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Story Written About the Orphan House in the Anchor 1889

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c. 1848

The Orphans House was built at about this time in the Holland Colony with the purpose to house the orphans of many families when both parents were lost by death. A story written about the Orphan House by Cornelius Doesburg was published in *The Anchor*, April, 1889. The story was written at that time because the building burned down on 26 March 1889.

The story appeared in volume II, No. 7, pp. 103-104.

the individual using the poisonous staff; for the annual consumption of \$560,000,000 worth by the laboring man, causes much unnecessary poverty; deprives many a child of a good education; and leaves with his offspring an inherent nature for evil deeds and wrong living.

Judge Noah Davis tells us that 80 per cent. of the crime perpetrated within our borders are brought on by this effectual but destructive tool of Satan. And again, Mr. Gladstone says it is worse than war, pestilence, and famine combined. It is not our object here to say what ought to be done. Yet, without questioning whether a government has a moral right to license such an evil, it is certainly not an economic method, for it puts in with one hand and takes out with a myriad. For illustration, Scott F. Hovey, Ph. D., says: "It produces in Chicago one hundred and ninety-four thousand dollars revenue per annum, and it costs the city nine hundred and thirty thousand dollars."

Long, ye very long, has God from heaven been watching to see whether this nation will not drive into eternal banishment, into hell whence it came, this terrible demon, liquor; and if it refuses, will He not wipe out this nation, as He did Phoenicia, and Rome, and Thebes, and Babylon? Aye, He is waiting to see if the seventeen million professors of religion in America will not unite and as one man, by one mighty effort, root it out, branch and all.

Inasmuch as we stand face to face with these stubborn facts, since peril is imminent, may our legislators so direct that these dangers may be averted; and we long remain that nation whose God is the Lord.

H. J. V., 92.

The Burning of an "Orphan-house."

In contemplating the ruins of any structure or dwelling erected by man, the mind is unconsciously led to reflection, and a certain seriousness takes possession of one. Ivory habitation, from the lowliest hut to the grandest palace, has its secret or public history, and the reflective mind cannot help dwelling for a moment upon the decay or destruction of a part of the visible evidence in the history of man. This feeling is, however, much stronger when we view the ruins of a building which has occupied a conspicuous place in history, which was the result of a consciousness that the erection thereof was in accordance with the will of God, and which has stood for years as a monument of piety and beneficence.

The destruction of the "Orphan-house," by in-

cidental fire on the night of Tuesday, March 26th, 1889, created a sad feeling in the hearts of many of the early settlers in this vicinity; and why?

In order to afford an answer, we must take a short retrospect at the history of this place.

Rev. Dr. A. C. Van Raalte reached Detroit on December 31st, 1846. After spending a few weeks at Detroit and at Allegan, he came here and selected his part of Michigan as a desirable locality for the settlement of a Holland colony.

During the year, 1847 and 1848, large numbers of emigrants from the Netherlands followed their beloved leader, and settled here.

The inclemencies of the weather, against which their small and poorly constructed dwellings were no sufficient protection, scanty food and often privations and hardships of pioneer life, were the causes of much sickness and death. Husbands lost wives; wives, husbands; children, parents; and parents, children. Among the early deaths was that of a widow, who left behind her six children. The question was, what was to be done with these little ones. The resources of each family were taxed to the utmost limit in providing food, clothing and shelter for its own immediate members. The sympathetic and Christian-like feelings on the part of these early settlers induced them, in spite of their own privations, to take upon themselves the burden of providing for these fatherless and motherless children. Dr. Van Raalte charged himself with the care of two of the children, and the other four were taken by as many different families.

The number of orphans gradually increased, and the question often arose—what is to be done with these children.

One Sunday Dr. Van Raalte, from the pulpit, appealed to the people, and with his usual earnestness and powerful eloquence convinced them that it was their duty to provide a home for the orphans, where they could be educated under the care of a pious "father" and "mother," appointed for the purpose.

Dr. Van Raalte donated a lot for the building, and in a few days about two hundred dollars were contributed. A few paid their contribution in money; some by promise of labor or material; a large number of women brought their gold ear and finger-rings, their silver smelling boxes, and some men their silver watches. All this was given willingly, notwithstanding the individual necessities of the givers. All these valuables were collected together and disposed of to outside parties for cash.

Plans and specifications were drawn up, bids received, and the job of building the orphan home given to Messrs. C. Hofman and Kramer. The build-

ing was soon completed, but about that time there was a change in the opinions of the colonists. They preferred to take the orphans into their own homes, and strange as it may seem, after so much personal sacrifice, the building was never used for the purpose for which it was erected.

The building afterwards was used for various purposes. Soon after completion, Mr. Walter T. Taylor opened it as a school, and there laid the foundation of the Holland Academy, which has since grown into Hope College.

For several years it was used for holding the township elections.

After the Holland Academy was started, Rev. John Van Vleck taught the classes in this building for a short period.

It was afterward utilized as a Parochial school, in which the late Mrs. Pieters, Miss Falconer, and Mrs. Van O'Linda taught successively.

When Prof. Oggel began the publication of the *De Hope*, the building was used as a printing office, and continued as such until 1879, when the office was transferred to a new building.

Since 1879 the "Orphan-house" has been vacant, and used principally for the purpose of storing lumber, etc. At the time of its destruction, it contained about one hundred dollars worth, which loss the college sustained.

Every citizen who appreciates Dr. Van Raalte's work, and the self-denial and piety of our first settlers, cannot but regret that a building with such noble historical relations was destroyed by the hand of one entirely devoid of feeling and respect for the devotion of so many pious men and women who now rest from their labor of love.

It is true, the building was old, and appeared dilapidated, and some might have predicted that sooner or later it would be destroyed by incendiarism.

Does such an admission, however, indicate a proper feeling? We can point out several buildings, not only in this locality, but elsewhere, which are quite as old and dilapidated; but is that a reason why they should be wilfully destroyed? While they may be an eye-sore to a few, the reminiscences connected therewith, may be held in high regard by many. In many localities old landmarks of this character are carefully protected from decay or destruction. Several historical buildings have been enclosed in new ones, and thus the work of past generations made sacred.

The little spot which marks the former location of the old "Orphan-house" will, no doubt, in the future be looked upon as hallowed; by the descend-

ants of those Christian people, who sacrificed so much for principle.

C. DOESBURG.

Hope College.

THE KINGDOM OF THE DEAD.

Oh! who can help but love to stand
Or be by fancy led,
By moonlight in this silent land,
The kingdom of the dead.

Beneath these stones the dead are laid,
Secure from every care,
Beneath this sod their bed is made,
Toil never finds them there.

Those troublous times of constant strife
That vexed their spirits here,
The weary waiting for a life
Of darkened skies to clear.

All this is o'er, they are at rest
Within their narrow bed;
Their souls in regions of the blest,
By angel hands are led.

They strive no more with toil and pain,
With trouble and with care,
They seek no more for earthly gain,
But heavenly bliss they share.

Not many of those buried here
The world has ever known,
Yet every grassy mound is dear,
A loved one neath each stone.

What tho the busy world may ne'er
Have claimed them for her own!
What tho their names and deeds may ne'er
Unto the world be known!

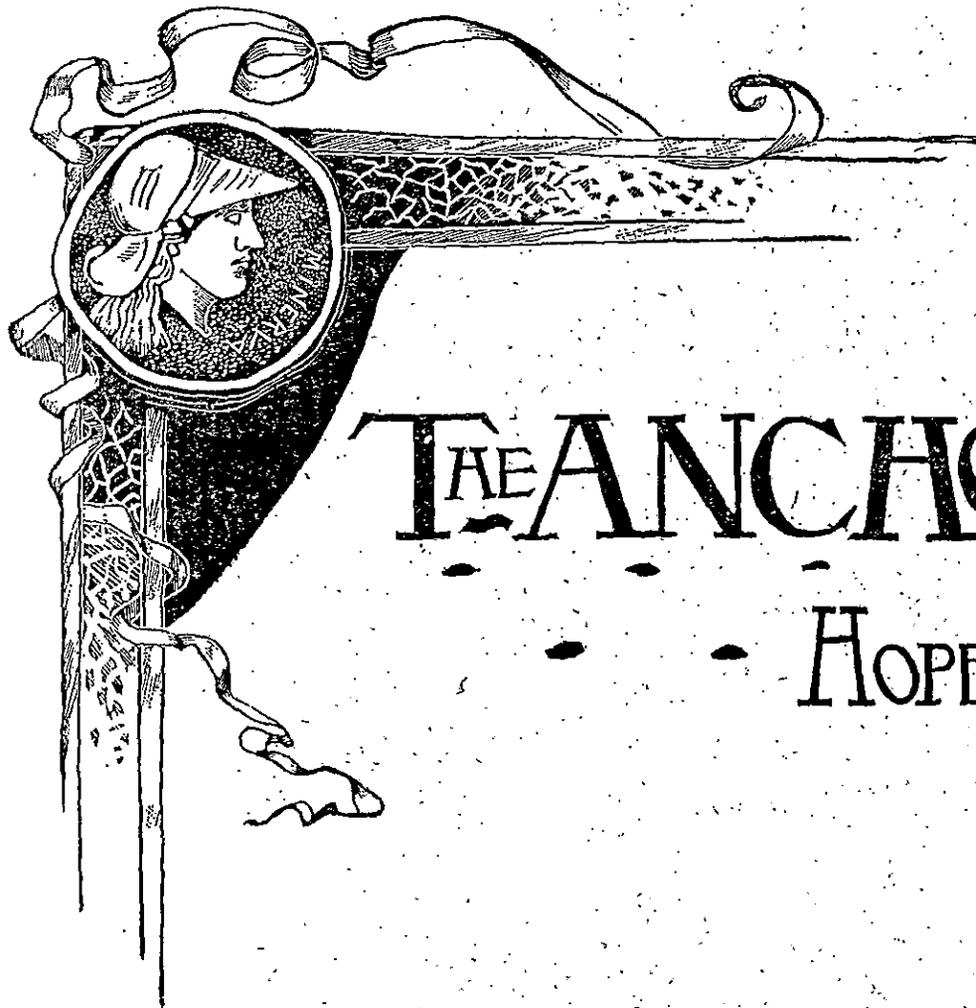
Their names and deeds were nobler far,
Than many a one whose names
The page of history doth mar,
With dark and sullied fame.

Then let us never, never say,
That only they are brave,
Who for their country's safety lay,
Within a soldier's grave.

For hearts as true as theirs
Have sped in silence on,
Have borne life's burdens and its cares,
And to their rest have gone.

But now they're free, oh! let them sleep,
And take their final rest,
And let us living cease to weep,
And mourn for those who're blest.

ANON.



THE ANCHOR.

HOPE-COLLEGE

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