Facsimile from Sibbald Island.

Wolfe Edwin after Knickerbocker

SHR

Dear Sir.

Having, in an accompanying paper, sketched a good deal about Communipaw, and the romantic interest with which it is invested, I hereunto send you, Mr. Editor, as a case in point, a legend, connected with that place, and which I am surprised should have escaped the researches of your correspondent, Mr Vanderdonk, as it relates to an edifice scarcely less fated than the house of the Four Chimneys. The legend is crude and simple, as I heard it related by one of my fellow cronies in city state, of the cocked hat confraternity; it is capable however of being delated, inflated, and dressed up into very imposing shape and dimensions. Should any of your ingenious contributors in this line feel inclined to take it in hand, they will find ample materials, yea collateral

New York, N.

the only bay and harbor on Astoria, our original seat of empire, ~~at the mouth~~ has been turned into a British port and landing-house; ~~and~~ has been a foreign flag ~~has~~ been hoisted at the mouth of the Columbia, and how a mere trading company has seized ~~it~~ ~~illegally~~ at that great portal of our empire, and actually locked it against our own citizens

SHR

~~What are the petty claims and questions which occupy the Congress in comparison with the adjustment of this territorial what~~

What are the petty questions which occupy Congress, and distract it with clamorous contention, in comparison with the adjustment of this great territorial right which involves empire? What is the most east boundary question, which concerns a mere strip of forest land, ~~with~~ to this, on which depends our whole territory west of the Rocky Mountains and our great highway to the ~~Pacific~~ Pacific?

A little more delay on our part and irksome commerce will have woven its web over the whole country; and it will cost thousands of lives, and millions of

~~as well to separate to territorial~~
~~right and the boundaries of empire, as to~~
~~stop the rising stream of foreign traffic to~~
~~spread like a cord on the whole country,~~
~~and to gloom, stay~~

from of the British and the Yankees, the tavern continued its ancient loyalty. It is true, the head of the Prince of Orange disappeared from the sign; a strange bird being painted over it, with the explanatory legend of "Die Wilde Gans", or "The wild Goose", but this all the world knew to be a sly riddle of the landlord, the worthy Jannis Van Gieson, a knowing man in a small way, who laid his finger beside his nose and winked, when any one studied the signification of his sign, and observed that his goose was hatching, but would join the flock whenever they flew over the water; an enigma which was the perpetual vexation and delight of the loyal, but pot-headed burghers of Communipaw.

Under the sway of this patriotic, though ~~but~~ descent, and quiet publican, the tavern continued to flourish in primeval tranquility, and was the resort of all true-hearted Hollanders, from all parts of Pavonia; who met here quietly and sociably, to smoke and drink the doorpull of Butter and Yankee, and sneer at admiral Van Tromp.

[W1380]

A perfect contrast to the worthy host of the Wild Goose was his man Pluto, a crop headed, vagrant command from of a negro, ~~that~~ who was a kind of enigma in communion. Where he came from no body knew. He was found one morning after a storm, cast like a sea monster on the strand in front of the Wild Goose, and lay there, more dead than alive. The neighbors gathered round and speculated on this "~~[illegible]~~ fish" production of the deep: whether it came fish or flesh or a compound of both, commonly ycleped a Merman. The kind hearted Innis Van Dieson ~~[illegible]~~ seeing that he was the human form took him into his house and warmed him into life. By degrees he showed signs of intelligence, and even uttered sounds very much like language, but which no one in communion could understand. Some thought him ~~[illegible]~~ a negro just from Guinea, who had either fallen overboard, or escaped from a slaver. Nothing, however, could ever draw from him any account of his origin; when questioned on the subject he merely pointed to Gibbet Island, a small rocky island in the open bay just opposite to Urbanna; as if that was his native

Reuben James

& rolled his quid, but turned silently at a loss what recompense to claim. His messmates gathered around him, & nudging him with their elbows, & whispering in his ear: "He had all the wind in a string, and could get what he pleased; the "old man" could deny him nothing," etc. One advised one thing, & one another; & "double pay," & "double allowance," & a ~~bo~~ boatswain's berth," & "a pocketfull of money, and a full swing on shore," etc. ~~Wh~~ ~~Jack~~ Jack allowed them all aloft, and would hear none of their counsel. After mature deliberation, he announced ~~to~~ the reward to which he aspired; it was to be excused from rolling up the hammock cloths! SHR

The whimsical request was of course granted; and from that time forward, whenever the ~~sa~~ sailors were piped to stow away their hammocks, Jack was to be seen loitering around, and looking on, with the most gentlemanlike leisure. ~~He~~ He always continued in the same ship with Decatur. "I could always ~~tell~~ ~~[illegible]~~ know the state of my bile by Jack," said the commodore. "If I was in good humour, and wore a pleasant aspect, Jack would be seen to heave in

[W138e]

place, though young body knew it had never been inhabited.

SHR In the process of time he acquired that a smattering of the Dutch language, ~~but~~ ~~his first and most unexpected chance.~~ ~~[illegible]~~ to say, he learnt all its vocabulary of oaths and maledictions, with just enough sufficient to string them together. "Donder onde Bliksem!" (thunder and lightning) was the gentlest of his ejaculations. For years he kept about the wild goose, more like one of those familiar spirits or house hold gobbins that we read of, than like a ~~[illegible]~~ human being. He acknowledged allegiance to no one; but performed various ~~[illegible]~~ domestic offices when it suited his humour; waiting occasionally on the guests; grooming the horses; cutting wood, drawing water, and all this without being asked. Any command or hint and the stubborn sea urchin was sure to rebel. He was never so much at home, however, as when on the water, plying about in skiff or canoe, entirely alone, fishing, crabbing, or grabbing for oysters, and

[W138]

would bring home quantities for the larder of the wild fowl, which he would throw down at the kitchen door with a growl.

He was no weather deterred him from launching forth on his favorite element; indeed the wilder the weather, the more he seemed to enjoy it. If a storm was brewing he was here to put off from shore; and would be seen far out in the bay, his light skiff dancing like a feather on the waves, when sea and sky were all in a turmoil and the stoutest ships were fain to lower their sails. Sometimes on such occasions he would be absent for days together; how he weathered the tempests, and how and where he subsisted no one could divine, nor did any one venture to ask, for all had an almost superstitious awe of him. Some of the commonplace oystermen declared that they had more than once seen him suddenly disappear canoe and all, as if they plunged beneath the waves, and after a

[W1369]

while
came up again in quite a different
part of the bay, where they concluded
that he could bin under water like
that notable species of wild duck commonly
called the Hell diver. All began to
criticise him in the light of a foul
weather bird, like the Mother Carey's
chicken or Stormy Petrel, and when
anything saw him pattering far off
in his skiff in cloudy weather, made
up their minds for a storm.

SHR

Another minute of the wild goose was
a nephew of mine here; a sister's son,
Jack Vandrscamp by name, and
a real scamp by nature. He was a
perfect imp for mischief, and his natural
propensity was fostered and cultivated
by old Pluto, who seemed to delve on the
urchin for his very wicked ends, and to
prompt him to all kinds of capers. Under
his auspices the urchin began in a
small way by playing tricks upon his
the progenitors of the wild goose; putting
gun powder in their pipes or snuff into their
pockets, and astonishing them with an
effulgence while they sat nodding round the

[W138b]

fine place in the ~~a~~ bar room. Sometimes he would mistake their horses as they stood dozing at the posts ~~[illegible]~~ before the door, when he and old Pluto would run races along the fields: and if perchance a worthy burgher from some distant part of Pascoria had tarried until dark over his potation, ~~[illegible]~~ it was odds but ~~[illegible]~~ that young ~~[illegible]~~ Brandscamp would slip a brier under his horses tail as he mounted, and send him clattering along the road in such a nothing style to his infinite astonishment and discomfiture.

SHR

Thus by degrees, and under the tuition of old Pluto, the boy became the scape grace of the village, and a pest to his uncle and to every one else. Nor were his pranks confined to the land; ~~[illegible]~~ he soon learned to accompany old Pluto on the water. Together these worthies used cruise about ~~the~~

the bond boy and all the of the neighbor-
ing shacks and ruins; poking around
in ~~stuff~~ stuffs and canvas; robbing the
set nets of the fishermen, boarding on
remote coasts and laying waste ~~and~~
orchards and water melon patches, and
in short carrying on a complete system of piracy
on a small scale. Piloted by Pluto,
the youthful vandal soon ~~become~~ became acquainted with all
the bays, ~~and~~ rivers, ~~and~~ creeks and
inlets of the country round about him;
could navigate from the Hook to Spuyten
Duyvil on the darkest night, and
learned to set at defiance the terrors of
the water at defiance.

At length Hugo and boy suddenly
disappeared, and days and weeks elapsed
but without tidings of them. Some said
they must have run away and gone to
sea; others, wisely, hinted that old Pluto,
being no other than his master, had
in disguise, bewitched and spirited away the
boy to the Northern regions — all however,
agreed in one thing that the village
was well rid of them.

[1881M]

[illegible]

7

The pilloury is the punishment of one of his traitors —

In the process of time the good Tennies Van Geison slept with his fathers and the town remained shut up, waiting for a claimant, for the next heir was Jan Rust Vanderkamp and he had not been heard of for years. At length one day a boat was seen pulling for shore from a long black, rakish, ~~looking~~ schooner that lay at anchor in the bay. The boats crew ~~too~~ seemed worthy of the craft from which they debarked: never had such a set of noisy, swaggering, swaggering ruffians landed in peaceful Communipaw. They were outlandish in garb and demeanour and were ~~they were~~ headed by a rough, burly bully ~~boy~~ ruffian, with fiery whiskers, a coppery nose, ~~and~~ and a great flaunting brown slouched a scar across his face, ~~in short, to them~~ on one side of his head, in whom, to their dismay, the quiet wholesome men made to recognize their ~~[illegible]~~ early best Jan Rust Vanderkamp: ~~with~~ The sear of this lubberful ~~group~~ gang was brought off by old Pluto, who had lost an eye, grown grizzly headed, and looked more like a decrepit

[M138]

Mr Edda.

Inn

their own. Vanderdecamp renewed his acquaintance with the old boatsman made against their will, and in a manner not at all to their taste. He slapped them familiarly on the back, gave them an iron grip of the hand and was half hail fellow with most. According to his own account he had been all the world over; had made ~~many~~ money by bags full; ~~and~~ had ships in every sea, and now meant to turn the Wildgoose into a country seat, where he and his comrades, all rich merchants from foreign parts, might enjoy themselves in the interval of their voyages.

Sure enough, in a little while there was a complete metamorphosis of the Wildgoose. From being a quiet peaceful British public house, it became a most riotous uproarious private dwelling: a complete rendezvous for boisterous men of the seas, who ~~[illegible]~~ came here to have what they called a "blow out" on dry land, and ~~[illegible]~~ might be seen at all hours

lounging about the deck, or leaning out of the windows; throwing away cheroots, and cracking rough jokes on every ~~one who might happen to pass by~~ passer by. The bowsprit was piled up, too, in so strange a manner — hammocks hung to the walls instead of bedsteads; odd kinds of furniture of Spanish fashion; bamboo couches, Spanish chairs; pretty ~~hand~~ cottages and boudoirs ~~hung~~ suspended ~~and~~ on every peg; silver ~~cigarettes~~ cigarettes on the mouth pieces, and silver candlesticks and porringers on the tables, contrasting oddly with the pewter and delft ware of the original establishment.

And then the strange amusements of these sea monsters. Pitching Spanish dollars instead of quoits; ~~shooting at a mark~~, firing blunderbusses out of the windows; shooting at a mark, or at any unlucky dog, or cat, or pig, or barndoor fowl, that might happen to come within reach.

The only being ~~that~~ who seemed to relish their rough wrangling was old Pluto, and yet he had but a dog's life of it; for they practised all kinds of unusual jokes upon him: kicked him about like a foot ball; thrust him by his grizzly mane of wool, ~~and~~ and even spoke to him without coupling a curse by way of adjective to his name, and consigning him to the infernal regions. The old fellow, however, seemed to like them the better the more they cursed him, though his utmost exhibition of pleasure went ~~no~~ amounted to more than the grunt of a pelted bear when his ears are rubbed.

SHR

Old Pluto was the ministering spirit at the orgies of the hall-house — and such orgies as took place there!— Such drinking, singing, whooping, ~~swearing~~ swearing; ~~and occasionally brawl~~ with an occasional intermixture of quarrelling and fighting. The night grew the more, the more old Pluto plied the potatoes, waited the guests and became frantic in their merriment, smashing every thing to pieces and throwing the house out of the windows.. Sometimes ~~they sallied~~ after a drinking bout they sallied ~~out upon~~ forth and peopled the village to the dismay of the worthy burghers and gaffers who were

~~[illegible]~~

[W1380]

within doors and would have shut up the house. Vanderscamp however was not to be rebuffed. He insisted on renewing acquaintance with his old neighbors, and on introducing his friends the merchant to their families; and so he made his way on the track out for a wife, and meant, before he stirred, to find husbands for all their daughters. So, willy-nilly, he would be accosted about their best parlors with his hat on one side of his head. Set on the good wife, nearly crazed with mahogany table, kicking his heels against the carved and polished legs; kissed and tousled the young women, and, if they pouted and fretted, gave them a gold ring or a sparkling cap to put them in good humor again.

Sometimes nothing would satisfy him but he must have some of his old neighbors to dinner at the Wild Goose; then came

no respecting him, for he had got the complete ascendancy of the community, and the principal burghers all stood in awe of him. But what a time would the quiet earthy man have among these rake-hells, ~~[illegible]~~ who would delight to astound them with the most extraordinary gunpowder tales, embroidered ~~[illegible]~~ with all kind of foreign oaths ~~and gunpowder tales~~: chink the cash with them; bind them in deep potations; travel drinking songs in their ears: and occasionally fire pistols on their heads or under ~~them~~ the table, and then laugh in their faces and ask them how they liked the smell of ~~gun~~ gunpowder?

Thus was the ~~[illegible]~~ little village of Communipaw for a time like the under-world peopled with devils: until Vandriscamp and his brother merchants would sail on another trading voyage, when the burghers would be shut up, and everything relapse into quiet; only to be disturbed by his next visitation

Wilde Jonker he knocked timidly and diffidently at the door, for he dreaded the reception he was to experience from his wife. He had risen to do so: ~~[illegible]~~, she met him at the threshold in a furious ill humour. "Is this a time," said she, "to keep people out of their beds, and to bring home company to turn the house upside down?"

"Company," said Vanderscamp meekly. "I have brought no company with me, wife."

"No indeed! They have got here before you, but by your invitation; and blessed looking company they are truly! ~~[illegible]~~."

Vanderscamp's knees smote together & ~~[illegible]~~.

For the love of heaven, where are they, wife?

Where! why in the blue room up stairs, making themselves as much at

house as if the house were their own.

Vanderscamp made a desperate effort. Scrambled up to the room and threw open the door. Sure enough, there at a table on which burnt a light as blue as brimstone, sat the three guests from Gilbert Island, with halters round their necks, and bobbing their caps together as if they were hob-or-nobbing, and trolling the old Dutch preboiler glee, ~~which has already been~~ since translated into English: ~~for the benefit of the public~~:

In three merry lads be we -
And three merry lads be we;
I on the land and thou on the sand
And Jack on the gallows tree.

Vanderscamp turned head no more. Starting back with horror he missed his footing on the landing place, fell from the step of the stairs to the bottom, was taken up speechless, and either from the fall or the fright was buried in the yard of the little Dutch church at Bergen on the following Sunday; ~~when his~~

desired to call during my
letter, Mason to my family and

From that day forward the fate of the Leede farm was sealed. It was pronounced a haunted house, and avoided accordingly. No one inhabited it but vagrant scamps, thieves of a widow and old Pluto, and they were considered but little better than its hobgoblin visitors. ~~Had~~ Pluto grew more and more haggard and morose, and looked more like an imp of darkness than a human being. He spoke to ~~no~~ no one but ~~was~~ ~~no~~ muttering to himself; ~~He spoke~~ ~~time was passed in his skiff, & looking about the bay~~ or, as some hinted, ~~talking~~ talking with the devil, who, ~~though~~ though unseen, was ever at his elbow. Now and then he was seen pulling about the bay alone in his skiff, in dark weather, or at the approach of night fall; no body could tell why, unless it was conceived, to invite more guests from the gallows. Indeed it was ~~of~~ believed that the Leede farm still

[W1383]

considered to be a house of entertainment for such guests, and that, on stormy nights the ~~blue~~ blue chamber was occasionally illuminated, and sounds of diabolical merriment were overheard mingling with the howlings of the tempest. Some treated them as idle stories, ~~but one wild~~ until on one such night, it was about the time of the equinox, there was a terrible uproar in the wild gains ~~that~~ that could not be mistaken. It was not to mend the sound of revelry, however, as sleep, ~~with the a chase~~ ~~and the~~ piercing shrieks that pervaded every part of the village.

SHR

Nevertheless ~~the one~~ ~~contrary at~~ ~~lamm~~, ~~of~~ ~~to the~~ ~~inclinacy to the that~~ ~~inferior~~. ~~The thoughts of~~ On the contrary, the honest burghers of Communipaw drew their night caps on their ~~head~~ ears and buried their heads under the bedclothes at the thoughts of Vanderscamp and his galloping companions.

The next morning some of the boldest and most curious undertook to reconnoitre.

all was quiet and lifeless at the hall farm.
~~the door~~ the door ~~hall door~~ yawned wide open, and had evidently been open all night, for the storm had beaten into the hall.
~~Rushing~~ Gathering more courage from the ~~[illegible]~~ silence and apparent desertion, they gradually ventured over the threshold. The house had indeed the air of having been deserted by daylight. Everything was topsy turvy. ~~the hall had been~~ trunks had been broken open and ~~[illegible]~~ ~~ransack and rummage~~; chests of drawers and corner cupboards ~~had been~~ turned inside out, as in a time of general sack and pillage; but the most conspicuous sight was the window of Van Vandenscamp. extended a corpse on the floor of the blue chamber, with the marks of a deadly gripe ~~[illegible]~~ on the windpipe.
~~He had fallen on the staff of old Pluto~~
~~was picked up dreaming about the~~
~~bag bottom upward, what had become~~

[W138a]