

REV. DR. STRONG'S HISTORY OF FLATBUSH, LONG ISLAND.

“In the great struggle for American independence the first battle was fought on Long Island, and the two great armies first met each other in and about Flatbush. Many prisoners taken previous to and during the war were confined in Flatbush. One of them was our ancestor, CORNELIUS VANDERVEER, grandson of Cornelius Janse Vanderveer, the first settler in this country by that name. He was Captain of the militia of Flatbush. During those perilous times, for the sake of protecting his family, he sent them to New Jersey. He then attempted to secure his furniture. While he remained about his premises he had hid his arms and accoutrements in a thicket near the house. Afterward, one evening, having observed how the guards and pickets of the British were placed, he went in the dead of the night, with a faithful colored servant, to regain them. They reached the place by a circuitous route, and having secured his arms he put them on, the more easily to carry them. He then proposed to his servant to take a nearer and more direct way back. In so doing they came unexpectedly upon a guard, of whom he was not aware, he having been placed there after dark. Consequently he was made a prisoner, and having his accoutrements on and his arms in his hands, he had not much mercy to expect. He was carried to the Captain of the Guard; here he was told by several that there was no hope for him, he must be hung, and they actually put a rope around his neck. In the morning he was taken before Lord Cornwallis, who sent him with some others under guard to New Utrecht, where he was confined in a barn with several other prisoners, and was in various ways basely treated and insulted. While there a Captain Miller, with whom he had been on terms of intimacy, happened to pass by; he inquired of him how he came to be there, and after being informed he kindly said he would try and effect his release. A short time after a file of soldiers came and took him before one of General Howe's aides, by the name of Cuyler, who questioned him about his situation. He asked him if he would take a protection and go home on