

STORIES of New Jersey 565

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THE BIRTHPLACE OF HANS BRINKER

The story of Hans Brinker, or the Silver Skates has delighted boys and girls of foreign lands as well as our own. And children of New Jersey may be proud when they think that it was written for two small boys by their own mother, Mrs. Mary Mapes Dodge, in a tiny farm-house on the outskirts of Newark, the largest city in the State.

Mary Mapes was born in New York City over a hundred years ago, in 1831. She was one of four daughters of Professor Mapes, a well-known scientist and inventor.

As guests to their home came such prominent men as William Cullen Bryant and Horace Greeley. It is said that extra places were always set at their bountiful table for any friends who "might drop in."

According to the custom of the day, these girls were educated at home instead of at school; but they studied art and music and more foreign languages than do high school students of our time. No algebra or science appeared in their list of subjects.

Mary was the best student of the four sisters. She spent hours happily poring over the great books of all times that lined the shelves of her father's spacious library. It was from her reading of history, especially that of the plucky little nation of Holland, that she derived much of the story of the little Dutch boy, Hans Brinker. She loved to write too, and when still but a young girl helped her father with his scientific pamphlets.

In spite of serious interest in her studies, Mary was a healthy, happy child, loving her dolls and her games as well as her books. When she was twenty years old she put aside her personal ambitions for fame as artist or writer, as women who married were always expected to do in those days, to be-