

CHAPTER III.

ROELOFF SWARTWOUT, SCROUT OF ESOPUS.

1634-1715.

THE hostilities in 1616 between the Mohawk and Mohegan Indians having caused the colonists at Fort Orange to abandon the settlement and be conveyed to New Amsterdam, no steps were taken to induce others to occupy and cultivate land on the Upper Hudson until Kiliaen van Rensselaer, one of the wealthy stockholders of the West-India Company, became a patron of New Netherland.

The lords-directors of the company, believing that an enriching revenue could be derived from the country should its territory be divided into manors and these be granted under certain privileges and exemptions to proprietary lords called patrons (*patroons*), formally approved, June 7, 1629, this plan for the colonization of the province, which was duly ratified and confirmed by their High Mightinesses, the Lords States-General of the United Netherlands.

The person accepted by the company as a *patroon* was required to settle upon the tract of land granted him a colony of fifty people within a period of four years. All of the colonists included in that number were required to be over fifteen years of age. Upon such conditions as these, Kiliaen van Rensselaer, and his heirs, came into possession of the extensive manor known as that of Rensselaerswijck, extending along both sides of the Hudson River, from Beeren Island to the site of Waterford, in Saratoga County, and forming an estate twenty-one miles long and forty-six wide.

The famous French Jesuit missionary, Father Jogues, in his description of this part of New Netherland, in 1646, writes: "There are two things in this settlement (which is called Rensselaerswijck, or in other words the settlement of Rensselaer, who is a rich Amsterdam merchant), first, 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