



NEW YORK IN THE MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. (From a Print of the period.)

OLD NEW YORK.



ORD MACAULAY'S historical arithmetic would have found congenial employment in estimating the profits which, had their lives been prolonged till now, would have been reaped by the adventurous Dutchmen who, in 1626, purchased for twenty-four dollars (£4 16s.) the whole island now occupied by the city of New York. It is probable, however, that the simple Munhato Indians who were its original masters, considered that

the swampy and desolate "Isle of Manhattan" had fetched a good price; and indeed, had any one presented to those sturdy, broad-faced, bearded men in doublet and trunk-hose, as they stood chaffering with the stately, feather-crowned "red-skins" of the forest, a true picture of what that lonely place was one day to be, it would doubtless have astonished them quite as much as their own appearance had astonished the savages with whom they traded.*

The "four houses" which were the first germ of the Empire City multiplied apace, and in 1629 the infant colony of New Amsterdam (as it was then called) received its first charter, under the directorship of Peter Minnewitt, who was succeeded by Wouter (Walter) van Twiller, the first of the three Dutch Governors † immortalised in that masterpiece

* The island was first discovered in September, 1609, by five of Hendrick Hudson's sailors, whom their captain sent through the "Narrows" in one of the ship's boats.

† The two others were Wilhelmus Kieft and Peter Stuyvesant.

of good-humoured satire, "Knickerbocker's History of New York." Tradition has chronicled that the first schoolmaster arrived in 1633, and the first lawyer commenced practice in 1650. A few English settlers appeared in 1635, whose quiet behaviour gave little warning that they were so soon to be the masters of the whole settlement; and except some trifling difficulties with the Indians, mingled with apprehensions of possible danger from the iron-handed colonists of New England, nothing occurred during the next few years to disturb the archaic repose that seems to hang over the early history of every Dutch colony, and still lingers lovingly, amid all the bustle of go-ahead America, around the remoter villages of the Hudson.

In 1653 came the introduction of municipal government by the appointment of burgomasters and "schepens," bringing in its train the erection of the first Town Hall, at the head of what is now Cœnties Slip. Five years later, the municipality took the bold step of paving the streets, the road-ways of which were laid down with cobble-stones, and the side-walks with brick, while the gutters were curbed with wood. The same year witnessed the foreshadowing of "the finest police force in the world," in the form of eight watchmen, who perambulated the streets at night with their rattles; while, as a precaution against attack, the wary burghers erected upon the earthen embankment which formed the landward boundary of the little town, a stout wooden palisade, in honour of which they gave to the adjacent thoroughfare (little dreaming how celebrated that name was one day to be) the appropriate title of *Wall Street*.

But despite these astounding innovations—which doubtless furnished the quiet Dutch settlers with matter of conversation for many a day—this little outpost of civilisation retained its primitive character

during the whole period of its connection with Holland. A painter might love to reproduce the picturesque old-world aspect of the miniature city, with its "four hundred buildings" and 1,500 inhabitants; its straight, wide streets; its gable-ended houses faced with red or black tiles; its tall windmills and quaint little toy citadel; its quaint, mediæval-looking market-place, where groups of painted savages mingled with the crowd of grave, portly, taciturn burghers, and buxom lasses in the voluminous skirts and bright-coloured kerchiefs of the old Flemish school.

At the time of Peter Stuyvesant's accession to the governor's chair, about 1645, the little straw-thatched cottages of one storey, surmounted by wooden chimneys, which formed the original edition of New Amsterdam, had already given place to substantial brick mansions of the solid Dutch fashion, whose ridgy roofs, projecting gables, and shining weather-cocks gave to the whole town that strange mediæval picturesqueness that haunts the Spanish cities of Gustave Doré. The street-door was divided cross-wise in the middle, like that of a shop, the upper part being adorned with a large iron or brass knocker, kept scrupulously bright. Every street-door had a porch in front of it, furnished with a commodious bench, upon which, in the pleasant summer evenings, the members of the household were wont to enjoy a chat with their friends and neighbours; while a passage along one side of the building led round to the long, low-roofed, cross-beamed kitchen, with its huge, roomy fire-place, the usual sitting-room of every family in those primitive days, when the arrival of a ship from Holland was the event of the year. The picturesque contrast between this quiet, jog-trot Past, and the bustling Present has seldom been more vividly sketched than in the graphic words of America's last and best historian:—

"On the west, between the Heere Straat (the principal thoroughfare) and the Hudson, lay the West India Company's great gardens, the dwellings of the leading men, and their spacious gardens and orchards. The region between the Heere Straat and the East River, on the contrary, was covered with marshes and a tangle of water-courses, of which the city of to-day shows no trace whatever. A group of little knolls surrounded a boggy pasture called the Company's Valley, which of itself might have made the quarter untenable by any but true Hollanders. But they contented themselves with partially draining it by a ditch along the Bever-graft (now Beaver Street), and another along the upper part of the present Broad Street, the lower part of which was occupied by something still more characteristic of the Fatherland—a canal from tide-water, extending up to Exchange Place. The busy place was then traversed chiefly by cattle coming up from the meadow, marking out the future street with their muddy trail. Between the Heere Straat and the Company's Valley the ground was high, and the boys of New Amsterdam used in winter to bring out their sleds to the 'Verlettenberg,' and slide down-hill directly over the site of the New York Stock Exchange, while in summer they ran down the slope

to drive home the cows that fed where the Custom House now stands, and to collect the sheep that pastured where the vaults of the Sub-Treasury now undermine the street."

A gate in the palisade above mentioned, shut by the city watchmen every night at sunset, connected the Heere Straat with the wide high-road (Heere Wegh) beyond, destined to become world-famous under its translated title of *Broadway*. This road was pretty thickly set with houses for some little distance outside the wall; but as the island tended northward, the gardens and farm-houses gradually gave place to thick masses of wooding, the remains of the primeval forest. The mass of houses now overlooked by the mighty tower of the Brooklyn Suspension Bridge were then replaced by a belt of water-meadows, which in after-years offered an excellent skating-ground to the fashionables of New York. The now crowded and dusty Maiden Lane was then a pretty green dell, frequented by lovers; and on the spot where the great prison (aptly styled "The Tombs") now rears its gloomy mass, a ring of green knolls encircled a deep, placid pool. Farther on lay small farms and stretches of partly-cleared ground, and beyond that again the "Great Bouwerje" (country house) of Peter Stuyvesant himself, whither the stout-hearted old governor, like another Coriolanus, retired in disdain when, after expelling the Swedes from the rival settlement of Fort Christina, he was himself expelled from New Amsterdam by the English expedition of 1664, under Colonel Richard Nichols. But the Bouwerje is now remembered only as having given its name to one of the principal streets of modern New York; and the trains of the Elevated Railroad go rattling and whistling over the spot where the grim Dutch veteran, with his battered cocked hat and wooden leg, smoked his pipe amid the daisies and cowslips 200 years ago.

The force with which Colonel Nichols terrified the colony into surrender, without striking a blow, consisted of "two shippes of war and three hundred valliant red-coats," an army sufficiently characteristic of those primitive days, when Captain John Underhill marched against the Province of New Netherlands with "twenty souldiers," and conquered "territory to the extent of thirty acres!" It was at this time that the town received its present name, in honour of the Duke of York (afterwards James II.), to whom the settlement had been given by his brother, Charles II. "A truly royal gift," says Washington Irving, with his wonted quiet humour, "since it is only kings who have the power of giving away what does not belong to them." But this change of name was, for many years, almost the only visible fruit of the conquest. The Dutch settlers remained as indomitably Dutch as ever, and there are few happier touches in American literature than Irving's sly side-hit at the proverbial pride of the old "Knickerbockers," who "avenged the fall of their city by magnanimously resolving never to invite any of their conquerors to dinner."

* Literally "a building."

"Sixty years of slow but constant growth," says the historian already quoted, "had brought 'the village of the Manhattoes' to a size and importance which almost entitled it to its new name of city; and 'the best of His Majesty's towns in America,' as Nicolls had called it on his arrival, was beginning to give tokens of its future leadership in commerce—a fact," said its governor, 'of which the brethren in Boston were very sensible.' The little seaport, in this time of its transition under the earlier English governors, had characteristics not belonging to any of the other colonial towns—peculiarities arising partly from its singular mingling of races, and partly from the reproduction of the manners and customs of another nationality. Looked back upon through two centuries, the life of New York, in these first days of its English name, has a picturesque quaintness that is sharply marked against the colder back-ground of New England. Though a good deal of English energy and activity had already begun to pervade its streets and wharves, yet its customs long remained those which its first settlers had brought with them out of the Dutch Fatherland. Its architecture, most of its local names, and even its more common speech were Dutch. Its domestic and social life was regulated by the customs of Holland. If it was simple and somewhat heavy, it was at the same time healthy, virtuous, and full of kindness and hospitality. If the stout

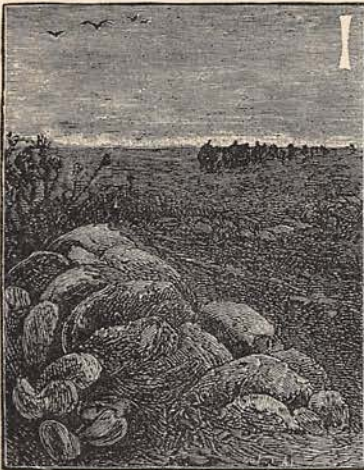
burghers moved slowly, thought only of the practical side of things, and went to bed at nine o'clock, they also worked steadily, governed their houses wisely, and *persecuted nobody.*"

The allusion in this last sentence to the persecution of the Quakers and "Salem witches" by the stern colonists of New England, is too pointed to be misunderstood; but it must be owned that the implied censure has been fully merited.

After a three years' rule of the colony which he had subdued, Colonel Nicolls was superseded in 1667 by Francis Lovelace. In October, 1673, the Dutch recaptured the town, and held it till the ensuing February, when it was restored by treaty to Great Britain, whose possession of it remained thenceforth undisturbed, till 1783 made it independent in common with the whole of the United States. Its subsequent history is too well known to need repetition; but the statistics of its growth are worthy of a passing glance before concluding. In 1656 the population was 1,000; in 1664, 1,500; in 1673, 2,500; in 1690, 4,302; in 1731, 8,628; in 1771, 21,163; in 1773, 21,876; in 1786, 23,614; in 1790, 33,131; in 1800, 60,489. But while the lapse of nearly two centuries barely carried the total above 60,000, the seventy-eight years which have since passed have raised it to the astounding figure of 1,170,142, a rapidity of increase to which Europe can furnish no parallel.

THE PANIC IN THE DESERT.

A TALE OF SEVEN YEARS SINCE.



"AM afraid, sir, it is true."

"Upon my word, Mr. Marston, I am very sorry to hear it."

The second speaker was, like myself, an Englishman—a tall, dignified old man, who as he spoke cast a quick, anxious glance towards a bright-eyed,

slender girl of nineteen, who stood at the tent-door watching the picturesque process of saddling and loading the kneeling camels for the start. Mr. Wynne was a widower, with an entailed estate, a large income, and but two children, one of whom was the son in England, heir to the property, and M.P. for some borough; and the other his young daughter, Ethel, with whom, after travelling in the Holy Land, the father had

ventured so far as Bagdad. As for myself, I was simply a young English civil engineer, lately employed by Midhat Pasha in some of his magnificent projects for irrigating neglected Mesopotamia, and now homeward-bound. There were rumours of war and disturbance among the Anayze Bedouins, and consequently both the Wynne family and myself had been glad to avail ourselves of the opportunity of joining the Bagdad and Damascus caravan, which was under the protection of a Turkish military guard.

Caravan-travel is tedious, but full of interest to those whose curiosity as to Eastern manners and Eastern costumes is not yet dulled by custom; and Miss Wynne never seemed tired of sketching some group of pilgrims in flowing robes and turbans of the sacred green, some knot of the irregular soldiery as they cooked their pilaff or groomed their horses, or a party of solemn Arabs shrouded in their white haicks. All went on prosperously until, on the evening of the fourth day, ugly rumours began to circulate through the camp; and the inquiries which Mr. Wynne, more anxious on his daughter's account than on his own, requested me to make, had but served to prove their truth. The plague was among us, and two members of our migratory community—one a Kurdish horse-dealer, the other a Syrian Christian—had died in the night. To return, however, was