

**BRAVE LITTLE  
HOLLAND, AND WHAT  
SHE TAUGHT US**

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Brave Little Holland, and What She Taught Us by William Elliot Griffis

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**WILLIAM ELLIOT GRIFFIS**

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# BRAVE LITTLE HOLLAND, AND WHAT SHE TAUGHT US

BY

WILLIAM ELLIOT GRIFFIS

AUTHOR OF "THE NERADO'S EMPIRE," "THE INFLUENCE OF THE  
NETHERLANDS," "SIR WILLIAM JOHNSON," ETC.

"In love of liberty and bravery in the defense of it, she has been our great  
example." — BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

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## BRAVE LITTLE HOLLAND.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW.

ENGLISH-SPEAKING people usually refer to the European Kingdom of Nederland by mentioning the name of a single one of its eleven provinces, Holland. The Dutch call their country Nederland. The Kingdom of the Netherlands, or Nederlanden, means Nederland and its colonies. The "Low Countries" is the old term for the Netherlands, the seventeen provinces, which included what is now Belgium and Nederland, that is both the southern and the northern provinces. Since 1579, the two countries, except for a period between 1815 and 1830, have been separate. When the Dutch settled the country which now includes our four Middle States, they named it New Netherland, not New Netherlands. The Dutch flag is red, white, and blue; that of Belgium has the tri-color of old Brabant, red, yellow, and black. In this book, when we say Netherlands, we mean the Low

Countries, or the seventeen provinces; by *Nederland* we mean the land included in the Dutch Republic, or the modern kingdom north of the Scheldt River.

All who speak the English language should visit *Nederland*, or be interested in its story. It was the older home of tribes and people now called English. The largest emigration from the continent into Great Britain was from its shores. The language very much like the English is the Dutch, and most like it is the Frisian or North Dutch. Many of the arts, sciences, inventions, and improvements which have made Great Britain so rich and powerful came from Holland. One of the very best of her kings, William III., Prince of Orange, was a Dutchman. In a thousand ways England owes much to the Dutch, who are rather more like the English than they are like the Germans.

The American, even more than the Briton, should know about *Netherland*. It was the *Fatherland* of the first settlers of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. In the United States of *Netherland* we had the first example of a federal republic with a written constitution. Seven states formed a union under the orange, white, and blue flag. This Dutch republic had a senate of sovereign states or *States-General*, in which each state, large or small, had one vote. The capital lay in a small district and



was without a vote, like our District of Columbia. In this little republic of seven states there were differences almost as great as between Massachusetts and Louisiana, Ohio and New Mexico. One was ultra democratic like Friesland, another was aristocratic like Holland. Some were maritime, others inland. Some were violently Protestant, others intensely Roman Catholic. There were variations in local customs, religion, and social organization, yet all were loyal to the Union made about two hundred years before ours, that is, in 1579. In their public schools, sustained by taxation, the Dutch were trained to be intelligent as well as brave, so as to use their liberty aright.

The Dutch cast off the yoke of the Spaniards just as our fathers threw off the yoke of the British, because their rights were invaded and they were taxed without their consent. Like our fathers, also, they first formed a Union of states, and then made themselves free by a declaration of independence. Like us, they had a long war for freedom; like us, they had trouble about threatened secession. They talked much about State Rights and the Union, but the Union was maintained. For two hundred and fifteen years the Dutch United States remained a republic, though surrounded by proud and strong monarchs that hated republics.

In our Revolutionary War the Dutch sympa-

thized with us, gave us aid, and lent us money. The first salute ever fired by foreigners in honor of the American flag was from the Dutch. Governor Johannes de Graeff, at the port of St. Eustachius in the West Indies, November 16, 1776, ordered the "honor-shots." After the States-General had formally recognized the United States of America as a nation, the loan by the Dutch merchants of fourteen millions of dollars came when our country needed it most.

When in 1787 our fathers made the Constitution, the Dutch republic was a living example before their eyes. They borrowed many things directly from the Dutch system, though they also rejected many and improved most of its features. Dutch history had shown them what to select and what to avoid. "In love of liberty and bravery in the defense of it, she has been our great example," is what Benjamin Franklin said of brave little Holland.

For a thousand years the Dutch fought the sea waves and the river floods. They dyked their land, which is lower than the ocean. While thus engaged, they were rearing also the bulwarks of freedom. They beat off the Spaniard; they helped to make England and America free.

Grand as is her story, the size of *Nederland* is almost ridiculously small. The whole kingdom of eleven provinces is less than half the size of South Carolina, or one third the area of Ohio,

and hardly bigger than Maryland. Twenty such countries could be dropped into the one State of Texas. On her 12,650 square miles of land and water live over four millions of people, or fewer than in the Empire State.

After the English, the Dutch have been the most successful colonizers. In the East Indies they possess Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes, and St. Eustachius in the West Indies, besides part of Guiana. Many thousands of Hollanders live abroad in these and other colonies, which together form a domain of 766,000 square miles, or five times the area of California. By a few thousand Dutchmen, the thirty millions of Malays and other natives are easily governed. Except the long and costly war with the Atchinese, peace is the rule in the Dutch colonial dominions. There is a vast difference between Cuba and Java. In the one are despotism and constant insurrection, in the other are peace, law, good government.

South Africa has been largely settled by Netherlanders, many of whom still live under British rule in Cape Colony. Others have, since 1854, formed the Orange Free State and the Transvaal Republic. The Dutch Boers handle the rifle and ride on horses from childhood. Thus far their dauntless spirit, sure aim, and intense patriotism have enabled them to resist British aggression.

Nederland lies between Belgium and Germany, facing the North Sea, opposite England and near