

It is about forty years since the Hollanders came to these parts. The fort was begun in the year 1615; they began to settle about twenty years ago, and there is already some little commerce with Virginia and New England.

The first comers found lands fit for use, formerly cleared by the savages, who had fields here. Those who came later have cleared the woods, which are mostly oak. The soil is good. Deer hunting is abundant in the fall. There are some houses built of stone:—lime they make of oyster shells, great heaps of which are found here, made formerly by the savages, who subsist in part by that fishery.

The climate is very mild. Lying at $40\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ there are many European fruits, as apples, pears, cherries. I reached there in October, and found even then a considerable quantity of peaches.

Ascending the river to the 43d degree, you meet the second Dutch settlement, which the tide reaches but does not pass. Ships of a hundred and a hundred and twenty tons can come up to it.

There are two things in this settlement (which is called Renselaerswick, as if to say, settlement of Renselaers, who is a rich Amsterdam merchant)—1st, a miserable little fort called Fort Orange, built of logs, with four or five pieces of Breteuil cannon, and as many swivels. This has been reserved, and is maintained by the West India Company. This fort was formerly on an island in the river; it is now on the mainland, towards the Hiroquois, a little above the said island. 2d, a colony sent here by this Renselaers, who is the patron.—This colony is composed of about a hundred persons, who reside in some twenty-five or thirty houses built along the river, as each found most convenient. In the principal house lives the patron's agent; the Minister has his apart, in which service is performed. There is also a kind of Bailiff here, whom they call the Seneschal, who administers justice. Their houses are merely of boards and thatched, with no mason work except the chimneys. The forest furnishing many large pines, they make boards by means of their mills, which they have here for the purpose.

They found some pieces of ground all ready, which the savages had formerly cleared, and in which they sow wheat and