

A VISIT TO HOLLAND (1794)

by

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Selections from "A Journey made in the Summer of 1794, through Holland and the Western frontier of Germany, with a return down the Rhine ..."

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FOREWORD

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THE Author begs leave to observe, in explanation of the use made of the plural term in the following pages, that, her journey having been performed in the company of her nearest relative and friend, the account of it has been written so much from their mutual observation, that there would be a deception in permitting the book to appear, without some acknowledgement, which may distinguish it from works entirely her own. The title page would, therefore, have contained the joint names of her husband and herself, if this mode of appearing before the Public, besides being thought by that relative a greater acknowledgement than was due to his share of the work, had not seemed liable to the imputation of a design to attract attention by extraordinary novelty. It is, however, necessary to her own satisfaction, that some notice should be taken of this assistance. She may, therefore, be permitted to intrude a few more words, as to this subject, by saying, that where the economic and political conditions of countries are touched upon in the following work, the remarks are less her own than elsewhere.

With respect to the book itself, it is, of course, impossible, and would be degrading if it were not so, to prevent just censure by apologies; and unjust censure she has no reason, from her experience, to fear; but she will venture to defend a practice adopted in the following pages, that has been sometimes blamed for its apparent nationality, by writers of the most respectable authority. The references to England, which frequently occur during the foreign part of the tour, are made because it has seemed that one of the best modes of describing to any class of readers what they may not know, is by comparing it with what they do.

May 20, 1795.

HELVOETSLUYS

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ABOUT twenty hours after our embarkation, at Harwich, and six after our first sight of the low-spread and barren coast of *Goree*, we reached this place, which is seated on one of many inlets, that carry the waters of the German Ocean through the southern part of the province of Holland. *Goree*, rendered an island by these encroachments of the sea, is always the first land expected by the seamen; or rather they look out for the lofty tower of its church, which, though several miles more distant than the shore, is visible when that cannot be discerned. The entrance of the water between the land, in a channel probably three leagues wide, soon after commences; and Helvoetsluys is then presently seen, with the masts of vessels rising above its low houses, amidst green embankments and pastures, that there begin to reward the care of excluding the sea.

The names of Dutch towns are in themselves expressive of the objects most interesting to a people, who, for opportunities of commerce, have increased their original and natural dangers, by admitting the water in some parts, while, for their homes and their lives, they must prevent it from encroaching upon others. *Dam*, *Sluice*, or *Dyke* occur in almost all their compounded titles. The sluice, which gives this town part of its name, is also its harbor; affording, perhaps, an outlet to the overflowings of the country behind, but filled at the entrance to the depth of more than eighty feet by the sea, with which it communicates.

Upon the banks of this sluice, which are partly artificial, the town is built in one short street of small houses, inhabited chiefly by tradesmen and innkeepers. The dockyard bounds the sluice and the town, communicating with the former by gates, over which a small pivot bridge connects the two sides of the street. Each head of the pier, or harbor, has been extended beyond the land, for several yards by pile work, filled with earth and large stones, over which there is no pavement, that its condition may be constantly known. We stepped from the packet upon one of these, and, walking along the beams, that pass between the immense piles, saw how closely the interstices were filled, and how the earth and stones were again compacted by a strong kind of basket-work.

The arrival of a packet is the chief incident known at Helvoetsluys; and, as ours entered the harbor about noon, and in fine weather, perhaps, a fourth part of the inhabitants were collected as spectators. Their appearance did not surprise us with all the novelty, which we had expected from the first sight of a foreign people. The Dutch seamen everywhere retain the national dress; but the other men of Helvoetsluys differ from Englishmen in their appearance chiefly by wearing coarser clothes, and by bringing their pipes with them into the street. Further on, several women were collected about their baskets of herbs, and their dress had some of the novelty, for which we were looking; they had hats of the size of a small Chinese umbrella, and almost as gaudily lined within; close, white jackets, with long flaps; short, colored petticoats, in the shape of a diving bell; yellow slippers, without quarters at the heel; and caps, that exactly fitted the head and concealed the hair, but which were ornamented at the temples by gold filigree clasps, twirling, like vine tendrils, over the cheeks of the wearer.

Our inn was kept by English people, but the furniture was entirely Dutch. Two beds, like cribs in a ship, were let into the wainscot; and we were told, that, in all the inns on our journey, we should seldom, or never, be shewn into a room, which had not a bed.

Helvoetsluys, it sufficiently appears, is a very inconsiderable place, as to its size and inhabitants. But it is not so in naval, or military estimation. It is distant about ten or twelve miles from the open sea, yet is nearly secure from attack on this side, because that part of the approach, which is deep enough for large vessels, is commanded by batteries on shore. It stands in the middle of an immense bay, large enough to contain all the navy of Holland, and has a dockyard and arsenal in the center of the fortifications. When we passed through it, six ships of the line and two frigates were lying in the dockyard, and two ships of the line and three frigates, under the command of an Admiral, in the bay.

The fortifications, we were assured upon good military authority, were in such repair, that not a sod was out of its place, and are strong enough to be defended by five thousand men against a hundred thousand, for five weeks. The sea water rises to a considerable height in a wide ditch, which surrounds them. We

omitted to copy an inscription, placed on one of the walls, which told the date of their completion; but this was probably about the year 1696, when the harbor was perfected. Though the dockyard can be only one of the dependencies upon that of Rotterdam, the largest ships of that jurisdiction are preserved here, on account of the convenient communication between the port and the sea.

Near this place may be observed, what we examined with more leisure upon our return, the ingenuity, utility and vastness of the embankments, opposed by the Dutch to the sea. From Helvoetsluys eastward, for many miles, the land is preserved from the sea only by an artificial mound of earth, against which the water heavily and often impetuously drives for admission into the sheltered plains below. The sea, at high water, is so much above the level of the ground, from which it is thus boldly separated, that one who stands on the land side of the embankment hears the water foaming, as if over his head. Yet the mound itself, which has stood for two centuries, at least, without repair, though with many renewals of the means, that protect it, is still unhurt and undiminished, and may yet see generations of those, whom it defends, rising and passing away, on one side, like the fluctuations of the tides, which assail and retire from it, on the other.

It is better, however, to describe than to praise. The mound, which appears to be throughout of the same height, as to the sea, is sometimes more and sometimes less raised above the fields; for, where the natural level of the land assists in resistance to the water, the Hollanders have, of course, availed themselves of it, to exert the less of their art and their labor. It is, perhaps, for the most part, thirty feet above the adjoining land. The width at top is enough to permit the passage of two carriages, and there is a sort of imperfect road along it. In its descent, the breadth increases so much, that it is not very difficult to walk down either side. We could not measure it, and may therefore be excused for relating how its size may be guessed.

On the land side, it is said to be strengthened by stone and timber, which we did not see, but which may be there, covered by earth and grass. Towards the sea, somewhat above and considerably below high-water mark, a strong matting of flags prevents the surge from carrying away the surface of the mound; and this

is the defense which has so long preserved it. The matting is held to the shore by bandages of twisted flags, running horizontally, at the distance of three, or four yards from each other, and staked to the ground by strong wooden pins. As this matting is worn by every tide, a survey of it is frequently made, and many parts appear to have been just repaired. Further in the sea, it is held down by stones; above, there are posts at every forty yards, which are numbered, that the spot may be exactly described where repairs are necessary. The import for the maintenance of these banks amounts to nearly as much as the land-tax; and, as the land could not be possessed without it, this tax has the valuable character of being occasioned by no mismanagement, and of producing no discontent.

LEYDEN

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THREE hours pleasant floating along a canal, adorned with frequent country houses, gardens, summer-houses and square balconies, or rather platforms, projecting over the water, within a hand's breadth of its level, brought us to this city, which was esteemed the second in Holland, before Rotterdam gained its present extent. Leyden is, however, so large, that a traveller is likely to have a walk of half a league to his inn; and those who arrive, as we did, at the time of the fair, may find the procession not very pleasant. We increased our difficulties by turning away from the dirt and incivility of what was called the bed inn, and did not afterwards find a better, though such, it seems, might have been had.

Having, at length, become contented with the worst, we went towards the fair, of which we had as yet seen only the crowd. The booths, being disposed under trees and along the borders of canals, made the whole appearance differ from that of an English fair, though not quite so much as we had expected. The stock of the shopkeepers makes a greater distinction. There were several booths filled with silversmiths' and jewellers' wares, to the amount of, probably, some thousand pounds each. Large French clocks in *or moulu*¹ and porcelain were among their stores. All the trades displayed the most valuable articles, that could be asked for in similar shops in large cities. We had the pleasure to see great quantities of English goods, and there were English names over three, or four of the booths.

The Dutch dresses were now become so familiar to us, that the crowd seemed as remarkable for the number of other persons in it, as for the abundance of peasants in their holiday finery, which, it is pleasant to know, displays the ornamental relics of several generations, fashion having very little influence in Holland. The fair occupied about a fourth part of the town, which we soon left to see the remainder. Two streets, parallel to each other, run through its whole length, and include the few public halls of a University, which would scarcely be known to exist, if it had no more conspicuous objects than its buildings. The Dutch universities contain no endowed foundations; so that the professors,

¹ Or moulu — finely ground gold-based amalgam used in gilding metals

who have their salaries from the States, live in private houses, and the students in lodgings. The academical dress is worn only in the schools, and by the professors. The library, to which Joseph Scaliger² was a benefactor, is open only once in a week, and then for no more than two hours. It is the constant policy of the Dutch government, to make strangers leave as much money as possible behind them; and Leyden was once so greatly the resort of foreigners, that it was thought important not to let them read for nothing what they must otherwise be obliged to buy. The University is, of course, declining much, under this commercial wisdom of the magistrates.

There are students, however, of many nations and religions, no oaths being imposed, except upon the professors. Physic and botany especially are said to be cultivated here with much success; and there is a garden, to which not only individuals, but the East India Company, industriously contribute foreign plants. The salaries of the professors, who receive, besides, fees from the students, are nearly two hundred pounds a-year. The government of the University is in the Rector, who is chosen out of three persons returned by the Senate to the States; the Senate consists of the professors; and, on extraordinary occasions, the Senate and Rector are directed by Curators, who are the agents for the States.

The chief street in the town is of the crescent form, so that, with more public buildings, it would be a miniature resemblance of High-street, Oxford. The townhouse is built with many spires, and with almost Chinese lightness. We did not see the interior of this, or, indeed, of any other public buildings; for, in the morning, when curiosity was to be indulged, our fastidiousness as to the inns returned, and induced us to take a passage for Haerlem. The MSS. [manuscripts, Ed.] of the Dutch version of the Bible, which are known to be deposited here, could not have been shewn, being opened only once in three years, when the Deputies of the Synod and States attend; but we might have seen, in the townhouse, some curious testimonies of the hardships and perseverance of the inhabitants, during the celebrated blockade of five months, in 1574, in consideration of which the University was founded.

² Joseph Scaliger — 1540-1609, French scholar

After viewing some well-filled booksellers' shops, and one wide street of magnificent houses, we again made half the circuit of this extensive city, in the way to the *trechtschuyt*³ for [Haerlem.]

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³ Trechtschuyt — modern *trekschuit*; type of slow passenger barge formerly used on canals and rivers

AMSTERDAM

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THE voyage between Haerlem and this place is less pleasant, with respect to the country, than many of the other trips, but more gratifying to curiosity. For great part of the way, the canal passes between the lake, called Haerlemer Maer, and a large branch of the Zuyder Zee,⁴ called the River Y. In one place, the neck of land, which separates these two waters, is so thin, that a canal cannot be drawn through it; and, near this, there is a village, where passengers leave their first boat, another waiting for them at the renewal of the canal, within a quarter of a mile. Here, as upon other occasions of the same sort, nearly as much is paid for the carriage of two or three trunks between the boats, as for the whole voyage; and there is an *Ordonnatie* [ordinance, Ed.] to authorize the price; for the Magistrates have considered, that those, who have much baggage, are probably foreigners, and may be thus made to support many of the natives. The Dutch themselves put their linen into a velvet bag, called a *Rysack* [modern *rugzak* - rucksack, backpack, Ed.], and for this accordingly no charge is made.

The Half Wegen Sluice is the name of this separation between two vast waters, both of which have gained considerably upon their shores, and, if united, would be irresistible. At the narrowed part, it consists of pile-work and masonry, to the thickness of probably forty feet. On this spot the spectator has, on his left hand, the Y, which, though called a river, is an immense inundation of the Zuyder Zee, and would probably carry a small vessel, without interruption, into the German ocean. On the other hand, is the Haerlem lake, about twelve miles long and nine broad, on which, during the siege of Haerlem, the Dutch and Spaniards maintained fleets, and fought battles. Extending as far as Leyden, there is a passage upon it from that city to Amsterdam, much shorter than by the canal, but held to be dangerous. Before the year 1657, there was, however, no other way, and it was probably the loss of the Prince of Bohemia and the danger of his dethroned father upon the lake, that instigated the making of the canal.

⁴ Zuyder Zee — Large, shallow bay in northern Holland, mostly reclaimed from the sea during the 20th century

This sluice is one of several valuable posts, by which Amsterdam may be defended against a powerful army, and was an important station, during the approach of the Duke of BRUNSWICK in 1787, when this city was the last, which surrendered. All the roads being formed upon dikes, or embankments, may be defended by batteries, which can be attacked only by narrow columns and in front. The Half Wegen Sluice was, however, easily taken by the Duke of BRUNSWICK, his opponents having neglected to place gun-boats on the Haerlem lake, over which he carried eight hundred men in thirty boats, and surprised the Dutch before day-break, on the morning of the first of October. This was one of his real assaults, but there were all together eleven made on that day, and, on the next, the city proposed to surrender.

Beyond the sluice, the canal passes several breaches, made by inundations of the Y, and not capable of being drained, or repaired. In these places the canal is separated from the inundations either by piles, or floating planks. None of the breaches were made within the memory of the present generation, yet the boatmen have learned to speak of them with horror.

There is nothing magnificent, or grand, in the approach to Amsterdam, or the prospect of the city. The sails of above a hundred windmills, moving on all fides, seem more conspicuous than the public buildings of this celebrated capital.

The *trechtschuyt* having stopped on the outside of the gate, we waited for one of the public coaches, which are always to be had by sending to a livery stable, but do not stand in the street for fares. It cost half-a-crown for a drive of about two miles into the city; the regulated price is a guilder, or twenty-pence. Our direction was to the Doolen; but the driver chose to take us to another inn, in the same street, which we did not discover to be otherwise called, till we had become satisfied with it.

Nearly all the chief thoroughfares of Amsterdam are narrow, but the carriages are neither so numerous as in other places of the same size, nor suffered to be driven with the same speed; so that, though there is no raised pavement, foot passengers are as safe as elsewhere. There are broad terraces to the streets over the two chief canals, but these are sometimes encumbered by workshops,

placed immediately over the water, between which and the houses the owners maintain an intercourse of packages and planks, with very little care about the freedom of the passage. This, indeed, may be constantly observed of the Dutch: they will never, either in their societies, or their business, employ their time, for a moment, in gratifying the little malice, or shewing the little envy, or assuming the little triumphs, which fill so much of life with unnecessary miseries; but they will seldom step one inch out of their way, or surrender one moment of their time, to save those, whom they do not know, from any inconvenience. A Dutchman, throwing cheeses into his warehouse, or drawing iron along the pathway, will not stop, while a lady, or an infirm person passes, unless he perceives somebody inclined to protect them; a warehouseman trundling a cask, or a woman in the favourite occupation of throwing water upon her windows, will leave it entirely to the passengers to take care of their limbs, or their clothes.

The canals themselves, which are the ornaments of other Dutch cities, are, for the most part, the nuisances of Amsterdam. Many of them are entirely stagnant, and, though deep, are so laden with filth, that, on a hot day, the feculence [presence of waste matter, Ed.] seems pestilential. Our windows opened upon two, but the scent very soon made us willing to relinquish the prospect. The bottoms are so muddy, that a boat-hook, drawn up, perhaps, through twelve feet of water, leaves a circle of slime at the top, which is not lost for many minutes. It is not unusual to see boats, laden with this mud, passing during mid-day, under the windows of the most opulent traders; and the fetid cargoes never disturb the intense studies of the counting-houses within.

After this distaste of the streets and canals of Amsterdam, it was a sort of duty to see, what is the glory of the city, the interior of the Stadthouse [town hall, Ed.]; but we lost this spectacle, by a negligence of that severe punctuality, in which the Dutch might be usefully imitated throughout the world. Our friends had obtained for us a ticket of admission at ten; we called upon them about half an hour afterwards; but, as the ride from their house would have required ten minutes more, the time of this ticket was thought to be elapsed. We would not accept one, which was offered to be obtained for another day, being unwilling to render it possible, that those, who were loading us with the sincerest civilities, should witness another apparent instance of inattention.

The Stadthouse, as to its exterior, is a plain stone building, attracting attention chiefly from its length, solidity and height. The front is a hundred and eight paces long. It has no large gate, but several small ones, and few statues, that would be observed, except one of Atlas on the top. The tales, as to the expense of the building, are inexhaustible. The foundation alone, which is entirely of piles, is said to have cost a million of guilders, or nearly ninety thousand pounds, and the whole edifice treble that sum. Its contents, the stock of the celebrated Bank, are estimated at various amounts, of which we will not repeat the lowest.

The Exchange is a humble building, and not convenient of access. The Post Office is well situated, upon a broad terrace, near the Stadthouse, and seems to be properly laid out for its use.

None of the churches are conspicuous for their structure; but the regulation, with respect to their ministers, should be more known. Two are assigned to each, and all throughout the city have equal and respectable salaries.

At a distance from the Exchange are some magnificent streets, raised on the banks of canals, nearly equalling those of the Hague for the grandeur of houses, and much exceeding in length the best of Leyden and Haerlem. These are the streets, which must give a stranger an opinion of the wealth of the city, while the Port, and that alone, can display the extensiveness of its commerce. The shops and the preparations for traffic in the interior have a mean appearance to those, who try them by the standard of London conveniences and elegance.

The best method of seeing the Port is to pass down it in a boat to some of the many towns, that skirt the Zuyder Zee. One convenience, easy to be had everywhere, is immediately visible from the quays. Small platforms of planks supported by piles project from the shore between the vessels, which are disposed with their heads towards the sides of these little bridges; the furthest has thus a communication with the quay, and, if the cargo is not of very heavy articles, may be unladen at the same time with the others. The port is so wide, that, though both sides are thronged with shipping, the channel in the middle is, at least, as broad as the Thames at London Bridge; but the harbour does not

extend to more than half the length of the Pool at London, and seems to contain about half the number of vessels. The form of the port is, however, much more advantageous for a display of shipping, which may be here seen nearly at one glance in a fine bay of the Zuyder.

After a sail of about an hour, we landed at Saardam, a village celebrated for the Dockyards, which supply Amsterdam with nearly all its fleets. A short channel carries vessels of the greatest burthen from Saardam to the Zuyder Zee, which the founders of the place took care not to approach too nearly; and the terrace at the end of this channel is prepared for the reception of cannon, that must easily defend it from any attack by sea. Though the neighbourhood of a dockyard might be supposed a sufficient antidote to cleanliness, the neatness of this little town renders it a spectacle even to the Dutch themselves. The streets are so carefully swept, that a piece of orange peel would be noticed upon the pavement, and the houses are washed and painted to the highest polish of nicety. Those, who are here in a morning, or at night, may probably see how many dirty operations are endured for the sake of this excessive cleanliness.

We were shewn nearly round the place, and, of course, to the cottage, in which the indefatigable Peter the First of Russia resided, when he was a workman in the dockyard. It is a tenement of two rooms, standing in a part of the village, so very mean, that the alleys near it are not cleaner, than those of other places. An old woman lives in the cottage, and subsists chiefly by shewing it to visitors, amongst whom have been the present Grand Duke and Duchess of Russia; for the Court of Petersburgh [Saint Petersburg, Ed.] acknowledge it to have been the residence of Peter, and have struck a medal in commemoration of so truly honourable a palace. The old woman has received one of these medals from the present Empress, together with a grant of a small annuity to encourage her care of the cottage.

We passed an agreeable afternoon, at an inn on the terrace, from whence pleasure vessels and passage boats were continually departing for Amsterdam, and had a smart fail, on our return, during a cloudy and somewhat a stormy sunset. The approach to Amsterdam, on this side, is as grand as that from Haerlem is mean, half the circuit of the city, and all its spires, being visible at once over the crowded harbour. The great church of Haerlem is also seen at a

small distance, on the right. The Amstel, a wide river, which flows through the city into the harbour, fills nearly all the canals, and is itself capable of receiving ships of considerable burthen: one of the bridges over it, and a terrace beyond, are among the few pleasant walks enjoyed by the inhabitants. The Admiralty, an immense building, in the interior of which is the dockyard, stands on this terrace, or quay; and the East India Company have their magazine here, instead of the interior of the city, where it would be benevolence to let its perfume counteract the noxiousness of the canals.

The government of Amsterdam is said to collect by taxes, rents and dues of various sorts, more than an English million and a half annually; and, though a great part of this sum is afterwards paid to the use of the whole Republic, the power of collecting and distributing it must give considerable consequence to the magistrates. The Senate, which has this power, consists of thirty-six members, who retain their seats during life, and were formerly chosen by the whole body of burghers; but, about two centuries ago, this privilege was surrendered to the Senate itself, who have ever since filled up the vacancies in their number by a majority of their own voices. The Échevins who form the court of justice, are here chosen by the burghers out of a double number, nominated by the Senate: in the other cities, the Stadtholder [city official, Ed.], and not the burghers, makes this choice.

It is obvious, that when the City Senates, which return the Provincial States, and, through them, the States General, were themselves elected by the burghers, the legislature of the United Provinces had a character entirely representative; and, at present, a respect for public opinion is said to have considerable influence in directing the choice of the Senates.

The province of Holland, of which this city is the most important part, is supposed to contain 800,000 persons, who pay taxes to the amount of twenty-four millions of guilders, or two millions sterling, forming an average of two pounds ten millings per person. In estimating the real taxation of a people, it is, however, necessary to consider the proportion of their consumption to their imports; for the duties, advanced upon imported articles, are not ultimately and finally paid till these are consumed. The frugal habits of the Dutch permit them to retain but a small part of the expensive commodities, which they collect; and

the foreigners, to whom they are resold, pay, therefore, a large share of the taxation, which would be so enormous, if it was confined to the inhabitants. Among the taxes, really paid by themselves, are the following; — a land-tax of about four shillings and nine pence per acre; a sale-tax of eight per cent, upon horses, one and a quarter per cent, upon other movables, and two and an half per cent, upon land and buildings; a tax upon inheritances out of the direct line, varying from two and an half to eleven per cent; two per cent, upon every man's income; an excise of three pounds per hogshead upon wine, and a charge of two per cent, upon all public offices. The latter tax is not quite so popular here as in other countries, because many of these offices are actually purchased, the holders being compelled to buy stock to a certain amount, and to destroy the obligations. The excise upon coffee, tea and salt is paid annually by each family, according to the number of their servants.

The inhabitants of Amsterdam, and some other cities, pay also a tax, in proportion to their property, for the maintenance of companies of city-guards, which are under the orders of their own magistrates. In Amsterdam, indeed, taxation is somewhat higher than in other places. Sir William Temple was assured, that no less than thirty duties might be reckoned to have been paid there, before a certain dish could be placed upon a table at a tavern.

The exact sums, paid by the several provinces towards every hundred thousand guilders, raised for the general use, have been often printed. The share of Holland is 58,309 guilders and a fraction; that of Overijssel, which is the smallest, 3,571 guilders and a fraction.

Of five colleges of Admiralty, established within the United Provinces, three are in Holland, and contribute of course to point out the pre-eminence of that province. It is remarkable, that neither of these supply their ships with provisions: They allow the captains to deduct about four-pence halfpenny per day from the pay of each sailor for that purpose; a regulation, which is never made injurious to the seamen by any improper parsimony, and is sometimes useful to the public, in a country where pressing is not permitted. A captain, who has acquired a character for generosity amongst the sailors, can muster a crew in a few days, which, without such a temptation, could not be raised in as many weeks.

We cannot speak with exactness of the prices of provisions in this province, but they are generally said to be as high as in England. The charges at inns are the same as on the roads within a hundred miles of London, or, perhaps, something more. Port wine is not so common as a wine which they call Claret, but which is compounded of a strong red wine from Valencia, mixed with some from Bordeaux. The general price for this is twenty pence English a bottle; three and four pence is the price for a much better sort. About half-a-crown per day is charged for each apartment; and *logement* [accommodation, Ed.] is always the first article in a bill.

Private families buy good claret at the rate of about eighteen pence per bottle, and chocolate for two shillings per pound. Beef is sold for much less than in England, but is so poor that the Dutch use it chiefly for soup, and salt even that which they roast. Good white sugar is eighteen pence per pound. Bread is dearer than in England; and there is a sort, called milk bread, of uncommon whiteness, which costs nearly twice as much as our ordinary loaves. Herbs and fruits are much lower priced, and worse in flavour; but their colour and size are not inferior. Fish is cheaper than in our maritime counties, those excepted which are at a great distance from the metropolis. Coffee is very cheap, and is more used than tea. No kind of meat is so good as in England; but veal is not much inferior, and is often dressed as plainly and as well as with us. The innkeepers have a notion of mutton and lamb chops; but then it is *a la Maintenon*;⁵ and the rank oil of the paper is not a very delightful sauce. Butter is usually brought to table clarified, that is, purposely melted into an oil; and it is difficult to make them understand that it may be otherwise.

The Dutch have much more respect for English than for other travellers; but there is a jealousy, with respect to our commerce, which is avowed by those, who have been tutored to calm discussion, and may be perceived in the conversation of others, whenever the state of the two countries is noticed. This jealousy is greater in the maritime than in the other provinces, and in Amsterdam than in some of the other cities. Rotterdam has so much direct intercourse with England, as to feel, in some degree, a share in its interests.

⁵ A la Maintenon — Savory sauce made with mushrooms, onions and béchamel sauce

Some of our excursions round Amsterdam were made in a curious vehicle; the body of a coach placed upon a sledge, and drawn by one horse. The driver walks by the side, with the reins in one hand, and in the other a wetted rope, which he sometimes throws under the sledge to prevent it from taking fire, and to fill up the little gaps in the pavement. The appearance of these things was so whimsical, that curiosity tempted us to embark in one; and, finding them laughed at by none but ourselves, the convenience of being upon a level with the shops, and with the faces that seemed to contain the history of the shops, induced us to use them again. There are great numbers of them, being encouraged by the magistrates, in preference to wheel carriages, and, as is said, in tenderness to the piled foundations of the city, the only one in Holland in which they are used. The price is eight pence for any distance within the city, and eight pence an hour for attendance.

Near Amsterdam is the small village of Ouderkerk, a place of some importance in the short campaign of 1787, being accessible by four roads, all of which were then fortified. It consists chiefly of the country houses of Amsterdam merchants, at one of which we passed a pleasant day. Having been but slightly defended, after the loss of the posts of Half Wegen and Amstelreen, it was not much injured by the Prussians; but there are many traces of balls thrown into it. The ride to it from Amsterdam is upon the cheerful banks of the Amstel, which is bordered, for more than five miles, with gardens of better verdure and richer groves than had hitherto appeared. The village was spread with booths for a fair, though it was Sunday; and we were somewhat surprised to observe, that a people in general so gravely decorous as the Dutch, should not pay a stricter deference to the Sabbath. We here took leave of some friends, whose frank manners and obliging dispositions are remembered with much more delight than any other circumstances, relative to Amsterdam.

UTRECHT

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THE passage from Amsterdam hither is of eight hours; and, notwithstanding the pleasantness of *trechtschuyt* conveyance, seemed somewhat tedious, after the habit of passing from city to city in half that time.

The canal is, however, justly preferred to others, on account of the richness of its surrounding scenery; and it is pleasing to observe how gradually the country improves, as the distance from the province of Holland and from the sea increases. Towards Utrecht, the gardens rise from the banks of the canal, instead of spreading below its level, and the grounds maintain avenues and plantations of lofty trees. Vegetation is stronger and more copious; shrubs rise to a greater height; meadows display a livelier green; and the lattice-work of the bowery avenues, which occur so frequently, ceases to be more conspicuous than the foliage.

It was Whitsuntide,⁶ and the banks of the canal were gay with holiday people, riding in wagons and carts; the latter frequently carrying a woman wearing a painted hat as large as an umbrella, and a man with one in whimsical contrast clipped nearly close to the crown. The lady sometimes refreshed herself with a fan, and the gentleman, meanwhile, with a pipe of tobacco. Every village we passed resounded with hoarse music and the clatter of wooden shoe: among these the prettiest was Nieuversluys, bordering each side of the canal, with a white drawbridge picturesquely shadowed with high trees, and green banks sloping to the water's brim. Pleasure-boats and *trechtschuyts* lined the shores; and the windows of every house were thronged with broad faces. On the little terraces below were groups of smokers, and of girls in the neat trim Dutch dress, with the fair complexion and air of decorous modesty, by which their country-women are distinguished.

About half way from Amsterdam stands a small modern fortification; and it is an instance of Dutch carefulness, that grass had just been mowed even from the parapets of the batteries, and was made up in heaps within the works. Not far

⁶ Whitsuntide — Christian celebration, observed seven weeks after Easter

from it is an ancient castle of one tower, left in the state to which it was reduced during the contest with the Spaniards.

Near Utrecht, the ground has improved so much, that nothing but its evenness distinguishes it from other countries; and, at some distance eastward, the hills of Guelderland rise to destroy this last difference. The entrance into the city is between high terraces, from which steps descend to the canal; but the street is not wide enough to have its appearance improved by this sort of approach. Warehouses, formed under the terraces, shew also that the latter have been raised more for convenience than splendor.

The steeple of the great church, formerly a cathedral, excites, in the meantime, an expectation of dignity in the interior, where some considerable streets and another canal complete the air of an opulent city. It is not immediately seen, that a great part of the body of this cathedral has been destroyed, and that the canals, being subject to tides, have dirty walls during the ebb. The splendor, which might be expected in the capital of a province much inhabited by nobility, does not appear; nor is there, perhaps, any street equal to the best of Leyden and Haerlem; yet, in general beauty, the city is superior to either of these.

We arrived just before nine, at which hour a bell rings to denote the shutting of the larger gates; for the rules of a walled town are observed here, though the fortifications could be of little other use than to prevent a surprise by horse. The *Chateau d'Anvers*, at which we lodged, is an excellent inn, with a landlord, who tells, that he has walked sixty years in his own passage, and that he had the honour of entertaining the Marquis of Granby⁷ thirteen times, during the war of 1756. Though the Dutch inns are generally unobjectionable, there is an air of English completeness about this which the others do not reach.

Utrecht is a university, but with as little appearance of such an institution as Leyden. The students have no academical dress; and their halls, which are used only for lectures and exercises, are formed in the cloisters of the ancient cathedral. The chief sign of their residence in the place is, that the householders, who have lodgings to let, write upon a board, as is done at Leyden, *Cubicula*

⁷ Marquis of Granby —1721-1770; 3rd duke of Rutland; army officer in Seven Years War

*locanda*⁸. We were shewn round the town by a member of the university, who carefully avoided the halls; and we did not press to see them.

There are still some traces remaining of the Bishopric, which was once so powerful, as to excite the jealousy, or rather, perhaps, to tempt the avarice of Charles the Fifth,⁹ who seized upon many of its possessions. The use made of the remainder by the States General, is scarcely more justifiable; for the prebends¹⁰ still subsist, and are disposed of by sale to lay canons, who send delegates to the Provincial States, as if they had ecclesiastical characters.

The substantial remains of the Cathedral are one aisle, in which divine service is performed, and a lofty, magnificent Gothic tower, that stands apart from it. The ascent of this tower is one of the talks prescribed to strangers, and, laborious as it is, the view from the summit sufficiently rewards them. A stone staircase, steep, narrow, and winding, after passing several grated doors, leads into a floor, which you hope is at the top, but which is little more than half way up. Here the family of the belfry-man fill several decently furnished apartments, and shew the great bell, with several others, the noise of which, it might be supposed, no human ears could bear, as they must, at the distance of only three, or four yards. After resting a few minutes in a room, the windows of which command, perhaps, a more extensive land view than any other inhabited apartment in Europe, you begin the second ascent by a staircase still narrower and steeper, and, when you seem to be so weary as to be incapable of another step, half the horizon suddenly bursts upon the view, and all your meditated complaints are overborne by expressions of admiration.

Towards the west, the prospect, after including the rich plain of gardens near Utrecht, extends over the province of Holland, intersected with water, speckled with towns, and finally bounded by the sea, the mists of which hide the low shores from the sight. To the northward, the Zuyder Zee spreads its haziness over Amsterdam and Naerden; but from thence to the east, the spires of Amersfoort, Rhenen, Arnheim, Nimeguen and many intermediate towns, are

⁸ *Cubicula locanda* — Latin - small rooms for rent

⁹ Charles the Fifth — 1500-1558; Holy Roman Emperor, King of Spain, ruler of Netherlands

¹⁰ Prebends — Stipends derived from revenues of a cathedral

seen amongst the woods and hills, that gradually rise towards Germany. Southward, the more mountainous district of Cleves and then the level parts of Guelderland and Holland, with the windings of the Waal and the Leek, in which the Rhine loses itself, complete a circle of probably more than sixty miles diameter, that strains the sight from this tremendous steeple. The almost perpendicular view into the streets of Utrecht affords afterwards some relief to the eye, but increases any notions of danger, you may have had from observing, that the openwork Gothic parapet, which alone prevents you from falling with dizziness, has suffered something in the general decay of the church.

While we were at the top, the bells struck; and, between the giddiness communicated by the eye, and the stunning effect of a sound that seemed to shake the steeple, we were compelled to conclude sooner than had been intended this comprehensive and farewell prospect of Holland.

The Mall, which is esteemed the chief ornament of Utrecht, is, perhaps, the only avenue of the sort in Europe, still fit to be used for the game that gives its name to them all.¹¹ The several rows of noble trees include, at the sides, roads and walks; but the center is laid out for the game of Mall, and, though not often used, is in perfect preservation. It is divided so as to admit of two parties of players at once, and the side-boards sufficiently restrain spectators. The Mall in St. James's Park [London, Ed.] was kept in the same state, till 1752, when the present great walk was formed over the part, which was separated by similar side-boards. The length of that at Utrecht is nearly three quarters of a mile. The luxuriance and loftiness of the trees preserve a perspective much superior to that of St. James's, but in the latter the whole breadth of the walks is greater, and the view is more extensive, as well as more ornamented.

This city, being a sort of capital to the neighboring nobility, is called the politest in the United Provinces, and certainly abounds, more than the others, with the professions and trades, which are subservient to splendor. One practice, observed in some degree, in all the cities, is most frequent here; that of bows paid to all parties, in which there are ladies, by every gentleman who passes. There are, however, no plays, or other public amusements; and the festivities,

¹¹ Pall Mall — French *paille-maille* (ball-mallet), game resembling croquet

or ceremonies, by which other nations commemorate the happier events in their history, are as unusual here as in the other parts of the United Provinces, where there are more occasions to celebrate and fewer celebrations than in most European countries. Music is very little cultivated in any of the cities, and plays are to be seen only at Amsterdam and the Hague, where German and Dutch pieces are acted upon alternate nights. At Amsterdam, a French Opera-house has been shut up, and, at the Hague, a Comédie, and the actors ordered to leave the country.

The ramparts of the city, which are high and command extensive prospects, are rather emblems of the peacefulness, which it has long enjoyed, than signs of any effectual resistance, prepared for an enemy. They are in many places regularly planted with trees, which must be old enough to have been spared, together with the Mall, by Louis the Fourteenth; in others, pleasure houses, instead of batteries, have been raised upon them. A few pieces of old cannon are planted for the purpose of saluting the Prince of ORANGE, when he passes the city.

Trechtschuyts go no further eastward than this place, so that we hired a voiturier's [cab driver, Ed.] carriage, a sort of curricle¹² with a driver's box in front, for the journey to Nimeguen. The price for thirty-eight, or thirty-nine miles, was something more than a guinea and a half; the horses were worth probably sixty pounds upon the spot, and were as able as they were showy, or they could not have drawn us through the deep sands, that cover one third of the road.

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¹² Curricle — Light, open, two-wheeled carriage pulled by two horses, side by side [Wikipedia.]