

JOURNAL FROM THE LOW COUNTRIES (1756)

by

MRS. MARGARET CALDERWOOD (1715-1774)

Selection from "Letters and Journals of Mrs. Calderwood of Polton from
England Holland and The Low Countries in 1756"

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INTRODUCTION TO THE WEB TRANSCRIPTION

The failure of the second Jacobite rebellion (1745-46) set Scotland into turmoil. It was not only the ringleaders who paid dearly for their allegiance: suspects, sympathizers and their families also lost property, and some went into exile abroad. One such was the economics scholar, Sir James Steuart, who was obliged to take refuge with his wife and children in France.

By 1756 it had been eleven years since Sir James last met his younger sister, Margaret Calderwood. That summer, she set out from Edinburgh, accompanied by her husband Thomas, their sons William and James, and two servants, Peggy and John; their ultimate destination would be Liège, Belgium. They travelled by horse-drawn coach to London, continuing to Harwich, where they took ship for Holland.

These selections from Margaret's private journal describe her first impressions upon arrival at Rotterdam. They are both informative and entertaining. Posterity has been fortunate that she compiled her diary entries into manuscript volumes; these were preserved by the family, and were eventually printed in the 19th century. The presence of Scots words and irregular spellings adds colour and authenticity, without impeding comprehension; spelling and footnotes follow the 1884 public edition.

D. S. Campbell

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CHAPTER II.

[...] We arrived at Harwich in time enough, but found the wind was not fair for sailing, but as the paquet is obliged to sail so soon as the mail arrives, the captain would not tell us whether he would sail or not, till nine o'clock at night, and then let us know we might go to bed, which I was very happy at, as we had been very early up that morning.

Harwich is a pretty large town, but nobody but seafaring men lives in it, and most of its business is the passage. There are four paquets belongs to it in time of peace; and, in time of war, they call the paquets from Dover, as it is not so safe from privateers as Harwich. The commanders of the paquets are named by the Government, and the ships are theirs; they are very small, not being a third longer than a Kinghorn boat, but much deeper, and somewhat broader, for they have two very neat cabins with eight beds in each of them, and in the first, or rather off it, is a small stateroom with a bed.

It is surprising the constant intercourse of passengers alone (for they carry no goods) there is betwixt England and Holland, for each of these paquets makes twelve hundred pounds per annum to the captain, who imposes sadly on the passengers. I suppose it raises as much to the publick, for we paid twelve shillings for our passage, and a shilling to the clerk; this should be for our passage, but then the captain has the cabin bedded at his expence, and, if you take a bed, you pay a guinea, and if not, the half: this makes the captain be sure to keep you a night on sea, though, if the wind be good, it may be made in twelve hours; you take provisions on board, or can have it from the steuart of the ship.

The river at Harwich is but like half a mile broad. There is no harbour built, but they have two old men-of-war, one of seventy, and another of forty guns, the one runs out like a peer, the other turns like a head; they are firm to the ground, and make a very good harbour. You may propose this method to the Laird of Lundin; it will save so much time and labour, but I do not know the price of an old man-of-war, for these were given by the Government, so I do not know if it would save money. There was a seventy gun ship building in the dock-yard; it was as high to the top from the ground as a house of three stories, and a prodigious length.

This county of Essex, which reaches all the way to Harwich, is a very rich country, and more pleasing to the eye, as it has severall rising grounds in it, and towns and houses set up to view, as it were. Its produce is mostly wheat, barley, and beans, and rapeseed, which they change alternatly with fallow. This looks to be a very rich, plentiful country, and is reckoned one of the best in England. Its whole produce goes to the London market; and I do not think it is so populous as I would expect. If you see one English town or village you see them all; they are very neat and pleasant. The inns in all this country are built (round a court-yard) of timber, and open galleries from whence most of the rooms enter.

On Sunday the 27th of June we went on board the paquet about eleven o'clock forenoon. We were in an inn which is not so much frequented as another, so that we did not know of any passengers but two young gentlemen I saw walking about, and one who lodged in our inn, come from New England; but we were no sooner on board but we found ourselves a very numerous company.

As I have now got all their names, I may call them by name, which I could not do whilst on ship-board, nor for many days after: In the first place, there was an old lady with her son and daughter, the lady's name was Mrs. Clark, her son was Peter Dondie, bred a corn factor; Miss Dondie was a girl about eighteen, not ill-lookt, quite a cockney, she has exactly the voice of the stage, and might be made a player, had she as much sense or feeling as to enter into the spirit of her part.

Peter you have often seen acted by Stamper;¹ he seemed to understand a horse-race or a cock-match much better than the price of corn; he is just the figure of a young squire who would be married to a cast-mistress, if some good-natured person in the drama did not prevent it, for which he would express his thankfulness with many grins and smiles, severall bows and scrapes, shrugs, and rubbing of his hands for gladness.

¹ Stamper was one of Mr. Digge's and Mrs. Ward's company at the theatre in the Canongate in 1753-56, and is described as 'an actor of merit.' ARNOT'S History of Edinburgh, p. 369.

The old woman is a good-natured body, and seems to desire nothing so much that she would run the risque of giving offence to obtain it. She told me that she had severall troubles in her life; her first husband was a Frenchman, he died when the lassie was at nurse, and left her with Peter, another daughter and her. The other daughter was most charmingly married, but died a few months after, of the small-pox: that she had married, for a second time, a coall-merchant of the name of Clark. She did not know whether he was Scots or not. She supposed he was of no great family, or she would have heard enough of it, but indeed he was so unhappy, (which signifies ill-nature in Scots,) that she durst never ask anything at him he was not pleased to tell her.

Now do not suppose I got all this on board a ship, for you will see, by the course of our travells, I have met her often again.

The next in rank of our company were two young gentlemen, the one, Mr. Webb, setting out for the tour of Italy, and his companion, one Mr. Bowlls, the son of a very rich father, who keeps a crown-glass warehouse near London. He had allowance from his father to accompany Mr. Webb (who had been a Cambridge companion) the tour of Flanders, and was to return by Dover in a few weeks.

Then we had one Mr. Cookson, a merchant of Leeds, a very good descreet man, going abroad to settle his correspondence before the war break out; a Presbyterian minister going to Utrecht to supply the place of Mr. Brown,² who has got the Church-history in St. Andrews; a very fine body they call M'Culloch; two messengers, one returning to Pettersburgh [St. Petersburg, dsc.] from London, he is an officer in the service, as the Russian Court has no people of that kind or office as we have; this gentleman, in his way to London from Harwich, where he had never been before, met with a company of Germans, so, for the sake of coming with them, he left the English passengers, and joined the Germans, who made him pay the whole expence of the company, which was £7, and told him England was a very dear place. He was one of the merriest finest bodies ever I saw, and sung vastly fine.

² The Revd. William Brown, Professor of Divinity and Church History in St. Mary's College, St. Andrews—see *University Calendar*, where the date 1757 is given.

The other messenger was a very smart lad; he was going to Berlin, and from that to Petersburgh, and the two were to set out together a journey of twenty-two days, night and day travelling, and was not to have off their clothes till they arrived. He was sent to Lisbon with the account of the present from the Parliament,³ and was there at the second great earthquake.

We had likeways a Doctor Monro going to study at Leyden, but he had as much knowledge already as would do all his business, which he had bought for forty shillings; this was a cure for the jaundice. He had likeways in his pocket a bottle of drops infallible for preventing sea sickness, which was no other than the spirit of lavender; but if his other specifick be no better than that, he is forty shillings out of pocket. However, every body swallowed of it greedily, but, alais! it proved of no effect.

Marinasa the opera dancer was in the company, and a companion of his, a Swiss, who was either a singer or a dancer, we could not know which, for he sung very ill, and did not look as if he could dance. This poor Italian applyed to the doctor for a few of his drops, which after taking, he fell sick, took his bed, and did not get up again till he was within smell of land; we all thought he would have died outright. All the company were sick, less or more, for first we plyed down the river with a cross wind, tacking every half hour till the tide was spent, and about three o'clock afternoon, when we were of Orford, on the coast of Suffolk, we were obliged to cast anchor; which was no sooner done than every one fell a wameling⁴ as the ship did, and there was such sighing and groaning in the two cabins, as I never heard the like.

Mr. Calderwood had got possession of the state-room, and there lay he snug with the door shut, very squeamish. There was such a stink below, that I durst

³ The great earthquake of Lisbon occurred on the 1st Nov. 1755, and was felt more or less during the following seventeen days.

In answer to a message to Parliament sent by the King on the 28th Nov. a sum of £100,000 was voted to enable his Majesty to afford speedy and effectual relief to the inhabitants, and his own subjects in that country. On 5th Dec. H.M.S. 'Hampton Court,' 70 guns, was despatched for Lisbon with '£50,000 in specie, and as much provision of beef, flour, biscuit, etc. as she could carry.' *Scots Magazine*, Nov. and Dec. 1755.

⁴ Rolling about

not go down, so sat above till it was almost dark; then down I must go, and into bed as soon as possible, very very squeamish. I could not keep my feet in the cabin. And it was such an operation betwixt John⁵ and me, to get off some of my clothes, and to get on my night clothes, that had anybody been inclined to laugh, they might have had a good subject. I at last got to bed, but such a night I think I never will forget.

At the upper end of the cabin, a bed lyes across the stern, in that lay the Swiss dished up like a boiled salmond, (for it has no cover over it,) sick to death; on the right hand of it lay the almost expiring dancer; on the left lay the old lady; at her feet was Miss making a deplorable lamentation; at her feet lay I as quietly as I could; on the side with the dancer lay Mr. Webb; John Rattray was laid before my bed, with his head on a clog-bag⁶ and his feet into the state-room.

About twelve we all composed ourselves to sleep, but were very soon awaked by a most dreadful storm of thunder, and lightning and rain. When I waked, I heard Miss calling out, 'Oh, good La, is there any danger?'

Mr. Webb sitting up in his bed, with a night-cap and red vest, demonstrating to Miss that the thunder would not drown her. Bowles, who had come from the other cabin to pay us a visit, was speldring⁷ with legs and arms to keep his ballance, and holding by the walls, protesting he had never seen such a night; the poor dancer crying out his prayer, and sick by turns. I had slept so sound I had forgot where I was, when all this presented itself, and you may figure how astonished I was.

The thunder continued for three hours; however, it had the effect to change the wind, so that we set sail again with a fair wind, about four o'clock in the morning.

The minister, poor body, got up about nine, and made a large pot of coffee, which he came round with, declaring it to be the finest thing to settle the

⁵ John Rattray, their servant.

⁶ Cloak-bag, portmanteau.

⁷ Spreading himself.

stomachs of the whole company; but it was ordained in this voiage, that every thing which was intended for a remedy proved quite contrary, for no sooner was the coffee swallowed, but every one fell sick, and I, who had withstood everything, at last yeilded to the minister's coffee, and made a clean stomach.

My remedy came next, for about dinner time, I caused John make some mutton broth; by the time it was ready, we were coming within sight of land, so that it had a great effect on the company as it is a good remedy comes in the end of a disease. Every one praised the broth, and wondered I could be so wise as to think of making broth; little did they know that I thought I had not got a dinner since I left home for want of broth.

The sight of land cheared every body's spirits, and even the poor dancer creept out of bed like a poisoned rottan;⁸ he returned thanks to the company for their concern for him, but, indeed, it was only comiseration he had received from any of them but us. Every one said, the poor Italian is [ill], but nobody offered him any assistance but the minister, who gave him of his coffee, and we gave him part of any thing we had. I sent him some peppermint water, and he reached out his bare neck, and head without a night-cap, and cried,

'Me thank ye, Madam.'

John gave him broth, and took great care of him, at which he was so thankfull that he gave John half a croun.

We came in sight of land about four o'clock afternoon, and arrived in sight of the harbour of Helveotsluce at eight: I say in sight, for there it seems it is the custome to cast anchor, that there may be money given for a boat to take you in, though the ship can go as easily as any other part of the voiage. The sea run pretty rough; the captain went into his boat, and all who were very impatient got in with him, but those who thought the sea rough demurred a little, of which number were the ladies, some of the gentlemen, and the Italian, and the Swiss, and two poor servant lasses I forgot to mention. We waited some time, and no

⁸ Rat.

appearance of the boat's return, and though it had, they that had gone into it made so bad a figure on the water, that we did not choose to follow them.

Whilst we were considering what would be done, up comes a Dutch boat, a great odd-like thing, by all the world just like a great parton;⁹ for, instead of being hollow in the midst, it rose up round like the back of a parton, and had two boards fixed to the sides, not unlike the toes. There was two men in it, who asked a shilling per head from us; they could speak no English, we no Dutch; but you must take this alongst with you, that in money matters, the Dutch understands any language. The poor lasses say to me,

'But what will become of us, for we have not a shilling to pay?'

'Go in boldly,' says I, 'we will not pay till we land, and then what can they do? If they threaten to drown you, the company will pay two shillings to save you.'

So in we all went, and after we entered the harbour, they demanded the money; every one payed their shilling; when it came to the Swiss, he gave a guinea to change, and expected nineteen shillings back, which paid for him and the dancer, but they offered him but seventeen, withholding the other two for the poor lasses; upon which insued a scolding bout betwixt the Swiss and the skipper, each in their own language. The company inter-posed in every language they could speak, to try if any party could understand them, but to no purpose, and this was certainly the most lively representation of the Confusion of Babel ever I had been witness to.

The two poor lasses were pointed at by both, and were terrified out of their wits; all that I could understand of the whole dialogue was, 'G—d d—n ye,' which was thrown out by both sides; which, to the honour of the English, has become part, and I think the only part, of the universall language so much wished for.

This dispute was at last determined in favour of the Swiss, who got back his guinea, and somebody gave him two shillings to pay for him and his companion.

⁹ Crab.

We got on shore, and came to an English house, we had been recommended to, where we, Mr. Cookson, and the minister, put up; all the rest went to another. We got very good entertainment in a low parlour, very neat and clean set forth, with many pictures and much china. When we came to go up stairs to bed, there was a trap, which is the Dutch name for a stair, and, indeed, it answers all the idea anybody can have of a trap, for there was not two foot of difference betwixt the head and the foot of it, though it went straight up before you. The maid spoke English:

'Bless me,' said I, 'such a stair!'

'Madam,' said she, 'this is one of the best stairs in all Holland;' which I found to be true.

The next question was, in what manner we should go to Rotterdam. The parson had been instructed to go by water; there is no track-scoot goes from Helveot, but they go to the Brille in a waggon, which is but two miles, and then takes a sailing scoot up the Maes to Rotterdam. As this passage depends on the wind, it may sometimes be tedious, so that the surest way, though the most expensive, is to take what they call a *rattel waggon*, that being the genteelest conveyance, straight to Rotterdam. In this way Mr. Cookson and we intended to go, but the parson was instructed to go by water, and by water he would go; so Mr. Cookson, we, and the two gentlemen, Webb and Bowles, set out in two waggons, and left the parson with the ladies, the Doctor, Fetter, the dancer, and the Swiss.

This waggon is a long-bodied narrow cart, that just holds two to sit in the wideness. There are four benches in it, including the one the driver sits in; it has very soft cushions on the seats, four wheels, and is very easy. It is drawn by two horses, but has no pole, for the horses are yoked to a cross-tree, and betwixt the two fore wheels there is a peice of timber turned up like a hook, and this serves for a rudder to the waggon, which the driver governs with his foot. The intention of this is, that in this way they can make a much shorter turn, and pass another machine much nearer, as the roads are very narrow, high raised on the top of what they call dykes, with deep ditches on each hand, and when you have

to make a turn it is very sharp, and often upon a little bridge which goes over one of these ditches. The horses are very well trained, and go at a good rate.

This way of travelling was very agreeable; you know to a minute how long you will be on the road, for they count all by hours; it is four hours betwixt Helveot and Rotterdam. There was no cover over our head, and we saw the whole country round, which is very flat, but not inclosed any other way than by water, that is, in broad ditches always full of water, and in some places canalls; there are bushes of trees here and there, for all these dykes are planted, I suppose to make them stand the firmer. All through the country are these dykes, far from the sea, and made only to prevent the water from going further should it breake in at any part.

We got to Rotterdam in good time to dine; the waggon set us down on the other side of the Maes, which we had to ferry over in about five minutes sailing or rowing. When we arrived at the ferry, Mr. Webb, who had come in another waggon, told us he had rode in great pain; he really was in great distress, poor lad! We came to the best inn in Rotterdam, called the *Swyn's Hooft*, which being interpreted, signifies the Sow's head. This house was kepted by a Frenchman, and a Dutch frowe of the first magnitude. There we had things dressed in the Dutch manner, some of which was new, which I shall tell you when I come to display my acquirements in cookery.

I dined one day at the ordinary for curiosity, and there was a collection of severall nations, French, Dutch and German, and some of them could speak a little English. We had sixteen dishes of meat, and a very good desert of fruit, fresh and dry, for we here had the finest strawberries and cherries since ever we came to Holland. The price, besides the wine, which every body paid as they called for it, was a gilder the head.

Now, I must make you acquaint with the Dutch money in order to save me calculation when I name the price of any thing: The highest coin they have here is a ducat, that is a very pretty gold peice, broader and thinner than our half-guinea; that, when changed into silver, is five gilders five stivers, and the nearest thing to our nine-and-sixpence. The next coin to that is a gilder, which is twenty stivers; a stiver is rather more than our penny, for our shilling goes

for eleven stivers, our half-crown for twenty-eight; so that there is a loss of a twelfth part in bringing English money here. There is two stiver pieces called doublesees; there is likewise five stivers and one-half, which is exactly the value of an English sixpence. Then there are six stiver pieces, these they call skillings, and twelve stiver pieces, called two skillings or twelve stivers. They have the stiver in silver, and the only copper coin is doits, of which there are eight for a stiver. They have severall other silver coins, as double and single dollars, but they are not now so much in use; and they have no other gold coin but the ducat, which, by general agreement, is allowed now to be current all over Germany, but they are looked upon only as a sort of conveniency, for they are not reckoned money, but merchandise.

In any large payments, and in bills of exchange, or payments of any extent, silver is the only thing called money; and when a man makes a bargain, the payer will stipulate, that so much of the price is to be received in ducats, or rather gold. They have no paper credit, so you may judge what a mint of that ugly ill-coined silver must be in this country, when there are few pieces of it above twenty-two pence of our money, which is a gilder.

CHAPTER III.

The sight of the town of Rotterdam is something very new. It is situated on a very fine fresh water river, up which the largest ships can come, from whence every large street in the town has a canall, always supplied with fresh water every tide; the streets are on each side of the canall.

There are the houses on one hand each within themselves; they have commonly two steps, then a flat of a black stone, or blew like marble, before the door, and as much on each hand of the door as hold a binch of the same stone, with the one end to the street, and the other to the house, where the carles¹⁰ sit in the evening and smok their pipes. Next to the steps is a foot-walk of bricks, laid with their edges uppermost; this sort of bricks they call clinkers, and are as hard as any flint. Next that they have a stone casway, about eight or nine foot broad; and, on the other side of that, to the edge of the canall, is all laid with these clinkers, and will be about as broad, or broader in many places, than the casway, and in the middle of it is planted a continued row of old fine elms, which are kepted in nice order, and make a fine shade.

Ships of good burthen sail from canall to canall to any part of the town, and all the bridges are made to draw up to let them through, so that the town is intirely a mixture of houses, trees, and ship masts from the one end to the other, and this is the appearance and plan of every town in Holland.

Their streets are kepted as clean as any parlour floor, washed from the door of every house cross to the canall every day, with a besome [broom, dsc.] made of small twigs. The Dutch maid-servants do nothing on earth but wash the house and the streets, and the veshells of the house and kitchen; none of them wash their linnen at home, they are all washed in publick fields and brought in wet, so that, when the maids have not them to dry and dress, they have nothing to do but slester¹¹ and wash. They have plenty of water, and every house has a pump, and they will have a pump of water in every story. This is one inducement to wash, but the originall of it is the necessity, as the streets would

¹⁰ Old fellows.

¹¹ To slush, or slop.

in a few days gather a fog¹² betwixt the bricks, and that in a short time would certainly breed a vermine.

All the houses and the streets, and every thing here, are all founded on timber pillars, which makes the streets so noisy that it is quite intolerable; a wheelbarrow makes as much noise in passing as a coach and six would do in another place, and one would think they put rattling things to their machines to increase the noise. A great many things they carry on slipes,¹³ for instance barrells. They have slipes of a great length, on which I have counted four-and-twenty empty barrells.

All the bread and things of common use are wheeled about in what they call a *croy waggon*, which is like a large box set on two wheels; it has no shaft, but a crooked thing like a hook, which they hold by, and pushes it before them, as fast as they can run it drives away. You see no porters here with burthens on their backs; all is carried on wheels or on slipes, which makes a prodigious and constant ratling on the streets.

Then there are a great number of coaches, made in a different form from ours. The coachman's seat is much lower, the fore wheels so low as to run in under the carriage when they turn. The coach is supported by two large braces [that] go through below it; it hangs very easy. All the back part is full glass down to the seat. They are large, and clumsily made; but all the Dutch carriages have a certain roundness, and a coach and a ship have the same bulge, in which both differ from other nations; but their coaches are most magnificently ornamented, and gilded to a high degree.

A Dutch hacke is finer than any coach the King of Britain has; black japaned ground, with fine carved corners; cornices round the windows, all upon the carriage, and on the wheels all over guilt.

¹² Moss, or lichen.

¹³ To slipe, to move freely any weighty body which is dragged through the mire. JAMIESON'S *Scot. Dict.*

The gentlemen's coaches are still finer, all painted and japanned, and overlaid with coats of arms and coronets, as if they were all dukes and princes. They are all lined with flowered velvet, a gold or silver fringe round the coachman's seat; the finest liveries quite covered over with pacements,¹⁴ more than any drummer ever you saw, broad laced hats and large shoulder knots; the harness, some of red Turkey leather, with a great many fine buckles, double gilt; the horses' mains are plet with scarlet or other colours of worsted binding; the reins are the same, and the horses has a large bob of a tasell at each ear, such as hang at a lady's chair, the same tying up their tails sometimes, and a large top betwixt their ears.

They mostly are mares, which are very large, and finely shaped, very black, with long tails; they are so fat, so well kept and clean skined, that they are the prettiest creatures ever I saw, and look much better in a coach than the light horses now used in England; they are not for such swift travelling, but they are better for draught and deep roads, and, were I to breed horses, I would have them for that use; the finest of them are bred in Frisland, and cost about two hundred gilders the piece, which is just £18 sterling.

The English horses of their size have risen since the war to £25 the piece, and they could never keep up their number of horses in England without a great supply from this country every year.

Besides the coaches, there are many and various sorts of machines for travelling in Holland. There are phaetons made for holding six folks; the back part is like a coach, where two can sit; then there is a window, then another seat with no back to it; then there is another window, and then another seat; then, below this is a little bench for the driver; this goes likeways without a pole, and is conducted by a rudder; when it comes down a slope, (for there is no down hill,) the driver keeps it back by puting his foot against the horses' buttocks; in this way they can yoke either two or three horses a-breast. They have no harness but a bridle, and sort of brecham¹⁵ about their necks, and yoked by

¹⁴ Lace, passementerie.

¹⁵ The collar of a working horse.—JAMIESON'S *Dict.*

ropes; to the outermost side of each bridle comes a small cord, which is all the command the driver has, but he has no need, for they are so well trained that they all obey by words. In a narrow road they will never flinch, though the briars and thorns brush against their faces that you would think it would pull out their eyes.

Such horses as they use in these carriages for travelling are of a smaller size than those I mentioned before, and will drive seven or eight hours in a prodigious hot day, at the rate of betwixt three and four miles an hour, without any thing but a little water every two hours, and once a little grass and a bit of rye bread. There is no water on the roads for them to drink, as every wet place has a bridge over it; for that there are certain houses on the road who have always grass and water set out for passengers; the driver drinks a pot of beer, while his horses drink water; so on we go again.

There are a great many rivers and branches of rivers to pass, which are too broad for bridges; on these they have the most convenient passage-boats can be: I have drawn you a very bad draught of it. Any carriage, with the horses and passengers in it, drive just into it, and are ferried over; the boatmen pulling the rope pushes the boat from one side of the river to the other; so they drive out at the other end, the end board lying closs on the ground. This is an improvement may easily be transplanted into Scotland, where there is much need of it.

But, to return to the carriages. Another conveyance is the post-waggon, the draught of which I send you likeways. It is divided, the two first seats from the last, next the driver, by a canvas which draws up and down, so that it is like a coach and a chaise joined, only the folks in the coach and chaise may converse together or not as they please, by putting up or down this canvas. The two first sits face to face as in a coach, the other seat faces the horses, so that they sit back to back.

Then they have a single horse chair, which is for one or two persons to take the air in, and this is a great diversion in the evenings. They are very neat, light things, highly ornamented. You have one of these an afternoon for half a crown, and drive as much as you please. Nobody rides by, for the horses are finely

trained. Nobody rides a-horseback here, nor in all Holland almost, but the post. The country-people all travell in carts and waggons of various sorts. The conveyance in the track-scoot I shall speak of when I come to travel in it.

The town of Rotterdam is a very busy place, ships loading and unloading every moment. One of the finest streets in the town, they call the Bomcase, is upon the side of the Maes, with a row of fine trees before the windows, through which you see an unnumerable quantity of ships and boats continually passing, and many pleasure boats, on which the young extravagant Dutch beaux lay out a vast deall of money. One of them I heard of had three sloops for his pleasure, of different sizes, the largest cost a thousand pound sterling.

In this street there are the finest houses in the place, and severall of the richest merchants live in it. Every street is full of shops and ware-houses, and work-houses, where every sort of people are at work, and there is nothing comes from any part of the world which is not to be had there.

There are certain places allotted for each market; the flesh is sold in a house and not exposed to the air; the fish is under shades; the herbs and fruit are in a place by themselves. These last are carried up and down the streets in baskets carried on the women's shoulders, and it is surprising what a weight they can carry hung to a peice of board which goes on their neck, to which the baskets are hung. All the strawberries are carried in little earthen pots set in those baskets, and are of the large hoy boy kind, very good. They are vastly well supplied with garden stuff of all kinds; you buy one or two large cucumbers for a doit; the Dutch live greatly on garden things, rich and poor.

The houses all over Holland are built of brick, the walls very thin, six inches is the common; but the strength of the houses is in the timber. They have great oak beams, and severall houses, which are not of the finest, incline forward so much that the top is in some two foot off the plum, and looks as if they were falling forward; but this is done, it seems, designedly, either to widen the house above, or to make them cast the rain, but I imagine it is just an old fashion that nobody follows now.

I cannot commend their architecture by no means.

They look upon a stair as a necessary evil, so puts it in as little room as possible, and in as dark an out of the way corner as they can find. If the street runs a-squint the town, then all the houses run a-squint in the fore wall, and every room is two foot longer on the one side than the other. The chimney places are very droll like; they have no jams nor lintell, as we have, but a flat wall the grate is set to, and then projects over it a lum,¹⁶ in the form of the cat-and-clay lums in the country houses of timber, and commonly a muslin or point ruffled pawn¹⁷ round it; above that is what we call a chimney-piece, and above that severall other little cornices for setting china upon, which every house must be decked with.

They have excellent bedding here, fine down and feather beds; most of the bottomes are timber, and over that a straw mattress, then a large down bed, then a wool mattress very thick; a Dutch bolster is at least three quarters broad, and not made round as ours are, but in the pillow shape; the pillows are in proportion, and made square. The finest bed I lay in in Rotterdam had no blankets, but a soft callico, quilt very thick with cotton, and very slightly quilted together. I thought I should not have enough of clothes, so took another, but soon found it too warm.

I expected to find in Holland the finest large basons, and every other thing of Delph, but, to my great surprise, found nothing but puther. [pewter, dsc.] Every thing you can imagine is made of puther, tea-kettle, tea-pot, milk-pot, bason, plates, casters, juggs, muggs, and every thing you ever saw in silver or in china.

When I first went through the town, I saw, as I thought, the most magnificent silver-smiths' shops I could imagine, finely polished, in other shops silver-work unpolished, prettily chaced, but the colour of the inside of our new plate, and, upon enquiry, found that all the polished work was puther, and the unpolished silver.

¹⁶ Chimney.

¹⁷ A valance, as round a bedstead.

Providence has certainly wisely ordered, for the greater correspondence amongst mankind, that every country should despise its own produce or manufactures, otherways the Dutch, who are a very wise and rational people, could never prefer the ugly puther to their fine china and Delph, nor our printed cottons to their fine chinces. If you say to a Dutch lady,

'Your gown is a vast pretty chince,' she will say,

'It is not a chince, I do assure you, it is an English cotton, which I value much more.'

They are not come into the taste of paper in their houses; the guilt leather, or silk, or tapestry, is the only thing used. But the principall finery and expence in their houses are carving, guilding, stucko, marble, china of the ornamental kind and pictures. As for marble, there is the utmost profusion of it; a very indifferent house has the passages in marble, both above and below stairs. The kitchen floors are marble for certain, lined with the glazed tile.

The Dutch houses are all after the same plan, which at first appeared to me very odd; some parts of the house that is to the street was three stories, some parts two stories, some but one story, and that lighted from the roof; but the reason of this is, they are greatly confined to the street, so can have but the length of one room to it, and then the house runs a great way back.

Mr. Crawford's was the only fine house I was in. It is built after the Dutch plan, which indeed the ground prescribes. This house cost him, warehouses included, which lye behind the house, and in the sunk story, seven thousand pounds. His house is twenty-six foot long, and ninety foot deep. Now, how is the middle of this house to be lighted, but by cutting a room out in the middle of it? so that, instead of being five rooms in depth, it is first two, then a blank, and then two. In this blank there is one room on the ground, lighted from the roof, which some makes a parlour of, but they make some other use of it.

This house is built of brick, some stone pillasters and ornaments above the door as you come in. There is a passage laid with very fine white marble, every stone about six foot long and four broad. Off that, all on one hand, enters the compting

room, and other places for his business, and this lantern room, as they call it, or hot-bed, as I called it. Above stairs, and up a very good stair, (which is a wonder,) there is another long passage, laid with marble, and the walls lined with white tiles. The fore room is a very pretty one, lined with green and gold leather, the chimney in the English fashion; but as the walls are so thin, they cannot contain it. It must be built so as to project upon the room, and all that projection is marble back to the wall. All above the lintell is carved in wood, with brecates set out for china.

The roofs in all the best rooms, and in this, are stucko, which was wrought by an Italian, much cheaper than Rennick's, and of so hard a nature that it is like stone. The roofs of the rooms are all high, and the doors and windows very high; the windows will be about twelve by five or six foot, and the doors more than seven foot.

The bricks of which the houses are built are vastly hard; Mr. Crawford had forgot to bore a hole for a bell, (which, in every house, is put so as the handle is at the side of the outer door, that, instead of knocking, you ring,) and in peircing that hole through the brick, it was as hard to do as if it had been marble.

Behind this room I have described there is a parlour, lighted into the void; beyond the void a bed-chamber, and behind that a drawing-room. You may judge of the windows, when three window curtains and two peices of hangings will take ten peices of Indian damask to hing them.

Above they have lodging rooms, a large nursery, (as they have ten children, the eldest little more than ten years old,) and a place for drying clothes, which I thought vastly convenient. There are joists laid alongst at the height one can reach, at the distance of about eight foot from each other, and on them are cut out, at about two foot distance, a notch, and betwixt every joist, at that distance, is laid a poll, on which the clothes are hung; the polls always lye on the joists, so they just take down the one end, and string the clothes on and put it up again, which is very clever.

Up in the garret lye the peats: the Dutch allow nothing to be carried through their houses, so how think you the peats gets up to the garret? they come in at

the window, or rather a place made on purpose, with a tackle and pulley; a basket is tied and let down, so everything is put into it that is wanted up stairs. Then, to take them down again for use, every story has a bunker for peats, and these bunkers have a communication from each other, and up to the garret, by timber spouts, such as they let down malt with. The peats have little ashes, so that a white-iron pan takes away the whole day's ashes, which the maid carries away in her hand with a cloth thrown over it.

I have been particular in the description of this house, as I reckon it in the conveniency equall to the best. Every one of the lower order is in the same stile, only some very bad copies, and many exceed it in expensive finishing: their kitchens are very neat.

The peats are a vast conveniency, as they serve for stove holes in any part of the kitchen without a vent above, as the peats they use in the stoves are charred, and have no smock, that is, they are half burnt, and then smothered; but, at any rate, they are of a much finer kind than we have. They are all fished with nets out of a lake, like coffee grounds, then laid out in heaps to dry, and so cut into square peices; they are brought to every town by the cannalls. Those peats have a fine heat, and answer all sorts of kitchen use better than coals, as with them they use every sort of earthen vessells for the kitchen.

This, or charcoal, with an earthen pot, is the whole secret of Madamosel's boulie we could never light upon; and this is like many imported improvements, which, by not answering, gives our country the character of being stupid, self-conceited, wedded to our own way, etc. when, behold, the very materials are not in use amongst us, that such things can only be done by.

I must here make a degression, least I forget it, of some things of the same kind. How often have I heard us blamed for the Dutch excelling us so much in both whiteness and cheapness in their bleaching? The Dutch say they have certainly a secret, and a method of bleaching which we cannot obtain, and our wise Trustees¹⁸ have bestowed a vast deall of money upon rogues, who pretend they

¹⁸ During the troubles in which the Fletcher family, and many other Whigs, were involved in the times of persecution, the mother of Andrew Fletcher, Lord Milton (*see post*), who was a

have got the secret of the Dutch bleaching, when the Dutch have no more secret than what Margaret Pedie [has], and I suppose her great-grandmother had before her, which is boiling her cloth and laying it out to the sun, and watering, and putting it into sower milk when it is near white. They give their servants a great day's wage,¹⁹ perhaps twenty-pence, and yet they bleach at two-pence farthing their yard, which is our three quarters.

The secret of it is what I am afraid can never be brought into Scotland, at least the two main articles, the last may. First, there is no duty on either soap or pot-ashes. The wood-ashes they get down from Germany by the Rhine, at a perfect trifle, as any body may imagine, that, if an ash-midden is worth carriage, it is worth but little more. In the next place, the weather is quite serene and constant, and, for most part in summer, very hot; and, last of all, the water is quite of a different quality. There are no springs in all Holland, though the country is full of water. This water falls from the heavens in winter, and covers the whole face of the ground, and what is carried with great rapidity to the sea with us, by every river and burn, with them lies in the ground for want of level.

For this reason, the whole country is cut into these canals and ditches in order to receive it, and what lies in the hollow places, and cannot get into the canal, is drawn up by wind-mills, and thrown into the canals, and this is one great use of the unnumberable wind-mills through Holland: besides, these canals have all a circulation of fresh water from the great rivers, which keeps them fresh all summer. But it must appear, at this rate, that the water here is of a

daughter of Sir David Carnegie of Pitarrow, went to Holland, taking with her a clever millwright and a weaver, in the hope that by their means she might be able to discover the secret of the weaving and dressing of linen as practised by the Dutch.

In 1754 and 1755, 'the Commissioners and Trustees for improving Fisheries and Manufactures in Scotland' were very zealous in their endeavours to better the system of making and dressing linen throughout Scotland, and at an outlay of £3000 elaborated a scheme for the erection of stations and schools; and the training of teachers and artificers all over the Highlands.— *See Scots Magazine*, 1754 and 1755.

¹⁹ This phrase still is commonly used in Scotland where 'wages' would be employed in England.

much softer quality than any in Scotland, and the only way that can be supplied with us for bleaching is, to make ponds which shall keep as much water as will serve a bleaching-feild all summer.

Harlem, which is the famous place for bleaching, has the finest water; there are many sand hillocks near it, which the water comes through, and, as it were, filters it from all sort of minerall or bad ingredients of any kind.

Most of the reproaches our country meets with are as ill founded as this, and can only be the effects of want of enquiry or reflection.

The Dutch herron [herring, dsc.] will cost me another degression, so I shall mention them here. You know there were great hopes conceived of the British herron fishery, which has not succeeded, and every body said that is very odd. Will you see how the Dutch herron fishery always thrives, and how many bushes they have? but you must know that that affair of herron is like witchcraft here. The first herron that comes in are cured after a particular manner. The French salt is refined here, and then sent out to cure the herron. Every town, or certain ships, are priviledged by turns to bring home the first herron, which no sooner arrive, than every man, woman and child in Holland run upon them as if they were mad; they will sell in the morning for half a crown the peice, and at night come down to threepence.

The first herron arrived, since I came here, about three o'clock in the morning, and I was told one of the great burgomasters in this town sent out for a couple, and sat up in his bed and eat them. It can be nothing but a sort of naturall instinct that makes them be so run upon, for it is observed no disease rages the time of the herron, and they cure every body that is not well. They are all eat raw, and appear to be so fat that they are almost transparent, which must be owing to the curing, for they are the same with ours. They are not very salt, and they call them fresh herron; they will not keep any time, and ships are constantly coming in, and they are as fast eat up.

They are likeways sent to all parts of Germany, and the first which arrives are sent in a present, express to the King of Prussia. Suppose this is but home consumpt, and brings in no money from other countries, yet, finding

employment for a people at home makes them not think of going out of the country; and when they apply themselves to get bread at home, they think of many ways of doing to the advantage of their country.

All the folks in Holland who live by carrying, (that is, upon the water, either out at sea or on the cannalls,) their whole family lives in the boat, and they have no other house; wife and bairns all live in the scoot always. But these track-scoots [see Chapter V, dsc.] who carry passengers have no family living in them. This is the reason why the Dutch fish the herron and other fish cheaper than other nations. The master of the vessell is always at home, and does not keep two families, and they all live on the herron that they catch, so has no provision to take with them but bread and cheese.

I find it was a great loss that I could not speak to the folks and ask questions, so that there are many things I could not inform myself of. I went with Mrs. Crawfoord to a dairy farm, for all the grounds almost in the province of Holland are grass. They have lost, by the disease, all their fine breed of cattle, and, by the supply from Denmark and other countrys, the cattle is become small. The ground belongs mostly to the boors; there are almost no other lairds in the province of Holland.

No gentleman asks more than a house and garden, and, indeed, it would be needless to have land, for, of a hundred gilders of rent, there comes off seventy gilders of taxes; for it takes the whole rents of the country, and much more, to support it and the government; as it is all art,²⁰ it must be kept up at a great expence.

This dairy I went into; the woman, her second husband, (who had been her servant,) and her son, lived in [it.] There is not a wife in Scotland that is not as well drest or genteel like as her, and yet she had had two thousand pounds to her tocher [dowry, dsc.]. Her first husband was very rich, and her marrying the servant man was not an odd thing at all, he was as good as she. They keep forty cows, and had lost their whole stock three times over with the disease. I inquired into the management of their milk, and found that, so soon as it is

²⁰ Artificial.

milked, they sieth²¹ it into a brass veshell tinned within, of the shape of the green water-canns used by our country people. They immediatly put those veshells into cold water, and let them stand till the milk is cold; then they pour it into earthen veshells, narrow below and wide above, and let it stand only a day and half, and take care that the cream be not sower in the least. They churn three times a-week, and what the churn wants of being full, they fill it up with new milk, which is sometimes more or less, but often a third part. This churn is wider in proportion than ours, and like the hold of a nine gallon barrell; it works with a churn-staff, and is wrought by a very simple machine which is moved by a horse in a little house adjoining, yoked in a thing of the nature of Lundin's pump.

But the great nicety of the Dutch butter is the salting of it; they never put more salt on it than is common to put in England on the first butter, which is just a little more than we do. The proportion, they told me, was like our mutchkin [liquid measure, roughly three-quarters of an imperial pint, dsc.] of salt to twenty pound weight of butter, and with this I eat butter of last summer, which I did not know but that it was churned the day before. This salt they work into the butter after it has been washed from the milk as well as possible, and pour a pickle on it till the next morning, then pour it off, and so on till the barrell is full. The barrells are like half ankers, but all depends on the keeping it. When in the barrells, it should stand near nothing that it attracks a taste from; where it can contract no taste, nor be too dry. So, in the best houses in Holland, they have a place for their butter like a press, lined with tiles, and, when they take any out, they never hollow it, but slice it smooth off, and the least bit must not be left on the sides of the cask.

The Dutch churches are very clean and pretty, all paved, some with marble, some with stone. They have very few seats fixed, and most people sit on chairs. This church is battered²² as full of escutchions as the wall can hold. There is a fine organ in each, and in severall, very pretty monuments of the Orange family, and of their great admiralls, as De Roiter, etc. I think they are the best set of

²¹ To sythe or sey, to strain any liquid for its purification through a scarce or sey dish.

JAMIESON..

²² Plastered, literally pasted.

reformers, for they have just kepted what they could afford, and no more; and whim or fancy never governs the Dutch.

A Sunday is very droll in Holland; they almost all wear black to go to church, and you would take them for so many Seceders, they put on such a Sunday face, and walk as if they would not look up. No sooner is the sermon over but they fall to feasting, drinking and dancing. This was certainly not originally presbyterian; but, as their situation made all nations come amongst them, they could easily perceive they would not get a day, in which there was no work, kepted in a manner peculiar to themselves, so I suppose they thought it better to permit such things, than to let them be done by way of a sin; which, to be sure, was right, for, when folks come to think light of one sin, they soon think light of others: and you see, in all penitent confessions, that breach of Sunday was the first thing loosend their conscience.

The Dutch folks are very solid and rationally. They are not the people I would like to live among, by their appearance; but one must admire them for their solidity, industry, and pains-taking in every thing, and for the latitude they give to every body to follow their own way. They have no notion of what we call *whity whaty*, nor can they, I find, comprehend one's being undetermined. Though they have no vivacity, yet I think they are smart, and smarter, a great deall, than the English, that is, more uptaking.²³ I must be judge of this, as I went very much about by myself, and into every shop and place, and I found it very easy to make them understand what I wanted to know about their business, though I had not above ten words of Dutch, which did, you will allow, require some smartness.

A china wife and I turned very great;²⁴ she gave me her direction, and set down the price of several of her best things, and told me the age of every peice in her shop. It was from her I bought the small bottles I send you. They have no notion of your troubling them; if they think you come unresolved whether to buy or not, and in that case are very short, and ask you if you intend to buy, or if you

²³ 'Uptak ' in Scotland is equivalent to Anthony Trollope's 'observation and reception.' See *Autobiography*, ii. 47.

²⁴ Intimate.

be wanting anything; but, if you buy a trifle, or say that you are a stranger looking for curiosity, or that you would buy, but cannot carry things from place to place, then they are very civill.

The thing I think the oddest about the Dutch is their appearance; there [are] almost none of them have the look of gentlemen or ladies. The men are tolerable; they have the air of sober men of busness, but, for the ladies, they look like chambermaids, put on them what you please, and they dress very plain. A fine guilt coach will pass, and in it a chamber-maid in her Sunday's clothes, or an old worn-out housekeeper; and, when you see them walking from church, drest, they are just like a lady from the country, who has not had on a hoop, nor a fan in her hand, for twenty years, looking very prim, with her elbows into her sides, her two hands streight out before her, holding the fan out likeways, as if she was to red ²⁵ her way by it, and hagheling, [advancing with difficulty; per *Scottish National Dictionary*; dsc.] as if she thought all her pitecots were coming off. And this is a description of every body, for there is no odds²⁶ in any town, either in the appearance of the people or the place, for, shut your eyes, and you will not know in what town you are, they are so like.

What do you think of their making salt in Rotterdam, as a proof of their industry? The salt water is brought severall leagues off, and their peats from high up in Germany, yet they made salt almost as cheap as we buy it in Scotland; till of late, that the States has laid a duty on it. The salt water is brought in a boat, which is made to hold a certain quantity. The boat goes down the Maes out to sea, they pull out a cork, and she draws as much water as she can hold; in with the cork, and away they come, and it is pumped out of the boat into the salt-pan. This is an improvement to Mr. Martin, least his water is too fresh.

Every thing of viviers²⁷ is dear in Holland but vegetables, upon which the commons live almost all summer, and the better sort a great deall. Every body, great and small, sups on sallad with oil and vinegar. Their cookery is preferable to ours in all sorts of stewes or stoved things. They stew almost all the

²⁵ To clear, or straighten.

²⁶ Difference.

²⁷ Food, provisions.

vegetables which we boil, which I think is a great improvement, as it gives many of them a taste which otherways has none; for instance, carrots stewed as we do cabbage. Turkey-beans and pease they make great use of, which are very good boiled, or rather stewed in the hulle,²⁸ like kidney-beans: they have no stoffin within; I have seen them in Scotland; the English name is 'pease without parchment.'

Nobody chooses to eat beef in Holland at present, for the disease; for, whenever they are seized with it, they kill them, and eating them does no harm.

I have just now heard of a hand to carry this to London, so shall refer further minute particulars, and carry myself as far on as I have time to do in this. It was on the last day of June, I beleive, we got to Rotterdam, which was on Tuesday, and on Saturday we hired a pheatone, and set out for the Hague. In our way we dined at Delph, and went to see the Delph manufactory, which is much the same as you saw at Glasgow; but, least the composition be other than they have, I brought away a peice of it. They had very little of it to dispose of at the place, and that very dear; it is all sent out of the country somewhere, for there is little made, for I told you they did not use it in Holland.

The road betwixt Delph and the Hague is about five miles of a fine avenue, quite shaded, with a cannall on one hand, and grass grounds full of cattle or hay on the other.

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²⁸ Pod.