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Description of the New Netherlands.

By ADRIAN VAN DER DONCK.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE NEW NETHERLANDS (AS THE SAME ARE AT THE PRESENT TIME); COMPREHENDING THE FRUITFULNESS AND NATURAL ADVANTAGES OF THE COUNTRY, AND THE DESIRABLE OPPORTUNITIES WHICH IT PRESENTS, WITHIN ITSELF, AND FROM ABROAD, FOR THE SUBSISTENCE OF MAN; WHICH ARE NOT SURPASSED ELSEWHERE. 1655.

Where New-Netherlands is situated.

This country is situated in the New American World, beginning north of the Equinoctial Line, 38 deg. and 53 min., extending north-easterly along the sea-coast to the 42d deg., and is named *New-Netherlands*, by the Netherlanders, for reasons to be related hereafter; lying in the latitude of Sardinia and Corsica, in the Mediterranean Sea, and of Spain and France along the Ocean; the South River* corresponding exactly with the Flemish Islands, with the rivers of Lisbon, with the south point of the Island of Sardinia, and of the *Punctum Meridionale*† of the Orientals, reckoning an easterly course from the Canary Islands by west, upon the 316th degree, or counting due west 44 degrees from the *Punctum Meridionale*, whereon we hold the Canary Islands, being 660 miles, corresponding with Cape Mesuratta on the Barbary coast in Africa, in the kingdom of Tripoli, and with Cape Spartivento, being the uttermost corner of Italy against the Mediterranean Sea. New-Netherlands is

* The river Delaware.

† The *Punctum Meridionale* of the Orientals is probably the meridian assumed by Ptolemy, which passed through the farthest of the Canary Islands. The Dutch geographers and mariners pitched upon the Peak of Teneriffe for their meridian.

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a fine, acceptable, healthy, extensive, and agreeable country, wherein all people can more easily gain a competent support than in the Netherlands, or in any other quarter of the globe which is known to me or which I have visited.

When, and by whom, New-Netherlands was first discovered.

This country was first found and discovered in the year of our Lord 1609; when, at the cost of the incorporated East India Company, a ship named the Half-Moon was fitted out to discover a westerly passage to the kingdom of China. This ship was commanded by Hendrick Hudson, as captain and supercargo, who was an Englishman by birth, and had resided many years in Holland, during which he had been in the employment of the East India Company. This ship sailed from the Canary Islands, steering a course north by west; and, after sailing twenty days with good speed, land was discovered, which, by their calculation, lay 320 degrees by west. On approaching the land, and observing the coast and shore convenient, they landed, and examined the country as well as they could at the time, and as opportunity offered; from which they were well satisfied that no Christian people had ever been there before, and that they were the first who by Providence had been guided to the discovery of the country.

Why this Country is called New-Netherlands.

We have before related that the Netherlanders, in the year 1609, had first discovered this country, of which they took possession as their own in right of their discovery, and finding the country fruitful and advantageously situated, possessing good and safe havens, rivers, fisheries, and many other worthy appurtenances corresponding with the Netherlands, or in truth excelling the same; for this good reason it was named New-Netherlands, being as much as to say, another or a new-found Netherlands. Still the name depended most upon the first discovery, and upon the corresponding temperatures of the climates of the two countries, which to strangers is not so observable. We notice also that the French in the same quarter of the new world have named their territory Canada or Nova Francia, only because they were the first Europeans who possessed the lands in those parts, for the temperature of the cli-

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mate is so cold and wintry that the snow commonly lies on the earth four or five months in succession and from four to five feet deep, which renders it costly to keep domestic animals there; and, although this country lies no farther than fifty degrees north, still the air in winter is so fine, clear, and sharp there that when the snow once falls, which it commonly does about the first of December, it does not thaw away except by the power of the sun in April. If a shower of rain happens to fall in winter (which is seldom), then it forms a hard crust on the surface of the snow, that renders the travelling difficult for man and beast. The air there is clear and dry, and the snow seldom melts or thaws away suddenly.

The Swedes also have a possession on the south (Delaware) river, which they name New-Sweden. The climate of this place by no means corresponds with that of Sweden, as it lies in latitude 39 degrees north. But, although they have formed a settlement there, still their title is disputed, for they can show no legal right or claim to their possessions.

The country having been first found or discovered by the Netherlanders, and keeping in view the discovery of the same, it is named the New-Netherlands. That this country was first found or discovered by the Netherlanders is evident and clear from the fact that the Indians or natives of the land, many of whom are still living, and with whom I have conversed, declare freely that before the arrival of the Lowland ship, the Half-Moon, in the year 1609, they (the natives) did not know that there were any other people in the world than those who were like themselves, much less any people who differed so much in appearance from them as we did. Their men on the breasts and about the mouth were bare, and their women, like ours, hairy; going unclad and almost naked, particularly in summer, while we are always clothed and covered. When some of them first saw our ship approaching at a distance, they did not know what to think about her, but stood in deep and solemn amazement, wondering whether it were a ghost or apparition, coming down from heaven, or from hell. Others of them supposed her to be a strange fish or sea monster. When they discovered men on board, they supposed them to be more like devils than human beings. Thus they differed about the ship and men. A strange report was also spread about the country concerning our ship and visit, which created great astonishment and surprise amongst the Indians. These things we have frequently

heard them declare, which we hold as certain proof that the Netherlanders were the first finders or discoverers and possessors of the New-Netherlands. There are Indians in the country, who remember a hundred years, and, if there had been any other people here before us, they would have known something of them, and, if they had not seen them themselves, they would have heard an account of them from others. There are persons who believe that the Spaniards have been here many years ago, when they found the climate too cold to their liking, and again left the country; and that the maize or Turkish corn and beans found among the Indians were left with them by the Spaniards. This opinion or belief is improbable, as we can discover nothing of the kind from the Indians. They say that their corn and beans were received from the southern Indians, who received their seed from a people who resided still farther south, which may well be true, as the Castilians have long since resided in Florida. The maize may have been among the Indians in the warm climate long ago. However, our Indians say that they did eat roots and the bark of trees instead of bread, before the introduction of Indian corn or maize.

THE NETHERLANDERS THE FIRST POSSESSORS OF NEW-NETHERLAND.

Although the possession and title which the Netherlanders have to New-Netherlands are amply treated of in their length and breadth, in the *Representation of the Commonalty*, and little more can be said in relation to them unless access be had to the Registers of the Honorable West India Company, we will nevertheless touch upon them briefly, *en passant*. When this country was first discovered by the Netherlanders in the year 1609, and it was told them by the natives that they were the first Christian explorers in that region, they took possession of it in the name and on behalf of their High Mightinesses, the Lords of the States-General of the United Netherlands, first in the South Bay at Cape *Hinloopen*, which they so called at that time, and which still retains that name; and so all along the coast and up the rivers, giving names to the different places as far as the great North River, a great distance up which they sailed, and which some of the English will still call Hudson's River, but which was then named *Mauritius* River after Prince

Maurice, who at that time was governor in Netherland; from whence they sailed further along till they went beyond Cape Cod, of which they also took possession, and which they named New Holland. And our Netherlanders have sailed there and traded at the same places thus taken into possession from time to time since then, until the charter was granted to the West Indian Company, when they passed under its jurisdiction. And although before we had there in our favor the circumstances of fifty families and cattle, yet since the year 1622 several forts have been built, farms and plantations taken up, much of the land bought of the natives, and then tokens of possession shown as is to be seen at length in the *Representation of the Commonalty of New-Netherland*, to which we refer the curious reader. It is therefore unusual, unhand-some, and unreasonable for any other nation to assert title or jurisdiction over these places or over those situated between such as were first discovered by the Netherlanders.

*Of the Limits of the New-Netherlands, and how far the
Same extend.*

New-Netherlands is bounded by the ocean or great sea, which separates Europe from America, by New-England and the Fresh (Connecticut) river, in part by the river of Canada, (the St. Lawrence), and by Virginia. Some persons who are not well informed name all North-America *Virginia*, because Virginia from her tobacco trade is well known. These circumstances, therefore, will be observed as we progress, as admonitions to the readers. The coast of New-Netherlands extends and stretches mostly north-east and south-west. The sea-shore is mostly formed of pure sand, having a dry beach. On the south side, the country is bounded by Virginia. Those boundaries are not yet well defined, but in the progress of the settlement of the country the same will be determined without difficulty. On the north-east the New-Netherlands abut upon New-England, where there are differences on the subject of boundaries which we wish were well settled. On the north, the river of Canada stretches a considerable distance, but to the north-west it is still undefined and unknown. Many of our Netherlanders have been far into the country, more than seventy or eighty miles from the river and sea-shore. We also frequently trade with the Indians, who come more than ten

and twenty days' journey from the interior, and who have been farther off to catch beavers, and they know of no limits to the country, and, when spoken to on the subject, they deem such enquiries to be strange and singular. Therefore we may safely say that we know not how deep or how far we extend inland. There are, however, many signs, which indicate a great extent of country, such as the land winds, which domineer much, with severe cold, the multitudes of beavers and land animals which are taken, and the great numbers of water-fowl, which fly to and fro across the country in the spring and fall seasons. From these circumstances we judge that the land extends several hundred miles into the interior. Therefore, the extent and greatness of this province are still unknown.

Of the Forelands and Sea-havens.

The coast of New-Netherlands extends south-west and north-east, as before mentioned, and is mostly clean and sandy, drying naturally; and, although the bare, bleak, and open sea breaks on the beach, still there is good anchorage in almost every place, because of the clean, sandy bottom. There seldom are severe gales from the sea, except from the south-east, with the spring tides. When the winds blow from the north-west, which domineer the strongest, then there is an upper or windward shore, with smooth water and little danger. For those reasons, the coast is as convenient to approach at all seasons as could be desired. The highlands, which are naturally dry, may be seen far at sea, and give timely warning.

The forelands are generally double, and in some places broken into islands (affording convenient situations for the keeping of stock), which would lead seamen to suppose, on approaching the shore, that the same were the main land, when the same are islands and forelands, within which lie large meadows, bays, and creeks, affording convenient navigable passages, and communications between places.

It has pleased God to protect against the raging sea those parts of the coast which have no double foreland, with natural barriers of firm, strong, and secure stone foundations, that preserve the coast from the inundations of the mighty ocean (which are ever to be feared), where the coast, if not thus protected, might be lessened and destroyed; particularly the nearest sea lands, against which the sea acts with most violence.

Nature has secured those positions with firm, high, and accommodated rocky heads and cliffs, which are as perfect formations as the arts and hands of man, with great expense, could make the same.

There are many and different sea-havens in the New-Netherlands, a particular description of which would form a work larger than we design this to be. We will therefore briefly notice this subject, and leave the same for the consideration of mariners and seamen. Beginning at the south and terminating at Long Island, first comes Godyn's bay, or the South (Delaware) bay, which was the first discovered. This bay lies in 39 degrees north latitude, being six (Dutch) miles wide and nine miles long, and having several banks or shoals, but still possessing many advantages; convenient and safe anchorages for ships, with roomy and safe harbours. Here also is a good whale fishery. Whales are numerous in the winter on the coast and in the bay, where they frequently ground on the shoals and bars; but they are not as fat as the Greenland whales. If, however, the fishery was well managed, it would be profitable. After ascending the bay nine miles, it is terminated in a river, which we name the South river, to which we will again refer hereafter, and pass on to the bay, wherein the East and North rivers terminate, and wherein Staten Island lies; because the same is most frequented, and the country is most populous, and because the greatest negotiations in trade are carried on there; and also because it is situated in the centre of the New-Netherlands. Hence it is named, *quasi per excellentiam*, "The Bay." But before we speak more at large of this place, we will attend to the places, and their advantages, which lie between this bay and the South bay.

Between those two bays, the coast, almost the whole distance, has double forelands, with many islands, which in some places lie two or three deep. Those forelands as well as the islands are well situated for seaboard towns, and all kind of fisheries, and also for the cultivation of grain, vineyards, and gardening, and the keeping of stock, for which purposes the land is tolerably good. Those lands are now mostly overgrown with different kinds of trees and grape-vines; having many plums, hazel-nuts and strawberries, and much grass. The waters abound with oysters, having many convenient banks and beds where they may be taken.

Besides the many islands which lie between the aforesaid

bays, many of which are highland, there are also several fine bays and inland waters, which form good sea harbours for those who are acquainted with the inlets and entrances to the same, which at present are not much used; particularly the Bear-gat, Great and Little Egg Harbours, Barnegat, &c., wherein the anchorages are safe and secure. But as New-Netherlands is not yet well peopled, and as there are but few Christians settled at those places, these harbours are seldom used, unless the winds and weather render it necessary for safety.

The before-mentioned bay, wherein Staten Island lies, is the most famous, because the East and North rivers empty therein, which are two fine rivers, and will be further noticed hereafter. Besides those, there are several kills, inlets, and creeks, some of which resemble small rivers, as the Raritan, Kill van Col, Neuversinck, &c. Moreover, the said bay affords a safe and convenient haven from all winds, wherein a thousand ships may ride in safety inland. The entrance into the bay is reasonably wide or roomy, without much danger, and easily found by those who have entered the same, or are well instructed. We can also easily, if the wind and tide suit, in one tide sail and proceed from the sea to New-Amsterdam (which lies five miles from the open sea), with the largest ships fully laden; and in like manner proceed from New-Amsterdam to sea. But the outward bound vessels usually stop at the watering-place under Staten Island, to lay in a sufficient supply of wood and water, which are easily obtained at that place. We also frequently stop far in the bay behind Sand Point (Sandy Hook) in waiting for the last passengers and letters, and to avail ourselves of the wind and tide.

Along the sea-coast of Long Island there are also several safe, commodious inlets for small vessels, which are not much frequented by us. There also are many spacious inland bays, from which, by the inlets (at full tide), the sea is easy of access; otherwise those are too shallow. The same also are not much frequented by us. With population several of the places would become important, which now, for brevity's sake, we pass over.

Between Long Island and the main land there are throughout many safe and convenient places for large and small vessels, which may be occupied, if necessary. For in connection with the whole river which is held by many to be a bay, there

are in the main land and in the island opposite to the same many safe bays, harbours, and creeks, which are but little known to us, and which the English, by their devices, have appropriated. Although this subject is spoken of in the remonstrances of the New-Netherlands, we will pass over it without waking the *sleepers*, and attend briefly to the most important rivers, waters, and creeks.

Of the North River.

We have before noticed the name of this river, with the population and advantages of the country; and, inasmuch as a particular and ample account of the same is preparing for publication, we will at once say that this river is the most famous, and the country the most populous of any in the New-Netherlands. There are also several colonies settled, besides the city of New-Amsterdam, on the island of Manhattan, where the most of the trade of this river centres. The river carries flood tides forty miles up the same.* Several fine creeks empty into this river, such as the Great and Small Esopus kills, Kats kill, Sleepy Haven kill, Colondonck's kill or Saw kill, Wapincke's kill, &c. We can also pass from the North river behind Manhattan island by the East river, without approaching New-Amsterdam. This river still remains altogether in the possession and jurisdiction of the Netherlands, without being invaded; but, if the population did not increase and advance, there would be great danger of its long continuation. This river is rich in fishes: sturgeon, dunns, bass, sheep-heads, &c. I cannot refrain, although somewhat out of place, to relate a very singular occurrence, which happened in the month of March, 1647, at the time of a great freshet caused by the fresh water flowing down from above, by which the water of the river became nearly fresh to the bay, when at ordinary seasons the salt water flows up from twenty to twenty-four miles from the sea. At this season, two whales, of common size, swam up the river forty miles, from which place one of them returned and stranded about twelve miles from the sea, near which place four others also stranded the same year. The other run farther up the river, and grounded near the great Chahoos falls, about forty-three miles from the sea. This fish was tolerably fat, for although the citizens of Rensselaerwyck broiled out a

*A Dutch mile is about three English miles.

great quantity of train oil, still the whole river (the current being still rapid) was oily for three weeks, and covered with grease. As the fish lay rotting, the air was infected with its stench to such a degree that the smell was offensive and perceptible for two miles to leeward. For what purpose those whales ascended the river so far, it being at the time full forty miles from all salt or brackish water, it is difficult to say, unless their great desire for fish, which were plenty at this season, led them onward.

Forty-four miles from the sea this North river is divided. One part by four sprouts ascends to the great falls of the Maquas kill, which is named the Chahoos, of which we will treat presently. The other part, which retains the name of the North river, is navigable for boats several miles farther, and, according to the information of the Indians, rises in a great lake, from which the river of Canada also proceeds. This should be the lake of the *Iracoyse* (lake Ontario), which is as great as the Mediterranean Sea, being about forty miles wide, when in the middle of the sea, no eye can see land or see over it. The lake also has extensive reed and brook lands of great breadth, wherein great multitudes of water-fowl breed in summer. When the Indians intend to cross this lake, they know certain islands which lie therein, and proceed from one to another by daylight, to the number of three or four, without which they could not find their way over the same. This, however, we relate on the information of the Indians. They also assert that we can proceed in boats to the river of Canada, which we deem incredible.

The other arm of the North river runs by four sprouts (as we have related) to the great falls of the *Maquas kill* (Mohawk river), which the Indians name the Chahoos, and our nation the Great Falls; above which the river is again several hundred yards wide, and the falls we estimate to be one hundred and fifty or two hundred feet high.* The water glides over the falls as smooth as if it ran over an even wall and fell over the same. The precipice is formed of firm blue rock; near by and below the falls there stand several rocks, which appear splendid in the water, rising above it like high turf-heaps, apparently from eight, sixteen, to thirty feet high; very delightful to the eye. This place is well calculated to exalt the fancy of the poets. The ancient fabulous writers would, if they had been

* This is careless guessing, the falls being seventy feet high.

here, have exalted those works of nature, by the force of imagination, into the most artful and elegant descriptive illusions. The waters descend rapidly downwards from the falls, over a stony bottom, skipping, foaming and whirling boisterously about the distance of a gunshot or more, when it resumes an even course, and flows downwards. We name this the Maquas Kill, but still it is wider in most places than the Yssell of the Netherlands. It, however, always runs one way; is navigable for boats, being tolerably deep and not rapid; but it extends above sixty miles, and runs through the Maquas and Senecas countries to a lake, remaining boatable all the way. The river passes through fine land, and abounds with fish. The Indians, when they travel by water, and come to trade, usually come in canoes made of the bark of trees, which they know how to construct. When they come near the falls, they land, and carry their boats and their lading some distance below the falls, and proceed on their voyage; otherwise they would be driven over the falls and destroyed. An occurrence of this kind took place here in our time. An Indian, whom I have known, accompanied by his wife and child, with sixty beaver skins, descended the river in his canoe, in the spring, when the water runs rapid and the current is strongest, for the purpose of selling his beaver to the Netherlanders. This Indian carelessly approached too near to the falls, before he discovered his danger, and, notwithstanding his utmost exertion to gain the land, his frail bark with all on board was swept over by the rapid current and down the falls; his wife and child were killed, his bark shattered to pieces, his cargo of furs damaged. But his life was preserved. I have frequently seen the Indian, and have heard him relate the perilous occurrence or adventure.

Of the Fresh River (Connecticut River).

This river is called the Fresh river, because it affords more fresh water than many other rivers. It has advantageous navigable situations. It also has finely situated land, and the country affords a tolerably good fur trade. But as this river with its advantages is mostly in the occupancy of the English nation, to the injury and disadvantage of the Hon. the West India Company, which they continue to occupy, whereby the company is injured every year, it will be painful to us to recapitulate the subject, as the same is stated in the remon-

strance of the New-Netherlanders, where we leave the matter and pass to the East river.

Of the East River.

This river is thus named because it extends eastward from the city of New-Amsterdam. By some this river is held to be an arm of the sea, or a bay, because it is very wide in some places, and because both ends of the same are connected with and empty into the ocean. This subtilty notwithstanding, we adopt the common opinion, and hold it to be a river. Be it then a river or a bay, as men may please to name it, still it is one of the best, most fit, and most convenient places and most advantageous accommodations which a country can possess or desire, for the following reasons: Long Island, which is about forty miles in length, makes this river. The river, and most of the creeks, bays, and inlets joining the same, are navigable in winter and in summer without much danger. This river also affords a safe and convenient passage at all seasons to those who desire to sail east or west; and the same is most used, because the outside passage is more dangerous. Most of the English (of New-England) who wish to go south to Virginia, to South river, or to other southern places, pass through this river, which brings no small traffic and advantage to the city of New-Amsterdam. This also causes the English to frequent our harbours, to which they are invited for safety. Lastly, this river is famous on account of its convenient bays, inlets, havens, rivers, and creeks, on both sides, to wit, on the side of Long Island and on the side of the fast or main land. In the Netherlands, no such place is known. Of this and the other rivers of New-Netherlands, enough has been said, in our opinion, for this time and for our purpose.

Of the Formation, Soil, and Appearance of the Land.

We will now treat of the land, with its natural, superficial appearance, beginning with the formations of the earth. Near and along the sea-shores, the soil is light and sandy, with a mixture of clay, which enriches the land. The productions are different kinds of wood, various fruits and vegetables. Barrens and sterile heath land are not here. The whole country has a waving surface, and in some places high hills and

protruding mountains, particularly those named the Highlands, which is a place of high, connected mountain land, about three miles broad, extending in curved forms throughout the country; separated in some places, and then again connected. There also is much fine level land, intersected with brooks, affording pasturage of great length and breadth, but mostly along the rivers, and near the salt water side. Inland most of the country is waving, with hills which generally are not steep, but ascend gradually. We sometimes in travelling imperceptibly find ourselves on high, elevated situations, from which we overlook large portions of the country. The neighbouring eminence, the surrounding valleys, and the highest trees are overlooked, and again lost in the distant space. Here our attention is arrested in the beautiful landscape around us, here the painter can find rare and beautiful subjects for the employment of his pencil, and here also the huntsman is animated when he views the enchanting prospects presented to the eyes; on the hills, at the brooks and in the valleys, where the game abounds and where the deer are feeding, or gambolling or resting in the shades in full view.

The surface of the land generally is composed of a black soil intermixed with clay, about a foot or a foot and a half deep, in some places more, and in some less; below the stratum is white, reddish and yellow clay, which in some places is mixed with sand, and in others with gravel and stones. Here and there large rocks and stones appear on the surface. There are also hills of pure clay, but sand hills I have not seen, except near the sea-shore, which have been cast up or formed by the ocean. There also are very rocky places which our naturalists suppose abound in minerals. The mountains and highlands are in some places tillable and fertile, the soil being composed of clay intermixed with stone. Other parts are composed of rocks, of various colours, but all overgrown with wood, growing in the seams, rents, clefts, and ravines. Such are the aspects of the mountains, the hills and inland country. Near the rivers and water sides there are large extensive plains containing several hundred *morgens*;* in one place more and in another less, which are very convenient for plantations, villages, and towns. There also are brooklands and fresh and salt meadows; some so extensive that the eye cannot oversee the same. Those are good for pasturage and

* A *morgen* is somewhat less than two acres.

hay, although the same are overflowed by the spring tides, particularly near the seaboard. These meadows resemble the low and out lands of the Netherlands. Most of them could be dyked and cultivated. We also find meadow grounds far inland, which are all fresh and make good hayland. Where the meadows are boggy and wet, such failings are easily remedied by cutting and breaking the bogs in winter and letting off the water in the spring. There also would be much more meadow ground, but as the soil is natural for wood, and as the birds and the winds carry the seeds in every direction, hence those moist, low grounds are covered with timber and underwoods which we call cripple bushes. The situations are curious to behold where those lands are cleared and cultivated. They are wonderfully fertile, which, in short, is the general quality of such land, and of most of the places we have noticed. Thus we tender to the kind reader the fruitfulness of this land, subject to his own judgment. I admit that I am incompetent to describe the beauties, the grand and sublime works, wherewith Providence has diversified this land. Our opinions are formed by the eye alone, therefore we cannot do justice and give assurance to the heart.

Of the Fruit Trees brought over from the Netherlands.

The Netherland settlers, who are lovers of fruit, on observing that the climate was suitable to the production of fruit trees, have brought over and planted various kinds of apple and pear trees, which thrive well. Those also grow from the seeds, of which I have seen many, which, without grafting, bore delicious fruit in the sixth year. The stocks may also be grafted when the same are as large as thorns, which, being cut off near the root and grafted, are then set into the ground, when the graft also strikes root: otherwise the fruit is somewhat hard. But, in general, grafting is not as necessary here as in the Netherlands, for most of the fruit is good without it, which there would be harsh and sour or would not bear. The English have brought over the first quinces, and we have also brought over stocks and seeds which thrive well. Orchard cherries thrive well and produce large fruit. Spanish cherries, forerunners, morellæs, of every kind we have, as in the Netherlands; and the trees bear better, because the blossoms are not injured by the frosts. The peaches, which are sought after in the Nether-

lands, grow wonderfully well here. If a stone is put into the earth, it will spring in the same season, and grow so rapidly as to bear fruit in the fourth year, and the limbs are frequently broken by the weight of the peaches, which usually are very fine. We have also introduced morecotoons (a kind of peach), apricots, several sorts of the best plums, almonds, persimmons, cornelian cherries, figs, several sorts of currants, gooseberries, calissiens, and thorn apples; and we do not doubt but that the olive would thrive and be profitable, but we have them not. Although the land is full of many kinds of grapes, we still want settings of the best kinds from Germany, for the purpose of enabling our wine planters here to select the best kinds, and to propagate the same. In short, every kind of fruit which grows in the Netherlands is plenty already in the New-Netherlands, which have been introduced by the lovers of agriculture, and the fruits thrive better here, particularly such kinds as require a warmer climate.

Of the Flowers.

The flowers in general which the Netherlands have introduced there are the white and red roses of different kinds, the cornelian roses, and stock roses; and those of which there were none before in the country, such as eglantine, several kinds of gillyflowers, jenoffelins, different varieties of fine tulips, crown imperials, white lilies, the lily frutularia, anemones, baredames, violets, marigolds, summer sots, &c. The clove tree has also been introduced; and there are several indigenous trees that bear handsome flowers, which are unknown in the Netherlands. We also find there some flowers of native growth, as, for instance, sunflowers, red and yellow lilies, mountain lilies, morning stars, red, white, and yellow maritoffles (a very sweet flower), several species of bell flowers, &c.; to which I have not given particular attention, but *amateurs* would hold them in high estimation, and make them widely known.

Of the Agricultural Productions.

The pursuit of agriculture is not heavy and expensive there, as it is in the Netherlands. First, because the fencing and enclosing of the land does not cost much; for, instead of the Netherlands dykes and ditches, they set up post and rail, or palisado fences, and when new clearings are made, they com-

monly have fencing timber enough on the land to remove, which costs nothing but the labour, which is reasonably cheap to those who have their own hands, and without domestic labour very little can be effected. The land whereon there are few standing trees, and which has been grubbed and ploughed twice, we hold to be prepared for a crop of winter grain. For summer grain one ploughing is sufficient. If it is intended to sow the same field again with winter grain, then the stubble is ploughed in, and the land is sowed with wheat or rye, which in ordinary seasons will yield a fine crop.

I can affirm that during my residence of nine years in the country I have never seen land manured, and it is seldom done. The land is kept in order by tillage, which is often done to keep down weeds and brush, but for which it would have rest. Some persons (which I also hold to be good management), when their land becomes foul and weedy, break it up and sow the same with peas, because a crop of peas softens the land and makes it clean; but most of the land is too rich for peas, which when sown on the same grow so rank that the crop falls and rots on the land. Some of the land must be reduced by cropping it with wheat and barley, before it is proper to sow the same with peas. We have frequently seen the straw of wheat and barley grow so luxuriant that the crops yielded very little grain.

I deem it worthy of notice that with proper attention, in ordinary seasons, two ripe crops of peas can be raised on the same land in one season, in the New-Netherlands. It has frequently been done in the following manner, viz. The first crop was sown in the last of March or first of April, which will ripen about the first of July; the crop is then removed, and the land ploughed, and sowed again with peas of the first crop. The second crop will ripen in September, or about the first of October, when the weather is still fine and warm. The same can also be done with buckwheat, which has frequently been proved; but the first crop is usually much injured by finches and other birds, and, as wheat and rye are plenty, therefore there is very little buckwheat sown. The maize (Indian corn) is carefully attended to, and is sufficient to the wants of the country.

The Turkey wheat, or maize, as the grain is named, many persons suppose to be the same kind of grain which Jesse sent parched by his son David to his other sons of the army of

Israel. This is a hardy grain, and is fit for the sustenance of man and animals. It is easily cultivated and will grow in almost every kind of land. . . . After a corn crop is gathered, the land may be sowed with winter grain in the fall without previous ploughing. When this is intended, the corn is gathered, the stalks are pulled up and burnt, the hills levelled, and the land sown and harrowed smooth and level. Good crops are raised in this manner. I have seen rye sown as before described, which grew so tall that a man of common size would bind the ears together above his head, which yielded seven and eight *schepels*,* Amsterdam measure, per *vin* of 108 sheaves, of which two *vins* made a wagon load.

The Rev. Johannis Megapolensis, Junior, minister of the colony of Rensselaerwyck, in certain letters which he has written to his friends, which were printed (as he has told me) without his consent, but may be fully credited,—he being a man of truth and of great learning, who writes in a vigorous style,—states, with other matters, that a certain farmer had cropped one field with wheat eleven years in succession, which to many persons will seem extraordinary, and may not be credited. Still it is true, and the residents of the place testify to the same, and they add that this same land was ploughed but twelve times in the eleven seasons,—twice in the first year, and once in every succeeding year, when the stubble was ploughed in, the wheat sown and harrowed under. I owned land adjoining the land referred to, and have seen the eleventh crop, which was tolerably good. The man who did this is named Brandt Pelen; he was born in the district of Utrecht, and at the time was a magistrate (schepen) of the colony of Rensselaerwyck. We acknowledge that this relation appears to be marvellous, but in the country it is not so, for there are many thousand *morgens* of as good land there as the land of which we have spoken.

During the period when I resided in the New-Netherlands, a certain honorable gentleman, named John Everts Bout (who was recommended to the colonists by their High Mightinesses, &c.), laid a wager that he could raise a crop of barley on a field containing seven *morgens* of land, which would grow so tall in every part of the field that the ears could easily be tied together above his head. I went to see the field of barley, and found that the straw, land by land, was from six to seven feet

* A *schepel* is three pecks English.

high, and very little of it any shorter. It has also been stated to me as a fact that barley has frequently been raised, although not common, which yielded eleven *schepel*, Amsterdam measure, per *vin* of 108 sheaves. Therefore, all persons who are acquainted with the New-Netherlands judge the country to be as well adapted for the cultivation of grain as any part of the world which is known to the Netherlanders, or is in their possession.

With the other productions of the land we must include tobacco, which is also cultivated in the country, and is, as well as the maize, well adapted to prepare the land for other agricultural purposes, which also, with proper attention, grows fine, and yields more profit. Not only myself, but hundreds of others, have raised tobacco the leaves of which were three-fourths of a yard long. The tobacco raised here is of different kind, but principally of the Virginia kind, from which it differs little in flavour, although the Virginia is the best. Still it does not differ so much in quality as in price. Next to the Virginia it will be the best; many persons esteem it better, and give it a preference. It is even probable that when the people extend the cultivation of the article, and more tobacco is planted, that it will gain more reputation and esteem. Many persons are of opinion that the defect in flavour arises from the newness of the land, and hasty cultivation, which will gradually be removed.

Barley grows well in the country, but it is not much needed. Cummin seed, canary seed, and the like, have been tried, and Commander Minuit testifies that those articles succeed well, but are not sought after. Flax and hemp will grow fine, but as the women do not spin much, and the Indians have hemp in abundance in the woods from which they make strong ropes and nets, for these reasons very little flax is raised; but the persons who do sow the seed find that the land is of the proper quality for such articles.

Of the Seasons.

The changes of the year, and the calculations of time, are observed as in the Netherlands; and although these countries differ much in their situations in south latitude, still they do not differ much in the temperature of cold and heat. But, to discriminate more accurately, it should be remarked that the win-

ters usually terminate with the month of February, at New-Amsterdam, which is the chief place and centre of the New-Netherlands. Then the spring or Lent-like weather begins. Some persons calculate from the 21st of March, new style, after which it seldom freezes, nor before this does it seldom summer; but at this season a change evidently begins. The fishes then leave the bottom ground, the buds begin to swell; the grass sprouts, and in some places the cattle are put to grass in March; in other situations they wait later, as the situations and soils vary. The horses and working cattle are not turned out to grass until May, when the grass is plenty everywhere. April is the proper month for gardening. Later the farmers should not sow summer grain, unless they are not ready; it may be done later, and still ripen.

Easterly winds and stormy weather are common in the spring, which then cause high tides; but they cannot produce high floods. The persons who desire to explore and view the country have the best opportunity in April and May. The grass and herbage at this season causes no inconvenience in the woods, and still there is grass enough for horses. The cold has not overcome the heat produced by the wood burnings, and the ground which has been burnt over is yet bare enough for inspection. The flowers are then in bloom, and the woods are fragrant with their perfume. In the middle of May, strawberries are always plenty in the fields, where they grow naturally; they are seldom planted in the gardens, but there, in warm situations, they are earlier. When the warm weather sets in, then vegetation springs rapidly. It is so rapid as to change the fields from nakedness to green in eight or ten days. There are no frosts in May, or they are very uncommon, as then it is summer. The winter grain is in full blossom. The summer may be said to begin in May, but it really is calculated from the first of June, and then the weather is frequently very warm, and there is seldom much rain. Still there are no extremes of wet and dry weather, and we may freely say that the summers are always better in the New-Netherlands than in Holland. . . .

Now when the summer progresses finely, the land rewards the labor of the husbandman; the flowers smile on his countenance; the fishes sport in their element, and the herds play in the fields, as if no reverses were to return. But the tobacco, and the fruit of the vines, come in in September. There is plenty here for man and the animal creation.

The days are not so long in summer, nor so short in winter, as they are in Holland. Their length in summer, and their shortness in winter, differ about an hour and a half. It is found that this difference in the length of the days causes no inconvenience; the days in summer are long and warm enough for those who are inclined to labour, and do it from necessity; and for those who seek diversion. The winters pass by without becoming tedious. The reasons for this, and the objections thereto, we leave to the learned, as we deem the subject not worthy of our inquiry. The received opinion on this subject is that the difference in the length of the days and nights arises from the difference of latitude of the New-Netherlands and Holland. The former lies nearer the equinoctial line, and nearer the centre of the globe. As they differ in length, so also they differ in twilight. When it is mid-day in Holland, it is morning in the New-Netherlands. On this subject there are also different opinions. Most men say that the New-Netherlands lay so much farther to the west that its situation causes this variation; others go further, and dispute the roundness of the globe. As the creation of the world is connected with this subject, which none will deny, and as the difference in the appearance of the eclipses supports the truth of the first position of the roundness of the globe, therefore the other position appears to be unsupported.

The autumns in the New-Netherlands are very fine, lovely, and agreeable; more delightful cannot be found on the earth; not only because the summer productions are gathered, and the earth is then yielding its surplusage, but also because the season is so well tempered with heat and cold as to appear like the month of May, except that on some mornings there will be frost, which by ten o'clock will be removed by the ascending sun. . . . In short the autumns in the New-Netherlands are as fine as the summers of Holland, and continue very long; for below the highlands, towards the sea-coast, the winter does not set in or freeze much before Christmas, the waters remaining open, the weather fine, and in many places the cattle grazing in the fields. Above the highlands, advancing northerly, the weather is colder, the fresh waters freeze, the stock is sheltered, the kitchens are provided, and all things are put in order for the winter. The fat oxen and swine are slaughtered. The wild geese, turkeys, and deer are at their best in this season, and easiest obtained, because of the cold, and because the

woods are now burnt over, and the brushwood and herbage out of the way. This is also the Indian hunting season, wherein such great numbers of deer are killed that a person who is un-informed of the vast extent of the country would imagine that all these animals would be destroyed in a short time. But the country is so extensive, and their subsistence so abundant, and the hunting being confined mostly to certain districts, therefore no diminution of the deer is observable. The Indians also affirm that before the arrival of the Christians, and before the small-pox broke out amongst them, they were ten times as numerous as they now are, and that their population had been melted down by this disease, whereof nine-tenths of them have died. That then, before the arrival of the Christians, many more deer were killed than there now are, without any perceptible decrease of their numbers.

We will now notice the winters of the New-Netherlands, which are different at different places. Above the highlands, towards Rensselaerwyck, and in the interior places extending towards New-England (which we still claim), there the winters are colder and last longer than at New-Amsterdam, and other places along the sea-coast, or on Long Island, and on the South river (Delaware). At the latter places, there seldom is any hard freezing weather before Christmas, and although there may be some cold nights, and trifling snows, still it does not amount to much, for during the day it is usually clear weather. But at Rensselaerwyck the winters begin earlier, as in 1645, when the North river closed on the 25th day of November, and remained frozen very late. Below the highlands and near the sea-coast, as has been observed, it never begins to freeze so early, but the cold weather usually keeps off until about Christmas, and frequently later, before the rivers are closed; and then they frequently are so full of drifting ice during the north-west winds as to obstruct the navigation; and, whenever the wind shifts to the south or south-east, the ice decays, and the rivers are open and clear. . . .

It is strange and worthy of observation, and surpasses all reasoning, that in the New-Netherlands, without or with but little wind (for when the weather is coldest, there seldom is much wind), although it lies in the latitude of Spain and Italy, and the summer heat is similar, that the winters should be so much colder as to render useless all the plants and herbs which grow in those countries, which will not endure the cold weather.

The winter weather is dry and cold, and we find that the peltries and feltings are prior and better than the furs of Muscovy. For this difference several reasons are assigned, which we will relate, without controverting any, except in remarking that in most cases wherein many different reasons are assigned to establish a subject, all are frequently discredited. Some say that the New-Netherlands lie so much further west on the globe, and that this causes the difference; others who compare the summer heat with Spain and Italy deny this position; others declare that the globe is not round, and that the country lies in a declining position from the sun. Others assert that the last discovered quarter of the world is larger than the other parts, and ask, if the world formerly was considered round, how that theory can be supported now, when about one-half is added to it? Some also say that the higher a country is situated, the colder it is. Now, say they, the New-Netherlands lie in a high westerly position; *ergo*, it must be cold there in winter, and as warm in summer. Many remark, and with much plausibility also, that the country extends northerly many hundred miles to the frozen ocean, and is accessible by Davis Straits (which by some is doubted), and that the land is intersected and studded by high mountains, and that the snow remains lying on them and in the valleys, and seldom thaws away entirely; and that when the wind blows from and over those cold regions, it brings cold with it. Receiving the cold from above and from beneath (both being cold), it must of course follow that the cold comes with the north-westerly winds. On the contrary, they say that, whenever the wind blows from the sea, if it be in the heat of the winter, then the weather becomes sultry and warm as in Lent. . . .

There is everywhere fuel in abundance, and to be obtained for the expense of cutting and procuring the same. The superabundance of this country is not equalled by any other in the world. The Indians do not clothe as we do, but frequently go half-naked and withstand the cold, in fashion, and fear it little. They are never overcome with the cold, or injured by it. In bitter cold weather, they will not pursue their customary pleasures, particularly the women and the children; for the men do not care so much for the cold days in winter as they do for the hot days in summer.

Washington Irving's services for American history and for the study of history among our people were scarcely less than his services for our general literature, in which field his is the first great name. The lives of Washington, Columbus, Mahomet, and Goldsmith, "The Conquest of Granada," the "Spanish Papers," and so much besides witness to the wide range of his historical activities; and everywhere—in Spain, in England, and at home—it is with the historian's eye that he looks upon the world. But above all other places New York was dear to him and is his debtor. Her early history most stirred his imagination from first to last, and it was fitting that his final home and his grave should be upon the banks of the Hudson whose legends he did most to vivify. His early work, "Diedrich Knickerbocker's History of New York," was a burlesque; but it had a great effect in awakening interest in the early period of New York history. Professor Jameson well surmises that "the great amount of work which the State government in the next generation did for the historical illustration of the Dutch period, through the researches of Mr. Brodhead in foreign archives, had this unhistorical little book for one of its principal causes." Irving himself says that at the time he wrote his humorous book few of his fellow-citizens were aware "that New York had ever been called New Amsterdam or had heard of the names of its early Dutch governors or cared a straw about their ancient Dutch progenitors."

"The main object of my work," says Irving, "had a bearing wide from the sober aim of history. It was to embody the traditions of our city in an amusing form; to illustrate its local humors, customs, and peculiarities; to clothe home scenes and places and familiar names with those imaginative and whimsical associations so seldom met with in our new country, but which live like charms and spells about the cities of the Old World, binding the heart of the native inhabitant to his home."

"When I find, after a lapse of nearly forty years," he wrote at Sunnyside in 1848, "this haphazard production of my youth still cherished among the descendants of the Dutch worthies, when I find its very name become a household word and used to give the home stamp to everything recommended for popular acceptance,—such as Knickerbocker societies, Knickerbocker insurance companies, Knickerbocker steamboats, Knickerbocker omnibuses, Knickerbocker bread, and Knickerbocker ice,—and when I find New Yorkers of Dutch descent priding themselves upon being 'genuine Knickerbockers,' I please myself with the persuasion that I have struck the right chord."

It will be remembered that when Diedrich Knickerbocker found his end approaching he disposed of his worldly affairs, leaving to the city library his Heidelberg Catechism and Adrian Van der Donck's famous account of the New Netherland, "by the use of which he had profited greatly in his second edition." Van der Donck's "Description of New Netherland" is the most important work which has come down to us describing New York in the early period; and the selection from it published in the present leaflet is given in connection with the Old South lecture on Irving as one of the best illustrations of the original documents among which Irving loved to delve.

"Jonker Adrian van der Donck, Doctor of Laws and advocate of the Supreme Court of Holland, has done more to give to his contemporaries a full knowledge of the country of his adoption than any other man. Sent

over in 1642 as Schout (sheriff) of the Patroons' Colony of Rensselaerwyck, he in 1647 left this service in consequence of a quarrel with the vice-director, and purchased from the Indians the colony of Colen Donck, now Yonkers (getting its name from his title), for which he received a patent in 1648." A controversy between Van der Donck and several other colonists and the government led to a "Remonstrance" published in Holland in 1650, doubtless the work of Van der Donck, which gives incidentally an account of New Netherland and matters relating to its history, of high value. A translation of this by Henry C. Murphy may be seen in the "New York Historical Collections," second series, ii. 251. The "Description of New Netherland" appeared in Amsterdam in 1655. A translation of the entire work by General Jeremiah Johnson was published in the "New York Historical Society Collections," 1841. The description of the country, a large portion of which is given in the present leaflet, is followed by a long and important section on the Indians, and by a discourse between a patriot and a New Netherlander on the character of the new colony.

The best account of the original sources of information concerning New Netherland is that by Berthold Fernow in the critical notes appended to his chapter on New Netherland in the "Narrative and Critical History of the United States," vol. iv. The great series of volumes of "Documents relating to the Colonial History of the State of New York" contains many papers illustrating this early period. Mrs. Martha J. Lamb's "History of the City of New York," and the "Memorial History of the City of New York," edited by James Grant Wilson, are very complete upon the Dutch period. There are many histories of the State of New York. A good account of them may be found in the appendix to Elbridge S. Brooks's "Story of New York," which is the best book for the young people. The excellent volume in the "American Commonwealths" series is by Ellis H. Roberts.

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