Origin of the "Baker's Dozen."

Close by Market Street (now Broadway) lived and prospered a baker, the first man that ever baked New-Year cakes—in fact, the inventor of them. The name of our friend was Volckert Jan Pieterson Van Amsterdam, commonly known as Baas. He was Dutch from his large feet to his round bald head, and had no respect for any one or anything that was not Dutch. He was a regular attendant at the old Dutch church, but, nevertheless, in constant fear of being bewitched. His wife, Maritjie, was economical even to the saving and parings of her nails, and her ginger-bread babies were always made in imitation of his children. It was New Year Eve, 1655, and Bass in his shop dealing out cakes for small pieces of money, called wampum. He had taken an extra glass of rum in honor of St. Nicholas, when he heard a sharp rap, and in walked as ugly an old woman as ever he had set his eyes on.

"I want a dozen New Year cookies," she screamed.

"Vell, den, you needn' sbeak so loud," replied Baas. "Duyvel! I ain't teaf, den."

"I wan't a dozen screamed the old woman, "and here is only twelve."

"Vel, den, und vhat de duyvel is dwalf but a dozen?" said the baker.

"I tell you I want one more!" she shrieked.

"Vell, den," said he, "your may co to de duyvel und get anodder; you von't get it here."

From this time on our baker's wife and himself were made miserable. Their money and cookies were taken away by invisible hands; their bread either rose out of their sight or sank into the earth; their famous brick oven was torn down, and poor Baas pelted with his own bricks; Maritjie became deaf; Baas was black and blue from head to toe; and such a life as he led was purgatory.

Thrice the old woman appeared, and thrice was she sent to "de duyvel." And at last, in his agony, Bass bethought himself of St. Nicholas, who advised him, on hearing of his troubles, when he counted a dozen to count thirteen.

"Py St. Johnnes de Dooper, put St Nicholas is a great plockhead!" thought Baas; and while he was thus thinking, St. Nick had vanished, and in his stead was the old woman. She repeated her demand for "one more," and Bass, remembering St. Nicholas, acceded to her demand, when she exclaimed, "The spell is broken, andhence forward a dozen is thirteen, and thirteen is a dozen." And taking a cooky with an effigy of the good saint on it, she made Baas swear that ever afterward twelve should be thirteen, as a type of the thirteen mighty States that should arise out of the ruins of the government of Vanderlandt.

It is well known how terribly St. Nicholas revenged himself upon those who set themselves up against the venerable customs of their ancestors, and refused the homage to him to whose good offices it was owing that this his favorite city had surpassed all others in beautiful damsels, valorous young men, mince-pies, oliekoeks, and New-Year cookies.—*Harper's Magazine.*

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