A FINAL WORD ON JERSEY DUTCH

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The Dutch of seventeenth-century New Netherland seems only in the last dozen years or so to have become finally a matter of the past. After the forty-odd years of Dutch sovereignty came to an end in 1664 the Dutch-speaking settlements flourished and spread, but they were for all practical purposes cut off from the mother country. The language, which from now on lived and developed independently of the Dutch of the Netherlands, survived a remarkably long time, but by the end of the nineteenth century it was in active use only around Albany, New York, and in the northernmost part of New Jersey. The latter settlements seem to have preserved best their identity as speech islands, and even the tide of Dutch immigration in the 1840s appears to have done little or no mingling with this isolated group no longer felt by the Dutch to be compatriots.\(^1\) By the beginning of the twentieth century 'Jersey Dutch' and 'Albany Dutch' were plainly becoming extinct and began attracting attention as collectors' items. In 1908 William H. Carpenter preaced a discussion of some seventy-six Dutch words which have entered the lexicon of American English and the sound changes involved with some rather detailed remarks on the history and fate of the original New Netherland Dutch.\(^2\) In 1910 J. Dyneley Prince, professor at Columbia and Vice Governor of New Jersey, published a detailed though somewhat fanciful description of the sounds of Jersey Dutch (hereafter JD) in terms of their deviation from Standard Dutch, and included some remarks on the grammar, where again the theme is predominantly the 'decay' of Standard Dutch.\(^3\) Nevertheless, his work is by far the most complete body of material on this late stage of the language, and we will have occasion to refer again both to his remarks on the sounds and to his glossary of about seven hundred words of JD. In the same year Prince gratified the curiosity and interest he had aroused in the Netherlands by publishing a short annotated text in JD in a Dutch journal.\(^4\) Then in 1938 L. G. Van Loon, a doctor in Reading, Pennsylvania, wrote a booklet outlining some characteristics of the sounds, grammar, and vocabulary of

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2. William H. Carpenter, 'Dutch Contributions to the Vocabulary of English in America,' Modern Philology, VI (1908), 53–68. Schele de Vere in 1872 included a considerable number of Dutch words but said nothing of the language itself.
Albany Dutch, which appears to have become quite noticeably differentiated from JD. A year later, an article by Van Loon appeared in a Dutch journal, in which he announced that he had interviewed the last remaining speakers of the language, made a few unfortunately vague remarks on the pronunciation, presented a number of grammatical forms which differed from Standard Dutch, and appended to this a short conversation, a few verses, and a glossary of about 150 words.

Though these records of JD are valuable in giving us a good sample of the vocabulary and grammar of JD just before its demise, we are considerably less well informed on some other points: since all discussions tend to treat the sounds inexact and in terms of 'corruption' of Standard Dutch, it is not possible to piece together any satisfactory picture of the phonological system of the language.

An opportunity to supplement this material with more reliable information came when Hans Kurath recently called to my attention and placed at my disposal a field record made under his direction and containing a number of entries in Dutch. The record, made in Park Ridge, Bergen County, New Jersey (the heart of the old Dutch settlements in the state) and dated 1941, is part of the material for the Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada. It was taken down by the late Guy S. Lowman, who presumably knew little or no Dutch but included in phonetic transcription nearly three hundred JD entries—both words and phrases—for whatever they were worth. The informant was J. B. H. Storms, eighty at the time, whose family had lived in the immediate area for at least four generations and who claimed descent from the first schoolteacher in New Amsterdam. It is interesting that Storms also served Van Loon as an informant in 1939, an indication that he was probably well known as one of the last speakers of JD. Although there is no guarantee that the informant still spoke Dutch as fluently as he had in childhood, the evidence preserved in the field record agrees in all important respects with that set down by Prince a generation before. While the field record's phonetic transcription of JD has the obvious limitation that it was not made with the intention of collecting evidence of any particular sort, its very precision provides us with a stock of information which—supplemented at some points by a comparison with older but less exact descriptions—enables us to draw some fruitful conclusions concerning developments within the sound system.

5. L. G. Van Loon, *Crumbs from an Old Dutch Closet; the Dutch Dialect of Old New York* ('s-Gravenhage, 1938). Prince made some intriguing remarks about a distinct subdialect spoken by Negroes within the small JD settlement, but gave only few examples (see n. 3).

of JD during the nearly three hundred years of its separation from Netherlands Dutch in a foreign environment.

VOWELS

In the interest of economy and clarity, all the diacritics used in the field record before or after vowels and consonants to indicate fronting, backing, raising, or lowering have been omitted here. The symbol [i] in unstressed syllables corresponds in every case to the field record’s ‘barred’ [i], and in a few cases an unusual symbol has been replaced by an equivalent and more usual one. Corresponding modern Dutch forms are given in italics without further identification. J. Dyneley Prince’s description of the JD sounds (note 1) is referred to as ‘Prince.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dutch</th>
<th>Jersey Dutch</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[i]</td>
<td>[e]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[aː]</td>
<td>[vaːr] wer ‘far,’ [daːr-tiːn] dertien ‘thirteen,’ but [a] in [værder] verder ‘further,’ all before r.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ɛ]</td>
<td>[ben] ben ‘am,’ [bɛːtsə] beste ‘best,’ but [ɛː] in [ɛ-s] eg ‘harrow.’ Prince has åå or å.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[a]</td>
<td>[aː]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[a]</td>
<td>[aːxtər, (a-taːr)] achter ‘behind,’ [nɛm, (nɛ-m)] nam ‘took,’ [bɛŋk] bank ‘bench,’ [vɑːʁkə] varken ‘pig.’ Prince has å.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[o]</td>
<td>[a]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[i]</td>
<td>[iː]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[y]</td>
<td>[o]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[sxər] schuur ‘barn,’ [daː-vl] dwavel ‘devil,’ but here in the euphemistic (and dialect) form dwavel. Prince has ae, presumably [yː] or [y].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[u]</td>
<td>[uː]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Dutch ie uə oe are quite short [iː y uː] everywhere (including word-final position) except before r, where they are long [iː-yː-uː].
American Speech

Dutch    | Jersey Dutch
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[u]      | [vuta] voeten 'feet,' [-kuk] koek 'cake,' [duma] doen 'to do,' [xut] goed 'good,' [hoo] stot 'cough.' Prince has å and u.
[e:]     | [e:] lepel 'spoon,' [xe:v] geef 'give,' [ne:xa] neger 'nine'; [æ] in [heol] heel 'very.'
[e:]     | [we:] weer 'weather,' [ne:] neer 'down,' [moo] meneer 'Mr.,' in every case before r.
[i:]     | [i:] een 'one,' [twi:] twee 'two,' [sti:n] steen 'stone'; these are probably not a JD development but dialect forms.9 Prince has é and i, cf.
[o:]     | [o:] deur 'door,' [zovonutx] zeewenig (colloq. and dial.) 'seventy'; [o:] in [zo:v] zeven 'seven.' Prince has å.
[ə]      | [x:x] gaat 'goes,' [jo:] jaar 'year,' [butalx:] botselaar 'apron.' Prince has å, i.e., Eng. ax.
[ai]     | [va:v] vijf 'five,' [wa:] wei 'meadow,' [ma:nx:] meisjes 'girl'; once [a] in [straik] 'ironing' strijken 'to iron.' Prince has åi and åi.
[œ]      | [ho:nes] huis 'house,' [rœ:um] ruim 'room,' [xe:n] uien 'onions,' [vœ:lt] mad 'soil' 'dirty.' It is amusing to note the fieldworker's constant indecision as to how to represent this sound, though his variety of transcriptions generalized here leave no doubt as to what he heard. Prince has åu, which gives no hint of any rounding of the first component.

Anomalous in their correspondence are: [kaen] kan 'can,' [zæt] zat 'sat,' both no doubt due to the English form; [a] in forms like [xa:braxt] getraakt 'brought' above may be the result of lengthening to [æ:] (cf. Prince's dâxt [do:xta] dachte 'thought') and late shortening; [pe:rt] paard 'horse' (cf. common dialect peerd), [ke:s] kaas 'cheese' (dialect form kees); [ka:st] kerstijd 'Christmas time,' [ma:t] met 'with'; [zik] ziek 'sick' and [zwp] zweep 'whip,' both undoubtedly influenced by the English; [manœrt] minut 'minute,' but [du:z] duizend 'thousand'; [beuzam] bezem 'broom' probably shows a secondary rounding (cf. bezem, cited by Van Loon for JD), but [hœuthœus] houthuis 'woodhouse' is more likely a slip on the part of the informant; [xro:næ] groene 'green' and [xo:ta] zoete 'sweet' are dialect forms showing umlaut; [ha:] 'have,' [ha:i] 'have (you) heb, [hæ:d] had had' seem to be relics of old dialect forms, the last lengthened at an early date and fallen together with [o:] from older long a; [baxra:næs] begrafenis 'burial'

does not show the expected [ɔ:] for Dutch aa (Prince also has anomalous ə).

We have, then, the following vowels: [i iː, ɛ ɛː, æ æː, a aː, ə ə, o o, ø ø, A A, u u, u u, ɔ ɔ]. The choice of short vowel, vowel plus glide or long vowel seems, as far as the transcription allows us to determine, to be decided by the surrounding sounds.

The most noteworthy differences in the correspondences of JD to Dutch vowels are both qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative differences are: (i) the lowering of [i] to [ɛ] and [ɛ] to [æ];10 (2) the unrounding of [o] or [ø] to [ʌ], and (3) the rounding of [ʌ] to [ɔ].11 The first and third of these probably owe their origin to the dialects spoken by the first settlers, while the second can reasonably be taken as an example of the impact of American English. Quantitatively, the JD vowels no longer correspond to the Dutch: we notice that nearly all those which in Dutch are phonetically short turn up in JD with greater length, e.g., [sxɛː] schil, [zɛː]zes, [aːxt] acht, [ɔːns] ons, [driː] drie, [stuːl] stoel, and that occasionally a Dutch phonetically long vowel is shortened, e.g., [zʊvɔntɪk] zeuventig, [drox] droog. The qualitative differences enumerated above are of interest as phonetic phenomena in ascertaining the origin of the speakers of JD and the preservation of archaic or dialectal features; the quantitative differences are likewise important, since they seem rather clearly to exhibit the impact of American English. Even more significant, though, have been the phonological consequences of the latter changes: the vowel system of JD no longer shows any trace of the distinguishing features of the Dutch system. In Dutch, for example, [ɛ] hen ‘hen’ and [eː] heen ‘away’ are distinct in three ways. The first is short while the second is long, ɛ is mid lax while ee is higher-mid tense, and e can occur only immediately followed by a consonant while ee can occur in open syllable; comparable threefold distinctions can be found between [o] bom ‘bomb’ and [ɔː]boom ‘tree,’ [ɣ] kus ‘kiss’ and [øː] kus ‘choice,’ [a] man ‘man’ and [ɑː] maan ‘moon.’ These three features cannot all be phonologically significant; the pairs of

10. Dutch [i] and [ɛ] are distinctly lower than the English or German ‘short’ i and e, yet not low enough to be represented by IPA [ɛ] and [æ]. Afrikaans also shows examples of lowering, e.g., in ek ‘I,’ wen ‘to win,’ ken ‘chin.’

11. The modern Standard Dutch palatal ə [ə] is a sound that seems to have begun to come into general popular use only after the middle of the seventeenth century, in other words, after the speech which became JD had already been removed from such developments in Netherlands Dutch. The dialects had (and have) [æː] or [ɛː], primarily north of Amsterdam, and [aː] or [ɔː] south of Amsterdam. Since a number of features of JD point to a southern origin, its earlier speakers may have brought with them a rounded [ɔː]. The problem of the rise of the Standard Dutch aa which is not characteristic of any dialect is discussed in detail by W. Hellings in De Opbouw van de Algemeen Beschaaafde Uitspraak van het Nederlands (Amsterdam, 1938).
vowels can be distinguished as 'short' and 'long,' though it also seems reasonable—and indeed preferable—that the phonological significance be assigned to the 'Silbenschnitt' (closed-syllable 'checked' vs. open-syllable 'free' vowels) or the place of the termination of the word stress, length being then an automatic result of the vowel's not being immediately cut off by the following consonant or only the vowel and not the following consonant as well receiving the word stress. Dutch accordingly has the following, exclusive of the diphthongs: Checked i, e, a, u, o (some speakers distinguish [o] and [ɔ]); free ie, ee, au, uu, eu, oe, oo (for the status of ie, uu, oe, see note 8).

JD, on the other hand, shows none of the features that suggested such an analysis for Standard Dutch. Only [i ʌ u] are definitely short, though the fact that we find [hu*st] and [du*2nd] in the field record seems to indicate that at least [u] was not always sharply cut off by the following consonant. The vowel [i] was found stressed only in two words, both of them suspect (see above), but should probably be included on the strength of its occurrence in unstressed syllables. All the other vowels, as we have seen, fluctuate between short and long depending upon environment and probably stress as well. Since there is no evidence that vowel length is distinctive and nearly all the vowels which in Dutch are 'checked' by the following consonant can in JD be 'drawn out' (with additional length or with the glide [ə]), there is no reason for assuming any distinctive feature but quality. We then have, with varying but nonsignificant length:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
i & u \\
\text{t} & \text{u} \\
\text{e} & \theta & o & \text{æ} & \text{œ} & \text{u} \\
\text{æ} & \text{a} \\
\end{array}
\]

A large amount of additional evidence might conceivably make it possible to reduce one or two of these to the status of variants, e.g., assign [i] to [i] or [u] to [u], but this cannot be done on the basis of what now exists. It is interesting to note that [u] and [u] did in fact both originate in Dutch [u] as longer and shorter variants which eventually became differentiated in quality.

CONSONANTS

Dutch [p t k b d f s x m n h j] appear to have the same value in JD, though not always the same distribution. None of the sources make any mention of aspiration of [p t k], which are not aspirated in Dutch, but since Lowman

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uses the same symbols for them as for his American English [p t k] with no further comment, it can probably be assumed that they had become aspirated.

Dutch [v z r] in initial position are semivoiced, and [r] in the pronunciation of many speakers has been replaced entirely by [x], even in medial position. Although this is a relatively late development, JD shows definite signs of voicelessness in these spirants. We find [v] in [vutə] voeten ‘feet,’ [vi.] viel ‘fell,’ [ho.vər] haver ‘oats,’ and the [v] of [va.n] van ‘of’ which we find twice may point to a weaker articulation or simply to the pronunciation of an old speaker. Van Loon tells us that [v] has been replaced by [f] initially in Albany Dutch, but Prince says only that [v] is ‘like Eng. v, but not so strong a labial.’ We have [z], e.g. in [zak] zak ‘bag,’ [za.ut] zout ‘salt,’ [dazə] deze ‘this,’ but also [q] in [bo.zələr] boezelaar ‘apron,’ [bra.mbo.zə] frambozen ‘rasberries’ (and braambessen ‘blackberries?’). Van Loon makes no comment, but his glossary contains spellings like swart ‘black’, suive ‘seven’, sou (sou ‘should’); Prince distinguishes s and z. For Dutch [r] or [x] we find no voiced spirant. Normally there is [x] ([ko.t] gaat ‘goes,’ [ho.xər] hoger ‘higher,’ [le.xər] lager ‘lower’), though the transcription significantly shows a palatal spirant in four cases: [xe.ə] geel ‘yellow,’ [xə.xət] gist ‘yeast,’ [xə.xənt] ‘owns,’ eigen (adj.) ‘own,’ [sxə.xə] schil ‘peel’ are fairly unambiguous evidence for a southern origin of the dialect(s) spoken by the first settlers. Prince states that x before e or i is always palatalized into ə.x. Exceptionally we find [g] ([mo.gər] mager ‘thin’), [k] ([apkəwərnt] ‘warmed up,’ [məkər] begeer(?) ‘want’), though the first of these latter is doubtless a variant or a slip and the second is highly dubious. Though voicing was certainly no longer significant in the spirants in Albany Dutch, we must probably assume that it still was in JD, though weakened even further than in present-day Dutch.

The Dutch trilled r seems to have given way entirely to the American retroflex r; Prince makes this statement, and the field record shows no distinction in symbols. Dutch w [v] is JD [w], possibly continuing the bilabial heard today in Flemish, but more likely the American English [w]. Dutch l varies from palatal to velar depending upon environment, but JD seems to have had a still more velar [l] ([ko.rə] ‘field,’ [ko.fə] tafel ‘table’), and Prince describes it as ‘almost the Polish barred l.’ It is worth noting that the typical Dutch
neutral vowel between l and labials or velars is not found in JD: [twɔ=l] twaalf vs. [væ=ł] 'twelve,' [me=ł'k] melk vs. [mɛl'k] 'milk.'

A striking distributional feature in JD is that voiced consonants can occur in final position, a phenomenon unknown in Dutch outside of compound or sentence sandhi. The field record has [du=ɔn] duizend, [pɑd] pad 'road' (the voicelessness in Dutch concealed by the spelling), [kəndərz] kinders (colloq.) 'children,' [ɛs] is, [væv] vijf, [twɔ=lv] twaalf, [jəræz=lv] jezelf 'yourself,' [mɔzæ=lv] mijzelf 'myself'; b does not appear because it is rare medially, and JD has no voiced velar spirant; this distribution might even be thought of as another indication of increasing loss of relevance of the voicing contrast. We can perhaps see the same significance in the additional fact that the Dutch sandhi or assimilation rules no longer seem to apply. In Dutch, a cluster of two or more consonants with phonologically distinctive voicing, when juxtaposed in a compound or across the word boundary, must be entirely voiced or entirely unvoiced; this is, however, concealed by the orthography in most cases. In JD we find [hɔt dər] 'the door,' [ætʃjant də] 'owns the,' [nit dʊn] 'not do,' [nit be-ɔr] 'not better,' [xɔ- tvɔ- dər] 'grandfather,' [hart vɑ-n] 'hard of,' [ni- t dat] 'not that,' [ɛx ədəst] 'is threshed,' [ɛk bɛn] 'I am.' Most of Prince's apparent examples (he makes no statement about this) are probably influenced by the traditional Dutch orthography, though his bleu tāus 'stayed home' and was ās 'was, is' are clear cases, especially since he comments on the oddness of the latter, in Dutch [vɔz ɛs].

Although we have been concerned mainly with JD phonology, it seems appropriate to append a few comments on words entered in the field record but not found in any of the previous discussions, or words recorded there in a form divergent enough to be noteworthy. Some correspond to modern Dutch words, but with a change in meaning: [bɔuãr] 'orchard' (with the change in stress found in Bowery): bouwerij 'farm'; [kro-] 'field': kraal 'corral'; [ni-vɑ] 'spry': dial. nuwerp 'industrious' (?); [prɛdɔkɔ-st]: predikatie 'sermon,' though preek is now more usual; [sɭɛŋkɔr] 'near (horse): slinker (archaic southern dialect form) 'left'; [tɑfɔrɛs] 'hotel': tapheus 'tavern'; [ra-wɔ] 'reins': touw 'rope'; [vœu1] 'mad': vuil 'dirty'; [amtræ-nɛt] 'because': omtrent 'about'; [vɛlɛt] 'meadow' (Carpenter gives the borrowings vly, fyl, etc.; see note 2): vallei 'valley'; [xæbɛrɛx] 'mountain': berg 'mountain,' gebergte 'mountain range.'

Some additional words appearing in an unexpected form and not mentioned in the course of the discussion above are [mux] moe(de) 'tired,' like Afrikaans moeg with a puzzling final consonant; [xæ-tə] gegeten 'eaten'; as both Prince and Van Loon point out, verb forms have undergone many changes, mostly in the direction of strong to weak, with analogical leveling: [stɛ-rvɔ] stierf 'died,' [hæ-lpɔ] hielp 'helped,' [ɛnɔxtʁɛkt] 'shrunk' (but [ɛntɔxtʁaka]
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‘worn out’) vs. Dutch ingetrokken ‘drawn in,’ [xøne⋅ma] genomen ‘taken,’ [xøbaetø] gebeten ‘bitten’ (infinitives nemen and bijten); the forms [hær.] ‘have,’ [hæ.ɪ jɔ] ‘have you,’ [hɔ.ˈd] ‘had’ are probably dialect words rather than JD developments.

A few forms occur which do not correspond to any Dutch usage and do not seem to be influenced by English: [hæt dʊr] de deur ‘the door,’ interesting not only because it seems to be a neuter article where Dutch has none, but because both Prince20 and Van Loon21 assure us that JD and Albany Dutch have lost all gender distinction. The record has only three other examples: [hæt səŋkər pət] het paard ‘the near horse’; [wæs hæt ðiɛ] ‘wash the dishes’; dis ‘table with food,’ the latter itself a problem; [hæt nɔ.ˈstɔ huk] ‘the next corner.’ Also [la ˈmn] ‘lane’: laan ‘avenue’; [ɔ.ˈft] ‘often’ (vaak, dikwijls); [vlæsmər] ‘boucher’ (vleeshouwer), the last two both suggesting German; [hɑza] ‘his’ (zijn); [əpsɛr] ‘courting’; [blæ.ˈbɑrd mɛl] ‘curds’ (wiergel, dikke melk); [zo.ˈmɛ mi.ˈs] ‘sweet corn’ (mais); [krɔm hæmni] ‘worm fence’ and [sti.ˈn hæmni] ‘stone fence’ (heining); [pælən] ‘laurel’ (laurier).

The field record has few phrases, but many of those recorded show a usage divergent from Dutch but not entirely English: [vɔr ma ʃɔ vɔrtæ.ˈla] vs. om me te vertellen ‘to tell me’; [ɛk məkət ˈap hæt nɔ.ˈstɔ huk ʌstək̆ma] vs. ik wens aan de volgende hoek uit te stappen ‘I want to get off at the next corner’; [ja kæn ma xɔælɛpt] vs. je had me kunnen helpen ‘you might have helped me.’

Finally, the expected influence of English is found in numerous words and constructions, though in view of the age of the informant and the fact that he had probably spoken little JD in later years, a minimum of importance should be attached to these: [lə.ˈwɔrəm] ‘living room’; [bə.ɾl] ‘barrel’; [mətɔª] ‘without’ (Prince has only the expected zonder, but cf. Pennsylvania German mitaus); [i.nixwæx] ‘anyway’; [inɪxplæx] (analogy; elsewhere regularly [plæk] plek ‘anyplace’; [mæ.k ˈkaft] ‘make coffee’; [zæ.ˈnɛr] ‘sat down’; [hæ.ˈlɔ jɔrəzə.ˈləv] ‘help yourself’; [æpklæ.ˈmɛrt] ‘warmed up’; [ætʃænt] ‘owns’; [tɔ.ˈfil-pəl] ‘tablespoon’; [zi.ˈtəl ˈliːk] ‘looks like’; [əpo.xɔ.ˈja] ‘throw up’; [trævərəz] ‘trousers’; [dæ.ˈd] ‘dad’ (according to notes in the field record, the informant insisted that both of the last two forms were JD. Prince also gives træuər and comments on his informant’s regarding this as JD); [ənxdədo.ˈva] ‘driven in’; [ɛz ələ vərdər] ‘is all the further’, [waz zik xøne⋅ma] ‘was taken sick’; [hæt ˈwɔ n hoˈrəni] ‘hard of hearing’; [hæt sta.ˈrɛvdɔ ˈwɔ.n] ‘he died of’; [nɔ.ˈzæn bœuək] ‘(sick) to his stomach’; [ɛk wi.ˈt ni.ˈt dat ɛk məkərət] ‘I don’t know that I care to’; [hæt hɔ.ˈd nɪt be.ˈtɔr xo.ˈna] ‘he ought not to go’; [at ɛz ˈhɛm (hɔr, ɛk)] ‘it is him (her, I); [juz ənə mənəquət] ‘just a minute.’

20. Ibid., p. 465.