

Dutch West India Company had been wanting in tact or sympathy; and, though a representative assembly was not at the time set on foot, the Dutch inhabitants seem to have acquiesced cheerfully in the new situation, and to have had no scruples in becoming, almost at once, good English subjects. An American historian writes: 'Putting aside the methods employed, the acquisition of New Netherland was by all means the wisest and most beneficial act of colonial administration performed in this period. . . . By the reduction of the Dutch, the English colonial possessions were territorially rounded up and brought into continuous contact with one another, and the monopoly of colonial trade, then so much sought after, could, it was thought, be more easily enforced now that there were no foreign ports in the midst of the colonies. The object was entirely in accord with the economic theory of the times and the *practice of other nations*, and the English ministers were justified in their desire to bring it about, if not in the means by which they accomplished it.'

After all, for us now, the practical question is not how our remote ancestors acquired this territory, but the actual use that was made of it, when acquired. Here we can claim a record which no hostile criticism can upset. Take as a crucial example this colony of New York. Started as we have seen by wrongdoing, one would naturally, therefore, expect it to be a vulnerable spot. It is surely, then, significant that at the time of the American Revolution, when, for reasons too complex and involved to be entered upon here, the first English colonial Empire was broken in pieces, the province, where the loyalists were the most numerous, and which longest clung to the Imperial connexion, was the one