

MISCELLANY.

"Omnis indigne honorum, expatiens aequo delibetum."

FROM KILDERMEESTER'S HISTORY OF NEW-YORK. How general Von Poffenburgh proved himself a great disciplinarian—How the warlike Peter prepared to chastise the Swedes, and how Gen. Poffenburgh gave a stout carousal, for which he got more kicks than coffers.

The next ambition of general Von Poffenburgh was to be thought a strict disciplinarian. When among the discipline is the soul of all military enterprise, he enforced it with the most rigorous precision; obliging every man to turn out his toes, and hold up his head on parade, and press down the forehead of those behind to all such as wore any shirts in their backs.

Having one day, in the course of his devout researches in the bible (for the pious Eneas himself could not exceed him in outward religion) encountered the history of Abalom and his melancholy end; the general in an evil hour issued orders for cropping the hair of both officers and men throughout the garrison. Now it came to pass, that among his officers was one Kildermester; a sturdy old veteran, who had cherished through the course of a long life, a rugged mop of hair, not a little resembling the shag of a Newfoundland dog; terminating with an immoderate queue, like the handle of a frying man; and quoted so tightly to his head, that his eyes and mouth generally stood ajar, and his eye-brows were drawn up to the top of his forehead. It may naturally be supposed that the possessor of so goodly an appendage would resist with abhorrence, an order condemning it to the shears. Sampson himself could not have held his wig more sacred, & on hearing the general orders, he discharged a tempest of veteran, soldier-like oaths, & dunder and blizums—swore he would break any man's head who attempted to meddle with his tail—queued it stiffer than ever, and whisked it about the garrison, as fiercely as the tail of a crocodile.

The eel-skin queue of old Kildermester became instantly an affair of the utmost importance. The commander in chief was too enlightened an officer not to perceive, that the discipline of the garrison, the subordination and good order of the armies of the Nieuw Nederlandt, the consequent safety of the whole province, and ultimately the dignity and prosperity of their high mightinesses, the lords states general, and above all, the dignity of the great general Von Poffenburgh, all imperiously demanded the docking of that stubborn queue. He therefore patriotically determined that old Kildermester should be publicly shorn of his glories in presence of the whole garrison—the old man as resolutely stood on the defensive—whereupon the general, as became a great man, was highly exasperated, and the offender was arrested and tried by a court martial for mutiny, desertion and all the other rignarole of offences noticed in the articles of war, ending with a "wadeleit, in wearing an eel-skin queue, three feet long, contrary to orders." Then came on arraignments, and trials, & pleadings, and convictings, and the whole country was in a ferment about this unfortunate queue. As it is well known that the commander of a distant frontier post has the power of acting pretty much after his own will, there is little doubt but that the old veteran would have been hanged or shot at least, had he not luckily fallen ill of a fever, through mere chagrin and mortification—and most flagitiously deserted from all earthly command, with his beloved locks unviolated. His obstinacy remained unshaken to the very last moment, when he directed that he should be carried to his grave with his eel-skin queue sticking out of a knot hole in his coffin.

This magnanimous affair obtained the general great credit as an excellent disciplinarian, but it is hinted that he was far ever after subject to bad dreams, and fearful visitations in the night—when the grisly specter of old Kildermester would stand by his bed side, erect as a pump, his enormous queue strutting out like the handle.

Hitherto most venerable and courteous reader, have I shewn thee the administration of the valourous Stuyvesant, under the mild moon-shine of peace; or rather the grim tranquility of awful preparation; but now the war drum rumbles, the brazen trumpet brays its thrilling note, and the rude clank of hostile arms, speaks fearful prophecies of coming trouble. The gallant warrior starts from soft repose, from golden visions and voluptuous ease; where in the dulcet, "piping time of peace," he sought sweet solace after all his toils. No more in beauty's eye-lap reclined, he weaves fair garlands for his lady's brows; no more entwines with flowers his shining sword, nor through the live-long lazy summers day, chaunts forth his lovesick soul in madrigals. To manhood roused he spurns the amorous fate; dolls from his branny back the robe of peace, and clothes his pampered limbs in princely of steel. O'er his dark brow, where late the myrtle waved; where wanton roses breathed enervate love, he rears the beaming casque and nodding plume; grasps the bright shield and shakes the poudrous lance; or mounts with oger

pride his fiery steed; and turns for deeds of glorious chivalry!

But soft, worthy reader I would not have you go about to imagine, that any great chemist thus ludicrously begins with iron existed in the city of New Amsterdam.—This is but a fey and fantastic mode in which we heretofore writers always talk'd war, thereby to give it a noble and imposing aspect; equipping our warriors with bucklers, helms and lances, and a host of other outlandish and obsolete weapons, the like of which perchance they had never seen or heard of; in the same manner that a cunning snarary arrays a modern general or an admiral in the accoutrements of a Caesar or an Alexander. The simple truth then of all this oratorical flourish is this.—That the valiant Peter Stuyvesant all of a sudden found it necessary to scour his trusty blade, which too long had rusted in its scabbard, and prepare himself to undergo those hardy toils of war, in which his mighty soul so much delighted.

methinks I at this moment behold him in my imagination—or rather I should say, in my imagination—on parade, in the full military accoutrements of the day, and in all the terrors of a veteran general. His regimental coat of German blue, gorgeously decorated with a gaudy show of large brass buttons, reaching from his waistband to his chin. The voluminous skirts turned up at the corners and separating gallantly behind, so as to display the seat of a sumptuous pair of bristled coloured trunk breeches—a graceful style still prevalent among the warriors of our day, & which is in conformity to the custom of ancient heroes, who scorned to defend themselves in rear.—His face rendered exceeding terrible and warlike by a pair of black mustachios; his hair strutting out on each side in stiffer pomatumed ear locks and descending in a rat tail queue below his waist; a shining stock of black leather supporting his chin, and a little, but fierce cocked hat stuck with a gallant and fiery air, over his left eye. Such was the chivalric port of Peter the Headstrong; and when he made a sudden halt, planted himself firmly on his solid supporter, with his wooden leg, inclined with silver, a little in advance, in order to strengthen his position; his right hand stuck akimbo, his left resting upon the pommel of his brass hilted sword; his head dressing spiritedly to the right, with a most appalling and hard favoured frown upon his brow—he presented altogether one of the most commanding, bitter looking, and soldiery figures, that ever strutted upon canvas. Proceed we now to enquire the cause of this warlike preparation.

The encroaching disposition of the Swedes, on the south, or Delaware river, has been duly recorded in the Chronicles of the reign of William the First. These encroachments having been endured with that heroic magnanimity, which is the corner stone, or according to Aristotle, the left hand neighbour of true courage, had been repeatedly and wickedly aggravated.

The Swedes, who were of that class of cunning pretenders to christianity, that read the Bible upside down, whenever it interferes with their interest, inverted the golden maxim, and when their neighbour suffered them to smite him on the one cheek, they generally smote him on the other also, whether it was turned to them or not. Their repeated aggressions had been among the numerous sources of vexation, that conspired to keep their ritable sensibilities of Wilhelmus Keif, in a constant fever, and it was only owing to the unfortunate circumstance, that he had always a hundred things to do at once, that he did not take such unrelenting vengeance as their offences merited. But they had now a chieftain of a different character to deal with; and they were soon guilty of a piece of treachery, that threw his honest blood in a ferment, and precluded all further sufferance.

Printz, the governor of the province of New Sweden, being either deceased or removed, for of this fact some uncertainty exists; he was succeeded by Jan Risingh, a gigantic Swede, and who, had he not been rather in-kneed and splay footed, might have served for the model of a Sampson, or a Hercules. He was no less rapacious than mighty and withal as crafty as he was rapacious; so that in fact there is very little doubt, had he lived, some four or five centuries before, he would have made one of those wicked gloms who took such a cruel pleasure, in pocketing distressed travellers, when gadding about the world, and locking them up in enchanted castles, without a toilet, a change of linen, or any other convenience.—In consequence of which enormities they fell under the high displeasure of chivalry, and all true, loyal and gallant knights, were instructed to attack and slay outright any miscreant they might happen to find above six feet high, which is doubtless one reason that the race of large men is nearly extinct, and the generation of datter ages so exceedingly small.

No sooner did governor Risingh enter upon his office, than he immediately cast his eyes upon the important post of Fort Cassimer, and formed the righteous resolution of taking it into his possession. The only thing that remained to consider, was the mode of carrying his resolution into effect; and here I must do him the justice to say, that he exhibited a humanity rarely to be met with among leaders; and which I have never seen equalled in modern times, excepting among the English, in their glorious affair at Copenhagen. Willing to spare the effusion of blood, and the miseries of open warfare, he benevolently shunned

every thing like avowed hostility or regular siege, and resorted to the less glorious, but more merciful expedient of treachery.

Under pretence therefore, of paying a sociable, neighbourly visit to general Von Poffenburgh, at his new post at Fort Cassimer, he made requisite preparation, sailed in great state up the Delaware, displayed his flag with the most ceremonious puzucilio, and honoured the fortress with a royal salute, previous to dropping anchor. The unusual noise awakened a veteran sentinel, who was napping faithfully on his post, and who after hammering his fist for good ten minutes, and rubbing his eye with the corner of his ragged cocked hat, but all to no purpose, contrived to return the compliment, by discharging his rusty firelock with the spark of a pipe, which he borrowed from one of his comrades. The salute indeed would have been answered by the guns of the fort, had they not unfortunately been out of order, and the magazine deficient in ammunition—accidents to which Fort Cassimer is all eyes been liable, and which as Fort Cassimer had only been erected about ten years, and general Von Poffenburgh, its mighty commander, had been fully occupied with matters of much greater self importance.

Risingh, highly satisfied with this courteous reply to his salute, treated the fort to a second, for he well knew its puissant and pompous leader, was marvelously delighted with these little ceremonials, which he considered as so many acts of homage paid unto his greatness. He then landed in great state, attended by a suit of thirty men.

It may readily be imagined how much general Von Poffenburgh was flattered by a visit from so august a personage; his only embarrassment was, how he should receive him in such a manner as to appear to the greatest advantage, and make the most advantageous impression. The main guard was ordered immediately to turn out, and the arms and regimentals (of which the garrison possessed full half a dozen suits) were equally distributed among the soldiers. One tall lank fellow, appeared in a coat intended for a small man, the skirts of which reached a little below his waist, the buttons were between his shoulders, and the sleeves half way to his wrists, so that his hands looked like a couple of huge spades—and the coat not being large enough to meet in front, was linked together by loops, made of a pair of red worsted garters. Another had an old cocked hat, stuck on the back of his head and decorated with a bunch of cock tails—a third had a pair of rusty gaiters hanging about his heels—while the fourth, who was a short duck legged little trojan, was equipped in a huge pair of the general's cast off breeches, which he held up with one hand, while he grasped his firelock with the other. The rest were accoutred in similar style, excepting three graceless raggamuffins, who had no shirts and but a pair and half of breeches between them, wherefore they were sent to the black hole, to keep them out of view.—There is nothing in which the talents of a prudent commander are more completely testified, than in this setting matters off to the greatest advantage; and it is for this reason that our frontier posts at the present day (that of Niagara in particular) display their best suit of regimentals on the back of the sentinel who stands in sight of travellers.

His men being thus gallantly arrayed—those who lacked muskets shouldering shovels and pick axes, and every man being ordered to tuck in his shirt tail and pull up his breeches, general Von Poffenburgh first took a sturdy draught of foaming ale, which like the magnanimous More of Morehall was his invariable practice on all great occasions—which done he put himself at their head, ordered the pine planks, which served as a draw bride, to be laid down, and issued forth from his castle, like a mighty giant, just refreshed with wine. But when the two heroes met, then began a scene of warlike parade and chivalric courtesy, that beggars all description. Risingh, who was a shrewd cunning politician, & had grown grey much before his time, in consequence of his craftiness, saw at one glance the ruling passions of general Von Poffenburgh, and humoured him in all his valourous fantasies.

Their detachments were accordingly drawn up in front of each other; they carried arms and they presented arms; they gave the standing salute and the passing salute.—They rolled their drums, they flourished their fies and they waved their colours—they faced to the left and they faced to the right, and they faced to the right about—they wheeled forward and they wheeled backward, and they wheeled into echelon—they marched, and they counter-marched, by grand divisions, by single divisions and by sub-divisions—by platoons, by sections and by files—in quick time, in slow time and in no time at all; for, having gone through all the evolutions of two great armies, including the eighteen manœuvres of Doudas (which, not being yet invented, they must have anticipated by intuition or inspiration) having exhausted that they could recollect or imagine of military tactics, including sundry strange and irregular evolutions, the like of which were never seen before or since, excepting among certain of our newly raised drafts, the 2 great commanders & their respective troops, came at length to a dead halt, completely exhausted by the toils of war.—Never did two valiant train band captains, or

two bush'd theatrick heroes, in the renowned tragedies of Plazzo, Tom I think, or any other heroidal and fighting tragedy, wear their gallows-looking duck-legged, hump-backed, sheep-stealing myrmidons with such glory and self-admiration.

These military compliments being finished, general Von Poffenburgh escorted his illustrious visitor, with great ceremony into the fort, attended him throughout the fortifications, shewed him the horn works, crow works, bastions, moons, and various outworks; or rather the places where they ought to be erected, and where they might be erected if he pleased; plentifully demonstrating that it was a piece of "great capability," and though at present but a mere redoubt, yet that it evidently was a formidable fortress, in embryo. This survey over, he next had the whole garrison put under arms, exercised and reviewed, and concluded by ordering the three bridewell birds to be let out of the black hole, brought up to the hall, and soundly flogged, for the amusement of the visitor, and to convince him that he was a disciplinarian.

There is no error more dangerous to a commander to make known the weakness of his garrison; this will be exemplified before I have arrived to an end of my present story, which thus carries its moral like a roasted goose, in pudding in its very middle. The cunning Risingh, while he pretended to be struck dumb outright, with the puissance of the great Von Poffenburgh, took silent note of the incompetency of his garrison, of which he gave a hint to his trusty followers; who tipped each other the wink, and laughed most obstreperously at their sleeves.

The inspection, review and flogging being concluded, the party adjourned to the table for among his other great qualities, the general was remarkably addicted to huge entertainments, or rather carousals, and in one afternoon's campaign would leave more dead men on the field, than he ever did in the whole course of his military career. Many ballads of these bloodless victories do still remain on record, and the whole province was thrown in amaze, by the return of one of the campaigns; wherein it was stated, that though like captain Bobadel, he had only twenty men to back him, yet in the short space of six months he had conquered and utterly annihilated 60 oxen, ninety hogs, one hundred sheep, ten thousand cabbages, one thousand bushels of potatoes, one hundred and fifty kilderkins of small beer, two thousand seven hundred and thirty-five pipes, seventy eight pounds of sugar plumbs, 43 pounds of capers and forty tons of iron, besides sundry small meats, game, poultry, and garden stuff. An achievement unparalleled since the days of Pantagruel and his devouring army, and shewed that it was only necessary to let the great general Von Poffenburgh, and his garrison, loose in an enemies country, and in a little while they would breed a famine, and starve all the inhabitants.

No sooner therefore had the general received the first intimation of the visit of governor Risingh, than he ordered a big dinner to be prepared; and privately sent out a detachment of his most experienced veterans, to rob all the hen-roosts in the neighbourhood, and lay the pig-styes under contribution; a service to which they had been long enured, and which they discharged with such incredible zeal and promptitude, that the garrison table groaned under the weight of their spoils.

I wish with all my heart, my readers could see the valiant Von Poffenburgh, as he presided at the head of the banquet; it was a sight worth beholding—there he sat, in his greatest glory, surrounded by his soldiers, like that famous wine bibber Alexander, whose thirty virtues he did most ably imitate—telling astounding stories of hair-breadth adventures and heroic exploits, at which, though all his auditors knew them to be most incontinent and outrageous gasconades, yet did they cast up their eyes in admiration and utter many interjections of astonishment. Nor could the general pronounce any thing that bore the remotest semblance to a joke, but the stout Risingh would strike his branny fist upon the table till every glass rattled again, throwing himself back in his chair, and uttering gigantic peals of laughter, swearing most horribly, it was the best joke he ever heard in his life.—Thus all was rout and revelry and hideous carousal within Fort Cassimer, and so lustily did the great Von Poffenburgh ply the bottle, that in less than four short hours he made himself, and his whole garrison, who all sedulously emulated the deeds of their chieftain, dead drunk; in singing songs, quaffing bumpers, and drinking fourth of July toasts, not one of which, but was as long as a Welsh pedigree or plea in chancery.

No sooner did things come unto this pass, than the crafty Risingh and his Swedes, who had cunningly kept themselves sober, rose on their entertainers, tied them neck and heels, & took formal possession of the fort, and all its dependencies, in the name of queen Christina, of Sweden; administering, at the same time, an oath of allegiance to all the dutch soldiers, who could be made sober enough to swallow it.—Risingh then put the fortifications in order, appointed his discreet and vigilant friend Susa Scutz, a tall, wind dried, water drinking Swede, to the command, and departed bearing with him this truly amiable garrison, and their puissant commander; who when brought to himself by a sound-drebbing bore to resemble a "deboashed fish," or blatted sea monster, caught upon dry land.