

CHAPTER XIV.

DESCENDANTS ON THE UPPER HUDSON.

1795-1899.

THE Dutch settlers of New Netherland, for many years after its territory had become a possession of England, steadfastly adhered to the customs of their forefathers. However, in the passage of years, Holland customs began to be ignored by them and their descendants and those of other nationalities adopted. As long as Dutch was the language of the province, marriages were usually contracted within the lines of the families speaking it. But as soon as the members of them began using English vernacularly, matrimonial alliances were formed with those of families not of Holland descent.

In the county of Essex, in England, not far north of London, the surname Bedell distinguishes a number of families whose pedigree can be traced to Richard Bedell, who held an estate in that county under John de Vere, earl of Oxford, in the fourteenth century. It was known under the name of the manor of Bedell's Hall, an appellation derived from the mansion-house standing on the right hand side of the road leading from Pleshey to Chignall-Smeley, not far from Dives Hall, about four miles northeast of Writtle church. Near it, where three roads intersect, there formerly was a wayside cross, popularly called Bedell's cross. The manor was one of four hamlets belonging to Writtle parish, and at the time of the general survey was held by Robert Gernon, lord of Stansted-Montfichet, and from his family passed to that of de Vere. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth it was held by one William Bedell.

The manor known as Shakeston's, also in Writtle, was held under King Henry VIII. by William Bedell, who died on September 3, 1535. The mansion-house of the estate stands on the side of the road leading from Writtle church to Margetting.

About eight miles northeast of Writtle church is the hamlet of Black Notley, where, in 1570, William Bedell was born, who became bishop of Kilmore, in Ireland, whom the poet Coleridge courageously styles: "The most faultless character in all ecclesiastical history."