

A North Carolinian Abroad

Mr. C. W. Tillett Sketches the Places He Visits and the People He Meets in a Tour of the Continent.

Rotterdam, Aug. 18.—Hello! Who is that far in front on the left side of the train as we speed along towards Amsterdam—beckoning to us as if to hurry us forward lest we miss seeing something? And what giant is that turning handspikes for somebody's amusement on the edge of the horizon far on the other side? Oh, I forgot, we are in Holland and that and those are nothing but windmills. Look, there is a fine lot of black and white spotted cows just back from a country fair where no doubt they took the prize for their beauty and enormous size! No, I see them in hundreds on both sides as we fly along the track and I am again reminded that I am in Holland and these are the famous Holstein cattle. But see, here comes a boat right through a field, seeming to slide along on the green turf. No, I see it in Holland now and I see as I draw near that this is one of the thousands of canals that intersect the whole country and form the pathways of the people—filled with water to their very edges and furnishing such a wonderfully easy method of transportation as to burst upon us as we get our first views of the home of the real Dutch. We seem to have left the full country for good, as the surface of the earth is as flat as a floor as far as the eye can reach. I guess the railroads of this country cost about as little as anywhere in the world, for they require no grading, no tunneling. The houses are nearly all of brick and present an exceedingly neat appearance. Cattle raising is the chief industry and it would delight the hearts of the Mecklenburg farmers if they could look at one of these scores of pastures on the roadside, covered with the grass and filled with cows, all of the same color and breed, the least of which would attract attention and win admiration at home. The fences are made of water and the gates are little bridges over which the cattle are let out or into the pasture. They pay a great deal of attention to the culture of the grass, for I noticed them scattering manure over it in many places as thickly as we put it on our little two-by-four front yards in Charlotte.

CITY OF AMSTERDAM.
Amsterdam is a place of much importance and exceedingly attractive to a stranger on account of the strange things to see in and around the city. The people themselves are here as everywhere the first objects of interest, and I was truly delighted to see on the streets so many men and women who looked real "Dutchy," the identical kind you laugh at in the picture books. The men have that monkey-like face with side whiskers or chin whiskers and rarely ever have any upper teeth. The women wear that peculiar head-dress consisting of a bright metal band which goes around the back of the head and ends just behind the eyes, where there is attached some brightly colored metal ornament and this band is fitted over a queer shaped white lace cap surmounted by an odd-looking black cap. We first visited the house where Rembrandt, the great painter, once lived and then we saw the Walling Tower, where in old times the women went to weep when their husbands and lovers put out to sea, each of the latter no doubt having stored away in his vessel many jugs of beer and kicking up his heels at the thought of the high old time he would have when he got to the other side of land. We visited a diamond cutters and had them explain to us how they take the stone as it comes from the mine in South Africa and polish it until it is ready to adorn my lady's throat or finger.

THE STATE CHURCH.
I went into the Dome, the State church, where the queen took the oath of office. They call it now the "New Church," but they tell you that it was begun in 1408 and finished in 1414. The contrast between this house of worship of the Dutch Reformed and the gorgeous Cathedral of the Roman Catholics is startling. Here were cold stone floors, rough and poorly jointed. Walls were white washed and windows filled with plain colored glass. There was the high pulpit about ten feet above the congregation covered by a canopy-like top. Here were all sorts of fenced-off places for the different classes of people to sit—for class distinctions seem to be rigidly observed notwithstanding their great simplicity. I suppose a man would feel out of place at preaching here unless he had on a black coat and a high standing collar. And what a queer language they have!—a sort of mixture of the German and English and a sprinkling of the old Norse tongue. In one instance, on the first of the railroad car they got a notice, "Do not open until the train stops," which is in their words, "Niet openen voor trien stilstaat." How droll! Then they will throw in a Norwegian j in a most ludicrous way. Instead of being satisfied to call a silversmith "zilveramid" they call him a "zilver smidder!" A bright young lady says they put these j's in to make jays of us English and I guess you will think she is right if you try to pronounce one.

ISLAND OF MARKEN.
But the most interesting part of our stay in Amsterdam was our visit to the island of Marken in the Zuyder Zee. We started in one of those canal boats and had to duck our heads every few minutes to keep from being wiped off by the low bridges at the intersection of the streets. I wish you could have seen the skipper that carried us across the sea to the island. If you can imagine the late Great Springs wearing very baggy bloomers tied at the knee and a jaunty tight-fitting jacket, you will get some idea of the comical appearance of our skipper for he was tall and lank. When we pulled up to the island itself, I felt as though I had been sailing through ether and had landed on the moon, for surely nothing like these people can be seen anywhere on this globe. I suppose there are about 500 inhabitants in the village. They have no streets, but wind in and out through narrow foot paths. The children swarmed around, all wearing wooden shoes and queer costumes. Most of all the people wear these wooden shoes, which are never carried inside the house, but are kicked off just as they enter the door. Many of the houses are over a hundred years old and have about as few of the comforts of life

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as possible. They sleep in shelf-like places cut in the wall and have the rudest of cooking appliances. The costumes of the women, I will not undertake to describe, except to say that it is odd and hideous. They are all fisher-folk and catch founders and herring for market. The pleasure of the visit was much marred by the fact that owing to the constant influx of strangers and the frequent gifts of many, these natives have become beggars and allow their children to beg. Every house is open to the inspection of the public, but you are expected to drop into an open outstretched hand a few pennies before you retire. It is wonderful how they have preserved their pristine manners of life, and some are so cruel as to say that the whole island is owned by a New England Yankee, who pays these people to live in this way and makes of it a source of revenue, but this is one Yankee story I do not believe.

TRIP TO THE HAGUE.
The trip from Amsterdam to The Hague was full of interest—giving us another opportunity to see the country, the life of the Dutch to great advantage—windmills, canals, cattle, dog carts and all. At one place on the journey I noticed that there were four highways running parallel for a long distance, all used to the best advantage, viz, railroad track, trolley line, macadamized road, and canal. Holland is the paradise of bicyclists and the public highways literally swarm with them, the ladies riding as much as they did in Charlotte ten years ago.

Amsterdam is the capital of the Netherlands, but The Hague is the centre of its official life, as the queen makes her regular home here. We could tell that we were in an atmosphere of court life as soon as we left the train. Here we saw the "toniest" people we had met—men with silk hats and jim swingers and ladies in fine carriages looking as though they were just returning from a call on one of the ladies-in-waiting. The peace conference is in session here now, but unfortunately was not sitting during the time we remained. We saw the building in which it is held, and also the palace called the "House in the Woods" and went into the room in it where the first peace conference was held. The flags of all nations are flying, and our faces flushed with pride as we walked under the Stars and Stripes and realized that our own country is represented by that great lawyer, Joseph H. Choate, who never casts discredit on any cause he espouses.

OLD DUTCH CHURCH.
Sunday morning we went to the old Dutch church and found the drollest service you can imagine, but exceedingly impressive withal. It had a plainness and freedom from ritual about it that would have done good to the heart of a Reformer of fifty years ago. There were ugly uncarpeted plank floors in the aisles and great boxed-up pews elevated two feet above the floor. As we walked in we saw two pleasant-looking old ladies standing in the aisle, who I at first supposed were unable to get seats, but what was my astonishment when one of them took charge of us and showed us into a pew and I then realized that they were women ushers. They had no choir in the church, but a big organ led them in what was truly congregational singing—every song being a psalm sung in a plaintive wailing, hark-from-the-tombs air. I noticed a devout worshiper come in while the minister was reading a selection from the Bible and he first stood with bowed

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head in a few moments of silent prayer, then took his seat and got out his money for the collection which was to come later in the service. After the minister had preached about twenty minutes he stopped and gave out another dirge and I inwardly commended him as I am particularly fond of short sermons. After this song I expected the benediction but behold, the preacher was not half through his sermon. At this point a solemn-faced old elder in full dress evening suit got down a bag with a wooden handle eight feet long and proceeded to take up a collection and the way he managed that long pole-like handle so as not to swipe any one on the head was a marvel of dexterity and a result no doubt of long training. Here the preacher began to talk again and I thought at first that, after Methodist fashion, he was exhorting the people during the collection in order to stimulate liberality, but I soon realized that this was merely the second, and, as it proved, the long division of his sermon, which went on for nearly 30 minutes more. During all this time, the old elder was "raising" the collection. Presently, there came behind him a young man also in full evening dress, wearing black gloves, and he also was taking up a collection, following right after the elder. My two collections at one service! They must be Methodists after all! Everybody was prepared for it though and "chipped in" on both rounds except myself, who was taken unawares the second time. One of the lady ushers seeing, I suppose, that I had contributed but once brought a box to me at the end of the service and I restored myself to good standing in the Dutch church by dropping something in. I noticed one old deacon-looking fellow sitting back upright with his tall beaver hat on, apparently chewing tobacco vigorously during the entire service. Altogether it was the most unique religious service I ever attended.

INSTRUMENTS OF TORTURE.
I also went in one hour's time literally from the prison to the palace. In the old prison I found many interesting relics of the days of the bloody Duke of Alva—all the instruments of torture that the cruelty of man could devise, from the thumb-stretching machine used to extort confessions in the days of the Spanish inquisition to the guillotine, which has the imprint of the axe on the wooden block where the heads were severed from the bodies. The guide showed us the room where the victims were starved to death which by the ingenuity of the devil himself was placed so near the kitchen that the odor of the savory viands could fill the nostrils and torture the soul of the starving man. There was one dungeon with a reddish picture on the wall, which they told us had been painted by a prisoner with his own blood.

I was glad to hurry away from this place to the palace of Queen Wilhelmina. Here again Dutch simplicity was so much in evidence as to make even an American smile, for instead of ap-

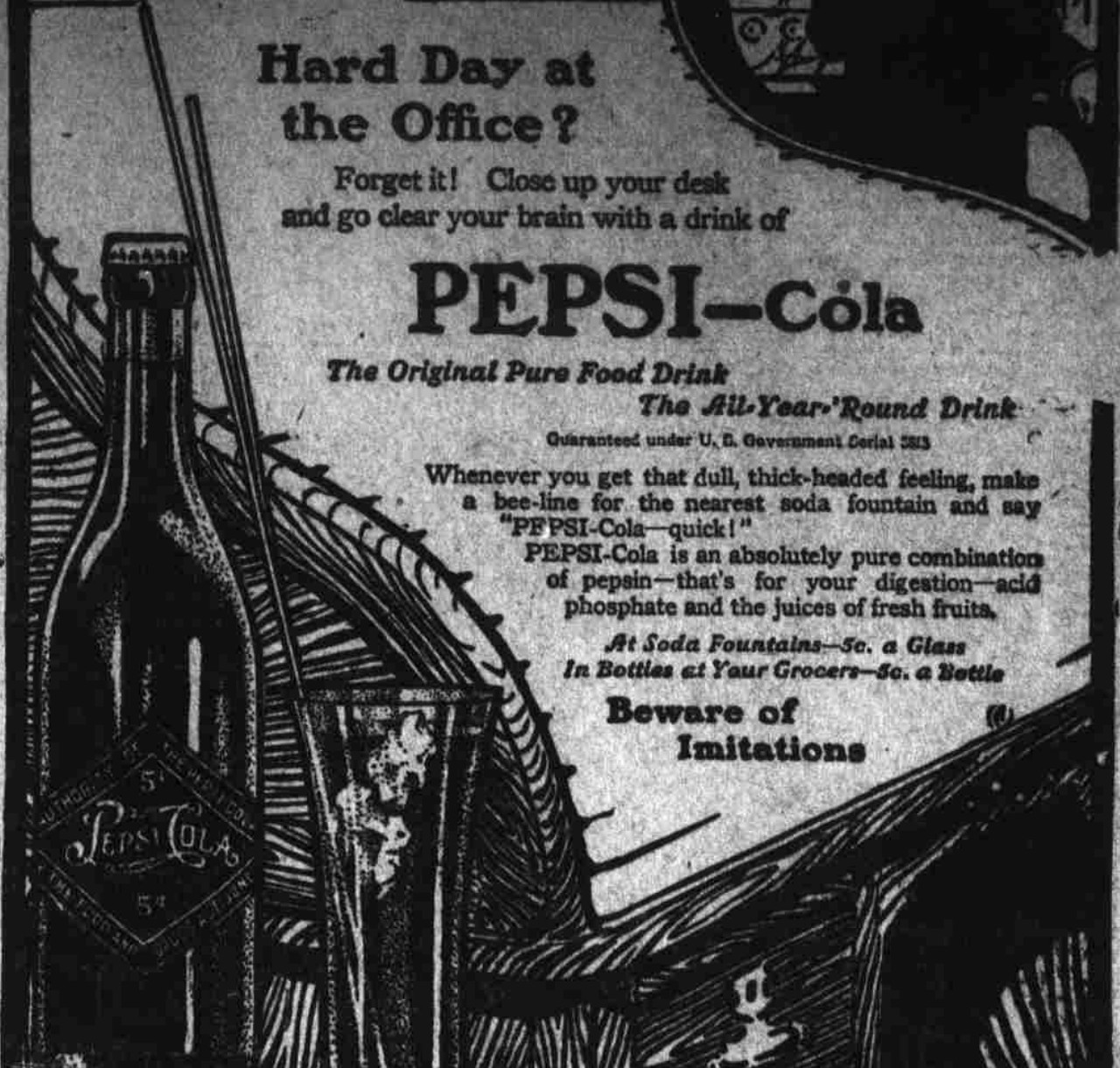
proaching the residence of the Queen through broad avenues bordered by handsome parks, I went through narrow, tortuous, unattractive streets and found a small open court, adorned with a statue of William the Silent, in front of which was the modest residence of the much beloved sovereign of the Netherlands. It is not to be compared with the White House at Washington. Upon entering the palace I was required to register in a book, giving my name and address. There was also a column having at the top the word "Qualite." I took this to mean that I was called upon to say whether I was an aristocrat or a plebeian, but as all the other Americans who had registered ahead of me (except one man from Texas) had left this line blank, I followed suit and thus saved myself the ordeal of deciding a very embarrassing question. I shall not describe the palace. We saw many attractive and beautiful rooms into which the keeper told us with evident pleasure "the Queen herself comes." I looked with most interest at the room in which she was married to that fellow who has, I believe, turned out to be right much of a disappointment to the Dutch people, to say nothing of what the Queen thinks on that subject. We were shown many of her bridal presents, gifts from the crown heads. I wish my wife could have seen them, as she loves so dearly to look at bridal presents. We passed an old hand organ in a hallway and some asked what it was. "Oh," said the keeper, "that was a gift to the Queen from her father when she was a little girl." It seems that on her 6th birthday, the late King said to her, "Daughter, what shall I give you?" To which she replied, "Father, I'd like above all things to have a hand organ such as I see in the street," and there it stands now a witness of the touch of nature which is found even in a little Princess.

A DOLL-BABY LOCOMOTIVE.
I would like for my good friend and neighbor, Engineer Misenheimer, to have seen the little engine that pulled us down to the seaside resort, Scheveningen, (I hope I've got enough e's and n's in that word). The little engine is a doll-baby affair

(Continued on Page Four).

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