

The travellers found numerous and excellent carriages.

CHAPTER X.

THE DAIRY VILLAGE.

MR. GEORGE and Rollo walked ashore in a very independent manner, having the commissioner to attend to the tickets. They went up to the top of the dike, and waited for the commissioner to come to them.

"While I am getting the carriage ready," said the commissioner, when he came, "perhaps you will like to take a walk on the bridge, where there is a very fine view. But first, perhaps, you will look at the carriage, and choose the one that you will like."

So saying, James led the way into a sort of stable, where there were a great many very nice and pretty carriages, arranged very snugly together. Mr. George was surprised to see so many. He asked James how it happened.

"O, there is a great deal of travelling on the roads about here," said James. "The country is very rich and populous, and the people of Amsterdam come out a great deal."

They choose an open carriage.

Gardens on the dike.

Some of the carriages were very elegant. One of these an hostler took out, and told Mr. George that he could have it if he chose. There was another which was much less elegant, but it was more open.

"Let us take the open one," said Rollo. "We can see so much better."

So they decided upon the open one; and then, while the hostlers were harnessing the horses, Mr. George and Rollo went forward to the bridge.

The bridge led over a branch canal, which here comes into the main canal. The road to it lay along the dike, and formed the street of a little village. It was paved with bricks placed edgewise, and was as neat as a parlor floor. The houses were all on one side. They were very small; but they were so neat and pretty, and the forms of them were so strange and queer, that they looked like play houses, or like a scene in fairy land, rather than like the real habitations of men.

There were pretty gardens by them, which extended down the slope of the dike. The slopes of the dikes are always very gradual, and very nice gardens can be made on them.

Mr. George and Rollo stood on the bridge, and looked up and down the canals on either side. They saw boats, with people in them, getting ready to set out on their voyages.

Appearance of the Dutch village.

"I wonder where that canal leads to?" said Rollo.

"O, it goes off into the interior of the country, some where," said Mr. George. "The country is as full of canals as Massachusetts is of roads."

"I should like, very much," said Rollo, "to get on board that boat with that man, and go with him wherever he is going."

"So should I, if I knew Dutch," said Mr. George, "so that I could talk with him as we sailed along."

"How pretty it is all about here," said Rollo. "What a queer village, — built on a bank! And what a funny road! It looks like a play road."

The road, where it led through the village, did, indeed, present a very singular appearance. It was very narrow indeed, being barely wide enough for one carriage to pass, and leaving scarcely room on the side for a child to crowd up against the house, and let it go by. On the other side was a row of trees, with green grass beneath, covering the banks of the canal.

After Mr. George and Rollo had been standing a few minutes on the bridge they saw that the carriage was nearly ready. So they went back to the place and got in. The top of the carriage was turned entirely down, so that they could see about them in every direction as they

Narrow streets.

Scenery in the country.

rode along. James mounted on the box outside, with the driver.

"Now," said Rollo, in a tone of great satisfaction, "we will have a very first rate ride."

The carriage drove along through the little street, which has already been described. Rollo could reach his hand out and almost touch the houses as they rode by. There were little shops kept in some of the houses, and the things that were for sale were put up at the windows. They looked exactly as if children had arranged them for play.

After leaving the village the road turned and followed the dike of a branch canal. The views on every side were extremely beautiful. The canal was carried along between its two banks, high above the rest of the country, and here and there, at moderate distances from each other, wind mills were to be seen busy at work pumping up water from the drains in the fields, and pouring it into the canal. The fields were covered with herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, and here and there were parties of men mowing the grass or loading the new-made hay into boats, that lay floating in the small canals which bordered the fields.

In looking about over the country, there were wind mills to be seen in all directions, their long arms slowly revolving in the air, and interspersed

An illusion.

Ships sailing on land.

The inn.

among them were the masts and sails of sloops and schooners, that were sailing to and fro along the canals. As the water of these canals was often hidden from view by the dikes which bordered them, it seemed as if the ships and steamers were sailing on the land in the midst of green fields and trees, and smiling villages.

After going on in this way for an hour or more, the carriage approached the village which Mr. George and Rollo were going to see. The village lay on the borders of a canal, which was here quite broad, and as the road approached it on the other side of the canal, it was in full view for Mr. George and Rollo as the party approached it. The houses were close to the margin of the water. They were very neat and pretty, and were, most of them, painted green. Many of them had little canals by the side of them, like lanes of water leading into the rear of the houses, and the prettiest little porticoes, and trellises, and piazzas, and pavilions, and summer houses were seen in every part. The road went winding round a wide basin, and then, after crossing a bridge, the carriage stopped at an inn.

The inn was entirely outside of the village. The commissioner said that they must walk through the village, for there was no carriage road through it at all.

A walk before breakfast.

Biftek aux pommes.

So Mr. George and Rollo dismounted, and the hostlers came out from the stable to unharness the horses.

"Now, Rollo," said Mr. George, "we will go in and order a breakfast, and then we will take our walk through the village while it is getting ready."

"Yes," said Rollo. "I should like some breakfast very much."

"What shall we have?" asked Mr. George.

"What you like," replied Rollo. "You always get good breakfasts."

"Well," said Mr. George, "we will tell them the old story."

Just at this moment James came up to the door of the hotel where Mr. George and Rollo had been standing during this conversation.

"You may order breakfast for us, James," said Mr. George, "and let them have it ready for us when we get back from our walk."

"Yes, sir," said James. "And what will you have?"

"*Biftek aux pommes*,"* said Mr. George, "and

* Pronounced *biftek-o-pom*. This is a very favorite breakfast in France, and every where, in fact, throughout Europe. Mr. George liked it better than any thing else, not only for his breakfast, but also for his dinner. It consists of very tender beefsteaks, deliciously seasoned, and accompanied with sliced potatoes, fried in a peculiar manner, and arranged all around the margin of the dish.

The beefsteak and fried potato man.

The servant girl.

coffee. And let them give us some of their best cheese."

The commissioner went in to give the order.

"Uncle George," said Rollo, "I think you'll be known all through this country as the beefsteak and fried potato man."

Mr. George laughed.

"Well," said he. "There could not be a more agreeable idea than that to be associated with my memory."

The truth is, that both Mr. George and Rollo liked the *biftek aux pommes* better than almost any thing else that they could have, whether for breakfast or dinner.

After having given the order for the breakfast to a very nice and tidy-looking Dutch girl, whose forehead and temples were adorned with a profusion of golden ornaments, after the fashion of the young women of North Holland, the commissioner came back, and the whole party set out to walk through the village. There were no streets, properly so called, but only walks, about as wide as the gravel walks of a garden, which meandered about among the houses and yards, in a most extraordinary manner. There were beautiful views, from time to time, presented over the water of the canal on which the village was situated; and there were a great number of small canals which seemed

THE DAIRY VILLAGE.



Strange intermingling of land and water.

The dairy.

to penetrate every where, with the prettiest little bridges over them, and landing steps, and bowers, and pavilions along the borders of them, and gayly painted boats fastened at kitchen doors, and a thousand other such-like objects, characteristic of the intimate intermingling of land and water which prevails in this extraordinary country.

Every thing was, however, on so small a scale, and so scrupulously neat and pretty, that it looked more like a toy village than one built for the every-day residence of real men.

After walking on for about a quarter of a mile, the commissioner said that he would show them the interior of one of the dairy houses, where the cheeses were made,—for the business of this town was the making of cheeses from the milk of the cows that feed on the green polders that lie all around them.

“The stalls for the cows,” said James, “are in the same house in which the family lives; but the cows are not kept there in summer, and so we shall find the stalls empty.”

So saying, James turned aside up a little paved walk which led to the door of a very pretty looking house. He opened the door without any ceremony, and Mr. George and Rollo went in.

The door was near one end of the house, and it opened into a passage way which extended

Decorated stables.

The ornaments and the utensils.

back through the whole depth of it. On one side was a row of stalls, or cribs, for the cows. On the other, were doors opening into the rooms used for the family. A very nice looking Dutch woman, who had apparently seen the party from her window, came out through this side door into the passage way, to welcome them when they came.

The stalls for the cows were all beautifully made, and they were painted and decorated in such an extraordinary manner, that no one could have imagined for what use they were intended. The floors for them were made of the glazed tiles so often used in Holland, and the partitions between them were nicely rubbed as bright as a lady's sideboard. The cribs, too, were now, in the absence of the cows, occupied with various little *étagères*, and sets of shelves, which were covered with fancy cups and saucers, china images, and curiosities of all sorts, — the Dutch housewives taking a special pride in the collection of such things.

The row of cribs was separated from the floor of the passage way by a sort of trench, about a foot and a half wide and ten inches deep, and outside this trench, and also within it, at the entrances to the cribs, were arrayed a great number of utensils employed in the work of the dairy, such as tubs, cans, cheese presses, moulds, and

Cheeses.

The travellers visit the dairywoman's house.

other such things. These were all beautifully made, and being mounted with brass, which had received the highest polish by constant rubbing, they gave to the whole aspect of the place an exceedingly gay and brilliant appearance.

Some of this apparatus was in use. There were tubs standing, with the curd or whey in them, and cheeses in press or in pickle, and various other indications that the establishment was a genuine one, and was then in active operation. The cheeses were of the round kind, so often seen for sale at the grocers' stores in Boston and New York. They looked like so many big cannon balls.

After walking down the passage way that led by the side of cribs, and examining all these things in detail, the party returned to the door where they had come in, and then, turning to the left, went into the rooms of the house. The first room was the bedroom. The second was the parlor. These rooms were both completely crowded with antique looking furniture, among which were cabinets of Chinese ware, and ornaments of every kind; and all was in such a brilliant condition of nicety and polish, as made the spectacle wonderful to behold.

The bed was in a recess, shut up by doors.

Curious beds.

The neatness of the Dutch.

When the doors were opened the bed place looked precisely like a berth on board ship.

After looking at all these things as long as they wished, Mr. George and Rollo bade the woman good by, and James gave her half a guilder. The party then withdrew.

"Well, uncle George," said Rollo, "and what do you think of that?"

"I think it is a very extraordinary spectacle," said Mr. George. "And it is very curious to think how such a state of things has come about."

"And how has it come about?" asked Rollo.

"Why, here," replied Mr. George, "for a thousand years, for aught I know, the people have been living from generation to generation with no other employment than taking care of the cows that feed on the polders around, and making the milk into cheese. That is a business which requires neatness. Every kind of dairy business does. So that here is a place where a current was set towards neatness a thousand years ago, and it has been running ever since, and this is what it has come to."

Talking in this manner of what they had seen, Mr. George and Rollo returned to the inn, and there they found an excellent breakfast. They

The travellers at breakfast.

were waited upon at the table by the young woman who had so many golden ornaments in her hair; and besides the *bifteek aux pommes*, and the coffee, and the hot milk, and the nice butter, there was the half of one of the round cheeses, such as they had seen in process of making at the dairy.

