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THE CLARKE COURIER.

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THE TWO CLOCKS.

Oh, while might it be from the clock to be free, With no measure of time in its flight, But the sun in its march through the glorious arch And the stars with their dial of light! But now at the hour, though my dream is in fever, I must leave it to wither or blight! At the minute in haste I the pleasure must taste, But leisure can never be right. I must shorten or speed every feeling and deed At the bid of the itinerant rhyme Of a tick and a tack, and a slack, And for the tyrannous measure of time!

THE DEVIL IN THE BELFRY.

BY EDGAR ALLAN POE. What 'o'clock is it?—Old Saying. Everybody knows, in a general way, that the finest place in the world is—or, alas, was—the Dutch borough of Vondervotteimittiss. Yet, as it lies some distance from any of the main roads, being in a somewhat out-of-the-way situation, there are perhaps very few of my readers who have ever paid it a visit. The site of the village is in a perfectly circular valley, about a quarter of a mile in circumference, and entirely surrounded by gentle hills, over whose summit the people have never ventured to pass. For this they assign the very good reason that they do not believe there is anything at all on the other side.

Round the skirts of the valley (which is quite level and paved throughout with flat tiles) extends a continuous row of 60 little houses. These, having their backs on the hills, must look of course to the center of the plain, which is just 50 yards from the front door of each dwelling. Every house has a small garden before it, with a circular path, a sundial and 24 cabbages. The buildings themselves are so precisely alike that one can in no manner be distinguished from the other. Owing to the vast antiquity, the style of architecture is somewhat odd, but it is not for that reason the less strikingly picturesque. They are fashioned of hard burned little bricks, red, with black ends, so that the walls look like a chessboard upon a great scale. The gables are turned to the front, and there are cornices, as big as all the rest of the house, over the eaves and over the main doors. The windows are narrow and deep, with very tiny panes and a great deal of sash.

On the roof is a vast quantity of tiles with long, curly ears. The woodwork throughout is of a dark hue, and there is much carving about it, with but a trifling variety of patterns, for time out of mind the carvers of Vondervotteimittiss have never been able to carve more than two objects—a timepiece and a cabbage. But these they do exceedingly well and intersperse them with singular ingenuity wherever they find room for the chisel. The dwellings are as much alike inside as out, and the furniture is all upon one plan. The floors are of square tiles, the chairs and tables of black looking wood, with thin, crooked legs and puppy feet. The mantelpieces are wide and high and have not only timepieces and cabbages sculptured over the front, but a real timepiece, which makes a prodigious ticking, on the top, in the middle, with a flowerpot containing a cabbage standing on each extremity by way of outrider. Between each cabbage and the timepiece, again, is a little china man having a large stomach with a great round hole in it, through which is seen the dial plate of a watch.

The fireplaces are large and deep, with fierce, crooked looking fire dogs. There is constantly a rousing fire and a huge pot over it full of sauerkraut and pork, to which the good woman of the house is always busy in attending. She is a little fat lady, with blue eyes and a red face, and wears a huge cap like a sugar loaf ornamented with purple and yellow ribbons. Her dress is of orange colored linsey woolsey, made very full behind and very short in the waist and, indeed, very short in other respects, not reaching below the middle of her leg. This is somewhat thick, and so are her ankles, but she has a fine pair of green stockings to cover them. Her shoes of pink leather are fastened each with a bunch of yellow ribbons puckered up in the shape of a cabbage. In her left hand she has a little heavy Dutch watch; in her right she wields a ladle for the sauerkraut and pork. By her side there stands a fat tabby cat, with a gilt top repeater tied to its tail, which "the boys" have there fastened by way of a quip.

The boys themselves are, all three of them, in the garden attending the pig. They are each two feet in height. They have three cornered cocked hats, purple waistcoats reaching down to their thighs, buckskin knee breeches, red woolen stockings, heavy shoes with big silver buckles and long surtout coats with large buttons of mother of pearl. Each, too, has a pipe in his mouth, and a little dumpy puff in his right hand. He takes a puff and a look and then a look and a puff. The pig—which is corpulent and lazy—is occupied now in plucking up the stray leaves

that fall from the cabbage, and now in giving a kick behind at the gilt repeater, which the urchins have also tied to his tail, in order to make him look as handsome as the cat. Right at the front door, in a high backed leather bottomed armchair, with crooked legs and puppy feet like the tables, is seated the old man of the house himself. He is an exceedingly puffy little old gentleman, with big circular eyes and a huge double chin. His dress resembles that of the boys—and I need say nothing further about it. All the difference is, that his pipe is somewhat bigger than theirs, and he can make a greater smoke. Like them, he has a watch, but he carries his watch in his pocket. To say the truth, he has something of more importance than a watch to attend to—and what that is I shall presently explain. He sits with his right leg upon his left knee, wears a grave countenance, and always keeps one of his eyes, at least, resolutely bent upon a certain remarkable object in the center of the plain.

This object is situated in the steeple of the house of the town council. The town council are all very little, round, oily, intelligent men, with big saucer eyes and fat double chins, and have their coats much longer and their shoe buckles much bigger than the ordinary inhabitants of Vondervotteimittiss. Since my sojourn in the borough, they have had several special meetings, and have adopted these three important resolutions: "That it is wrong to alter the good old course of things." "That there is nothing tolerable out of Vondervotteimittiss, and—" "That we will stick by our clocks and our cabbages."

Above the session room of the council is the steeple, and in the steeple is the belfry, where exists and has existed time out of mind, the pride and wonder of the village—the great clock of the borough of Vondervotteimittiss. And this is the object to which the eyes of the old gentlemen are turned who sit in the leather bottomed armchairs. The great clock has seven faces, one in each of the seven sides of the steeple, so that it can be readily seen from all quarters. Its faces are large and white and its hands heavy and black. There is a belfryman, whose sole duty is to attend to it. But this duty is the most perfect of sinecures, for the clock of Vondervotteimittiss was never yet known to have anything the matter with it. Until lately the bare supposition of such a thing was considered heretical. From the remotest period of antiquity to which the archives have reference the hours have been regularly struck by the big bell. And indeed the case was just the same with all the other clocks and watches in the borough. Never was such a place for keeping the true time. When the large clapper thought proper to say "12 o'clock" all its obedient followers opened their throats simultaneously and responded like a very echo. In short, the good burghers were fond of their sauerkraut, but then they were proud of their clocks.

All people who hold sinecure offices are held in more or less respect, and as the belfryman of Vondervotteimittiss has the most perfect of sinecures, he is the most perfectly respected of any man in the world. He is the chief dignitary of the borough, and the very pigs look up to him with a sentiment of reverence. His coattail is very far longer, his pipe, his shoe buckles, his eyes and his stomach are very far bigger, than those of any other old gentleman in the village. And as to his chin, it is not only double, but triple. I have thus painted the happy estate of Vondervotteimittiss. Alas, that so fair a picture should ever experience a reverse!

There has been long a saying among the wisest inhabitants that "no good can come from over the hills." And it really seemed that the words had in them something of the spirit of prophecy. It wanted five minutes of noon on the day before yesterday when there appeared a very odd looking object on the summit of the ridge to the eastward. Such an occurrence of course attracted universal attention, and every little old gentleman who sat in a leather bottomed armchair turned one of his eyes with a stare of dismay upon the phenomenon, still keeping the other upon the clock in the steeple. By the time that it wanted only three minutes to noon the droll object in question was perceived to be a very diminutive, foreign looking young man. He descended the hills at a great rate, so that everybody had soon a good look at him. He was really the most unlikely little personage that had ever been seen in Vondervotteimittiss. His countenance was of a dark snuff color, and he had a long hooked nose, pea eyes, a wide mouth and an excellent set of teeth, which latter he seemed anxious of displaying, as he was grinning from ear to ear. What with mustaches and whiskers, there was none of the rest of his face to be seen. His head was uncovered and his hair neatly done up in papillotes. His dress was a tight fitting swallow tailed black coat, from one of whose pockets dangled a vast length of white handkerchief; black kerseymere knee breeches, black stockings and stumpy looking pumps, with huge bunches of black sash ribbon for bows. Under one arm he carried a huge chapeau-de-bras and under the other a fiddle nearly five times as big as himself. In his left hand was a gold snuffbox, from which, as he capered down the hill, cutting all manner of fantastical steps, he took snuff incessantly with an air of the greatest possible self-satisfaction. God bless me! Here was a sight for the honest burghers of Vondervotteimittiss!

He scarcely a chance, however, to get their eyes thoroughly open, when, just as it wanted half a minute of noon, the rascal bounced, as I say, right into the midst of them; gave a chapeau here, and a balance there, and then, after a pirouette and a pas-de-zephyr, pigeon winged himself right up into the belfry of the house of the town council, where the wonder-stricken belfryman sat smoking in a state of dignity and dismay. But the little chap seized him at once by the nose, gave it a swing and a pull, clapped the big chapeau-de-bras upon his head, knocked it down over his eyes and mouth, and then, lifting up the big fiddle, beat him with it so long and so soundly that, what with the belfryman being so fat and the fiddle being so hollow, you would have sworn that there was a regiment of double bass drummers all beating the devil's introp up in the belfry of the steeple of Vondervotteimittiss.

There is no knowing to what desperate act of vengeance his unprincipled attack might have aroused the inhabitants, but for the important fact that it now wanted only half a second of noon. The bell was about to strike, and it was a matter of absolute and pre-emptive necessity that everybody should look well at his watch. It was evident, however, that just at this moment the fellow in the steeple was doing something that he had no business to do with the clock. But, as it now began to strike, nobody had any time to attend to his maneuvers, for they had all to count the strokes of the bell as it sounded. "One!" said the clock. "Von!" echoed every little old gentleman in every leather bottomed armchair in Vondervotteimittiss. "Von!" said his watch also; "Von!" said the watch of his vrow; and "Von!" said the watches of the boys and the little repeaters on the tails of the cat and pig.

"Two!" continued the big bell, and "Doo!" repeated all the repeaters. "Three! Four! Five! Six! Seven! Eight! Nine! Ten!" said the bell. "Dree! Vou! Fibe! Sax! Sebn! Aight! Neim! Den!" answered the others. "Eleven!" said the big one. "Eleben!" assented the little fellow. "Twelve!" said the bell. "Dveif!" they replied, perfectly satisfied and dropping their voices. "Und dveif it iss!" said all the little old gentlemen, putting up their watches. But the big bell had not done with them yet. "Dirteen!" said he. "Der teufel!" gasped the little gentleman, turning pale, dropping their pipes and putting down all their right legs from over their left knees. "Der teufel!" groaned they. "Dirteen! Dirteen! Mein Gott, it is dirteen o'clock!"

Why attempt to describe the terrible scene which ensued? All Vondervotteimittiss flew at once into a lamentable state of uproar. "Vot is cum'd to mein pely?" roared all the boys. "I've been angry for dis hour!" "Vot is cum'd to mein kraut?" screamed all the vrows. "It has been done to rags for dis hour!" "Vot is cum'd to mein pipe?" swore all the little old gentlemen. "Dander and blitzen!" It has been smoked out for dis hour!" And they flung them up again in a great rage and, sinking back in their armchairs, puffed away so fast and so fiercely that the whole valley was immediately filled with impetuous smoke.

Meantime the cabbages all turned very red in the face, and it seemed as if old Nick himself had taken possession of everything in the shape of a timepiece. The clocks carved upon the furniture took to dancing, as if bewitched, while those upon the mantelpieces could scarcely contain themselves for fury and kept such a continual striking of 13 and such a frisking and wriggling of their pendulums as was really horrible to see. But, worse than all, neither the cats nor the pigs could put up any longer with the behavior of the little repeaters tied to their tails and resented it by scampering all over the place, scratching and poking and squeaking and squalling and flying into the faces and running under the petticoats of the people, and creating altogether the most abominable din and confusion which it is possible for a reasonable person to conceive. And to make matters still more distressing the rascally little scapegrace in the steeple was evidently exerting himself to the utmost. Every now and then one might catch a glimpse of the scoundrel through the smoke. There he sat in the belfry upon the belfryman, who was lying flat upon his back. In his teeth the villain held the bellrope, which he kept jerking about with his head, raising such a clatter that his ears ring again even to think of it. On his lap lay the big fiddle, at which he was scraping out of all time and tune with both hands, making a great show, the nicompoop, of playing "Judy O'Flanagan and Paddy O'Hafferty?" Affairs being thus miserably situated I left the place in disgust and now appeal for aid to all lovers of correct time and fine kraut. Let us proceed in a body to the borough and restore the ancient order of things in Vondervotteimittiss by ejecting that little fellow from the steeple.

VISITING IN CHINA.

CEREMONIALS THAT ARE PROPER ON SUCH OCCASIONS.

The Duties of Hostess and Guests Are Intricate, and the Etiquette Smacks of Hypocrisy—The Houses and Their Furnishings. All Chinese houses are hidden from passersby in the street by high, blank walls, while on each side of the entrance are the stables and the apartments set apart for the gatekeeper and other servants. In China the mule takes the place of the horse, and near the door of the courtyard a well groomed, happy effect. A Chinese household is a community in which the parents are the head, over which the father rules with a rod of iron. Each son must bring his wife to his father's house on his marriage, and he must there remain with his growing family. Until she is fortunate enough to give birth to a son the position of the daughter-in-law is very much like that of an upper servant, her life being frequently one of the greatest misery. The best rooms of the houses face the south, and these are occupied by the mother-in-law, she having usually a suit of apartments, with reception, dining and bed rooms, which are separated by handsomely carved screens. The flooring is of brick or one and uncovered, this being even the case in the emperor's palaces. What is more, it is seldom clean and is made the repository for all sorts of rubbish, being carefully swept, however, when a visitor is expected.

In the reception room of a well-to-do Chinese house a handsome table is usually found placed against the wall opposite the door, with a chair on each side, while around are cabinets filled with bronze and porcelain. In the bedroom a k'ang, or oven bed, occupies more than half the space, and on this bed the Chinese woman spends more than half her existence, sewing, eating and gossiping thereon, and at each end of this bedstead are carved wardrobes. The dining room is separated from the reception room by a solid wall and not by screens, as in the other apartments, while it must be reached by going out of doors, although it is under the same roof. The furniture consists of a high, square table, with two or more polished and none too comfortable looking chairs, side tables for the serving of the meal, and upon the wall inscriptions in Chinese characters.

On the threshold the hostess steps on one side and entreats her guest to enter, which the latter, to be polite, must strenuously refuse, requesting her hostess to precede her. This little bit of Chinese etiquette can be prolonged for some time, when of course the guest enters first, as was originally intended. She is then conducted to the place of honor, this being the chair at the right of the table, which she must at first refuse, repeating the previous meaningless performance, ending by occupying the place. Pipes are then brought in, but if the visitor is a foreigner and does not smoke the hostess foregoes her accustomed puff. Presently tea is brought in, clear as amber, flavored with flowers and served without sugar or cream.

With it are served delicate small cakes, sweetmeats, candied fruits, red fruit marmalade pressed into small squares and walnuts browned in hot oil and dipped in sirup. What is considered vulgar in England is considered polite in China, for during the meal the guest must smack her lips to show the meal is appreciated. Very few are educated, the great majority being able to neither write nor read. Probably first of all the guest will be asked her age, for the Chinese ask the most pointed and personal questions. The older she is the more admirable will she appear in the eyes of her hostess, for youth in China does not gain much respect. The hostess will then want to know if her parents are living, how many brothers and sisters she has, and from these inquiries will pass on to dress, any peculiarities in the visitor's toilet being carefully noted, and the jewelry, lace and ribbons are religiously examined and admired, all that the visitor possesses being extravagantly praised and the belongings of the hostess correspondingly depreciated. At the close of the visit the latter will insist upon accompanying her visitor to the outer court, which of course she must be implored not to do, but which she does in the end, all the same, making shaking hands "Chinese fashion" after which the visitor enters her carriage and drives away.—London Household Words.

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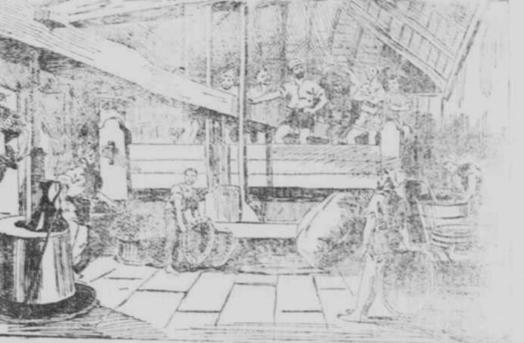
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Scene in Portugal at the Rio Porto Vineyards.

CARRYING THE PORT GRAPES TO THE WINERY, ON THE HEADS OF MEN AND WOMEN NEAR THE VALLE DE MENEZES WHERE THEY ARE CRUSHED IN THE MASHING VATS TO BE THROUDEN FOR FORT WINE.



The rugged hills with projecting rocks of brown stone and slate containing a large quantity of iron, make it impossible to use wagons here hence the grapes have to be carried to the treading vat or larger as they are called, and some are large enough for twenty persons to tread, which they do dancing to music furnished by the proprietor. Alfred Speer, the Pioneer wine grower of New Jersey whose Port Grape wine and Burgandy rivals the world, imported the Port Grape vines many years ago, and planted vineyards in the Passaic Valley N. J. The soil in Passaic county, New Jersey, is identical to that of de Menetz. Speer's New Jersey Vineyards are situated in the Passaic valley below the mountain range and the grapes are carried to the winery in the town of Passaic where they are mashed between rollers made of rubber, which do not break the seeds, and made into wine. These grand wines of Speer's, that have mellowed in flavor in the course of years of ripening, are the choicest wines in this country and can only be obtained by paying a price that is higher than new wine from western vineyards. Mr. Speer deems it necessary for a healthy wine that it be allowed years to mature in wood to get rid of its coarse parts; with this object he keeps his wines several years in fumigated cellars and frequently racks before bottling or offering for sale. The reputation of Speer's wines as a valuable medicinal and family wine extends around the world. Grocers and Druggists sell Speer's Wines and Brandy.

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