Jufrow Jintje's Wooing

By CURRAN RICHARD GREENLEY....

Past the green banks of the canal went the broad scows laden with market stuff, propelled by the strong arms of peasant women. Against the blue of the sky the weather gray of the windmills barred the sunlight into shifting shadows.

Jufrow Jintje had dropped her knitting in a tangled mass, flinging herself back against the slant of the bank to blink at the sun; Lazy Jufrow Jintje—so the maidens of Vaarken called her—truly an alien, for under the close white cap that she hated with all her soul the little black curls crept out to frame the sweet curves of the dimpled cheek, warm with the sun kissed olive of another land.

In the squat red brick house whose shining brass railed stoop led out to the market square dwelt Mevrouw van Verck, old and wrinkled, but straight as an oak. There had come to her womanhood, wifehood, motherhood and sorrow, for Nicholas van Verck, the stalwart, laughing son of the old house, had fled from the quiet and quaintness of the fatherland without ever a word. The darkness of five silent years had passed when one night, as the sea raged against the dikes, the wanderer returned—not alone, for he carried the child that was destined to be at once the pride and plague of Mevrouw van Verck's lonely life. A few months later Nicholas van Verck, strangely old and broken, yielded up his turbulent soul, as much a mystery to Vaarken as before he returned. The old woman and the child lived on together, and the red brick mansion kept its secrets well.

The years rolled on, the gypsy years that stole the little laughing child with her witching, dark face and left in her stead a demure young maiden of dreams. Jufrow Jintje, scarce sixteen, had her rebellious little head full of old tales that Katrinke, the serving woman, had whispered at dusk through the curtains of her white bed when mevrouw had thought the child fast asleep. There was ever a faint, elusive memory of some other time when, in place of the grassy banks of the slow canals, the weary order and cleanliness of Vaarken, came bursts of wild music, white tents flapping in the breezes, the glow of scarlet and gold, with warm, red lips upon her own. Dimmer and dimmer, but as the childish things slipped by out of the meagerness of everyday was born a renaissance of the past as the girl struggled daily to remember. Foolish Jufrow Jintje! As if the fatted kine were not better than the tents of Kedar!

Oh, weary, weary days—mevrouw, upright in her high, carved, oaken chair, knitting, always knitting, only looking over her spectacles long enough to reprove the girl for her idleness, and the silence of a house where laughter is forbidden—where one goes softly in penance for an unknown sin! She hated the close cap, the sober garb of the burgher maiden. Better the flash of peasant color and the tinkle of their glittering ornaments.

The flame barred sunset died across the flat, green meadows as the women cluttered away from the washing place. Still Jintje sat listless, her big, dark eyes looking out from under their long lashes straight into distance.

The tinkle of a guitar rippled over the water, and a man's rich tenor singing some lilt of stranger music—nearer, "Non ti scordor ti mi." To Jintje's ear the words were nothing, but the passion of the music and the voice—ah, she had heard that voice in dreams!

The guitar ceased, but the splash of oars came in its stead. The song was now a Venetian barcarole as the light skiff shot into view between the drooping alders that fringed the bank.

The craft was strange to Jintje's eyes, but she half rose to greet the man that propelled it after the English fashion. As she stood out tall and slight from the green wall behind her Dering paused involuntarily. Then, seeing that it was one of the burgher maidens, he would have gone on, but something in the appealing childish face riveted his attention.

Ten minutes later the boat was moored close in. He was seated at Jufrow Jintje's side and by the aid of his broken Dutch was struggling to make her understand.

That evening was one of many evenings when Jufrow Jintje strove with the strange tongue, awkwardly at first. Then, as a half forgotten mother tongue, the English words took meaning, and she listened wonderingly as Dering told her of the wild jungle, the forests of palm, the great elephants that wrought like men, the glitter of the eastern land where the languorous golden days droned into the glory of tropic nights. These stories were a queer medley of broken Dutch and unfamiliar English, but Jufrow Jintje listened and longed. At last she told him of her "other country" that she knew and yet did not know, the secret of which was locked in mevrouw's breast.

As the summer days grew to their end Dering awoke with a shock to the position into which he had drifted. Already curious glances followed the girl, and the maidens of Vaarken hushed their chatter when she came among them. Others knew of the little nook in the green shadow of the alders, and whispers of the doings of Jufrow Jintje and the stranger were growing louder.

One day he waited long in the little boat, and she did not come. Then he shipped his oars and strode with determined air up the street, across the market place to the red brick house. Mevrouw's high pitched voice came to him as he mounted the stoop:

"What manner of maiden art thou? Answer, thou shameless one! Out of the mire of the English camp in the heathen land my son brought thee home. Like mother, like child. I want no more of thee. Begone!" Then the old voice broke into piteous weeping, and Dering heard a low sobbing that came ever nearer as the great door swung ajar and Jintje crept through into the dark.

Dering caught the slender figure in his arms, where she struggled like a frightened wild thing. But he held her close and rang peal after peal on the old brass knocker, while overhead the old voice cried: "Katrinke, Katrinke, haste, quick! The child hath taken my foolish word and is gone into the night." Then, as the frightened face appeared at an upper window, Dering uncovered his head and, with the girl still held tightly against his breast, spoke in such wise that the great door was flung wide. Mevrouw's anger had melted into smiles, for was not the stranger a kinsman of Jufrow Jintje, by right of the unknown mother? She laughed and wept in a breath as she told the story that Jintje had hungered to hear through all the years of her life.

There was a flush of shame on the old face as she told that her love for the child had prompted her to hide all trace of her mother's kindred, as she had hoped to mold her into a Dutch maiden, such as she herself had been. Nicholas had told her very little of the brief facts, and mevrouw had deemed it best never to let the child know—and now came a Dering, and the heart of the child had known its kin.

There were busy days in the old red brick of the market square. The sewing women wrought in the upper rooms piles of white linen household gear and dainty robing, all for Jufrow Jintje. Vaarken forgave the maid her uselessness when it heard the wedding bells and knew that Jufrow Jintje was going out from among them forever to the "other land."

Qualified to Travel.

In his "Confessions of a Caricaturist" Harry Furniss tells the following story of his brother-in-law, a man who had spent his life in London:

He was also an inveterate and clever story teller and of course occasionally made a slip, as for instance on a railway journey to Brighton once, when he found himself alone with a stranger. The stranger in conversation happened to ask my relative casually if he were fond of traveling.

"Traveling? I should rather think so," he replied airily, and, imagining he was impressing some one who was "something in the city," he continued, "Yes, sir, I'm a pretty experienced traveler. Been mostly round the world and all that kind of thing, you know, and had my share of adventures, I can tell you!"

After a bit he gained more confidence and launched into details, giving the stranger the benefit of his experience. "Why, sir, you read in books that hunters of big game, such as tigers, watch their eyes. Not a bit of it. What you have got to do is to watch the tail. That's the thing! It mesmerizes the animal, so to speak, and you have him at your mercy."

On arriving at the hotel he found that his traveling companion had just signed his name in the visitors' book. It was Richard F. Burton, one of the greatest travelers of the age. My brother-in-law hastened to apologize to Sir Richard for his absurd tales. He had no idea, of course, to whom he was retailing his yarns.

Burton laughed. "My dear sir, not a word, please. I was more entertained than I can tell you. You really might have traveled—you lie so well."

Thought It Was a Bird.

A story is told of a Glasgow bailie whose knowledge of natural history was limited. One day when on the bench the following case came before him:

A man who had a squirrel, on going to the country for a short time left the squirrel in charge of a neighbor. The neighbor when attending to the animal accidentally left the door of its cage open, and without being seen it made its escape.

On his return the owner of the squirrel was very angry at the man for his carelessness and brought an action against him demanding compensation for the loss of his pet.

The bailie heard both parties and then gave the following as his decision.

"Nae doot ye did wrang to open the cage door, but"—turning to the pursuer—"ye was wrang, tae, for ye should hae clippit the beast's wings."

"It's a quadruped, yer honor!" said the man.

"Quadruped here or quadruped there, if ye had clippit its wings it couldna hae flown awa'. I dismiss the case."

Horse Races In King Solomon's Time

King Solomon was a sportsman, but not a Nimrod. He was the first king in Israel who introduced in his country "horse races." Dr. Jellinek some years ago published an ancient booklet of the Talmudical era, wherein a full account of "Solomon's races" is given. The Bible says that King Solomon was the owner of 40,000 stables. As the country was divided into twelve military provinces corresponding to the settlement of the twelve tribes, each governed by a nazib (governor), who had to provide for the king's wants and needs a month in the year, so it may be probable that the races were also arranged; that each month a race took place in the province under the patronage of that governor whose monthly service was on the list, while the Derby once a year was run under the control of King Solomon himself.

An Early Norman Dinner.

The Saxon dinner arrangements were orderly compared with those of the early Normans, when the halls and passages were frequently the scene of a free fight between the servants bringing in the food and the crowds of hangers on endeavoring to snatch it from them. This nuisance became at length so intolerable that ushers of the hall and kitchen were established by King William Rufus to protect not only the cooks bringing in the dinner, but the guests arriving to partake of it. Upon the occasion of his great feast at Westminster 300 of these officers were on duty, some to guard the visitors as they ascended the steps and others to defend the threatened dishes.

Such was the uncivilized state of society at this period, but when later on the marauders disappeared from the great houses it became customary to carry in the dishes in procession, sometimes preceded by music and headed by the steward with his wand of office. It was the duty of an "asseeur" or placer to arrange them upon the table; the ewers and napkins with which to perform their ablutions were presented to the guests by the esquires and pages, while it fell to the lot of the almoner to say grace.

A Great Feast.

There has never been prepared at any feast a bigger bowl of punch than that which was brewed by the Right Hon. Edward Russell when he was captain general and commander in chief of the forces in the Mediterranean seas. It was made in a fountain in a garden in the middle of four walks, all covered overhead with lemon and orange trees. In every walk there was a table the whole length of it, and on every table was a cold collation. In the huge fountains were the following ingredients: Four hogsheads of brandy, eight hogsheads of water, 25,000 lemons, twenty gallons of lime juice, 1,300 pounds of fine Lisbon sugar, five pounds of grated nutmegs, 300 toasted biscuits and a pipe of dry mountain Malaga.

Over the fountain was placed a great canopy, while in the midst of this lake of liquor there sailed a little sailor boy who filled the cups and replenished the glasses of all those who had a desire to drink. More than 6,000 men put in an appearance at this feast.—London Tit-Bits.

The Feet of Chameleons.

Chameleons, as no doubt readers are aware, all belong to the old world, and particularly to Africa. In their tongue, their feet and their eyes they differ remarkably from other lizards. Their feet, though possessing five toes, are divided into two grasping groups, looking like a hand in mittens, and only by close examination you perceive the presence of the two or the three opposing respectively, but so close together as to appear like one broad one.

On the padded soles or palms of these grasping limbs you can feel and see the small—may one say—palpi, which enable them to grasp so firmly that it is difficult to detach a chameleon from its foothold. These clinging feet, together with their prehensile tail, enable them to sustain themselves on the branches in the strongest gale.

Paying a Call In China.

A Chinese bride called upon a foreign lady, says a missionary. On entering the room she deliberately turned her back upon her hostess and made an elaborate obeisance. Of course the foreign lady was amazed and annoyed, but she found out the reason of the strange proceeding afterward. The bride's conduct had conformed to Chinese etiquette.

She had performed her obeisance, her k'o-t'-ou, to the north because that is the direction of the royal abode. If the foreign lady was so ignorant as to stand on the south side of the room, that was not the bride's concern. She knew, if her hostess did not, in what direction to bow her head.

Boiled Oysters.

In "Social Life In the Reign of Queen Anne" Swift writes to Stella, "Lord Masham made me go home with him to eat boiled oysters," and then he obligingly adds the recipe: "Take oysters, wash them clean; that is, wash their shells clean; then put your oysters in an earthen pot, with their hollow side down; then put this pot, covered, into a great kettle of water and let it boil. Your oysters are then boiled in their own liquor and do not mix with water."

Raphael's "Paul."

While Raphael was engaged in painting his celebrated frescoes he was visited by two churchmen, who began to criticise his work without understanding it. "The Apostle Paul has too red a face," said one. "He blushes even in heaven to see what hands the church has fallen into," replied the indignant painter.

A Source of Revenue Stopped.

"How many quarters did you receive last Sunday night, Harry?"

"Four."

"I thought you had five sisters?"

"Yes'm, but one is engaged."—Town and Country.

Time's Changes.

Father (meditating on time's changes)—Ah, yes, the fashion of this world passeth away.

Daughter—Indeed it does, papa. I shall want a new hat next week.

Reversed.

"What sort of a man is my husband? Well, before we were married he wouldn't leave the house before midnight, and since he never enters it before."—Journal Amusant.

It is always safe to learn even from our enemies; never safe to instruct even our friends.—Colton.

SWAMI SPRAGGE

...By Ewan MacPherson

"He's some sort of fakir or swami or occult duck. You'll find him at the Grand Circular. I got it privately."

That was what the city editor had said in giving him the assignment, and yet Wickham was not keen on it, for he had planned to happen to be near the ladies' entrance of quite a different hotel that afternoon at an hour when he had good reason to believe that Miss Olive Parker would be going in to get a cup of tea. He was not interested in wandering swamis.

Nevertheless he stuck to his assignment and was presently at the clerk's desk at the Grand Circular, trying to form a plan of interviewing a traveling swami of retiring disposition. The name on the register was in very matter of fact writing: "John Lyndon Spragge, Liverpool, England."

"Nothing mysterious about this fellow, I'll wager—common, everyday British drummer. And in ten minutes from now Olive will"—

Did Wickham say these thoughts aloud or only think them? Of that he never made sure. But a stocky man, dressed in tweeds, tapped him on the elbow from behind.

"Looking at my autograph, sir?"

Wickham started and turned. "Is this Mr. Spragge?"

The man in tweeds smiled pleasantly.

"I'm a reporter," said Wickham.

"So I thought."

"Then you have guessed what I want to see you about?" a fairly good diplomatic stroke, considering how hard it was for Wickham to keep his mind from wandering to the other hotel.

Mr. Spragge smiled oddly. "Oh, I don't know about 'guessed.' Suppose we go up to my room."

As they walked up one flight of carpeted stairs together he tried to guess Spragge's age, and that puzzled him. He studied the red and brown cheeks and neck, and they puzzled him, too, for he thought an occult person should look much less like an eater of thick beefsteaks.

"Is this your first visit to America?"

"Yes, but you didn't come here to ask me that."

Although this remark did not necessarily imply preternatural intuition, Wickham began to feel a little creepy.

"I suppose you—you travel for pleasure."

By this time they were entering the Englishman's room, on the second floor. "Yes," he said; "I do—that and other things." Then, closing the door behind him, he added, "And perhaps Spragge is not my only name."

Wickham gasped and turned to stare at him. "Are you a clairvoyant?"

"I might be, or I might be a mahatma or anything else that would interest your readers, and you might be a reporter for the Express if you were not in fact the representative of the Morning Star. What can I do in particular to oblige you at present?"

Wickham had forgotten all about Miss Parker. "Well—er—do you really possess these wonderful powers?"

"Which? Bilocation? Levitation? Perhaps."

"Then, if you don't mind, perhaps you might"—

The stocky man broke in with a gleeful laugh, throwing his head back in the chair. "If you should see me, for instance, float up to the ceiling, chair and all, what good would that do?"

"I thought you occultists wanted to convince the public."

"And you are one of the public's pairs of eyes? But if I did give you an exhibition like that"— Spragge stopped tantalizingly and looked at the reporter.

Wickham sat on the very edge of his chair in breathless expectation of something miraculous.

"If I did anything of that kind, you'd have two columns about it in the Morning Star, wouldn't you?"

"I should think so," said Wickham, relaxing into a more comfortable attitude.

The Englishman laughed again. "Well, perhaps your editor might let it get into print, but much more likely he would say you were drunk."

There was a pause, Wickham turning over in his mind the probabilities of this hypothetical case. If a reporter was to be accused of seeing double when he reported this kind of thing, what was the use of sending him to interview a magician? He began to think he had better let the interview go at that. Then he remembered Olive Parker again and nervously pulled out his watch.

At this the other man smiled and shook his head. "I'm afraid you're too late. Besides, the young lady has changed her mind and gone to a friend's house."

Wickham's jaw dropped, and the stare in which his face was set was as of one who saw a specter.

That evening the city editor cross examined Wickham, for the city editor was confident there was good news matter in this swami affair.

"You say he admits that Spragge isn't his real name?"

"Yes, in a sort of way."

"Well, what is his real name?"

"He didn't tell me that. He's a magician all right. He knew I was looking at his name in the hotel register when my back was turned to him."

"H'm! Is that all?"

"He knew I was a Star man without my telling him."

"Wickham, if you think it would take a mahatma to find that out—What else?"

Wickham turned red and stammered. It was borne in upon him that the final proof of Spragge's preternatural powers was much too delicately personal to be mentioned to the city editor. As for putting it into print, that was unthinkable.

The city editor sighed in weary disappointment, looked all around the room and sniffed.

Wickham went to his desk feeling that all his rosy prospects of journalistic advancement were fading; but when he reached his desk, behold, a square envelope of a delicate gray green tint! He opened it and read:

Dear Mr. Wickham—Just home from Mrs. Cowley's reception, where Alex would have me with her, and I didn't care to say what in particular urged me to shop just this afternoon.

At Mrs. C.'s something turned up that may make a good item for you. She and a lot of them are theosophists, and it seems there is a man here who gives himself out to be an English swami. But those Boer relief committee women got private warning that this Spragge is the same English detective who was watching them at Philadelphia. He is an old Indian scout service man like you read about. Two of the B. R. C. saw him on the steamboat last night. They teased me about him, because they said he was watching us and taking you to be a recruit I was enlisting for the Boers. At Philadelphia the first thing he did was to find out all he could about newspaper men, gave his name as Southgate and let them think he was some lord in disguise looking for chances to invest money.

Can't you make something of this for the paper? He is at the Grand Circular, I think. Cordially, O. P.

P. S.—This goes by special messenger.

Wickham thought he could, and he lost no time in saying so to the city editor. And that was how it came to pass that next morning the Star had an exclusive story of Mr. Spragge—how Mr. Spragge, who had ostensibly arrived in the city the day before and registered at the Grand Circular, had really spent two days quietly at an obscure boarding house learning all he could about things not obviously his business; how he had played much the same game in at least two other big cities, all to make sure that the Boer relief committees were not shipping contrabands to the seat of war.

It was a great thing for Wickham's journalistic prospects, that story, but it hurt Spragge's career.

Breaking the Steers.

During an old home week celebration in a small town in New Hampshire there were present a learned judge from a western city, a professor from Boston and a United States senator. Grave and austere of manner, as became their age and honors, they addressed each other by the titles which belonged to their several stations. But they had been schoolmates, and when the senator told a story of school days the accumulated ice of forty years thawed in a burst of laughter, and they were John and Bill and Horace once more. The Delineator repeats one of their stories:

"Bill, do you remember breaking the steers?" laughed Horace.

"Now, that's between you and me, Horace."

"No secrets here," said John. "Out with it!"

"One summer one of Bill's steers got mired in the swamp and was killed. Bill wasn't going to miss the fun of breaking the steers, so the next winter he yoked himself up with the one that was left. I met them coming down over the crust like Sam Hill. Bill yelled between gasps: 'Stop us! Stop us! We're running away!' I cornered them in an angle of the wall. As soon as Bill got breath enough he said, 'For goodness' sake, Horace, unyoke the other steer!'"

The Planet Mercury.

Though Mercury is one of the smallest of the planets, it is perhaps the most troublesome to the astronomer. It lies so close to the sun that it is seen but seldom in comparison with the other great planets. Its orbit is very eccentric, and it experiences disturbances by the attraction of other bodies in a way not yet fully understood. A special difficulty has also been found in the attempt to place Mercury in the weighing scales. We can weigh the whole earth, we can weigh the sun, the moon and even Jupiter and other planets, but Mercury presents difficulties of a peculiar character. Le Verrier, however, succeeded in devising a method of weighing it.

He demonstrated that our earth is attracted by this planet, and he showed how the amount of attraction may be disclosed by observations of the sun, so that from an examination of the observations he made an approximate determination of the mass of Mercury. Le Verrier's result indicated that the weight of the planet was about the fifteenth part of the weight of the earth. In other words, if our earth was placed in a balance and fifteen globes, each equal to Mercury, were laid in the other the scales would hang evenly.—"Story of the Heavens."

The Servant's Question.

Mrs. Newly Wed (from above)—Bridget, put the lemons on the ice so they won't get sour.

Bridget (to herself)—Is it anny whonder thot I asks dooble pay fer serving the loikes of thot?—Exchange.