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MASTER FLEA

E. T. A. HOFFMANN

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Contents

I. First Adventure

II. Second Adventure

III. Third Adventure

IV. Fourth Adventure

V. Fifth Adventure

VI. Sixth Adventure

VII. Seventh Adventure

I. First Adventure

Once upon a time—But what author will venture to begin his tale so nowadays? Obsolete! tedious! Such is the cry of the gentle, or rather ungentle reader, who wishes to be plunged at once, *in medias res*, according to the wise advice of the old Roman poet. He feels as if some long-winded talker of a guest, who had just entered, was spreading himself out, and clearing his voice to begin an endless discourse, and he angrily closes the book which he had but just opened. The present editor, indeed, of the wonderful tale of *Master Flea*, thinks this beginning a very good beginning, not to say the best for every history, on which account the most excellent storytellers that are, namely, nurses, old women, etc. have at all times made use of it, but as every author writes chiefly to be read, he—that is, the aforesaid editor—will not at any rate deprive the kind reader of the pleasure of actually being his reader. He tells him therefore at once, without more circumlocution, that this same Peregrine Tyss, of whose strange adventures this history is to treat, had never, on any Christmas evening, felt his heart so throb with anxious joyful expectation, as precisely on that with which begins the narration of his adventures.

Peregrine was in a dark chamber, next to the showroom in which he was wont to receive his Christmas box. There he crept gently up and down, listened a little at the door, and then seated himself quietly in a corner, and with shut eyes inhaled the mystic odours of the marzipan and gingerbread which streamed from the sanctuary. Then again there would shoot through him a sweet mysterious thrill when, on suddenly reopening them, he was dazzled by the vivid beams of light which fell through the crevices of the door, and danced hither and thither upon the wall.

At length sounded the little silver bell—the chamber door was flung open, and in rushed Peregrine, amidst a whole fireflood of variegated Christmas lights. Quite petrified, he remained standing at the table, on which the finest gifts were arranged in the most handsome order, and only a loud “oh!” forced itself from his breast. Never before had the Christmas tree borne such splendid fruits, for every sweetmeat that can be named, and amongst them many a golden nut, many a golden apple from the garden of the Hesperides hung upon the boughs, which bent beneath their burden. The provision of choicest playthings, fine leaden soldiers, hunting trains of the same, picture books, etc. is not to be told. But as yet he did not venture to touch any part of the wealth presented to him; he could only occupy himself in mastering his wonder, and comprehending the idea of his good fortune in all this being really his.

“O my dear parents! O my good Alina!” so he exclaimed, with feelings of the highest transport.

“Well, my little Peregrine,” replied Alina, “have I done it well? Are you in truth rejoiced from your heart, my child? Won’t you look nearer at these handsome things? Won’t you try the new rocking horse and the beautiful fox?”

“A noble steed,” said Peregrine, examining the bridled rocking-horse with tears of joy, “A noble beast, of pure Arabian race,” and he immediately mounted his proud courser, but though Peregrine might else be a capital rider, yet this time he must have made some mistake, for the wild Pontifer (so was the horse called) reared, and threw him off, making him kick up his legs most piteously. Before, however, Alina, who was frightened to death, could run to his assistance, he had got up again and seized the bridle of the horse, who threw out behind, and endeavoured to run away. Again he mounted, and using with strength and skill all the arts of

horsemanship, he brought the wild animal so to his reason, that it trembled and panted, and recognized his master in Peregrine. Upon his dismounting, Alina led the conquered horse into his stable.

This somewhat violent riding, which had caused an outrageous noise in the room, and indeed through the whole house, was now over, and Peregrine seated himself at the table, that he might quietly take a nearer view of the other splendid presents. With great delight he devoured some of the marzipan, while he set in motion the limbs of the different puppets, peeped into the various picture books, mustered his army, which he with reason deemed invincible, since not a single soldier had a stomach in his body, and at last proceeded to the business of the chase. To his great vexation, he discovered that there was only a hare and fox hunt, and that the stag and wild boar chase were altogether wanting. These, too, ought to have been there, as none better knew than Peregrine, he himself having purchased the whole with unspeakable care and trouble.

But, hold! It seems highly requisite to guard the kind reader against the awkward mistakes into which he might fall, if the author were to go on gossiping at random, without reflecting that though he may know the meaning of these Christmas-Eve arrangements, it is not so with his reader, who would wish to learn what he does not comprehend.

Much mistaken would he be who should imagine that Peregrine Tyss was a child, to whom a kind mother, or some other well-affectioned female, called in romantic fashion Alina, had been giving Christmas boxes—nothing less than that!

Mr. Peregrine Tyss had got to his six-and-thirtieth year, and herein had passed almost the best of life. Six years before, he was said to be a handsome man; now he was with reason called a man of gentlemanly appearance, but at all times—then, as well as now—it was the cry of all, that he lived too much to himself, that he did not know life, and was manifestly suffering under a diseased melancholy. Fathers, whose daughters were just marriageable, thought that to get rid of this melancholy, the good Tyss could do nothing better than marry; he had a free choice, and had little reason to fear a negative. The opinion of the fathers was at least correct in regard to the latter point, insomuch as Mr. Tyss, besides being, as before said, a man of gentlemanly appearance, possessed a considerable property, left to him by his father, Mr. Balthasar Tyss, a very respectable merchant. Maidens who have got beyond the heyday of love—that is, who are at least three or four-and-twenty years old—when such highly gifted men put the innocent question of “Will you bless me with your hand, dearest?” seldom do otherwise than answer, with blushing cheeks and downcast eyes, “Speak to my parents, sir; I shall obey them—I have no will,” while the parents fold their hands and say, “If it is the will of Heaven, we have nothing against it, son.”

But Mr. Peregrine Tyss seemed inclined to nothing less than marriage, for besides that he was in general averse to society, he showed more particularly a strange idiosyncrasy towards the female race. The mere proximity of any woman would bring the perspiration on his forehead, and if actually accosted by a tolerably handsome girl, he would fall into an agony that fettered his tongue, and caused a cramp-like trembling through all his limbs. Hence, perhaps, it was that his old servant was so ugly, that, in the neighbourhood where Mr. Peregrine Tyss lived, she passed for a wonder in natural history. The black, rugged, half-grey hair accorded well with the red bleary eyes, and just as well agreed the thick copper nose with the pale blue lips, in forming the image of an aspirant to the Blocksberg;¹ so that two centuries earlier, she would hardly have escaped the stake, instead of being, as now, esteemed by Mr. Peregrine,

¹ The *Blocksberg*, or *Brocken*, is the name of the highest part of the Hartz mountains, where the German witches celebrate their saturnalia. —Translator

and others too, for a good sort of person. This, in fact, she was, and might therefore well be forgiven, if she comforted her body with many a little dram in the course of the day, or, perhaps, too often took out from her stomacher a huge black japanned snuffbox, and fed her respectable nose very richly with pure Oppenbacher. The kind reader has already observed that this remarkable person is the very same Alina who managed the business of the Christmas boxes. Heaven knows how she came by the celebrated name of the Queen of Golconda!

But if the fathers desired that the rich agreeable Mr. Peregrine should lay aside his horror of women and marry without more ado, the old bachelors, on the other hand, said that he did quite right to remain single, as his turn of mind was not suited to matrimony. It was unlucky, however, that at the phrase "turn of mind," not a few made a very mysterious face, and upon close inquiry, gave it to be pretty plainly understood, that Mr. Peregrine Tyss was at times a little cracked. The numerous retailers of this opinion belonged chiefly to those who are firmly convinced that on the great highway of life, which is to be kept according to reason and prudence, the nose is the best guide, and who would rather put on blinkers than be led aside by any odorous shrub or blooming meadow that grows by the way. It was, however, true that Peregrine had many things about him which people could not comprehend.

It has been already said that his father was a rich and respectable merchant; when to this is added that he owned a handsome house in the Horse Market, and that in this house, in the very same chamber where the little Peregrine had always received his Christmas boxes, the grownup Peregrine was now receiving them, there is no room to doubt that the place of the strange adventures to be narrated in this history is the celebrated city of Frankfurt am Main. Of his parents little more is to be told than that they were quiet honest folks, of whom no one could speak anything but good. The unbounded esteem which Mr. Tyss enjoyed upon 'Change he owed to two circumstances: he always speculated well and safely, gaining one sum after the other, while at the same time he never presumed, but remained modest as before, and made no boast of his wealth, which he showed merely by his haggling about nothing, and being indulgent itself towards insolvent debtors who had fallen into misfortune, even though it were deservedly.

For a long time the marriage of Mr. Tyss was unfruitful, till at length, after almost twenty years, Mrs. Tyss rejoiced her husband with a fine lusty boy, who was our identical Master Peregrine Tyss. The boundless joy of the elders may be imagined, and the people of Frankfurt yet talk of the splendid christening given by the old Tyss, at which the noblest hock was filled out as if at a coronation festival. But what added still more to the posthumous fame of Mr. Tyss was that he invited to this christening a couple of people who, in their enmity, had often injured him, and not only them, but others too whom he thought he had injured, so that the feast was really one of peace and reconciliation.

Alas! the good man did not suspect that this same child, whose birth so much rejoiced him, would soon be a cause of sorrow. At the very first, the boy Peregrine showed a singular disposition. After he had cried night and day uninterruptedly for some weeks, without their being able to find out any bodily ailment, he became on the sudden quite quiet and as it were stupified into a motionless insensibility: he seemed incapable of the least impression. The little brow, which appeared to belong to a lifeless puppet, was wrinkled neither by tears nor laughter. His mother maintained that it was owing, on her part, to the sight of the old bookkeeper, who had for twenty years sat in the countinghouse before the great cashbook, with the same lifeless countenance, and she wept bitter tears over the little automaton.

At last an old gossip hit upon the lucky thought of bringing Peregrine a very motley, and, in fact, a very ugly harlequin. The child's eyes quickened in a strange fashion, the mouth

contracted to a gentle smile, he caught at the puppet, and the moment it was given to him, hugged it tenderly. Then again he gazed upon the mannequin with such intelligent and speaking eyes, that it seemed as if reason and sensation had suddenly awakened in him, and with much greater vigour than is usual with children of his age.

“He is too wise,” said the godmother; “you’ll not keep him. Only look at his eyes; he already thinks more than he ought to do.”

This declaration greatly comforted the old merchant, who had in some measure reconciled himself to the idea of having begot an idiot, after so many years of fruitless expectation. Soon, however, he fell into a fresh trouble, and this was that the time had long since gone by in which children usually begin to speak, and yet Peregrine had not uttered a syllable. The boy would have been thought dumb, but that he often gazed on the person who spoke to him with such attention—nay, even showed such sympathy by sad as well as by joyful looks that there could be no doubt not only of his hearing but of his understanding everything.

In the meantime his mother was mightily astonished at finding what the nurse had told her confirmed. At night, when the boy lay in bed and fancied himself unnoticed, he talked to himself single words, and even whole sentences, and so little broken that a long practice might be inferred from this perfection. Heaven has lent to women a certain tact of reading human nature as its growth variously develops itself, on which account—for the first years, at least of childhood—they are the best educators. According to this tact, Mrs. Tyss was far from letting the boy see he was observed, or from wishing to force him to speak; she rather contrived to bring it about by other dexterous means, that he should of himself no longer keep concealed the beautiful talent of speech, but should slowly, yet plainly, manifest it to the world, and to the wonder of all. Still, however, he evinced a constant aversion to talking, and was most pleased when they left him in quiet by himself.

Thus was Mr. Tyss freed from all anxiety on account of his want of tongue, but it was only to fall into a much greater care afterwards. When Peregrine had grown a boy and ought to have learned stoutly, it seemed as if nothing was to be driven into him without the greatest trouble. It was with his writing and reading as it had been with his talking: at first the matter could not be compassed at all, and then on a sudden he did it admirably, and beyond all expectation. In the meantime one master after another left the house, not from dislike to the boy, but because they could not enter into his disposition. Peregrine was still, mannerly, and industrious, and yet it was no use thinking of any systematic learning with him. He had understanding for that only which happened to chime in exactly with his genius; all the rest passed over him without leaving any impression. And that which suited his genius was the *wonderful*—all that excited his imagination; in that he lived and moved. So, for example, he once received a present of a sketch of Beijing, with all its streets, houses, etc. which occupied the entire wall of his chamber. At the sight of this city of fables, of the singular people that seemed to crowd through its streets, Peregrine felt as if transported by some magic sleight into another world, in which he was to become at home. With eagerness he now fell upon everything that he could get hold of respecting China, the Chinese, and Beijing, and having somewhere found the Chinese sounds described, he laboured to pronounce them according to the description, with a fine chanting voice; nay, he even endeavoured, by means of the paper-scissors, to give his handsome calimanco bed-gowns the Chinese cut as much as possible, that he might have the pleasure of walking the streets of Beijing in the fashion. Nothing else could excite his attention—to the great annoyance of his tutor, who just then wished to instill into him the history of the Hanseatic League, according to the express wish of Mr. Tyss, but the old gentleman found to his sorrow that Peregrine was not to be brought out of Beijing, wherefore he brought Beijing out of the boy’s chamber.

The elder Mr. Tyss had always considered it a bad omen that Peregrine, as a little child, should prefer counters to ducats, and next should manifest a decided abhorrence of moneybags, ledgers, and waste books. But what seemed most singular was that he never could hear the word “bill of exchange” pronounced without having his teeth set on edge, and he assured them that he felt at the sound as if someone was scratching up and down a pane of glass with the point of a knife. Mr. Tyss, therefore, could not help seeing that his son was spoiled for a merchant, and however he might wish to have him treading in his footsteps, yet he readily gave up this desire, under the idea that Peregrine would apply himself to some decided occupation. It was a maxim of his, that the richest man ought to have an employment, and thereby a settled station in life. People with no occupation were an abomination to him, and it was precisely to this *No-occupation* that his son was entirely devoted, with all the knowledge which he had picked up in his own way, and which lay chaotically confounded in his brain. This was now the greatest and most pressing anxiety of Mr. Tyss. Peregrine wished to know nothing of the actual world; the old man lived in that only—from which contradiction it could not but be that the older Peregrine grew, the worse became the discord between father and son, to the no little sorrow of the mother. She cordially conceded to Peregrine—who was otherwise the best of sons—his mode of life, in mere dreams and fancies, though to her indeed unintelligible, and she could not conceive why her husband would positively impose upon him a decided occupation.

By the advice of tried friends, Tyss sent his son to the university of Jena, but when, after three years, he returned, the old man exclaimed, full of wrath and vexation, “Did I not think so? Hans the dreamer he went away, Hans the dreamer he comes back again.” And so far he was quite right, for the student was substantially unaltered. Still, he did not give up all hope of bringing the degenerate Peregrine to reason, thinking that if he were once forced into some employment, he might, perhaps, change his mind in the end, and take a pleasure in it. With this view he sent him to Hamburg, with commissions that did not require any particular knowledge of business, and moreover commended him to a friend there, who was to assist him faithfully in all things.

Peregrine arrived at Hamburg, where he gave into the hands of his father’s friend not only his letter of recommendation, but all the papers too that related to his commissions, and immediately disappeared, no one knew whither. Hereupon the friend wrote to Mr. Tyss:

“I have punctually received your honoured letter of the — by the hands of your son. The same, however, has not shown himself since, but set off from Hamburg immediately, without leaving any commission. In peppers we are doing little; cotton goes off heavily; in coffee, the middle sort only is inquired after, but on the other hand molasses maintain their price pleasantly, and in indigo there is not much fluctuation. I have the honour,” etc.

This letter would have plunged Mr. Tyss and his spouse into no little alarm, if by the very same post another had not arrived from the lost son, wherein he excused himself, with the most melancholy expressions, saying that it had been utterly impossible for him to execute the received commissions, according to his father’s wishes, and that he found himself irresistibly attracted to foreign countries, from which he hoped to return home in a year’s time with a happier and more cheerful disposition.

“It is well,” said the old man, “that the youngster should look about him in the world; he may get shaken out of his daydreams.” And when Peregrine’s mother expressed an anxiety lest he should want money for his long journey, and that, therefore, his carelessness was much to be blamed in not having written to tell them where he was going, the old gentleman replied laughing, “If the lad be in want of money, he will the sooner get acquainted with the real

world, and if he have not said which way he is going, still he knows where his letters will find us.”

It has always remained unknown which way his journey really was directed: some maintain that he had been to the distant Indies; others declare that he had only fancied it. This much, however, is certain: he must have travelled a great way, for it was not in a year's time, as he had promised his parents, but after the lapse of full three years, that Peregrine returned to Frankfurt on foot, and in a tolerably poor condition.

He found his father's mansion fast shut up and no one stirred within, let him ring and knock as much as he would. At last there came by a neighbour from 'Change, of whom he immediately inquired whether Mr. Tyss had gone abroad? At this question the neighbour started back, terrified, and cried, “Mr. Peregrine Tyss! Is it you? Are you come at last? Don't you then know it?”

Enough—Peregrine learned that, during his absence, both parents had died, one after the other; that the authorities had taken possession of the inheritance, and had publicly summoned him, whose abode was altogether unknown, to return to Frankfurt and receive the property of his father.

Peregrine continued to stand before his neighbour without the power of utterance. For the first time the pain of life crossed his heart, and he saw in ruins the beautiful bright world wherein, till now, he had dwelt with so much delight. The neighbour soon perceived that he was utterly incapable of setting about the least thing that the occasion called for; he therefore took him to his own house, and himself arranged everything with all possible expedition, so that on the very same evening, Peregrine found himself in his paternal mansion.

Exhausted, overwhelmed by a feeling of disconsolation such as he had not yet known, he sank into his father's great armchair, which was still standing in its usual place, when a voice said, “It is well that you have returned, dear Mr. Peregrine; ah, if you had but come sooner!”

Peregrine looked up and saw close before him the old woman whom his father had taken into his service chiefly because she could get no other place, on account of her outrageous ugliness: she had been Peregrine's nurse in his early childhood, and had not left the house since. For a long time he stared at the woman, and at last began with a strange smile, “Is it you, Alina? The old people live still, do they not?” And with this he got up, went through every room, considered every chair, every table, and every picture, and then calmly added, “Yes, it is all just as I left it, and just so shall it remain.”

From this moment Peregrine adopted the strange life which was mentioned at the very beginning of our story. Retired from all society, he lived with his aged attendant in the large roomy house in the deepest solitude: subsequently he let out a couple of rooms to an old man, who had been his father's friend, and seemed as misanthropical as himself—reason enough why the two should agree remarkably well, for they never saw each other.

There were four family festivals which Peregrine celebrated with infinite solemnity, and these were the birthdays of his father and mother, Easter, and his own day of christening. At these times Alina had to set out a table for as many persons as his father had been wont to invite, with the same wine and dishes which had been usually served up on those occasions. Of course the same silver, the same plates, the same glasses, such as had then been used, and such as they still remained, were now brought forward, in the fashion which had prevailed for so many years. Peregrine kept to this strictly. Was the table ready? He sat down to it alone, ate and drank but little, listened to the conversation of his parents, and the imaginary guests, and replied modestly to this or that question as it was directed to him by anyone of the company. Did his mother put back her seat? He too rose with the rest, and took his leave of

each with great courtesy. Then he retired to a distant chamber, and consigned to Alina the division of the wine and the many untasted dishes amongst the poor; which command of her master, the faithful soul was wont to execute most conscientiously.

The celebration of the two birthdays he began early in the morning, that, according to the custom of his boyhood, he might carry a handsome nosegay into the room where his parents used to breakfast, and repeat verses which he had got by heart for the occasion. On his own day of christening, he naturally could not sit at table, as he had not then been long born; Alina, therefore, had to attend to everything, that is, to invite people to drink, and, in the general phrase, to do the honours of the table, with this exception: everything was the same as at the other festivals. But in addition to these, Peregrine had yet another holiday in the year, or rather holy evening, and that was Christmas Eve, with its gifts, which had excited his youthful fancy more than any other pleasure.

He himself carefully purchased the motley Christmas lights, the playthings, the sweetmeats, just as his parents had presented them to him in his childish years, and then the presentation took place, as the kind reader has already seen.

“It is very vexatious,” said Peregrine, after having played with them some time, “It is very vexatious that the stag and wild boar hunt should be missing. Where can they be? Ah, look there!” At this moment he perceived a little box which still remained unopened, and hastily snatched at it, expecting to recover the missing treasure. But on opening it he found it empty, and started back as if a sudden fright had seized him. “Strange!” he murmured to himself, “Strange! What is the matter with this box? It seems as if some fearful thing sprang out upon me, that my eye was too dull to grapple with.”

Alina, on being questioned, assured him that she had found the box among the playthings, and had in vain used every exertion to open it; hence she had imagined that it contained something particular, and that the lid would yield only to the experienced hand of her master.

“Strange!” repeated Peregrine, “Very strange! And it was with this chase that I had particularly pleased myself; I hope it may not bode any evil! But who, on a Christmas Eve, would dwell upon such fancies, which have properly no foundation? Alina, fetch me the basket.”

Alina accordingly brought a large white basket, in which, with much care, he packed up the playthings, the sweetmeats, and the tapers, took the basket under his arm, the great Christmas tree on his shoulder, and set out on his way.

It was the kind and laudable practice of Mr. Tyss to surprise some needy family, where he knew there were children, with his whole cargo of Christmas boxes, just as he had purchased it, and dream himself for a few hours into the happy times of boyhood. Then, when the children were in the height of their joy, he would softly steal away and wander about the streets half the night, hardly knowing what to do with himself, from the deep emotions which straitened his breast, and feeling his own house like a vault, in which he was buried with all his pleasures. This time his Christmas boxes were intended for the children of a poor bookbinder, of the name of Lemmerhirt, who was a skilful, industrious man, had long worked for him, and whose three children he was well acquainted with.

The bookbinder, Lemmerhirt, lived in the top floor of a narrow house in the Kalbecher Street, and as the winter storm howled and raged, and the rain and snow fell with mingled violence, it may be easily imagined that Peregrine did not get to his object without great difficulty. From the window twinkled down a couple of miserable tapers; with no little toil he clambered up the steep stairs, knocked at the door, and called out, “Open! Open! Christmas sends his presents to all good children.”

The bookbinder opened the door in alarm, and it was not till after some consideration that he recognised Peregrine, who was quite covered with snow.

“Worshipful Mr. Tyss!” he exclaimed, full of wonder. “How in the name of Heaven do I come to such an honour on Christmas Eve?”

Worshipful Mr. Tyss, however, would not let him finish, but calling out, “Children! Children! Alert! Christmas sends his presents!” he took possession of the flap-table in the middle of the room, and immediately began to pull out his presents from the basket. (The great Christmas tree, indeed, which was dripping wet, he had been forced to leave outside the door.) Still the bookbinder could not comprehend what it all meant. The wife, however, knew better, for she smiled at Peregrine, with silent tears, while the children stood at a distance, devouring with their eyes each gift as it came out of the cover, and often unable to refrain from a loud cry of joy and wonder. At last he had dexterously divided, and ordered the presents according to each child’s age, lighted all the tapers, and cried, “Come, come, children! this is what Christmas sends you.” They, who could yet hardly believe that all belonged to them, now shouted aloud, and leaped, and rejoiced, while their parents prepared to thank their benefactor. But it was precisely this thanksgiving that Peregrine always sought to avoid, and he therefore wished, as usual, to take himself off quietly. With this view he had got to the door, when it suddenly opened, and in the bright shine of the Christmas lights stood before him a young female, splendidly attired.

It seldom turns out well, when an author undertakes to describe narrowly to the reader the appearance of this or that beautiful personage of his tale—showing the shape, the growth, the carriage, the hair, the colour of the eyes; it seems much better to give the whole person at once, without these details. Here, too, it would be quite enough to state that the lady, who ran against the startled Peregrine, was uncommonly handsome and graceful, if it were not absolutely requisite to speak of certain peculiarities which the little creature had about her.

She was small, and, indeed, somewhat too small, but, at the same time, neatly and elegantly proportioned. Her forehead, in other respects handsomely formed and full of expression, acquired something strange and singular from the unusual size of the eyeballs, and from the dark pencilly brows being higher placed than ordinary. The little thing was dressed, or rather decorated, as if she had just come from a ball. A splendid diadem glittered amongst her raven locks, rich point lace only half veiled her bosom, a black- and yellow-striped dress of heavy silk sat close upon her slender body, and fell down in folds just so low as to let the neatest little feet be seen, in white shoes, while the sleeves were just long enough, and the gloves just short enough, to show the fairest part of a dazzling arm. A rich necklace, and brilliant earrings, completed her attire.

It could not but be that the bookbinder was as much surprised as Peregrine, that the children abandoned their playthings, and stared with open mouths at the stranger. As, however, women in general are wont to be the least astonished at anything unusual, and are the quickest to collect themselves, so, on this occasion also, the bookbinder’s wife was the first that recovered speech, and asked, “In what she could serve the lady?”

Upon this the stranger came fairly into the room, and the frightened Peregrine would have seized the opportunity to take himself quickly off, but she caught him by both hands, lisping out, in a little soft voice, “Fortune, then, has favoured me! I have found you, then! O Peregrine, my dear Peregrine, what a delightful meeting!” Herewith she raised her right hand, so that it touched Peregrine’s lips, and he was compelled to kiss it, though, in so doing, the cold drops of perspiration stood on his forehead. She now, indeed, let go his hands, and he

might have fled, but he felt himself spellbound; he could not move from the place, like some poor little animal that has been fascinated by the eye of the rattlesnake.

“Allow me,” she said, “dear Peregrine, to share in this charming treat that you have so nobly, and with such real goodness, prepared for the children. Permit me, also, to contribute something to it!”

From a little basket which hung upon her arm, and which had not been remarked till now, she took out all sorts of playthings, arranged them on the table with graceful bustle, brought forward the children, pointed out to each the present intended for him, and sported so prettily withal, that nothing could be more delightful. The bookbinder thought he was in a dream, but the wife laughed roguishly, fancying that there must be some particular acquaintance between Peregrine and the stranger.

While now the parents were wondering, and the children were rejoicing, the lady took her seat upon an old frail sofa, and drew down Mr. Peregrine, who, in fact, scarcely knew any longer whether he actually was this same person. She then gently lisped into his ear, “My dear, dear Peregrine, how happy, how delighted I feel by your side!”

“But, lady,” stammered Peregrine, “honoured lady—” On a sudden, Heaven knows how, the lips of the stranger came so close to his, that, before he could think about kissing them, he had really done it. That by this he lost all power of speech is easily to be imagined.

“My sweet friend,” continued the lady, creeping up to Peregrine so closely, that she almost sat in his lap, “My sweet friend, I know what troubles you; I know what has so much afflicted your simple heart this evening. But, take comfort. That which you lost, that which you hardly hoped to find again—see, I bring it to you.”

With this she took out a little wooden box from her basket, and gave it into the hands of Peregrine. In it was the hunting set that he had missed on the Christmas-Eve table. It would be hard to describe the strange feelings which were now thronging and jostling in his bosom.

The whole appearance of the stranger, in spite of all her grace and loveliness, had yet something supernatural about it, which those who had not Peregrine’s awe of woman would yet have received with a cold shudder through every vein. Of course, therefore, a deep horror seized the poor Peregrine, already in sufficient alarm, when he found the lady most narrowly informed of all that he had been doing in the profoundest solitude. Still, when he looked up, and met the glance of two bright black eyes flashing from under the silken lids—when he felt the sweet breath of the lovely being, and the electric warmth of her limbs—still, with all his terror, there awoke in him the sadness of unutterable desires, such as he had not yet known. For the first time his whole mode of life, his trifling with the Christmas presents, appeared to him absurd and childish, and he felt ashamed that the stranger should know of it. But then again it seemed as if her gift was the living proof that she understood him, as none else on earth had understood him, and, in seeking to gratify him after this manner, had been prompted by the most perfect delicacy of feeling. He resolved to treasure up the dear gift forever, never to let it go out of his own hands, and, carried away by a feeling which totally overpowered him, he pressed the casket to his breast with vehemence.

“Delightful!” murmured the maiden, “my gift pleases you! Oh, my dearest Peregrine, then my dreams, my presentiments, have not deceived me!”

Mr. Tyss came somewhat to himself, so that he was able to say, with great plainness and distinctness, “But, most respected lady, if I only knew to whom in all the world I had the honour—”

“Cunning man,” said the stranger, gently tapping his cheeks, “to pretend as if you did not know your faithful Alina! But it is time that we should leave the good folks here to their own pleasures. Accompany me, Mr. Tyss.”

On hearing the name Alina, Peregrine naturally reverted to his old attendant, and he felt exactly as if a windmill were going round in his head.

The strange Alina now took the kindest and most gracious leave of the family, while the bookbinder, from pure wonder and respect, could only stammer out something unintelligible. But the children made as if they had been long acquainted with her, and the wife said, “Such a kind, handsome man as you are, Mr. Tyss, well deserves to have so kind and handsome a bride, who, even at this hour, assists him in doing acts of benevolence. I congratulate you with all my heart.” The strange lady thanked her with emotion, protesting that the day of her wedding should also be a day of festival to them, and then strictly refusing all attendance, took a taper from the Christmas table to light herself down the stairs.

It is easy to imagine the feelings of Peregrine at all this, on whose arm she leant.

“Accompany me, Mr. Tyss,” that is—he thought within himself—down the stairs to the carriage which stands at the door, and where the servant, or perhaps a whole set of servants, is in waiting, for in the end it must be some mad princess, who—Heaven deliver me with speed from this strange torture, and keep me in my right senses, such as they are!

Mr. Tyss did not suspect that all which had yet happened was only the prologue to a most wonderful adventure, and had therefore, without knowing it, done exceedingly well in praying to Heaven for the preservation of his senses.

No sooner had the couple reached the bottom of the stairs, than the door was opened by invisible hands, and, when they had got out, was shut again in the same manner. Peregrine, however, paid no attention to this, in his astonishment at finding not the slightest appearance of any carriage before the house, or of any servant in waiting. “In the name of Heaven,” he cried, “where is your coach, lady?”

“Coach!” replied the stranger, “Coach! what coach? Did you think, dear Peregrine, that my impatience, my anxiety, to find you, would allow me to come riding here quite quietly? No; hurried on by hope and desire, I ran about through the storm till I found you. Thank Heaven that I have succeeded! And now lead me home; my house is not far off.”

Peregrine resolutely avoided all reflection on the impossibility of the stranger going a few steps only, tricked out as she was, and in white silk shoes, without spoiling her whole dress in the storm, instead of being, as now, in a state that showed not the slightest trace of discomposure. He reconciled himself to the idea of accompanying her still farther, and was only glad that the weather was changed. The storm, indeed, had past, not a cloud was in the heaven, the full moon shone down pleasantly, and only the keen air made the midnight to be felt.

Scarcely had they gone a few steps, when the maiden began to complain softly, and soon burst out into loud lamentations, that she was freezing with the cold. Peregrine, whose blood glowed through his veins, who had therefore been insensible to the weather, and never thought of her being so lightly clad, without even a shawl or a tucker, now on a sudden saw his folly, and would have wrapped her in his cloak. This, however, she rejected, exclaiming piteously, “No, my dear Peregrine, that avails me nothing: my feet! Ah, my feet! I shall die with the dreadful agony.”

And she was about to drop, half senseless, as she cried out with a faint voice, “Carry me, carry me, my sweet friend!”

Without more ado, Peregrine took up the light little creature in his arms like a child, and wrapt her in his cloak. But he had not gone far with his burden, before the wild intoxication of desire took more and more possession of him, and, as he hurried halfway through the streets, he covered the neck and bosom of the lovely creature, who had nestled closely to him with burning kisses. At last he felt as if waking with a sudden jerk out of a dream: he found himself at a house door, and, looking up, recognised his own house, in the Horse Market, when, for the first time, it occurred to him that he had not asked the maiden where she lived. He collected himself therefore with effort, and said, “Lady—sweet, angelic creature, where is your abode?”

“Here, my dear Peregrine,” she replied, lifting up her head, “here, in this house: I am your Alina; I live with you. But get the door open quickly.”

“No—never!” cried Peregrine, in horror, and let her sink down.

“How!” exclaimed the stranger, “How! Peregrine, you would reject me? and yet know my dreadful fate—and yet know that, child of misfortune as I am, I have no refuge, and must perish here miserably if you will not take me in as usual! But perhaps you wish that I should perish? Be it so then! Only carry me to the fountain, that my corpse may not be found before your door. Ha! The stone dolphins may, perchance, have more pity than you have. Woe is me! Woe is me! The bitter cold!”

She sank down in a swoon; Peregrine was seized with despair, and exclaiming wildly, “Let it be as it will; I cannot do otherwise,” he lifted up the lifeless little thing, took her in his arms, and rang violently at the bell. No sooner was the door opened than he rushed by the servant, and instead of waiting, according to his usual custom, till he got to the top of the stairs, and then tapping gently, he shouted out, “Alina! Alina! light!” and, indeed, so loudly, that the whole floor reechoed it.

“How! What! What’s this? What does this mean?” exclaimed the old woman, opening her eyes widely as Peregrine unfolded the maiden from his cloak, and laid her with great care upon the sofa.

“Quick, Alina, quick! Fire in the grate! Salts! Punch! Beds here!”

Alina, however, did not stir from the place, but remained, staring at the stranger, with her “How! What! What’s this? What does this mean?”

Hereupon Peregrine began to tell of a countess, perhaps a princess, whom he had met at the bookbinder’s, who had fainted in the streets, whom he had been forced to carry home, and, as Alina still remained immoveable, he cried out, stamping with his feet, “Fire, I tell you, in the devil’s name! Tea! Salts!”

At this, the old woman’s eyes glared like a cat’s, and her nose was lit up with a brighter phosphorus. She pulled out her huge black snuffbox, opened it with a tap that sounded again, and took a mighty pinch. Then, planting an arm in either side, she said with a scoffing tone, “Oh yes, to be sure, a countess! A princess! who is found at a poor bookseller’s, who faints in the street! Ho! ho! I know well where such tricked-out madams are fetched from in the nighttime. Here are fine tricks! Here’s pretty behaviour! To bring a loose girl into an honest house, and, that the measure of sin may be quite full, to invoke the devil on a Christmas night! And I, too, in my old days am to be abetting! No, Mr. Tyss—you are mistaken in your person; I am not of that sort: tomorrow I leave your service.”

With this she left the room, and banged the door after her with a violence that made all clatter again. Peregrine wrung his hands in despair. No sign of life showed itself in the stranger, but at the moment when in his dreadful distress he had found a bottle of cologne-water, and was

about to rub her temples with it, she jumped up from the sofa quite fresh and sound, exclaiming, “At last we are alone! At last I may explain why I followed you to the bookbinder’s, why I could not leave you tonight! Peregrine! give up to me the prisoner whom you have confined in this room. I know that you are not at all bound to do so; I know that it only depends upon your goodness. But I know, too, your kind affectionate heart; therefore, my good, dear Peregrine, give him up—give up the prisoner!”

“What prisoner?” asked Peregrine, in the greatest surprise. “Who do you suppose is a prisoner with me?”

“Yes,” continued the stranger, seizing Peregrine’s hand, and pressing it tenderly to her breast, “Yes, I must confess that only a noble mind can abandon the advantages which a lucky chance puts into his hands, and it is true that you resign many things which it would be easy for you to obtain if you did not give up the prisoner. But think: that Alina’s destiny, her life, depends upon the possession of this prisoner, that—”

“Angelic creature!” interrupted Peregrine, “if you don’t wish that I should take it all for a delirious dream, or perhaps become delirious on the spot myself, tell me at once of whom you are speaking—who is this prisoner?”

“How!” replied the maiden, “I do not understand you; would you deny that he is in your custody? Was I not present when you bought the hunting-set?”

“Who,” cried Peregrine, quite beside himself, “who is this he? For the first time in my life I see *you*, lady, and who are you? who is this he?”

Dissolving in grief, the stranger threw herself at Peregrine’s feet, while the tears poured down in abundant streams from her eyes: “Be humane, be merciful—give him back to me!” and at the same time her exclamations were mingled with those of Peregrine, “I shall lose my senses! I shall go mad! I shall be frantic!”

On a sudden the maiden started up. She seemed much larger than before; her eyes flashed fire, her lips quivered, and she exclaimed, with furious gestures, “Ha, barbarian! no human heart dwells in you! You are inexorable! You wish my death, my destruction! You won’t give him up! No—never, never! Wretched me! Lost! lost!”

And with this she rushed out of the room. Peregrine heard her clattering down the stairs, while her lamentations filled the whole house, till at last a door below was flung to with violence.

II. Second Adventure

At this time there was a man in Frankfurt, who practised the strangest art possible. He was called the flea-tamer, from having succeeded—and certainly not without much trouble and exertion—in educating these little creatures, and teaching them to execute all sorts of pretty tricks. You saw with the greatest astonishment a troop of fleas upon a slab of highly-polished marble, who drew along little cannons, ammunition-wagons, and baggage-carts, while others leaped along by them with muskets in their arms, cartouche-boxes on their backs, and sabres at their sides. At the word of command from the artist, they performed the most difficult evolutions, and all seemed fuller of life and mirth than if they had been real soldiers, the marching consisted in the neatest entrechats and capers, and the faces about, right and left, in the most graceful pirouettes. The whole troop had a wonderful aplomb, and the general seemed to be at the same time a most admirable ballet master. But even more handsome and more wonderful were the little gold coaches, which were drawn by four, six, or eight fleas. Coachmen and servants were little gold flies, of the smallest kind and almost invisible, while that which sat within could not be well distinguished. One was involuntarily reminded of the equipage of Queen Mab, so admirably described by Shakespeare's Mercutio, that it is easy to perceive she must often have travelled athwart his own nose.

But it was not till you overlooked the table with a good magnifying glass that the art of the flea-tamer developed itself in its full extent, for then first appeared the splendour and grace of the vessels, the fine workmanship of the arms, the glitter and neatness of the uniforms, all of which excited the profoundest admiration. It was quite impossible to imagine what instruments the flea-tamer could have used in making neatly and proportionately certain little collaterals, such as spurs and buttons, compared to which that matter seemed to be a very trifling task, which else had passed for a masterpiece of the tailor, namely, the fitting a flea with a pair of breeches; though, indeed, in this the most difficult part must have been the measuring.

The flea-tamer had abundance of visitors. Throughout the whole day the hall was never free from the curious, who were not deterred by the high price of admission. In the evening, too, the company was numerous, nay, almost more numerous, as then even those people, who cared little about such trickeries, came to admire a work which gave the flea-tamer quite another character, and acquired for him the real esteem of the philosopher. This work was a night-microscope, that, as the sun-microscope by day, like a magic lantern, flung the object, brightly lit up, upon a white ground, with a sharpness and distinctness which left nothing more to be wished. Moreover, the flea-tamer carried on a traffic with the finest microscopes that could be, and which were readily bought at a great price.

It chanced that a young man, called George Pepusch—the kind reader will soon be better acquainted with him—took a fancy to visit the flea-tamer late in the evening. Already, upon the stairs, he heard the clamour of a dispute that grew louder and louder with every moment, and at last became a perfect tempest. Just as he was about to enter, the door of the hall was violently flung open, and the multitude rushed out in a heap upon him, their faces pale with terror.

“The cursed wizard! The Satan's-brood! I'll denounce him to the supreme court! He shall out of the city, the false juggler!”

Such were the confused cries of the multitude, as, urged by fear and terror, they sought to get out of the house as quickly as possible.

A glance into the hall at once betrayed to the young Pepusch the cause of this horror, which had driven away the people. All within was alive, and a loathsome medley of the most hideous creatures filled the whole room. The race of beetles, spiders, leeches, gnats, magnified to excess, stretched out their probosces, crawled upon their long hairy legs, or fluttered their long wings. A more hideous spectacle Pepusch had never seen. He was even beginning to be sensible himself of horror, when something rough suddenly flew in his face, and he saw himself enveloped in a thick cloud of meal dust. His terror immediately left him, for he at once perceived that the rough thing could be nothing else than the round powdered wig of the flea-tamer—which, in fact, it was.

By the time Pepusch had rubbed the powder from his eyes, the disgusting population of insects had vanished. The flea-tamer sat in his armchair quite exhausted.

“Leeuwenhoek!” exclaimed Pepusch to him, “Leeuwenhoek, do you see now what comes of your trickeries? You have again been forced to have recourse to your vassals to keep the people’s hands off you—is it not so?”

“Is it you?” said the naturalist, in a faint voice, “Is it you, good Pepusch? Ah! it is all over with me—clean over with me—I am a lost man! Pepusch, I begin to believe that you really meant it well with me, and that I have not done wisely in making light of your warnings.”

Upon Pepusch’s quietly asking what had happened, the flea-tamer turned himself round with his armchair to the wall, held both his hands before his face, and cried out piteously to Pepusch to take up a glass and examine the marble slab. Already, with the naked eye, Pepusch observed that the little soldiers, etc. lay there as if dead, that nothing stirred any longer. The dexterous fleas appeared also to have taken another shape. But now, by means of the glass, Pepusch soon discovered that not a single flea was there, but what he had taken for them were nothing more than black peppercorns and fruit-seeds that stood in their uniforms.

“I know not,” began the flea-tamer, quite melancholy and overwhelmed, “I know not what evil spirit struck me with blindness, that I did not perceive the desertion of my army till the people were at the table and prepared for the spectacle. You may imagine, Pepusch, how, on seeing themselves deceived, the visitors first murmured, and then blazed out into fury. They accused me of the vilest deceit, and as they grew hotter and hotter, and would no longer listen to any excuses, they were falling upon me to take their own revenge. What could I do better, to shun a load of blows, than immediately set the great microscope into motion, and envelope the people in a cloud of insects, at which they were terrified, as is natural to them?”

“But,” said Pepusch, “tell me how it could possibly happen that your well-disciplined troop, which had shown so much fidelity to you, could so suddenly take themselves off, without your perceiving it at once?”

“Oh!” cried the flea-tamer, “O, Pepusch! He has deserted me! He by whom alone I was master—He it is to whose treachery I ascribe all my blindness, all my misery!”

“Have I not,” said Pepusch, “have I not long ago warned you not to place your reliance upon tricks which you cannot execute without the possession of the master? and on how ticklish a point rests that possession, notwithstanding all your care, you have just now experienced.”

Pepusch further gave the flea-tamer to understand, that he could not at all comprehend how his being forced to give up these tricks could so much disturb his life, as the invention of the microscope, and his general dexterity in the preparation of microscopic glasses, had long ago established him. But the flea-tamer, on the other hand, maintained that very different things lay hid in these subtleties, and that he could not give them up without giving up his whole existence. Pepusch interrupted him by asking, “Where is Dörtje Elverdink?”

“Where is she?” screamed Leeuwenhoek, wringing his hands, “Where is Dörtje Elverdink? Gone! gone into the wide world! Vanished! But strike me dead at once, Pepusch, for I see your wrath growing: make short work of it with me!”

“There you see now,” said Pepusch, with a gloomy look, “You see now what comes of your folly, of your absurd proceedings. Who gave you a right to confine the poor Dörtje like a slave, and then again, merely for the sake of alluring people, to make a show of her like some wonder of natural history? Why did you put a force upon her inclinations, and not allow her to give me her hand, when you must have seen how dearly we loved each other? Fled, is she? Well then, she is no longer in your power, and although I do not at this moment know where to seek for her, yet am I convinced that I shall find her. There, Leeuwenhoek, put on your wig again, and submit to your destiny; that is the best thing you can do.”

The flea-tamer arranged his wig on his bald head with his left hand, while with his right he caught Pepusch by the arm, exclaiming,

“Pepusch, you are my real friend, for you are the only man in the whole city of Frankfurt, who know that I lie buried in the old church at Delft, since the year seventeen hundred and twenty-five, and yet have not betrayed it to anyone, even when you were angry with me on account of Dörtje Elverdink. If at times I cannot exactly get it into my head that I am actually that Antonie van Leeuwenhoek who lies buried at Delft, yet again I must believe it, when I consider my works and reflect upon my life, and on that account it is very agreeable to me that it is not at all spoken of. I now see, my dear Pepusch, that, in regard to Dörtje Elverdink, I have not acted rightly, although in a very different way from what you may well imagine: that is, I was right in pronouncing your suit to be an idle struggle; wrong, in not being open with you, in not telling you the real circumstances of Dörtje Elverdink. You would then have seen how praiseworthy it was to talk you out of wishes, the accomplishment of which could not be other than destructive. Pepusch, sit down by me, and hear a wonderful history.”

“That I am likely to do,” replied Pepusch with a malicious glance, sitting down in an armchair, opposite the flea-tamer, who thus began:

“As you are well versed, my dear friend, in history, you know, beyond doubt, that King Sekakis lived for many years in intimate intercourse with the Flower-Queen, and that the beautiful Princess Gamaheh was the fruit of this passion. But it is not so well known, nor can I tell you, in what way the Princess Gamaheh came to Famagusta. Many maintain, and not without reason, that the princess wished to conceal herself there from the odious Leech-Prince, the sworn enemy of the Flower-Queen. Be this as it may—it happened once in Famagusta, that the princess was walking in the cool freshness of the evening, and chanced upon a pleasant cypress grove. Allured by the delightful sighings of the evening breeze, the murmurs of a brook, and the soft music of the birds, she stretched herself upon the moss, and quickly fell into a sound slumber. At this moment, the very enemy—whom she had been so anxious to escape—lifted his head out of the marshes, beheld the princess, and became so violently enamoured of the fair sleeper, that he could not resist an inclination to kiss her, and creeping forward, he kissed her under the left ear. Now you know, friend Pepusch, that when the Leech-Prince sets about kissing a fair one, she is lost, for he is the vilest bloodsucker in the world. So it happened on this occasion: the Leech-Prince kissed the poor Gamaheh so long, that all life left her, when he fell back gorged and intoxicated upon the moss, and was forced to be carried home by his servants, who hastily rolled out of their marshes. In vain the root mandragora toiled out of the earth, and laid itself upon the wound inflicted by the treacherous kisses of the Leech-Prince; in vain all the other flowers arose and joined in his lamentations: she was dead. Just then it happened that the genius, Thetel, was passing, and he too was deeply moved by Gamaheh’s beauty and her unlucky end. He took her in his arms,

pressed her to his breast, and endeavoured to breathe new life into her, but still she awoke not from the sleep of death. Now too the genius perceived the odious prince—who was so drunk and unwieldy that his servants had not been able to get him into his palace—fell into a violent rage, and threw a whole handful of rock-salt upon him, at which he poured forth again all the purple blood which he had drawn from the princess, and then gave up his spirit in a wretched manner, amidst the most violent convulsions. All the flowers that stood around dipped their vestments in this ichor, and stained them, in perpetual remembrance of the murdered princess, with so bright a purple that no painter on earth can imitate it. You know, Pepusch, that the most beautiful pinks and hyacinths grow in that cypress grove where the Leech-Prince kissed to death the fair Gamaheh.

“The genius, Thetel, now thought of departing, as he had much to do at Samarkand before night, and cast a farewell look at the princess, when he seemed as if fixed by magic to the spot, and gazed on the fair one with deep emotion. Suddenly a thought struck him. Instead of going on farther, he took the princess in his arms, and rose with her high into the air, at which time two philosophers—one of whom it should be said was myself—were observing the course of the stars from the gallery of a lofty tower. They perceived high above them the genius, Thetel, with the fair Gamaheh, and at the same moment there fell upon one—but that is nothing to the present matter. Both magicians had recognised the genius, but not the princess, and exhausted themselves in all manner of conjectures as to the meaning of this appearance, without being able to get at anything certain, or even probable. Soon after this the unhappy fate of the princess became generally known in Famagusta, and now the magicians knew how to interpret the vision of the genius with the maiden in his arms. Both imagined that the genius must certainly have found some means of recalling the princess into life, and resolved to make inquiries in Samarkand, where, according to their observations, he had manifestly directed his flight. But in Samarkand all were silent about the princess; no one knew a word.

“Many years had passed; the two magicians had quarrelled, as it will happen with learned men—and the more learned the oftener—and they only imparted to each other their most important discoveries from the iron force of custom. (You have not forgotten, Pepusch, that I myself am one of these magicians.) Well, I was not a little surprised at a communication from my colleague, which contained the most wonderful—and at the same time the happiest—intelligence of the princess that could be imagined. The matter was thus: by means of a scientific friend in Samarkand, my colleague had obtained the loveliest and rarest tulips, and as perfectly fresh as if they had been just cut from the stalk. His chief object was the microscopic examination of the interior portions, and in fact, of the petal. It was with this view that he was dissecting a beautiful tulip, and discovered in the cup a strange little kernel that struck him prodigiously, but how great was his astonishment when, on applying his glass, he perceived that the little kernel was nothing else than the Princess Gamaheh, who, pillowed in the petal of the tulip, seemed to slumber softly and calmly.

“However great the distance that separated me from my colleague, yet I set off immediately, and hastened to him. He had in the meantime put off all operations, to allow me the pleasure of a sight first, and perhaps, too, from the fear of spoiling something if he acted entirely from himself. I soon convinced myself of the perfect correctness of my colleague’s observations, and, like him, firmly believed that it were possible to snatch the princess from her sleep, and give her again her original form. The sublime spirit, dwelling within us, soon let us find the proper method, but as you, friend Pepusch, know very little—in fact nothing at all—of our art, it would be quite superfluous to describe to you the different operations which we went through to attain our object. It is sufficient if I tell you that by the dexterous use of various glasses—for the most part prepared by myself—we succeeded not only in drawing the

princess uninjured from the flower, but in forwarding her growth, so that she soon attained her natural dimensions. Now, indeed, life was wanting, and this depended on the last and most difficult operations. We reflected her image by means of one of the best solar microscopes, and loosened it dexterously from the white wall, without the least injury. As soon as the shadow floated freely, it shot like lightning into the glass, which broke into a thousand shivers. The princess stood before us full of life and freshness. We shouted for joy, but so much the greater was our horror on perceiving that the circulation of the blood stopped precisely there where the Leech-Prince had fastened himself. She was just on the point of swooning, when we perceived on the very spot behind the left ear a little black dot, that quickly appeared and as quickly disappeared. Immediately the stagnation of the blood ceased, the princess revived, and our work had succeeded.

“Each of us—that is, I and my colleague—knew full well how invaluable was the possession of the princess, and each struggled for it, imagining that he had more right to it than the other. My colleague affirmed that the tulip, in which he had found the princess, was his property, and that he had made the first discovery, which he had imparted to me, and that I could only be deemed an assistant, who had no right to demand, as a reward of his labour, the work itself at which he had assisted. I, on the other hand, brought forward my invention of the last and most difficult process, which had restored the princess to life, and in the execution of which my colleague had only helped; so that, if he had any claims of propriety upon the embryo in the flower petal, yet the living person belonged to me. On this ground we quarrelled for many hours, till, having screamed ourselves hoarse, we at last came to a compromise. My colleague consigned the princess to me, in return for which I gave him an important glass, and this very glass is the cause of our present determined hostility. He affirms that I have treacherously purloined it—an impudent falsehood—and although I really know that the glass was lost in the transferring, yet I can declare, upon my honour and conscience, that I am not the cause of it, nor have I any idea how it could have happened. In fact, the glass is so small, that a grain of sand is about ten times larger. See, friend Pepusch: now I have told you all in confidence, and now you know that Dörtje Elverdink is none other than the revived Princess Gamaheh, and must perceive that to such a high mysterious alliance a plain young man like you can have no—”

“Stop!” interrupted George Pepusch, with a smile that was something satanic, “Stop! one confidence is worth another, and, therefore, I, on my side, will confide to you that I knew all that you have been telling me much earlier and much better than you did. I cannot laugh enough at your bigotry and your foolish pretensions. Know—what you might have known long ago if your knowledge had not been confined to glass-grinding—that I myself am the thistle, Zeherit, who stood where the princess had laid her head, and of whom you have thought fit to be silent through your whole history.”

“Pepusch!” cried the flea-tamer, “are you in your senses? The thistle, Zeherit, blooms in the distant Indies, in the beautiful valley, closed in by lofty rocks, where at times the wisest magi of the earth are wont to assemble: Lindhorst, the keeper of the records, can best inform you about it. And you, whom I have seen running about half starved with study and hunger, you pretend to be the thistle, Zeherit?”

“What a wise man you are, Leeuwenhoek!” said Pepusch, laughing: “Well, think of my person what you will, but do not be absurd enough to deny that, in the moment of the thistle Zeherit’s feeling the sweet breath of Gamaheh, he bloomed in glowing love and passion, and that, when he touched the temples of the sleeping princess, she too dreamt sweetly of love. Too late the Thistle perceived the Leech-Prince, whom he else had killed with his thorns in a moment, but yet, with the help of the root, Mandragora, he would have succeeded in recalling

the princess to life, if the stupid genius, Thetel, had not interfered with his awkward remedies. It is true that in his passion the genius put his hand into the saltbox, which he is used to carry at his girdle when he travels, like Pantagruel, and flung a good handful at the Leech-Prince. But it is quite false that he killed him in so doing. All the salt fell into the marsh; not a single grain hit the prince, whom the thistle, Zeherit, slew with his thorns, and having thus avenged the murder of Gamaheh, devoted himself to death. It is the genius only—who interfered in matters not concerning him—that is the cause of the princess lying so long in the sleep of flowers; the Thistle awoke much earlier, for the death of both was but the same sleep, from which they revived, although in other forms. You will have completed the measure of your gross blunders, if you suppose that the Princess Gamaheh was formed exactly as Dörtje Elverdink now is, and that it is you who restored her to life. It happened to you, my good Leeuwenhoek, as it did to the awkward servant in the remarkable story of the Three Pomegranates; he freed two maidens from the fruit, without having first assured himself of the means of keeping them in life, and in consequence saw them perish miserably before his eyes. Not you, but *he*, who has escaped from you, whose loss you so deeply feel and lament; he it was who completed the work, which you began so awkwardly.”

“Ha!” cried the flea-tamer, quite beside himself, “Ha! ’twas so I suspected! But you, Pepusch, you, to whom I have shown so much kindness, you are my worst enemy: I see it well now. Instead of advising me, instead of assisting me in my misfortunes, you amuse me with all manner of nonsensical stories.”

“Nonsense yourself!” cried Pepusch, quite indignant. “You’ll rue your folly too late, you dreaming charlatan! I go to seek Dörtje Elverdink—but that you may no longer mislead honest people—”

He grasped at the screw which set all the microscopic machinery in motion—

“Take my life at the same time!” roared the flea-tamer, but at the instant all crashed together, and he fell senseless to the ground.

“How is it,” said George Pepusch to himself, when he had got into the street, “How is it that one, who has the command of a nice warm chamber and a well-stuffed bed, wanders through the streets at night in the rain and storm? Because he has forgotten the house key, and he is driven moreover by love.”

He could answer himself not otherwise, and indeed his whole conduct seemed silly in his own estimation. He remembered the moment when he saw Dörtje Elverdink for the first time. Some years before the Flea-tamer had exhibited his arts in Berlin, and had found no slight audiences as long as the thing was new. Soon, however, people had seen enough of the educated and well-disciplined fleas, and even the paraphernalia of the diminutive race began not to be thought so very wonderful, although at first attributed almost to magic, and Leeuwenhoek seemed to have fallen into total oblivion. On a sudden, a report was spread that a niece of the artist, who had not appeared before, now attended the exhibitions—a beautiful, lovely little maiden, and withal so strangely attired as to baffle description. The world of fashionables—who, like leaders in a concert, are accustomed to give the time and tune to society—now poured in, and as in this world everything is in extremes, the niece excited unparalleled astonishment. It soon became the mode to frequent the flea-tamer; he who had not seen his niece could not join in the common talk, and thus the artist was saved in his distress. As to the rest, no one could comprehend the name “*Dörtje*,” and as at this time a celebrated actress was displaying, in the part of the Queen of Golconda, all those high yet soft attractions which are peculiar to the sex, they called the fair Hollander by the royal name, Alina.

When George Pepusch came to Berlin, Leeuwenhoek's fair niece was the talk of the day, and hence at the table of the hotel, where he lodged, scarcely anything else was spoken of but the little wonder that delighted all the men, young and old, and even the women themselves. Everyone pressed the newcomer to place himself on the pinnacle of the existing mode at Berlin, and see the Hollandress. Pepusch had an irritable, melancholy temperament; in every enjoyment he found too much of the bitter aftertaste, which indeed comes from the Stygian brook that runs through our whole life, and this made him gloomy and often unjust to all about him. It may be easily supposed that in this mood he was little inclined to run about after pretty girls, but he went nevertheless to the flea-tamer's, less on account of the dangerous wonder than to confirm his preconceived opinion that here too, as so often in life, a strange madness was predominating. He found the Hollandress fair, indeed, and agreeable, but in considering her, he could not help smiling with self-satisfaction at his own sagacity, by the help of which he had already guessed that the heads, which the little one had so perfectly turned, must have been tolerably crazy before they left home.

The maiden had that light easy manner which evinces the best education; a mistress of that delightful coquetry, which, when it offers the fingertips to anyone, at the same time takes from him the power of receiving them, the lovely little creature knew how to attract her numerous visitors, as well as to restrain them within the bounds of the strictest decorum.

None troubled themselves about the stranger, who had leisure enough to observe all the actions of the fair one. But while he continued staring more and more at the beautiful face, there awoke in the deepest recesses of his mind a dark recollection, as if he had somewhere before seen the Hollandress, although in other relations and in other attire, and that he himself had at one time worn a very different form. In vain he tormented himself to bring this recollection to any clearness, yet still the idea of his having really seen the little creature before became more and more determinate. The blood mounted into his face, when at last someone gently jogged him, and whispered in his ear, "The lightning has struck you too, Mr. Philosopher, has it not?" It was his neighbour of the ordinary, to whom he had asserted that the ecstasy into which all had fallen was no better than madness, which would pass away as quickly as it had arisen.

Pepusch observed that while he had been gazing so fixedly on the little one, the hall had grown deserted. Now for the first time she seemed to be aware of his presence, and greeted him with graceful familiarity. From this time he could not get rid of her idea; he tormented himself through a sleepless night, only to come upon the trace of a recollection—but in vain. The sight of the fair one, he rightly thought, could alone bring him to it, and the next day, and all the following days, he never omitted visiting the flea-tamer, and staring two or three hours together at the beautiful Dörtje Elverdink.

When a man cannot get rid of the idea of a beautiful woman who has riveted his attention, he has already made the first step towards love, and thus it happened that, at the very time Pepusch fancied he was only poring upon that faint recollection, he was already in love with the fair Hollandress.

Who would now trouble himself about the fleas, over whom Alina had gained so splendid a victory, attracting all within her own circle? The master himself felt that he was playing a somewhat silly part with his insects; he, therefore, locked up the whole troop for other times, and with much dexterity gave to his play another form, in which his niece played the principal character. He had hit upon the happy thought of giving evening entertainments, at a tolerably high rate of subscription, in which, after he had exhibited a few optical illusions, the further amusement of the company rested with his niece. Here the social talents of the fair one shone in full measure, and she took advantage of the least pause in the entertainment to

give a new impulse to the party by songs, which she herself accompanied on the guitar. Her voice was not powerful; her manner was not imposing, often even against rule, but the sweetness and clearness of tone completely answered to her appearance, and when from her dark eyelashes she darted the soft glances, like gentle moonbeams, amongst the spectators, every breast heaved, and the censure of the most confirmed pedant was silenced.

Pepusch diligently prosecuted his studies in these evening entertainments, that is, he stared for two hours together at the Hollandress, and then left the hall with the rest of the company. Once he stood nearer to her than usual, and distinctly heard her saying to a young man, "Tell me, who is that lifeless spectre, that every evening stares at me for hours, and then disappears without a syllable?"

Pepusch was deeply hurt, and made such a clamour in his chamber, and acted so wildly, that no friend could have recognized him in his mad freaks. He swore, high and low, never again to see the malicious Hollandress, but for all that, did not fail appearing at Leeuwenhoek's on the very next evening, at the usual hour, to stare at the lovely Dörtje more fixedly if that were possible, than ever. It is true, indeed, that even upon the steps he was mightily alarmed at finding himself there, and in all haste adopted the wise resolution of keeping quite at a distance from the fascinating creature. He even carried this plan into effect by creeping into a corner of the hall, but the attempt to cast down his eyes failed entirely, and as before said, he gazed on the Hollandress more determinedly than ever. Yet he did not know how it happened that on a sudden Dörtje Elverdink was standing in his corner close beside him. With a voice that was melody itself, the fair one said, "I do not remember, sir, having seen you anywhere before our meeting here at Berlin, and yet I find in your features, in all your manner, so much that seems familiar. Nay, it is as if in times long past we had been very intimate, but in a distant country and in other relations. I entreat you: free me from this uncertainty, and if I am not deceived by some resemblance, let us renew the friendship, which floats in dim recollection like some delightful dream."

George Pepusch felt strangely at this address; his breast heaved, his forehead glowed, and a shudder ran through all his limbs as if he had lain in a violent fever. Though this might mean nothing else than that he was head over ears in love, yet there was another cause for this perturbation, which robbed him of all speech, and almost of his senses. When Dörtje Elverdink spoke of her belief that she had known him long before, it seemed to him as if another image was presented to his inward mind as in a magic lantern, and he perceived a long removed self, which lay far back in time. The idea, that by much meditation had assumed a clear and firm shape, flashed up in this moment, and this was nothing less than that Dörtje Elverdink was the Princess Gamaheh, daughter of King Sekakis, whom he had loved in a remote period, when he flourished as the thistle, Zeherit. It was well that he did not communicate this fancy to other folks, as he would most probably have been reckoned mad, and confined as such, although the fixed idea of a partial maniac may often, perhaps, be nothing more than the illusions of a preceding existence.

"Good God! you seem dumb, sir!" said the little one, touching George's breast with the prettiest finger imaginable, and from the tip of it shot an electric spark into his heart, and he awoke from his stupefaction. He seized her hand in a perfect ecstasy, covered it with burning kisses, and exclaimed, "Heavenly, angelic creature!" etc., etc., etc. The kind reader will easily imagine all that George Pepusch would exclaim in a such a moment. It is sufficient to say, that she received his love-protests as kindly as could be wished, and that the fateful moment, in the corner of Leeuwenhoek's hall, brought forth a love affair that first raised the good George Pepusch up to heaven, and then again plunged him into hell. As he happened to be of a melancholy temperament, and withal pettish and suspicious, Dörtje's conduct could not fail

of giving rise to many little jealousies. Now it was precisely these jealousies that tickled Dörtje's malicious humour, and it was her delight to torment the poor George Pepusch in a variety of ways, but as everything can be carried only to a certain point, so at last the long-smothered resentment of the lover blazed forth. He was speaking of that wondrous time when he, as the thistle, Zeherit, had so dearly loved the fair Hollandress, who was then the daughter of King Sekakis, and was reminding her, with all the fire of love, that the circumstance of his battle with the Leech-Prince had given him the most incontestable right to her hand. On her part, she declared that she well remembered it, and had already felt the foreboding of it, when Pepusch gazed on her with the thistle-glance; she spoke, too, so sweetly of these wonderful matters, seemed so inspired with love to the thistle, Zeherit, who had been destined to study at Jena, and then again find the Princess Gamaheh in Berlin, that George Pepusch fancied himself in the El Dorado of all delight. The lovers stood at the window, and the little one suffered her enamoured friend to wind his arm about her. In this familiar position they caressed each other, for to that at last came the dreamy talk about the wonders in Famagusta, when it chanced that a handsome officer of the guards passed by in a brand-new uniform, and familiarly greeted the little one, whom he knew from the evening entertainments; Dörtje had half closed her eyes and turned away her head from the street, so that one would have thought it was impossible for her to see the officer, but great is the magic of a fine new uniform! The little one—roused, perhaps, by the clatter of the sabre on the pavement—opened her eyes broad and bright, twisted herself from George's arm, flung open the window, threw a kiss to the officer, and watched him till he had disappeared round the corner.

“Gamaheh!” shouted George Pepusch, quite beside himself, “Gamaheh! What is this? Do you mock me? Is this the faith you have promised to your Thistle?”

The little one turned round upon her heel, burst into a loud laughter, and exclaimed—

“Go, go, George; if I am the daughter of the worthy old King Sekakis, if you are the thistle, Zeherit, that dear officer is the genius, Thetel, who, in fact, pleases me much better than the sad thorny thistle.”

With this she darted away through the door, while George Pepusch, as might be expected, fell immediately into a fit of desperation, and rushed down the steps as if he had been driven by a thousand devils. Fate would have it, that he met a friend, in a post-chaise, who was leaving Berlin, upon which he called out, “Halt! I go with you,” flew home, donned a great coat, put money in his purse, gave the key of his room to the hostess, seated himself in the chaise, and posted off with his friend.

Notwithstanding this hostile separation, his love to the fair Hollandress was by no means extinguished—and just as little could he resolve to give up the fair claims, which, as the thistle Zeherit, he thought he had to the hand and heart of Gamaheh—he renewed therefore his pretensions, when some years afterwards he met with Leeuwenhoek again at the Hague, and how zealously he followed her in Frankfurt the reader has learned already.

George Pepusch was wandering through the streets at night, quite inconsolable, when his attention was attracted by an unusually bright light that fell upon the street from a crevice in the window-shutter in the lower room of a large house. He thought that there must be fire in the chamber, and swung himself up by means of the ironwork to look in. Boundless was his surprise at what he saw. A large fire blazed in the chimney, which was opposite to the window, before which sat, or rather lay, the little Hollandress in a broad old-fashioned armchair, dressed out like an angel. She seemed to sleep, while a withered old man knelt before the fire, and with spectacles on his nose, peeped into a kettle, in which he was probably brewing some potion. Pepusch was trying to raise himself higher to get a better

view of the group, when he felt himself seized by the legs, and violently pulled down. A harsh voice exclaimed, "Now only see the rascal! To the watchhouse, my master!" It was the watchman who had observed George climbing up the window, and could not suppose otherwise than that he wanted to break into the house. In spite of all protestations, George Pepusch was dragged off by the watchman, to whose help the patrol had hastened, and thus his nightly wandering ended merrily in the watchhouse.

III. Third Adventure

He who has experienced such things in one evening as Mr. Peregrine Tyss, and who is consequently in such a state of mind, cannot possibly sleep well. He rolled about restless on his bed, and, when he fell into that sort of delirium which usually precedes sleep, he again held the little creature in his arms, and felt warm glowing kisses on his lips. Then he would start up and fancy, even when awake, that he heard the sweet voice of Alina. He would burn with desire that she might not have fled, and yet again would fear that she might return and snare him in a net, from which he could not extricate himself. This war of contrary feelings straightened his breast, and filled it at the same time with a sweet pain, such as he had never felt before.

“Sleep not, Peregrine; sleep not, generous man: I must speak with you directly,” was lisped close by Peregrine, and still the voice went on with “sleep not, sleep not,” till at last he opened his eyes, which he had closed only to see Alina more distinctly. By the light of the lamp he perceived a little monster, scarce a span long, that sat upon the white counterpane, and which at first terrified him, but in the next moment he grasped boldly at it with his hand, to convince himself whether he was or was not deceived by his fancy, but the little monster had immediately disappeared without leaving a trace behind.

Though it was not requisite to give a minute description of the fair Alina, Dörtje Elverdink, or Princess Gamaheh—for the reader has long ago known that these were one and the same person apparently split into three—it is, on the contrary, quite requisite to narrowly portray the little monster that sat upon the counterpane, and caused so much terror to Mr. Peregrine Tyss.

As already mentioned, the creature was scarcely a span long. In his bird-shaped head gleamed a pair of round sparkling eyes, and from his sparrow beak protruded a long sharp thing like a rapier, while two horns came out from the forehead close below the beak. The neck began close under the head also, in the manner of a bird, but grew thicker and thicker, so that without any interruption the former grew to a shapeless body, almost like a hazelnut, and seemed covered with dark-brown scales like the armadillo. But the strangest part was the formation of the arms and legs; the two former had joints, and were rooted in the creature’s cheeks, close by the beak; immediately under these arms was a pair of legs, and still farther on another pair, both double-jointed like the arms. These last feet appeared to be those on which the creature really relied, for besides that they were longer and stronger than the others, he wore upon them very handsome golden boots with diamond spurs.

The little monster having so completely vanished upon Peregrine’s attempt to seize it, he would have taken the whole for an illusion of his excited fancy, if directly afterwards a thin voice had not been audible, exclaiming:

“Good heavens! Mr. Peregrine Tyss! have I really been mistaken in you? Yesterday you acted so nobly towards me, and now that I want to show my gratitude, you grasp at me with a murderous hand! But perhaps my form displeased you, and I did wrong in showing myself to you microscopically, that you might be sure to see me, which, as you may well suppose, is no such easy matter; in fact, I am still sitting upon your white counterpane, and yet you cannot perceive me. Don’t take it amiss, Peregrine, but, in truth, your optical nerves are a little too gross for my thin form. Only promise me, however, that I shall be safe with you, and that you will not make any hostile attempts upon me, and I will come close to you and tell you many things, which it would be as well that you knew now.”

“In the first place,” replied Mr. Tyss to the voice, “tell me, my good unknown friend, who you are; the rest will easily follow of itself. In the meantime I can assure you beforehand, that anything hostile is not at all in my disposition, and that I will continue to act nobly towards you, though at present I cannot comprehend in what way I have evinced my nobleness. Keep, however, your incognito, for your appearance is not the most agreeable.”

The voice, after a little hemming and coughing, continued, “You are, I repeat it with pleasure, a noble man, Mr. Peregrine, but not particularly deep in science, and above all, a little inexperienced, or you would have recognised me at the first glance. I might boast a little and say that I am one of the mightiest of kings, and rule over many, many millions, but from a natural modesty, and because, after all, the expression ‘king’ is not exactly correct, I will pass it over. Amongst the people, at whose head I have the honour to be, a republican constitution prevails. A senate, which at most can consist of forty-five thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine members, for the greater facility of voting, holds the place of regent, and he who presides over this senate has the name of master, because, in all the affairs of life, he must really be a master. Without farther circumlocution, I will now confess to you that I, who now speak to you without your seeing me, am none other than this Master Flea. That you know my people I do not make the least doubt, for most assuredly, worthy sir, you have already nourished many of them with your own blood. Hence you must needs be aware that they are animated by an untameable love of freedom, and indeed are a set of springalds, who are inclined to keep off anything like solidity of form by a continual leaping and skipping. You will easily perceive what talents must be requisite to govern such a people, and will therefore feel for me a becoming respect. Assure me of that, Mr. Peregrine, before I proceed any farther.”

For some moments it seemed to Mr. Tyss as if a great mill wheel were turning round in his head, but he soon became more composed, and began to think that the appearance of the strange lady at the bookbinder’s was just as wonderful as the present one, which was perhaps, after all, nothing more than a natural continuation of the singular history in which he had become involved. He therefore declared to Master Flea that he respected him prodigiously for his uncommon talents, and was the more anxious to know him better, as his voice sounded very sweetly, and there was a certain delicacy in his speech which betrayed a delicate form of body, whereat Master Flea continued:

“I thank you much, my best Mr. Tyss, for your favourable opinion, and hope soon to convince you that you are not mistaken in me. In the meantime, that you may learn what service you have rendered me, it is requisite that I should impart to you my whole history. Know then that my father was the renowned... (Yet stay; it just occurs to me that the beautiful gift of patience has become remarkably rare of late amongst readers and auditors, and that copious memoirs, once so much admired, are now detestable: I will therefore touch lightly and episodically that part only which is more immediately connected with my abode with you.)... In knowing that I am really Master Flea, you must know me for a man of the most extensive learning, of the most profound experience in all branches of knowledge. But hold! You cannot measure the degree of my information by your scale, since you are ignorant of the wonderful world in which I and my people live. How would you feel astonished if your mind could be opened to that world! It would seem to you a realm of the strangest and most incomprehensible wonders, and hence you must not feel surprised, if all which originates from that world should seem to you like a confused fairy tale, invented by an idle brain. Do not, therefore, allow yourself to be confounded, but trust my words. See: in many things my people are far superior to you men, for example: in all that regards the penetrating into the mysteries of nature, in strength, dexterity—spiritual and corporeal dexterity. But we, too, have our passions, and with us, as with you, these are often the sources of great inquietudes,

sometimes even of total destruction. Loved, nay adored, as I was, by my people, my mastery might have placed me upon the pinnacle of happiness, had I not been blinded by an unfortunate passion for a person who completely governed me, though she never could be my wife. But our race is in general reproached with a passion for the fair sex, that oversteps the bounds of decorum. Supposing however this reproach to be true, yet on the other hand, everyone knows. But hold: without more circumlocution, I saw the daughter of King Sekakis, the beautiful Gamaheh, and on the instant became so desperately enamoured of her, that I forgot my people—myself—and lived only in the delight of skipping about the fairest neck, the fairest bosom, and tickling the beauty with kisses. She often caught at me with her rosy fingers, without ever being able to seize me, and this I took for the toying of affection. But how silly is anyone in love, even when that one is Master Flea. Suffice it to say, that the odious Leech-Prince fell upon the poor Gamaheh, whom he kissed to death, but still I should have succeeded in saving my beloved, if a silly boaster and an awkward idiot had not interfered without being asked, and spoilt all. The boaster was the Thistle, Zeherit, and the idiot was the Genius, Thetel. When, however, the Genius rose in the air with the sleeping princess, I clung fast to the lace about her bosom, and thus was Gamaheh's faithful fellow-traveller, without being perceived by him. It happened that we flew over two magi, who were observing the stars from a lofty tower. One of them directed his glass so sharply at me, that I was almost blinded by the shine of the magic instrument. A violent giddiness seized me; in vain I sought to hold fast. I tumbled down helplessly from the monstrous height, fell plump upon the nose of one of the magi, and only my lightness, my extraordinary activity, could have saved me.

“I was still too much stunned to skip off his nose and place myself in perfect safety, when the treacherous Leeuwenhoek—he was the magician—caught me dexterously with his fingers, and placed me in his microscope. Notwithstanding it was night, and he was obliged to use a lamp, he was by far too practiced an observer, and too great an adept, not immediately to recognise in me the Master Flea. Delighted that a lucky chance had delivered into his hands such an important prisoner, and resolved to draw every possible advantage from it, he flung poor me into chains, and thus began a painful imprisonment, from which I was yesterday freed by you. The possession of me gave the abominable Leeuwenhoek full power over my vassals, whom he soon collected in swarms about him, and with barbarian cruelty introduced amongst us that which is called education, and which soon robbed us of all freedom, of all enjoyment of life. In regard to scholastic studies, and the arts and sciences in general, Leeuwenhoek soon discovered, to his surprise and vexation, that we knew more than himself; the higher cultivation which he forced upon us consisted chiefly in this: that we were to be something, or at least represent something. But it was precisely this being something, this representing something, that brought with it a multitude of wants which we had never known before, and which were now to be satisfied with the sweat of our brow. The barbarous Leeuwenhoek converted us into statesmen, soldiers, professors, and I know not what besides. All were obliged to wear the dress of their respective ranks, and thus arose amongst us tailors, shoemakers, hairdressers, blacksmiths, cutlers, and a multitude of other trades, only to satisfy an useless and destructive luxury. The worst of it was that Leeuwenhoek had nothing else in view than his own advantage in showing us cultivated people to men, and receiving money for it. Moreover our cultivation was set down entirely to his account, and he got the praise which belonged to us alone. Leeuwenhoek well knew that in losing me he would also lose the dominion over my people; the more closely therefore he drew the spell which bound me to him, and so much the harder was my imprisonment. I thought with ardent desire on the beautiful Gamaheh, and pondered on the means of getting tidings of her fate, but what the acutest reason could not effect, the chance of the moment itself brought about. The friend and associate of my magician, the old Swammerdam, had found the princess in the petal of a

tulip, and this discovery he imparted to his friend. By means which, my good Peregrine, I forbear detailing to you, as you do not understand much about these matters, he succeeded in restoring Gamaheh to her natural shape, and bringing her back to life. In the end, however, these very wise persons proved as awkward idiots as the Genius, Thetel, and the Thistle, Zeherit. In their eagerness they had forgotten the most material point, and thus it happened that in the very same moment the princess awoke to life, she was sinking back again into death. I alone knew the cause; love to the fair one, which now flamed in my breast stronger than ever, gave me a giant's strength: I burst my chains, sprang with one mighty bound upon her shoulder—a single bite sufficed to set the freezing blood in motion: she lived. But I must tell you, Mr. Peregrine Tyss, that this bite must be repeated if the princess is to continue blooming in youth and beauty; otherwise she will dwindle away in a few months to a shrivelled little old woman. On this account, as you must see, I am quite indispensable to her, and it is only by the fear of losing me, that I can account for the black ingratitude with which she repaid my love. Without more ado she delivered me up to my tormentor, who flung me into heavier chains than ever, but to his own destruction. In spite of all the vigilance of Leeuwenhoek and Gamaheh, I at last succeeded, in an unguarded hour, in escaping from my prison. Although the heavy boots, which I had no time to pull off, hindered me considerably in my flight, yet I got safely to the shop of the toyman, of whom you bought your ware; but it was not long before, to my infinite terror, Gamaheh entered the shop. I held myself lost; you alone could save me. I gently whispered to you my distress, and you were good enough to open a little box for me, into which I quickly sprang, and in which you as quickly carried me off with you. Gamaheh sought in vain for me, and it was not till much later that she learned how and whither I had fled.

“As soon as I was free, Leeuwenhoek lost all power over my people, who immediately slipped away, and in mockery left the tyrant peppercorns, fruit-stones, and suchlike, in their clothes. Again then my hearty thanks, kind, noble Mr. Peregrine, for the great benefit you have done me, and which I know as well as anyone how to estimate. Permit me, as a free man, to remain a little time with you; I can be useful to you in many important affairs of your life beyond what you may expect. To be sure there might be danger if you should become enamoured of the fair one—”

“What do you say?” interrupted Peregrine, “What do you say, Master? I—I enamoured!”

“Even so,” continued Master Flea, “Think of my terror, of my anxiety, when you entered yesterday with the princess in your arms, glowing with passion, and she employing every seductive art—as she well knows how—to persuade you to surrender me. Ah, then I perceived your nobleness in its full extent, when you remained immovable, dexterously feigning as if you knew nothing of my being with you, as if you did not even understand what the princess wanted.”

“And that was precisely the truth of the matter,” said Peregrine, interrupting Master Flea anew. “You are attributing things as a merit to me, of which I had not the slightest suspicion. In the shop where I bought the toys, I neither saw you nor the fair damsel, who sought me at the bookbinder's, and whom you are strangely pleased to call the Princess Gamaheh. It was quite unknown to me, that amongst the boxes, where I expected to find leaden soldiers, there was an empty one in which you were lurking, and how could I possibly guess that you were the prisoner whom the pretty child was requiring with such impetuosity? Don't be whimsical, Master Flea, and dream of things, of which I had not the slightest conception.”

“Ah,” replied Master Flea, “you would dexterously avoid my thanks, kind Mr. Peregrine, and this gives me, to my great consolation, a farther lively proof of your noble way of thinking. Learn, generous man, that all the efforts of Leeuwenhoek and Gamaheh to regain me are

fruitless, so long as you afford me your protection. You must voluntarily give me up to my tormentors; all other means are to no purpose—Mr. Peregrine Tyss, you are in love!”

“Do not talk so!” exclaimed Peregrine. “Do not call by the name of love a foolish momentary ebullition, which is already past.”

Peregrine felt the colour rushing up into his cheeks and forehead, and giving him the lie. He crept under the bedclothes. Master Flea continued:

“It is not to be wondered at if you were unable to resist the surprising charms of the princess, especially as she employed many dangerous arts to captivate you. Nor is the storm yet over. The malicious little thing will put in practice many a trick to catch you in her love-toils, as, indeed, every woman can, without exactly being a Princess Gamaheh. She will try to get you so completely in her power, that you shall only live for her and her wishes, and then—woe to me! It will come to this question: is your nobleness strong enough to conquer your passion, or will you prefer yielding to Gamaheh’s wishes, and thus replunge into misery not only your little protégé, but the whole people whom you have released from a wretched slavery? Or, again, will you resist the allurements of a treacherous creature, and thus confirm my happiness and that of my subjects? Oh that you would promise me the last! That you *could!*”

“Master,” replied Peregrine, drawing the bedclothes away from his face, “Dear Master, you are right: nothing is more dangerous than the temptations of women. They are all false, all malicious; they play with us as cats with mice, and for our tenderest exertions we reap nothing but contempt and mockery. Hence it is that formerly a cold deathlike perspiration used to stand upon my brow as soon as any woman-creature approached me, and I myself believe that there must be something peculiar about the fair Alina, or Princess Gamaheh, as you will have it, although, with my plain human reason, I do not comprehend all that you are saying, but rather feel as if I were in some wild dream, or reading *The Thousand and One Nights*. Be all this, however, as it may, you have put yourself under my protection, dear Master, and nothing shall persuade me to deliver you up to your enemies; as to the seductive maiden, I will not see her again. This I promise solemnly, and would give my hand upon it, had you one to receive it and return the honourable pledge.”

With this Peregrine stretched out his arm far upon the bedclothes.

“Now,” exclaimed the little Invisible, “Now I am quite consoled, quite at ease. If I have no hand to offer you, at least permit me to prick you in the right thumb, partly to testify my extreme satisfaction, and partly to seal our bond of friendship more assuredly.”

At the same moment Peregrine felt in the thumb of his right hand a bite, which smarted so sensibly, as to prove it could have come only from the first Master of all the fleas.

“You bite like a little devil!” cried Peregrine.

“Take it,” replied Master Flea, “as a lively token of my honourable intentions. But it is fit that I should offer to you, as a pledge of my gratitude, a gift which belongs to the most extraordinary productions of art. It is nothing else than a microscope, made by a very dexterous optician of my people, while he was in Leeuwenhoek’s service. The instrument will appear somewhat small to you, for, in reality, it is about a hundred and twenty times smaller than a grain of sand, but its use will not allow of any peculiar greatness. It is this: I place the glass in the pupil of your left eye, and this eye immediately becomes microscopic. As I wish to surprise you with the effect of it, I will say no more about it for the present, and will only entreat that I may be permitted to perform the microscopic operation whenever I see that it will do you any important service. And now sleep well, Mr. Peregrine; you have need of rest.”

Peregrine, in reality, fell asleep, and did not awake till full morning, when he heard the well-known scratching of old Alina's broom; she was sweeping out the next room. A little child, who was conscious of some mischief, could not tremble more at his mother's rod than Mr. Peregrine trembled in the fear of the old woman's reproaches. At length she came in with the coffee. Peregrine glanced at her through the bed-curtains, which he had drawn close, and was not a little surprised at the clear sunshine which overspread the old woman's face.

"Are you still asleep, my dear Mr. Tyss?" she asked in one of the softest tones of which her voice was capable, and Peregrine, taking courage, answered just as softly,

"No, my dear Alina. Lay the breakfast upon the table; I will get up directly."

But when he did really rise, it seemed to him as if the sweet breath of the creature, who had lain in his arms, was waving through the chamber, he felt so strangely and so anxiously. He would have given all the world to know what had become of the mystery of his passion, for like this mystery itself, the fair one had appeared and vanished.

While he was in vain endeavouring to drink his coffee and eat his toast—every morsel of which was bitter in his mouth—Alina entered, and busied herself about this and that, murmuring all the time to herself, "Strange! incredible! What things one sees! Who would have thought it?"

Peregrine, whose heart beat so strongly that he could bear it no longer, asked, "What is so strange, dear Alina?"

"All manner of things! All manner of things!" replied the old woman, laughing cunningly, while she went on with her occupation of setting the rooms to rights. Peregrine's breast was ready to burst, and he involuntarily exclaimed, in a tone of languishing pain, "Ah! Alina!"

"Yes, Mr. Tyss, here I am; what are your commands?" replied Alina, spreading herself out before Peregrine, as if in expectation of his orders.

Peregrine stared at the copper face of the old woman, and all his fears were lost in the disgust which filled him on the sudden. He asked in a tolerably harsh tone:

"What has become of the strange lady who was here yesterday evening? Did you open the door for her? Did you look to a coach for her, as I ordered? Was she taken home?"

"Open doors!" said the old woman with an abominable grin, which she intended for a sly laugh. "Look to a coach! taken home! There was no need of all this: the fair damsel is in the house, and won't leave the house for the present."

Peregrine started up in joyful alarm, and she now proceeded to tell him how, when the lady was leaping down the stairs in a way that almost stunned her, Mr. Swammer stood below, at the door of his room, with an immense branch-candlestick in his hand. The old gentleman, with a profusion of bows, contrary to his usual custom, invited the lady into his apartment, and she slipped in without any hesitation, and her host locked and bolted the door.

The conduct of the misanthropic Swammer was too strange for Alina not to listen at the door, and peep a little through the keyhole. She then saw him standing in the middle of the room, and talking so wisely and pathetically to the lady, that she herself had wept, though she had not understood a single word, he having spoken in a foreign language. She could not think otherwise than that the old gentleman had laboured to bring her back to the paths of virtue, for his vehemence had gradually increased, till the damsel at last sank upon her knees and kissed his hand with great humility: she had even wept a little. Upon this he lifted her up very kindly, kissed her forehead—in doing which he was forced to stoop terribly—and then led her to an armchair. He next busied himself in making a fire, brought some spices, and, as far

as she could perceive, began to mull some wine. Unluckily the old woman had just then taken snuff, and sneezed aloud, upon which Swammer, stretching out his arm to the door, exclaimed with a terrible voice, that went through the marrow of her bones, "Away with thee, listening Satan!" She knew not how she had got off and into her bed, but in the morning, upon opening her eyes, she fancied she saw a spectre, for before her stood Mr. Swammer in a handsome sable-fur, with gold buckles, his hat on his head, his stick in his hand.

"My good Mistress Alina," he said, "I must go out on important business, and perhaps may not return for many hours. Take care, therefore, that there is no noise on my floor, and that no one ventures to enter my room. A lady of rank, and—I may tell you—a very handsome princess, has taken refuge with me. Long ago, at the court of her father, I was her governor; therefore she has confidence in me, and I must and will protect her against all evil machinations. I tell you this, Mistress Alina, that you may show the lady the respect which belongs to her rank. With Mr. Tyss's permission she will be waited on by you, for which attendance you will be royally rewarded, provided you are silent, and do not betray the princess' abode to anyone." So saying, Mr. Swammer had immediately gone off.

Peregrine now asked the old woman, if it did not seem strange that the lady, whom he could swear he met at the bookbinder's, should be a princess, seeking refuge with old Swammer? But she protested that she believed his words rather than her own eyes, and was therefore of opinion that all which had happened at the bookbinder's or in the chamber was either a magical illusion, or that the terror and anxiety of the flight had led the princess into so strange an adventure. For the rest, she would soon learn all from the lady herself.

"But," objected Peregrine, in reality only to continue the conversation about the lady, "but where is the suspicion, the evil opinion, you had of her yesterday?"

"Ah," replied the old woman simpering, "that is all over. One need only look at the dear creature to be convinced she is a princess, and as beautiful withal as ever was a princess. When Swammer had gone, I could not help looking to see what she was about, and peeping a little through the keyhole. There she lay stretched out upon the sofa, her angel head leaning upon her hand, so that the raven locks poured through the little white fingers, a beautiful sight! Her dress was of silver tissue, through which the bosom and the arms were visible, and on her feet she had golden slippers. One had fallen off, and showed that she wore no stockings, so that the naked foot peeped forth from under the garments. But, my good Mr. Tyss, she is no doubt still lying on the sofa, and if you will take the trouble of peeping through the keyhole—"

"What do you say?" interrupted Peregrine with vehemence, "What do you say? Shall I expose myself to her seductive sight, which might urge me into all manner of follies?"

"Courage, Peregrine! resist the temptation!" lisped a voice close beside him, which he instantly recognised for that of Master Flea.

The old woman laughed mysteriously, and after a few minutes' silence said, "I will tell you the whole matter, as it seems to me. Whether the strange lady be a princess or not, thus much is certain, that she is of rank and rich, and that Mr. Swammer has taken up her cause warmly, and must have been long acquainted with her. And why did she run after you, dear Mr. Tyss? I say, because she is desperately in love with you, and love makes people blind and mad, and leads even princesses into the strangest and most inconsiderate follies. A gypsy prophesied to your late mother that you would one day be happy in a marriage when you least expected it. Now it is coming true."

And with this the old woman began again describing how beautiful the lady looked. It may be easily supposed that Peregrine felt overwhelmed. At last he broke out with, "Silence, I pray you, of such things. The lady in love with me! How silly! how absurd!"

"Umph!" said the old woman. "If that were not the case she would not have sighed so piteously, she would not have exclaimed so lamentably, 'no, my dear Peregrine, my sweet friend, you will not, you cannot be cruel to me. I shall see you again, and enjoy all the happiness of heaven.' And our old Mr. Swammer! she has quite changed him. Did I ever use to get anything of him but a paltry sixpence for a Christmas box? And now he gave me this morning a crown, with such a kind look—no common thing with him—as a *douceur* beforehand for my services to the lady. There's something in it all. I'll lay you anything that in the end Mr. Swammer is her ambassador to you."

And again the old woman began to speak of the grace and loveliness of the lady with an animation that sounded strange enough in the mouth of a withered creature like herself, till Peregrine jumped up all fire and fury, and cried out like a madman, "Be it as it will—down, down to the keyhole!" In vain he was warned by Master Flea, who sat in the neckcloth of the enamoured Peregrine, and had hid himself in a fold. Peregrine did not hear his voice, and Master Flea learned what he ought to have known long before: namely, that something may be done with the most obstinate man, but not with a lover.

The lady did, indeed, lie on the sofa, just as the old woman had described, and Peregrine found that no mortal language was adequate to the expression of the heavenly charms which overspread the lovely figure. Her dress, of real silver tissue, with strange embroidery, was quite fantastic, and might do very well for the negligee of the princess Gamaheh, which she had perhaps worn in Famagusta, at the very moment of her being kissed to death by the malicious Leech-Prince. At all events it was so beautiful, and so exceedingly strange, that the idea of it could never have come from the head of the most genial theatrical tailor, nor have been conceived by the sublimest milliner.

"Yes, it is she! it is the Princess Gamaheh!" murmured Peregrine, trembling with anxiety and pleasure. But when the fair one sighed, "Peregrine! my Peregrine!" the full madness of the passion seized him, and it was only an unnameable anxiety, robbing him of all self-possession, that prevented him from breaking in the door, and throwing himself at the feet of the angel.

The friendly reader knows already how it was with the fascinations, the celestial beauty, of the little Dörtje Elverdink. The editor, however, may safely declare, that, after he too had peeped through the keyhole, and seen the fair one in her fantastic dress of tissue, he can say nothing more than that Dörtje Elverdink was a very pretty little puppet. But as no young man can possibly be in love for the first time with any but an angel, without her equal on earth, it may be allowed also to Mr. Peregrine Tyss to look upon Dörtje Elverdink as something celestial.

"Recollect yourself, my dear Mr. Tyss; think of your promise. You would never see the seductive Gamaheh again, and now I could put the microscopic glass into your eye, but without such help you must perceive that the malicious creature has long observed you, and that all she is doing is only deceit, to seduce you. Believe me, I mean it well with you." So whispered Master Flea in the fold of his collar, but, whatever doubts might arise in Mr. Peregrine's mind, he could not tear himself away from the fascinating sight of the little one, who knew well how to use the advantage of being supposed to fancy herself alone; flinging herself into all manner of voluptuous attitudes, she put the poor Peregrine quite beside himself.

He would most likely have been still fixed at the door, had it not been for a loud ringing, and Alina's crying out that Swammer had returned. Upon this he hurried up the stairs into his chamber, where he gave himself up to his love thoughts, but with these thoughts returned the doubts which had been raised in his breast by the admonitions of Master Flea. There was, indeed, a flea in his ear, and he fell into all manner of disquieting meditations. He thought to himself, "Must I not believe that this lovely creature is the Princess Gamaheh, the daughter of a mighty king? But if this be the case, it is folly, madness, to aspire to the possession of so exalted a personage. Then too she has begged the surrender of a prisoner, on whom her life depends, and as this exactly agrees with what Master Flea has said, I can hardly doubt that all which I would interpret into affection for me is only a mean to subject me to her will. And yet to leave her! to lose her! That is hell! That is death!"

In these painful meditations he was disturbed by a modest knocking at his door, and the person who entered was none other than his lodger. The ancient Mr. Swammer, at other times a shrivelled, misanthropic, grumbling man, seemed suddenly to have become twenty years younger. His forehead was smooth, his eye animated, his mouth friendly: instead of the odious black periwig he wore his natural silver hair, and in the place of the dark-gray upper coat, he had on a sable, such as Aline had before described him. With a cheerful and even friendly mien, by no means usual with him, he came up to Peregrine, protesting that he did not wish to disturb his dear host in any occupation, but his duty as a lodger required that he should the first thing in the morning inform his landlord he had been under the necessity of giving refuge to a helpless damsel, who sought to escape from the tyranny of a cruel uncle, and would therefore pass some time in the house. For this he needed the permission of his kind host, which he now requested.

Involuntarily Peregrine inquired who the lady was, without reflecting that this in fact was the best question he could ask to get a clue to the strange mystery.

"It is just and proper," replied Swammer, "that the landlord should know whom he is lodging in his house. Learn then, my respected Mr. Tyss, that the damsel, who has taken refuge with me, is none other than the fair Hollandress, Dörtje Elverdink, niece of the celebrated Leeuwenhoek, who, as you know, gives here the wonderful microscopic exhibitions. Leeuwenhoek was once my friend, but I must acknowledge that he is a hard man, and uses my goddaughter cruelly. A violent affair, which took place yesterday, compelled the maiden to flight, and it seems natural enough that she should seek help and refuge with me."

"Dörtje Elverdink!" said Peregrine, half dreaming, "Leeuwenhoek! Perhaps a descendant of the naturalist, Antonie van Leeuwenhoek, who made the celebrated microscopes."

"That our Leeuwenhoek," replied Swammer, smiling, "is a descendant of that celebrated man, I cannot exactly say, seeing that he is the celebrated man himself, and it is a mere fable that he was buried about two hundred years ago at Delft. Believe it, my dear Mr. Tyss, or else you might doubt that I am the renowned Swammerdam, although, for the sake of shortness and that I may not have to answer the questions of every curious blockhead, I call myself Swammer. Everyone maintains that I died in the year 1680, but you see, Mr. Tyss, that I stand before you alive and hearty, and that *I* am really *I*, I can prove even to the dullest, from my *Biblia Naturae*. You believe me, my worthy Mr. Tyss?"

"Since a short time—" said Mr. Tyss, in a tone that showed his mental perplexity, "Since a short time I have experienced so many wonders, that I should be in perpetual doubt, if the whole had not been a manifest subject of the senses. But now I believe everything, however wild and fantastic. It may be that you are the dead Jan Swammerdam, and, therefore, as a dead-alive, know more than other common men, but as to the flight of Dörtje Elverdink, or

the Princess Gamaheh, or however else the lady may be called, you are in a monstrous error. Hear how the matter really happened.”

Peregrine now related quite calmly the adventure he had with the lady, her entrance into Lemmerhirt’s room, up to her reception with Mr. Swammer, who, when he had done replied, “It seems to me, as if all that you have been pleased to relate were nothing more than a singular, yet very pleasant, dream. I will, however, let that be, and request your friendship, which perhaps I may have much need of. Forget my morose conduct, and let us be more intimate. Your father was a shrewd man and my good friend, but in regard to science, depth of understanding, mature judgment, and practiced insight into life, the son goes before the father. You know not how much I esteem you, my worthy Mr. Tyss.”

“Now is the time!” whispered Master Flea, and in the same moment Peregrine felt a slight passing pain in the pupil of his left eye. He knew that Master Flea had placed the microscopic glass in his eye, but he had not before had the slightest idea of its effects. Behind the tunicle of Swammer’s eyes he perceived strange nerves and branches, the perplexed course of which he traced deep into the forehead, and could perceive that they were Swammer’s thoughts. They ran much in this way: “I did not expect to get off so easily here, without being better questioned. If papa was an ignoramus, of whom I never thought anything, the son is still worse, with a greater infusion of childishness. With the simplicity of an idiot, he tells me the whole adventure with the Princess, not seeing that she must have already told me all, as my behaviour to her of necessity presupposes an earlier intimacy. But there is no help for it; I must speak him fair, because I want his help. He is simple enough to believe all I say, and, in his stupid good nature, to make many a sacrifice to my interest, for which he will reap no other thanks than that, when all is over, and Gamaheh mine again, I shall laugh soundly at him behind his back.”

“It seemed to me—” said Swammer, coming close to Peregrine. “It seemed to me, my dear Mr. Tyss, as if a flea were on your collar.”

The thoughts ran thus: “The deuce! that was, indeed, Master Flea! It would be a queer piece of business if Gamaheh should be right after all.”

Peregrine stepped nimbly back, protesting that he had no dislike to fleas.

“Then,” replied Swammer, with a profound bow, “then for the present I most respectfully take my leave, my dear Mr. Tyss.”

The thoughts ran thus: “I wish the blackwinged devil had you, idiot!”

Master Flea took the microscopic glass out of the eye of the astonished Peregrine, and then said, “You have now, my dear sir, experienced the wonderful effects of the glass, which has not its equal in the world, and must perceive what a superiority it gives you over men, by laying open before your eyes their inmost thoughts. But, if you were to use it constantly, the perpetual knowledge of their real sentiments would overwhelm you, for the bitter vexation which you have just now experienced would be too often repeated. I will always be with you when you leave your house, sitting either in your collar, or in some convenient place, and if you wish to learn the thoughts of him who is conversing with you, you have only to snap your fingers, and the glass will be in your eye immediately.”

Peregrine, seeing the manifest advantages of such a gift, was about to pour out the warmest thanks, when two deputies from the council entered, and announced to him that he was accused of a deep offence, the consequence of which must be preliminary imprisonment and the seizure of his papers.

Mr. Peregrine swore high and low that he was not conscious of the slightest offence, but one of the deputies replied with a smile that perhaps in a few hours his innocence might be proved; till when, however, he must submit to the orders of the magistrate. After this, what was left to Mr. Tyss but to get into the coach, and suffer himself to be carried off to prison? It may be supposed with what feelings he passed Mr. Swammer's chamber.

Master Flea sat in the collar of the prisoner.

IV. Fourth Adventure

The mistake of the watchman in arresting Mr. George Pepusch for a thief was soon explained. In the meantime, however, some informalities had been discovered in his passport, and for this reason they required that he should produce some resident citizen of Frankfurt as his bail, till when he must be contented with his present place in prison.

Here then sat Mr. George Pepusch in a very neat room, meditating on whom he could find in Frankfurt to be his bail. He had been away so long that he feared he must be forgotten by those who had formerly known him well, and, as to foreign recommendations, he possessed none whatever. He began to look out of the window in a very melancholy mood, and cursed his fate aloud, when a window was opened close by him, and a voice exclaimed, "What! do I see right? Is it you, George?" Mr. Pepusch was not a little astonished on perceiving the friend, with whom he had been most intimate during his residence at Madras. "The deuce!" he exclaimed, "that I should be so forgetful, so utterly stupid! I knew that you had got safely into harbour, and in Hamburg heard strange things of your way of living, and, when I had got here, never thought of paying you a visit. But he who has such wonderful things in his head as I have—Well, it is lucky that accident brought you to me! You see I am under arrest, but you can immediately set me free, by answering for my being really the George Pepusch, whom you knew years ago, and not a thief nor a robber."

"Why," replied Peregrine, "I should be an excellent bail, being myself under arrest!"

He now related at large to his friend, how since his return to Frankfurt he had found himself deprived of both his parents, and had from that time led, amidst all the bustle of a city, a lonely joyless life, devoted to the memory of other days. To this George replied morosely, "Oh yes, I have heard of it, I have heard of the fools' tricks you play, that you may waste life in a childish dream. You would be a hero of innocence, of childishness, and for this despise the just claims which society has upon you. You give imaginary family feasts, and bestow upon the poor the costly viands, the dear wines, which you have before served up to the dead. You give yourself Christmas boxes, and act as if you were a child, and then present to poor children these gifts, which are of the sort usually wasted in rich houses upon spoiled young ones. But you do not reflect that you are doing a scurvy benefit to the poor in tickling their gums with delicacies, that they may doubly feel their wretchedness, when afterwards they are compelled, by pressing hunger, to eat the vile bits that would be rejected by many a petted lapdog. Ha! how this alms-giving disgusts me, when I think that what you thus waste in a day would be sufficient to support them for months in a moderate manner. Then too you overload them with glittering gewgaws, when a common toy, presented by their fathers or mothers, gives them infinitely more pleasure. They eat themselves sick with your infernal marzipan, and with the knowledge of your splendid gifts, which in the end must be denied to them, you sow in their young minds the seeds of discontent and uneasiness. You are rich, full of youth, and yet withdraw yourself from all society, and thus frustrate the approaches of well-meaning minds. I will believe that the death of your parents may have shaken you, but if everyone who has suffered a real loss were to creep into his shell, by heavens! the whole world would be like a house of mourning, and I would not live in it. But, my friend! do you know that you are under the influence of the most determined egotism that ever lurked beneath a silly misanthropy? Go, go, Peregrine, I can no longer esteem you, no longer be your friend, if you do not change this way of life, and give up your abominable system of housekeeping."

Peregrine snapped his fingers, and Master Flea instantly placed the microscopic glass in his eye. The thoughts of the angry Pepusch ran thus: “Is it not a pity that such a kind, understanding man should fall into these dangerous fancies, which at last will completely unnerve him, and deprive him of his best powers? But it is evident that his delicate mind, which is besides inclined to melancholy, could not endure the blow inflicted on him by the death of his parents, and he seeks for consolation in a mode of life which borders upon madness. He is lost if I do not save him. The more I esteem him, the harder I will attack him, and the stronger I will paint his folly.”

In these thoughts Peregrine saw that he had found his old friend unaltered, and, after Master Flea had taken the microscopic glass out of his eye, he said, “George, I will not contend with you as to what you say of my mode of life, for I know you mean it well with me, but I must tell you that it gives me real delight when I can make a day of festival to the poor, although in this I do not think of myself a detestable egotism, of which at least I feel unconscious. They are the flowers in my life, which else seems to me like a wild melancholy field of thistles.”

“What do you say of thistles?” interrupted George Pepusch hastily, “Why do you despise thistles, and place them in opposition to flowers? Are you so little versed in natural history as not to know that the most wonderful blossom in the world is that of the thistle, I mean the *Cactus grandiflorus*. And again, is not the thistle, Zeherit, the most beautiful Cactus under the sun? Peregrine, I have so long kept it from you, or rather was forced to keep it from you, because I myself had not the full conviction of it, but now learn, that I myself am the thistle, Zeherit, and will never give up my claims to the hand of the daughter of the worthy king, Sekakis, the heavenly Princess Gamaheh. I had found her, but in the same moment the diabolical watchmen seized me, and dragged me to prison.”

“How!” cried Peregrine, half petrified with astonishment, “are you too involved in the strangest of all histories?”

“What history?” asked Pepusch.

Peregrine did not hesitate to tell his friend, as he had before told Mr. Swammer, all that had happened at the bookbinder’s, and afterwards at his own house. He did not even conceal the appearance of Master Flea, although, as may be easily supposed, he kept to himself the secret of his possessing the microscopic glass.

George’s eyes burnt, he bit his lips, struck his forehead, and, when Peregrine had ended, cried out like a maniac, “The false one! the traitress!” Greedy, in the self-pangs of despairing love, to drain the last drop from the poison cup, which Peregrine had unconsciously proffered him, he made him repeat every little trait of Dörtje’s behaviour, interrupting him with murmurs of, “In the arms! On the breast! Glowing kisses!” Then again he started away from the window, and ran about the room with the gestures of a madman. In vain Peregrine cried out to him to hear the rest, exclaiming that he had much that was consolatory to say—Pepusch did not the more leave off his raving.

The door was opened, and an officer of the council announced to Peregrine that no sufficient cause had been found for his longer imprisonment, and he might return home.

The first use Peregrine made of his regained freedom was to offer himself as bail for George Pepusch, testifying that he was really George Pepusch, with whom he had lived in intimacy at Madras, and who was known to him for a man of fortune and respectability.

Master Flea exhausted himself in very philosophic and instructive reflections, which amounted to this: that the Thistle, Zeherit, in spite of his rough exterior, was very kind and reasonable, but a little too overbearing, and fairly considered was quite correct in his censure

of Mr. Peregrine's way of life, though somewhat too harsh perhaps in his expressions. He too—that is, Master Flea—would really advise Mr. Peregrine henceforth to go abroad in the world.

“Believe me,” he said, “it will bring you many advantages to leave your solitude. You need no longer fear seeming shy and confused, as with the mysterious glass in your eye you command the thoughts of men, and it is therefore impossible that you should not always maintain the right tact. How firmly and calmly may you stand before the highest, while their inward souls lie open to your eyes. Therefore, move freely in the world; your blood will circulate more lightly, all melancholy brooding will cease and, which is the best of all, motley ideas and thoughts will arise in your brain; the image of the fair Gamaheh will lose its brightness, and you will soon be better able to keep your word with me.”

Peregrine felt that both George Pepusch and Master Flea meant him well, and he resolved to follow their wise advice. But when he heard the sweet voice of his beautiful beloved, he could not think how it was possible for him to leave the house, which had become a paradise to him.

At length he brought himself to visit a public promenade. Master Flea had fixed the glass in his eye, and taken up a place in his collar, where he gently rocked himself to and fro at his ease.

“Have I at last the pleasure of seeing my good friend Mr. Tyss again? You make yourself scarce, my dear sir, and we have all been longing for you. Let us go into a coffeehouse, and take a glass of wine together. I am truly rejoiced to see you.”

It was thus that he was addressed by a young man, whom he had seen scarcely two or three times. The thoughts ran thus: “Is the stupid misanthrope visible again? But I must flatter him, that I may soon borrow money of him. He'll not surely be possessed by the devil, and accept my invitation; I have not a halfpenny in my pocket, and no innkeeper will trust me any longer.”

Two well-dressed girls now crossed him. They were sisters, distantly related to him.

“Ah, cousin!” cried one of them, laughing, “do we meet you at last? It is not well done to lock yourself up so that one can never get a sight of you. You do not know how fond mamma is of you, because you are such a sensible man. Promise me to come soon. There, kiss my hand.” The thoughts ran thus: “How! what is this? what has come to our cousin? I wanted to make him blush and stammer, and formerly he used to run away from every girl, but now he stands and eyes me so strangely, and kisses my hand without the least shyness. If he should be in love with me? That would be a fine thing! My mother says that he is somewhat stupid, but what does that signify? I will have him: a stupid man, when he is rich as my cousin is, is the very best.” The sister had merely lisped, with downcast eyes and blushing cheeks, “Come to us shortly, dear cousin.” The thoughts ran thus: “Our cousin is a very handsome man, and I do not understand why mamma calls him silly, and can't endure him. If he should come to our house, he will fall in love with me, for I am the prettiest girl in all Frankfurt. I will have him, because I want a rich man, that I may sleep till twelve o'clock in the day, and wear dearer shawls than my sister.”

A physician, in passing, perceived Peregrine, stopped his carriage, and called out, “Good morning, my dear sir: you look uncommonly well; heaven keep you so! But, if anything should happen, think of me, the old friend of your late father: such sound constitutions as yours I can soon set to rights. Adieu.” The thoughts ran thus: “I believe the fellow is constantly well out of pure avarice, but he looks tolerably pale now, and seems at last to have something the matter with him. Well; only let him once come under my hands, and he shall

not soon get up from his bed again; he shall undergo a sound penance for his obstinate health.”

Immediately after this, an old merchant cried out to him, “My best greetings to you, worthy Mr. Tyss; see how I am forced to run and bustle, and plague myself with business. You have done wisely in withdrawing from it, though with your quick-sightedness you could not fail of doubling your father’s fortune.” The thoughts were thus: “If the fool would only meddle with business, he would speculate away his whole fortune in a short time, and that would be a real delight. His old papa, whose joy was in ruining other people that wished to help themselves by a little bankruptcy, would turn himself about in his grave.”

Many more such cutting contrasts between words and thoughts occurred to Peregrine. He always directed his answers rather by what people meant than by what they said, and, as he penetrated into their inmost intents, they themselves were puzzled what to think of him. At last he felt wearied, snapped his fingers, and immediately the glass vanished from the pupil of his left eye.

On returning to his house he was surprised by a strange spectacle. A man stood in the middle of the passage, looking steadfastly through a strangely-formed glass at Mr. Swammer’s door. Upon this door sun-bright circles played in rainbow colours, and then met in one fiery point, that seemed to pierce through the wood. As this took place a deep sighing was heard, broken by cries of pain, which came, as it appeared, from the room. To his horror, Peregrine fancied that he distinguished Gamaheh’s voice.

“What do you want? what are you doing here?” he exclaimed to the man, who really seemed to be practising diabolic arts, the rainbow circles growing with every moment quicker and brighter, the centre-point piercing more keenly, and the cries sounding more painfully from the chamber.

“Oh!” exclaimed the stranger, closing his glass, and hastily putting it into his pocket, “Oh! the landlord. Your pardon, my dear sir, that I am operating here without your permission; I did indeed pay you a visit to request it, but Alina told me you had gone out, and the business here would admit of no delay.”

“What business?” said Peregrine, pretty harshly; “what business is it that will admit of no delay?”

“Don’t you know,” replied the stranger with an odious grin, “don’t you know that my ill-advised niece, Dörtje Elverdink, has run away? You were arrested, though with great injustice, as her seducer, on which score I will with great pleasure testify your perfect innocence, if it should be requisite. It is not to you, but to Swammerdam, once my friend, and now my enemy, that the faithless Dörtje has fled. She is in that chamber—I know it—and alone, since Swammerdam has gone out. I cannot get in, as the door is barred and bolted, and I am too mild to employ force, but I have taken the liberty to torment her a little with my optical glass, that she may know I am her lord and master in spite of her imaginary princess-ship.”

“You are the devil!” exclaimed Peregrine, in the highest indignation, “You are the devil! but not lord and master of the beautiful Gamaheh. Out of my house! Practise your devil’s tricks where you will, but here you will fail with them, I can promise you.”

“Don’t put yourself in a passion,” replied Leeuwenhoek, “Don’t put yourself in a passion, my dear Mr. Tyss; I am an innocent man, who means nothing but good. It is a little monster, a little basilisk, that sits in yonder room, in the shape of a lovely woman. If the abode with my insignificance displeased her, she might have fled, but the traitress should not have robbed

me of my most precious treasure, the best friend of my soul, without whom I am nothing. She should not have run away with Master Flea. You will not understand what I mean, worthy sir, but—”

Here Master Flea, who had planted himself in a secure place, could not refrain from bursting out into a fine mocking laugh.

“Ha!” cried Leeuwenhoek, struck with a sudden terror, “ha! what was that? Can it be possible? Here, on this spot? Permit me, my dear sir—”

Thus saying, Leeuwenhoek stretched out his hand, and snatched at Peregrine’s collar, who dexterously avoided his grasp, and, seizing him with a strong arm, dragged him towards the door, to fling him out without farther ado. But just as he had reached the door, it was opened from without, and in rushed George Pepusch, followed by Swammerdam.

No sooner did Leeuwenhoek perceive his enemy Swammerdam, than he burst from Peregrine with the utmost exertion of his last strength, and planted himself with his back against the door of the mysterious chamber, where the fair one was imprisoned. Swammerdam, seeing this, took a little telescope from his pocket, drew it out at full length, and fell upon his adversary, exclaiming, “Draw, scoundrel, if you have courage!”

Leeuwenhoek had quickly a similar instrument in his hand, drew it out as the other had done, and cried, “Come on; I am ready, and you shall soon feel my prowess.”

Each now put his glass to his eye, and fell furiously upon the other with sharp, murderous glances, now lengthening and now shortening his weapon by drawing the tubes in and out. There were feints, parries, thrusts, in short, all the tricks of the fencing-school, and with every moment they seemed to grow more angry. Whenever one was hit he cried out aloud, sprang into the air, cut the most wonderful capers, made the most beautiful entrechats, and turned pirouettes, as well as the best *pas seul* dancer on the Parisian stage, till his adversary fixed him fast with the shortened telescope. When the other was hit he did precisely the same, and in this way they went on interchangeably with the most violent springs, the maddest gestures, and the most furious cries. The perspiration dropped from their brows, the blood-red eyes seemed starting from their heads, and as there appeared no other cause for their St. Vitus’ dance than their looking at each other through their glasses, they might have been taken for maniacs, just escaped from the madhouse. For the rest, it was a very pretty sight.

Swammerdam at last succeeded in driving Leeuwenhoek from his post by the door—which he had maintained with obstinate bravery—and thus carrying on the war in the remoter parts of the ground. George Pepusch saw the opportunity, pressed against the unoccupied door, that was neither barred nor bolted, and slipped into the chamber, but in the next moment he rushed out, exclaiming, “She has fled! Fled!” and then hurried out of the house with the rapidity of lightning.

Both Leeuwenhoek and Swammerdam were seriously wounded, for both hopped and danced about after a mad fashion, and with their howlings and cryings made a music to it that seemed like the shrieks of the damned in hell. Peregrine knew not how to set about separating them, and thus ending a contest, which was as ludicrous as it was terrific. At last the combatants perceived that the door stood wide open, forgot their duel and their pains, put their destructive weapons into their pockets, and rushed into the chamber.

Mr. Tyss took it grievously to heart that the fair one had fled from his house, and wished the abominable Leeuwenhoek at the devil, when the voice of Alina was heard upon the stairs. She was laughing aloud, and muttered between, “What strange things one does see! Wonderful! incredible!”

“What?” cried Peregrine dejectedly, “what wonder has happened now?”

“Oh, my dear Mr. Tyss!” exclaimed the old woman, “only come upstairs directly, and go into your chamber.”

And she opened the room-door with a cunning titter. On entering, O wonder! O joy! the little Dörtje Elverdink tripped up to him, in her dress of tissue, as he had before seen her at Mr. Swammer’s.

“At length I see you again!” lisped the little one, and contrived to nestle up so closely to Peregrine, that he could not help embracing her most tenderly in spite of all his good resolutions. His senses seemed ecstasied by love and joy.

It has often happened to a man that in the height of his transports he has hit his nose somewhat roughly, and, being suddenly awakened out of his heaven by the earthly pain, has tumbled down again into the vulgar world. Just so it chanced with our Mr. Tyss. In stooping down to kiss Dörtje’s sweet mouth, he gave his nose, of goodly dimensions, a hard blow against the diadem of shining brilliants, which the little one wore in her raven locks. The pain of the blow upon the sharp points of the stone brought him sufficiently to himself to perceive the diadem. The diadem reminded him of the Princess Gamaheh, and with this recollection recurred all that Master Flea had told him of the little siren. He bethought himself that a Princess, the daughter of a mighty king, could not possibly care about his love, and therefore all her pretended affection must be a mere trick, by which the dissembler hoped to regain possession of Master Flea. With this consideration a cold ice stream seemed to rush through his veins, which, if it did not quite extinguish, at least damped, the love flames.

Peregrine gently freed himself from the arms of the little one, who had lovingly embraced him, and said with downcast eyes, “Oh, heavens! you are the daughter of the mighty King Sekakis, the beautiful Gamaheh. Your pardon, princess, if a feeling, which I could not master, hurried me into folly, into madness. But yourself, lady—”

“What are you saying, my fair friend?” interrupted Dörtje Elverdink; “I the daughter of a mighty king? I a princess? I am your Alina, who will love you to distraction, if you—but how is this? Alina, the queen of Golconda? she is already with you; I have spoken with her—a good kind woman, but she has grown old, and is no longer so handsome as in the time of her marriage with the French general. Woe is me! I am not the right one; I never ruled in Golconda. Woe is me!”

The little one had closed her eyes, and began to totter. Peregrine conveyed her to a sofa.

“Gamaheh!” she went on, speaking in a state of somnambulism, “Gamaheh, do you say? Gamaheh, the daughter of King Sekakis? Yes, I recollect, in Famagusta! I was indeed a beautiful tulip—Yet no, even then I felt desire and love in my breast. Still, still on that point...”

She was silent, and seemed to be falling into a perfect slumber. Peregrine undertook the perilous enterprise of placing her in a more convenient position, but, as he gently embraced her, a concealed pin prickled him sharply in the finger. According to his custom he snapt his fingers, and Master Flea, taking it for the concerted signal, immediately placed the microscopic glass in his eye.

Now, as usual, Peregrine saw behind the tunicle of the eyes the strange interweaving of nerves and veins, which pierced deep into the brain. But with these were twined bright silver threads, a hundred times thinner than the thinnest spider’s web, and it was these very threads that confused him, for they seemed to be endless, branching out into something indistinguishable even by the microscopic eye; perhaps they were thoughts of a sublimer

kind, the others of a sort more easily comprehended. Then he observed flowers, strangely blended, which took the shape of men, then again men, who dissolved as it were into the earth, and peeped forth again as stones and metals. Amongst these all manner of beasts were in motion, who underwent innumerable changes, and spoke strange languages. No one appearance answered to the other, and in the plaintive sounds of sorrow that filled the air, there was a dissonance, corresponding with that of the images. But it was this very dissonance that ennobled still more the deep fundamental harmony, which broke out triumphantly, and united all that seemed irreconcilable.

“Do not puzzle yourself,” whispered Master Flea, “do not puzzle yourself, my good Peregrine; those which you see, are the images of a dream. Even if anything more should lurk behind them, now is not the time for farther inquiry. Only call the little deceiver by her real name, and then sift her as much as you please.”

As the lady had many names, it must have been difficult, one would have thought, for Peregrine to hit upon the right, but, without the least reflection, he exclaimed, “Dörtje Elverdink! dear, charming girl; was it no deceit? Is it possible that you can love me?”

Immediately the little one awoke from her dreamy state, opened her eye, and said with burning glance, “What a doubt, my Peregrine! Could a maiden do as I have done, unless her breast were filled with the most glowing passion? Peregrine, I love you more than anyone, and, if you will be mine, I am yours with my whole soul, and remain with you because I cannot leave you, and not merely to escape from the tyranny of my uncle.”

The silver threads had disappeared, and the thoughts, properly arranged, ran thus: “How is this? At first I feigned a passion for him only to regain Master Flea for myself and Leeuwenhoek, and now I actually am fond of him. I have caught myself in my own snares. I think no more of Master Flea, and would like to be his, who seems lovelier to me than any man I have ever seen.”

It may be easily supposed what effect these thoughts produced in Peregrine’s breast. He fell on his knees before the fair one, covered her hand with a thousand burning kisses, called her his joy, his heaven, his whole happiness.

“Well!” lisped the maiden, drawing him gently to her side, “well, my love, you certainly will not deny a request, on the fulfilment of which depends the repose, nay, the very existence of your beloved.”

“Demand,” replied Peregrine, tenderly embracing her, “demand anything, my life—anything you will. Your slightest wish is my command. Nothing in the world is so dear to me that I would not with pleasure sacrifice it to you and your affection.”

“Woe is me!” lisped Master Flea, “who could have imagined that the little traitress would have conquered? I am lost!”

“Hear then,” replied Gamaheh, after having returned with equal fire the glowing kisses, which Peregrine imprinted on her lips, “Hear then: I know how the—”

The door burst open, and in rushed George Pepusch.

“Zeherit!” cried the little one in despair, and fell back on the sofa, senseless.

The Thistle, Zeherit, flew to the princess, took her in his arms, and ran off with the speed of lightning.

For this time Master Flea was saved.

V. Fifth Adventure

With the speed of lightning—as the reader has already learned at the conclusion of the fourth adventure—George Pepusch snatched the fair one from the arms of the enamoured Peregrine, and left him behind petrified with astonishment and terror. When at length the latter came to his recollection, and would have followed his robber-friend, all was still and desolate in the house. Upon his repeated calling, the old Alina came pattering up the stairs from one of the farthest rooms, and declared that she had not observed any, the slightest part of the whole business.

Peregrine was nigh going mad at the loss of Dörtje, but Master Flea began to console him in a tone that must have inspired the most desperate with confidence: “You are not yet quite certain, my dear Mr. Peregrine, whether the fair Dörtje Elverdink has really left your house. As well as I can judge of such things, she is not far off; I seem to feel her nearness. But, if you will follow my friendly counsel, you will leave her to her fate. Trust me, she is as capricious as the wind. It may be, as you have said, that she now is really fond of you, but how long will it be before she plunges you into such misery, that you will be in danger from it of losing your reason, like the Thistle, Zeherit? I say again, give up your lonely way of life. You will be the better for it. How many women have you known, that you should take Dörtje for the handsomest of her sex? What maiden have you approached with love, that you should believe that Dörtje alone can love you? Go to, Peregrine; experience will show you better. You are a well-made, handsome man, and I should not be so keen-sighted, as Master Flea really is, if I could not see beforehand that love would smile upon you in a very different way from what you may expect.”

Peregrine had already broken the ice by going abroad in public places, and it was therefore the less difficult for him to visit societies, from which he had formerly withdrawn himself. In this Master Flea rendered him excellent service with his microscopic glass, and he is said during this time to have kept a daybook, and to have made notes of the most remarkable and pleasant contradictions between words and thoughts, as they daily occurred to him. Perhaps the editor of this strange tale, called *Master Flea*, may find some future opportunity of bringing to light many worthy impartments from this same daybook; here it would only stop the current of the history, and, therefore, would not be welcome to the reader. So much, however, may be said, that many of the phrases with the corresponding thoughts seemed to be stereotyped as it were; as for example, “Favour me with your advice,” the thought being, “He is fool enough to think I ask his advice in a matter that I have long since resolved upon, and that tickles him.” “I have the most perfect confidence in you,” the thought being, “I knew long ago that you were a scoundrel,” etc. It should also be mentioned that many folks mightily puzzled Peregrine with his microscopic observations. These were the young men, who fell into raptures upon everything, and poured themselves forth in a torrent of splendid phrases. Amongst these the most remarkable were the young poets, who were boiling over with imagination and genius, and were particularly adored by the ladies. To these were associated the bluestockings, who were as familiar with metaphysics as the less learned part of their sex with scandal, and could talk like any parson in his pulpit. If it seemed strange to Peregrine that the silver threads should twine together out of Gamaheh’s brain into an undistinguishable something, he was not a little astonished at what he saw in the heads of those above mentioned. He saw indeed the strange weaving of nerves and veins, but remarked at the same time, that when the owners of them spoke most learnedly on art and science, they did not penetrate the brain, but were reflected outwards, so that all recognition

of the thoughts was out of the question. He imparted his observation to Master Flea, who usually sat in a fold of his neckcloth, and Master Flea was of the opinion that what Peregrine took for thoughts were in reality none, but merely words, which in vain endeavoured to become thoughts.

If Mr. Tyss began now to amuse himself in society, his faithful companion also laid aside much of his gravity, and exhibited himself as a knavish little voluptuary, an amiable *roué*. He could not see the fair neck or the white bosom of any beauty, without slipping out of his hiding place with the first opportunity, and springing on the inviting spot, where he very dexterously contrived to elude the attacks of pursuing fingers. This manoeuvre combined a double interest. In the first place, he found a pleasure in it for the thing itself, and then, he hoped, by drawing Peregrine's attention to the fair ones, to cast Dörtje's image into shadow. This however seemed to be a fruitless labour, for none of all the ladies, whom he now approached without the least timidity, seemed to him so fair and lovely as his little princess. The great cause however of his continued constancy was that in none he found the words and thoughts so united in his favour as with her. He was convinced that he could never leave her, and this he repeated incessantly. Master Flea was in no little alarm.

One day Peregrine remarked that the old Alina laughed very cunningly, took snuff more frequently than usual, muttered strangely—in short, acted altogether like one who is big with a secret and would fain be disburdened of it. To everything she replied, “Yes, one can't tell that! one must wait!” whether these words were suited to the occasion or not, till at last Peregrine, full of impatience, exclaimed, “Speak it out at once; tell me what is the matter, without creeping around me with those mysterious looks.”

“Ah!” cried the old woman, clasping her withered hands together, “ah! the dear little thing! the sweet little puppet!”

“Whom do you mean?” asked Peregrine angrily.

“Ah!” said the old woman, smirking. “Ah! whom should I mean but our princess, below here with Mr. Swammer—your bride, Mr. Tyss?”

“Woman!” cried Mr. Tyss, “unlucky woman, she is here! In the house! And you do not tell me till now?”

“Where,” replied the old woman, without in the least losing her composure, “Where should the princess be but here, where she has found her mother?”

“How!” cried Peregrine, “what is it you say, Alina?”

“Yes,” rejoined the old woman, drawing herself up, “Yes, Alina is my right name, and who knows what else may come to light, in a short time, before your nuptials?”

Peregrine entreated her, by all the angels and devils, to go on, but, without paying the least attention to his hurry, she seated herself snugly in the armchair, drew out her snuffbox, took a prodigious pinch, and demonstrated to Peregrine very circumstantially, that there was no worse failing than impatience.

“Calmness, my son; calmness is above all things requisite, or otherwise you run the risk of losing all in the moment that you think you have gained it. Before you get a word out of me, you must first promise to seat yourself there, quite quietly like a pretty-behaved child, and for the life of you not to interrupt me in my story.”

Nothing was left to Peregrine but to obey the old woman, who, when he had seated himself, related things that were strange enough to hear.

According to the old woman's tale, the two gentlemen, namely, Swammerdam and Leeuwenhoek, had another tough struggle in the chamber, and for a time kept up a terrible clatter. Then again all had become quite still, when a heavy moaning had made her fancy that one of the two was mortally wounded, but on peeping through the keyhole she perceived something quite different from what she had expected. Swammerdam and Leeuwenhoek had seized George Pepusch, and stroked and squeezed him with their fists, so that he grew thinner and thinner, during which operation he had uttered the moans heard by the old woman. At last, when he had grown as thin as a thistle-stem, they had tried to squeeze him through the keyhole, and the poor Pepusch was hanging with half his body out, when she ran away in terror. Soon afterwards she heard a loud laughing, and saw Pepusch in his natural form, quietly led out of the house by the two magicians, while at the room door stood Dörtje and beckoned her in. The little one wished to dress herself, and needed her assistance.

The old woman could not talk enough of the great heap of clothes which the princess brought out of a variety of chests and showed to her, each of which had appeared richer than the other. She declared that none but an Indian princess could possess such jewels as the little one; her eyes still ached with the glitter. She then went on to say how, during the dressing, she had talked of this and that, of the late Mr. Tyss, on the delightful life they had formerly led in the house, and at last the conversation had fallen upon her deceased relations.

“You know, my dear Mr. Tyss, that nothing is more valued by me than my late cousin, the calico-printer's wife. She was in Maintz, and, I believe, even in the Indies, and could speak French and sing. If I owe to my cousin the unchristian name of Alina, I will forgive her that in the grave, since it is from her alone that I have learned polite manners and the art of speaking elegantly. As I was talking much of my cousin, the little princess asked after my father, my grandfather, and so on, higher and higher up the family. I opened my heart to her, told her that my mother had been almost as handsome as myself, except that I go beyond her in regard to the nose, which I derive from my father, and which is after the shape that has been usual in the family since the memory of man. Then I came to speak of the country wake, when I waltzed with Sergeant Drumstick, and wore the skyblue stockings with red clocks. Ah, dear God! we are all weak, sinful creatures! But oh! Mr. Tyss, you should have seen how the little princess, who at first had laughed and tittered, that it was a pleasure to hear her, now grew more and more quiet, and gazed on me with such odd looks, that I began to be terribly alarmed. And then think, Mr. Tyss, on a sudden, before I could prevent it, she lies on her knees before me, and will positively kiss my hand, exclaiming, ‘Yes, it is you! Now I recognise you! It is yourself!’ and when, quite astonished, I asked what it all meant—”

Here the old woman stopped, and, when Peregrine pressed her to go on, she with great gravity and precision took a mighty pinch of snuff, and said,

“You'll know in good time, my son, what farther happened. Everything has its time and hour.”

He was now more urgent than ever with the old woman to proceed, when she burst out into a roaring fit of laughter, upon which he admonished her, with a very sour face, that his room was not exactly the place for her to play off such fooleries. But the old woman, planting her hands in her sides, seemed ready to burst. The burning red of her brow changed to an agreeable mahogany, and Peregrine was upon the point of flinging a glass of water into the old woman's face, when she recovered her breath and speech at the same time.

“I can't help laughing,” she said, “I can't help laughing at the foolish little thing. No; such love is no longer on earth. Only think, Mr. Tyss—”

Here she broke out into a fresh fit of laughter, and Peregrine's patience was well nigh exhausted. At last, with much difficulty, he got out of her that the little princess had taken up the whimsical notion of Mr. Tyss being positively determined to marry the old woman, and had compelled her solemnly to promise to reject his hand.

It seemed to Peregrine as if he were mixed up in a scene of witchery, and he felt so strangely, that even the honest old Alina appeared to him a supernatural kind of being, from whom he could not fly with sufficient speed. But she still detained him, having something to communicate in all haste, that concerned the little princess.

"It is now certain," she said confidentially, "It is now certain, my dear Mr. Tyss, that the bright star of fortune has arisen, but it is your business to keep it favourable. When I protested to the little one that you were desperately smitten with her, and far from any idea of marrying me, she replied, that she could not be convinced of it and give you her hand till you had complied with a wish that had long sat near her heart. She says that she had a pretty little negro boy in her service who had fled from her; I have indeed denied it, but she maintains that the boy is so little he might live in a nutshell."

"Nothing will ever come of this," exclaimed Peregrine violently, well knowing what the old woman was driving at, and rushed out of the room, and then out of the house, with great vehemence.

It is an established custom, that when the hero of a tale is under any violent agitation, he should run out into a forest, or at least, into some lonely wood, and the custom is good, because it really prevails in life. Hence it could not be otherwise with Mr. Tyss, than that he ran from his house without stopping, till he had left the city behind him and reached a remote wood. Moreover, as in a romantic history no wood must be without rustling leaves, sighing breezes, murmuring brooks, etc., etc. it is to be supposed that Peregrine found all these things in his place of refuge. Upon a mossy stone, the lower half of which lay in a bright brook, Peregrine sat down with a firm resolution to reflect on his strange adventures, and, if possible, find the Ariadne clue which might show the way out of this labyrinth of mysteries. The murmurs of the leaves, returning at equal intervals, the monotonous babbling of the waters, the constant clap, clap of a distant mill, soon formed a ground which regulated the thoughts so that they no longer rushed wildly together without time or rhythms, but became an intelligible melody. Thus, after sitting some time on this pleasant spot, he got to reflect calmly.

"In reality," he said to himself, "a fantastic tale-writer could not have invented wilder events than I have actually gone through in the short space of a few days. Beauty, love itself visits the lonely misogynist, and a look, a word, is sufficient to fan, in his breast, the flames which he had dreaded without knowing them. But the time, the place, the whole appearance of the strange siren are so mysterious, that it seems to be the result of magic. And then it is not long before a despised little insect evinces knowledge, understanding—nay, even a sort of supernatural power. And this creature talks of things which to common minds are incomprehensible, in a way as if it all were nothing more than the familiar today and yesterday of usual life, as it appears repeated for the thousandth time.

"Have I come too near the flywheel, that dark unknown powers are driving, and has it caught me in its whirlings? Would not one believe, that the reason must be lost with such things, when they cross the path of life? And yet I find myself quite well, withal: nay, it no longer seems strange to me that a Flea King should have sought my protection, and in requital have entrusted me with a mystery that opens to me the secrets of thought, and thus sets me above the deceptions of life. But whither will or can all this lead? How, if under this singular mask

of a flea, an evil demon lurked, who sought to lure me into destruction, who aimed to rob me of all the happiness that might bloom to me in the possession of Dörtje?... Were it not better to get rid at once of the little monster?"

"That was a very pitiful idea, Mr. Tyss!" exclaimed Master Flea, interrupting Peregrine's soliloquy. "Do you imagine that the mystery I have entrusted to you is a trifle? Should not this gift pass for the most decided proof of my sincere friendship? Shame on you for being suspicious! You are surprised at the reason, the mind, of a little despised insect, and that proves—don't be offended—the narrowness of your education in science. I wish, in regard to the thinking instinctive soul of animals, you had read the Greek Philo, or, at least, the treatise of Hieronymus Rorarius, *Quod Animalia Bruta Ratione Utantur Melius Homine*; or his oration *Pro Muribus*; or that you knew what Lipsius and the great Leibnitz thought of the mental power of beasts; or that you were aware what the profound Rabbi Maimonides has said about their souls; you would not then take me for a demon on account of my understanding, or measure the spiritual faculties by the proportions of the body. I suppose, at last, you will come to the shrewd opinion of the Spanish physician, Gomez Pereira, who could find nothing more in animals than mere artificial machines, without thought or freedom of will, moving arbitrarily and automatically. Yet, no: I cannot deem you so absurd, and am convinced that you have long ago learned better through my humble person. Moreover, I do not well understand what you call wonders, or in what way you are able to divide into the wonderful and natural, the appearances of our being, which—in reality—are ourselves, as we and they mutually condition each other. Do not, therefore, wonder at anything because it has not yet occurred to you, or because you fancy you do not see the connection of cause and effect; that only proves the natural or diseased obtuseness of your sight, which injures your perception. But—do not take it amiss, Mr. Peregrine—the drollest part of the business is that you want to split yourself into two parts, one of which recognises and willingly believes the so-called wonders; the other, on the contrary, is mightily astonished at this recognition and belief. Has it ever occurred to you, that you believe in the images of dreams?"

"I!" exclaimed Peregrine, "My dear fellow, how can you talk of dreams, which are only the result of some disorder in our corporeal or intellectual structure?"

At these words Master Flea burst into a laugh, as fine as it was mocking, and then said to Mr. Tyss, who was not a little confounded,

"My poor friend, is your understanding so little enlightened, that you do not see the folly of such opinions? Since the time that Chaos melted together into plastic matter—it may be a tolerably long time ago—the spirit of the universe has formed all shapes out of this existing material, and from this come also dreams and their images. These images are sketches of what has been, or probably of what is yet to be, which the soul rapidly puts together for its amusement when the tyrant, called body, has released it from its slavish servitude. But here is neither time nor place to refute you, and bring you to a better conviction; perhaps, too, it would be of no use whatever to you. One thing only I should like to explain."

"Dear master," cried Peregrine, "speak, or be silent, as you think proper; do what to you seems best, for I plainly perceive that however small you may be, you have deep knowledge and sound understanding. You compel from me unconditional confidence, although I do not quite comprehend your figurative modes of speech."

"Learn then," resumed Master Flea, "that you are very strangely implicated in the history of the Princess Gamaheh. Swammerdam and Leeuwenhoek, the Thistle, Zeherit, and the Leech-Prince, as well as the Genius, Thetel, are all striving after the princess, and even I myself must confess that, alas! my old passion is reviving, and I could be fool enough to share my

sovereignty with the false fair one. But you—you, Mr. Peregrine, are the principal person, and without your consent, Gamaheh can belong to no one. If you wish to understand the more particular connection of the whole, which I myself do not know, you must speak to Leeuwenhoek about it; he has found it out, and will certainly let out much, if you will take the pains, and know how to question him.”

Master Flea was about to continue, when a man leapt from the bushes in boiling passion, and flew upon Peregrine.

“Ha!” cried George Pepusch, with frantic gestures—for it was he, “Ha! faithless, treacherous friend! Have I found you? Found you in the fateful hour? Up then! pierce this breast, or fall by my hand.”

With this he drew a brace of pistols from his pocket, pressed one into Peregrine’s hand, and took his ground with the other, crying, “Shoot, coward! shoot!”

Peregrine placed himself, but declared that nothing should induce him to the incurable madness of entering into a duel with his only friend, without even a suspicion of the cause. At all events he would in no case be the first to begin a murderous attack.

At this Pepusch burst into a wild laugh, and in the same moment the ball went through Peregrine’s hat. The latter remained staring at his friend in profound silence, without picking up the hat, which had fallen to the ground, when Pepusch advanced a few steps towards him, and murmured in a hollow voice, “Shoot!” Peregrine fired his pistol in the air.

With the voice and gestures of a madman, Pepusch now flung himself upon his friend’s breast, and cried out, in heartrending tones, “She is dying! dying for you, unlucky one! Quick! Save her! You can do it—save her for yourself, and let me perish in my despair!”

Pepusch ran off so fast that Peregrine had lost sight of him on the instant, and now a fearful foreboding came over him, that his friend’s mad behaviour must have been occasioned by something terrible which had happened to the little one, whereupon he hastened back to the city.

On entering his house, he was met by the old woman, loudly lamenting that the poor princess was on the sudden taken violently ill, and was dying. Mr. Swammer himself had gone after the most celebrated physician in Frankfurt.

With the feelings of death at his heart, he crept into Mr. Swammer’s room that was opened to him by the old woman. There lay the little one upon a sofa, pale and stiff like a corpse, and it was not till he knelt down and bent over her that he perceived her gentle breathing. No sooner had he touched her icy hand, than a painful smile played about her lips, and she lisped:

“Is it you, my sweet friend? Have you come to see her once again, who loves you so unspeakably—who dies, alas! because she cannot breathe without you?”

Dissolving in sorrow, Peregrine poured himself forth in protestations of the tenderest love, and repeated, that nothing in the world was so dear to him that he would not sacrifice it to her. Out of words grew kisses, but in these kisses again words, like the breathings of love, were distinguishable.

“You know, my Peregrine, how much I love you. I can be yours, you, mine. I can recover on the spot—you will see me bloom again in my youthful splendour, like a flower refreshed by the morning dew, and joyfully lifting up his drooping head. . . . But—give me up the prisoner, my dear, beloved Peregrine, or else you will see me perish before your eyes, in unutterable death pangs. Peregrine—I can no more—it is all over!”

With this she sank back upon the cushions, from which she had half raised herself; her bosom heaved tumultuously up and down, as if, in the death-pangs; her lips grew bluer, and her eyes seemed to break.

In wild anguish Peregrine caught at his neckcloth, from which Master Flea now leapt, of his own accord, upon the white neck of the little one, exclaiming, in a tone of the deepest grief, "I am lost!"

Peregrine stretched out his hand to catch the Master, but suddenly it seemed as if some invisible power held back his arm, and far other thoughts ran through his head than those which till now had occupied it.

"How!" thought he, "Because you are a frail man, and influenced by a mad passion, will you therefore betray him, to whom you have promised your protection? Will you therefore plunge a free, harmless people into eternal slavery, and utterly ruin the friend whose thoughts and words agree? No, no, recollect yourself, Peregrine! Rather die than be a traitor!"

"Give... up... the prisoner... I am dying!" stammered the little one, with failing voice.

"No!" cried Peregrine, while in despair he caught her in his arms, "No! never! But let me die with you!"

And now a fine, penetrating harmony was heard, as if little silver bells were struck. Dörtje, with fresh roses on her lips and cheeks, started up suddenly from the sofa, and, breaking into a convulsive laughter, skipped about the chamber. She seemed to have been bit by the tarantula.

Peregrine gazed in terror on the strange spectacle, and the same did the physician, who stood at the door quite petrified, keeping out Mr. Swammer, who had followed him.

VI. Sixth Adventure

All the passersby stopped, stretched out their necks, and peeped through the window into the coffee room. With every moment the crowd grew greater, the pressure more violent, and the noise louder. All this was occasioned by two strangers, who—besides that their form, their dress, their whole manner had something extraordinary about it, that was repulsive and ridiculous at the same time—played off many wonderful tricks, such as had never been seen before. The one, an old man, of a dirty, disagreeable appearance, was dressed in a surtout of shining stuff. Sometimes he made himself thin and long, sometimes he would shrink himself up to a short fat fellow, winding about all the time like a worm. The other, with powdered hair, motly silk coat, underdress of the same, large silver buckles, and altogether resembling a *petit-maître* of the last half of the foregoing century, repeatedly flew up to the ceiling, and then gently let himself down again, while, with a cheerful voice, he trilled discordant songs in a language altogether unknown.

According to the host's declaration, they had both come in—one a short time after the other—like orderly people, and had called for wine. Then they had gazed more and more keenly on each other, and entered into conversation, and although the language of it was unintelligible to all the guests, yet their tone and manner showed they were engaged in a dispute, which grew warmer and warmer. On a sudden they had taken their present form and began these mad tricks, which continually attracted more spectators.

“The man who flies up and down so admirably,” exclaimed one of the spectators, “is the clockmaker Degen, of Vienna—he who invented the flying machine, with which he is constantly contriving to tumble down upon his nose.”

“No,” replied another, “that is not the clockmaker. I should rather fancy that it was the Little Tailor of Sachsenhausen, if I did not know that the poor thing was burnt.”

I know not whether my readers are acquainted with the Little Tailor of Sachsenhausen? Here it is.

History of the Little Tailor of Sachsenhausen

It happened that a pious little tailor at Sachsenhausen was coming out of church one Sunday with his wife, in all his best attire. The air was raw, the little tailor had taken nothing over night but a soft boiled egg and a few pickled gerkins, and in the morning a cup of coffee. Moreover he had been singing most vehemently in the church, and hence he began to feel in a piteous plight, and to long for a dram. As he had worked hard through the week, and had been particularly kind to his better half, making her a very pretty gown out of the pieces cabbaged from his customers, she consented to his going into the apothecary's and getting himself a dram, which he did accordingly. The awkward apprentice, who was alone in the shop, made a mistake, and took down a bottle which, instead of a dram, contained inflammable gas, wherewith balloons are filled. Of this the apprentice poured out a full glass, and the tailor, putting it at once to his mouth, swallowed off the gas as an agreeable reviver. It made him, however, feel very strangely—as if he had got a pair of wings on his shoulders, or as if someone were playing at football with him, for he felt himself compelled to jump up and down in the shop, and with every moment the impetus increased.

“Eh! Gemini! Gemini!” he cried, “What a nimble dancer I have grown!”

The apothecary's apprentice stood with his mouth gaping wide from pure wonder, when it chanced that someone opened the door so hastily, that the opposite window flew open also. A strong current of air poured in, caught up the little tailor, and away he sailed through the window, since when he has not been seen. But it happened some time after, that the people of Sachsenhausen observed in the air a fireball, which lighted the whole country with its brightness, and then, being extinguished, fell to earth. All were eager to know what had dropped, and ran to the place, but found nothing more than a little heap of ashes, but with this the tongue of a shoe-buckle, a little piece of yellow satin with flowers, and something black, which to look at was like the horn-top of a walking stick. All were in deep council how such things could fall down from heaven in a fireball, when the wife of the departed tailor came up, and, on seeing these things, wrung her hands, took on most piteously, and cried out, "Ah, woe! that is my husband's buckle! Ah, woe! that is my husband's Sunday waistcoat! Ah, woe! that is my husband's cane-top!" A very learned man, however, has declared that the cane-top was no cane-top, but a meteoric ball, or an abortive globe.

Thus was made known to the people of Sachsenhausen and to all the world that the poor little tailor—to whom the apothecary's apprentice had given inflammable gas instead of a dram—was burnt in the air, and had fallen to earth, as a meteoric ball, or an abortive globe.

The taverner was at length impatient that the odd guest did not cease making himself now larger now smaller, without paying him any attention, and held the flask of Burgundy, which he had ordered, close to his nose. The stranger caught fast hold of it immediately, and did not let go till he had drained the last drop; then he sank as if fainting into an armchair, and could scarcely move himself.

The guests observed with astonishment that he swelled more and more during the drinking, and now appeared quite thick and shapeless. The fly-work of the other seemed also to be at a stand; he was about to sit down, panting and breathless, but, perceiving how his adversary lay there, half dead, he flew suddenly upon him, and began to belabour him soundly with his fists. The host, however, pulled him off, and declared that he would turn him out of the house, if he did not keep quiet. If they both wished to show their juggler's tricks, they were welcome to do so, but without quarrelling and fighting like blackguards.

The flying gentleman seemed to take it somewhat ill that the host should suppose he was a juggler. He protested that he was nothing less than a vagabond, who went about playing off legerdemain tricks; he had formerly been ballet master to a celebrated king, but now practised in private as an amateur, and was called—as his functions required he should be—Legénie. If, in his just indignation at the abominable fellow there, he had sprung somewhat higher than was fitting, that was his own business, and concerned no one else.

The host on his part opined, that all this did not justify any fisticuffs; to which the amateur replied that mine host did not know the malicious fellow, or he would willingly allow his back to be drubbed black and blue. He had formerly been a French customhouse officer, and now gained a livelihood by bloodletting, cupping, and shaving, and was called Monsieur Leech, a nuisance to everybody, by his awkwardness, stupidity, and gluttony. It was not enough that the scoundrel, wherever he met him, whisked away the wine from his very lips, as he had done just now, but he was plotting to carry off his bride, whom he intended to carry home from Frankfurt.

The Douanier had heard all that the Amateur advanced, and, glancing at him with his little malicious eyes, said to the host, "Don't believe a syllable that the gallows-bird there is chattering. An admirable ballet master, truly! who with his elephant feet crushes the legs of the fair dancers, and with his pirouette knocks a tooth out of the manager's jaw at the wing.

And his verses, too! They have as awkward feet as himself, and tumble here and there like drunkards, treading the thoughts to pap. Because he flutters heavily in the air at times, like a drowsy gander, the conceited peacock fancies he is to have the fair one for his bride.”

At this the indignant Amateur cried out, “Thou Satan’s worm, thou shalt feel the gander’s beak,” and would have fallen upon the Douanier again, when the host seized him from behind, with strong arm, and, amidst the rejoicing of the assembled crowd, flung him out of the window.

No sooner was the Amateur gone than Monsieur Leech resumed the plain solid form in which he had entered. The people without took him for quite another person than the juggler, who had played such strange tricks, and quietly dispersed. The Douanier thanked mine host in the most obliging terms for his aid against the Amateur, and, to prove his gratitude, offered to shave him for nothing, and more pleasantly than ever he had been shaved in his life before. The host felt his beard, and it seeming to him at the moment as if the hairs were terribly long, he accepted Mr. Leech’s offer, who accordingly set about it, at first, with a light, dexterous hand, but on a sudden he cut his nose so shrewdly, that the blood streamed down. The host, deeming this to be nothing else than malice, seized the Douanier, who flew as nimbly out of the door as the Amateur through the window. Immediately after, there arose a loud tumult without, and scarcely allowing himself time to stop the bleeding of his nose with lint, he flew out to see what devil was raising this new uproar. There, to his no little astonishment, he saw a young man, who with one hand grasped the Amateur, and with the other the Douanier, and with rolling eyes exclaimed, “Ha! Satan’s brood! you shall not cross my way, you shall not rob me of Gamaheh!” while his prisoners intermixed their cries of, “A madman! Save—save us, host—he mistakes us—he will murder us—”

“Eh!” cried the host, “what are you about, my good Mr. Pepusch? Have you been offended by these strange people? Perhaps you are mistaken in them. This is the Ballet Master, Monsieur Légénie, and this the Douanier, Monsieur Leech.”

“Ballet Master Légénie! Douanier Leech!” repeated Pepusch, in a hollow voice.

He seemed as if waking out of a dream, and trying to recollect himself. In the meantime two honest citizens, of his acquaintance, came out of the inn, who joined in persuading him to be quiet, and let the fellows go about their business.

Again Pepusch exclaimed, “Ballet Master Légénie! Douanier Leech!” and let his arms drop powerless by his side. With the speed of wind, the released prisoners were off, and it seemed to many in the street as if the Amateur fled over the roofs of the neighbouring houses, and the barber was lost in the puddle that had collected itself between the stones before the door.

The two citizens invited the distracted Pepusch to come in and drink a glass of old hock with them, an offer which he readily accepted, and seemed to enjoy the generous wine, though he sat silent and abstracted, and answered not a word to all that could be said to him. At last, however, his features brightened up, and he said, very kindly, “You did well, my friends, in hindering me from killing on the spot those wretches, who were in my power. But you know not what dangerous creatures lurk beneath their masks.”

Pepusch paused, and it may be easily supposed with what eagerness the citizens waited for what he had to discover. The host also had approached them, and all three poked their heads together, with their arms crossed upon the table, and held in their breath, that they might not lose a syllable from Pepusch’s mouth.

“See, my good people,” he continued solemnly, “see; he—whom you call the Ballet Master, Légénie—is none other than the evil, awkward genius, Thetel; the other, whom you take for

the Douanier, Leech, is the hateful bloodsucker, the Leech-Prince. Both are in love with the Princess, Gamaheh, who as you know, is the daughter of the mighty king, Sekakis, and are here to make her false to the Thistle, Zeherit. This is the greatest folly that ever entered into a foolish brain, for besides the Thistle, Zeherit, there is but one person in the world to whom she can belong, and this person would perhaps vainly enter into the contest with Zeherit. For soon the Thistle will bloom at midnight in full splendour and strength, and in the death of love dawns the morning of a higher life. Now, I myself am the Thistle, Zeherit, and, therefore, my good friends, you cannot blame me if I am indignant with those traitors, and altogether take the whole affair much to heart.”

The three listeners opened their eyes wide, and stared, speechlessly, at Pepusch, with open mouths. They had tumbled out of the clouds, as people say, and their heads were humming with the fall. But Pepusch emptied a bumper, and, turning to the host, said, “Yes, yes, mine host; you will soon see that I shall bloom as the *Cactus grandiflorus*, and the whole country round will be impregnated with its perfume. You may believe me, friends.”

The host could utter nothing but an exclamation of stupid surprise, “Eh! that would be the deuce!” The two citizens exchanged mysterious glances, and one, taking George’s hand, said with a doubtful smile, “You seem to be somewhat disquieted, my good Mr. Pepusch; how, if you were to take a glass of water, and—”

“Not a drop!” exclaimed Pepusch, interrupting the well-meant counsel, “Not a drop! Has water ever been poured upon boiling oil without increasing the fury of the flames? I am disquieted, you say? In truth that may well be the case; how the devil can I be otherwise, after having exchanged shots with my bosom friend, and then sending a bullet through my own brain? Here, into your hands I deliver up the murderous weapons, now that all is over.”

Pepusch drew a brace of pistols from his pocket, whereat the host started back; the citizens snatched at them, but no sooner had they fairly hold of them, than they burst out into immoderate laughter. The pistols were of wood, a plaything from the Christmas fair.

Pepusch seemed to pay no attention to what was going on about him; he sat in deep thought, and continually cried out, “If I could but find him! if I could but find him!”

The host took courage, and modestly asked, “Whom do you mean, my good Mr. Pepusch? Whom can you not find?”

“Know you,” said Pepusch solemnly, and fixing the host with a keen gaze, “Know you anyone to be compared, in might and wondrous power, with the king Sekakis; then name his name and I will kiss your feet. But for the rest, I would ask you if you know anyone who is acquainted with Mr. Peregrine Tyss, and can tell me where I may meet him at this present moment?”

To this the host replied, smirking amiably, “Here I can serve you, respected Mr. Pepusch, and inform you that he was with me an hour ago, taking a glass of wine. He was very thoughtful, and when I asked ‘What news on ’Change?’ he suddenly cried out, ‘Yes, sweet Gamaheh! I have renounced you! Be happy in my George’s arms!’ Upon this a thin curious voice said, ‘Let us now go to Leeuwenhoek’s, and peep into the horoscope.’ Immediately Mr. Tyss emptied his glass, and they went away together—that is, Mr. Tyss and the voice without a body. Probably they have gone to Leeuwenhoek’s, who is lamenting that his well-disciplined fleas have, one and all, deserted him.”

The words were scarcely out of the host’s mouth than George started up in a fury, and, seizing him by the throat, cried out, “Scoundrel, what do you say? Renounced? renounced her Gamaheh! Peregrine! Sekakis!”

The host's story, however, was perfectly correct. He had heard Master Flea, who was summoning Peregrine, in his fine silver tones, to go to the microscopist, Leeuwenhoek, for what purpose the reader knows already: Peregrine had really gone thither, and was received by Leeuwenhoek with that soft odious friendliness—and that humility of compliment—which announce the burdensome and reluctant recognition of superiority. But, as Mr. Tyss had the microscopic glass in the pupil of his eye, all this complimenting and subservience availed Antonie van Leeuwenhoek nothing in the world; on the contrary, Peregrine only the more discovered the hatred which filled the heart of the microscopist. While he protested how much he felt honoured and rejoiced by Mr. Tyss's visit, the thoughts ran thus: "I wish that the devil had plunged you ten thousand fathoms deep in the abyss! But I must feign friendship and submission towards you, as the cursed constellation has placed me under your dominion, and my whole being in some sort depends upon you. But perhaps I may be able to outwit you, for, in spite of your high descent, you are a simple fool. You fancy that Dörtje Elverdink loves you, and will perhaps marry her. Only come to me about it and you fall into my hands, in spite of the power that dwells within you without your knowing it, and I will employ everything to ruin you, and gain possession of Dörtje and Master Flea."

Peregrine naturally regulated his conduct by these thoughts, and took good care not to say a syllable about Dörtje Elverdink, and pretended that he came to see Leeuwenhoek's collection of natural rarities.

While now Leeuwenhoek opened the great drawers, Master Flea whispered very gently in Peregrine's ear, that his (Peregrine's) horoscope was lying on the table by the window. Here he saw all manner of lines, that mysteriously crossed each other, and many other wonderful signs, but as he was entirely deficient in astronomical knowledge, all remained confused and dark to him, look as keenly as he would. Yet it seemed strange to him, that, in the bright red point, in the middle of the table on which the horoscope was drawn, he plainly recognised himself. The longer he looked at this point, the more it gained the shape of a heart, and the more brightly it reddened. Still it only sparkled as through a web, with which it was overspread.

Peregrine plainly saw that Leeuwenhoek wanted to draw off his attention from the horoscope, and as he ran no risk of being deceived, very rationally resolved to question his friendly enemy at once, and without any circumlocution, as to the meaning of the mysterious table. Leeuwenhoek assured him, with a malicious smile, that nothing would give him greater pleasure than the explaining to his respected friend the signs upon the table, which he himself had drawn, according to his slight knowledge in such matters.

The thoughts ran thus: "Hoho! are you after that, my wise sir? In truth Master Flea has not advised you ill. I myself am to explain the table, and help you to the understanding of the magic might that dwells in your worthy person! I might invent some lies for you, but of what use would it be? For if I were to tell you the truth, you would not understand a syllable, but would remain stupid as ever? From pure convenience, therefore, and not to put myself to the trouble of invention, I will tell you so much of the signs of the table as seems good to me."

Peregrine knew now that if he were not to learn all, at least he would not be deceived with falsehoods.

Leeuwenhoek placed the tablet on something like an easel, which he brought forward from a corner of the room, and both seating themselves before it, considered it for a time in silence. At length Leeuwenhoek began with much solemnity:

"You, perhaps, do not suspect that those lines, those characters on the table, which you are so attentively considering, are your own horoscope, drawn by myself, with mysterious astrologic

art, under the favourable influence of the stars. How came you to such a presumptuous idea? what could make you wish to unravel the web of my fate, to read my destiny? so might you ask, my friend, and with perfect justice, if I were not able to show you my inward call thereto. I know not whether you have heard of the celebrated rabbi Isaac Ben Harravad. Among other profound knowledge he had the strange gift of reading by men's faces whether the soul had previously inhabited another body, or whether it was to be considered quite fresh and new. I was yet very young when the rabbi died of an indigestion, brought on by eating of a dish highly seasoned with garlic. The Jews ran away with the body so quickly that the deceased had not time to collect and carry off all his knowledge, which the illness had scattered. Laughing heirs divided the property, but I had fished off that wonderful seer-gift, in the very moment that the Angel of Death had set his sword upon the rabbi's breast. In this way the wonderful faculty has come to me, and I, like the rabbi Isaac Ben Harravad, can read in the faces of men, whether the soul has before occupied another body or not. Your brow, Mr. Tyss, when I saw it the first time, excited the strangest thoughts and doubts. I was certain of the previous existence of your soul long ago, and yet the form, prior to your present life, remained a perfect mystery. I was forced to have recourse to the stars, and draw your horoscope, to solve the difficulty."

"Well!" exclaimed Peregrine, "And have you discovered anything, Mr. Leeuwenhoek?"

"Certainly!" replied Leeuwenhoek, assuming a still more solemn tone, "Certainly! I have discovered that the physical principle—which now animates the agreeable body of my very worthy friend, Mr. Peregrine Tyss—existed long ago, although only as a thought or consciousness of a shape. Look here; consider attentively the red point in the centre of the table. That is not only yourself, but the point is the form, of which your physical principle once could not be conscious. As a sparkling carbuncle, you then lay in a deep mine of the earth, but stretched over you, on the green surface of the ground, slept the beautiful Gamaheh, and her form also passed away in unconsciousness. Strange lines and foreign constellations cross your life from the point of time when the thought first put on a form, and became Mr. Peregrine Tyss. You are in possession of a talisman without knowing it, and this talisman is that very red carbuncle. It may be that King Sekakis wore it as a precious jewel in his crown, or perhaps—in some measure—was the carbuncle itself. Enough—you possess it now, but a certain event must take place if its slumbering power is to be awakened, and with this waking of the power of your talisman will be decided the fate of an unhappy creature, who hitherto has led a shadowy life between fear and changing hope. Alas! it was only a shadowy life that the sweet Gamaheh could gain by the profoundest magic, as the operative talisman was stolen from us. You alone have killed her, you alone can breathe fresh life into her, when the carbuncle glows again in your breast."

"And can you," interrupted Peregrine, "can you explain what that event is which is to awake the power of the talisman?"

The microscopist stared with open eyes at Peregrine, like a person who is suddenly surprised into confusion, and who does not know what to say. The thoughts ran thus: "If I had but held my tongue about the talisman which the unlucky rascal carries within him, and which gives him so much power over us that we must all dance to his pipe! And now I am to tell him the event on which depends the awaking the strength of his talisman! Shall I confess to him that I don't know myself, that all my art fails to loosen the knot in which the lines meet? Nay, that when I consider the planetary centre of the horoscope, I feel most piteously, and my own learned head seems to me no better than a painted block for periwigs? Far from me be any such confession that would lower me, and put arms into his hands against myself. I will

fasten something upon the idiot who fancies himself so wise—something that shall make his blood run cold, and take from him all farther inclination of teasing me.”

“My dearest sir,” said the Flea-tamer, putting on a very important face, “My dearest Mr. Tyss, don’t ask me to speak of this event. You know that the horoscope does indeed plainly and perfectly instruct us as to the existence of certain circumstances, but—such is the wisdom of Eternal Might—the event of threatening dangers always remains dark and doubtful. I esteem you too highly as an excellent kindhearted man to put you into disquiet and anxiety before the time, otherwise I should at least tell you so much: that the event which is to give you the consciousness of power, would in the same moment destroy your present form of being with the most horrible agonies of hell. But no! on that too I will be silent, and now not another word of the horoscope. Do not however fret yourself, although the affair looks bad enough, and I, with all my knowledge, can hardly see any chance of a favourable issue to the adventure. Perhaps you may be saved from this peril by some unexpected constellation which is now beyond the reach of observation.”

Peregrine was astonished at this deceit, yet still the whole state of the thing, the peculiar situation in which Leeuwenhoek stood without suspecting it, appeared to him so exceedingly pleasant, that he could not help breaking out into a loud fit of laughter. The microscopist, somewhat surprised at this, asked, “What are you laughing at so vehemently, my dear Mr. Tyss?”

“You do wisely,” replied Peregrine, still laughing, “You do very wisely in keeping secret, out of pure kindness, this threatening event, for besides that you are too much my friend to put me into fear and terror, you have yet another excellent reason for your silence, which is nothing else than that you do not know a syllable about the matter. In vain was all your labour to unriddle that knot: your whole astrology goes but to little, and if Master Flea had not fallen upon your nose, all your arts would have helped you little.”

Leeuwenhoek’s brow was red with rage; he clenched his fist, gnashed his teeth, and trembled so violently with agitation, that he would have tumbled from his seat, if Peregrine had not held him as firmly by the arm as George Pepusch grasped the unlucky taverner by the throat, who at length succeeded in saving himself by a dexterous side-spring. Hereupon George rushed out and entered Leeuwenhoek’s room just as Peregrine was holding him fast upon his seat, while he muttered furiously between his teeth, “Cursed Swammerdam! is it *you* that have done this?”

No sooner did Peregrine perceive his friend than he let go of the microscopist, and going up to him, asked anxiously if that strange frenzy were over which had so dangerously possessed him. Pepusch seemed softened almost to tears, and protested that he had not in all his life committed so many follies as in the course of that one day. Amongst these not the least was that after he had sent a ball through his head in the forest, he had gone into a tavern—where he did not know—had talked to people of strange things, and murderously set upon the host, because from his broken speech he gathered that which was the very happiest thing that could befall him. All his paroxysms would now soon have reached the highest pitch, for the bystanders had taken his words for insanity, and he had to fear: instead of reaping the fruit of the happiest event, that he would be confined in a madhouse. With this he explained what the host had let drop concerning Peregrine’s conduct and declarations, and asked, with downcast eyes, whether such an act of self-denial, in favour of an unhappy friend, was probable, or even possible, in the present day, when heroism had vanished from the earth.

At these declarations from his companion Peregrine revived in his inmost heart. He protested with warmth that for his part he was far removed from doing anything that might in the least

annoy his tried friend; that he solemnly renounced all pretensions to the heart and hand of the fair Dörtje Elverdink, and willingly gave up a paradise, though it had indeed opened upon him most seductively.

“And it was you,” said Pepusch, rushing into his friend’s arms, “It was you that I would have murdered, and because I did not believe you, I therefore shot myself. Oh, the madness of a mind ill at ease!”

“I pray you,” said Peregrine, “I pray you come to your senses. You speak of having shot yourself, and yet stand fresh and sound before me. How do these things agree?”

“You are right,” replied Pepusch, “it seems as if I could not speak to you so rationally as I really do, if I had actually sent a ball through my brain. The people, too, maintain that my pistols were not particularly dangerous—nor, indeed, of iron, but of wood—in fact mere toys; and so neither the duel nor the suicide could have been anything more than a pleasant mockery. We must have changed our parts, and I have begun to mystify myself and play the child, at the moment you have left the world of dream to enter into real life. But be this as it may; it is requisite that I should be certain of your generosity and my fortune, and then the clouds will dissipate which trouble my sight, or perhaps deceive me with the illusions of the *Fata Morgana*. Come, my Peregrine, accompany me to the fair Dörtje Elverdink.”

Pepusch took his friend’s arm, and was hastening off with him, but their intended walk was spared, for the door opened, and in tripped Dörtje Elverdink, lovely as an angel, and behind her the old Swammer. Leeuwenhoek, who had so long remained dumb, casting angry looks first at Pepusch and then at Peregrine, seemed, upon seeing the old Swammerdam, as if struck by an electric shock. He stretched his clenched hands towards him, and cried out in a voice hoarse with rage, “Ha! do you come to mock me, you old deceitful monster? But you shall not succeed. Defend yourself: your last hour has struck.”

Swammerdam started a few steps back, and as Leeuwenhoek was ready to fall upon him with his telescope, drew the like arms for his defence. The duel, which had begun at Peregrine’s, seemed about to be renewed. George Pepusch threw himself between the combatants, and while with his left hand he beat down a murderous glance of Leeuwenhoek’s, which would have stretched his adversary to the earth, with the left he turned aside the weapon of Swammerdam, so that he could not injure Leeuwenhoek. He then declared that he would not allow of any battle between them, till he thoroughly knew the cause of their dissension. Peregrine found this protest so reasonable, that he did not hesitate to throw himself between the champions with a similar declaration. To this the combatants were forced to yield. Swammerdam, moreover, asserted that he had not at all come with hostile intentions, but merely to enter into some composition with Leeuwenhoek, and thus to end a feud which had so long divided two similarly-created principles, whose united researches only could exhaust the deepest springs of knowledge. With this he looked smilingly at Peregrine, into whose arms Dörtje had fled, and expressed a wish that he would mediate.

Leeuwenhoek, on the other hand, admitted that Dörtje was indeed the apple of contention, but that he had just now discovered a new trick of his unworthy colleague. It was not only that to revive his unjust pretensions to Dörtje, he denied the possession of a certain microscope which he had received on a certain occasion as a quittance, but the more to torment him—Leeuwenhoek—he had given it to another. In answer to all this, Swammerdam swore, high and low, that he had never received the microscope, and had great reason to believe that Leeuwenhoek had shamefully purloined it.

“The fools!” softly whispered Master Flea to Peregrine, “The fools! they are talking of the microscope which is in your eye. You know that I was present at the treaty of peace

concluded between them about the possession of the princess, and, when Swammerdam was flinging into the pupil of his left eye the microscopic glass which he had, in fact, received from Leeuwenhoek, I snapped it up, because it was not Leeuwenhoek's, but my lawful property. Tell them plainly at once, that you have the jewel."

Upon this Peregrine made no hesitation in declaring that he was in possession of the microscopic glass which Swammerdam should have received, but did not receive, from Leeuwenhoek, and moreover that the union was not yet settled, and neither Leeuwenhoek nor Swammerdam had at present the unconditional right to look on Dörtje Elverdink as his foster-daughter.

After much argument, it was agreed by the disputants that Mr. Tyss should marry Dörtje Elverdink, who tenderly loved him, and then after seven months, should decide which of the two microscopists was the most desirable father-in-law.

However beautiful Dörtje appeared in a dress so admirable that it might seem to have been fashioned by the Loves, and whatever burning looks of passion she might cast at Peregrine, yet he still thought of his protégé as well as of his friend, and remained true to his plighted word, declaring again that he renounced Dörtje's hand. The microscopists were not a little astonished when Peregrine announced George Pepusch for the man who had the justest claims to the princess, and that he, at all events, had no right to interfere with her choice.

With tears in her eyes the maiden staggered towards Peregrine, who caught her in his arms as she was sinking senseless to the earth. "Ingrate!" she sighed. "You break my heart in thrusting me from you. But you will have it. Take, then, my parting kiss, and let me die!"

Peregrine bent down to her, but when his mouth touched her mouth, she bit his lips so violently that the blood started, at the same time exclaiming merrily, "Monster! it is so one must punish you! Be reasonable, be civil, and take me, let the other cry out as he will."

During this the two microscopists had fallen together by the ears again, heaven knows wherefore, while George Pepusch flung himself quite disconsolately at Gamaheh's feet, and cried out in a voice that sounded wretched enough for any lover—

"Oh, Gamaheh! is then your passion quite extinguished? Do you no more remember the glorious times in Famagusta? no more the pleasant days in Berlin? no more—"

"You are a fool!" interrupted the little one, laughing, "You are a fool, George, with your Gamahehs, your Thistle, Zeherit, and all the other nonsense that you must once have dreamed. I did like you, do like you, and will have you—although the tall one yonder pleases me better—if you solemnly promise, nay swear, to bend all your mind to—"

Here she softly whispered something to Pepusch, and Peregrine thought he collected that Master Flea was the subject of it. In the meantime the dispute between the microscopists had grown hotter and hotter; they had again recourse to their weapons, and Peregrine was busy in trying to sooth their wrath, when the company was again augmented. The door was burst open amidst a strange screaming and croaking, and in rushed the Amateur, Monsieur Legénie, and the barber, Leech. With wild, furious gestures they flew upon the princess, and the barber had already caught her by the shoulder, when Pepusch thrust away the odious assailant with irresistible might, wound about his whole flexible body, and squeezed it together in such a manner that he shot up into the air, quite thin and long, roaring aloud with pain all the time.

While this was going on with the barber, the two microscopists had reconciled themselves in an instant on the appearance of the common enemy, and made a united attack on the Amateur with much success. It availed him nothing that when he was sufficiently drubbed below, he

rose up to the ceiling, for Leeuwenhoek and Swammerdam had both seized short thick sticks, and whenever the Amateur descended, they drove him up again by blows, dexterously applied to that part of the body which best can bear them. It was a pretty game of racket, at which the Amateur by compulsion indeed played the most fatiguing—and at the same time the most ungracious—part, namely that of the ball.

This war seemed to inspire the little one with the greatest terror; she clung to Peregrine, and entreated him to bear her away from such an abominable uproar. This he could the less refuse, as there seemed to be no need of him on the field of battle, and he therefore carried her home, that is, into the apartments of his lodger. But no sooner had she got there and found herself alone with Peregrine, than she employed all the arts of the most refined coquetry to allure him into her snares. However firmly he bore in mind that all this was merely falsehood, and aimed at bringing his protégé into captivity, yet such a dizziness of the senses seized him, that he did not even think of the microscopic glass, which might have served him as an active antidote. Master Flea was again in danger; he was, however, saved this time by Mr. Swammer, who entered with George Pepusch. The former appeared to be exceedingly delighted, but the latter had wrath and jealousy in his burning glances. Peregrine left the room, and with wounded heart he strolled through the streets of Frankfurt. He went through the gate and onwards, till he reached the very spot where the strange adventure had happened with his friend, Pepusch. Here he again thought over his wonderful destiny; the image of Gamaheh appeared to him lovelier than ever; the blood rolled more quickly in his veins, his pulse beat more violently, and his breast seemed ready to burst with feverish desire. He felt only too painfully the greatness of the sacrifice which he had just made, and with which he fancied that he had lost all the happiness of life.

The night had drawn in when he returned to the city. Without being aware of it, perhaps from an unconscious dread of going back to his own house, he wandered through many by-lanes, and at last into the Kalbecher-street. A man with a knapsack on his back asked him if the bookbinder, Lemmerhirt, did not live there? and on looking up, Peregrine saw that he was actually standing before the narrow dwelling. The windows of the industrious binder, who worked through the night, were shining brightly and loftily, and the door was opened to the man with a knapsack, who entered immediately.

Peregrine now recollected, with vexation, that, in the tumult of the last few weeks, he had forgotten to pay the bookbinder for several jobs that he had executed for him; he resolved to go and settle all the very next morning.

VII. Seventh Adventure

Although we are wholly deficient in any certain information respecting the result of the battle in Leeuwenhoek's chamber, yet we cannot suppose otherwise than that the microscopists, with the help of George Pepusch, had obtained a complete victory over the hostile confederates: it had else been impossible that the old Swammer had returned so friendly and contented as he really did. With the same glad face, Swammer, or rather Mr. Jan Swammerdam, came the following morning to Peregrine, who was still in bed and earnestly conversing with his protégé, Master Flea. Upon seeing this visitor, Peregrine did not fail putting the microscopic glass into the pupil of his eye.

After many long and tedious excuses for his early visit, Swammerdam at last took his place on the bed, positively refusing to let Peregrine rise and put on his dressing gown. In the strangest phrases he thanked his landlord for the great civilities he had experienced, which, it seems, consisted in his having been received as a lodger, and also in that Mr. Tyss had allowed his household to be increased by the addition of a young female, who was sometimes too loud and vivacious. But the greatest favour shown by Mr. Peregrine, and not without some self-sacrifice, was in his having effected a reconciliation between him (Swammerdam) and his old friend, Antonie van Leeuwenhoek. In fact, as Swammerdam went on to say, both hearts had inclined to each other at the moment when they were attacked by the Amateur and the barber and had to protect Dörtje Elverdink from those monsters. The serious reconciliation of the microscopists had soon after followed.

Leeuwenhoek had perceived, as well as Swammerdam, the paramount influence which Peregrine had over both of them and the first use which they made of their renewed friendship was to consider in unison the strange horoscope of Mr. Tyss, and as far as possible, to interpret it.

“What my friend, Leeuwenhoek, could not do alone,” continued the microscopist, “was effected by our united powers, and thus this was the second experiment which, in spite of all the obstacles opposed to us, we undertook with the most splendid results.”

“The shortsighted fool!” lisped Master Flea, who sat upon the pillow, close to Peregrine's ear. “He still fancies that the Princess, Gamaheh, was restored to life by him. A pretty life, indeed, is that to which the awkwardness of the two microscopists has condemned the poor thing!”

“My dear friend,” continued Swammerdam, who had the less heard Master Flea, as he had just then begun to sneeze loudly, “my dear friend, you are particularly chosen by the spirit of the creation, a pet-child of nature, for you possess the most wonderful talisman, or, to speak more correctly and scientifically, the most splendid Tsilmenaja, or Tilsemoht, that was ever fed by the dew of heaven, and has sprung from the lap of earth. It is an honour to my art that I, and not Leeuwenhoek, have discovered that this lucky talisman sleeps for a time till a certain constellation enters, which finds its centre-point in your worthy person. With yourself, my dear friend, something must and will happen, which in the moment the power of the talisman awakes, may make that waking known to you. Let Leeuwenhoek have told you what he will, it must all be false, for in regard to that point, he knew nothing at all until I opened his eyes. Perhaps he tried to frighten you, my dear friend, with some terrible catastrophe, for I know he likes to terrify people without reason. But trust to me, Mr. Tyss, who have the highest respect for you, and swear it to you most solemnly: you have nothing to fear. I should

like, however, to learn whether you do not as yet feel the presence of the talisman, and what you think of the matter altogether.”

At these last words Swammerdam eyed his host as keenly as if he would pierce his deepest thoughts, but of course he did not succeed so well in that as Peregrine with his microscopic glass, by means of which the latter learned that it was not so much the united war with the Amateur and the Barber, as the mysterious horoscope, that had brought about the reconciliation of the microscopists. It was the possession of the mighty talisman that both were striving after. In regard to the mysterious lines in the horoscope of Peregrine, Swammerdam remained in as vexatious ignorance as Leeuwenhoek, but he fancied the clue must lie within Peregrine, which would lead to the discovery of the mystery. This clue he now sought to fish out of the novice, and then rob him of the inestimable treasure before he knew its value. He was convinced this talisman was equal to that of the wise Solomon, since, like that, it gave him who possessed it the perfect dominion over the kingdom of spirits.

Peregrine paid like with like, himself mystifying Swammerdam, who thought to mystify him. He contrived to answer so dexterously, in such figurative speeches, that the microscopist feared the initiation had already begun, and that soon the mystery would be revealed which neither he nor Leeuwenhoek had been able to unravel.

Swammerdam cast down his eyes, hemmed, and stammered a few unintelligible words; he was really in a bad plight, and his thoughts were all in confusion.

“The devil! What’s this? Is this Peregrine, who speaks to me? Am I the learned Swammerdam or an ass?”

In despair he at last collected himself, and began,

“But to come to something else, most respected Mr. Tyss, and as it seems to me, something much more agreeable.”

According to what Swammer now went on to say, both he and Leeuwenhoek had perceived, with great pleasure, the strong inclination which Dörtje Elverdink had conceived for him. If they had both formerly been of a different opinion, each believing that Dörtje should stay with himself, and not think of love and marriage, yet they had now both come to a better conviction. They fancied that they read in Peregrine’s horoscope he positively must take Dörtje Elverdink for his wife, as the greatest advantage in all the conjunctures of his life, and as neither doubted for a moment that he was equally enamoured of her, they had looked upon the matter as fully settled. Swammerdam, moreover, was of opinion that Peregrine was the only one who, without any trouble, could beat his rivals out of the field, and that the most dangerous opponents—namely the Amateur and the Barber—could avail nothing against him.

Peregrine found, from Swammerdam’s thoughts, that both the microscopists actually imagined they had read in his horoscope the inevitable necessity of his marriage with Dörtje. It was to this supposed necessity only they yielded, thinking to draw the greatest gain from the apparent loss of the little one, namely, by getting possession of Mr. Tyss and his talisman. But it may be easily supposed how little faith he must have in the science of the two microscopists, when neither of them was able to solve the centre-point of the horoscope. He did not, therefore at all yield to that pretended conjunction, which conditioned the necessity of his marriage with Gamaheh, and found no difficulty whatever in declaring positively that he renounced her hand in favour of his best friend George Pepusch, who had older and better claims to the fair one, and that he would not break his word upon any condition.

Swammerdam raised his green eyes which he had so long cast down, stared vehemently at Peregrine, and grinned with the cunning of a fox, as he said, if the friendship between him and Pepusch were the only scruple which kept him from giving free scope to his feelings, this obstacle existed no longer: Pepusch had perceived, although slightly touched with madness, his marriage with Dörtje was against the stars, and nothing could come from it but misery and destruction. He had therefore resigned all his pretensions, declaring only that, with his life, he would protect Gamaheh—who could belong to no one but his bosom-friend, Tyss—against the awkward dolt of an Amateur and the bloodthirsty Barber.

A cold shudder ran through Peregrine when he perceived, from Swammerdam's thoughts, that all was true which he had spoken. Overpowered by the strangest and the most opposite feelings, he sank back upon his pillow and closed his eyes. The microscopist pressed him to come down himself, and hear from Dörtje's mouth, from George's, the present state of things, and then took his leave with as much ceremony as he had entered.

Master Flea, who sat the whole time quietly on the pillow, suddenly leaped up to the top of Peregrine's nightcap. There he raised himself up on his long hind-legs, wrung his hands, stretched them imploringly to Heaven, and cried out in a voice half-stifled with tears,

“Woe to poor me! I already thought myself safe, and now comes the most dangerous trial. What avail me the courage, the constancy of my noble patron? I surrender myself! All is over.”

“Why,” said Mr. Tyss, in a faint voice, “Why do you lament so on my nightcap, my dear master? Do you fancy that you alone have to complain? that I myself am not in the unhappiest situation in the world? for my whole mind seems broken up, and I neither know what to do, nor which way to turn my thoughts. But do not fancy, my dear master, I am foolish enough to venture near the rock upon which all my resolutions might be shipwrecked. I shall take care not to follow Swammerdam's invitation, and to avoid seeing the alluring Dörtje Elverdink.”

“In reality,” said Master Flea, after he had taken his old post upon the pillow, by Peregrine's ear, “In reality I am not sure that I ought not to advise you to go at once to Swammerdam's, however destructive it may appear to myself. It seems to me as if all the lines of your horoscope were running quicker and quicker together, and you yourself were upon the point of entering the red centre. Well, let the dark destiny have decreed what it will; I plainly perceive even a Master Flea cannot escape such a conclusion, and it is as simple as useless to expect my safety from you. Go then: take her hand, deliver me to slavery, and that all may happen as the stars will it, without any interference, make no use of the microscopic glass.”

“Formerly,” said Peregrine, “formerly, Master Flea, your heart seemed stout, your mind firm, and now you have grown so fainthearted! You may be as wise as you will, but you have no good idea of human resolution, and at all events, rate it too meanly. Once more—I will not break my word to you, and that you may perceive how fixed my determination is, of not seeing the little one again, I will now rise and betake myself, as I did yesterday, to the bookbinder's.”

“Oh Peregrine!” cried Master Flea, “the will of man is a frail thing; a passing air will break it. How immense is the abyss lying between what man wills and what really happens! Many a life is only a constant *willing*, and many a one, from pure volition, at last does not know what he will. You *will* not see Dörtje Elverdink, and yet who will answer for it that you do not see her in the very moment of your declaring such a resolution?”

Strange enough, the very thing really happened which Master Flea had prophesied.

Peregrine arose, dressed himself, and faithful to his intention, would have gone to the bookbinder. In passing Swammerdam's chamber, the door was wide open, and—he knew not how it happened—he stood, leaning on Swammerdam's arm, close before Dörtje Elverdink, who sent him a hundred kisses, and with her silver voice cried out, joyfully, "Good morning, my dear Peregrine!" George Pepusch, too, was there, looking out of the window and whistling. He now flung the window to with violence, and turned round.

"Ha!" he exclaimed as if he had just then seen Peregrine, "Ha! look! You come to see your bride. That's all in order, and any third person would only be in the way. I too will take myself off, but let me first tell you, my good friend Peregrine, that George Pepusch scorns every gift which a compassionate friend would fling to him as if he were a beggar. Cursed be every sacrifice! I will have nothing to thank you for. Take the beautiful Gamaheh, who so warmly loves you, but take care the Thistle, Zeherit, do not take root, and burst the walls of your house."

George's voice and manner bordered upon brutality, and Peregrine was filled with vexation, when he saw how much his whole conduct was mistaken. Without concealing his disgust, he said,

"It never has entered into my head to cross you in your path, but the madness of jealousy speaks out of you, or you would see how innocent I am of all you have been brooding in your own soul. Do not ask of me to kill the snake which you have been nourishing in your breast for your own torment; learn too, I gave *you* no alms, I made *you* no sacrifice, in giving up the fair one, and with her, perhaps, the greatest blessing of my life. Other and higher duties, an irrevocable promise, compelled me to it."

Pepusch, in the wildest wrath, raised his clenched hand against his friend, when Gamaheh sprang between them, and catching Peregrine's arm, exclaimed,

"Let the foolish Thistle go; he has nothing but nonsense in his brain, and as is the way with thistles, is surly and obstinate without well knowing what he means. You are mine, and remain mine—mine own dearest Peregrine."

Thus saying, the little one drew Peregrine upon the sofa, and without further ceremony, seated herself upon his knees. Pepusch, after having sufficiently gnawed his nails, ran wildly out of the door.

Dressed again in the fairy dress of tissue, she appeared as lovely as ever. Peregrine felt himself streamed through by the electric warmth of her body, and yet, amidst it all, a cold mysterious shudder thrilled through him like the breathing of death. For the first time he thought that he saw something singular and lifeless deeply seated in her eyes, while the tone of her voice—nay, even the rustling of her dress—betrayed a strange being, who was never to be trusted. It fell heavily upon his heart that when she had spoken her real thoughts, she had been in this same silver tissue; he knew not why he should fancy anything menacing in it, and yet the idea of this dress was intimately blended with that of the supernatural, as a dream unites the most heterogeneous things, and all passes for absurd, the deeper connection of which we are unable to comprehend.

Far from wounding the fair one with a suspicion which was perhaps false, Peregrine violently suppressed his feelings, and only waited for a favourable opportunity of freeing himself and escaping from the snake of Paradise. At last Dörtje said,

"How is it, my sweet friend, you seem so cold and insensible today? What have you got in your head, my life?"

“I have a headache,” replied Peregrine, as indifferently as he was able. “Headache! Whims! Megrimms! Nothing else, my sweet child. I must go into the open air, and all will be over in a few minutes. Besides, I am called away by a particular business.”

“It is all invention!” exclaimed Gamaheh, starting up hastily. “But you are a malicious monkey that must be tamed.”

Peregrine was glad when he found himself in the open street, but as to Master Flea, he was quite extravagant in his joy, tittering and laughing incessantly in Peregrine’s neckcloth, and clapping together his forepaws till they rang again. This merriment of his little protégé was somewhat troublesome to Mr. Tyss, as it disturbed him in his meditations, and he begged of him to be quiet, for many grave people had already glanced at him with looks of reproach, fancying it was he who tittered and laughed, and played such foolish pranks in the open streets.

“Fool that I was!” exclaimed Master Flea, persisting in the ebullitions of his extravagant joy, “Fool that I was to doubt of the victory where no battle was needed. Why, you had conquered in the moment, when even the death of your beloved could not shake your resolution. Let me shout, let me rejoice, for all must deceive me if a bright morning sun do not soon arise, which will clear up every mystery.”

On Peregrine’s knocking at the bookbinder’s, a soft female voice cried, “Come in!” He opened the door, and a young girl, who was alone in the room, came forward, and asked him in a friendly manner what he wanted. She was about eighteen years old, rather tall than short, and slim, with the finest proportions. Her hair was of a bright chestnut colour, her eyes were of a deep blue, and her skin seemed to be a blended web of lilies and roses. But more than all this were the purity and innocence that sat upon her brow, and showed themselves in all her actions.

When Peregrine gazed on the gentle beauty, it seemed to him as if he had been hitherto lying in bonds, which a benevolent power had loosened, and the angel of light stood before him. But his enamoured gaze had confounded the maiden: she blushed deeply, and casting down her eyes, repeated more gently than at first, “What does the gentleman want?” With difficulty Peregrine stammered out, “Pray, does the bookbinder Lemmerhirt live here?” Upon her replying that he did, but that he was now gone out upon business, Peregrine talked confusedly of bindings which he had ordered, of books which Lemmerhirt was to procure for him, till at last he came somewhat more to himself, and spoke of a splendid copy of Ariosto, which was to have been bound in red morocco with golden filleting. At this, it was as if a sudden electric spark had shot through the maiden; she clasped her hands, and with tears in her eyes, exclaimed, “Then you are Mr. Tyss?” At the same time she made a motion as if she would have seized his hand, but suddenly drew back, and a deep sigh seemed to relieve her full breast. A sweet smile beamed on her face, like the lovely glow of morning, and she poured forth thanks and blessings to Peregrine for his having been the benefactor of her father and mother, and not only for this—no—for his generosity, his kindness, the manner of his making presents to the children, and spreading joy and happiness amongst them. She quickly cleared her father’s armchair of the books, bound and unbound, with which it was loaded, wheeled it forward, and pressed him to be seated, and then presented to him the splendid Ariosto with sparkling eyes, well knowing that this masterpiece of bookbinding would meet with Peregrine’s approbation.

Mr. Tyss took a few pieces of gold from his pocket, which, the maiden seeing, hastily assured him that she did not know the price of the work, and therefore could not take any payment; perhaps he would be pleased to wait a few minutes for her father’s return. It seemed to

Peregrine as if the unworthy metal melted into one lump in his hand, and he pocketed the gold again, much faster than he had brought it out. Upon his seating himself mechanically in the broad armchair, the maiden reached after her own seat, and from instinctive politeness he jumped up to fetch it, when, instead of the chair, he caught hold of her hand, and on gently pressing the treasure, he thought he felt a scarcely perceptible return.

“Puss, puss, what are you doing?” suddenly cried Rose, breaking from him, and picking up a skein of thread, which the cat held between her forepaws, beginning a most mystical web.

Peregrine was in a perfect tumult, and the words “Oh, princess!” escaped him without his knowing how it happened. The maiden looked at him in alarm, and he cried out in the softest and most melancholy tone, “My dearest young lady!” Rose blushed, and said with maiden bashfulness, “My parents call me Rose; pray, do the same my dear Mr. Tyss, for I too am one of the children, to whom you have shown so much kindness, and by whom you are so highly honoured.”

“Rose!” cried Peregrine, in a transport. He could have thrown himself at her feet, and it was only with difficulty that he restrained himself.

Rose now related—as she quietly went on with her work—how the war had reduced her parents to distress, and how since that time she had lived with an aunt in a neighbouring village, till a few weeks ago, when, upon the death of the old lady, she had returned home.

Peregrine heard only the sweet voice of Rose, without understanding the words too well, and was not perfectly convinced of his being awake, till Lemmerhirt entered the room and gave him a hearty welcome. Soon after the wife followed with the children, and as thoughts and feelings are strangely blended in the mind of man, it happened now that Peregrine, even in the midst of all his ecstasy, suddenly recollected how the sullen Pepusch had blamed his presents to this very family. He was particularly delighted to find that none of the children had made themselves ill by his gifts, and the pride with which they pointed to a glass case, where the toys were shining, proved that they looked upon them as something extraordinary, never perhaps to recur. The Thistle, in his ill-humour, was quite mistaken.

“Oh, Pepusch!” said Peregrine to himself, “no pure beam of love penetrates thy distempered mind.” In this Peregrine again meant something more than toys and sugarplums.

Lemmerhirt approached Peregrine and began to talk in an undertone of his Rose, elevating her, in the fullness of his heart, into a perfect miracle. But what gave him the most delight was that Rose had an inclination for the noble art of bookbinding, and in the few weeks that she had been with him had made uncommon advances in the decorative parts, so that she was already much more dexterous than many an oaf of an apprentice who wasted gold and morocco for years, and set the letters all awry, making them look like so many drunken peasants, staggering out of an alehouse. In the exuberance of his delight, he whispered to Peregrine quite confidentially, “It must out, Mr. Tyss, I can’t help it. Do you know, that it was my Rose who gilded the Ariosto?”

Upon hearing this, Peregrine hastily snatched up the book, as if securing it before he was robbed of it by an enemy. Lemmerhirt took this for a sign that Peregrine wished to go, and begged of him to stay a few minutes longer, and this it was that reminded him at last of the necessity of tearing himself away. He hastily paid his bill and set off home, dragging along the heavy quartos as if they had been some treasure.

On entering his house he was met by the old Alina, who pointed to Swammerdam’s chamber with looks of fear and anxiety. The door was open, and he saw Dörtje Elverdink, sitting in an armchair, quite stiff, with a face drawn up, as if it belonged to a corpse, already laid in the

grave. Just so stiff, so corpse-like sat before her Pepusch, Swammerdam, and Leeuwenhoek. The old woman exclaimed, "Is not that a strange, ghastly spectacle? In this manner the three unhappy beings have sat the whole day long, and eat nothing, and drink nothing, and speak nothing, and scarcely fetch their breath."

Peregrine at first felt a slight degree of terror at this strange spectacle, but as he ascended the stairs, the spectral image was completely swallowed up by the sea of pleasure, in which the delighted Peregrine swam, since his seeing Rose. Wishes, dreams, hopes, were agitating his mind, which he longed to unburden to some friend, but what friend had Peregrine besides the honest Master Flea? And to him he wished to open his whole heart, to tell him all about Rose—all in fact that cannot very well be told. But he might call and coax as long as he pleased—no Master Flea would show himself; he was up and away, at last, in the folds of his neckcloth, where Master Flea had been wont to lodge upon his going abroad. Peregrine found, after a more careful search, a tiny box, whereon was written:

"In this is the microscopic glass. If you look steadfastly into the box with your left eye, the glass will immediately be in its pupil; when you want to be freed from the instrument, you have only to gently squeeze the pupil, holding your eye over the box, and the glass will drop into it. I am busy in your service, and risk no little by it, but for so kind a protector I would hazard anything, as

"Your most devoted servant,

"Master Flea."

Now here would be an excellent opportunity for a genuine romance-writer to expatiate on the difference between lust and love, and having handled it sufficiently in theory, to illustrate it practically in the person of Mr. Tyss. Much might be said of sensual desires, of the curse of the primal sin, and of the heavenly Promethean spark, which in love inflames that true community of spirit of the two sexes, which forms the actual necessary dualism of nature. Should now the aforesaid Promethean spark—but the reader will perhaps be glad to escape the rest of this dissertation, though he may rest assured there is much in it whereby he might have been edified, had he been so inclined.

It must be evident to all that Peregrine only felt desire for Dörtje Elverdink, but that when he saw Rose Lemmerhirt, the real heavenly love blazed in his bosom. Little thanks, however, would be due to the editor of this most wonderful of all wonderful tales, if—adhering to the stiff, formal pace of renowned romancers—he could not forbear in this place exciting the weariness essentially requisite to a legitimate romance. No; let us go to the point at once: sighs, lamentations, joys, pains, kisses, blisses—are all united in the focus of the moment, when the lovely Rose—with the crimson of maiden modesty upon her cheeks—confesses to the enraptured Peregrine that she loves him; that she cannot express how much, how immeasurably she loves him; that she lives in him only; that he is her only thought, her only joy.

But the crafty demon is wont to thrust his dark claws into the sunniest moments of life—nay, to utterly obscure that sunshine by the shadow of his baleful presence. Thus it happened that evil doubts arose in Peregrine, and his breast was filled with suspicions. A voice seemed to whisper to him, "How! Dörtje Elverdink confessed her love, and yet it was mere selfishness, animated by which she sought to tempt you into breaking your faith and becoming a traitor to your best friend, poor Master Flea! You are rich; they say too that a certain frankness and good nature, by many called weakness, may procure you the doubtful love of men and even of women, and she, who now confesses a passion for you." He hastily snatched at the fate-fraught box, and was on the point of opening it to place the microscopic glass in the pupil of

his eye, and thus reading the thoughts of Rose, but he looked up, and the pure blue of her bright eyes seemed to be reflected on his inmost soul. Rose saw and wondered at his emotion. He felt as if a sudden flash of lightning had quivered through him, and the feeling of his own unworthiness overwhelmed him.

“How!” said he to himself, “Would you with sinful presumption penetrate into the sanctuary of this angel? Would you read thoughts, which have nothing in common with the wretched actions of minds entangled in earthly considerations? Would you mock the spirit of love himself, and try him with the accursed arts of dangerous and supernatural powers?”

He hastily put up the box, with a feeling as if he had committed some sin that could never be atoned, and dissolved in sadness, flung himself at the feet of the terrified Rose, exclaiming that he was a wretched sinner, unworthy of the love of so innocent, so pure a being.

Rose, who could not conceive what dark spirit had come over Peregrine, sank down to him, embraced him, and murmured with tears, “For God’s sake, my dear Peregrine, what is the matter with you? What evil enemy has placed himself between us? Oh, come—come, and sit down quietly by me.”

Incapable of any voluntary motion, Peregrine suffered himself to be raised by Rose in silence. It was well that the frail old sofa was loaded, as usual, with books and the tools for binding, so that Rose had many things to clear away to make room for Mr. Tyss. By this he gained time to recover himself, and his first wild passion subsided into a milder feeling. But if before he had looked like a most disconsolate sinner, upon whom a sentence of condemnation had been irrevocably pronounced, he now wore a somewhat silly appearance. This, however, in such circumstances, is a favourable prognostic.

When now both were seated on the aforesaid frail sofa, Rose began, with downcast eyes, and a half bashful smile, “I can guess what has affected you so, dear Peregrine, and will own that they have told me many strange things of the singular inhabitants of your house. The neighbours—you know what neighbours are, how they talk and talk, without knowing why or wherefore—these evil-minded neighbours have told me of a strange lady in your house, whom many take for a princess, and whom you brought home yourself on Christmas eve. They say that the old Mr. Swammer has indeed received her as his niece, but that she pursues you with strange arts and temptations. This, however, is by no means the worst; only think, my dear Peregrine: my old cousin just opposite with the sharp nose—who sends over such friendly greetings when she sees you here—she has tried to put all manner of bad things into my head about you. Notwithstanding her friendly greetings, she has always warned me against you, and maintained that nothing less than sorcery was carried on in your house, and that the little Dörtje is an imp in disguise, who, to seduce you, goes about in a human form, and, indeed, in a very beautiful one. But, Peregrine, my dear Peregrine, look at me; is there anything like doubt upon my face? I trust you, I trust the hopes of happiness to come upon us, when a firm band has united us forever. Let the dark spirits have determined what they will in regard to you; their power is fruitless against pure love and unchanging constancy. What will—what can—disturb a love like ours? It is the talisman, before which the nightly images all fly.”

At this moment Rose appeared to Peregrine like a higher being, and each of her words like the consolations of Heaven. An indescribable feeling of the purest delight streamed through him, like the sweet mild breath of spring. He was no longer the sinner, the impious presumer, which he had before held himself; he began to think with joy that he was worthy of the love of the innocent Rose.

The bookbinder, Lemmerhirt, now returned with his family from a walk.

The hearts of Rose and Peregrine were overflowing, and it was not till late that he quitted, as an accepted bridegroom, the narrow abode of the bookbinder, whose joy exalted him to heaven, while the old woman, from pure delight, sobbed rather more than was necessary.

All the authentic records, from which this wonderful history has been taken, agree in one point—and the chronicle of centuries confirms it—that in the night when Mr. Peregrine Tyss returned home as a happy lover, the full moon shone very brightly; it seems therefore natural enough, that, instead of going to rest, he seated himself at the open window, to stare at the moon, and think of his beloved, according to the usual custom of gentlemen, more particularly if they happen to be somewhat romantic—when under the influence of the tender passion.

But, however it may lower Mr. Peregrine Tyss with the ladies, it must not be concealed that, in spite of all his enthusiasm, he gaped twice, and so loudly, that a drunkard in the streets below called out to him, “Holla! you there with the white nightcap, don’t swallow me.” This of course was a sufficient cause for his dashing down the window so violently, that the frame rattled again. It is even affirmed that, in so doing, he cried out loud enough, “Impudent scoundrel!” But this cannot be relied upon, as it by no means accords with his general suavity of disposition. Enough; he shut the window, and went to bed. The necessity for sleep, however, seemed to be superseded by that immoderate gaping. Thoughts upon thoughts crossed his brain, and with peculiar vividness came before his eyes the surmounted danger, when a darker power would have tempted him to the use of the microscopic glass, and now it became plain to him that Master Flea’s mysterious present, however well intended, was yet in all respects a gift from hell.

“How!” said Peregrine to himself, “For a man to read the most hidden thoughts of his brothers! Does not this fateful gift bring upon him the dreadful destiny of the Wandering Jew, who wandered through the motliest crowds of life, as through a desert, without joy, without hope, without pain, in dull indifference, which is the *caput mortuum* of despair? Always trusting anew and always most bitterly deceived, how can it be otherwise than that distrust, hatred, jealousy, vindictiveness would nestle firmly in the soul, destroying every trace of that human principle, which shows itself in benevolence and gentle confidence. No, your friendly face, your smooth words, shall not deceive me—you, who in your inmost heart are concealing perhaps unmerited hate against me: I will hold you for my friend, I will do you as much good as I can, I will open my soul to you, because it gratifies me, and the bitter feeling of the moment, if you should deceive me, is little in comparison with the joys of a past dream. Even too the real friends, who truly mean you well—how changeable is the mind of man! May not an evil coincidence of circumstances, a misinclination growing out of the whims of chance, create transitory hatred in the bosom of the dearest friends? The unlucky glass shows the thoughts, distrust immediately occupies the mind, and in unjust wrath I push from me the real friend, and this poison goes on, eating deeper and deeper into the roots of life, till I am at variance with everything, even with myself. No; it is rank impiety to wish for an equality with the Eternal Power, who sees through the heart of man, because he is its master. Away, away with the unlucky gift!”

He caught up the little box, which held the magic glass, and was on the point of dashing it against the floor with all his might, when suddenly Master Flea stood before him on the counterpane: he was in his microscopic form, and looked extremely graceful and handsome, in a glittering scale-breastplate, and highly-polished golden boots.

“Hold!” he cried; “hold, most respected friend; do not commit an absurdity. You would sooner annihilate a sun-moat than fling this little indestructible glass but a foot from you, while I am near. For the rest, though you were not aware of it, I was sitting, as usual, in the

folds of your neckcloth, when you were at the honest bookbinder's, and therefore heard and saw all that passed. Just so I have been a party to your present edifying soliloquy, and have learned several things from it. In the first place, you have shown the purity of your mind in all its glory, whence I infer that the decisive moment is fast approaching. Then too I have found that in regard to the microscopic glass, I was in a great error. Believe me, my honoured friend, although I have not the pleasure to be a man, as you are, but only a flea—no simple one, indeed, but a graduate—still I thoroughly understand human beings, amongst whom I so constantly live. Most frequently their actions appear to me very ridiculous, and even childish. Do not take it ill, my friend; I speak it only as Master Flea. You are right. It would be a bad thing, and could not possibly lead to any good, if a man were able to spy thus, without ceremony, into the brains of his neighbours; still to the careless, lively flea this quality of the microscopic glass is not in the least dangerous.

“Most honoured friend, and as fortune soon will have it, most happy friend—you know that my people are of a reckless, merry disposition, and one might say that they consisted of mere youthful springalds. With this I can, for my part, boast of a peculiar sort of wisdom, which in general is wanting to you children of men—that is, I never do anything out of season. To bite is the principal business of my life, but I always bite in the right time and right place; lay that to your heart, my worthy friend.

“I will now back from your hands, and faithfully preserve the gift, intended for you, and which neither that preparation of a man, called Swammerdam, nor Leeuwenhoek, who wears himself out with petty envy, could possess. And now, my honoured Mr. Tyss, resign yourself to slumber. You will soon fall into a dreamy delirium, in which the great moment will reveal itself. At the right time I shall be with you again.”

Master Flea disappeared, and the brilliance, which he had spread, faded away in the darkness of the chamber, the curtains of which were closely drawn.

It fell out as Master Flea had said.

Peregrine fancied that he was lying on the banks of a murmuring wood stream, and heard the sighing of the wind, the whispering of the leaves, and the humming of a thousand insects that buzzed about him. Then it seemed as if strange voices were audible, plainer and still plainer, so that at last Peregrine thought he could make out words. But it was only a confused and stunning hubbub that reached his ear.

At length these words were pronounced by a solemn, hollow voice, that sounded clearer and clearer—

“Unhappy king, Sekakis, thou who didst despise the intelligence of nature, who, blinded by the evil spells of a crafty demon, didst look upon the false Teraphim, instead of the real spirit!

“In that fate-fraught spot at Famagusta, buried in the deep mine of the earth, lay the talisman, but, when you destroyed yourself, there was no principle to rekindle its frozen powers. In vain you sacrificed your daughter, the beautiful Gamaheh; in vain was the amorous despair of the Thistle, Zeherit, but at the same time impotent and inoperative was the blood-thirst of the Leech-Prince. Even the awkward Genius, Thetel, was obliged to let go his sweet prey, for so mighty still, O king, Sekakis, was thy half-extinct idea, that thou couldst return the lost one to the primal element, from which she sprang.

“And ye, insane anatomists of nature, that ever the unhappy one should have fallen into your hands, when you discovered her in the petal of a tulip! That you should have tormented her with your detestable experiments, presuming, in your childish arrogance, that you could

effect that by your wretched arts, which could only happen by the power of that sleeping talisman.

“And you, Master Flea, even to you it was not granted to pierce the mystery, for thy clear sight had not yet the power to penetrate the depths of earth, and see the frozen carbuncle.

“The stars now crossed each other in strange motions, and fearful constellations produced the wonderful, the inscrutable to the purblind sight of man. But still no starry conflict awoke the carbuncle, for the human mind was not born that could cherish it—but at last—

“The wonder is fulfilled, the moment is come.”

A bright shine flickered by Peregrine; he awoke out of his stupefaction, and—to his no little surprise—perceived Master Flea, who, in his microscopic form, but clad in a splendid drapery, and holding a blazing torch in his forepaws, busily skipped, up and down the chamber, and trilled forth the finest tones imaginable.

Peregrine strove to rouse himself from sleep, when suddenly a thousand fiery flashes quivered through the room, that in a short time seemed to be filled by one single glowing ball of fire. Then a mild aromatic breeze waved through the wild blaze, which soon died away into the softest moonlight.

Peregrine now found himself on a splendid throne in the rich garments of an Indian king, the sparkling diadem upon his head, the emblematic lotus-flower in his hand instead of a sceptre. The throne stood in the midst of a hall so large the eye could not take in its extent, and its thousand columns were slim cedars, aspiring to the heavens. Between them, roses and the most odorous flowers of every kind lifted up their heads from amidst a dark foliage, as if longing for the pure bright azure that glittered through the twined branches of the cedars, and seemed to look down upon them with the eyes of love.

Peregrine recognized himself; he felt that the carbuncle, rekindled into life, was glowing in his own breast.

In the farthest background the Genius, Thetel, was labouring to rise into the air, but never was able to reach half the height of the cedars, and fell back again to earth. Here the odious Leech-Prince was crawling with abominable contortions, now blowing himself out, and then again extending himself, and groaning out, all the time, “Gamaheh! Still mine!”

In the middle of the hall, upon colossal microscopes, sat Leeuwenhoek and Swammerdam, making most piteous faces, and reproachfully calling out to each other, “See now! that was the point in the horoscope, the meaning of which you could not interpret. The talisman is lost to us forever!”

Close upon the steps of the throne Dörtje Elverdink and George Pepusch seemed not so much to sleep as to be in a deep swoon.

Peregrine—or, as we may now call him, King Sekakis—flung back the regal mantle that covered his breast, and from within, the carbuncle shot forth dazzling beams, like Heaven’s fire, through the immense hall.

The Genius Thetel again tried to rise, but he fell away with a hollow groan into innumerable colourless flocks, which, driven by the wind, were lost in the bushes.

With the most horrible cries of agony, the Leech-Prince shrunk up, and vanished into the earth, while an indignant roar was heard, as if she reluctantly received into her bosom the odious fugitive. Leeuwenhoek and Swammerdam had sunk down from the microscopes into

themselves, and it was plain, from their sighs and groans, that they were undergoing a severe punishment.

But Dörtje Elverdink and George Pepusch—or, as we should now call them, Princess Gamaheh and the Thistle, Zeherit—had awakened from their swoon, and knelt before the king. Their eyes were cast to earth, as if unable to bear the burning splendour of the carbuncle.

Peregrine addressed them all with solemnity:

“Thou, who shouldst deceive men as the Genius, Thetel, thou wert compounded by the evil demon of clay and feathers, and therefore the beaming of love destroyed thee, empty phantom, and thou wert reduced to thy original nothing.

“And thou too, bloodthirsty monster of the night, thou wast forced to fly from the fire of the carbuncle into the bosom of the earth.

“But you, poor dupes, unhappy Swammerdam, wretched Leeuwenhoek, your whole life was one incessant error. You sought to inquire into Nature, without suspecting the import of her inward being. You were presumptuous enough to wish to penetrate into her workshop and watch her secret labours, imagining that you could, without punishment, look into the fearful mysteries of those depths, which are inscrutable to the human eye. Your hearts remained cold and insensible; the real love has never warmed your bosom. You imagined that you read the holy wonders of nature with pious admiration, but in endeavouring to find out the condition of those wonders, even in their inmost core, yourself destroyed that pious feeling, and the knowledge after which you strove was a phantom merely, that has deceived you, like prying, inquisitive children.

“Fools! For you the beams of the carbuncle no longer have hope or consolation.”

“Ha! ha! There is hope, there is consolation; the old one betakes herself to the old ones; there’s love! there’s truth! there’s tenderness! And the old one is now really a queen, and takes her little Swammerdam and her little Leeuwenhoek into her kingdom, and there they are princes, and wind gold thread and silver thread, and do many other useful things.”

So spoke the old Alina, who suddenly stood between the two microscopists, clad in a strange dress, which nearly resembled the costume of the Queen of Golconda in the opera. But Leeuwenhoek and Swammerdam had so shrunk up, that they seemed to be scarcely a span high, and the Queen of Golconda, putting her puppets into two ivory cradles, rocked and nursed them, and sang to them—Lullaby, lullaby, baby mine, etc.

During this the Princess Gamaheh and the Thistle, Zeherit, were still kneeling on the steps of the throne. Peregrine spoke:

“Yes, beloved pair, the error is past, which disturbed your lives. Come, dear ones, to my breast. The beam of the carbuncle will penetrate your hearts, and you will enjoy the blessedness of Heaven.”

With a cry of joy and hope, the lovers started up, and Peregrine pressed them strongly to his glowing heart. When he released them, they fell, transported, into each others arms; the corpse-like paleness had vanished from their brows, and the freshness of youth bloomed on their cheeks and sparkled in their eyes.

Master Flea, who had hitherto stood by the throne with all the gravity of a guard of honour, suddenly resumed his natural shape, and with a vigorous spring he leaped upon Dörtje’s neck, crying out, in a shrill voice, “Old love never changes.”

But, oh wonder! in the same moment, Rose lay upon Peregrine's breast, in all her youthful beauty, beaming with the purest love, like a cherub from Heaven.

And now the branches of the cedars rustled, the flowers lifted their heads more loftily, soft melodies poured from the bushes, and the thousand voices of delight rose from earth, and air, and water.

Mr. Peregrine Tyss had purchased a handsome villa in the vicinity of the city, and here on the same day was to be celebrated the double marriage of himself with Rose, and his friend George Pepusch with the little Dörtje Elverdink.

The kind reader will excuse my entering into the details of the nuptial feast and ceremonies. For my part I am willing to leave it to my fair readers to settle the dress of the two brides according to their own fancy. It is only to be observed that Peregrine and his beautiful Rose were all simple delight, while George and Dörtje, on the contrary, were meditative, and with mutual gaze seemed to have thoughts, eyes, and ears for each other only.

It was midnight, when suddenly the balsamic odours of the large-blossomed thistle spread through the whole garden.

Peregrine awoke from sleep. He fancied that he heard the plaintive melody of hopeless desire, and a strange foreboding got possession of him. It seemed to him as if a friend were violently torn from him.

The next morning the second bridal pair was missing, namely, George Pepusch and Dörtje Elverdink; what added not a little to the general astonishment was that they had not at all entered the bridal chamber.

In this moment of doubt, the gardener came and exclaimed, "He did not know what to think of it, but a strange wonder had happened in the garden. Throughout the whole night he had dreamt of the blooming *Cactus grandiflorus*, and not till now discovered the cause of it. They should only come and see!"

Peregrine and Rose went into the garden. In the middle of a clump of flowers a lofty thistle had shot up, which drooped its withering blossom beneath the morning sun; about this a variegated tulip wound itself, and that also had died a vegetable death.

"Oh, my foreboding!" cried Peregrine, while his voice trembled with sadness. "Oh, my foreboding! it has not deceived me. The beams of the carbuncle, which have kindled me to the highest life, have given death to thee, thou sweet pair, united by the strange discords of opposing powers. The mystery is revealed: the highest moment of gratified desire was also the moment of thy death."

Rose too seemed to have a foreboding of the wonder; she bent over the poor perished tulip, and shed a stream of tears.

"You are quite right," said Master Flea, who suddenly appeared in his microscopic form on the top of the thistle, "You are quite right, my dear Mr. Peregrine. It is all as you have said, and I have lost my beloved forever."

Rose was at first somewhat frightened at the little creature, but seeing that he gazed on her with such friendly, intelligent eyes, and Peregrine spoke so familiarly with him, she took heart, looked boldly on his graceful tiny form, and gained so much the more confidence in him as Peregrine whispered to her, "this is my kind Master Flea."

“My good Peregrine,” said Master Flea very tenderly, “My dear lady, I must now leave you, and return to my people; yet I shall always be your devoted friend, and you shall constantly experience my presence in a way that will be agreeable to you. Farewell! heartily farewell to both of you. And all good fortune be with you.”

During this he had resumed his natural form, and vanished without leaving a single trace behind.

Here the records suddenly break off, and the wonderful history of Master Flea comes to a joyous and—wished-for—*end*.

THE END

I'm Julie, the woman who runs [Global Grey](#) - the website where this ebook was published. These are my own formatted editions, and I hope you enjoyed reading this particular one.

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