

ground, the felling of large forest trees for suitable timber for their houses, barns, and fences, the exertion of erecting them, the oversight required to keep their cattle from straying while their *bouwerijs* remained unenclosed, the watchfulness exercised to protect their seeded land and maturing crops from the ravages of insects, birds, and graminivorous animals, these and many other urgent duties and multiplying cares allowed them no time during the summer and fall months to engage in less exacting and less exhausting occupations. Walking, and occasional riding by turns on horseback, to and from New Amsterdam on Sundays, and worshipping with the colonists residing there and in the neighboring settlements, afforded the older members of the households at Midwout enjoyable respites from agricultural and domestic toil. When obstructing depths of snow and the severe cold of winter restricted them to the immediate vicinity of their farms, the cadence of beating flails, the sound of hewing axes, and the lowing of sledge-drawing oxen often revealed the locality and nature of the daily tasks of the busy farmers.

In the summer and fall of 1653, certain colonists on Long Island were robbed of horses and other movable property. The sufferers repeatedly made known their losses to Director-General Stuyvesant, but failed in bringing about the arrest and punishment of the thieves. The indifference of the provincial authorities to their appeals for protection caused them to seek the advice of the people of the neighboring settlements regarding the means to be employed to free themselves from further losses of property. In order to obtain an adequate expression of the views of the other settlers respecting the action to be taken to protect the outlying farms from thieves and marauders, they invited the property-holders of Gravesande, Vlissingen and Middelburg (New Town), to send representatives to New Amsterdam, on November 24, to meet with those of the *burgemeesters* and *schepens* of that city.

In order to forestall any action taken at the meeting criminating him for inattention to the appeals of the colonists for protection, and to overrule it in such a manner as would frustrate the purpose for which the delegates were to convene, the crafty director-general, on the twenty-fourth of November, issued the following speciously worded announcement:

“Whereas several complaints have been made to us concerning the incursions and robberies of a certain Thomas Baxter, a fugitive from this province, and his companions, by which among others, Joehim Pietersen Cuyter, Wil-

*betaelden is, wert sulcx niet geacht; sij t' onvrede sijn de hebben Jan Suediker gedreijcht sijne bouwerije in brand te stecken, daerover hij den Directeur clagende heeft met sijn goetvinden op den 2d Junij voortden met de Wilden over de betaling voor 't lant geacordeert. De Directeur soude de betalinge doen, marr daer comt niet van, soo dat de man in perijcul blyst. en het dorp niet voortengaet; de Directeur wil't lant niet betalen, noch lijden dat ter anderen doen.”*

Holland documents, vol. vi., p. 221. Documents relating to the colonial history of the state of New York, vol. i., p. 198.