1871-1872 Caspar Morris journal 1799

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formerly the Austrian Netherlands then the republic of Holland & now the kingdom of Belgium. It is perfectly level, intersected by ditches, along some of the banks of which, and along the roadways trees are planted. The tameness of the scene is diminished by the perpetually changing variety of crops planted in small patches and set so closely together that there is not one inch of vacant space. The plots are all rectangular & mostly oblong not more than a few hundred feets in length and about half the width.
Clover, beans, wheat, potatoes alternate continually during the earlier part of the course followed by roots which occupy a higher & larger

growth than in Kent England
The houses of the peasantry are larger and neater than those in England & which we did not see any lordly mansions & extensive parks, there were more frequent small pleasure grounds & modest dwellings such as might be supposed the homes of comfortable independence.
Passing through Bruges & Ghent we came to a more hilly country with flax culture & manufacture. It had been pulled and was being rotted, lying spread upon the ground. The raw stone gathers it into bundles which they dipped in pools designed for that purpose. Others were rotting it by throwing water on it as it lay & in some cases they were breaking it. About the manufactories there were large bleaching grounds some