

Most men recall with pleasure the tales told them by grandmother and grandfather of the times long passed and gone, when men lived in a different way from that we are accustomed to, when customs and manners were unlike ours, when the country was newer, and political life different, and events moved with a good, old-fashioned way that seems all very romantic and picturesque to us of the younger generation. I suppose it has been thus thru all times, the young folks listening to the recollections of their elders with interest and admiration, and I doubt not that it will be so when we are old and gray, relating the scenes of our youth to our children. There always attaches a halo of picturesqueness and charm to these events of the long ago that the passing years enhance and enlarge till they seem fairly romantic and fit for story writing.

From childhood I can recollect the pleasure with which I used to listen to my grandmother tell of the scenes of her early life, and for several years I have intended to collect them into a series of reminiscences to form a short sketch of some of the more interesting parts of her story. I expect few eyes to read these pages save those of her children or grandchildren, and therefore will write in a familiar way of the things that most interest our family relations. And to begin, I will set down what grandmother has told me of our ancestors.

Grandmother's father was Hendrik Kiel. He came to this country from Holland at the time of the later Napoleonic wars. It all happened in this way: the Kiel family lived in quiet old Amsterdam. The father of Hendrik Kiel was married to Elizabeth Eckstein who had two brothers. One of these was an officer in the wars with Napoleon, the other was a sea captain of a merchant vessel that plied between Amsterdam and Baltimore and American ports. Hendrik, the nephew of this captain, and grandmother's father lived in Amsterdam with his two sisters, Anne, and Katocha, and a brother John Hendrik, till the wars broke out. Then at the age of nine, he was impressed as drummer boy in the army. When he came home on a furlough, his mother (Elizabeth Eckstein Kiel) got her brother, the sea-captain, to take him to sea to escape the service in the army. It was no wonder, for at such a tender age, I could quite justify such a desertion, if it should be called that. At any rate it was an important event in the family history, for it was the means of Hendrik's settling in America. For three years he was cabin boy on his uncle's ship, and had charge of the keys to most of the rooms, a thing perhaps unusual, but maybe accounted for by his relationship to the master of the boat. At the end of that time the uncle died, and a cousin took charge of the vessel. He gave Hendrik the choice of going back with him on the vessel, or of locating in America. Thus, at the age of 13, Hendrik disembarked in the American port to begin life in the new country.