

THE MOTHER CITY OF GREATER NEW YORK.

BY MRS. SCHUYLER VAN RENSSELAER.



HE sum of sixty guilders (about twenty-four dollars) was not a big one to pay for so big an island as Manhattan, thirteen miles in length from north to south and for the greater part two miles broad. But it satisfied "the lord Sachems of the Manhathes," and Peter Minuit did not hand it over in useless cash. He gave its "equivalent" when, in 1626, he arrived as the first formally accredited director or governor of New Netherland, commissioned by the Dutch West India Company which owned and ruled and was trying to people the province; and the nature of his moneys may be guessed from a list of the articles paid, seven years later, for a large piece of land in the Connecticut Valley: "One piece of duffels, 27 ells long; six axes, six kettles, eighteen knives, one sword-blade, one shears, and some toys." Moreover, land was the Indians' only plentiful possession; and, again, we need not think of the Manhathes as immediately deprived of their island, but merely as pledged, like tenants at will, to give up tract after tract as it might be wanted.

In 1628 the white people on Manhattan numbered "270 souls, including Men, Women and Children," a good many more than could be counted at Plymouth, while Boston had not then been born. They "remained as yet without the Fort in no fear as the Natives live peaceably with them." Wassenaer, the first historian of New Netherland, tells us this, and adds:

These strangers for the most part occupy their farms. Whatever they require is supplied by the directors.¹ The winter grain has turned out well there, but the summer grain, which ripened before it was half grown in consequence of the excessive heat, was very light. The cattle sent thither have had good increase, and everything promises better as soon as the land is improved, which is very poor and scrubby.

Of the nascent town of New Amsterdam itself Wassenaer writes:

¹ The "directors" or "masters" to whom the records and letters of New Netherland constantly refer as the arbitrators of its fate were the officers of the West India Company in Holland. The Koopman was the sec-

The counting house there is kept in a stone building thatched with reed; the other houses are of the bark of trees. Each has his own house. The Director and Koopman live together; there are thirty ordinary houses on the east side of the river which runs nearly north and south. The Honorable Peter Minuit is Director there at present; Jan Lampo Schout; Sebastian Jansz Crol and Jan Huyck, Comforters of the Sick who, while awaiting a clergyman, read to the Commonalty there on Sundays from texts of Scripture with the comment. Francois Molemaecker is busy building a horse-mill over which shall be constructed a spacious room sufficient to accommodate a large congregation, and then a tower is to be erected where the bells brought from Porto Rico will be hung. . . . Men work there as in Holland; one trades upwards, southwards and northwards; another builds houses, the third farms. Each farmer has his farm and the cows on the land purchased by the Company; but the milk remains to the profit of the Boor; he sells it to those of the people who receive their wages for work every week. The houses of the Hollanders now stand without the fort, but when it is completed they will all repair within, so as to garrison it and be secure from sudden attack.

A more personal description is preserved in a letter written from Manhattan, in August, 1628, by the Rev. Jonas Michaelius to a friend in Amsterdam. He tells that he had established a congregation, and at the first service of the Lord's Supper had had "fully fifty communicants, Walloons and Dutch." He mentions the death of his wife, and then he says:

I find myself by the loss of my good and helping partner very much hindered and distressed,—for my two little daughters are yet small; maid servants are not here to be had, at least none whom they advise me to take; and the Angola slaves are thievish, lazy, and useless trash. . . . The promise which the Lords Masters of the Company had made me of some acres or surveyed lands for me to make myself a home, instead of a free table which otherwise belonged to me, is wholly of no avail. For their Honors well know that there are no horses, cows, nor laborers to be obtained here for money. . . . So I will be compelled to pass through the winter without butter and other necessities which

retary for the province; the Schout, or Schout-Fiscal, combined the duties of sheriff and attorney-general; and both of these, like the governor or director-general, were appointed by the Company.

the ships did not bring with them to be sold here. The rations which are given out and charged for high enough are all hard, stale food as they are used to on board ship; and frequently this is not very good and there cannot be obtained as much of it as may be desired. . . . The summer yields something, but what of that for any one who has no strength? The Indians also bring some things, but one who has no wares, such as knives, beads and the like, or Seewan, cannot have any good of them. . . . I have now ordered from Holland almost all necessaries: but expect to pass through the winter with hard and scanty food. The country yields many good things for the support of life, but they are all to be gathered in an uncultivated and wild state. . . . They fell much wood here to carry to Fatherland, but the vessels are too few to take much of it. They are making a windmill to saw the wood and we have also a gristmill. . . . The country is good and pleasant and the climate is healthy notwithstanding the sudden changes of cold and heat. The sun is very warm; the winter strong and severe and continues full as long as in our country. The best remedy is not to spare the wood—of which there is enough—and to cover oneself well with rough skins which can also easily be obtained. The harvest—God be praised—is in the barns, and is better gathered than ever before. The ground is fertile enough to reward labor, but they must clear it well and manure and cultivate it the same as our lands require. It has hitherto happened much worse because many of the people are not very laborious or could not obtain their proper necessaries for want of bread. But it now begins to go on better, and it would be entirely different now if the Masters would only send good laborers and make regulations of all matters, in order, with what the land itself produces, to do for the best.

These are very simple accounts of a very poor and humble frontier village. There is no talk of personal independence, for the white men, like the red, are as yet the Company's tenants at will. There is no talk, as there always was in New England, of founding a new commonwealth, or of propagating "pure" forms of faith. The chief structure is a house of trade, and the house of God is an accessory part of one devoted to the nurture of the body. Nevertheless, there is a care for the soul. Fifty communicants are a goodly number to be drawn from a population of less than three hundred persons of all ages, and "Comforters of the Sick" has a more gently Christian sound than most of the ecclesiastical terms of the time. A touch of picturesqueness is bestowed by the mention of church bells which are military trophies taken in hot fight from Spain. And the kinship of the frontier village with the big modern town on Manhattan is amusingly suggested by the complaints about inefficient servants and sudden shifts of temperature.

The second governor, Wouter Van Twiller, who arrived in 1632, was a weak and bibulous gentleman, caring much for his own interests, little for those of the Company or its colonists. Yet he improved the town to some extent. Fort Amsterdam had fallen out of repair before it was finished. He rebuilt it with earthen walls, red-cedar palisades, and corner-points of stone. He also built the first church—a little one of wood, near the fort, on the Broad street of to-day, with a house and a stable for the clergyman, Domine Bogardus. He put up a small bake-house, a dwelling for the midwife, others for such functionaries as the cooper, the smith, and the corporal, and a stable for some goats which the governor of Virginia had sent him as a gift—forefathers of the progeny which trouble Manhattan even unto this modern day. He directed that a suitable mansion be built for himself on "the Plantation," and other structures on the Company's other farms, and ordered various buildings at Pavonia, on the Jersey shore, and also on the Delaware River, and at Fort Orange "an elegant large house with balustrades and eight small dwellings for the people." In this way he spent the Company's money, or proposed to spend it, much more freely than the Company liked. Meanwhile he was feathering a cozy private nest. For himself he bought, without the Company's sanction, wide lands on Long Island, two of the larger islands in the East River, and the largest of those in the harbor—Nut Island, now called Governor's; and these farms he tilled more diligently than his masters'.

Captain David Pietersen de Vries was often on Manhattan in the time of Van Twiller and his successor, Governor Kieft. He was a noted Dutch soldier, navigator, and colonist. He left a voluminous journal, which has more than once been printed; and, among many other interesting things, he tells of the building of New Amsterdam's first substantial church. It was begun some years after the arrival of Kieft, who came in 1636. De Vries narrates:

As I was every day with Commander Kieft, . . . he told me one day that he had built a fine tavern of stone for the English who, passing continually there with their vessels, in going from New England to Virginia, occasioned him much inconvenience, and could now take lodgings there. I told him this was excellent for travellers, but that we wanted very sadly a church for our people. It was a shame when the English passed there and saw only a mean barn in which we performed our worship. In New England, on the contrary, the first

thing they did when they had built some dwellings was to erect a fine church. We ought to do the same; it being supposed that the West India Company were very zealous in protecting the reformed church against the Spanish tyranny; that we had good materials for it; fine oak-wood; fine building stone; good lime made of oyster shells, being better than our lime in Holland.

Therefore New Amsterdam's "first consistory" was formed, Kieft and De Vries being two of its members. Kieft obtained much money by passing around his subscription-list at a wedding-party in the house of Domine Bogardus, when his own head was steady and other heads were light, and by holding the signers to their pledges, although on the following day some of them "well repented it." The church, which we see in so many old prints, with its "walls of rock-stone" and high-pitched twin roofs shingled with "oak tiles," was promptly begun within the shelter of the fort. It was dedicated to St. Nicholas, the patron saint of the town, and with the voice of the town bell—the proud old bell from Porto Rico—it regulated all the townfolk's works and ways.

The fort commanded the southern end of the island, overlooking the reef of rocks afterward filled in and extended to form the Battery. It stood between the Bridge, Whitehall, and State streets of to-day, facing the Bowling Green. This was an unadorned open space, then called the Plain, used for the people's sports, for military exercises, and for public gatherings, and long the focus of civic life. For its own use the West India Company had reserved six large farms, or bouweries, four stretching along the southeastern and two along the western shore—the Bossen Bouwerie, or Farm in the Forest, covering the site where Greenwich Village sprang up in later days.

Kieft was a more active governor than Van Twiller, and did much for his town before he ruined it by bringing on an Indian war. He imported horses, cattle, negroes, and salt, and bought from the Indians more lands on Long Island, which he rented as fast as he could. He took a keen interest in horticulture; and on Staten Island he set up, for his own profit, the first brandy-still that the colony had seen. "Staple rights" had been granted to Manhattan—all passing vessels were obliged to unload at its wharf, or to pay a toll instead. Small bodies of settlers arrived; private planters went to work in earnest; the Company's farms were improved; and statutes were passed to regulate tobacco culture, now become a prominent industry.

The earlier streets had followed the water-front, then formed by the line of Pearl street, to the eastward of the fort. Here stood the new city inn, facing the East River, but on a site which is well away from the shore of the widened city of to-day, near the head of Coenties Slip. Broadway was begun in 1643, on the site of its present No. 9, opposite the Bowling Green; and here for many years stood Krigier's Tavern. At first the people had been mere squatters, putting their houses where they chose and facing them as they chose, without personal titles to the land. Now some attention was paid to street-lines, and the land was surveyed, and sold in small parcels. The first lot of which the sale is recorded brought \$9.60; and in 1643 a house, with several acres of ground, not far from the fort, was bought for \$640. Most of the houses were of wood and very small. Cornelis Van Tienhoven, who had been in the Company's employ for a number of years and was now Koopman or secretary, lived in one that was thirty feet in length and twenty in width, on a spot that was afterward famous as Golden Hill. But the Company's warehouses were of stone, and the governor's residence, within the fort, was of brick. Kieft ordered for himself another dwelling, one hundred feet in length and partly of stone; and on the outlying bouweries the farmers built substantially. Jonas Bronck, a Dane, whose farm lay beyond the Harlem, where Bronx Park lies to-day, lived within stone walls, under a tiled roof. And his wife had substantial possessions—forty books, eleven pictures, various silver bowls, tankards, and spoons, thirty pewter plates, and much clothing of cloth and of satin as well as of program.

Many of the names known in New Amsterdam or its neighborhood by the year 1643 are still very well known in New York, although some of them have changed their spelling a little or narrowed it down to one of the varying forms that usage then allowed. Among the Dutch and Flemish and Huguenot names we read, for instance, Opdyke, Verplanck, Hardenberg, Hendricks, Bogardus, De Forest, De Witt, Duryea, Provost, Rapelje, Van Dyck, Wynkoop, De Kay, Snedeker, Mese-rolle, Coster, Colfax, Cowenhoven, Wendell, and Kip; and among the English, Ogdén, Belcher, and Lawrence. Some of their bearers were men of education, and a few had had social standing in Holland; but most of the immigrants had been described as wholly "without means," and our best genealogies run back pretty much as do those of the

Englishmen who once were Normans—not always to knights, or even to squires.

In the autumn of 1626 the ship which took home the news of the purchase of Manhattan had carried a cargo of 7246 beaver-skins, and more than a thousand peltries of other kinds, valued at over forty-five thousand guilders (nearly \$19,000), "together with a considerable quantity of oak-timber and of nut-wood"—the valuable hickory wood which grew in America only; and in this year the imports to Manhattan were estimated at nearly \$8500. During the next few years its exports increased, but not very fast; and therefore, perceiving that "considerable trade and goods, and many commodities, might be obtained from there," but that "the land in many places, being full of weeds and wild productions, could not be properly cultivated in consequence of the scantiness of the population"—therefore, in 1629, the government of Holland ratified a new scheme of colonization which the West India Company had evolved, and which resembled the schemes essayed by the French in Canada and the Portuguese in Brazil. A Charter of Freedoms and Exemptions was granted to "all such as shall plant colonies in New Netherland."

Under this charter great estates, known as "patroonships," or lordships, were established in various parts of the wide province which extended from the mouth of the Delaware to that Northern wilderness where the long struggle between France and England for the possession of the continent was to begin in the latter part of the century. The first "patroon" purchased his lands along the Delaware, naming them Swaanendael. But soon one of the Company's most influential directors, Kiliaen Van Rensselaer, claimed by proxy a great tract near Fort Orange (now Albany), while another, Michael Paauw, bought the district "called Hoboken-Hacking, situate opposite New Amsterdam on the west shore of River Mauritius"—a Dutch name for the Hudson. These were the chief patroonships. Pavonia¹ soon spread southward over the site of Jersey City and embraced the whole of Staten Island also, and by the year 1646 Rensselaerswyck covered an area of nearly twelve hundred square miles.

Feudal rights and privileges were granted to the owners of these estates. The example thus set by the Dutch was followed by the English when New Netherland became New York, and in this way a powerful landed

¹ Pavonia is a Latinized form of Paauw's name, and this is also preserved in the name of Communipaw.

aristocracy was founded and fostered. During Dutch times it did not develop; indeed, Rensselaerswyck was the only surviving patroonship when the Duke of York's ships arrived in 1664. Yet, from the first, rivalry in the fur trade engendered constant and bitter disputes between the officials of the Company and the patroons whom it had created. For many years the prosperity of New Amsterdam was impaired by the jealousy of the up-river settlers, while they were exasperated by the Company's desire to favor the island which bore the chief town and which it had reserved for its own colonists.

To the modern New-Yorker, however, the general characteristics of the Dutch as contrasted with the English settlers of North America are more interesting than the quarrels of the Dutch among themselves. None is more striking or more admirable than the Dutchman's broad-mindedness in matters of conscience and opinion.

In the statute-books of New Amsterdam certain pages were honorably blank which in those of Boston were closely inscribed, sometimes in letters of blood. New Amsterdam, for instance, had no undemocratic sumptuary laws distinguishing between the permissible attire of the richer and the less rich. It did not fight against the joys of "tobacco-taking." It did not forbid "unprofitable fowling, dancing, card-playing," and other possibly innocent forms of amusement, but only said they should not be pursued during service time on the Sabbath. It did not believe in witches; and it left the affairs of a man with his God to be settled by God and the man.

Religious liberty and equality, in our modern and American sense, did not exist even in Holland, the one existing republic of the seventeenth century. But the generous religious tolerance which did exist there was so phenomenal that it brought out scorn and wrath from every other land, and from men of every sect—from the English Protestants, who profited greatly by it, as well as from continental Catholics and Lutherans. And the temper of New Netherland was the temper of its fatherland.

Every one knows that a government like that of early Massachusetts, integrally uniting Church and State, could have been built on none but a stiff sectarian basis. But it should be remembered that this government was the outcome, not the cause, of Puritan intolerance. The differing spirit of New

Netherland was not rooted in its differing form of government. It ran back of this to the spirit of Dutch Protestantism at home. If the Dutch of the New World had been allowed to rule themselves, as were the men of Massachusetts Bay, they would have planted no theocracies; and it hardly needs to be said that the workings of New England theocracies were hateful in their eyes. Holland's large-heartedness excited Puritan rage; but Puritan narrow-mindedness provoked New Netherland's wonder and contempt. Loud Dutch laughter must have greeted the report of ordinances such as that which empowered the Massachusetts General Court to proceed against all holders of erroneous or unsafe opinions, carefully tabulated to the number of eighty-two; and we can guess what Dutch common sense and Dutch hospitality thought about the case of the respectable "gentlemen" who, as Governor Winthrop recounts, came to Boston's doors in 1630, but were "turned away" because they could produce no ecclesiastical "credentials."

The "spirit of the age" has been a little exaggerated for the explaining of the Puritan. The Dutchman who lived in the same age has been pushed a little too far out of sight. Of course the spirit of the age, in all its Protestant avatars, disliked and dreaded the Catholic; but it spoke with different tongues in this place and in that. In the year 1647 the General Court at Boston ordered that "no Jesuit or ecclesiastical person ordained by the authority of the pope" should come within its jurisdiction, and that, if brought there by shipwreck or accident, such person should depart at once. And in Plymouth, as in Boston, the people more than sustained the views of their rulers; for when their rulers were courteous and kind in their treatment of ecclesiastical persons who came officially from Canada, they questioned whether it were proper thus to receive "idolatrour Papists." But in the year 1642, when a party of Canadian French had been captured by the Mohawks, Arendt Van Corlaer of Rensselaerswyck took great trouble, and incurred great danger, to save them from immediate death. One of them, Father Jogues,—the famous Jesuit missionary, the first of his kind who worked and suffered within the borders of our State,—was soon kidnapped by the Dutch at much risk to themselves, secured by the payment of a great ransom, sent down to Manhattan, hospitably entertained there, and given "black clothes and all things necessary,"

and a free passage to Europe. And in 1644, when another Jesuit was likewise rescued, Governor Kieft issued a formal proclamation commending him to the Christian charity of all Dutch officials. This was the voice of an "age of intolerance," speaking through the mouths of men whose sufferings at the hand of Rome had been tenfold fiercer than those of any English sect.

In New Netherland the official theory was that only the State Church, the Reformed Church of Holland, should be supported or definitely countenanced by the government, and that, if the government should see fit to forbid any other forms of public worship, they should be held unlawful. But in practice complete toleration was allowed. No prohibitions of any sort were formulated until Governor Stuyvesant got the chance; then he was not supported by his own people, and was rebuked and restrained by his superiors in Holland; and in New Netherland the question of orthodoxy never complicated the question of political liberty, as it did in Massachusetts and New Haven.

In the time of Governor Kieft New Amsterdam and the neighboring settlements gladly received as permanent residents all the heretics who were forced or who chose to fly from Massachusetts — those who had openly assailed the sacro-sanctity of its government, as well as those who had confined themselves to transcendental theorizings. Governor Winthrop says that many people left Massachusetts at this time because of hard material conditions. But he also names the Anabaptist heresy as a reason why many accepted the "fair offers" of Governor Kieft; and a Dutch historian writes that they came "in numbers, nay, whole towns," to enjoy "freedom of conscience and escape from the intolerable government of New England." Like the Huguenot victims of Catholic intolerance, some of whom they met on New Netherland's soil, these victims of the Puritans' narrower tests were in the main good people, and among them were very prominent figures.

Isaac Allerton, who had been conspicuous among the Pilgrim Fathers at Plymouth and a pioneer at Marblehead, soon ranked among New Amsterdam's best citizens; and John Underhill, the great Indian-fighter, took service in Kieft's little army. Governor Winthrop has recorded Underhill's "wicked course" in Boston, and the way in which, with much "blubbering," he made public confession of his sins,— "his adultery, his hypocrisy, his persecution of God's people

here, and especially his pride, as the root of all . . . and contempt of the magistrates." But, being interpreted, his persecution of the saints and contempt for their rulers meant a bold love of free speech and equal political rights. This was more offensive than his real iniquities, and therefore, in spite of his penitences, Boston could not long contain him. In his new home he seems to have drunk as much as the Dutch, and he certainly roistered more; but he proved invaluable in their Indian wars.

In these wars perished the famous Anne Hutchinson, who had come from Boston by way of Rhode Island to find rest for her transcendental soul, and work for her philanthropic hands, at Pelham Neck; and until the ruinous conflict began, the Rev. Mr. Throgmorton, coming from Salem with thirty-five Anabaptist families, found a land of peace indeed in the region now known as Westchester, but then as Vreedeland. The Rev. Mr. Doughty came from Cohasset to Long Island, so that he might "in conformity with the Dutch Reformation have freedom of conscience which, contrary to his expectations, he missed in New England"; and Lady Deborah Moody, another Anabaptist, established a colony of forty persons at Gravesend. Each and all of these, and many another, received a brotherly welcome and a brother's share of right and privilege; and an interesting proof of tolerance is embalmed in Lady Moody's patent. Whatsoever form of worship she might choose to supply for her people was to be "without molestation or distraction from any madgistrate or madgistrates, or other ecclesiastical ministers that may p'tend to jurisdiction over them." This was at the time when even Winslow of Plymouth saw fit to speak of the mere wish for toleration as "that carrion."

The mixture of nationalities as well as the mixture of faiths in Kieft's town must have seemed strange indeed to a visitor from Winthrop's; for Boston tried to keep itself as pure in blood as in belief. Father Jogues recorded that eighteen languages might be heard in New Amsterdam. But in Boston, a few years later, a man was fined for bringing Irishmen on shore, and ordered to send them at once "out of this jurisdiction"; a woman was permitted to keep two Irish children only by taking oath that their parents had been English; and Scotch soldiers, captured in Cromwell's wars and sent out as indented servants, were classed with negroes and Indians in militia regulations. Of course, with many good people, bad ones from all

the colonies came as refugees to New Netherland, and its growing contingent of English was to add to its political troubles and to aid in its eventual downfall.

EXCEPT in regard to the Indian wars, which dreadfully illumine the last years of Governor Kieft's term of rule, few facts are remembered about him or his predecessor, Van Twiller. This is because what professes to be a picture of their times is painted in Irving's Knickerbocker history. An amusing book, our fathers thought it. No more mendacious one was ever written. It is not a caricature of real persons and real events. It is a fantasy which radically misrepresents the character and condition of place and people. It has, therefore, done more than to confuse the popular mind in respect to matters of detail. It has so distorted its point of view that veracious accounts of early New Amsterdam seem to it as fables.

Van Twiller was a bibulous and self-seeking merchant's clerk, intrusted with tasks entirely beyond his strength. But he had certain good qualities: he dealt prudently with his aggressive English neighbors, and wisely and kindly with the Indians. Of course the comic-opera background which Irving and his imitators set behind his figure has no relation to the real New Amsterdam in its early days; and one thought of what his fellow-countrymen had been at home proves that in the New World many of them cannot have been buffoons, or even men as feeble and foolish as Van Twiller himself.

With all their faults, the Puritans were the finest product of seventeenth-century England. John Milton spoke of their emigration to New England as "the departure of so many of the best"; and even their adversaries in State and Church realized what the motherland was losing when they sailed in such numbers, and tried to restrict the swelling tide. If Holland had likewise sent its very best, and by the tens of thousands, New Netherland might have outstripped New England in material and in intellectual ways; for the best Hollanders of that time had most of the virtues of the Puritan without his deep defects. But Hollanders were nowhere planting colonies for the sake of founding new commonwealths, or for the sake of the colonies themselves—only for the sake of the profit to be derived from them. And those who emigrated were not going in throngs because of political or religious discontent. They were being sent abroad in very small bands because of the service they

might render to Holland's commerce, and, through this, to its growing jealousy of England and its long-cherished hate of Spain; and it was hard to find any who would consent to go. Ready enough for adventurous trade or war, the Dutch of the first half of the seventeenth century were not ready for colonization. Those who liked a settled life were perfectly satisfied at home. Just at the time when the wonderful waves of willing immigration began to sweep into Massachusetts Bay, the West India Company at Amsterdam said of New Netherland:

The colonizing of such wild and uncultivated countries demands more inhabitants than we can well supply; not so much through lack of population in which our provinces abound, as from the fact that all who are inclined to do any sort of work here procure enough to eat without any trouble and are therefore unwilling to go so far from home on an uncertainty.

Having enough to eat was a very minor concern with the English Puritans of the time. Political and religious discontent drove them westward. These spurs did not touch the Hollander, and therefore New Netherland grew very slowly in comparison with New England. But, on the other hand, it was not peopled, like Virginia, with a mixture of all kinds and classes, from hot-brained adventurers and dispirited cavaliers to indented servants who had been paupers and criminals at home. It contained many adventurers, but of a commercial, not a military, sort—peddlers and petty traders who were loudly complained of because they brought nothing into the colony, and did nothing for it, but "having skimmed a little fat off the pot, could take to their heels again." Outcasts and social failures of various sorts may be supposed, but they were not sent over in bands. At the other extreme, its "aristocratic" element would not have been allowed the name in an English colony, for even the most notable patrols had been merchants at home. Traders of a much humbler kind—shopkeepers, sailors, farmers, and artisans—made up the population of New Amsterdam, with a sprinkling of well-born, well-educated burghers, and, as time went on, of those who brought some substance with them.

But Wouter Van Twiller's town was not even a well-organized town of humble burgher folk. It was still a frontier village, a trading-post just growing into civic life. Of course it put less restraint upon sins, and especially upon the great Dutch sin of drunkenness, than the real towns of the fatherland. Prob-

bly it was in some respects a bad little place. But many excuses may be made for it, if we read what Governor Winthrop writes in regard to the morals of early Boston. It insisted that many sins which we now call private ones were crimes to be officially prevented; and this meant a measure of conscience and decorum which may instructively be compared with the spirit of the isolated mining-camps and trading-stations of our modern day. If sometimes it witnessed deeds of violence, it never needed vigilantes, and, in fact, it seems to have hardly needed police regulations. It felt so little fear of white ruffians or of red that it set no watchmen at night.

Moreover, while pioneer life almost always bears its own peculiar crop of evils, the softer sins of civilization cannot flourish in its wild soil. Early Manhattan cannot have been a place where fools or cowards were many, and it certainly was not a place where plethoric citizens habitually smoked and dozed and boozed in chimney-corners—this poor, cold, stunted, harassed, and often half-starved little outpost in the wilderness, with an unfamiliar climate, uncleared lands, and ever-possible Indian foes to fight, dependent upon a trust of tradesmen for sustenance and defense, and upon these tradesmen's employees for guidance. There was not much humor in a situation like this. There can have been nothing feebly comic about the major part of the people who bore with it. And there is nothing shameful, if nothing very heroic, in the true tales of the coming of the English ship *William* and the contest for the Connecticut River—pegs though they have been made for the support of contumelious caricatures.

VAN TWILLER'S real faults were shown, not on the borders of his province, but in its little capital. He could not keep its unruly elements in order, and sometimes, falling into his cups, he led the disorderliness himself. But his people did not laugh at his "pranks," as we have been taught to do. Captain de Vries indignantly described them. Van Dincklagen, a "learned doctor of laws," who was now the Schout, protested so vigorously that Van Twiller brought counter-charges against him and shipped him back to Holland. Domine Bogardus reproached the governor for his loose ways of life, calling him a "child of the devil, a consummate villain," and assailed him violently from the pulpit; and the governor's friends retorted that the domine thus demeaned himself in ways "unbecoming

a heathen, much less a Christian, letting alone a preacher of the gospel."

Governor Kieft's faults were of a different kind. Able and industrious as a commercial administrator, he was passionate and cruel, and intolerant of opposition and advice. After helping his colony potently for some years, he ruined it by his treatment of the Indian neighbors who had hitherto been its friends and allies.

By nature the Dutch were more gentle and tolerant than the English, and they were also more inclined by their special needs to a policy of friendship with the natives. The Puritans did not long depend upon the fur trade as a main resource. Tilling their fields and fishing their seas, they soon prized the Indian's absence more than any wares that he could bring. But the New-Netherlanders craved nothing so much as the skins of wild creatures, and could more easily obtain them by bartering with wild hunters than by shooting and trapping on their own account in tangled forests and deep and rapid streams. So they conciliated the Indians as middlemen between themselves and the beaver, and also as the only men who in times of dearth could furnish them with food. The West India Company in Europe, and almost all its colonists in America, were fair and honorable in their attitude toward the savage, buying his lands, respecting his customs and beliefs, keeping the treaties they made with him, and, as Mr. Fernow writes,¹ regarding him "as a man with rights of life, liberty, opinion, and property like their own." To this policy, wisely followed by the English when they became the owners of New Netherland, "we owe," says the same historian, "the existence of the United States." That is, we owe our national existence to the fact that, generation after generation, the powerful Iroquois tribes formed a steady bulwark against the aggressions of the Canadian French, enabling the English to retain New York, the "pivot province," and eventually to win in the great conflict which ended on the Plains of Abraham and under the walls of Montreal—the conflict which made the continent English, and, at the same time, so drew the colonies together that they could combine to throw off England's yoke.

In Kieft's days the people of New Amsterdam had not changed their attitude toward the Indians; but the Indians, freely frequenting the town, with maize, tobacco, and furs to sell, and working as servants indoors and

¹In "Winsor's Narrative and Critical History of America."

out, had lost their awe of the white man, developed their passion for his drinks, and grown so covetous of his firearms that the prices they offered could hardly be refused, despite the strict laws against such traffic. The liberty to trade with the savages, which the West India Company had gradually granted its colonists, was beneficial in many ways; but it scattered them unduly and tempted many of them deep into the wilderness, while near the town the farmers let their cattle stray abroad, to the injury of the Indians' crops. Familiarity bred its usual result. Individual crimes naturally followed, and even a wise governor could scarcely have prevented local outbreaks. But Kieft's rashness and severity, and his contempt for the Indians' customary methods of apology and reparation, provoked them more and more. He was not supported in his course by the better or the major part of his people, but only by a few of his employees and cronies, and by the lawless element which, in a frontier town, naturally existed. The fears which the New-Amsterdammers felt when they first realized what his feelings toward the Indians were, their anger when these feelings grew into brutal deeds, and their remorse at the way in which the red men had been treated and their own good fame had thereby been disgraced—all these things are fully set forth in the journal of Captain de Vries, and in many letters and formal documents sent over to Holland. But these easily accessible records are so seldom read, even by the professed historian, that the Dutch of New Amsterdam are still generally condemned for the sins of their governor. Even so careful and just a writer as Parkman declares that Kieft's Indian wars were brought on by the "besotted cruelty" of the Dutch.

One good thing these wars accomplished: Kieft soon grew frightened at the results of his own besotted cruelty, and ordered the people to select twelve of their number to consult with him in the government. The "Twelve Men" thus appointed immediately turned their attention to other than Indian affairs, and demanded municipal freedoms for their fellow-citizens. Kieft dissolved their body, but was soon driven to sanction the forming of another, similar in kind, which was called the "Eight Men." These delegates repeated the demand of their predecessors, and thus the first political struggle on Manhattan was begun—a struggle for municipal liberty which, in Peter Stuyvesant's time, resulted in a victory for the people.

But meanwhile New Amsterdam was al-

most wiped out. After describing how, by Kieft's orders, many innocent Indians were massacred at Pavonia and at Corlaer's Hook (that easternmost point of Manhattan where the children of its poorest poor now play about in a peaceful waterside park), one of the old reports tells how eleven tribes of Indians flew to arms, and adds:

The consequence was that about 1000 of these and many soldiers and colonists belonging to us were killed. Almost all the bouweries were also destroyed, so that only three remained on the Manhattes and two on Staten Island, and the greater part of the cattle were also destroyed. Whatever remained of these had to be kept in a very small enclosure, except in the Rensselaer's Colonie, lying on the North River in the neighborhood of Fort Orange, which experienced no trouble and enjoyed peace because they continued to sell firearms and powder to the Indians even during the war against our people.

Roger Williams, who took ship from New Amsterdam at this time, declared:

Before we weighed anchor mine eyes saw the flames of their towns, and the flights and hurries of men, women, and children, and the present removal of all that could for Holland.

And a memorial of the Eight Men to the States-General in Holland, dated in November, 1643, describes the condition of the colony:

Almost every place is abandoned. We, wretched people, must skulk, with wives and little ones that still survive, in poverty together, in and around the fort at the Manahatas where we are not safe even for an hour; whilst the Indians daily threaten to overwhelm us with it. Very little can be planted this autumn and much less in the spring; so that it will come to pass that all of us who will yet save our lives must of necessity perish next year of hunger and sorrow unless our God have pity on us. We are all here, from the smallest to the greatest, devoid of counsel and means, wholly powerless. The enemy meets with scarce any resistance. The garrison consists of but fifty @ sixty soldiers unprovided with ammunition. Fort

Amsterdam, utterly defenceless, stands open to the enemy night and day. The Company hath few or no effects here (as the Director hath informed us); were it not for this, there would have been still time to receive assistance from the English at the East (ere all had gone to ruin). . . . In fine, we experience here the greatest misery which must astonish a Christian heart to see or to hear.

Before the year 1643 the *gemeende*, or commonalty, of New Amsterdam included five hundred men, so that a total population of at least twenty-five hundred souls may be supposed. By the end of this year the Eight Men, in a memorial sent to the West India Company, with the one addressed to the States-General, declared:

The fort is defenceless and entirely out of order and resembles (with submission) rather a molehill than a fort against an enemy. . . . The population is composed mainly of women and children; the freemen (exclusive of the English) are about 200 strong, who must protect by force their families now skulking in straw huts outside the fort. . . . Cattle destroyed, houses burnt; the mouths of women and children must remain shut. We speak not now of other necessities, such as clothing, shirts, shoes and stockings.

Many colonists had been slain, many had emigrated, the rest were in despair, and no one could look to William Kieft to build up the perishing little place. Under the rule of Peter Stuyvesant it was built up again, it flourished, and it gained a measure of self-government. Although in 1664, when the English captured it, it was not as populous as it had been in 1642, it was a much more civilized, contented, and wealthy little place. But the chief credit for its rebirth is due, not to Peter Stuyvesant, who opposed its desire for an increase of liberty, and not to the West India Company, which alternately neglected and oppressed it, but to its own merchants, artisans, and farmers—to those industrious, energetic, hospitable, and kindly men and women whom Irving and his imitators portray as a set of sleepy, cowardly, drunken triflers and buffoons.

