

KOOSJE

(By John Strange Winter.)



ING UNDER the name of Koosje Van Kampen, she lived in Utrecht, that most quaint of cities, the Venice of the north. She lived in the house of a professor who dwelt on the Munster most aristocratic parts of that wondrously aristocratic city, and once or twice every week you might have seen her, if you had been there to see, busily engaged in washing the red tile and blue slate pathway in front of the professor's house. You would have seen that she was very pleasant to look at, this Koosje, very comely and clean, whether she happened to be very busy or whether it had been Sunday, and with her very best gown on she was out for promenade in the Baan after duty going to service.

It was not likely that such a treasure could remain long unnoticed and unsought after. Servants in the Netherlands are not so good but that they might be better, and most people knew what a treasure Prof. van Dijk had in his Koosje. However, as the professor conscientiously raised her wages from time to time Koosje never thought of leaving him.

But there is one bribe no woman can resist—the bribe that is offered by love. As Prof. van Dijk had expected and feared, that bribe ere long was held out to Koosje, and Koosje was too weak to resist it. Not that she had intended to tell him at first. She was only three and twenty, and though Jan van der Welde was as fine a fellow as could be seen in Utrecht and had good wages and something put by, Koosje was by no means inclined to rush headlong into matrimony with undue hurry. It was more pleasant to live in the professor's good house to have delightful walks arm in arm with Jan under the trees in the Baan or around the Singles, parting under the stars with many a lingering word and promise to meet again. It was during one of these very partings that the professor suddenly became aware as he walked placidly home of the change that had come into Koosje's life.

However, Koosje told him blushing that she did not wish to leave him just at present. So he did not trouble himself about the matter. He was a wise man, this old authority on osteology, and quoted oftentimes, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." So the courtship sped smoothly on. Koosje had been on an errand for the professor, one that had kept her out of doors some time, and it happened that the night was bitterly cold. The cold indeed was fearful. The girl had delivered her message and ran on through Oude Kerkhoff as fast as her feet could carry her when just as she turned the corner into the Domplein, a fierce gust of wind, accompanied by a blinding shower of rain, assailed her. Her foot caught against something soft and heavy, and she fell.

"Bless me!" she ejaculated blankly. "What has left a bundle out on the path on such a night—pitch dark with half the lamps out and rain and mist enough to blind one?" She gathered herself up, rubbing elbows and knees vigorously, casting the while dark glances at the obnoxious bundle which had caused the disaster. Just then the wind was lulled. The lamp close at hand gave out a steady light, which shed its rays through the fog upon Koosje and the bundle, from which came a faint moan. Quickly she drew nearer, when she perceived that what she had believed to be a bundle was indeed a woman, apparently in the last stage of exhaustion.

Koosje tried to lift her and struggled on for a few steps that lay between her and the professor's house. "Oh, professor!" she gasped out, but between her struggle with the elements and her race down the passage her breath was utterly gone.

The professor looked up from his book and his tea tray in surprise. "What is the matter, Koosje?" he asked, regarding her gravely over his spectacles. "There's a woman outside—dying!" she panted. "I fell over her."

"You had better try to get her in, then," said the old gentleman, in quite a relieved tone. "You and Dorteje must bring her in. Dear, dear! Poor soul! But it is a dreadful night."

The old gentleman shivered as he spoke and drew a little nearer to the tall white porcelain stove. He wondered why he should have every luxury and this poor creature should be dying in the street amid the wind and the rain. It was all very unequal. It was very odd, the professor argued, leaning his back against the tall, warm stove. It was very odd indeed. His reverie was, however, broken by the abrupt re-entrance of Koosje, who this time was a little less breathless than she had been before.

"We have got her into the kitchen, professor," she announced. "She is a child, a mere baby, and so pretty! She has opened her eyes and spoken." "Give her some soup and wine—hot," said the professor without stirring. "But won't you ask?"

The professor hesitated. He had been attending in cases of illness, though he was properly a qualified doctor and in an emergency would lay his prejudice aside. "Oh, shall I run across for the good Dr. Smith?" Koosje asked. "He would come in a minute, only it is such a night!"

in a half hysterical sob, while violent shivers shook her from head to foot. The professor went and looked at her over his spectacles, as if she had been some curious specimen of his favorite study. But at the same time he kept at a respectful distance from her.

"Give her some soup and wine," he said at length, putting his hands under the tails of his long dressing gown of flowered cashmere—"some soup and wine, hot, and put her to bed."

"Is she then to remain for the night?" Koosje asked, a little surprised. "Oh, don't send me away!" the golden haired girl broke out in a voice that was positively a wail, and clasping a pair of pretty, slender hands in piteous supplication.

"Where do you come from?" the old gentleman asked, much as if he expected she might suddenly jump up and bite him. "From Rotterdam, myneer," she answered with a sob.

"So, Koosje, she is remarkably well dressed, is she not?" the professor said, glancing at the costly lace headgear, the heavy gold headpiece which lay on the table, together with the great gold spiral ornaments and filigree pendants—a dazzling head of richness.

"Very well dressed, indeed, professor," returned Koosje, promptly. "Yes, what are you doing in Utrecht in such a plight as this, to?" he asked, still keeping at a safe distance.

"Oh, myneer, I am all alone in the world!" she answered, her blue misty eyes filled with tears. "I had a month ago a dear, good, kind father, but he has died, and I am indeed desolate. I always believed him rich, and to these things," with a gesture that included her dress and the ornaments on the table, "I have ever been accustomed."

Thus I ordered without consideration such clothes as I thought useful. And then I found there was nothing for me—no a hundred guilders to call my own when all was paid."

"But what brought you to Utrecht?" "He sent me here, myneer, in his last illness, only of three days' duration, he bade me gather all together and come to this city, where I was to ask for a Mevrouw Baake, his cousin."

"Mevrouw Baake of the Signen Fabriek," said Dorteje in an aside to the others. "I lived servant with her before I came here."

"I had heard very little about her, only my father had sometimes mentioned his cousin to me. They had once been betrothed," the stranger continued. "But when I reached Utrecht I found she was dead—two years dead. But we had never heard of it."

"Dear, dear, dear!" exclaimed the professor, pityingly. "Well, you had better let Koosje put you to bed, and we will see what can be done for you in the morning."

"Am I to make up a bed?" Koosje asked, following him along the passage. The professor wheeled around and faced her.

"She had better sleep in the guest room," he said, thoughtfully, regardless of the cold which struck to his slippered feet from the marble floor. "That is the best room which does not contain specimens that would probably frighten the poor child. I am very much afraid, Koosje," he concluded, doubtfully, "that she is a lady, and what we are to do with a lady I can't think."

With that the old gentleman shuffled off to his easy room, and Koosje turned back to her kitchen. On the morrow matters assumed a somewhat different aspect. Gertrude Van Floote proved to be not exactly a gentlewoman. It is true that her father had been a well-to-do man for his station in life and had been much spoiled and indulged by his one moth-erless child. Yet her education was so slight that she could do little more than read and write, besides speaking a little English, which she had picked up from the yachtmen frequenting her native town. The professor found she had been but a distant relative of the Mevrouw Baake, to seek whom she had come to Utrecht, and that she had no kinsfolk upon whom she could depend, a fact which accounted for the profusion of her jewelry, all her golden trinkets having descended to her as heirlooms.

"I can be your servant, myneer," she suggested. "Indeed, I am a very useful girl, as you will find if you will but try me."

Now, as a rule, the professor vigorously set his face against admitting young servants into his house. They broke his china, they disarranged his books, they meddled with his papers, and made general havoc. So, in truth, he was not very willing to have Gertrude Van Floote as a permanent member of his household, and he said so.

Koosje had taken a fancy to the girl, and, having an eye to her own departure at no very distant date—for she had been betrothed more than two years—she pleaded so hard to keep her, promising to train her in all the professor's ways, to teach her the value of old china and osteologic specimens, that eventually, with a good deal of grumbling, the old gentleman gave way and, being a wise as well as an old gentleman, went back to his studies, dismissing Koosje and the girl alike from his thoughts.

Just at first Truide, poor child, was charmed. She put away her specimen ornaments, and some lilac frocks and black skirts were purchased for her. Her box, which she had left at the station, supplied all that was necessary for Sunday.



come and go as she chose, she was only permitted to attend services on Sundays and to take an hour's promenade with Dorteje, who was dull and heavy and stupid, she began to feel positively desperate, and the result of it was that when Jan van der Welde came to see Koosje, Miss Truide, from sheer longing for excitement and change, began to make eyes at him.

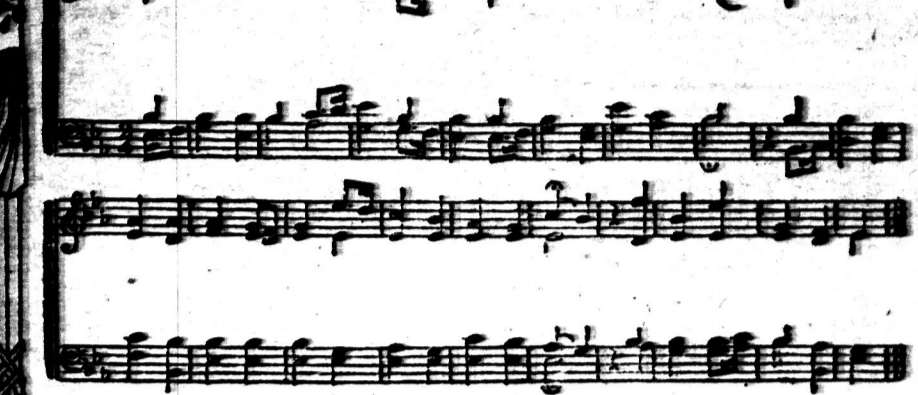
Just at first Koosje noticed nothing. She herself was of so faithful a nature that an idea, a suspicion, of Jan's faithlessness never entered her mind. When the girl laughed and blushed and dimpled and smiled, when she cast her great blue eyes at the big young fellow, Koosje only thought how pretty she was and it was just a thousand pities she had not been born a great lady.

And thus weeks slipped over. Never very demonstrative herself, Koosje saw nothing. Dorteje for her part saw a great deal. But Dorteje was a woman of few words, one who quite believed in the saying, "If speech is silver, silver is silence." So she held her peace.

Well, in the end there came what the French call an *demonstré*—what was, in forcible modern English would call it a smash—and it happened thus: It was one evening toward the summer that Koosje's eyes were suddenly opened and she became aware of the free and easy familiarity of Truide's manner toward her betrothed lover, Jan.

"Leave the kitchen!" she said, in a tone of authority. But it happened that at the very instant she spoke Jan was furtively holding Truide's fingers under the cover of the table cloth, and when on hearing the sharp words the girl would have snatched them away he, with true masculine instinct of opposition, held them fast.

"What do you mean by speaking to her like that?" he demanded, an angry flush overspreading his dark face.



While shepherds watched their flocks by night, All seated on the ground, The angel of the Lord came down, And glory shone around, And glory shone around.

"The heavenly babe you these shall find, To whom we kneel, And in the manger laid, All newly wrapped in swathing bands, And in a manger laid, And in a manger laid."

Thus spake the seraph, and forth appeared a shining throng Of angels, praising God, who then addressed their joyful song—

"To you, in David's town, this day, Is born of David's line, The Son, who is Christ, the Lord, And this shall be the sign, And this shall be the sign."

"What is the maid to you?" Koosje asked, indignantly. "Maybe more than you are," he retorted, in answer to which Koosje deliberately marched out of the kitchen, leaving them alone.

As she went along the passage the professor's bell sounded and Koosje, being close to the door, went abruptly in. The professor looked up in mild astonishment, quickly enough to change to dismay as he caught sight of Koosje's face.

"How now, my good Koosje? What is the trouble?" he asked gently. "It's just like this, professor," cried Koosje, setting her arms akimbo and speaking in a high pitched, shrill voice, "you and I have been warming a viper in our bosoms, and, viper-like, she has turned around and bitten me."

"Is it Truide?" "Truide," she affirmed distinctly. "Yes, it is Truide, who but for me would be dead now of hunger and cold—worse. And she has been making love to that great fool Jan van der Welde, great as that he is, after all I have done for her, after me dragging her in out of the cold and rain, after all I have taught her. 'Serves me right for being so soft hearted! I'll be wiser next time after I find over a bundle and leave it where I find it."

"No, no, Koosje. Don't say that," the old gentleman remonstrated, gently. "After all, it may be but a blessing in disguise. God sends all our trials for some good and wise purpose."

"Ah!" sniffed Koosje scornfully. "This out—as I must say you justly term him, for you are a good, clever woman, Koosje, as I can testify after the experience of years—has proved that he can be false; he has shown that he can throw away substance for shadow in favor of a truth, that poor, pretty child would make a sad wife for a poor man, yet it is better you should know it now than at some future date, when—when there might be other ties to make the knowledge more bitter to you. What are you going to do—punish her, or turn her out, or what?"

"I shall let him—marry her," replied Koosje, with a portentous nod. "Fifteen years had passed away. The old professor of osteology had passed away with them, and in the large house on the Domplein lived a baron, with half a dozen noisy, happy, healthy children. There was a new race of neat mules, clad in the same neat livery of lilac and black, who scoured and cleaned, just as Koosje and Dorteje had done in the old professor's day."

What had become of Dorteje I cannot say. But on the left hand of the busy, bustling, picturesque Oude Gracht, there was a handsome shop filled with all manner of cakes, sweets, confections and liquors, from absinth to benedictine or arrack to chartreuse. In that shop was a handsome, prosperous, middle-aged woman, well dressed and well mannered, no longer Professor van Dijk's Koosje, but the Jevrouw van Kampen.

Yes, Koosje had come to be a prosperous tradeswoman of good position, respected by all. But she was Koosje van Kampen still. The romance which had come to be so disastrous and abrupt an end had satisfied her for life. I must tell you that at the time of Jan's infidelity, after the first flush of rage was over, Koosje disclaimed to show any sign of grief or regret. She was very proud, this Netherlands servant maid, far too proud to let those by whom she was surrounded imagine she was wearing the willow for the faithless Jan, and when Dorteje, on the day of the wedding, remarked that for her part she had always considered Koosje remarkably cool on the subject of matrimony, Koosje, with a careless out-turning of her hands, palms uppermost, answered that she was right.

Very soon after their marriage Jan and his young wife left Utrecht for Arnheim, where Jan had promise of higher wages, and thus they passed, as Koosje thought, completely out of her life.

SANTA CLAUS AND HIS REINDEER: A CHRISTMAS READING LESSON



Way up by the North Pole Santa Claus has a big flock of Reindeer that he uses every Christmas time to haul him over the Chimneys of the Homes where good little Boys and Girls live. He has four small Reindeer that he calls Prancer, Dancer, Thunder and Blitzen. These are his Pets. Then he has a lot of others and some of them are in this Picture.

Last Summer Santa was very busy making Toys for the good Boys and Girls, so he had a queer old Eskimo and his Wife and his little Boy take care of the Reindeer in A-las-ka. This is a good Picture of the Reindeer that belong to Santa and it shows the old Eskimo and his Fam-ly too.

Wouldn't you like to live up there in the Summer time with the Reindeer and old Santa? Well I guess you! If you wake up Christmas Eve and hear little Bells jingling you will know then that old Santa and his cute little Reindeer are on their way to your House, and you must not make any Noise, or they will not come down your Chimney.



But not so. In time the professor died, leaving Koosje the large house with which she set up the habitation in the Oude Gracht, and several. It happened one day that Koosje was sitting in her shop sewing. In the large inner room a party of ladies and officers were eating cakes and drinking chocolate and liquors with a good deal of fun and laughter, when the door was opened timidly, thereby letting in a gust of bitter wind, and a woman crept fearfully in, followed by two small crying children.

"Could the lady give her something to eat?" she asked. They had had nothing during the day, and the little ones were almost famished.

Koosje, who was very charitable, lifted a tray of large, plain buns, and was about to give her some when her eyes fell upon the poor beggar's faded face and she exclaimed: "Truide!"

"Truide, for if it was she, looked up in startled surprise. "I did not know or I would not have come in, Koosje," she said, humbly. "I treated you very badly."

"Very badly?" returned Koosje, emphatically. "Then where is Jan?" "Dead!" murmured Truide, sadly. "Dead! So—ah, well! I suppose I must do something for you. Here, Yanke," opening the door and calling "Yanke!"

"Je, jevrouw!" a voice cried in reply. The next moment a maid came running into the shop. "Take these people into the kitchen and give them something to eat. Put them by the stove while you prepare it. There is some soup and that smoked ham we had for coffee. Then come here and take my place for awhile."

"I will take care of them, one after another," Truide told her later. "Jan said it seemed as if a curse had fallen upon us. He began to wish you back again and to blame me for leaving come between you. And then he took to genever and then to wish for something stronger. So at last every stiver went for absinth, and once or twice he beat me, and then he died."

"Just as well," murmured Koosje, under her breath. "It is very good of you to have fed and warmed us." Truide went on in her faint, complaining tones. "Many a one would have let me starve, and I should have deserved it. It is very good of you, and we are all grateful. But it is time we were going, Koosje and Mina; then added, with a shake of her head, "I live in this big house by useful in the shop than Yanke—if you want."

"And, after all," Koosje said, pitifully, shrugging her shoulders, starvings and the rest, I owe you something for that. Why, if it didn't seem for you I should have been silly enough to have married him myself."

HOW TO KEEP CHRISTMAS

But there is a better thing than the observance of Christmas Day, and that is, keep Christmas. Are you willing to forget what you have done for other people, and to remember what other people have done for you, to ignore what the world owes you, to think what you owe the world, to put your right in the background, and your status in the middle distance, and your claims to do a little more than your duty in the foreground, to see that your fellow men are just as real as you are, and try to look behind their faces to the hearts, hungry for joy, to own that probably the only good reason for going to get out of life, but what are you going to do, to close your book of complaints against the management of the universe, and look around you for a place where you can see a few seeds of happiness—are you willing to do these things every day? Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing to stoop down and consider the needs of little children; to remember the weakness and loneliness of people who are growing old; to stop asking how much your friends love you, and ask yourself whether you love them enough; to bear in mind the things that other people have to bear on their hearts; to try to understand what those who live in the same house with you really want, without waiting for them to tell you; to trim your lamp so that it will give more light and less smoke, and to carry it in front so that your shadow will fall behind you; to make a grave for your ugly thoughts, and a garden for your kindly feelings, with the gate open—are you willing to do these things every day? Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing to believe that love is the strongest thing in the world—stronger than hate, stronger than evil, stronger than death—and that the blessed life which began in Bethlehem nineteen hundred years ago is the image and brightness of the Eternal Love? Then you can keep Christmas.

And if you keep it for a day, why not always? But you can never keep it alone.—From "The Spirit of Christmas," by the Rev. Henry Van Dyke.

FOR THE CHILDREN.

(Erasmus Wilson.) The custom of giving toys to children on Christmas is all right provided it is not abused by surfeiting them and thus spoiling the effect. You may have noticed that a child will get more pleasure out of one toy than out of a dozen. The child mind is not comprehensive enough to appreciate more than one thing at a time. It soon becomes acquainted with one toy and finds great pleasure, as well as benefit in making it do many things.

But with a plethora of toys it soon becomes tired of the lot and thinks it wants more. In this way toys may become harmful rather than helpful. When you give a toy to a child it should be for a purpose and not merely to discharge a social duty. The toy should mean something which, when worked out and understood, will be distinctly beneficial.

It is quite apparent that the spirit that prompts most of our Christmas giving is not the spirit taught by the Master whose birth we are supposed to be celebrating.