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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK PETER OF NEW AMSTERDAM: A STORY OF OLD NEW YORK ***

PETER OF NEW AMSTERDAM A STORY OF OLD NEW YORK

BY

JAMES OTIS

NEW YORK--CINCINNATI--CHICAGO
AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY

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BY

JAMES OTIS KALER

ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL, LONDON

W. P. 4.

FOREWORD

The purpose of this series of stories is to show the children, and even those who have already taken up the study of history, the *home life* of the colonists with whom they meet in their books. To this end every effort has been made to avoid anything savoring of romance, and to deal only with facts, so far as that is possible, while describing the daily life of those people who conquered the wilderness whether for conscience sake or for gain. [Pg 3]

That the stories may appeal more directly to the children, they are told from the viewpoint of a child, and purport to have been related by a child. Should any criticism be made regarding the seeming neglect to mention important historical facts, the answer would be that these books are not sent out as histories,—although it is believed that they will awaken a desire to learn more of the building of the nation,—and only such incidents as would be particularly noted by a child are used.

Surely it is entertaining as well as instructive for young people to read of the toil and privations in the homes of those who came into a new world to build up a country for themselves, and such homely facts are not to be found in the real histories of our land. [Pg 4]

JAMES OTIS.

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PETER OF NEW AMSTERDAM

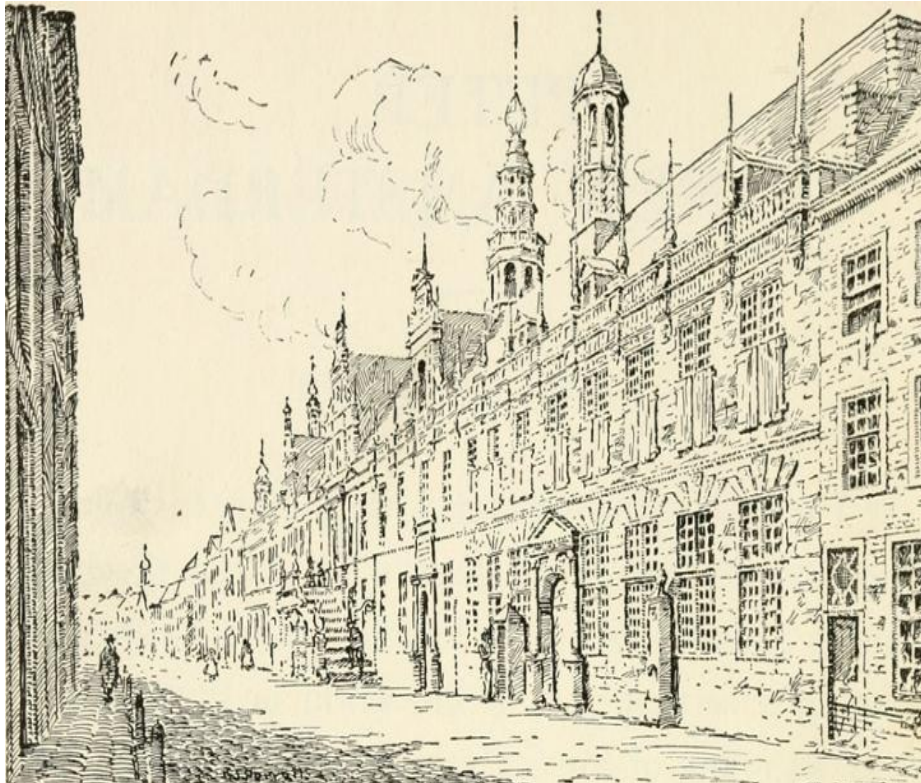
[Pg 9]

WHERE I WAS BORN

If I ever attempted to set down a story in words, it would be concerning the time when I was much the same as a slave among the Dutch of New Amsterdam, meaning a certain part of the world in that America where so many of my father's countrymen came after they left England, because of the King's not allowing them to worship God in the way they believed to be right.

It sounds odd to say that an English boy was ever held as slave by the Dutch, and perhaps I have no right to make such statement, because it is not strictly true, although there were many years in my life when I did the same work, and received the same fare, as did the negroes in the early days of New Amsterdam.

Before I was born, my father was clerk to the post-master of Scrooby, one William Brewster, and perhaps thus it was that when, because of troubles concerning religion, Master Brewster journeyed to Leyden with a company of people who were called Separatists, my parents went with him.



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And so it was that I was born in Leyden, in the year of our Lord, 1612, but I never knew what it was to have a mother, for mine died while I was yet in the cradle. Thanks to the care of a loving, God-fearing father, however, I could do very much toward looking out for myself by the time I had come to the age of eight, when I was left entirely alone in the world. I love now to think that during the years of my life while the good man remained on this earth, I did not cause him any

great anxiety, and required little care.

Within two months after my father died, which was in the year 1620, many of the congregation in Leyden set off with Master Brewster for the New World, there to build up a city where men might worship God in whatsoever fashion they pleased.

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Those of the Separatists who were left behind, cared for me as best they might until a year had passed; but none of them were overly burdened with this world's goods, and, young though I was, I realized, in some slight degree, what a tax the care of a lad nine years old was upon them.

ALONE IN HOLLAND



Later, those who had in charity taken charge of me also set off to join Master Brewster's company in America, and I, an English boy, was left much the same as alone in Holland. I could speak the Dutch language, however, and was willing to work at whatever came to hand, so that I earned enough with which to provide me with food; as for clothing, I wore the cast-off garments of the Dutch boys, whose mothers, taking pity upon an orphan, freely gave them to me.

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Among the few English then left in Leyden was Master Jan Marais, a professor in the University, whom my father had known; and he, so far as lay in his power, kept a watchful eye over me; but this was only to the extent of inquiring for my welfare when we met by chance, or in recalling my name to those among his Dutch friends who were in need of such services as so young a lad could render.

Now it seems, although I knew nothing concerning it at the time, that there had been formed in Holland, among the merchants, what was known as the West India Company, whose purpose was to make a settlement in that part of the New World which they had named New Netherland, claiming to own it, and there trade with the savages, or engage in whatsoever of business would bring in money.

Master Peter Minuit—whom I should call Heer Minuit, because such is the Dutch term for master, but the odd-sounding title never did ring true in my ear—had been appointed by this company, which had already sent out some people to the world of America, Director of the settlement that was to be made. He came on a visit of leave-taking to Master Jan Marais, and it so chanced, whether for good or for evil, that while the two were walking in the streets of Leyden, they came upon me, standing idly in front of a cook-shop, and saying to myself that if the choice were given to me I would take this or that dainty to eat.

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AN IMPORTANT INTRODUCTION

It may have been in a spirit of fun, or that perhaps Master Marais had in mind to do me a good turn, but however it came about, he said as gravely as if I were the burgomaster's son:

"Heer Peter Minuit, allow me to present to you Master Peter Hulbert, who has had the misfortune to lose both his father and his mother by death."

Master Minuit was not unlike many others whom I had met, save that there was in his face a certain look which bespoke a kindly heart, or so it seemed, while he gazed at me much as he would at a young calf that he had in mind to purchase.

I never did lay claim to being comely, either as boy or man; but yet it must have been that this sturdy visitor saw something about me which attracted either his closest attention or his charity, for he said with a kindly smile, as he patted me on the head: "Well, namesake Peter, since nearly all your English friends have gone to America, what say you to voyaging in the same direction?"

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I failed to understand the meaning of the question, and probably stood staring at him like a simple; yet at the same time I noted a quick glance from Master Marais, as if the Director had said something which caught his attention. An instant later, he said with more of seriousness in his voice than seemed to me the matter warranted:

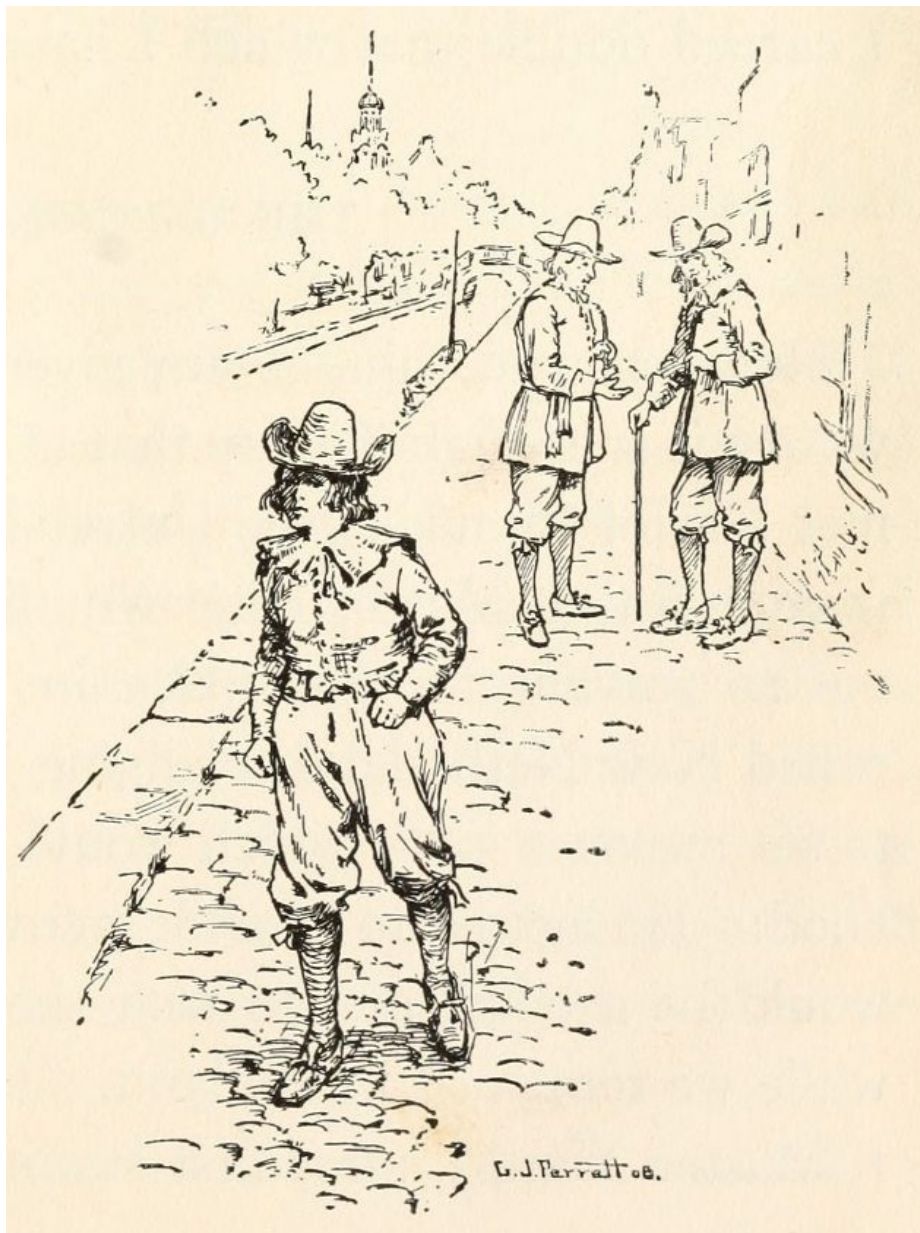
"It may not be well, Heer Minuit, to put into the lad's head a desire that cannot be gratified."

"And why may it not be?" Master Minuit asked, wheeling sharply about. "If namesake Peter has no friends in Holland who can take charge of him, why may he not go to that land on the other side of the world with me? A youngster of ten years might find many a meaner post than that of body servant to the Director of the new town in America."

I GO MY WAY

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Whatever speech these two may have had together afterward, I know not; but certain it is that Master Marais, speaking to me hastily, as if it were not well I should hear what passed between him and his friend, directed that I go my way until nightfall, when I was to come into the University grounds with the intent of seeing him.



It was all very well to tell me to go my way; but I had none. One section of Leyden was the same as another to me, who was penniless and hungry, casting about in the hope of earning as much, by whatsoever employment came my way, as would buy what might serve for supper.

However, I was not so dull as to fail in understanding that Master rapidly, as though business in Leyden would come to a standstill if I did not make haste. [Pg 16]

Then, once out of sight of these two, I looked about, keeping my eyes wide open in the hope of seeing one who required my services, but failing utterly, so that when night came, hunger had such a hold upon my stomach that I was like to have begged from whosoever passed me on the street.

Had I done so, it would have been the first time in my life, and since that afternoon I have had no reason to ask in charity aught of any one, for surely have I earned double that which I have ever received.

THE BARGAIN

Now lest you think I am given to using too many words, it is enough if I say that at the appointed time I met Master Marais at the University, and there learned from him that Master Peter Minuit had offered to take me as servant to that place in America which was called New Netherland, pledging himself, in due time, to set me on a path which would lead to honest manhood. He agreed to provide me with such an outfit as would be needed, and to bear the charge of my living while we remained in Holland.

Master Marais, after first stating that it was for me to decide, my future, perhaps, depended upon the answer to be given Master Minuit, advised that I accept gratefully the Director's offer. [Pg 17]

And so I did. What other could a lad, who had neither father nor mother, say, when he was given a chance to earn honestly that which he needed for the care of his body?



To me, boy as I was, the long voyage overseas had no terrors; but was rather an inducement, for I would see strange sights before coming to the New World, and then who should say that I might not, one day, rise to be as great a man as was Master Minuit?

Master Marais told me I had decided well, when I said that I believed myself fortunate in having such an opportunity, and straightway took charge of my affairs, having been so instructed by my new master. I was given of clothing more than ever I had before, and fed until I was no longer hungry, during such time as I remained in Leyden.

Then came the day when Master Marais sent me to Amsterdam with a letter to Master Minuit's agent, and from that hour I was no more than any parcel of goods, which the West India Company counted to send into the New World.

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It troubled me little, however, that I was considered of no importance, for in exactly that light did I look upon myself; yet I could not but wonder, if so be I was servant to the Director of the new country in America, that no one told me to do this or do that, but left me to my own will, save that I was ordered to keep strictly the rules laid down by the mistress of the house in which I lodged, until such time as the *Sea Mew* was ready to set sail.

Then it was that one of the sailors came to my lodgings to summon me, and I know not how it was he chanced to learn of my whereabouts, for I had had speech concerning my affairs with no person in Amsterdam, although it may well be that Master Marais had sent information concerning what was to be done with me.

SAILING FOR THE NEW WORLD

It was in January, in the year of our Lord 1626, when the *Sea Mew*, set forth on her long voyage, and during a certain number of days after we left port, it seemed as if my end was near at hand. There are those who make light of the sickness of the sea; but I am not one, for verily my sufferings on board the *Sea Mew*, passed man's power of description.

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I saw Master Minuit when I first went on board; but it was as if a cat had been looking at a king, for he remained in the after part of the ship where were the people of quality, while I, only a servant, was herded among the sailors, well up in the bow, where kicks and cuffs were the rule, and blessings the exception.

The life of a boy at sea, whether he be a servant in the employ of some passenger, or belonging to the ship's company, is at its best truly pitiable. No one has a good word for him; strive as he may,

he is always in some person's road, and the end of a wet rope is ever ready to the hand of that person who, having lost his temper, would vent his spite upon the most helpless being near at hand, which is the boy.



I had counted on seeing much of the world during this voyage in the *Sea Mew*, believing that we should visit strange lands, where I could roam about feasting my eyes upon all manner of odd things; but none of this came to pass.

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Twice during the voyage did the *Sea Mew*, cast anchor off some island, where it would have given me no little pleasure to go on shore that I might compare the land with the country I had known; but I lacked the courage to ask permission of my master, who as yet had not spoken to me since the ship left port, and no one, not even the friendliest among the seamen, had enough of charity in his heart to say "Come."

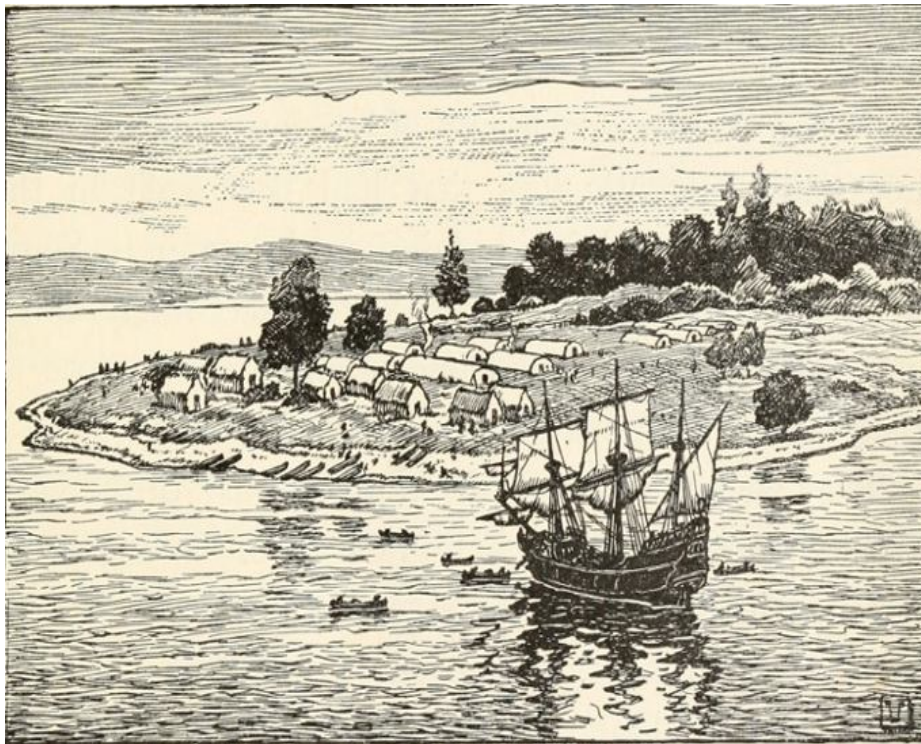
A VIEW OF NEW NETHERLAND

Because of all this, the voyage, which took up nearly four months, was one of discomfort, if not exactly of suffering, and when we came to anchor off that place in America which had been named New Netherland, I would have rejoiced even though it were the most desolate island, because of my life on shipboard having, for a time at least, come to an end.

But before I tell you what I saw when I gazed upon this part of the New World for the first time, to the end that you may the better understand what I am talking about, let me say that toward the close of the year of grace, 1624, a company of forty-five persons, men, women and children, with all their home belongings, their tools for the farms, and one hundred and three cows and sheep, had been sent out from Amsterdam in three large ships and a small boat, called by the Dutch a yacht, although in England it would have been spoken of as a pinnace.

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Some of these people, who agreed with the West India Company to build at this place a trading post, had already set up such houses as would serve to shelter them from the weather.



And this is the picture which I saw on the fourth day of May, in the year of our Lord, 1626, when I stood on the forward part of the *Sea Mew* gazing shoreward with hungry eyes, for the one desire I had was to plant my feet once more upon the solid earth.

We were lying where two grand rivers came together, forming a harbor in which all the King's ships might ride in safety. In front of me was a range of small hills, whereon grew noble trees that had just put on their dress of green to mark the coming of the summer, and in the valleys, betwixt the forest and the shore, were small dwellings or huts built of the bark of trees, much as a child might make a house of twigs.

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Beyond these huts were settlements like unto nothing I had ever seen, made up of buildings which looked not unlike gigantic logs that had been split in the middle, with the cleft side lying on the ground. Some of these half-round shelters were exceedingly long, others short, and all had one or more doors close to the ground, but no windows that I could see.

They were made, as I afterward learned, of the bark of birch trees laid over a framework of saplings, and fastened in place with the sinews of animals, or with small wooden pegs. From more than one of them came smoke, telling of fires and of cooking, but I saw no chimneys.

THE "BROWN MEN" OR SAVAGES

Here and there, either in this odd village, or near the bark huts of the Dutch people, wandered colored men, not black like those negro slaves we had on board the *Sea Mew*, but rather the color of a copper kettle that has been somewhat used over a fire. For clothing, they wore nothing more than a piece of skin tied around the waist, or leggings of hide.

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Their heads were bare, with the hair shaven from off a goodly portion, leaving a long tuft directly on the top, which by means, as I afterward learned, of animal fat, was made to stand upright like a horn.

These were the savages, and I looked no longer at the dwellings built in the shape of a half-moon, or at the loosely stacked strips of bark which marked the home of some Dutchman who had come here at the bidding of the West India Company, for all my thoughts were centered upon these brown men, of whom I had heard as one hears a fairy tale, not believing in its truth.

Now although the land was goodly and fair to look upon, a veritable garden of pleasure, to those who had come from a long voyage on the angry waters, as had we of the *Sea Mew*, yet there came into my mind the fear that these brown men who wandered here and there, giving little heed to us who were so lately arrived, and who were the owners of this New World, might come at some future time to say to themselves that it were better the Dutch had never landed in their midst. If that day ever did arrive, woe unto us whose skins were white!

Little did I believe, even as I dreamed, that such would come to be the truth; that the day was not far distant when these savages who made even of their hair a seeming weapon, would come to thirst for the blood of us who hoped to find fame or fortune, or both, in this New World of America.

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At a mile or more from the point where we had anchored, we were told there was a strip of marshy ground, stretching across from river to river, and lying so low that when the tide was at its height, the streams were united, making of this settlement an island, which the Indians called

Manhattan.

There were trees in the forest before me enough to make all the masts that could be used by the people of the world, and in such a wilderness how abundant must be the game! In these huge rivers how great in number the fish!

I panted to leave the narrow space of ship; to go on shore where I could wander among the trees and amid the flowers; where I could see these strange, brown people, whose huts were to me much like hills thrown up by ants; to come in contact with all these things which God had made, and in so doing rejoice that I lived.

SUMMONED TO THE CABIN

Now it was as if Master Minuit, who had given no heed during all the voyage as to whether I might be alive or dead, suddenly remembered that somewhere on board the *Sea Mew*, he had a servant by the name of Peter Hulbert, and straightway sent one of the serving men from the great cabin to hunt me out.

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From the time of leaving Amsterdam until this moment, no one had shown any desire to have speech with me, while all had acted as if believing I was of no more use in this world than to cumber their path; thus it came near to startling me when my name was called, so that I hung back, hardly knowing if I was expected to go forward or aft, until one of the seamen, hearing the serving man vainly shouting, asked me if that was not my name which was being spoken so loudly.

Whereupon I awoke to my senses, and went toward the stern to meet this fellow, who was bawling at the full strength of his lungs, as if he would make his tongue do the work of a trumpet, and by him was led into the great cabin where stood my master, as if he had been awaiting my coming.

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From that moment until this I have never sought for employment; there has ever been something which I should do for others, or was in duty bound to do for myself, until I am come to think that he who goes into a new world to help in building there a city, much the same as fastens himself into a treadmill in such a fashion that he may not contrive his own escape.

Now did I learn what it meant to act the part of body servant to such as Master Minit, and was not a little surprised at finding that he had two others, one a man grown, and a second who was three or four years my elder, both of whom took advantage of every opportunity to lord it over me when the master was not within hearing.

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TOYS FOR THE SAVAGES

During the long voyage I had tried time and again to picture to myself what would be expected of me when I began to serve Master Minit, and fancied the duties would be to look after his belongings, perhaps his weapons, or his clothing, or to serve him while he sat at meals.

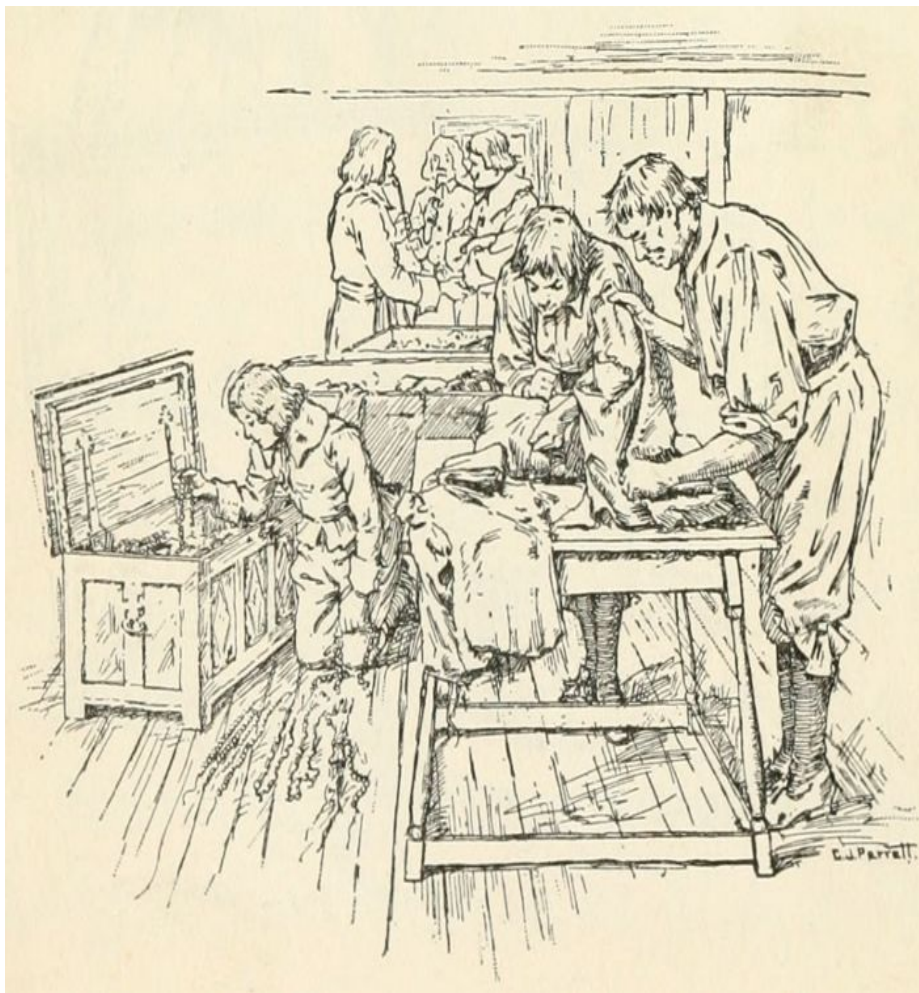


Therefore it was that my surprise was exceeding great when the first task which he set me, was that of taking from certain huge boxes, which had been brought into the great cabin, what appeared like toys for children, rather than things such as grown men would set a value upon.

A stout chest, fitted with handles, so that it might the more readily be carried, had been placed nearby these big boxes, and, under Master Mynuit's direction, I took out these fanciful things, laying some upon the floor, and stowing others in the chest. [Pg 28]

There were strings of beads such as young Dutch girls wear around their necks; short lengths of bright red, or blue, or yellow cloth of wool; ornaments for the ears, made of Dutch brass, and fashioned so rudely that none save the poorest in the land would covet them; belts of gaudily colored leather, and small axes and knives formed of iron so badly worked that but little rough usage would serve to turn the edges.

I cannot well name all the useless trinkets which I handled that day, working as deftly as I might, to the end that my new master should lay no blame upon me for clumsiness; but all the goods were of so little value that, poor though I was, there came into my heart no desire to possess them.



As I worked, and while the other two servants were busily engaged making into packages the belongings of my master, that they might the more readily be carried on shore, I could not fail of hearing, even though making no effort to play the part of eavesdropper, the conversation which was going on between Master Minuit and those Dutch gentlemen who had come out with him to build up this new land.

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CLAIM OF THE WEST INDIA COMPANY

And what I thus heard, without being minded to play the listener, was that among the orders given by the West India Company, was one to the effect that before Master Minuit should do anything toward taking upon himself the governing of the country, the land of Manhattan Island was to be bought of the brown men, and these useless trinkets were to serve in the stead of purchase money.

To the better understanding of this order, let me go back in the tale to where I have said that the West India Company claimed to own the land which was called New Netherland. Their reasons for making such claim were that the Dutch government had, many years before, sent out the ship *Half Moon*, commanded by an Englishman named Henry Hudson, who believed himself to be the first white man that ever saw these rivers; and afterward that famous Dutch seaman, Adrian Block, had followed Master Hudson, stopping at this same island of Manhattan. Therefore it was, because of their vessels being supposed to have come to this place first, that the people of Holland claimed the land as their own.

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As I came to know later, however, a certain sailor from Florence had been sent to America by the French king, near ninety years before Master Hudson's coming, and, on landing nearabout where we then were, claimed all the country in the name of France.

Perhaps the West India Company knew somewhat of this, and, fearing the French king might set up ownership to the island of Manhattan, had decided to buy it of theirs, first because of having been discovered by them, and again because of being bought in fair trade.

All this which I have just told you came to me afterward, when I knew more of the great world and of the manner in which the nations of the earth struggled one against another to increase their possessions.

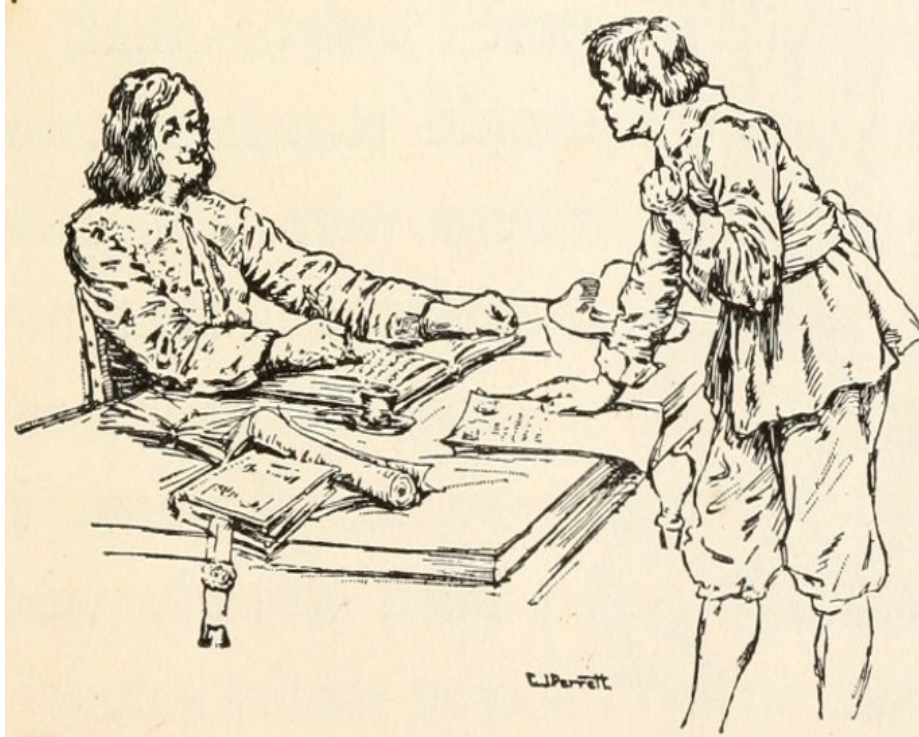
MAKING READY FOR TRADE

At the time, however, there was no thought in my mind save that if Master Minit should buy this island of Manhattan with all the trumpery goods he had in the great cabin, then would he be paying a price far too small for even the least portion of it.

You can well fancy that I did not neglect my work while thus looking with contempt upon the goods before me. My duty was to make quick despatch of the task set me, and at the same time take good heed that it was done in such a manner as to win the approval, if not the praise, of Master Minit.

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Many a long hour did I spend putting the childish things into the chest, and in taking them out and exchanging for others, when those in company with my master believed we were gathering too much of value, if indeed there could be value to such goods. When it was done, I had the idea that Master Minit was pleased with me, for he said that from then on I was to hold myself close to his person, going where he went, and stopping where he stopped.

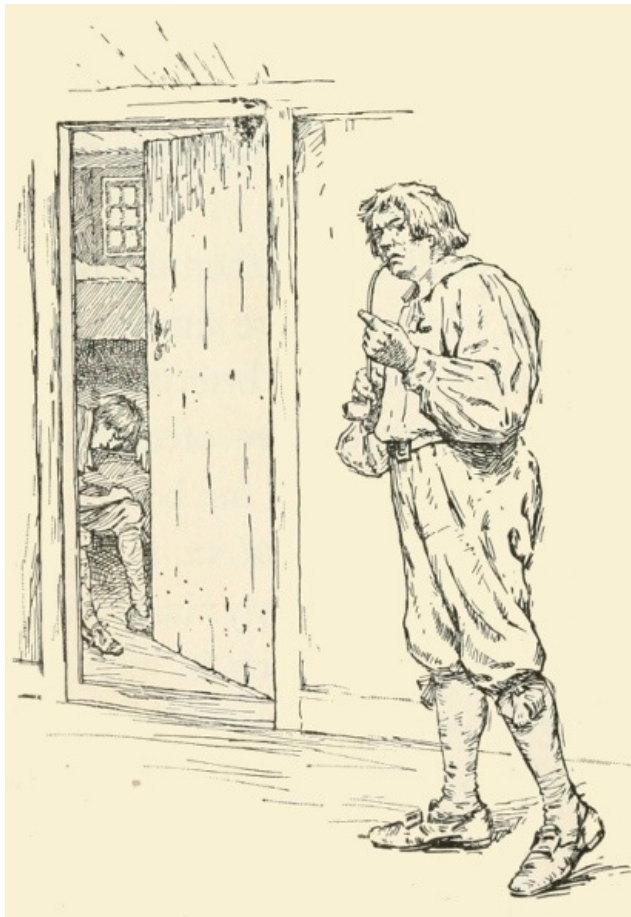


I make but a poor attempt at telling the tale, otherwise I would have said that when we were first come to anchor, some of those people who had been sent over by the West India Company in advance of our ship, came on board the *Sea Mew*, to speak with my master; and, as each in turn was done with his business, or with his pleasure, as the case might be, orders were given him that the savages be told they were to meet Master Minit on the shore nearby where we were then lying at anchor, to the end that he might have speech with them.

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It puzzled me not a little to understand how he could have speech with the brown men, when they did not speak in the same tongue as did he; but I had enough of wit to understand that it did not concern me. Master Minit most like had considered well the matter.

HANS BRAUN AND KRYN GILDERSLEEVE



When I was done with my task, instead of going into the forward part of the ship where I had lived from the time we left Amsterdam, my master gave orders that I should remain nearby where were his own quarters, and sent me with his other servants, of whom I have already told you somewhat.

The elder, who might have been thirty years of age, was named Hans Braun. He was as sour-visaged, square-jawed, thick-headed a Dutchman as ever stepped foot in Holland; one who knew not the meaning of the word friendship, and cared for his own comfort and his own pleasure more than he did for the master he served, or for anything whatsoever.

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When I came to have a good look at him, as he beckoned me to follow to that portion of the ship where he and his mate found lodgings, I said to myself that there at least was one in this New World who would never lend a helping hand, and would not hesitate to do a wrong if thereby he could compass his own ends.

The other servant was Kryn Gildersleeve, who, mayhap, was three or four years my elder; a dull, heavy lad, who did not give promise of being a cheerful comrade, and yet I would have put faith in him under the same conditions that I would have suspected Hans of working me harm.

If I have been overly careful in speaking of these two fellow servants, it is because of our being at a later day so placed that they could do me much of evil, or of good.

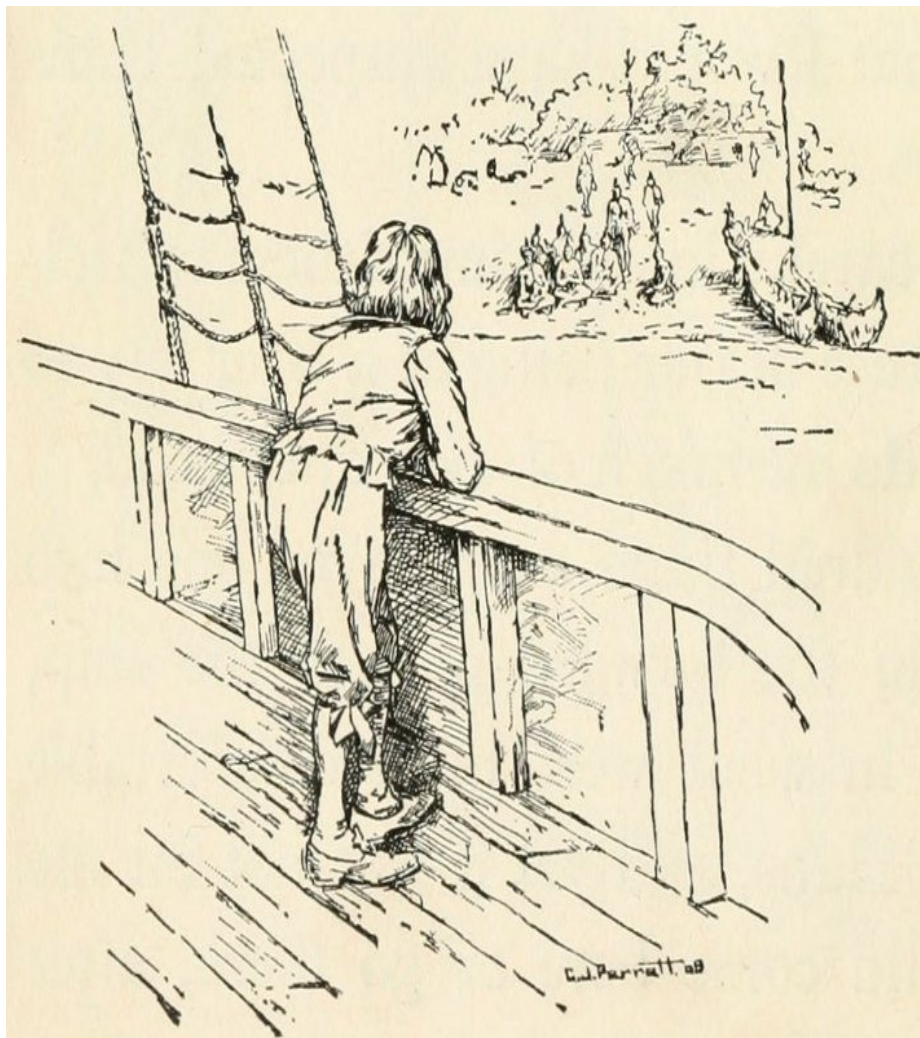
I had rather an hundred times over have gone into my meaner lodgings in the forward part of the ship, than spend the night in what were most comfortable quarters, with such as Hans, and yet it was not for me to say whether I would come here or go there, after the command had been given. Before another day was very old, however, I understood that, without having spoken a wrong word or done anything against him whatsoever, Hans Braun would never be my friend.

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THE GATHERING OF THE SAVAGES

It seemed, as I afterward learned, that Master Minuit had given orders for me to follow him on shore, while the other two were to remain aboard the ship, and this it was, most like, which displeased Hans.

However that may be, it has nothing to do with my tale, and perhaps I am giving overly many words to it; yet would I have you know how I, the youngest body servant of Master Minuit, Director of the West India Company's lands in America, came to see so much of that which was, in fact, important business, such as a lad would not be likely to have any part in.



We were yet on board the *Sea Mew*, when I, who was standing by the rail on the quarter-deck, where I could hear the slightest summons from my master, saw the brown men gathering on shore and verily it was a sight to cause wonder.

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These brown men, with their hair standing upright on the middle of their heads, and naked to the waist, but wearing leggings fringed with strips of hide, and queer, soft shoes ornamented with colored quills of the porcupine, which I afterwards learned were called moccasins, seated themselves on the sand of the shore, gazing out toward the *Sea Mew*.

Below, in the great cabin, I could see that my master and his companions were arraying themselves as if about to set out for an audience with the king, and why this should be I failed to understand, save that they counted to surprise the savages by their bravery of attire.

Master Minuit wore a long coat of blue cloth, which was fastened around his waist with a silken sash, and black velvet breeches, gathered in at the knee with a knot of blue ribbon, while his low shoes, ornamented with huge silver buckles, set off, as it seemed to me, the shiny blackness of his silken hose.



He had on a broad-brimmed hat of felt, in which was a plume of blue, and over his shoulder was a blue sash, which, coming to a point under the left arm, gave a hanging for his sword.

The gentlemen with him were decked out in no less brave apparel, and I said to myself that if the savages of Manhattan Island gave heed to gay adorning then they were like to be pleased on this day.

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GOING ASHORE

I was the one sent ashore in charge of the chest of trinkets, and that I was thus given a position of trust did not serve to sweeten the sour look on Hans' face, for he acted much as if believing he was the only one of Master Minuit's following who could be depended upon for any service of note.

It is impossible for me to say in such words as would be understood, how delighted I was to be on dry land once more. The scent of the flowers, the odors that came from the forest, and the songs of the birds, so filled me with delight that it was indeed a difficult matter to act as if I still held possession of my wits. Perhaps, if the savages had not been seated nearby, noting every movement made by those concerned in the care of the chest, I should not have succeeded so well.

Before these half-dressed, brown men, who watched intently, with never the ghost of a smile or show of interest on their faces, one could not but act in a dignified manner, and I held myself as if I, not Peter Minuit, were the Director of New Netherland come to take possession of my office.

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Save for long reeds, at one end of which was a small stone vessel, which I afterward learned was a contrivance used for burning that Indian weed, tobacco, the savages had nothing in their hands. It seemed to me that it would have been only natural had they brought with them some of their weapons, and I was disappointed because of their not having done so, for my curiosity was great regarding what sort of bloodletting instruments were in use among them.



During a full hour I sat on the chest, while two of the seamen loitered near at hand to make certain the brown men did not attempt to find out what we had brought ashore, and then came my master, followed by all the gentlemen of the *Sea Mew*.

Every one was dressed in his bravest garments, and on stepping out of the small boat on the sand, all gave particular respect to my master, as if to show the savages that he was the man who had been sent to rule over this country of New Netherland. [Pg 38]



This company of gentlemen walked gravely in procession to where the chest was standing, giving no heed to the savages until they were gathered around the useless trinkets, and then they bowed as if each brown man before them were a king.

BUYING THE ISLAND OF MANHATTAN

I had again been puzzling my brain to figure out how any trading of land could be carried on, since it was not reasonable to suppose the savages had knowledge of the Dutch tongue, or that Master Minit understood such words as the brown men spoke.

It was all made plain, however, when one of the white men who had come from Amsterdam the year before, stepped forward, bending low before my master as he began making odd sounds to the Indians, which must have been words of some kind, since they answered him in the same manner, after which the whole crowd of top-knotted, half-naked savages rose to their feet. [Pg 39]

Then our Dutchman would repeat the Indian words in English to Master Minit, though no one could say whether he repeated exactly that which the savages had told him, and thus a full hour was spent in telling of the greatness of Holland, the good intent of the West India Company toward the brown people, and the advantage it would be to have white men in the land.

Master Minit was not the only one who could deal out soft words, for the chief savage of the company was quite his match in such business, and made it appear as if this island of Manhattan were the one place in all the great world, while at the same time he claimed that the Manhattan Indians were the only real men ever born.

Finally Master Minit got at the kernel of the nut by telling the savages that he was ready to buy, and to pay a good price for their island, at the same time letting it be understood that they need not move away so long as it was their desire to be neighbors and friends with the white men, who would pay all kinds of prices for furs, or whatsoever they had to sell. [Pg 40]

This was the time when the chest was opened, and I looked to see the brown men walk away angrily, believing Master Minit was making fools of them when he offered such trumpery stuff for good, solid land; but much to my surprise the savages hung over the beads and cloth as if they were worth their weight in gold.



Had I owned the island, and Master Minit was trying to buy it from me for what he had in the chest, I would not have given him as much of the soil as he stood on, for a shipload of the stuff; but these savages seemed to think they were getting great wealth in exchange for the land, and he who was acting as mouthpiece had need to keep his tongue wagging lively in order to repeat all that was said.

By noon the bargain had been made; the savages kept a tight grip on all they had received, even when they were invited on board the *Sea Mew*, where writings of the trade were to be made, and I had hard work not to laugh outright when I saw how gingerly they stepped into our staunch longboat, as if fearing it would overset. [Pg 41]

BOATS USED BY THE SAVAGES

This fear of so seaworthy a craft as ours, was all the more comical after I had seen such boats as

the savages themselves used, and you may believe that I am stretching the truth to the point of breaking it, when I say that they put off in toy vessels that were little better than eggshells.

What is more, they showed no fear in so doing even when the waves ran high, and it seemed as if no human power could prevent the frail craft from being swamped.

These canoes, as the savages called them, were given shape by thin splints of wood, bent something after the fashion of a bow, with the forward and after ends, although one looked the same shape as the other, rising high above the midship portion. They were covered with bark from the birch tree, sewn together with sinews of deer, or of such like animals, and smeared plentifully with balsam from the pine trees. Where in another craft would have been the rail, were strips of wood not thicker than my smallest finger, but of such toughness as to give shape to the boat.

I could easily, and have done so many times since, toss the largest of these canoes on my shoulder and carry it without feeling that I was burdened. Yet four or five of the brown men would get inside one of these drowning machines, as Kryn called them, kneeling in the bottom, since there was no chance to sit squarely down, and dart over the waves with greater speed than our crew could row the longboat.

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WANDERING OVER THE ISLAND

When Master Minit was about to go on board the *Sea Mew*, with the savages whose land he had just bought, he graciously gave me permit to wander at will over the island, with the understanding, however, that I was to be on the shore, ready to come aboard ship, before nightfall.

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It can well be understood that I took advantage of the permission without delay, and before I had finished with my roaming, I came to believe that my master had not driven as hard a bargain as at first sight appeared.

In England, or in Holland, the land would not have been looked upon as of much value to a farmer. There were some spots where a kind of wheat was growing, but these were few and far between. A goodly portion of the upper part was swampy, and beyond that were ledges, covered with creeping vines, over which one could not make his way even if he felt so disposed.

One of the Dutchmen who had come over before we did, told me that he did not dare let his cows or sheep wander beyond the marshes, because of the forest's being filled with bears, wolves, and other ravaging creatures which would make speedy end of them.



When I asked as to the outlook for a farmer, he turned up his thick nose, saying that save for the fact of the land being rich, never having been planted, he could not raise enough to keep his family and his cattle from starving. [Pg 44]

Then it was he told me that the West India Company did not give great heed to what might be grown in the earth, but counted on building here a town in order that they might make much money by buying furs of the savages.

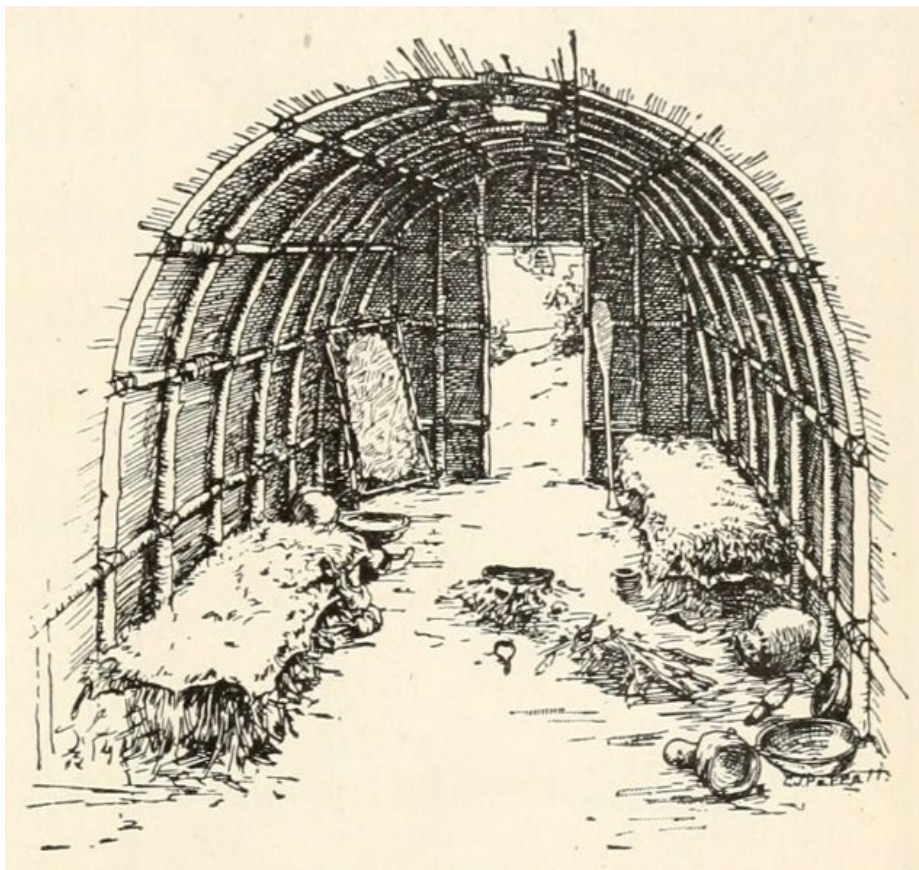
It seemed that there were animals in the forest nearabout, the skins of which were valuable in many of the other countries of the world, and it was Master Minuit's business, if he would please those who had made him Director of New Netherland, to exchange toys and beads for furs.

Those white men who had been induced to come over from Holland by promises of being well paid for their labor, were to turn all their attention to getting lumber out of the forests, doing no more in the way of farming than would provide them, as nearly as might be, with food.

THE HOMES OF THE SAVAGES

This same Dutchman, seeing that the Indian houses excited my curiosity, offered to go with me inside one, and, on my agreeing eagerly, he led the way into the first building on our path, with no thought of asking permission, much as if entering his own dwelling. [Pg 45]

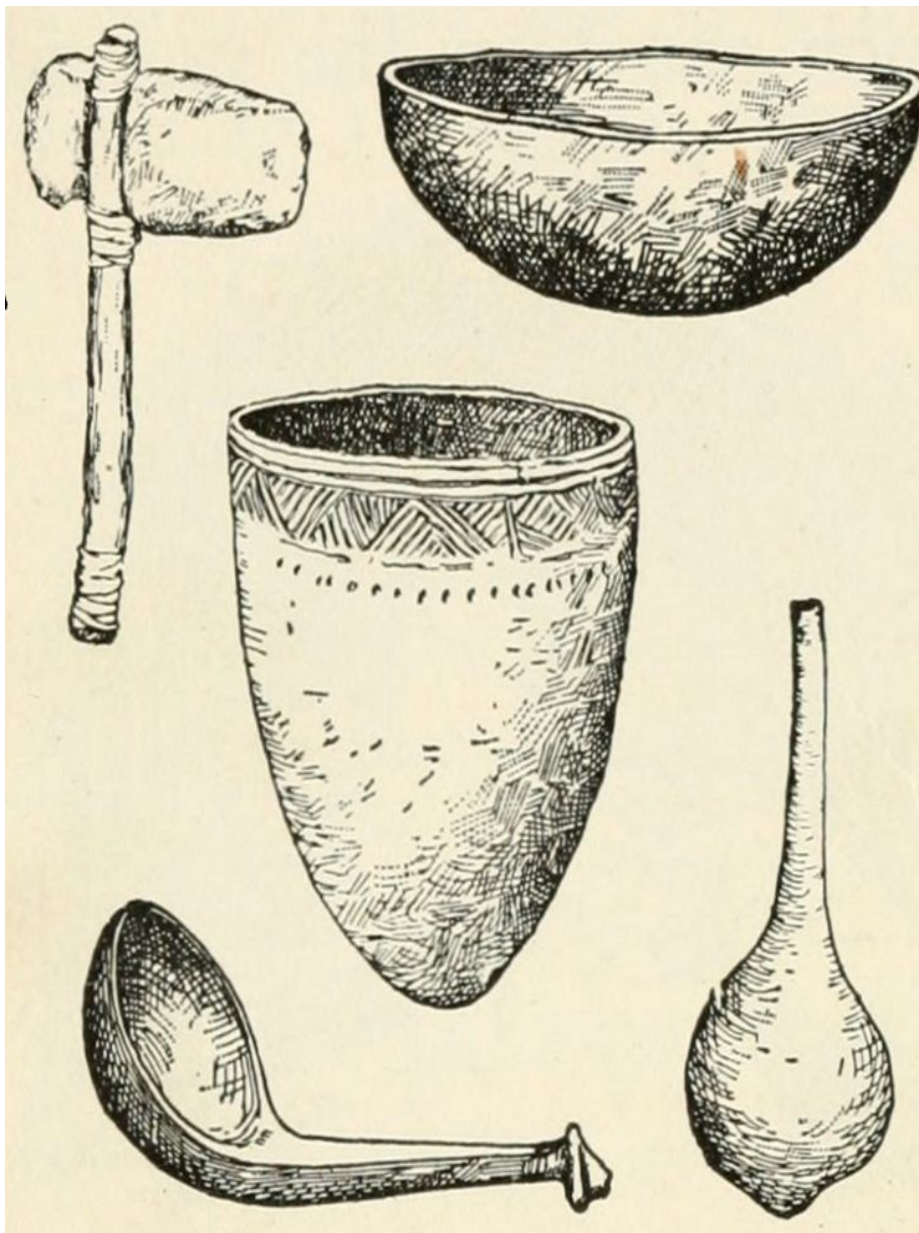
It surprised me to see what flimsy affairs they were, and yet it was said that the savages lived in them during the winter when there is much snow on the ground. I have already told you that instead of having a roof laid on upright sides, the top was rounded like a huge log cleft in halves, and once inside I understood why they were built in such fashion.



The timbers were nothing more than small, young trees, the thicker ends of which were thrust into the ground, and the tops bent over until the whole formed an arch. On the outside of this was bark taken from the birch tree, sewed or pegged in place, and in the center of the floor, which was simply the bare earth beaten down hard, a fire could be built, the smoke finding its way out through a hole in the roof.

Why such frail buildings did not take fire from sparks, I could not understand, for it would have needed but a tiny bit of live coal to set the whole thing in a blaze.

There were no people in this house which we entered, and therefore it was that I could look about me more closely than would otherwise have been the case. I saw pots and kettles fashioned of what looked to be gourds, or baked clay; sharpened stones lashed to wooden handles, to be used, most like, as axes, and shells with an edge so sharp that one might have whittled a heavy stick into shavings, which shells, so the Dutchman told me, served the savages as knives.



There were many wooden bowls, which must have been formed by these same knives of shell, and one of them, half filled with a greasy looking mixture, was yet standing upon the embers, as if its contents had been heated in that vessel of wood over the fire.

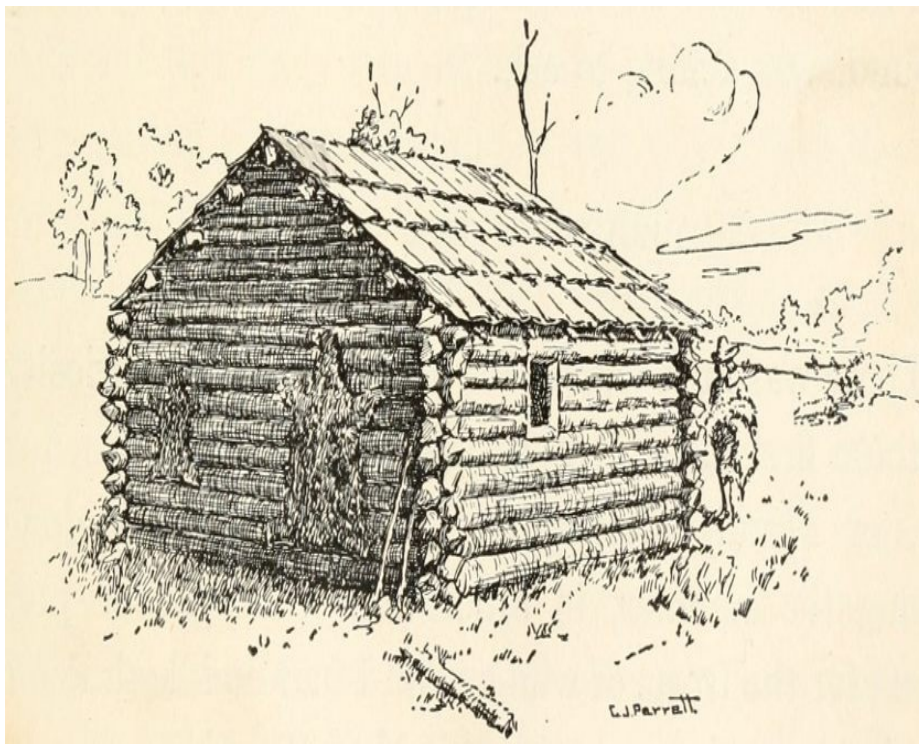
The beds were not uninviting, save that they were far from being cleanly, and gave forth a disagreeable odor, for they were made of furs piled high upon a coarse kind of straw.

MASTER MINUIT'S HOME

Then it was that this very friendly Dutchman showed me the house in which Master Minuit was to live, until such time as a building, made after the manner of those in Holland, could be set up.

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It was no more than a log hut, large, to be sure, but yet formed of the trunks of trees laid one on top of the other, with the ends notched so that they would lock together, as it were, and the floor was the same as I had seen in the house of the savage, simply earth beaten hard until it was nearly smooth.



The idea of bringing his fine garments into such a place, or even of wearing them where were none save the Indians to see his bravery of apparel, caused me to smile; but I soon came to know that my master had no intention of spending very many days within this rough dwelling of logs.

The *Sea Mew*, was moored stem and stern, as if for a long stay, and Master Minuit and the other gentlemen appeared to have no idea of going on shore to live as did the savages.

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It is not needed for me to say that I also remained aboard the ship, although it would have pleased me far better to have taken my chances with the people in the huts, for these Dutchmen who had come in advance of us were really pleasant fellows, who did not think it beneath their dignity to answer such questions as a lad like me, who saw so much that was curious everywhere around, was aching to ask.

BEGINNING THE WORK

There was little chance for me to gratify my curiosity in these first days after we were come to America, for Master Minuit counted on having much work done during the summer, in order that we might be prepared for the frosts of winter, and I had no idle time for making acquaintance with this New World.

My master put the interests of the West India Company even before the well-being of the people who were to make a new town, and his first act, after buying the island of Manhattan for much the same as no price at all, was to begin the gathering of furs.

The people who had come ahead of us were cutting timber in the forest, and dragging, or rafting, it down to the point where it would be in good position to be taken on board the first ship that was to be loaded, and with such tasks Master Minuit did not interfere.

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The gentlemen who had come with him were to go, each in a different direction, up the rivers in search of savages who would exchange valuable furs for trumpery toys, and it was my duty to assort these goods, under the direction of my master, as a matter of course, into various lots to the end that each of the traders would have some portion of every kind.

When this had been done, and I was kept at the task during the greater part of two days, each assortment was packed into a chest like unto the one we had taken ashore when the island was purchased of the savages.

To Hans and Kryn was given the duty of putting these goods into the boats; packing up food for the many crews, and doing the heavy work generally, which was not to the liking of the sour-faced servant, who would have been better pleased could he have remained snug in the great cabin, as did I.

STRANGE KIND OF CRAFT

Five traders at length set out, each in a boat with four Dutch sailors, and one of the brown men to show him the way, and before the last had departed I saw a craft, made by the savages, which

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was by no means as light and fanciful as were the canoes of the birch-tree bark.

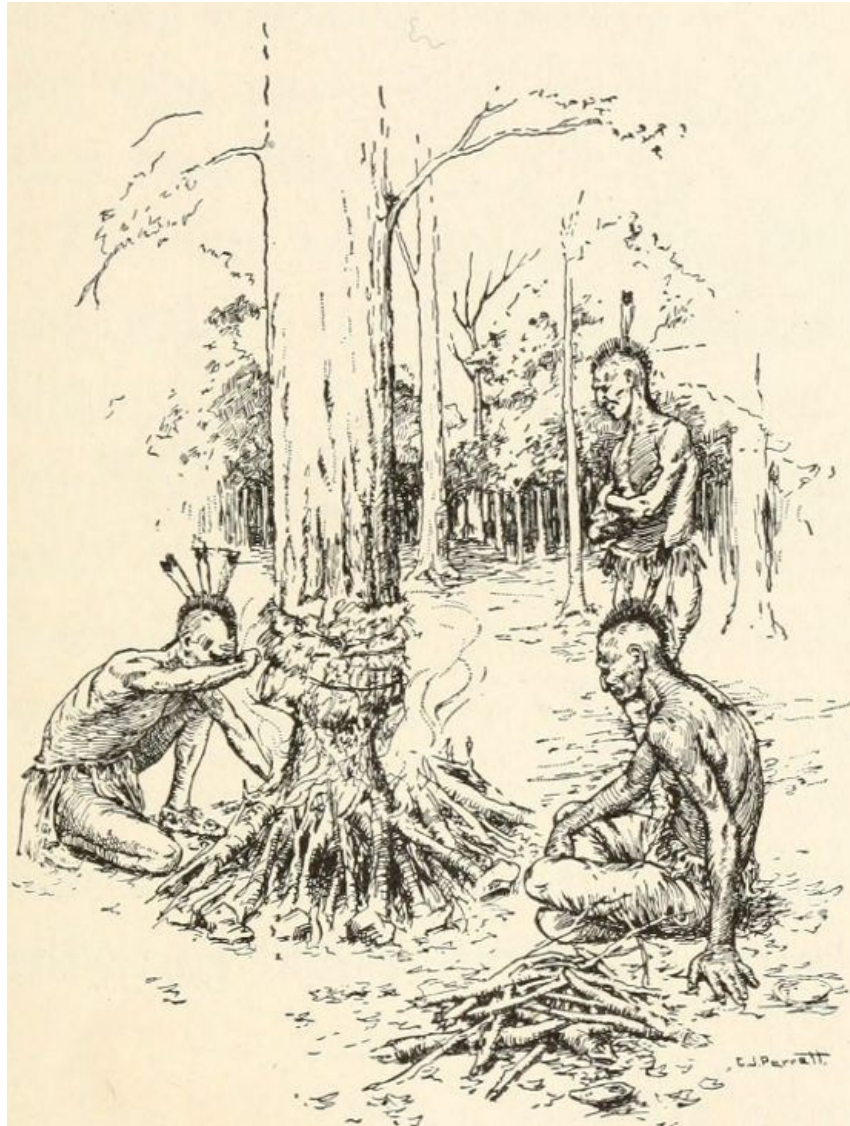
The boat had been fashioned out of a huge log, and although there seemed to be great danger she would upset if the cargo were suddenly shifted to one side, she was of sufficient size to carry a dozen men with twice as much of goods as we put on board of her.

I was puzzled to know how these brown men, who had not tools of iron, could build such a vessel, which would have cost the labor of two Dutchmen, with every convenience for working, during at least ten days. Later, however, when I had more time for roaming around on the shore, I learned in what manner the task had been performed, and then was I filled with wonder because of the patience and skill of these savages who were so childish as to be pleased with toys.

When a wooden boat, or "dugout," such as I have just spoken of was to be built, the brown men spent much time searching for a tree of the proper kind and size, and, having found it, set about cutting with both fire and sharpened shells.

A fire was built entirely around the tree, but the flames were prevented from rising very high by being deadened with wet moss or leaves, thus causing them to eat directly into the trunk. When the surface of the wood had been charred to a certain extent, the Indians scraped it away with their knives of shell, and this they continued to do, burning and scraping until finally the huge tree would fall to the ground.

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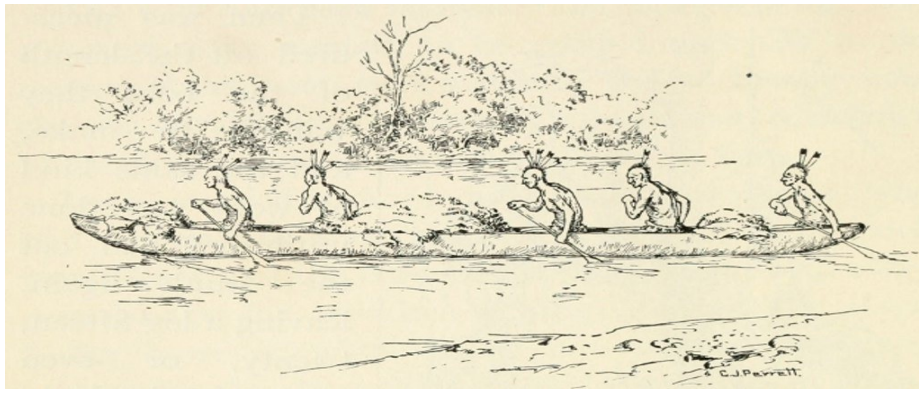


Then was measured off the length of the boat they wanted to make, and the same kind of work was done until they had cut the trunk again, leaving a log fifteen, twenty, or even twenty-five feet long, as the builders desired. Next this log was hollowed out by fire and scraping, until only the shell of the tree was left, so you can have some idea of the amount of work that was done by such rude methods.

The ends were fashioned much after the shape of the canoes, save that neither the stern nor the bow rose above the midship portion; thwarts, or seats, were fitted in as neatly as one of our workmen could do it with the proper tools, and when finished, the craft would carry quite as large a cargo as one of our longboats.

Our Dutch seamen looked upon these boats with wonder, questioning if they would not be swamped in a heavy sea; but those of our people who lived here nearly a year, declared that these dug-outs would swim where many a better built craft would go to the bottom.

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BUILDING A FORT

Within an hour after the last of the traders had set off, Master Minuit had his workmen busy on a fort, to be built an hundred yards or more from the place where we first landed.

Although these brown men appeared so very friendly, it was not in his mind to give them any chance to work mischief, and, therefore, some place where our people could defend themselves against an enemy, was needed.

All the Dutchmen who had been hewing timber were called upon to take part in the work, and it went on with amazing rapidity, for Master Minuit was not one who gave those in his employ much chance to suck their fingers. [Pg 53]

The fort was made in the form of a triangle, with bastions, or projections, at each corner, so that while within them the defenders could have a view of each side-wall. Around the entire building, say at a distance of twenty feet, was a palisade, or fence, of cedar logs planted upright in the earth, and fastened together with heavy timbers at the top.

A more solid fortification of wood I have never yet seen, nor have I known of a like defence to have been made in so short a time.

IN CHARGE OF THE GOODS

Before the fort was finished, two of the gentlemen traders came back, their chests emptied of beads, cloth, and trinkets, but the boats piled high with furs of all kinds, and I heard Master Minuit say that one such cargo was worth more than all the grain that could be raised in two years, by all the white men on the island.

The log house was taken for a storeroom, and Hans set at work making a list of the furs, which was anything rather than a pleasant task, for these skins were none of the sweetest or most cleanly, and the Dutchman both looked and smelled very disagreeably. [Pg 54]



While Hans was sweating over the furs in the log house, I stayed in the great cabin of the *Sea Mew*, refilling the chests with goods, and before the task was finished, Master Minuit told me that I was to have charge of all the things brought for trade with the savages.

In other words, I was no longer to be body servant, but a real storekeeper, which was more of a jump in the world than I had even hoped to make for many a long year to come.

The palisade of the fort was not yet wholly done, when a dozen or more of the men were set about building inside the fortification a log house, where the goods were to be kept and where I was to find lodgings.

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Kryn Gildersleeve, like the honest lad he was, gave me joy because of my thus having become, as it were, a real member of the Company; but Hans was angry, believing if any of the servants were to be promoted, it should have been himself, and I am told that he declared I would not long be allowed to enjoy my high station.

By the time the palisade had been built my house was finished, and all the goods brought from the *Sea Mew*, which gave me much of work to do, because my orders were to unpack and store the different articles where I could bring them out at a moment's notice.

You must not understand that Master Minuit had entrusted to me the trading. That portion of the work was for himself and the gentlemen who had come with him; but I was in charge of the goods, as Hans was keeper of the furs, while Kryn alone waited upon the master as body servant.

When any of the savages came in from the village close by, or from far away, to bargain for our toys, one of the gentlemen looked after him, and I brought this thing or carried that according to orders, for the Indians were not allowed to come inside the log house lest they might make mischief. After the trading was at an end, Hans would be summoned to carry away the furs.

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If none of the other gentlemen were near at hand, it was my duty to summon Master Minuit, when any of the brown men came to the fort with such a burden that I could understand he was eager to buy of our goods.

THE VALUE OF WAMPUM

Because of thus being employed, I very soon saw that which served the savages as money, and queer stuff it was, being neither more nor less than bits of shell.

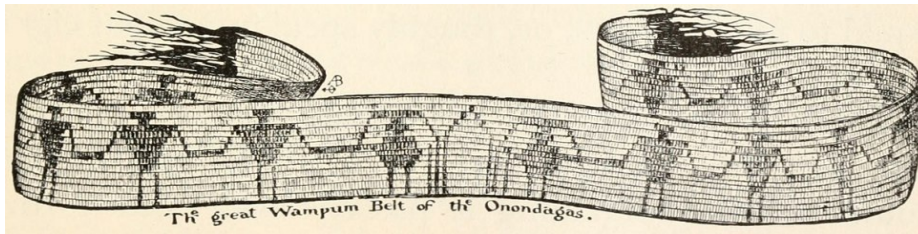
The brown men called the stuff wampum, and because of having such poor tools it must be an enormous amount of work to make it. As nearly as I could learn, there were certain big shells which washed up on the shores here after a storm, and only some part of the inside of these, and a portion of the mussel shells, were used.

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From the big shells they made a smooth white bead, grinding the shell down against a rock until it was perfectly smooth, and then boring a hole through it. The beads of wampum made from the mussel shells were in shape much like a straw, and less than half an inch in length.

These beads the Indians strung on the dried sinews of wild animals, from a half a yard to four feet in length, when, as I have already told you, they were used as money.

But wampum is even more than that among the savages. When these strings are fastened to the width of five or six inches into a belt, they are given to messengers to take to another tribe, much as kings of old used to give their seal rings as a sort of letter of recommendation.



The wampum belts were sent in token of peace after a war, or as a present from one ruler to another, and, as can be seen, this wampum was even of more value to the savages than gold is to white men.

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One would think that when they got our beads in exchange for their furs, they would have strung them with those which had been cut from shells, and yet they did nothing of the kind, for in their eyes one of those tiny, white balls, which had a hole through the middle, was of more value than a cupful of Master Minuit's best.

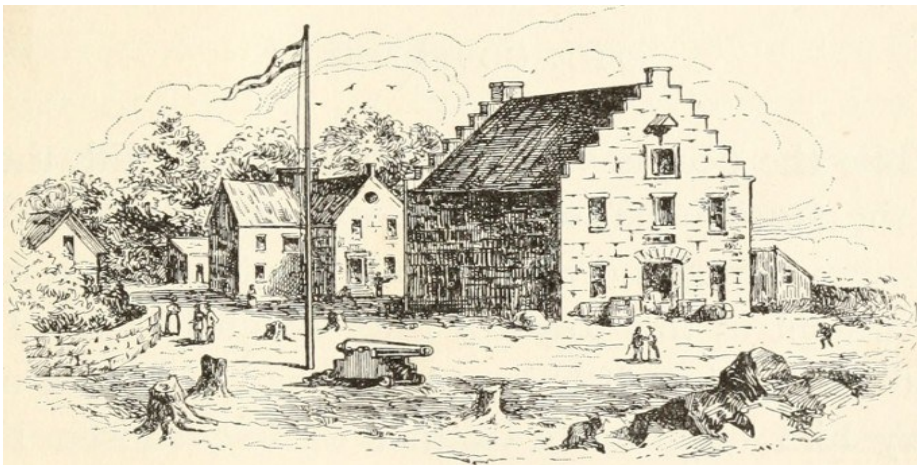
I do not know how it was figured out; but you must know that in Holland they have a coin called a stuyver, which is worth in English money near to two pennies. Our people here allowed, in trading with the Indians, that four beads of wampum were equal to one stuyver, or two pennies, and a single strand six feet long, was equal to four guilders, or, roughly speaking, about eight shillings.

There is no need for me to say that our people did not buy wampum of the Indians; but in the course of the bargaining it passed back and forth, because of being the only coins the brown men had, and therefore I suppose it was, that Master Minuit believed it necessary to put some fixed price upon it.

BUILDINGS OF STONE

After the fort and the storehouse had been finished, the Dutch laborers were set about cutting out stone from the ledges of which I have spoken, to be used in the place of bricks. From this rock Master Minuit decided that a more secure warehouse for the company's goods should be made, and, also, a dozen or more of the men were set about building a mill to be worked by horse-power, so that it might be possible to grind the grain.

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This horse-mill also was to be built of stone, with a large loft that would be used as a church.

There had been no ministers brought over when we came in the *Sea Mew*; but in place of them were two *zeikentroosters*, which is a Dutch word for "Consolers of the Sick;" but what they might be called in plain English I know not. It appeared to me that the *zeikentroosters* in Holland were much the same as deacons in England, though as to this I may be wrong.

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At all events, there were two of them came in our ship, and, until the first minister arrived, they held regular meetings out of doors while the mill was being built, and afterward in the loft.

THE GOVERNMENT

While the people were working on the mill, the fort, and the storehouse, or at the quarry, Master Minuit, busy man though he was, found time to set up a regular government in this town of huts which he called New Amsterdam, himself being at the head of it with no one to say him nay, and a Council of five chosen by the West India Company from among the white people.

There was also a secretary for this Council, and a Dutch official, which in Holland is called *schout-fiscal*, which means about all of the offices that could be held in an ordinary village, for he

was sheriff, constable, collector of customs, tithing-man, and almost anything else you chose to call him.

The secretary and the schout-fiscal were also appointed by the Company in Amsterdam, and every act of the Council, as well as the rules and regulations laid down by Master Minuit, were all to be approved by the gentlemen in Holland before our people would be bound by them. Thus it can be seen that while one might suppose the citizens of New Amsterdam made their own laws, it was in fact the West India Company which had full direction of affairs.

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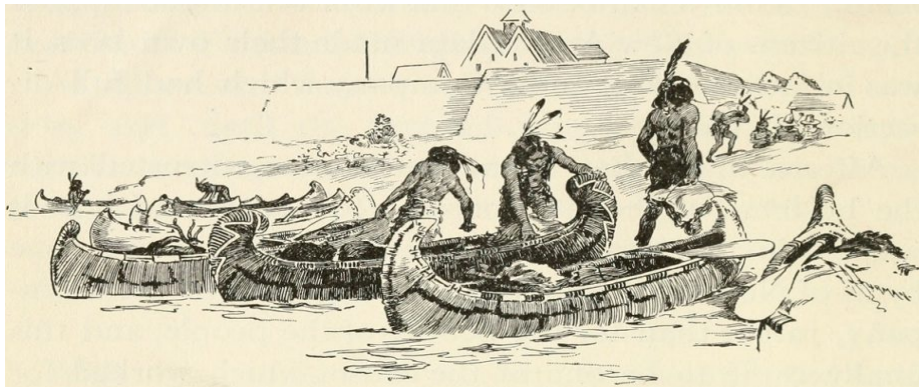
After a time, when I had been so far entrusted with the business of the settlement as to understand how it was conducted, I came to realize that all which was done by us of New Amsterdam was for the profit of the Company, rather than for the benefit of the people, and this finally came to be one of the causes which worked for the downfall of Dutch power in the New World.

A PROSPEROUS TOWN

Before I had been many days in charge of the Company's goods we began to drive a flourishing trade, for all those gentlemen who had set off with trinkets to buy furs, urged the brown men to go down to New Amsterdam and see what the white people were doing on the island they had bought at so generous a price.

And you can well fancy that these Indians were not slow in accepting the invitation. It must have been to them much like visiting a museum, or a menagerie, to come into our town and see another race of people working in a manner entirely different from their methods, and using tools which afforded a great saving of labor, the like of which they had never heard about.

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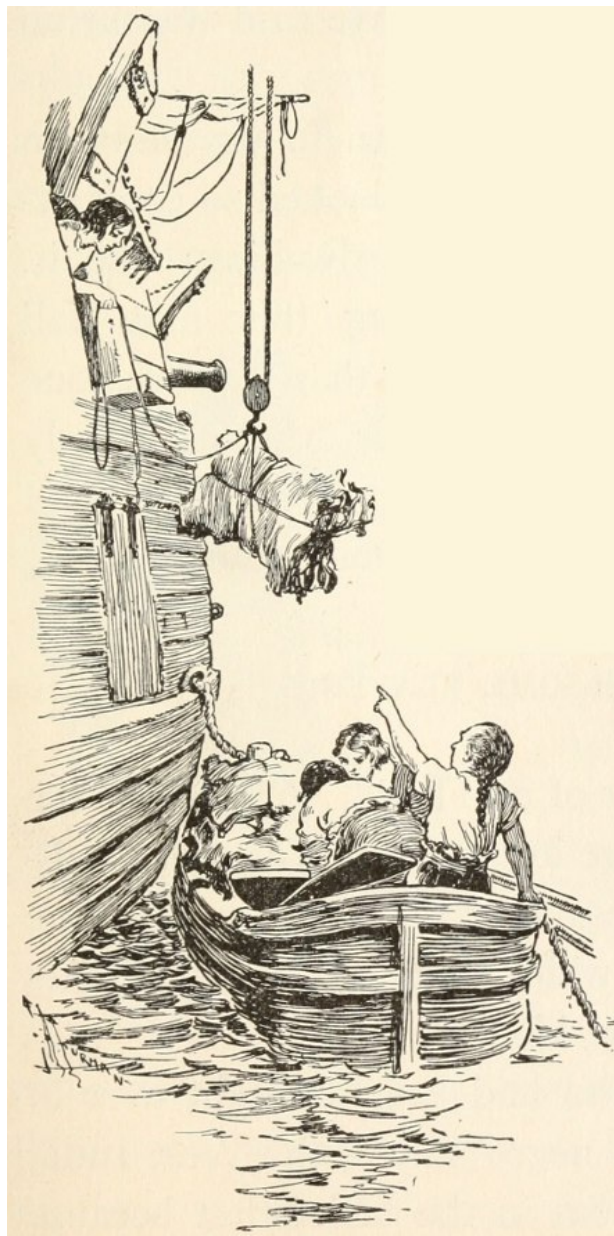
Before two weeks were passed, there was never a day that from three to twenty canoes were not hauled up on the shore of the point, and these brown people were gathered around the fort, many naked, excepting for queer breeches and belt; others wearing a kind of cloak made of furs, and now and then one who had a mantle of some sort of feather work, but all burdened with bales of furs, deer meat, wild turkeys, ducks or anything which it seemed to them likely would be bought by these Dutch traders, who had of toys such a store.

I was kept busy from morning until night, trotting in and out of the house with this article or that, as whosoever was conducting the business commanded, and I dare venture to say that Hans was having a sorry time indeed, for the weather had grown warm, and his quarters in the log hut, with those ill-smelling pelts, must have been anything rather than pleasant.

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The first event of great importance to us of New Amsterdam, was the loading of a ship to be sent home, and I am minded to tell you exactly how the cargo was made up, so that you may see whether the West India Company's servants had idled away any of their time.

There were 7,246 beaver skins, 1,781-1/2 otter skins, 675 poorer otter skins, 48 mink skins, 33 poorer mink skins, 36 wild cat skins, and 34 rat skins. The rest of the lading was made up of oak and hickory timber, while the whole of it was valued by Master Minuit at 45,000 guilders, and it is for you to find out how much that would be in the money of your own country.



Before this ship sailed we had gathered our first harvest, which was made up of wheat, rye, barley, oats, buckwheat, beans and flax, and in such quantity that, unless there should be large additions to our numbers, we had need to feel no anxiety regarding the winter's store of food.

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I am telling you this that you may understand how industrious our Dutchmen were, to raise so much on land that at first sight one would have said was in no way suited for planting.

Now it was that our people began to use stone in the building of houses, and the first looked so comfortable that others were eager to have dwellings like it. The consequence was, that during this first fall after our arrival, there were no less than twelve stone dwellings in progress, while Master Minuit already had such a home as was a credit to any town which had been no longer begun than New Amsterdam.

QUARRELSOME SLAVES

It was during this year of our Lord, 1626, when the venture of making a village in the New World was well-nigh shown to be a success, that the first serious crime was committed, and one which cost, before many years had passed, much of white blood.

Among the laborers who had been brought over in the *Sea Mew* were nine negro slaves, the West India Company having sent them in the belief that because of their skins' being black they might do much toward gaining favor with the brown men.

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In Holland these fellows had shown themselves to be fairly good servants, although not greatly given to industry; but no sooner were they landed in the New World than they became indolent and ill-tempered, seeming to believe that because of this country's being inhabited by people whose skins were dark, they were entitled to a full share of everything, with no longer the need to look upon any man as master.



The result of it all was that the negroes became troublesome, ready to quarrel with any man who crossed their path, and unwilling to do so much of labor as would have provided them with food to eat.

They swaggered here and there around the village, taking good care, however, not to cross Master Minuit's path, else would he have pulled them up with a round turn. At night, when the head men of the village were in their dwellings, these black fellows did not hesitate to quarrel with, or even illtreat, the hard working Dutchmen who had never a harsh word for any one. [Pg 66]

Now I have heard it said later that Master Minuit was at fault because of his not giving to those negroes, when they first showed signs of being unruly, such a punishment as would never have been forgotten; but it must be borne in mind that my master was an exceeding busy man, having the care of everything whatsoever on his shoulders, from the cutting of stone to the dealings with the West India Company.

Then again, there is a question in my mind as to whether he knew how overbearing they were growing, for our people, realizing that his cares were many, suffered much in the way of small injuries rather than complain to him.

However this may be, I shall always hold that the behavior of these negroes was no affair of Master Minuit. Until some of the people had called his attention to it, matters went on as they began, with the black men growing more and more unruly.

A BRUTAL MURDER

Finally, a certain Indian, having with him a small boy, came down to trade twenty-two beaver skins for red cloth. Because of none of the gentlemen traders being near at hand when he arrived, I was forced to ask him to wait until nearly nightfall, and by the time he had finished his bargaining, darkness was come. [Pg 67]

Now it was usual for these brown men, who lived at a distance, to shelter themselves for the night nearabout New Amsterdam in the dwellings of the Manhattan Indians; therefore no one gave heed to the fact that these two visitors went out from the fort at quite a late hour in the evening.

Exactly what happened, no one, excepting those concerned directly in it, could say; but certain it is that between the fort and the settlement of the Manhattan Indians, within an hour from the time I saw them last, this Indian and the boy were set upon by four negroes, who beat the man so brutally while robbing him of the goods he had just purchased, that he died before mid-night.

The boy escaped, as we learned later, so terrified that he dared not even trust himself among the Manhattan Indians, but hid in a swamp during a certain time, after which he rejoined his people.

The negroes were brought before the council; but only one was proven guilty, owing to lack of evidence, and this fellow was hanged off-hand, while the others, although declared innocent of the murder, were soundly flogged as a warning to others of their kind. [Pg 68]

Not until several years had passed, did the Dutchmen hear further concerning this most brutal murder, and then it was that the boy, whose father, or uncle, had been killed, aroused the people of his tribe to wreak vengeance upon the white men, thus aiding and bringing about a most terrible Indian war, although we of New Amsterdam did not suffer through it as did others who, coming to this New World years afterward, were wholly innocent of doing any wrong to the brown men.

However, save that the trouble which resulted in much bloodshed, began there, the war has but little to do with New Amsterdam, and I shall say no more regarding it at present.

THE VILLAGE CALLED PLYMOUTH

I had thought that, having been given the office of storekeeper, I was like to remain all my days in the town, without having the privilege of going even on a trading ship, and yet matters so came about that I became a great traveler, so far as seeing the New World was concerned.

Shortly after we were come to New Netherland, Master Minuit heard from the savages that at a place called Plymouth, many miles from us, a company of Englishmen had made for themselves a village which was fair to look upon, and growing exceeding fast.

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Now you may suppose that I had not been dumb during this time, when I was showing goods to the savages while our gentlemen made the bargains, but so I must have been had I not learned a word now and then of their speech, until, by using many signs in addition, I could carry on quite a conversation with such of the brown men as would stoop to make talk to a boy.



Therefore it was I understood Indian words far better than I could speak them, and when these stories were told concerning a company of English people at this new village of Plymouth, my heart went out to them, for was I not an English boy, and these my countrymen?

I had known, of course, that those of my race who once lived in Leyden, came to this New World; but that we might be anywhere near them never entered my head, until the savages told us of Plymouth, and then I said to myself that there could be no greater pleasure than to see these people who had been friendly with my father and mother.

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I GO ON A VOYAGE

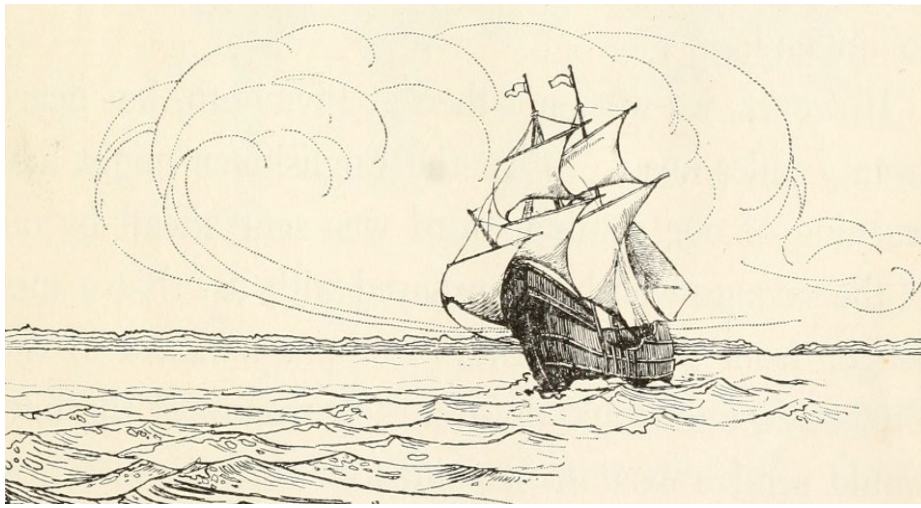
I also knew, because of hearing him speak of it to some of the gentlemen traders in my presence, that Master Minuit had sent a letter to the governor of Plymouth by one of the Indians, and a reply had come back; but more than that I heard nothing until the Secretary told me, one certain morning, that I was to make a sea voyage with him.

It was a direct command from Master Minuit, and I made ready without asking to what land we should go, because it was for me to obey, not to question; but I had a great hope that Hans Braun might not be put into the storehouse in my place, fearing lest he would not willingly give up the position, after learning how much more pleasing it was to handle the toys than the ill-smelling furs.

"We are to journey as far as Plymouth, where is a village in which English people live," the Secretary, whose name was that of a Frenchman and bothered my tongue, said to me when I went on board the pinnace *Nassau*, which had been made ready for the voyage.

One might have knocked me down with a breath, so astounded and overjoyed was I at the possibility of seeing my father's friends, and it was a full five minutes before I could set down an account of the goods that were being brought on board, for Master Minuit counted on sending a present to the governor of Plymouth, of no less value than a chest of sugar, near to an hundred strings of wampum, and three rolls of best cloth, each of a different color.

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If it had been in my power to provide the wind for the voyage, it could not have been more favorable, and the *Nassau* sent up a jet of spray from her bow, as we sailed down the river on the eastern side of New Amsterdam till we were come to what is called Long Island Sound, which is a vast inland sea.

Then we crossed the bay which is called Narragansett, because of the Indians of that tribe living along the shores, and afterward were come to a trading post belonging to the people of Plymouth. [Pg 72]

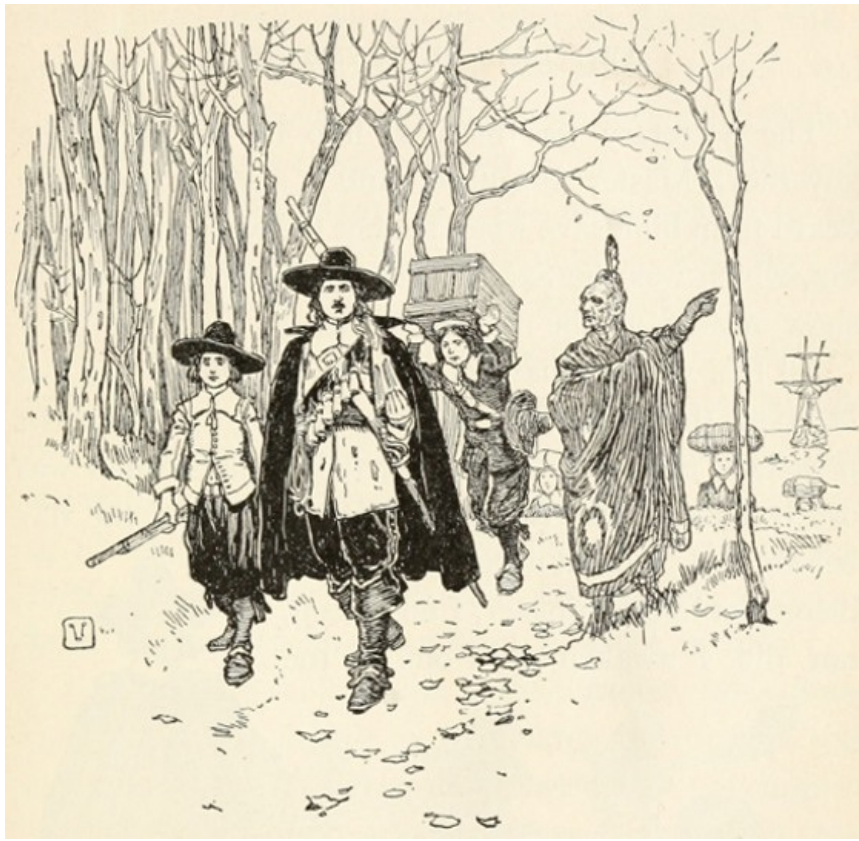
A LUKEWARM WELCOME

It was as if my heart came into my mouth when I saw these English people, and I made no doubt they would welcome me warmly on knowing that my father was of the same religious faith; but they gave little heed to my words, and because of being received so coldly, I felt shame that I had rejoiced when the Secretary told me where our voyage was to come to an end.

However, we were not then at Plymouth, but nearly twenty miles away. That the Englishmen might have warning of our coming, word was sent ahead by one of the savages who had journeyed with us, that a messenger from the West India Company wished to visit Plymouth, and would do so if the governor of the town would send a boat to a point four or five miles from where we then were.

All this was done as the Secretary wished, and we walked across a neck of land, some of the people from the trading post carrying the chests of gifts, until coming to where a boat was in waiting.

Before another night had come we were in Plymouth; but it was to me as if I had met entire strangers, for none gave me the hearty welcome I had been hungering for, although my story was not doubted. I suppose there were too many like me in this wide world, and those who were battling against the wilderness and the savages, as were these people, could give but little heed to a lad who had no standing among men. [Pg 73]



I was lodged in the fort, where were women who did by me as best they might; but my heart was sore because of disappointment.

TWO DAYS IN PLYMOUTH

The Secretary was received into the house of the governor, Master Bradford, and I neither saw nor heard from him, save when he sent me word next morning, which was the Sabbath, that he expected I would show myself at the meeting-house. [Pg 74]



All this would I have done even though he had not been so thoughtful, for I was burning to hear the preachers my father had known: but the sermon was overly long; I was tired from the journey of the day before, and, without meaning so much disrespect to the minister, I fell asleep, nor did I awaken until one of the tithing-men struck me a sharp blow on the head with a long pole, at the end of which was affixed a wolf's tail. [Pg 75]

It can well be supposed that from then on I sat bolt upright, my face crimsoned with shame, and after such moment I had no desire to make myself known to any who had met my father and mother, lest they reproach me for the crime I had committed.

We stayed in Plymouth the first two days of the week, and I had good opportunity to see the town; but did not fall in love with it. Although the people had been living there more than seven years, save for the manner in which the houses were built, they were not so comfortably settled as we of New Amsterdam, who had been in America no more than fourteen months.

I had a good look at that valiant soldier, Miles Standish, who had fought in the Dutch army, as I well knew, and was much pleased with his appearance, though I made no effort to have speech with him because of what I had done in the church.

It was Wednesday morning when we set out on our return, and I must confess that I was happy, rather than sad, at turning my back upon the English to meet the Dutch, for while we have less of preaching in New Amsterdam, there is more of friendliness shown to strangers, or, so it seemed to me whose heart was sore.

Neither Hans nor Kryn had been called upon to take my place in the storehouse, and within ten minutes after the *Nassau* had come to anchor off the fort, I was at work showing goods to the savages, as if I had seen no more of this New World than those who labored with me.

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By this time our church was set in order, being, as I have said, in the loft of the horse-mill, and you may be certain I did not allow my eyes to close in slumber when I went to hear the zeikentroosters explain the holy words next Sabbath day. We had no such pulpit as they at Plymouth, but our benches were fairly comfortable to sit on, and Master Minuit's chair had in it a red cushion that made a braver show than anything I saw among the English.

FORGING AHEAD

Now, as the days went on, our town of New Amsterdam grew amazingly fast. It was soon learned that there was good farming land along the eastern side above the swamps, and within two years no less than six farms, boweries,—the Dutchmen call them,—were laid out with good promise of bountiful crops.

The fort had been rebuilt of good stone, in the same shape as when first made, and the storehouse for the trading goods had been finished as Master Minuit promised. In addition to what we bartered with the Indians, stores of all kinds that could be brought from Holland were put on sale for the benefit of the laborers, and, because of my not being able to do all the work, Kryn Gildersleeve was sent to me as an apprentice.

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If that was not a rise in the world, then I do not know what it may be called, and for it all I have to thank Master Minuit, who ever dealt by the orphan lad as if he had been the son of a director

in the West India Company.

It was no longer necessary for us to heap up stones to serve as chimneys, for the laborers were making good bricks. To get lime we burned the shells of oysters, of which there are in this land so many that all the world may feed upon them till the youngest man has grown gray-headed, without lessening the supply.

Ships were coming to us from Holland nearly every month to take away the furs that had been bought, and the timber cut from the forests. Of building stone we had all that could be used, no matter how many other people might make their homes in New Amsterdam.

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Truly it was wonderful how soon we made of that wilderness a country that kings might covet, which indeed they did, as I came to know before I was at an end of my service with the West India Company.

If I give so much time to telling you of what we did in New Amsterdam when Master Minit was at the head of the government, you will not be inclined to listen when I speak of what the other governors, sent by the West India Company, accomplished for the good or ill of the country.

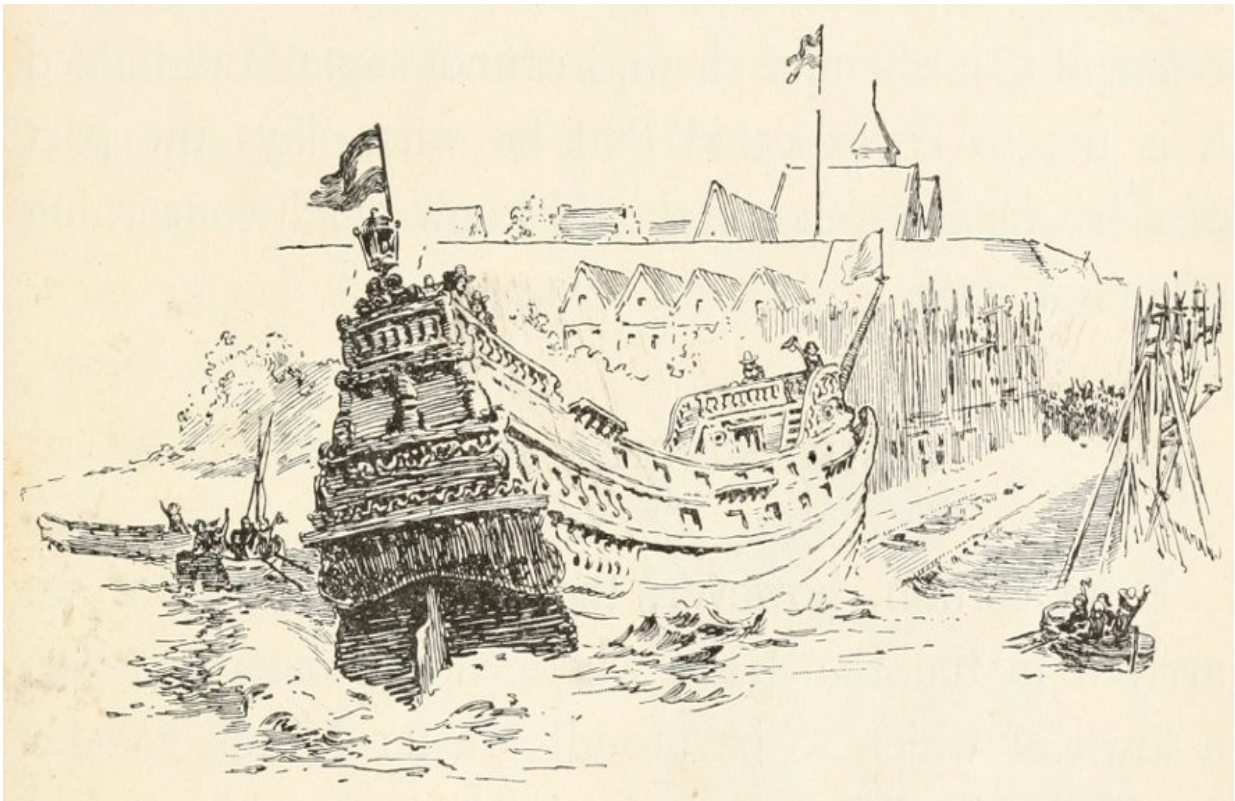
THE BIG SHIP

Therefore it is, that instead of pleasing myself by telling of all my master did, I will come directly to that time when he left us. According to my belief, the West India Company could not have found in all the world any other man who would have served so faithfully, both the people and the Company, as did Master Minit.

The last thing of moment which Director Minit did, was to have built, so that the merchants of Holland might see what we of New Netherland could do, one of the finest ships, so I have heard it said, that was ever put together. She was called the *New Netherland*. She measured eight hundred tons, and carried thirty guns.

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At the time she was launched, I said to myself that never in this world would be found men who could build a larger or more beautiful ship than this, and yet I made a mistake in saying so, as I have made many others during my life.



I would I might tell you of the merrymaking and the feasting when the New Netherland was sent from the land into the water. I wish it might be possible to describe the astonishment of the savages as they saw this huge vessel being built up timber by timber, until she was fit to encounter the tempests, and the waves, and the manifold dangers of the sea.

But I have said that in order to tell of what other things were done in New Amsterdam I must make of what should be a long story, a short one.

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Now, whether it was the building of this wonderful ship that displeased the directors of the West India Company, or other matters of Master Minit's government that offended them, I cannot say. And indeed it is not to be expected that he who plays the part of clerk in a storehouse should know much concerning affairs of state.

MASTER MINUIT'S SUCCESSOR

I am certain, however, that in six years after we arrived in the Sea Mew, when New Amsterdam was a town of which to be proud, Master Minuit set out for Holland, taking with him in the same ship no less than five thousand beaver skins.

When Master Minuit left us, it was our belief that he would soon come back; but there must have been in his mind some doubt regarding it, for he gave me much farewell advice on the night before the ship sailed, declaring, that so far as anything he might do, I should be advanced in the West India Company's employ as rapidly as was best.

It must be that my master seriously offended the Council of the Company, for I went in their employ no further on the road to fortune, or to fame, than where he left me.

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During the year the affairs of New Amsterdam were looked after by the Council of the town, and then came a new Director by the name of Wouter Van Twiller. Of him I can tell you very little, for, unlike Master Minuit, he showed no interest in the welfare of those who were serving him.

A short, fat man, who was overly fond of good dinners, and if I, who am nothing but a clerk in the employ of the Company, may say it, with not of brains enough to look after the concerns of such a town as New Amsterdam was becoming, yet withal he accomplished somewhat toward making this place beautiful.



As I have said before, my duties kept me in the storehouse, and so rapidly had the trade with the Indians increased, that instead of having only Kryn Gildersleeve to help me, there were now five men under my charge, while I myself was doing much of the bargaining with the Indians. Therefore it is that I know but little concerning what this new Director did or did not do.

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It was told in New Amsterdam that he had been no more than a clerk in the employ of the West India Company in Holland; but he knew somewhat regarding trading, for we set up posts here and there in such number that all the gentlemen traders who had come over with Master Minuit were needed to look after them, which accounts for my being allowed to conduct the business affairs in the fort.

TROUBLE WITH THE ENGLISH

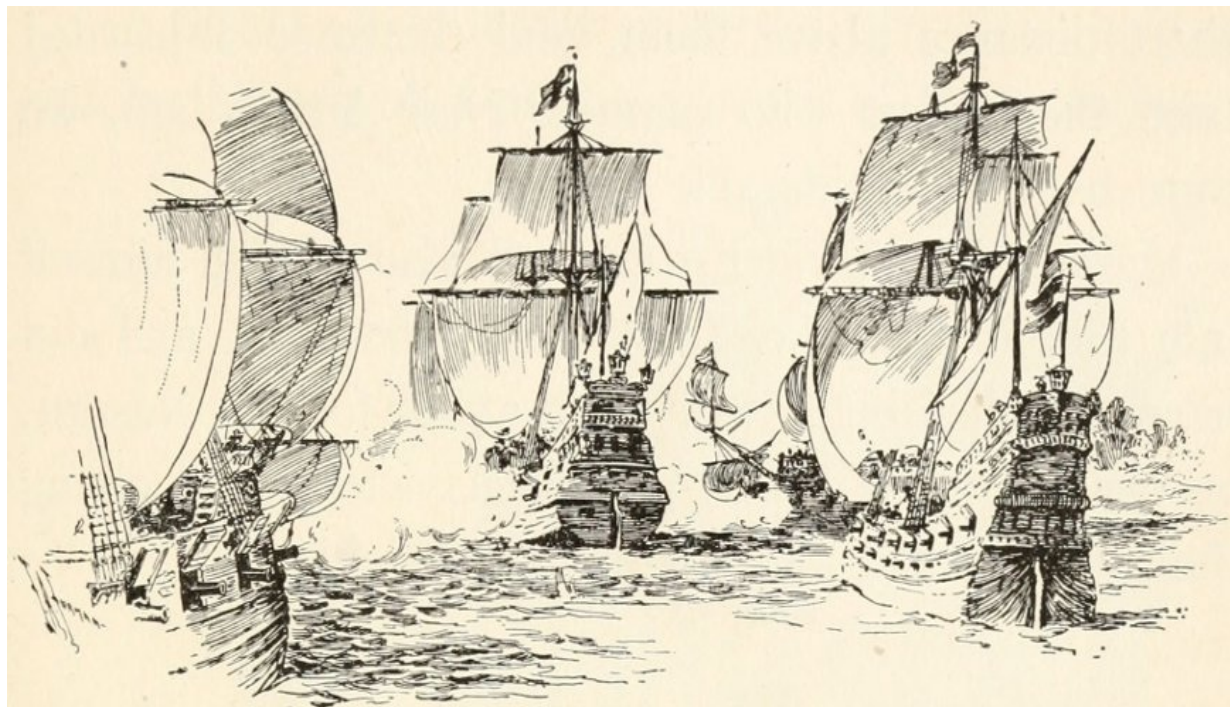
I do know this, however, that an English vessel came to anchor one certain day off the town, and her captain said it was his purpose to go up the river to one of our posts called Port Orange,

there to trade with the Indians on his own account.

Master Van Twiller forbade his doing so; but after remaining five days, the English captain sailed up the river, and then it was that our new Director, calling together all the men in the town, armed three vessels and drove the English out of the river.

I also know that he brought trouble to himself and to the West India Company, by doing that which the English people in Plymouth claimed he had no right to do, and it was much like this:

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Our Dutchman, Adrian Block, had sailed up a river to the east of us, which he called the Fresh River, and Master Minuit had traded there with the savages to the extent of near ten thousand beaver skins, besides other furs, each year.

Now it seems the English of Plymouth claimed that this land had been given them by King James, and so notified Master Van Twiller; but he sent his secretary with a lot of toys, and bought from the savages that piece of land called Connittecock, building thereon a trading post, in which we mounted two cannon, and called it the House of Good Hope.

Because of this the English of Boston, together with those in Plymouth, set about driving the Dutch away from Fresh River by building another post a short distance above them, and there, so I learned from the traders who came to New Amsterdam, we were having considerable trouble.

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Master Van Twiller contrived also to get himself into trouble with the English at Jamestown, and did have a pitched battle with them at our forts at Nassau, on the Delaware River, gaining a victory, but giving the Dutch a bad name with their neighbors.

MASTER VAN TWILLER DISCHARGED

This much I know, Master Van Twiller did much that was unwise; but out of the harm he accomplished considerable of good, so far as concerned New Amsterdam.

He strengthened and beautified the fort, building within its limits a goodly house of brick where he himself might live. He also laid out a farm on the East River equal to any in Holland. On this he put up a barn, a brewery, a boathouse, and a good stable, together with two mills, and dwellings for a blacksmith, a cooper, and such soldiers as might be lodged there to protect the place.

Master Van Twiller also built us a wharf on the easterly side of the point; a church which would have been an ornament to any town, as well as a house for the minister, for by this time we had a licensed clergyman.

But with it all, so it was charged against him, he was making himself rich at the expense of the Company, for he bought of the Indians, to be held as his own property, three of the large islands nearby, as well as a farm of sixty-two acres, which lay between the fort and the swamp.

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In some way the Council of the Company in Holland heard that Master Van Twiller was working more to his own advantage than theirs, and before he had been in New Amsterdam five years, a ship called the *Blessing* came into the harbor, having on board Master Wilhelm Kieft, who had with him papers to show that he had been appointed Director of New Netherland. Master Van Twiller was ordered to return at once to Holland, and there give an account of his proceedings.

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And now, because of this same Master Kieft's having worked much harm to us in New Amsterdam, causing the Indians to rise against us, I am minded to tell you more concerning him than I have thought well to say regarding Master Van Twiller.

DIRECTOR KIEFT

First, the seamen of the *Blessing* whispered here and there stories concerning him which were not to his credit; that he had failed in business in Holland, and as a punishment his portrait had been nailed to the gallows; again, that when he was sent by the king to Turkey, having been given charge of money to be paid for the release of some Dutch people who were held in slavery there, he put it in his own pocket, allowing the poor men to wear out their lives as slaves to the Turks.

He was a small man, with a sharp nose, sharp chin, and a face generally that gave one the idea of a weasel, or of a person who is ever ready to shed blood even though he does not benefit thereby.

Perhaps I am overly severe in describing this new Director of ours, because of the trouble which we in the storehouse had with him.

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Under Master Van Twiller we had conducted the business as we thought best; but all that was changed before Director Kieft had been with us eight and forty hours, for he soon gave the people in the employ of the West India Company to understand that matters in New Amsterdam would, from then out, go according to his liking, and with no reference whatsoever to the Council, or to any other officers in the town.



And all this he did with a high air, which chafed us the more because of Master Van Twiller and Master Mynuit having ruled us with kindly hands.

He set himself up almost as a king, by discharging the members of the town Council, and by appointing all the public officers, even so important an one as the schout-fiscal. [Pg 88]

He decided, without heed to judge or jury, all cases which were brought up in court, and, in fact, took upon himself the entire government, regardless alike of Council or of the West India Company.

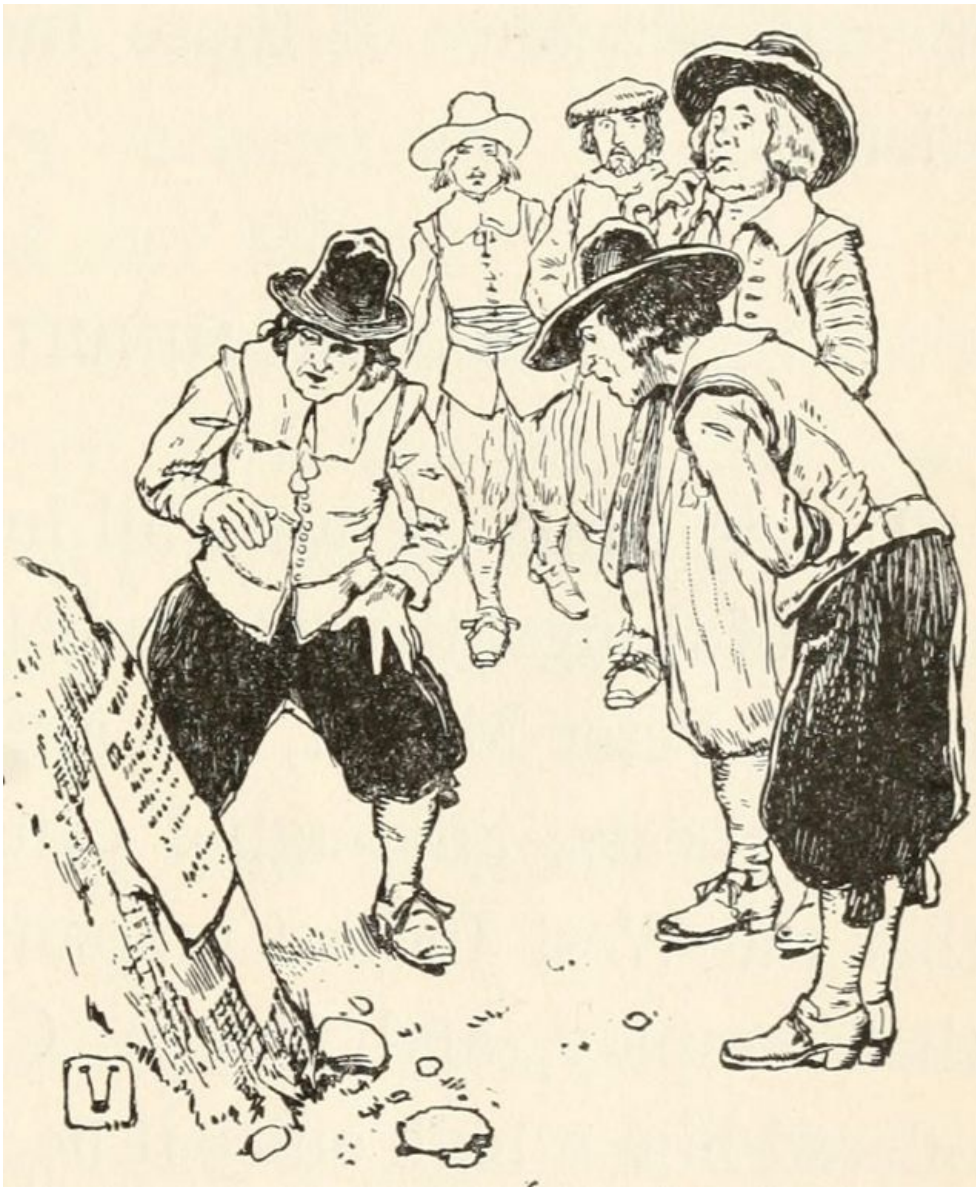
But, in justice to Master Kieft, I must say that he took heed to that which was wrong among us, for straightway he caused all our vessels to be repaired, and indeed they were in sore need of attention.

He enlarged and beautified the storehouse, of which I was in charge, and, what was more to my liking, put an end to the trading with the Indians by the people of the town, which had become, as I believed, a serious evil, for almost every man in New Amsterdam was buying furs of the savages on his own account, which was much to the loss of the West India Company, and served greatly to cheapen our goods.

UNJUST COMMANDS

It would be useless for me to try to tell you all with which our people charged Master Kieft before he had been in New Amsterdam a year. It is better I should spend my time relating what he did which cost the lives of so many white men, for to his door may be laid much of the suffering which we knew while he ruled over us, although we were in the meanwhile called upon to answer for the crime of the negroes who had killed the Indian, as I have told you. [Pg 89]

First let me say, that on a certain morning, very shortly after Master Kieft came among us, we found posted on the trunks of trees, on rocks, and on the corners of the houses, written notices, signed by the new Director, stating that whosoever traded with the Indians, save while doing so at the command of the West India Company, should suffer death; and that the Company's servants must begin work at a certain hour very shortly after daybreak, and not cease labor until sunset.



Also, among many other things, it was declared that the Indians themselves should pay a certain amount of wheat, wampum, or furs toward the support of the soldiers employed by the Company in different parts of the country.

There were many matters in these written notices that it is not necessary for me to speak about. The last was that which caused us the most trouble, for the Indians openly refused to obey any such command, and Master Kieft went so far as to hang four whom he accused of trying to persuade others of their tribe not to do as he had ordered.

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Now you can well fancy that such cruel acts served to make enemies of those Indians who had been our friends.

MASTER MINUIT'S RETURN

It was while we were all in a turmoil with this new order of things, that we had startling proof that my old master, Peter Minuit, was again in the New World.

It appears, although I cannot explain exactly why, that the West India Company had turned him out of their employ, and Queen Christina of Sweden had offered him a high office if he would build in America a town for the Swedish people, such as he had built for the Dutch.

This Master Minuit agreed upon, and at the time when, as I have said, we were in the greatest turmoil because of the savages, he came over from Sweden to the South River, not more than an hundred and thirty miles from our town of New Amsterdam, and began building a fort.

This news plunged me into a state of most painful excitement, for I burned to see the good man once more, and to beg that he take me into his service; but Master Kieft had given orders that no person be allowed to leave New Amsterdam, save with his permission. Therefore how could I, in charge of the Company's storehouse, expect to be allowed to go among those who were considered enemies to the Dutch, for speedily had our Director declared war against these Swedish people led by Master Minuit?

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Perhaps it is enough if I say that Master Kieft did not drive Master Minuit away, and that the latter continued to build up a trading post for the Swedish people until it became a stronghold in

THE REVENGE OF THE SAVAGES

While he was striving against the Swedes, word was brought Master Kieft that some hogs, which had been turned out in the forest on Staten Island, were no longer to be found there, and our sharp-nosed Director immediately made up his mind, without any proof whatsoever, that the savages who called themselves Raritans, had stolen them.

Making no inquiry into the matter, he sent out a company of soldiers who surrounded the unfortunate Indians in their village, and slaughtered them as if they had been wild beasts, killing men, women, and children, after which everything in the way of property was either destroyed or carried away.

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The embers of the Raritan village had hardly more than grown cold, when it was discovered that some of our own people had taken the hogs from Staten Island, thus showing that the terrible murders had been committed without any cause whatsoever, save Master Kieft's own suspicious, evil imaginings.



Then it was that instead of the people of New Amsterdam going out peacefully, earning money for the West India Company, as they were in duty bound to do, all were the same as shut up on Manhattan Island with enemies on every hand; for, as may be supposed, such of the Raritan Indians as remained alive sought every opportunity to gain revenge, beginning by killing four planters on a farm at Staten Island, and burning the buildings.

This caused Master Kieft to shut his eyes to his own crime, and at once every man was called upon to aid in killing the Raritans. Trade was neglected, and our Director went so far as to offer such of the Indians as remained friendly, ten long strings of wampum for the head of every Raritan Indian which should be brought to him, and twenty strings for each head of those who had been concerned in the murders on Staten Island.

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As if blood did not flow in sufficient quantity, the people of the boy who had escaped when the negro slaves murdered his father, or, as some say, his uncle, declared war against us by killing poor old Claus Schmidt, the wheelwright, who lived nearest the swamp; and we of New Amsterdam had good reason to fear that all the savages roundabout might take part, either with the Raritans, or with these new enemies, and we should be murdered at the very time when our town was becoming of importance.

Master Kieft, taking no council save with his own evil thoughts, announced that he would declare war against every brown man in the country, and there is no question in my mind but that such might have been the case to our utter destruction, had not the chief men of New Amsterdam, and among them those who had been in the Council during Master Van Twiller's reign, risen up against the Director, so far as could be done without laying themselves open to a charge of mutiny.

Our sensible men claimed, and with good reason, that war ought not to be declared because of the crops being still unharvested, and because of our having to gather in the cattle, swine, and sheep still roaming the woods. They declared also, that the farmers who had settled some distance away, had a right to be given warning in time for them to save a portion of their property.

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To this Master Kieft agreed; but only for a certain time. He took it upon himself to make preparations for war, and when winter was fully come did actually begin it, setting himself, with no more than two hundred and fifty Dutchmen, against two thousand savages who, because of our greed for furs, as shown both by the people in their private trading, and by the West India Company, were armed with the same kind of guns we were using, as well as supplied with an ample store of powder and ball.



I would not, if I could, tell you all that followed. It is too cruel a story; it has more to do with murder and death by torture, and with keenest suffering, than would be well for you to hear while we have gathered to listen to my poor tale of how the town of New Amsterdam was built, and how it grew.

It was a time when the bravest man's cheeks might well grow pale; when women and children shrieked with fear, or trembled in silent terror at the slightest unusual sound; when it was as if all the country roundabout had been stained the color of blood; when we could no longer lie down at night, or rise up in the morning, without fear; when we ceased to live the lives of peaceful, honest traders, but were become the same as hunted beasts,—and all through the evil of one man.

[Pg 95]

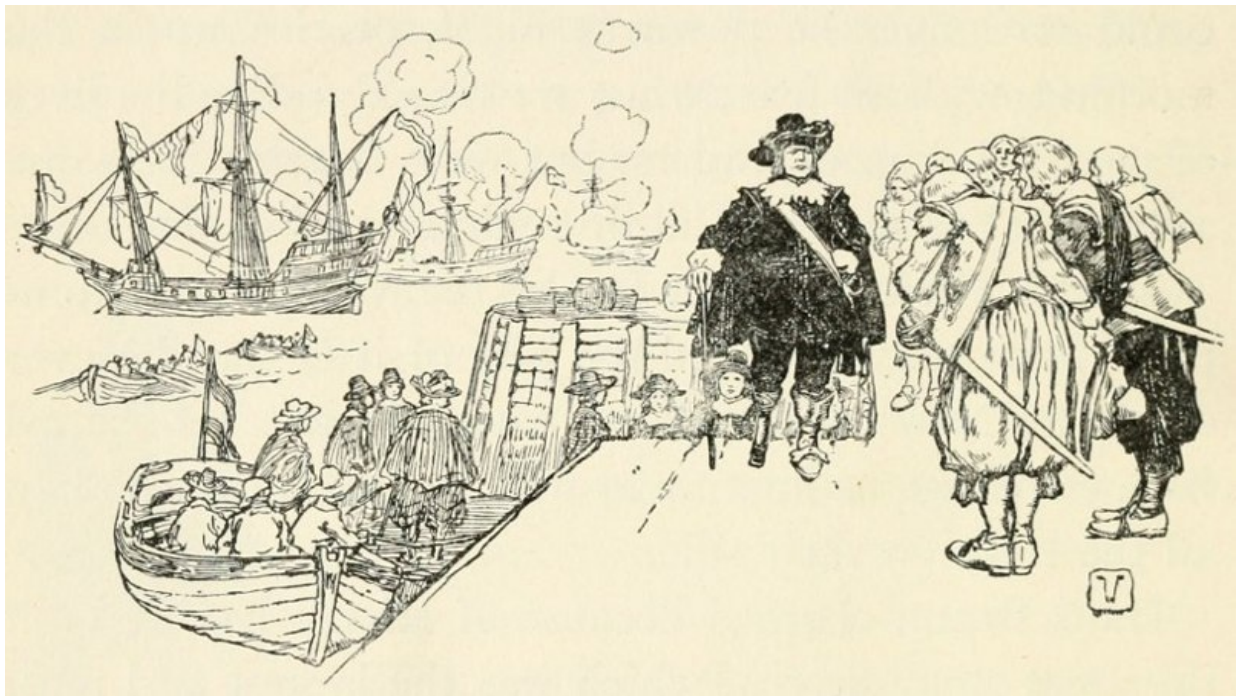
Master Kieft was sent for by the West India Company none too soon, and the pity of it is that he ever came to New Amsterdam, with his hatchet-shaped face, to plunge us into a war with the savages, who had all the right on their side.

Hans Braun claimed because of Kieft's having built the great stone tavern, which was the largest and most beautiful in all America, that he had left behind him a monument which would ever keep his memory green. But I question if any one, after Director Stuyvesant turned the building into a town hall, ever cared to remember that it had been built by Wilhelm Kieft.

On the eleventh day of May, in the year of our Lord, 1647, a fleet of four large vessels sailed into the harbor of New Amsterdam, bringing the new Director, Petrus Stuyvesant, his family, servants, soldiers, and many laborers.

[Pg 96]

A one-legged man was Master Stuyvesant, who had been a brave soldier, and, later, a governor of the island of Curaçoa, wherever it may be. That he believed he was of considerable importance in the world, could be told by his manner of moving about and of holding speech with any who was lower in station than himself.



It was as if he were too high and mighty to concern himself with what might or might not be done in the storehouse, even though through that building came the greater portion of all the money the West India Company received from the New World.

Do not understand me as saying that he gave no heed to such portion of the Company's business as was under my charge. He took note of it, but not as Master Minuit would have done, by coming daily in person to see for himself that I, and all under me, were doing full duty.

[Pg 97]

Director Stuyvesant sent the secretary, Master Van Tienhoven, to learn what was being done, and that gentleman, as if believing I was not making the best bargains for the Company, spent a goodly portion of his time in the office of the storehouse, under the pretext of allowing me to go here or there as I pleased.

While Master Kieft was in office, I had so much of labor to perform that two or three weeks, even a month on a certain time, would pass without my having been outside the building.

TIME FOR SIGHT-SEEING

When the Secretary proposed that I take some time for pleasure, claiming to do so only for my good,—although, as a matter of fact, I believe it was but his purpose to learn whether or no I had been doing my full duty by the Company,—I took advantage of the offer.

If any could do better for New Amsterdam than I, then it was time a change was made in the office of storekeeper and trader, this being my title at the time, as can be shown by the records in Holland. I had nothing to conceal, having ever done my work to the best of my ability, and Master Van Tienhoven had free permission, so far as I was concerned, to search for flaws.

[Pg 98]

I may as well say at once, that he never found anything in my conduct deserving of blame, although I did not hold my office quite so long as the West India Company did business in America.

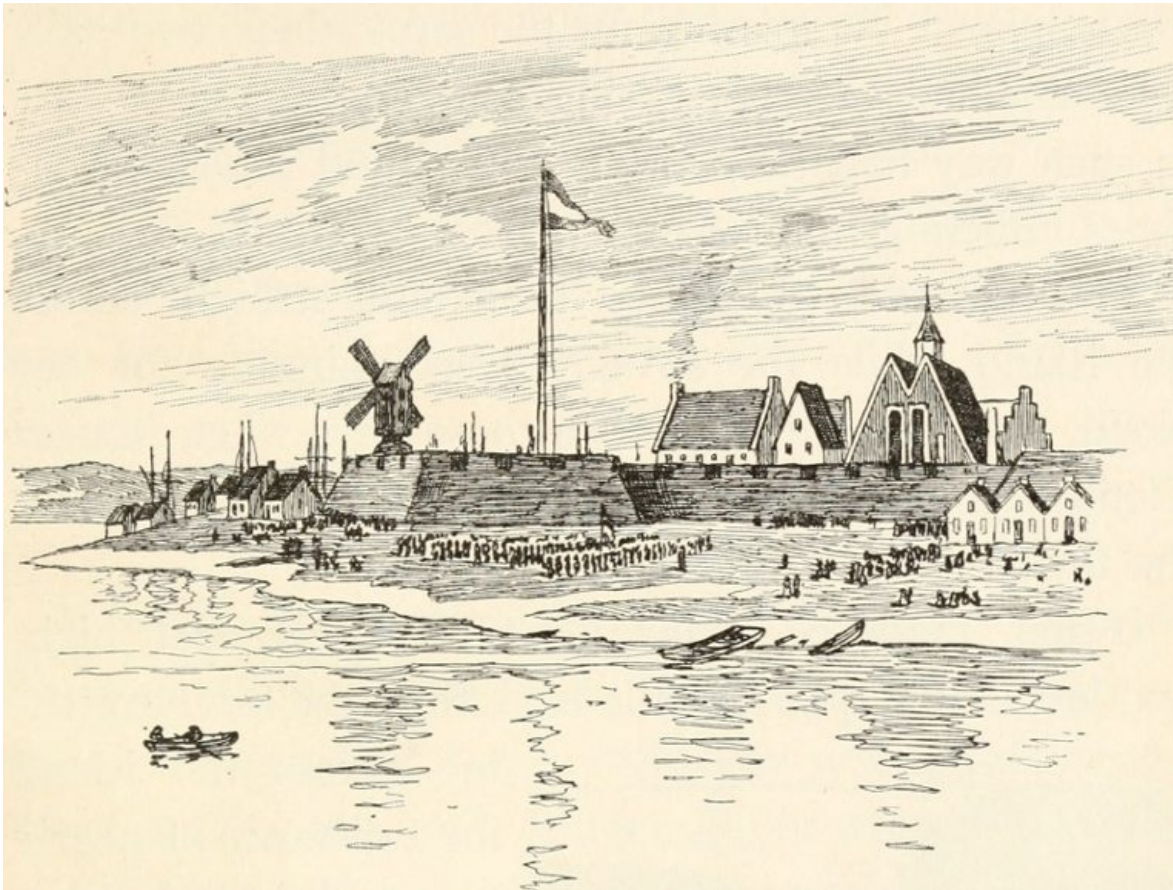
However, Master Tienhoven was so far my friend that he gave me many an opportunity of wandering about the town, which was almost strange to me, after having been kept at work in the storehouse so long.

The Indian village was no longer to be seen. When Master Kieft stirred up so much trouble with the savages, the last one of the Manhattans fled to the forest, there, most like, to join with our enemies against us, nor did we see any of them save when they came in with furs or wild fowl for barter.

Where the village of the Manhattans had stood were gardens and houses, many built of stone in the Dutch style, and in front of the fort, from the lower bastion to the water's edge, was the green, or the common, where the soldiers paraded on feast days that people might admire them.

Inside the fort, and not far from my storehouse, was the church of stone built by Master Kieft, the jail, the dwelling of the Director, concerning which I have already told you, and low stone barracks, or quarters for the soldiers, while on the northernmost bastion was a wind-mill, made after the fashion of those in Holland.

[Pg 99]



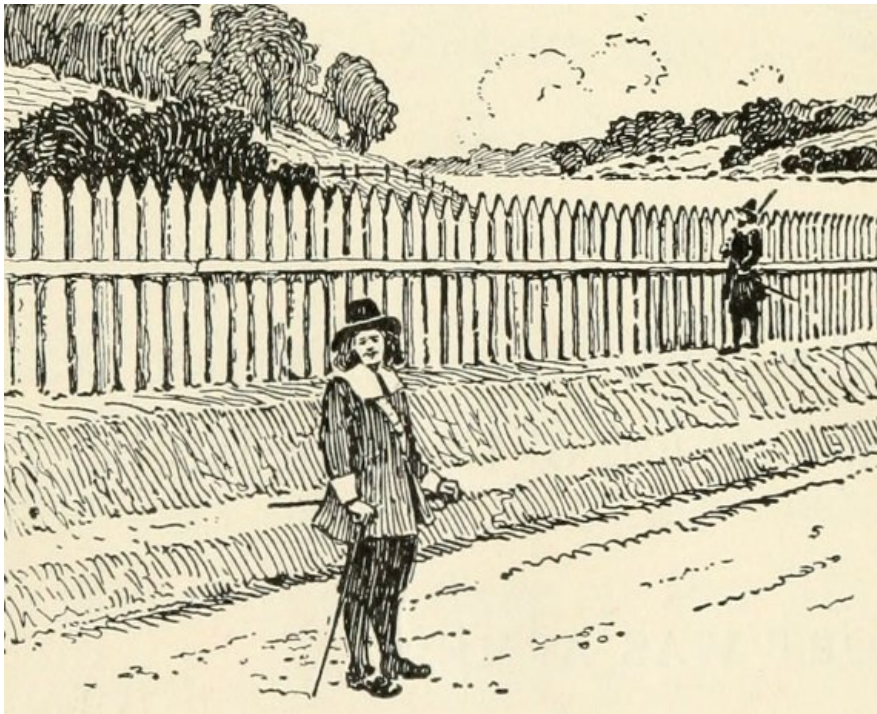
HOW THE FORT WAS ARMED

It may interest you to know that our fort was well armed, having mounted and ready for service, eight bombards, by which I mean heavy cannon with wide, flaring mouths; six culverins, or exceedingly long, slim guns with handles on either side for carrying; and seven serpentines, these last being thin, long guns with grooves on the inside to throw the shot in a whirling manner. As missiles for the serpentines, two balls were chained together, being sent among the enemy in such way that they swung round and round, oftentimes inflicting much damage.

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The palisade, which had been built straight across the island while the savages were thirsting for our blood, was to me a wonder in those days when Master Tienhoven gave me an opportunity for strolling about the town.

It was made of cedar logs full twelve-feet high, and less than a quarter-mile back from the fort, stretching across the island for a distance of nearly twenty-five hundred feet. Here and there, say every three hundred feet, was a small fort built of logs, where the soldiers could be protected while beating back an enemy, and at the water's edge on the river to the eastward, was what is called a half-moon battery, set well out into the stream, where were mounted two guns.



The same kind of fortification stood at the other end of the palisade, on the shore of that river discovered by Master Henry Hudson, and near each battery was a gate giving entrance to the town, while an arch with heavy barriers, formed with much ornamentation of carving, stretched across the Broad Way. [Pg 101]

Following this palisade was a wide lane, along which were built the huts of the slaves, servants, or people who were poor because of being lazy.

VILLAGE LAWS

It was on this palisade that I read the first of Director Stuyvesant's messages, and during that stroll I saw so many of them that I can even now repeat the words. They ran like this, and, to my mind, it would have been well if Master Kieft had given his attention to the same matter:

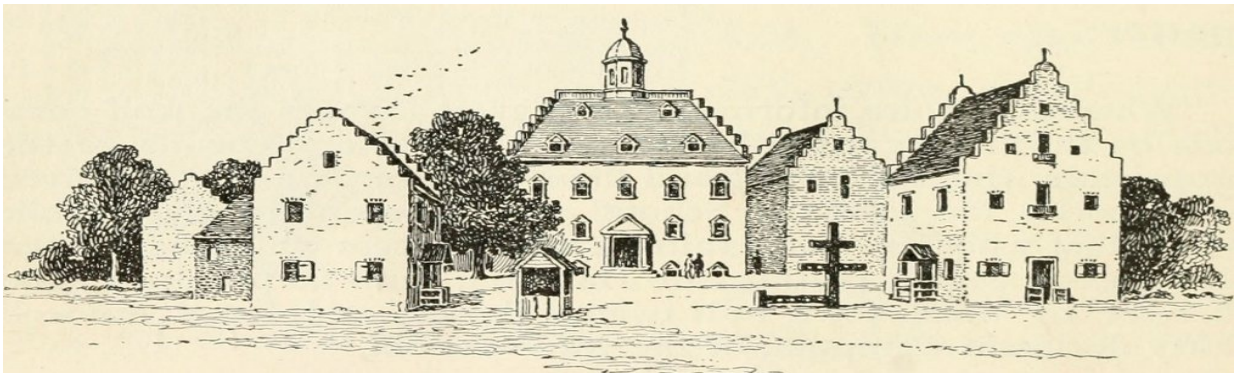
"Whereas, we are informed of the great ravages the wolf commits on the small cattle; therefore to animate and encourage the proprietors who will go out and shoot the same, we have resolved to his island, on this side Haarlem, shall be promptly paid therefor by them, for a wolf twenty florins, and for a she-wolf thirty florins in wampum, or the value thereof."

When the farmer's bell tolled from the belfrey of the church within the fort, all the gates in the palisade were closed, and no person might enter or leave the city from that time, which was nine of the clock in the evening, until sunrise of the next morning.

I have heard it said that there were many living beyond the palisade who claimed that this was all too early for them to leave the houses of their friends in the town, when there for a visit of pleasure; but I hold to it that he who would remain out of his bed longer than that is little better than a night-brawler, because of honest people being ready for sleep when the day's work is at an end. [Pg 102]

OTHER THINGS ABOUT TOWN

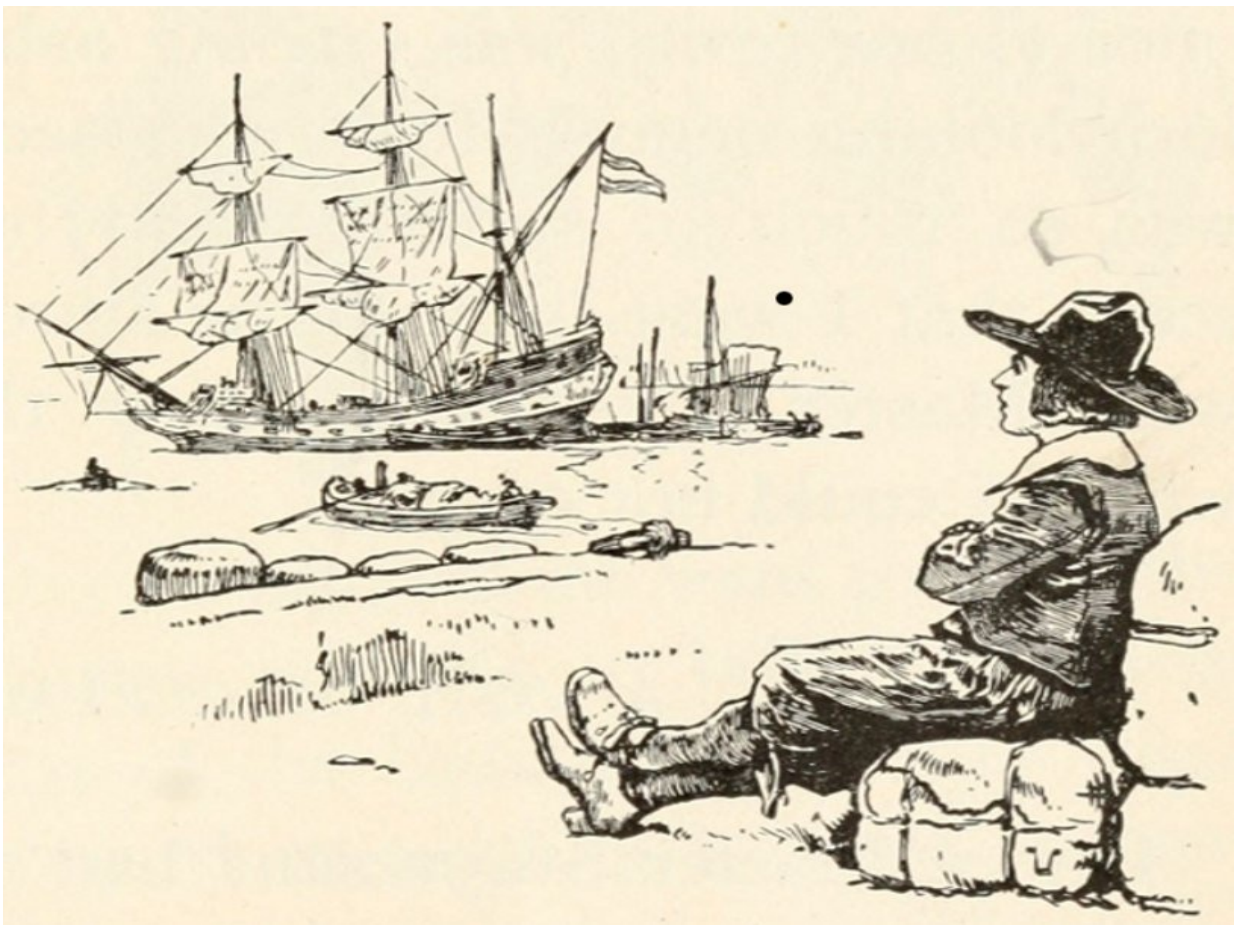
A thing which displeased me, though perhaps I was easily put out by anything Director Stuyvesant did, was that he should have set up the gallows in front of the stone tavern built by Master Kieft, after it had been turned into the town hall.



To me that instrument of justice was a blot on the fair building, even though it be something necessary in all towns; the whipping-post and the stocks seem to be there by right, and do not cast such a horror upon him who passes them, but to have ever in sight that which had been built for the taking away of men's lives is, in a way, brutal.

[Pg 103]

The hooft, or city dock, was ever a pleasant lounging place to me, particularly when there were many ships in the roadstead. It was pleasing to sit there idle, thinking Master Tienhoven was poring over my accounts when the day was so fair that one enjoyed being in the sunshine, and to watch the ships or the small boats that flitted to and fro. It was enough to make one believe that in the days to come this New Amsterdam of ours might grow to be even as large as Amsterdam in Holland.



Then could I, and all others who had a part in the building of the town, look back with pride upon our life-work, save that in it should be something of shame and crime, as in the case of Master Kieft, who, I may say here, was drowned in a shipwreck on his way back to Holland to answer to the Company for his misdeeds.

But there was at times one matter which gave me pain at the city dock, and that was whenever there arrived a vessel laden with black men, who had been stolen from Africa. With such a scene in view I had no desire to linger.

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It so chanced that I went there on a certain day when the *White Horse*, a slave ship that came more than once to our town, was sending ashore a throng of forlorn looking negroes to be exposed for sale, and there was so much of suffering and heart-sickness in the scene that I went back to the storehouse, glad to stay with Master Tienhoven rather than see the misery which I could not cure.

A VISIT OF CEREMONY

Before Master Stuyvesant had ruled over us many months, he went in great state to meet the governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony at some place in the Connecticut Colony, and if all that was said regarding the matter be true, he did what he might to persuade the Englishmen that he was of vast importance in this New World.

He journeyed on the ship *Black Eagle*, taking with him no less than eight servants, four trumpeters, and twelve soldiers, and I wonder much whether those people who had built here in America such towns as Salem, Plymouth, and Boston, were greatly impressed because the chief magistrate of New Amsterdam, where were living no more than fifteen hundred persons, could not go abroad without a following of twenty-four men, to say nothing of the secretaries, the clerks, cooks, and jacks-of-all-trades whom I saw flocking on board the ship.

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I was told that Director Stuyvesant went to meet the chief men of the eastern colonies to talk with them about the threatenings of the Indians, and as to what should be done in regard to sending to their owners runaway slaves, and concerning other such like matters; but how the different affairs were settled, I never heard.

At all events, Master Stuyvesant came back in the same high and mighty state as when he left us, after having been absent near to two weeks, and in the meantime had made many enemies in New Amsterdam, for there were not lacking those who claimed he was trying to make friends with the English for some purpose of his own, when all his time should have been spent in behalf of the West India Company.

NEW AMSTERDAM BECOMES A CITY

[Pg 106]

It was in the year 1652 that the town we had built was made a city, with a charter straight from Holland, and our people rejoiced because of its being possible at last, after so much of misrule, for them to have some voice in affairs.

According to this charter, the freemen of our new city were to select a schout, four burgomasters, nine schepens, which last were what in England would be called magistrates—and a council of thirty-six men whose duty it would be to advise with the Director on all affairs concerning the public welfare.

There was great rejoicing in New Amsterdam when Stoffel Mighielsen, the town crier, made this announcement, and I dare venture to say that on the night the news was made public, but little attention was paid to the farmer's bell by those who lived outside the palisade.



On every hand you could hear men giving joy to each other because of the time's having come when the Director would no longer have absolute power over all in the town, but must be guided by those who were to be elected by the ballots of the people, and following such rejoicings was ever the question as to when the election would be held.

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There was much talk as to who should be chosen to fill the offices, and all with whom I spoke declared that they were not to be influenced by anything Master Stuyvesant might say; but would pick out such men as could stand up honestly for the rights of all, instead of bending like slaves to the whims of the Director.

MASTER STUYVESANT MAKES ENEMIES

Because of our people's being so excited over this opportunity to have a part in the affairs of the city, you can well fancy what discontent, which swelled almost to open mutiny, was among us when Master Stuyvesant boldly announced that there would be no election. He had decided, so he said in that high and mighty voice of his, that he would appoint the city officers himself, without vote of the people, and this he did, naming those men whom he knew would sneeze when he caught cold.

Of course there were many vain threats made, and much whispering in dark corners, the purport of which might have been construed into open mutiny, had Director Stuyvesant or any of his following overheard the stealthy conversation. The whipping-post, and even the gallows, stood too conveniently at hand, while Big Pieter, the negro executioner who had charge of the public floggings, was ever ready to adjust a noose, or swing with vicious force the thongs of the whip.

[Pg 108]

Many a time did I hear threats which would have sent him who made them straight to the gallows, had they been repeated in the government house; but the people were cautious, not minded to risk their necks for the common good, and, so far as I can tell, Director Stuyvesant never knew how near he was to a hornet's nest, when he took it upon himself to throw aside one of the greatest privileges of New Amsterdam's charter.

I doubt if it would have disturbed him much even had he known of the discontent, for he ruled, as the saying is, with a rod of iron, and seemed to think that there was never one, or an hundred, of the common people to whose mutterings he need take heed.

But for that act of his, I question if our men of the city would have stood so calmly by when the English fleet came to capture New Amsterdam, turning out of office every Dutchman. Director Stuyvesant would have found more by his side in that bitter hour, when he was the same as driven from the land, if he had kept the promise made when he first arrived, to govern the people of our town as a father governs his children.

But it is not for me to speak of the English yet, for there is much to tell concerning what was done by the Dutchmen, before Colonel Richard Nicolls anchored off the battery with the guns of his fleet trained upon us. [Pg 109]

ORDERS FROM HOLLAND

We had settled down to the belief that while Director Stuyvesant ruled us with an iron hand, neither allowing the people nor the West India Company to interfere with his wishes, he was improving the city, when orders came from Holland which aroused us all to the highest pitch of excitement.

The West India Company had sent positive commands that the Swedes, whom Master Minuit had settled on South River, were to be driven out from their posts, and there was not a Dutchman in New Amsterdam who did not burn with the desire to have a hand in the driving; as if this big country of America were not large enough for all the Swedes and the Dutchmen that might want to live in it.

Now you must know that when Master Minuit was made governor of the Swedish people on South River, there had already been built there a fort by the Dutch, which was called Casimer. This the Swedish people captured and changed its name to that of Trinity. When Master Minuit came, he built a fort on the river above Trinity, and named it Christina, in honor of the Swedish Queen. [Pg 110]

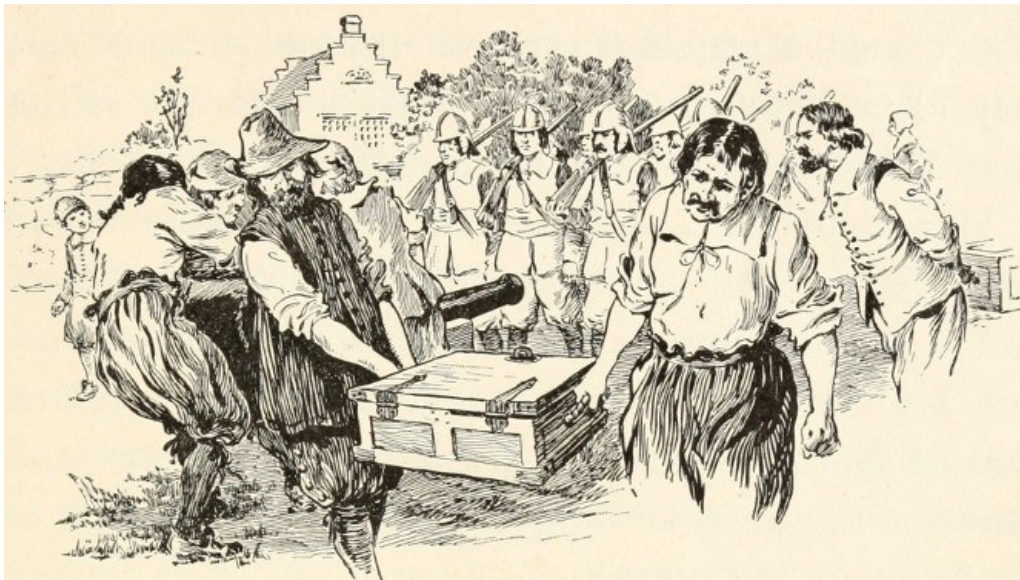
They were not bad neighbors, these Swedish people whom the Queen had advised to make a home in the New World. They minded their own business far better than did either the Dutch or the English, and were at peace with the savages, dealing honestly by them and treating them as if they were equals; therefore, why the West India Company should want them driven out of the New World was more than I could then, or can yet, explain to my own satisfaction.

However, the order had come that these people, who had been harming no one, be deprived of the homes which they had built in the wilderness, and there was in my mind the belief that Director Stuyvesant was only too well pleased to receive such commands.

MAKING READY FOR WAR

Straightway there was much marching to and fro by the soldiers; and great scurrying by the seamen, who were at once set about carrying cannon and ammunition aboard the vessels, for Master Stuyvesant had decided he would fit out a fleet of no less than seven ships.

The trumpeters were sent up and down the land to every Dutch farm and settlement calling for those who were willing to aid in driving out the Swedes, to present themselves at the fort that they might be drilled and equipped, and many there were who obeyed the summons. [Pg 111]



Those were idle days for me. No one thought of trading, and if peradventure a solitary Indian did venture into the city with a bundle of furs, he saw so much in the way of war-like preparations, that he scurried away, forgetting his desire for beads or cloth, to tell his people that the Dutch of New Netherlands were making ready to drive every other person off from the face of the earth.

Master Tienhoven no longer visited the storehouse, because of being busy with taking down the names of those who would join Director Stuyvesant's army, and I was at liberty to wander at will around the fort, if I but kept a watchful eye over my quarters, in case any came who was brave enough to venture in for trade where was so much of military preparations.

[Pg 112]

More than once I said to myself that if Master Minit could have been spared to the Swedes, our people would not have an easy task of driving them away; but I knew, from word brought a long time before, that he was no longer in this world; therefore, perhaps, Director Stuyvesant would be able to work the will of the West India Company.

AN UNEXPECTED QUESTION

That I should be counted as among those to accompany the expedition, never once had lodgment in my mind, until Master Tienhoven came to me the day before the fleet was to sail, asking if all my preparations for the voyage had been made.



I was in a maze of perplexity because of the question. He who has charge of a company's goods is supposed to remain where he can keep them under his hand, more particularly in time of war, and for me to be pinned to Master Stuyvesant's coat sleeves not only seemed useless, but positively foolish.

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It may be that I said something of this kind to the Secretary, for he shut me up in short order by curtly saying, as if he had his instructions so to do, that the Director had supposed I would know my duty sufficiently well to follow the army because of its being possible there might be much plunder, in which case I was the one person who should take charge of the Company's share.

I was not such a simple but that I could understand it would please Master Tienhoven right well if

I made protest against going, for there was little love lost between us two, and, believing he would repeat to the Director in his own fashion whatsoever might be said by me, I held my peace, save in so far as to ask on what ship I would be expected to sail.

He told me that Master Stuyvesant would himself embark upon one of the vessels which had been sent out from Amsterdam, called the *De Waag*, and that as an officer of the Company, even though an humble one, I would be expected to journey on the same vessel.

To one who had not been given to spending his wages upon brave attire, and who owns little more than that in which he stands, it is not a lengthy task to make ready for a voyage, however long. [Pg 114]

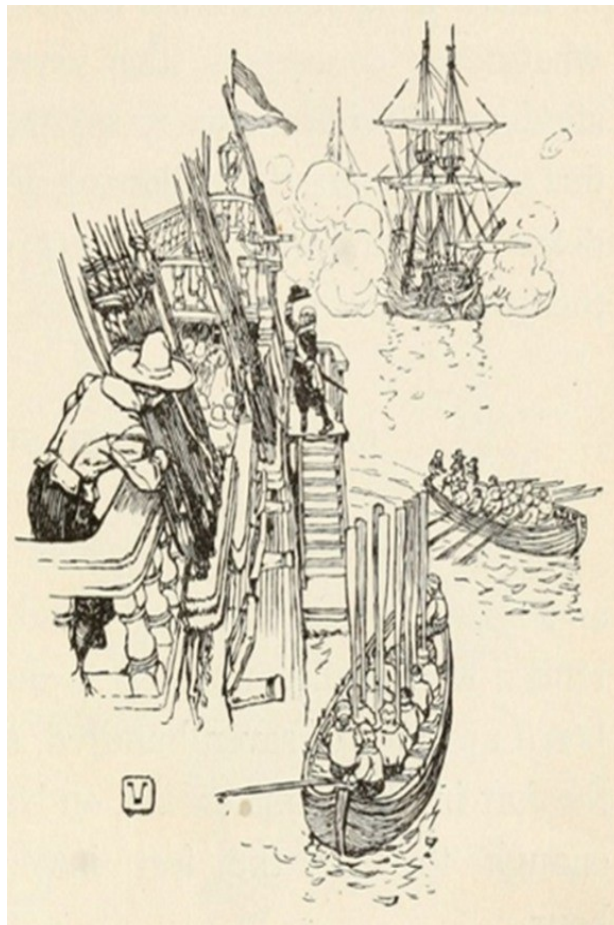
And here, by the way, let me say, lest any should think I was not prudent, that I had carefully saved the wages paid me by the West India Company, to the end that I might have sufficient of money to start in some business on my own account, when the day came—as I believed it would soon, yet without having much reason to do so—that my services would no longer be required in New Amsterdam.

WITH THE FLEET

And now to go back to the war against the Swedes: I left the storehouse in charge of Kryn Gildersleeve, and on Sunday morning bright and early was in church to hear the sermon which was to be preached, as a portion of the religious preparations for the driving out of the Swedes.

When the sermon was at an end, instead of looking around the fort to see the soldiers paraded before being sent on board the fleet, I quietly took boat for the ship *De Waag*, and was there an hour after noon, when Director Stuyvesant, attended by eight trumpeters, and a bodyguard of sixteen men, put off from the shore amid the booming of cannon, as if he had been a veritable king.

I know not whether the Director had really given orders to his secretary that I should be informed as to what was expected of me, but suppose such must have been the case, although no heed was given to so small an official as myself, from the time of setting sail until we were returned to New Amsterdam. [Pg 115]



So far as Master Stuyvesant was concerned, I might as well not have been there, but this overlooking me did not cause my heart to burn, for I was well content to be forgotten entirely by the gentleman who ruled over our city with an iron hand.

The officers of the ship, whose acquaintance I had already made, gave me fairly comfortable quarters, apart from the Director's following, and although such expeditions were not to my mind, I drank in all of the enjoyment that could come to one who was embarked upon a venture which to him seemed wrongful.

There is no need why I should tell you anything whatsoever concerning the journey from New Amsterdam to Trinity, save to say that we arrived off that fort at noon on the following Friday, when without delay our trumpeters were sent on shore to demand the surrender. [Pg 116]

DRIVING OUT THE SWEDES

In the fort were forty-six men with a captain, and, as a matter of course, they could do no less than surrender when called upon so to do, for our force numbered upwards of seven hundred, and we had sent from the fort in New Amsterdam, on board the vessels, guns enough to tear the fort into splinters within an hour.

The Swedish captain said all he could to soften the heart of Director Stuyvesant, who would listen neither to entreaties nor arguments, save that he permitted the garrison to march out with full honors of war, and immediately this had been done, a number of our men, sufficient to hold possession of the place, were sent on shore.

Then nearly all the people of the fleet assembled on board the *De Waag* to hear our preacher give thanks to God for the bloodless victory which had been won, and within four and twenty hours we were on our way to Christina, where, so we learned at Trinity, there was a force of only about thirty men. [Pg 117]



Here the trumpeters blew their shrill blasts again in front of the fort and surrender was demanded; but the governor of the colony was not minded to give in without at least a struggle of the tongue. From the second until the fifteenth day of September, we lay there at anchor while he protested against what he called high-handed proceedings, trying vainly to prove to Director Stuyvesant that he and his following had as much right in the wilderness of the New World, as had the Dutch.

It was all in vain, however, and, as may be expected, the result was that we captured Christina as we had Trinity, thus putting an end to this colony of New Sweden.

Again did we give thanks to God, although we had done a wrong, and it was while we were thus praising the Lord, and giving much credit to ourselves for having conquered without bloodshed seventy-seven men with a force of seven hundred, that a messenger came in hot haste from New Amsterdam. [Pg 118]

In the twinkling of an eye our rejoicings were turned to something very like fear.

THE UPRISING OF THE INDIANS

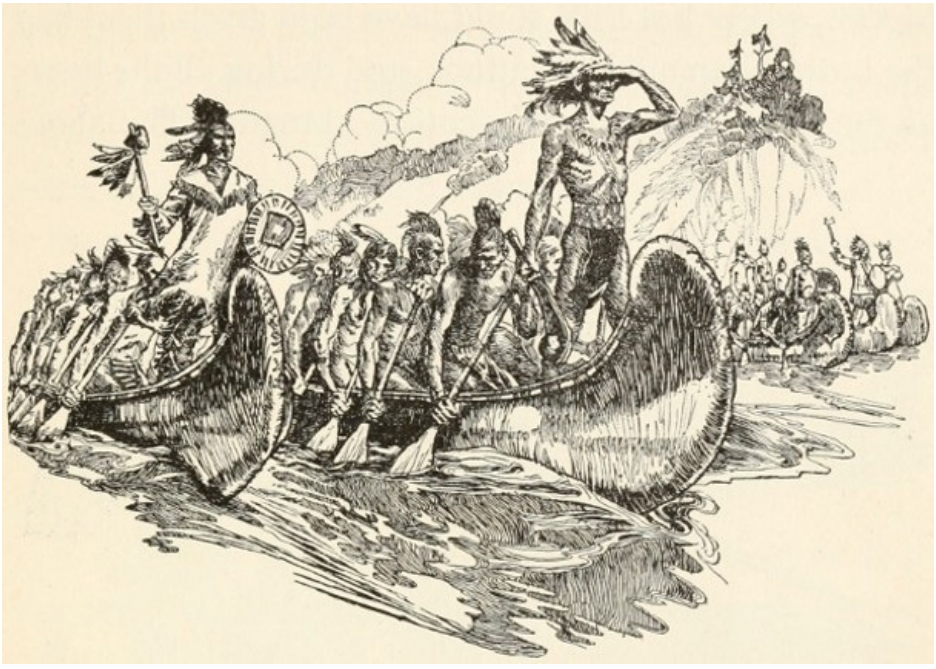
And this is the news which the messenger brought:—It seems that two days after our fleet had sailed from New Amsterdam, Master Van Dyck found an Indian woman in his orchard stealing peaches; without parley or warning, he shot her dead, and there were those of her tribe nearby who carried with all speed to the Indian villages information of the murder.

The savages knew that Master Stuyvesant and nearly all the fighting men of the city were away, and speedily they gathered to take revenge. It was said that no less than two thousand savages, having come in sixty-four canoes, paddled down the Hudson River in front of the city while we lay off Christina arguing with the Swedish governor.

The Indians claimed that they had come only in order to find some enemies of their tribe whom they believed had fled there, and proceeded to break open a dozen or more of the houses while searching for those whom they professed to be seeking.

Now there had been left in the fort less than twenty soldiers, while the greater number of our cannon were on board the fleet for the purpose of killing the Swedes, in case they refused to give up their forts to us. Therefore it would have been folly had our people made any attempt at holding the savages in check.

[Pg 119]

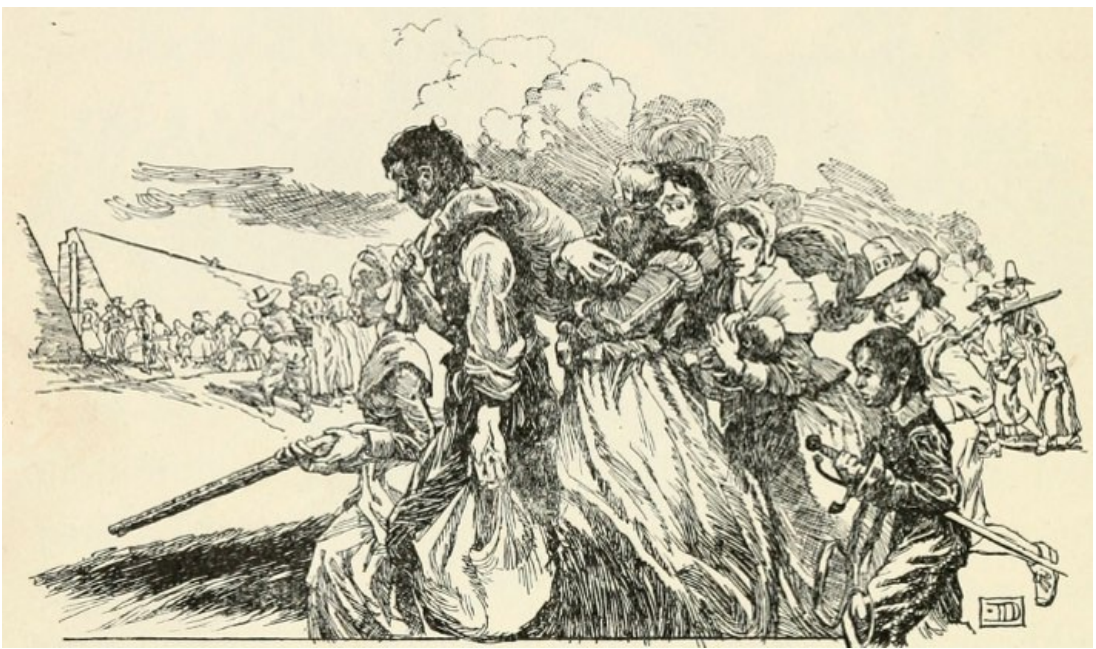


The burgomasters and other officers of the city did what they could to pacify the painted visitors, and so far succeeded, by soft words, as to persuade them to withdraw to Nutten Island.

One can well fancy in what a state of terror were those whom Director Stuyvesant had left behind in New Amsterdam, while so great an army of savages, who had just cause for anger, was so near at hand.

The women and the children fled to the fort for protection, where but little could have been given them had the brown men made an attack, and during all the hours of the day no one dared venture abroad. The shops and the dwellings alike were left unprotected, while those trembling, frightened ones who crouched within the fort, believed that death was close beside them.

[Pg 120]



AN ATTACK BY THE INDIANS

The Indians remained quietly on Nutten Island until nightfall, when they came into New Amsterdam again, went directly to Master Van Dyck's house, and killed him.

One of his neighbors attempted to lend him aid, and was stricken down in short order,—not, however, before he had given an alarm. Such soldiers as had been left in the fort, together with the men of the city, hastened with true courage to the scene of the murder, where a small battle took place, in which three Indians were killed outright, and many wounded. [Pg 121]

It was as if the savages needed only this to send them upon the war path again; but instead of making any attack upon New Amsterdam, where were so few to oppose them, they went to the plantations nearby, killing or capturing men, women, and children, burning dwellings and destroying crops.

Yet this was no more than we had threatened to do to the Swedes, and without such cause as the savages had.

During the three days that the Indians remained near New Amsterdam, so the messenger said, more than one hundred persons had been killed, and nearly twice as many carried to a dreadful captivity. The buildings on twenty-eight of the plantations were burned and the crops destroyed utterly.

It needed not that this man who had come to us pale with terror, and fearing lest on his return he should find those whom he loved butchered, should tell us into what condition the city was plunged because of such a state of affairs. We could see, in our minds, the people of New Amsterdam as they cowered like sheep before wolves, unable to flee.

There was no place for them to go, save into the wilderness where lurked brown men who were thirsting for revenge, and they were unable to do more than make the merest show of defence, owing to the fact that Director Stuyvesant had taken with him nearly all the able-bodied men, and a goodly portion of the weapons, to the end that he might do much the same as were the savages doing. [Pg 122]



HASTENING BACK TO NEW AMSTERDAM

It can well be supposed that every man of us, from the Director down to the youngest soldier, was eager to get back to New Amsterdam, for I question whether, with the single exception of myself, there was a member of the company who had not left behind him loved ones; and how could our people find any satisfaction in continuing the conquest of the Swedes, when there was every possibility that the savages were murdering and torturing white men, women, and children? [Pg 123]

Within an hour after the messenger had arrived, two hundred of the soldiers were sent across the land to New Amsterdam, under orders to march at their swiftest possible pace until they were come to the city. As soon after these men had set off as could be arranged for, the fleet was in motion.

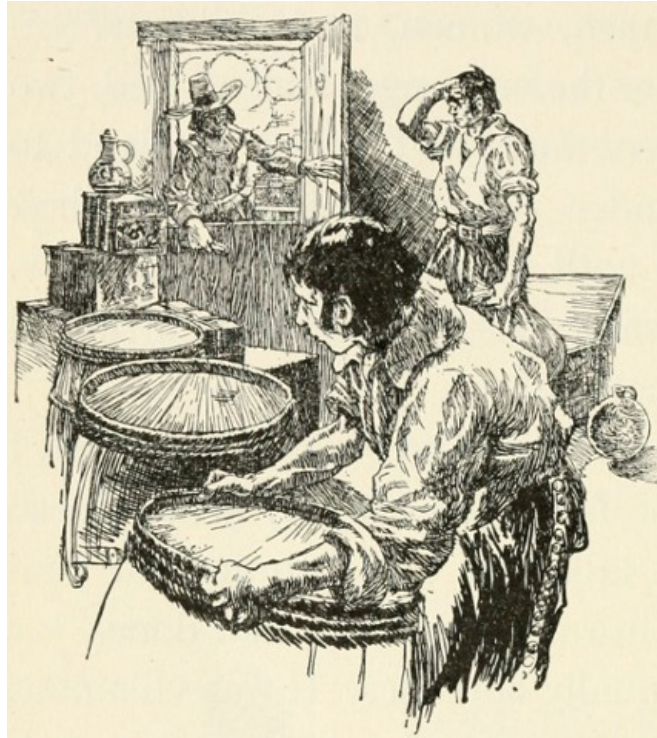
Because of my having received no orders whatsoever, I remained on board the *De Waag*, and my heart was so sore that I could not talk with those around me concerning what we had heard, or what we had done.

To me both were equally horrible. It was villainous work for us to drive the poor Swedes away, and it seemed almost like a judgment of God, that the Indians should have descended upon our city at a time when we were showing ourselves to be no better than savages.

Fortunately, or so it seemed, we had a favoring wind, and within four and twenty hours from the time of making sail, were come to anchor off the fort. That those who had been sent across by land had arrived, we knew because of the numbers to be seen on duty in the bastions, and that the Indians had not made further attack upon New Amsterdam, we also understood because of the people who were gathered to give us welcome.

I went directly from the ship to the storehouse, where I found Kryn Gildersleeve and his fellow clerks working valiantly to pack our goods into cases, which had been brought from Holland, with the hope that these might be saved, even though the savages gained possession of the town.

[Pg 124]



Although I held my peace, the thought was in my heart that he who could give his time to the saving of such useless trinkets as ours, when mayhap before morning not a single white man would be alive, was much the same as trifling with the Angel of Death.

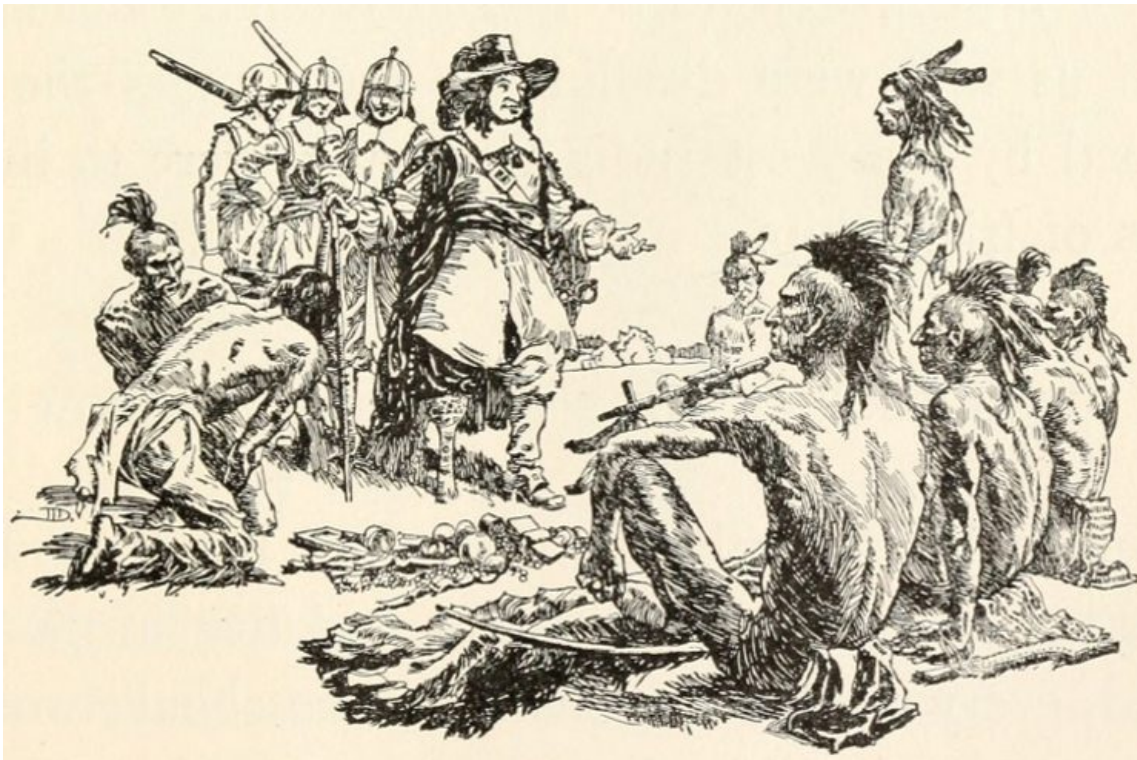
However, I was soon engaged in the same task, and while thus busy, forgot everything save the fact that I was the clerk in charge of the storehouse, whose duty it was to look after whatsoever we had for barter, whether to my mind it was of value or not.

COAXING THE SAVAGES

And now I have to tell you that which bears witness to Master Petrus Stuyvesant's ability as a ruler. Although I never felt friendly disposed towards him, because of thinking myself neglected, there is enough of honesty in my heart to give praise where it is due.

[Pg 125]

When Master Kieft was governor of New Amsterdam, and through his folly had caused the Indians to seek revenge, he did no more than meet them with powder and ball, widening the breach between the brown and the white men day by day; but our Director, stern and unyielding as he had ever shown himself to be, had so much of wisdom that he knew when it was useless to beat his head against a wall of stone.



With so many of the savages risen against us, all the white men whom we could muster would not have been sufficient to hold them in check; to wage war with them would have meant the utter wiping out of the Dutch in America.

Therefore it was that Master Stuyvesant, instead of seeking to punish those who had attacked our people, set about coaxing them into a friendly mood, and during the three or four weeks which followed our return from Trinity and Christina, there was a continual coming and going of messengers from the Director to the savage chiefs, who were to be brought, through Master Stuyvesant's plans, to a peaceable life by the means of gaudy toys. [Pg 126]

And all this Master Stuyvesant succeeded in doing. Before the winter's snows were come, the savages were seemingly friendly with us once more, it being understood that past crimes, whether committed by white men or brown, were to be forgotten, and, so to speak, all of us who were dwelling in and around the land claimed by the West India Company, were to live on terms of friendship.

INTERFERENCE WITH RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

It must be remembered, that when the West India Company asked people to go out and live in the New World, every one was promised that he should worship God as seemed to him best.

This was a portion of the bargain made when the people left Holland, and yet before another spring had come, Master Stuyvesant declared, by written notices and by the mouth of Stoffel Mighielsen, that no person would be allowed to praise God save he did it according to the belief and the rules of the Dutch Reformed Church. [Pg 127]



It was on a certain Easter Monday, when all over the city the young men and maidens were playing at egg cracking, that Master Stuyvesant's plan for punishing those who did not choose to go to the same church as did he, was begun.

The Dutch had brought with them from Holland all the old games such as are played to-day; but the favorite among them was the cracking of eggs on Easter Monday, and I dare venture to say every young person in this land of America knows the game well by this time. [Pg 128]

The shops were gay with boiled eggs of various colors, hung in the windows by many-colored ribbons, and it is not much straining at the truth to say that every person in New Amsterdam, save those who, like the soldiers, could not leave their posts of duty, was in the street, walking to and fro watching the young people as they strove to see how many eggs they could capture by cracking them, when a Quaker, and an Englishman at that, was taken into custody for preaching nearby New Amsterdam without permission of Master Stuyvesant.

Although this was directly opposite to what the West India Company had said might be done in such portion of the new land as they claimed, it would have passed almost unheeded had the arrest been made quietly; but, so I have heard it said, and so I believe, Master Stuyvesant himself gave positive commands as to how the prisoner should be treated, and what should be done with him before he was lodged in jail.

PUNISHING THE QUAKER

A godly man was this Quaker, and yet he was tied face down to the back end of a cart, in which were two women accused of giving him shelter, and this sorry spectacle was paraded through the streets in the midst of our merrymaking. [Pg 129]

Even though the man had been accused of some crime, it would have been more to the credit of our Director had he been lodged in jail without first marching him up and down that all the people might look upon the disgrace.

That he had done no more than preach the word of God in a manner such as was not set down by the rules of the Dutch Reformed Church, caused the arrest to seem much like wickedness, and there were many persons in New Amsterdam who in private cried out against it, for to speak in those days openly against whatsoever the Director commanded was cause for imprisonment in the dungeons, as in the case of Master Keller's raising his voice against the capture of the Swedish forts.

Nor was this punishment, severe though you will say it was, all that the Director imposed upon the God-fearing Quaker. He ordered that unless he could pay the sum of six hundred florins at once, he should be chained to a wheelbarrow by the side of a negro, who had been condemned to such labor for the good of the city because of having brutally beaten a Dutchman, and this for the term of two years.

The Quaker refused to move when they chained him to the black man, and it seemed to me well that he did so; but the refusal cost him dearly, for he was hung up by the thumbs and beaten with thirty lashes each morning for the space of four days, when a sister of Master Stuyvesant mercifully begged for, and succeeded in obtaining, the prisoner's release. [Pg 130]



Now you may be certain that our people of New Amsterdam, although knowing what might be their punishment for speaking against such an act, did not hold their tongues.

Wherever two or three of the common people were gathered on the green, or in the streets, there could one hear harsh words spoken against the Director, and because of such tongue-wagging there were seventeen free men of New Amsterdam at one time imprisoned in the jail by the orders of Master Stuyvesant.

OTHER PERSECUTIONS

Instead of seeking to soothe the people, our Director became more harsh and severe in such matters, and followed the arrest by sending back to Holland a preacher who had come at the request of the Lutherans of our city. Fathers and mothers to the number of six were put in jail because of refusing to have their children baptized in the Dutch church, desiring it should be done according to the Lutheran faith.

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That he fined the Baptist preacher one thousand pounds and banished him from the West India Company's lands, was no secret, since it was all done in open court with our Director acting both as judge and jury, and this despite the charter sent from Holland.

I might go on until you were wearied, telling of the religious persecutions in New Amsterdam while Master Stuyvesant was Director; but there is no good reason why one should repeat each case of suffering.

It is enough that it was done, and verily did it seem to me in later days, that in the doing of it Master Stuyvesant was digging a pit for his own downfall.

To you who hear these things after they have passed, and concerning people whom you know not, they seem of but little importance; but to one like myself, who had been told on the other side of the ocean that this new land of America would be a refuge for all who were oppressed because of their faith, it is a sore that will take long in the healing.

DULL TRADE

[Pg 132]

It seems to me, as I look back upon it, that at about the time Master Stuyvesant was hunting down with such a heavy hand those people who did not come regularly to the Dutch church, preferring to hear some other preacher, that our trade in furs fell off in a manner to cause alarm.

As a matter of course we did not reckon that time when the savages were bent on killing us, and, therefore, remained away entirely; but as compared with what we took in when matters with the Indians were most friendly, we were losing ground rapidly.

With the Swedes driven out of the land, it surely seemed as if the West India Company should have been able to get, by trading, all the pelts taken by the Indians, and yet, from all I could hear, I knew that not more than one half were coming our way. In addition to this, the savages were bent on driving keener bargains, as if there were people close around who were offering bigger prices than we of New Amsterdam.

All this caused me no little trouble of mind, for although it was not my concern to go abroad urging the Indians to come in for trade, I knew that more than a fair share of blame would attach to me when the profits of the year were reckoned.

THE CHARGE MADE BY HANS BRAUN

[Pg 133]

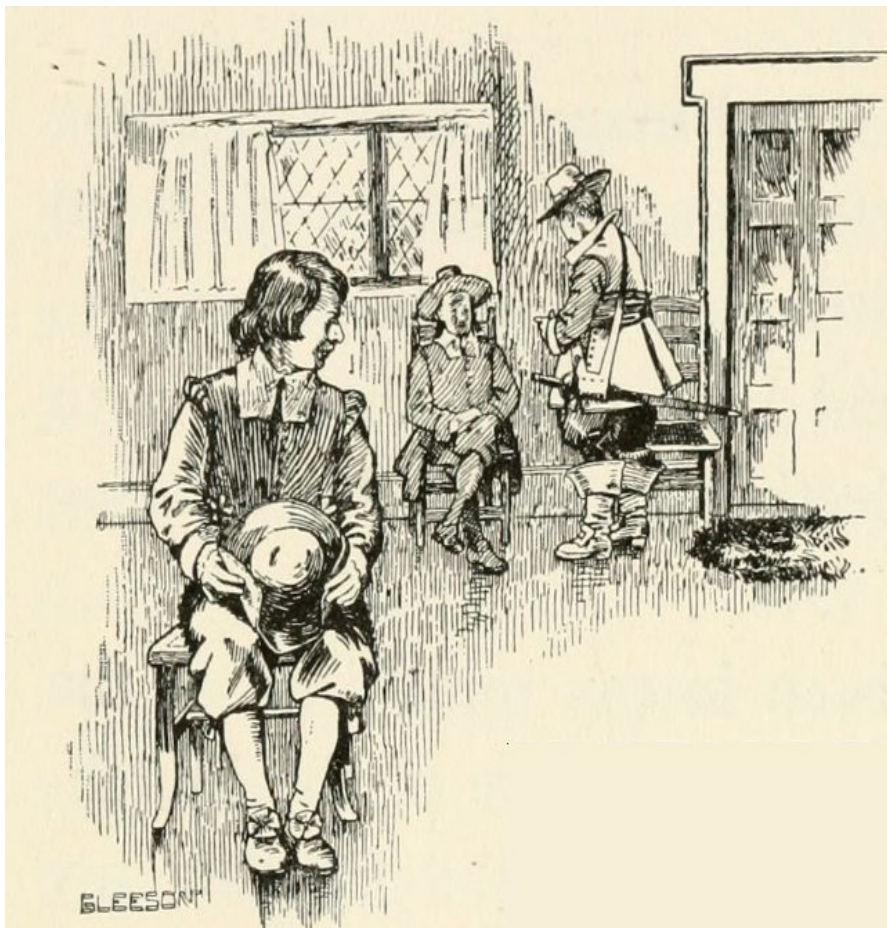
Kryn Gildersleeve and I had many a talk regarding the matter, until on a certain day he came with word which aroused me in no little degree, for he claimed to know that Hans Braun had been to the Director with the charge that I was neglecting my work, thus causing a falling off in our take of furs.

It had for some time been in my mind that at the first good chance I would bid good-bye to the Dutchmen of New Amsterdam, and go to the English, my countrymen, either in Boston or Salem, for I had laid by sufficient of money, not having squandered my wages, to set me up in fur-buying on my own account. I had been told, by those who knew, that in the English colonies there was no Company with the sole right to deal in pelts.

In addition to all that, the Englishmen had begun to rule the land themselves, save as their king might interfere, and such government pleased me far better than to be under the iron hand of a single man like our Director.

Therefore it was that I went straightway to Master Stuyvesant, determined to know if he believed what Hans might have said; and, if you please, it was three long hours that I cooled my heels at the entrance to his chamber of business before I, the keeper of the storehouse and a regular officer of the Company, was allowed to enter, such kingly airs had he taken upon himself.

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When at last I stood before him, it was not as a beggar, though of course my hat was in my hand, but as one who knows that he may not lawfully be displaced save by direct orders from Holland.

Speaking to him as the head of the city should be spoken to, I repeated what Kryn had told me, and asked if he had cause to complain of me.

DISMISSED BY MASTER STUYVESANT

Had I been a Lutheran preacher, or a Quaker, I could not have been treated more shamefully. Instead of questioning as to why our trade was growing small, in which case I should have told him that in my belief it was owing to the English colony in the country of Connecticut, he cried out upon me in a most violent rage, declaring that I had been spending my time breeding discontent among the people, instead of having a watchful eye over the interests of the Company. [Pg 135]

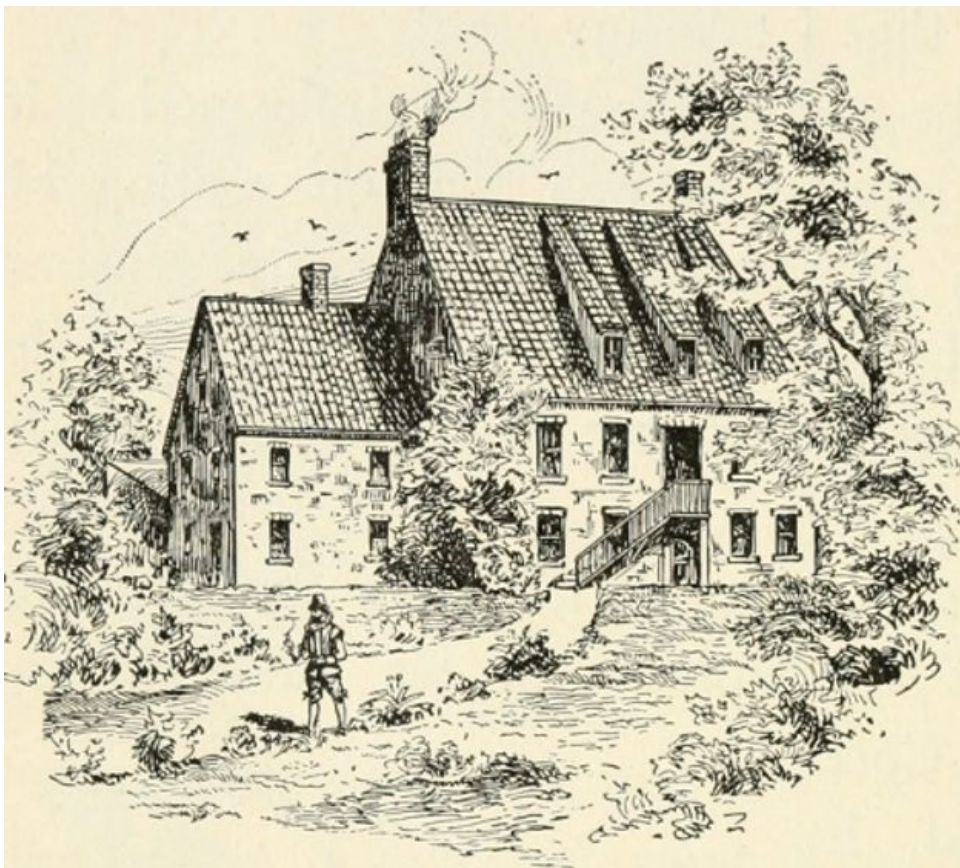
And this when I had never been outside the fort, save while Master Tienhoven was in the storehouse giving the advice that I take my ease!

Nor was this the end of the matter; it seemed as if, being in a bad humor, he was bent on venting his spleen upon me, and without giving any reasons, other than as I have told you, the Director declared that I was no longer in the employ of the Company.

When I spoke to him of the rule that a storekeeper may not be deprived of his office save by the Council of the Company in Holland, he called me a mutinous hound, and threatened that if I showed myself inside the fort after the sun had set, I would be thrown into prison.



I knew full well that I would be powerless if he did such a wicked thing, for of course the word of the Director would be heeded by the Company when set against one of the lower officers like myself, therefore did I hold my temper in check, striving to look the submission which I did not feel. [Pg 136]



It is no more than just that I should give Kryn Gildersleeve credit for grieving over the injustice that had been done me; but he could not mend matters, even if I would have had him, and two hours before sunset I had made a bargain for lodgings on the plantation belonging to Martin Kip, who was glad to have in his family one who knew the Indians so well that he might be expected to get some hint if the savages were bent on more mischief.

I had known Martin for many a year, he having come over in the *Sea Mew*, when I did, and trusted him for a true friend, if so be he was not called upon for an outlay of money.

To him I told my plans for joining one of the English colonies, and much to my surprise he gave

me his reasons for believing that I would soon be in an English colony, if I remained in New Amsterdam taking good care not to show myself in such a manner as would arouse Director Stuyvesant's ire.

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ENGLISH CLAIMS

It was a long story concerning England, and the rights she claimed in the New World, which he told, the repeating of which would not be of interest to you who know all he could have said, and, most likely, much more.

What I had not known was that the English believed they owned all the land that had been settled by the West India Company, because, so they said, of John Cabot's having been the first white man to set foot on it; but the Dutch claimed that Henry Hudson first found the river which was sometimes called the North, therefore the country between it and the South river belonged to them.

Because of no one's knowing at that time how large a country had been found in this New World, and because of the English kings' having given away lands to this person or that company, everything was in a snarl; but I said to myself that if the Swedes could be driven out of their settlements by Master Stuyvesant, it would be no more than turn about for him to get the same treatment from the English.

And, even though I had been working for the Dutch during so many years that I had grown from boy to man, there was a great hope in my heart that Master Kip had made no mistake when he believed we were like to have a change of rulers before many years went by.

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IDLE DAYS

While I waited, making myself as small as possible lest the Director should see me and remember that he had threatened to throw me into prison, the people were growing more and more discontented because of Master Stuyvesant's not ceasing to punish Lutherans, Baptists, or Quakers when they refused to attend the Dutch church.

Many a one threatened, in private, to do what he might toward teaching the Director a lesson, if a fitting chance came his way, and I have been told that a dozen or more Dutchmen, who had friends in power in Holland, sent to the West India Company many complaints concerning Master Stuyvesant, praying that he might be deprived of his office.

It was during these idle days that I learned, because of asking many questions, much concerning the village of Hartford, which had been begun by the preacher Hooker, and all who went to his church in New Town of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

These people wanted a village of their own, therefore entered the forest with but little of goods, suffering much in the battle with the wilderness, but coming out victors owing to their industry.

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While we of New Amsterdam had built a city, we could count no more than fifteen hundred people in it, and this settlement on the Connecticut river, which was by this time made up of three villages, boasted of more than eight hundred persons.

It was to Hartford I would first go when a fitting opportunity came, so I said to myself after hearing all that could be told concerning these people, and to such an end I began to make plans.

Wherever I might go, however, I could not find so much to please the eye as in New Amsterdam, for the English people in this New World are much more prim and sedate, both in manner and dress, than are the Dutch.

ON BROAD WAY

It was indeed a brave sight to see the people of quality walking on Broad Way, or strolling to and fro upon the Bowling Green, of a summer evening, and although I so disliked the man, I must confess that Director Stuyvesant and his family went far toward adding to the fine array.

The ladies dressed exceeding gay in high-colored gowns of silk, satin, or some other such stuff, open up and down in front of the skirt that their petticoats, ornamented with fine needlework, might be seen. Their hose were of bright colors, and the low shoes, with very high heels, had bows of ribbon, or buckles of silver, even of gold, which added much to the looks of the wearer. It was the silken hoods which I disliked, for those ladies curled or frowzled their hair in a most bewitching fashion, afterward covering it with powder, and the hood concealed far too much of it.

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To see the rings set with precious stones on their fingers; the locket, or toys, of gold hanging over the stiff fronts of their waists, and, on Sundays, the Bibles and psalm books richly decked with gold and hanging by golden chains to their waists, one would hardly believe that we were living in such a wild land, with savages on every hand, who might at any moment be at our throats.

Our gentlemen did not allow the ladies all the bravery of attire, as you shall hear when I tell you how Director Stuyvesant was dressed when, standing half-hidden behind the whipping-post one evening, I saw him parading with his wife and sister, showing by the way he stumped along with his head high, that he believed himself the greatest man this side Holland. [Pg 141]

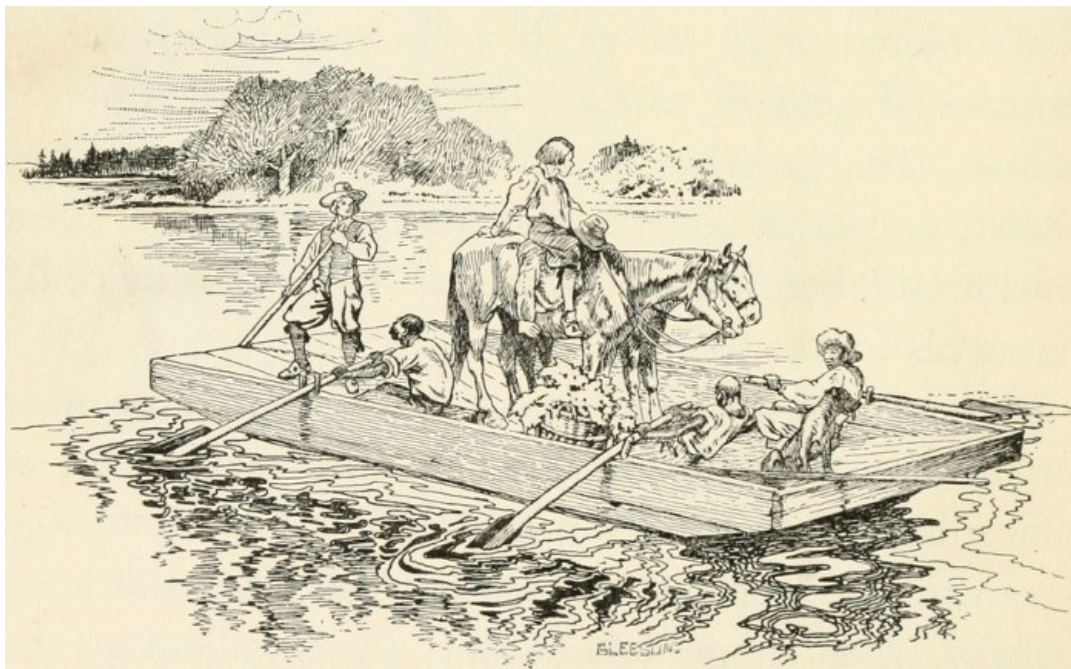
He wore a long coat of blue velvet on which were silver buttons, and the huge flaps of the pockets were trimmed with silver lace. His waistcoat, so long that the front came nearly to his knees, was of buff silk embroidered with silver threads, and fastened by buttons of gold in which were set jewels of different colors. His breeches of velvet were of a deeper hue than the coat, while the low shoe had on it a silver buckle so large that the wonder of it was how he could move his foot.

He wore on his head a soft black hat, whose wide brim was caught up on one side with a gay knot of blue ribbon that fell down athwart his big, white wig. From the knot on his hat to below the black silk hose, he was, when viewed on one side, a very gallant gentleman; but turn him about so that his wooden stump with its heavy bands of silver might be seen, and one could not but remember the battle at St. Martins, where he left his leg during a desperate fight.

LOOKING AFTER THE FERRY

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During a portion of my idle time, I worked at fair wages for Nicholas Steinburg, who ran the ferry from near the water-gate to the Long Island shore, and of a verity I earned all he paid me.



The boat on which wagons were taken across, was the most clumsy scow it was ever my ill fortune to handle, and his slaves the most stupid to be found in all New Amsterdam. One was forced to send the unwieldy craft along by heavy sweeps, which were fashioned so rudely that I dare venture to say there was twice as much of timber in them as was necessary, and that foolish negro who failed to lift one of them at the proper time, found that the current swung it around with a force that sent him sprawling in the bottom of the boat.

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More than once have I picked one of the thick-headed black men up from beneath the feet of the horses, and spent no little time trying to recover the oar.

However, there was not much passing to and fro, for there were but few farms on the big island, and a goodly portion of the time I spent in the thatched shed which was put up for the pleasure of those who were forced to await Nicholas Steinburg's slow motions.

It is wearying work, looking after a ferry, even though one gets as wage one-half the money paid over to him, and I would not thus have spent my time, had I not been taught by Master Minuit that he who squanders his days in idleness is the same as reproaching God for permitting him to live.

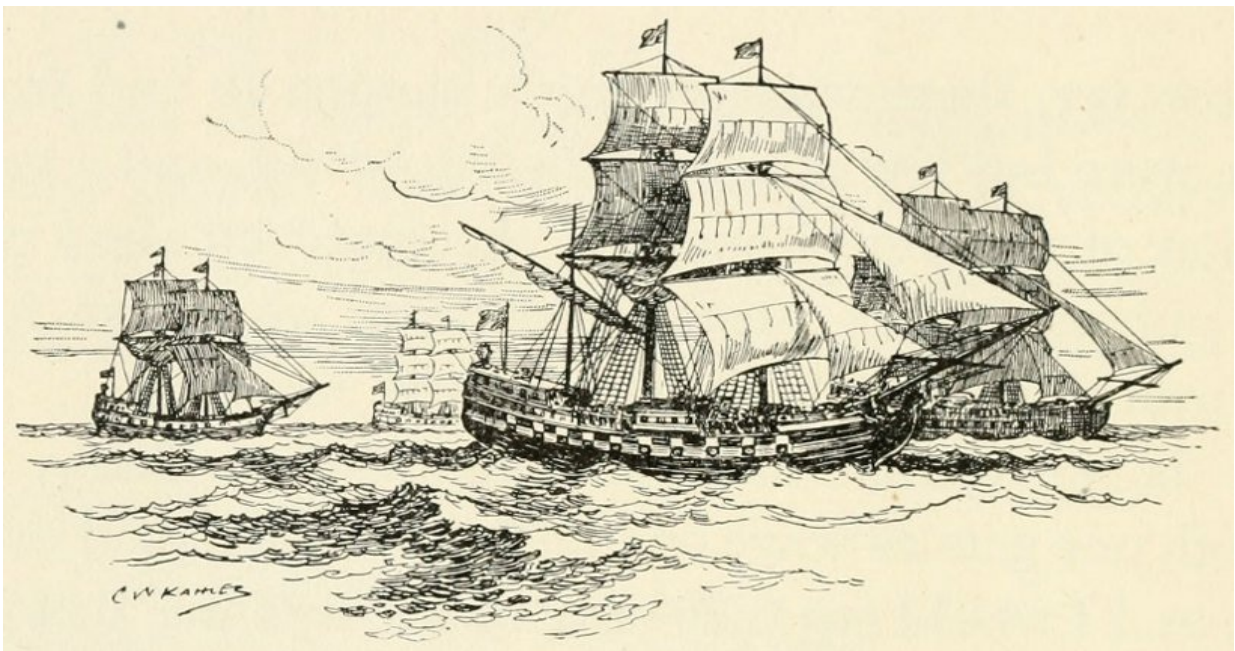
Then came the day when I rejoiced secretly, and many another man with me, because of what Director Stuyvesant had done to wrong us.

THE COMING OF THE ENGLISH

It was reported that the English, with four ships, had arrived at Boston from England, and were making ready to come against New Amsterdam, to the end that it might be taken from the Dutch, even as they had taken Trinity and Christina from the Swedes.

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We knew that there could be no doubt as to the truth of the news, for even the names and strength of the ships were given, and there was little question but that they had already sailed from Boston, therefore did we have reason to believe the fleet would be in our harbor very soon.



The force which King Charles had sent on advice of his brother, the Duke of York, was made up of the Guinea, carrying thirty-six guns, the Elias with thirty, the Martin with sixteen, and the William and Nicholas with ten, making ninety-two guns against our twenty-two bombards, culverins, and serpentines.

It was reported also that many of the English from Hartford, who believed they had cause of complaint against Master Stuyvesant, had joined themselves to the soldiers sent from England, and that no less a person than Governor Winthrop was with them.

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To show how complete was the information which came to us discontented ones of New Amsterdam, it is only needed for me to say that we even knew that the English commander was Colonel Richard Nicolls, who was to be Deputy Governor of the West India Company's possessions when he had captured them.

A WEAK DEFENSE

I knew, in addition to all this, because of having lived so many years in the fort, that we were not in a condition to hold our own against even one of these English ships, because of many of our soldiers' being in the same frame of mind as was I, concerning the Director, and even though each and every one had been heart and hand with Master Stuyvesant, there was not in all the city enough of ammunition to serve the guns during a battle.

It stood on the accounts that we had thirteen hundred pounds of powder in the magazine; but I knew, as did many another, that of the whole amount a full seven hundred pounds would not burn even though it was thrown into a blazing fire.

We had one hundred and fifty soldiers under arms, and Martin Kip had the names of ninety-six of these who had declared that if English, French, or Swedes came against us while Petrus Stuyvesant was Director, they would not raise a hand in defense of the city.

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There were also near to two hundred and fifty citizens who had been armed and commanded to be ready for service in time of danger; but I knew beyond a question that more than half the number would stand with hands in their coat pockets, rather than raise them in obedience to an order from Director Stuyvesant.

Thus it can be seen that the English had chosen a most favorable time for coming against us, and, as if to make their chances even better, Master Stuyvesant, suspecting no evil, had gone on a tour of inspection far up the North river.

MASTER STUYVESANT ABSENT

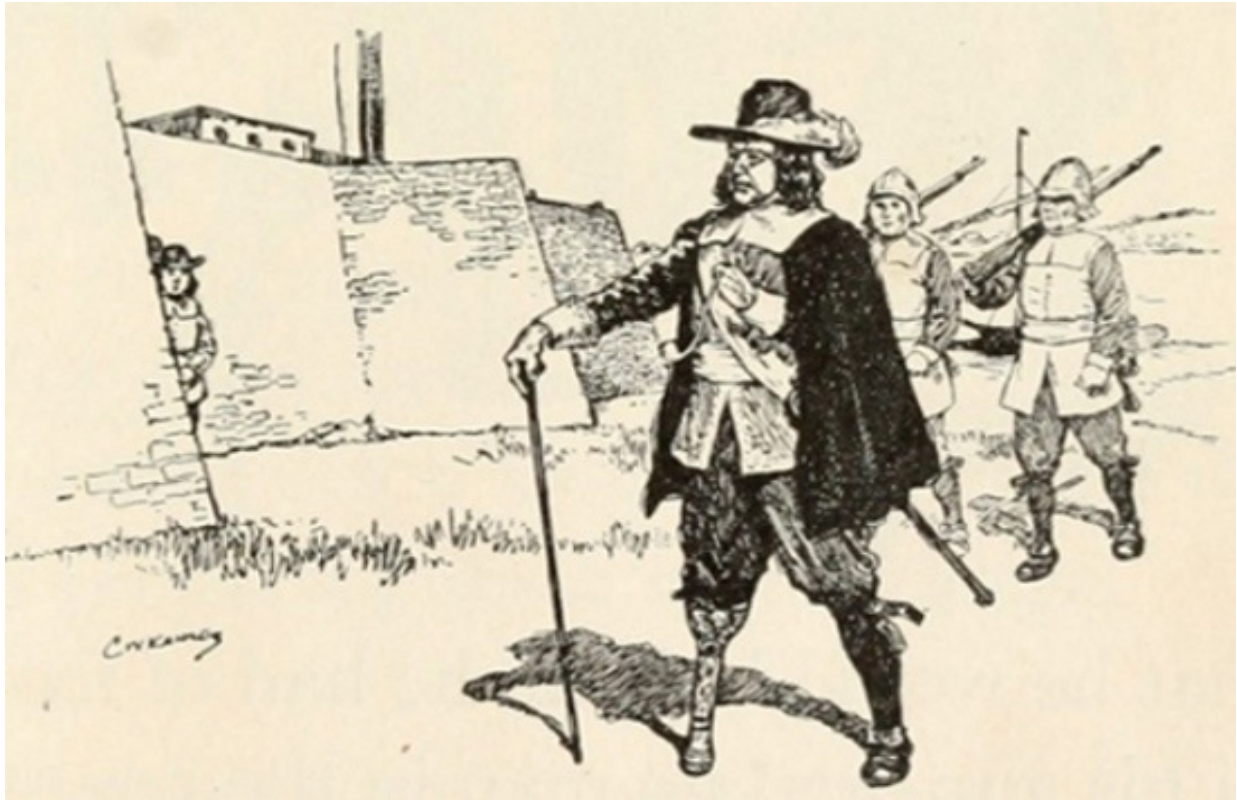
On the night this welcome news was brought to New Amsterdam, the farm buildings belonging to Martin Kip were actually crowded with men, who had come thus far out of the city that they might decide upon what should be done when the Director gave orders for all the citizens to stand to their weapons, and a most excited throng it was.

Some one brought word that a messenger had been sent in hot haste up the river to summon Master Stuyvesant, and others had learned from fishermen who had been in the lower bay, that the English fleet was even at that moment in sight.

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Although the people had been so disposed, nothing could be done in the way of making ready to defend the city until Master Stuyvesant came back, and from all I could hear, though as a matter of course I had no speech with those who were friendly with the Director, no one was sorry because of there promising soon to be an end to Dutch rule in America.

We were well content to remain idle, knowing that each hour of the Director's absence made more certain the end we desired, and it was rather from curiosity than anxiety, that Martin Kip and I stood half sheltered by one of the bastions of the fort when Master Stuyvesant arrived.



During the hurried journey he must have settled in his own mind exactly what should be done, for within ten minutes after having come, orders were given that every third man of all the citizens should, with axe, spade, or wheelbarrow, present himself at the fort ready to aid in strengthening the works.

DISOBEYING COMMANDS

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Not above ninety obeyed this command, and the greater number of those who did so were, in one way or another, under Master Stuyvesant's thumb.

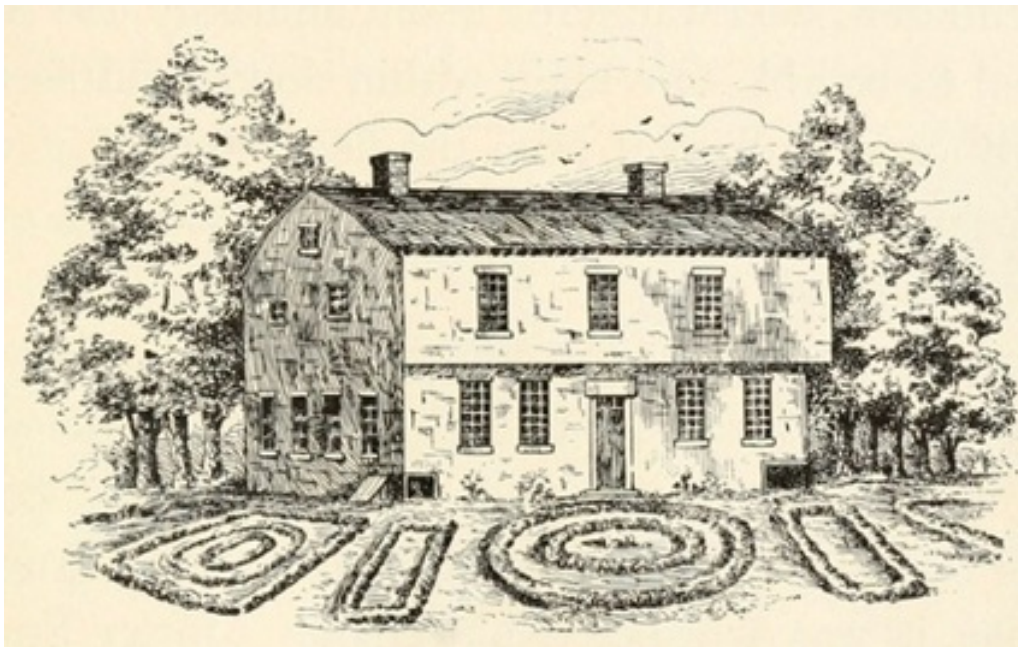


At the same time guards were placed at the city gates to prevent any from leaving the city over the land, and every farmer was commanded to send in all the grain he had on hand, together with what his slaves could thresh during the next eight and forty hours.

Martin Kip laughed at this last order, declaring that he would hold all he had of food-stuff at the muzzle of his gun, and no man in the country should force him to give up to the use of others, what might be needed for his own family and for his slaves.

Nor did he stand alone in such refusal; I heard of but two who obeyed, and one of these was the schout who had been appointed to office at the time when Master Stuyvesant refused to give us the rights called for by the charter which had been sent from Holland.

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It must be told to the credit of the Director, that he set a good example of obedience, for all his servants and slaves were hard at work hauling grain into the city from his farm above the swamps, or engaged in threshing that which yet remained on the stalk.

It seemed as if Master Stuyvesant believed it would be possible for him to hold out a long while against the English, and he was preparing for a regular siege.

SURRENDER OF THE CITY DEMANDED

There had been no more than time to issue commands, when the fleet we had been expecting sailed up the harbor, and anchored within full view of the city. The ships were seemingly crowded with soldiers, and even those who were eager to prevent the English from working their will, must have begun to understand that there was no hope of making a successful defense.

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The streets of the city were filled with men, women, and children, who wandered about aimlessly, too much excited to be able to remain within doors, and as messengers came and went from the fleet, enough of what was being done leaked out to give us a good idea of the matter in hand.

First we knew that the commander of the fleet had demanded the surrender of the city, and this we would have understood even though no one told us, because of the officers who came ashore under flag of truce.

Then it was whispered about that Master Stuyvesant wanted to talk over the situation with the English commander; but was told that the fleet had been sent to take the city, not that its officers might argue.

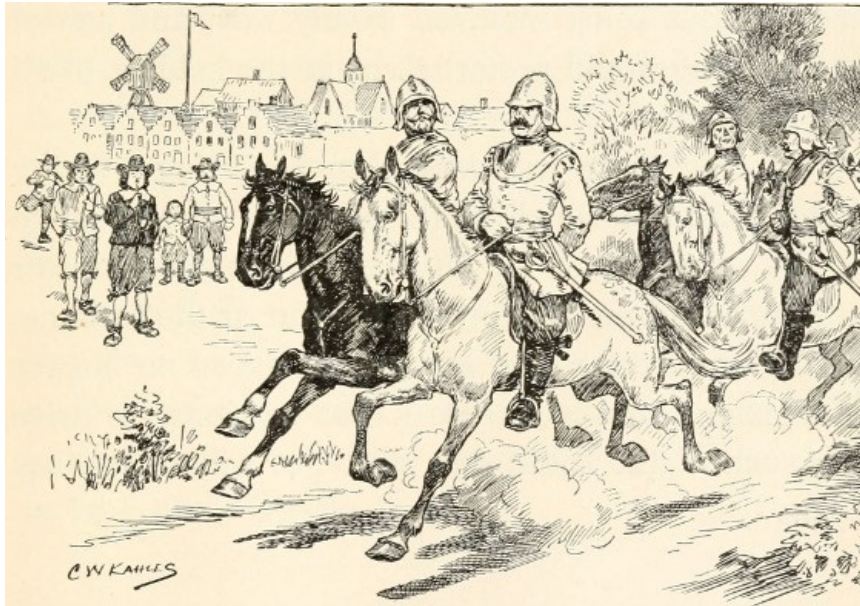
A THREE DAYS' TRUCE

Upon this Master Stuyvesant asked for three days in which to consult with his advisors, forgetting, perhaps, that the Swedes had asked for only twelve hours, and he had refused.

To this request Colonel Nicolls agreed, but at the same time made all his preparations for opening fire upon the city, in case Master Stuyvesant was so pig-headed as to refuse to surrender.

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Two of the ships were sent up the river and anchored where they could throw shot into the fort at short range, while the others were moored off Nutten Island, sending five companies of soldiers ashore near the ferry landing on Long Island, where they went into camp.



Next morning a company of horsemen and a band of soldiers came down from Hartford, and were ferried across in the boats of the fleet, thus showing that the Massachusetts Bay Company would do what they might to carry out the wishes of King Charles.

That night the commander of the English fleet sent ashore, secretly, twenty or more written messages to the people, and both Martin Kip, on whose farm the messengers landed, and I, knew beyond a peradventure that there were found men in New Amsterdam willing to spend their time carrying them where the most good might be done to the enemy.

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In these messages Colonel Nicolls promised all who would lay down their arms, full liberty to remain on the land, without being molested in any way, and agreed that his king would protect them in the holding of all their property.

Now even those who had been hesitating whether to side with the Dutch or the English, were eager to see the surrender of the city, and when the Director called upon citizens to work on the fort or the palisade, he could find none save servants or slaves to answer his summons, and even these it was necessary to drive with such of the soldiers as were yet willing to obey orders.

VISITORS FROM THE ENGLISH

At noon of the second day of the truce, a boat put off from the fleet, coming directly toward the city, and before she was near to the dock some of the Englishmen among us cried out that he

who stood in the bow was Governor Winthrop, of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Then it was that Master Stuyvesant ordered a salute to be given, as if the gentleman were coming to us as a friend, and when the latter stepped on shore, followed by five officers from the English army, the schout conducted them to the city hall, where it was said the Director and the burgomasters were waiting.

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It can well be fancied that every person in the city, save, perhaps, Master Stuyvesant's family and servants, gathered around the city hall to hear what might be going on, and there we speedily learned that the Director had fallen into a rage, even going so far as to quarrel with those other officials who had been his best friends.

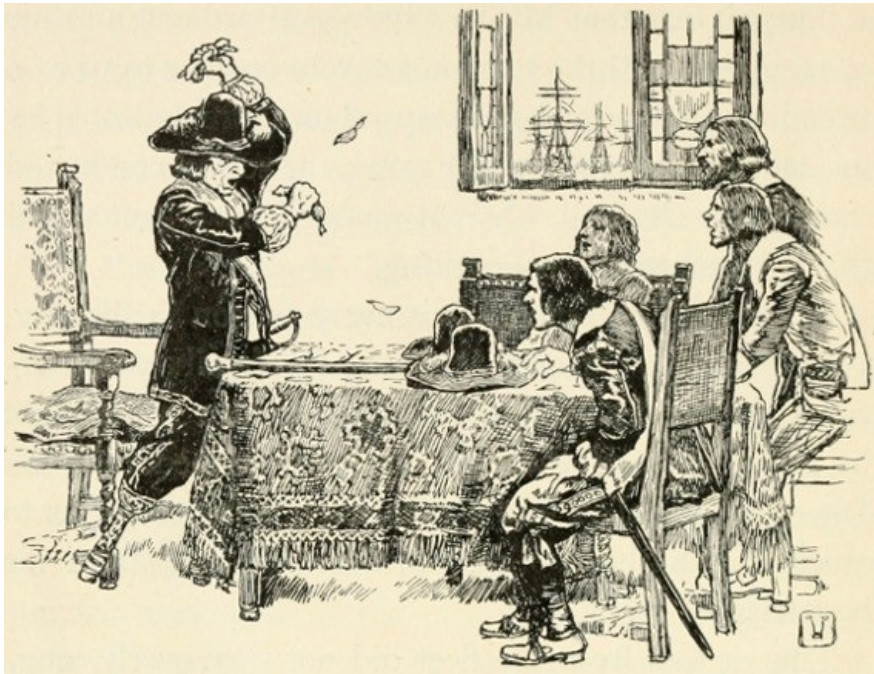
The visitors from the fleet did not stay overly long, and when they went away it was whispered among the excited citizens that Governor Winthrop had left a letter, which some of the burgomasters believed should be read to the people.

MASTER STUYVESANT'S RAGE

It seemed, as we learned very shortly, that in his rage Master Stuyvesant had torn the letter into little pieces claiming that it did not concern the common people, and then it was that his own friends left him in anger.

Within half an hour the people insisted that the letter be demanded of the Director, and five men were sent to Master Stuyvesant, claiming that which Governor Winthrop had brought.

[Pg 154]

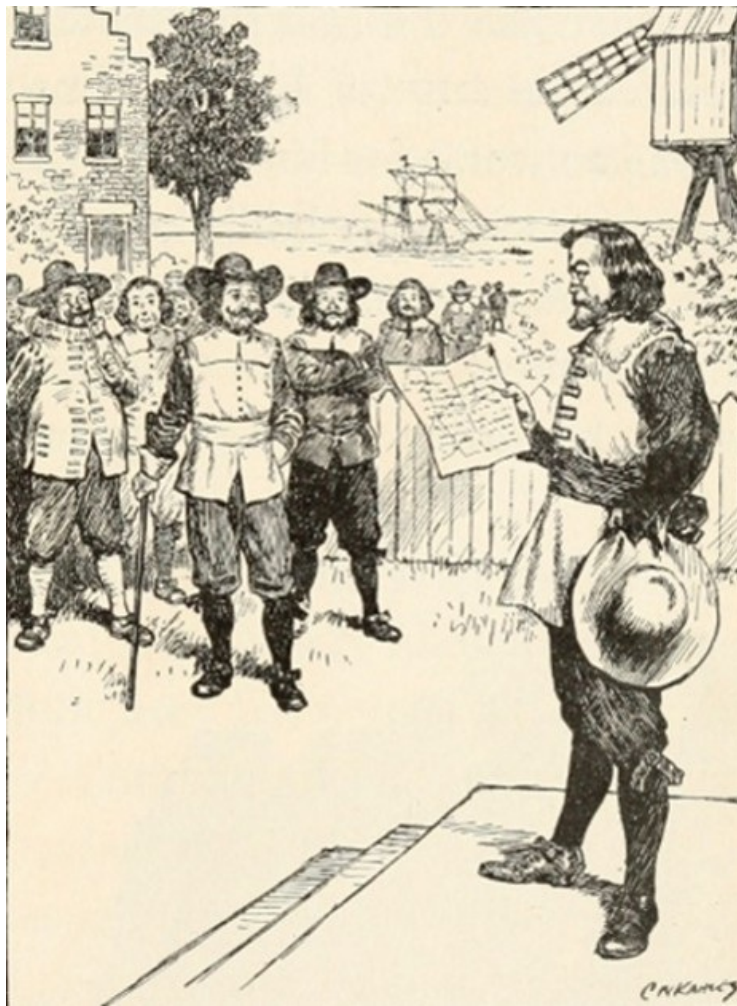


It was Martin Kip who headed the messengers from the free men of New Amsterdam, and he told me Master Stuyvesant was in a fine rage. He stumped to and fro threatening, but finally showed in his hand the tiny bits of paper, throwing them on the floor.

Then some one of the house, I do not know who, picked up the pieces, putting them together so that the words might be read, and Martin Kip, speaking from the steps of the city hall, told us what had been written.

I do not remember it all, but there was in the letter a promise that the Dutch should not be driven out after the city was captured. They would be allowed to remain, each man on his own land, free to come or go as it pleased him best, and other Dutchmen were at liberty to live in New Amsterdam with the same rights as belonged to any English man.

[Pg 155]



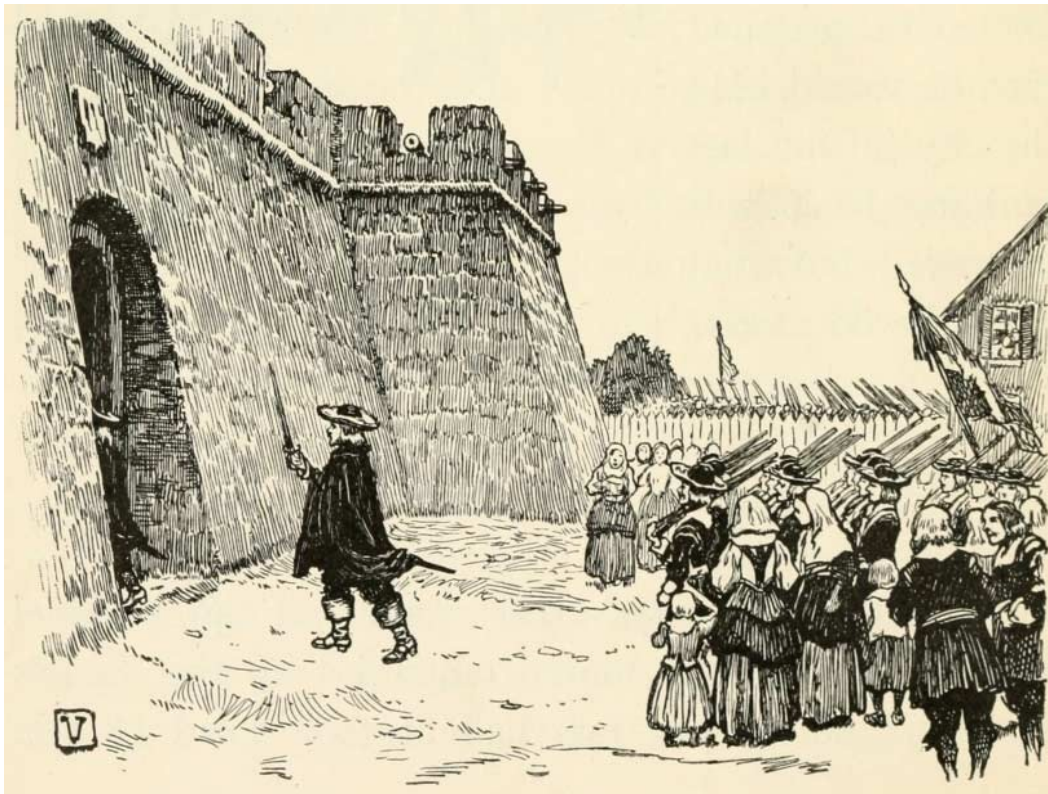
It was all up with Master Stuyvesant after that. He did not cease to storm and rage at those who refused to stand by the guns in the fort, and threatened that he would hold the city till the last building in it was destroyed; but what could he do alone?

THE END OF DUTCH RULE

When the three-days' truce was at an end, Colonel Nicolls landed three more companies of the King's soldiers, and himself marched at their head to join those who were encamped at the ferry-way. All the ships came into position for opening fire upon the city, and it was time for Master Stuyvesant to surrender, or have it done for him by those of us who were not minded to make fools of ourselves.

[Pg 156]

I have heard it said that he was near to being broken-hearted because of having come to such a plight; but it was no worse for him than it had been for the Swedish governor whom he bullied, and, by thus making promises to the people, the English commander was showing himself more of a man than had Director Stuyvesant, when he drove away every last Swede out of their homes.



Whoever gave the command to hoist the white flag over the fort in token of surrender, I know not; but it was done before the English had time to open fire, and New Amsterdam was no longer under Dutch rule. [Pg 157]

It was Monday, September 8th, in the year of our Lord, 1664, when Master Stuyvesant, at the head of the hundred and fifty soldiers, marched from the fort to take ship for Holland, and an hour later Colonel Nicolls came in with seven companies of soldiers, who, instead of remaining to eat us out of house and home, went at once on board the ships until they could go into camp on the Long Island shore.

THE CITY OF NEW YORK

That same day Colonel Nicolls was chosen governor by the Dutch themselves, and his first order was that the city be called New York in honor of the Duke of York, who had really had charge of the matter.

Next day came a message from the new governor, in which it was promised that people from all lands might come into the City of New York, with the same rights as any other; that there would be no change in the affairs until an election by the people could be held, and that each man might worship God in whatsoever way seemed to him best.

We who had lived so long in the New World had seen the last of New Amsterdam with its Dutch rulers, who knew no law but their own whims, and now were we like men who have finally thrown off a heavy burden, able to breathe freely once more. [Pg 158]

I would that I had enough of knowledge to set down in words all that I have just told you; but I am ignorant of nearly everything, save furs and bargaining with the Indians, therefore it is, that unless you shall repeat what I have said, the people of this country may never hear the story of Peter of New Amsterdam.

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Transcriber's Note:

Punctuation has been standardised.

Variations in spelling, including dialect, have been retained as in the original publication.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK PETER OF NEW AMSTERDAM: A STORY OF OLD NEW YORK ***

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