

A PICTURE ON GLASS

By ALLAN C. CARLYLE

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The residence of the Count Van Arsdale at Rotterdam, Holland, is a very old one. Indeed, it was standing when the first Dutch settlers bought Manhattan island for \$24. In recent times David, one of the Van Arsdale family, came to New York to make a home there, but he did not remain long.

There were two reasons for his return to Holland. Firstly, he was in love with a member of another branch of the family, Anneke Van Arsdale, the daughter of the man who held the title and the Van Arsdale manor house. Secondly, there was a tradition that David Van Arsdale was the real count. The title and estates had passed from David's great-grandfather to an ancestor of Anneke's, and it had never been clear how the transaction came about. David believed that Anneke's father knew something about it, but the count would not admit that he did. When David first came courting Anneke her father favored the suit, but a very wealthy suitor having asked for her hand, the count, feeling that money was needed in the family, favored the latter. Anneke would not wed him and would not accept David without her father's consent.

There appearing to be no hope that the count would relent, David determined to go back to America. He neither could nor would deprive the girl he loved of his prospective possessions, and since she must eventually pass to another, he did not wish to be near her. The night before he was to sail he was sitting in the great square hall which was once used by the Dutch for a living room, making his last visit to Anneke preceding his departure. The lovers were very despondent.

"I believe," said David, "that the reason your father first favored our union is that he believes me to be the rightful heir to the title and estates he is now enjoying."

"Why do you think that, David?" asked the girl.

"Because there are those who say that I am. There has always been a mystery connected with the death of my great-grandfather, John Van Arsdale, and the assumption of the title by Henry. It is well known that Henry's mind was subsequently affected, and it is rumored that this came from remorse."

"But father has nothing to do with that."

"No; but if there was fraud in the change of the title and estates from his ancestor to mine I am the real Count Van Arsdale. If I married you the two branches of the family would be united and the fraud, if any, would not matter. That, I believe, is the reason for your father's willingness at first, because there is no other reason. I am poor, and you need a rich husband."

At this moment something singular happened. Winding about the hall to the upper story was a staircase. Midway, where the staircase turned at right angles with the lower and upper parts, was a window. It was of curious construction, the glass being of different thicknesses in different parts. It had been there no one knew how long, and no one knew why an ordinary window or one of stained glass had not been placed there in its stead.

At this time electricity was first converted into and utilized as light. The searchlight had just been invented, and some electricians were experimenting with one of them on the roof of a neighboring building. Suddenly the window mentioned was brilliantly illuminated. David and Anneke looked at it in astonishment. Instead of being ordinary white glass, it was a picture—a picture in black and white—such as we now see hanging in windows that the light may bring out the scene. And the subject, a man in the Dutch costume of the olden time, lay on his back bestridden by another man who had plunged a dagger into his heart. Below were the words: "The Murder of Henry, Count Van Arsdale."

A mystery was explained by a mystery. The window till that moment had been a blank. The invention of the searchlight had revealed what it contained. But who many years before had learned to make a picture on glass? And what light did he use to bring it out? For how could he have made it without seeing it?

One fact of its being there at all might be explained by the fact that the murderer brooded over his crime until he lost his reason and placed it there while a monomaniac.

While the lovers looked the picture disappeared as instantaneously as it had sprung into being. Then Anneke covered her eyes with her hands.

"I am descended from a murderer," she said. "All that father possesses is yours."

David did not sail for America the next day. Workmen came in, took out the glass in the window and replaced it with a stained one. Then came a wedding between David and Anneke, and the count, having no male issue, surrendered his title to his son-in-law and his estates to his daughter. Having done this, he sailed for America, and Holland never saw him again. He buried himself in the wilds of Canada.

David and Anneke still live in the house in Rotterdam where the picture was revealed to them, but where the picture is kept no one knows. Some say it has been destroyed.

Curious Custom.

In Friesland, it seems, there is a custom that the news of a birth or death is announced verbally by a man who calls at every house in the village for that purpose. If he brings the news of a birth he wears white gloves; if of a death they are black. Some days back a child was born dead in a Friesland village. It was necessary that the usual announcement should be made, but in what colored gloves? The harbinger was a man of resource. He went his rounds wearing one white glove and

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