

DUTCH TOWERS

By MARTIN CONWAY

HOLLAND in its quaint way is a land of romance, but of a burgherish solid sort, the very antipodes of the romance of the sunny East. Dutch romance is the child of industry, enterprise, dogged courage, fogs and waterways, and its great days fell within the limits of the seventeenth century. Then ships of Holland sailed all the seven seas and brought home wealth and tales of adventure. Then its sailors hammered at the arctic ice-pack and pushed their trade among tropical spice islands. Then it was that De Ruyter sailed up the Thames with a broom at his masthead; then, too, that Rembrandt painted and Vondel rhymed. That also for Holland was a great building age, when prosperity caused cities to grow, canals to be dug, ports to be built, and the multiplex activity of Dutchmen to manifest itself in all kinds of makings and shapings upon the surface of their amphibious land—half earth, half water. Thus it is the Holland of Rembrandt's day and therefore that remains most interesting to the traveler, and it is the buildings then erected that are most worthy of study and presentation within her towns.

Amsterdam, when Rembrandt went to settle there about 1631, was passing architecturally through a period of transition. The small core of the city, where everything was on a small scale, still retained many remnants of the medieval age. The canals in it were narrow, the accommodation for ships was exiguous. A growing population and expanding trade were finding themselves horribly cramped.

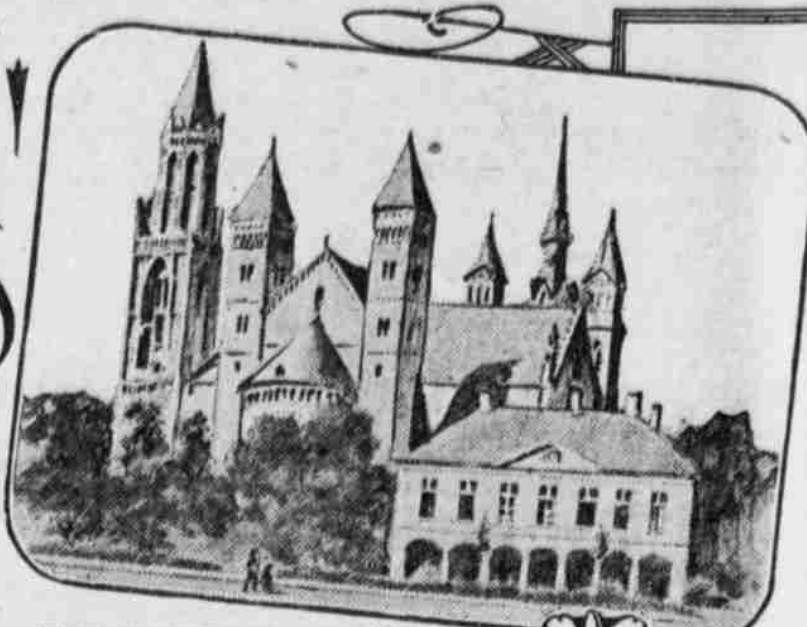
Amsterdam grew like an onion, by layers surrounding layers about a center. From time to time new rings of canals were added, with radial connections, and then more rings outside them. Of course fortified walls were erected round the whole at different dates, but they never lasted for long and had to be replaced by new circuits as the city expanded. The moat of each new circuit became a canal within the next. Those who were responsible for the important changes made at the beginning of the seventeenth century had the good sense not to destroy every memorial of medieval days. In particular they spared some of the old fortification towers, applying them to a new purpose and refitting them accordingly. Thus the tower called Montelbaanstoren, which still stands by the old Schans, one of the largest basins of the earlier canal system, was a part of the medieval fortifications. They turned it into a picturesque bell tower by the addition of a superstructure set up in the year 1606. Though this was done before Rembrandt's day, he omitted the steeple in an admirable drawing he made of it, thus giving one among countless instances that might be cited, of his attachment rather to the past than to the coming taste of the people of his day. The only other high tower at Amsterdam drawn by him was the Westertoren or tower of the Westerkerk on the Prinsengracht, which unfortunately, we cannot produce in this place. That tower was a favorite with the folk of Amsterdam, and I have more than once found it referred to, in narratives of Dutch exploration, as a measure of height, as, for instance, when a glacier cliff is said to have stood out of the sea about as high as the Westertoren. It is a storied tower, composed of four retreating rectangular stages, each with columns at the angles, not unlike some of Wren's towers in the city of London.

The Westertoren, however, carries us down rather too late, when Palladian ideas were affecting Dutch architects. This was a feature of the change of taste, which made the art of Rembrandt old-fashioned and terminated his prosperity. The Mint tower of 1640, and the others shown in our illustrations, are examples of Amsterdam steeple architecture of Rembrandt's own generation. If they must be called fantastic they are certainly picturesque, and admirably suited to enliven a canal vista or to poke up out of a foreground of crows-stepped gables.

These are the typically Dutch towers, these buildings of the great days of Dutch romance. Earlier towers we can find in Holland, but they are Gothic, and re-echo the style elaborated in France. France also set the key of architectural style in the eighteenth century. In the seventeenth century Holland stood on her own feet, and other folk imitated the work of her artists. The Dutch style affected England; it was imitated in the remarkable buildings erected in Denmark for Christian IV. It penetrated to the ends of the earth. It went with Dutch adventurers to New York, to Ceylon, to the Cape of Good Hope, where examples of it may still be hunted out by patient searching.

Our illustrations include a few of the earlier towers of Holland, about which a word or two must be said. Here, for instance, are the Cathedral and one of the medieval gates of Maastricht, neither of them in any sense characteristically Dutch, for the Holland that the world admires was created in the fire of the Reformation wars. The cathedral church of St. Servatius at Maastricht is of early Christian foundation, and it is even claimed that portions of the existing walls date back to the sixth century. The building as we see it, however, is a great romanesque church of Rhenish style, with restored eleventh century towers at the angles of its apse and a later Gothic bell tower adjacent to a side aisle. Utrecht and Delft have bell towers of a like kind, the upper story being many-sided and many-gabled. Another such tower is in Paradise itself, if we are to believe Hubert Van Eyck's picture of that delectable land, the famous altarpiece still at Ghent, unless the Germans have carried it off.

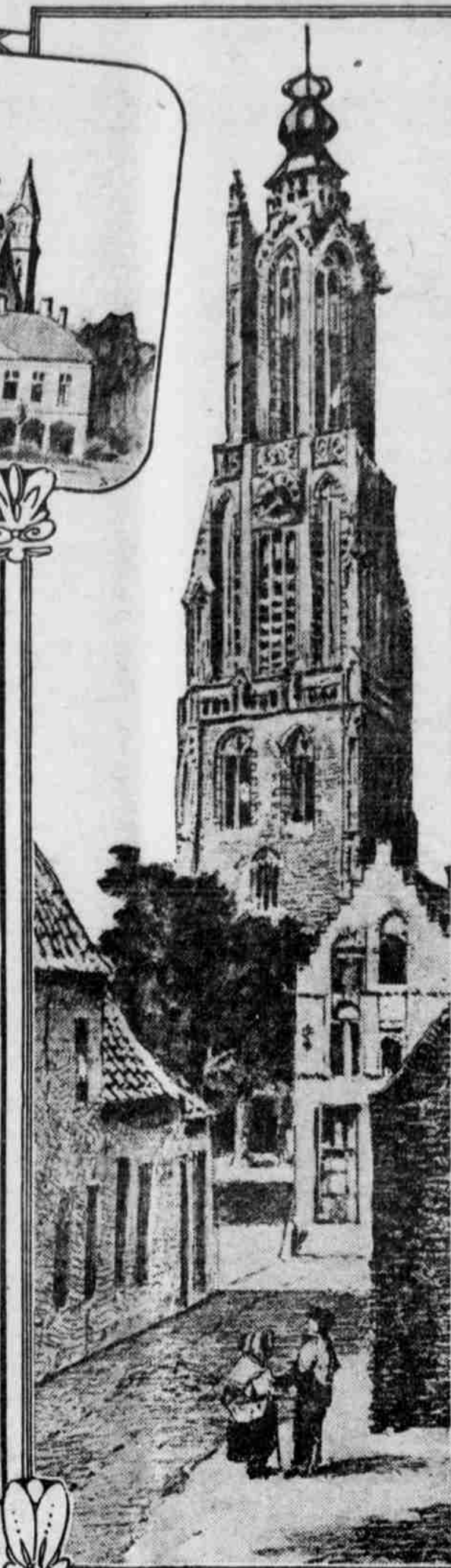
Medieval Maastricht was not a large place. The Cathedral was in the center of it; not more than five hundred yards away are the remains of the city walls of 1290. The exigencies of war make the military architecture of a given date everywhere much the same. Thus the tower-flanked south gate of Maastricht is not different in design from many another that can be found in the old cities of Europe. But though it had



THE CATHEDRAL, MAASTRICHT



MONTELBAANSTOREN, AMSTERDAM



AMERSFOORT

little individuality to start with, the adventures and patchings of time have endowed it with a picturesqueness of its own. The builders gave it practically no decoration, but such solid works receive all they need from the hand of time, which adds detail with unerring taste. The plainer an edifice may have been to start with, the better time adorns it, provided it has been built with sound materials, good workmanship and in good proportions. Most of England's noblest castles must have looked gaunt and even (to contemporary eyes) ugly. To the Saxon citizens of London the White (doubtless whitewashed) tower can hardly have conveyed esthetic pleasure. But time has even decorated Norman castles, so that not the baldest modern skyscraper need despair of future admiration if it can hold itself end up long enough.

Amersfoort tower is anything rather than plain. On the contrary, it is in the Gothic style tending towards flamboyant, while its general design is of the type of the tower at Utrecht, which, indeed, being only fourteen miles away, doubtless suggested it. That was built during the middle half of the fourteenth century; Amersfoort at the very end of the fifteenth. Both have the open octagonal top story already described. Utrecht is 338 feet high, Amersfoort 312 feet. The latter is considered to be the finest Gothic tower in Holland. I suppose it to have been surmounted or intended to be surmounted by a plain spire, but the present bulbous top and open-work crown were put on in 1655. Where did Holland get its taste for these bulbs? She did not have a monopoly of them, for they are numerous enough in Germany and even in Switzerland. An oriental original probably suggested them. The Amersfoort church was built in the fourteenth century, and the tower may well have been projected from the first. An explosion damaged the building, but the damage was made good and the tower fortunately escaped.

Few tourists stop at Amersfoort, but plenty of them can see the tower from the train on their way eastward from Amsterdam. The summit of it looks northward far away over the Zuyder Zee, and in every other direction over a country as flat as water. There was some fun in building high towers in Holland, they could be seen from so far away. Amersfoort can ball Utrecht on any clear day, and both of them Rhenen (I imagine), which Rembrandt sketched.

Anyone who has landed at Flushing, and proceeded thence anywhere by train, has been carried for the first few miles over the amphibious region of the island of Walcheren. He has passed Middelburg and presently, if he looked away off to the left, he will have seen, at a distance of two or three miles, the little town of Veere. Both are old towns and highly picturesque. So indeed Durer recorded them to be when he visited them in the cold December of 1520. "Middelburg," he said, "is a good town, a fine place for sketching. It has a beautiful town hall with a fine tower. There is much art shown in all things here." All he has to say about Veere is that "it is a fine little town where he Veere from all lands." The object of Durer's unfortunate winter journey to the islands of Zeeland was not, however, to see towers and town halls, but to satisfy his insatiable curiosity about natural history. He wanted to make a drawing of a whale that had been stranded in those parts. Such curiosity in the case of men like Durer and Leonardo is the first indication we possess of the approach of the age of science. The whale had been washed away before Durer's

arrival, so the drawing was never made, but a chill that he caught on this journey laid the foundations of the illness which eventually carried him off. The town hall of Middelburg and its fine tower were new buildings when he saw them. The town hall and tower of Veere were some forty years older, having been built about 1470 by A. Keldermans the elder, though the statues on the facade were not added till after Durer's visit. Unfortunately the surviving pages of his sketch-book contain no drawings of these places. There is, indeed, on one page the complicated top of some tower, unnamed, the highest member of which is like that of Veere, but the rest is different. Durer was evidently entertained by these fantastic steeples and several of them appear in his sketches. In the nature of things, however, such light wooden structures as crowned the towers of the low countries were not so durable as the stone substructures. Some have perished by fire, others have lost their open-work decorations, others have had to be repaired in various degrees, and repair has generally meant simplification. The tower of Veere, however, was apparently never very elaborate, and probably remains much as it was originally built. Four-square and plain below, the stone portion is completed with a clock chamber, strengthened at the corners. Then comes a balustraded bell chamber, with a bulbous spire for roof to it, of unusually slender and graceful proportions. Little imitation dormer windows were a common decorative detail on these bulbs, but on Veere spire they are reduced to the roofs of them only. These and the Gothic crochets higher up are the only medieval elements surviving in this tower.

The town hall below contains a treasure certainly worth seeing, for lovers of fine goldsmith's work worth going to see—an admirable classification of "sights" which we owe to the common sense of Doctor Johnson. How useful a guide-book to Europe, confined to the things "worth going to see," would be when peace returns, though a real peace in a once more friendly world is hardly to be looked for in the days of any but the young. The treasure at Veere is a magnificent goblet, richly enameled and chased, which the townsfolk caused to be made for, and presented to, the Emperor Maximilian.

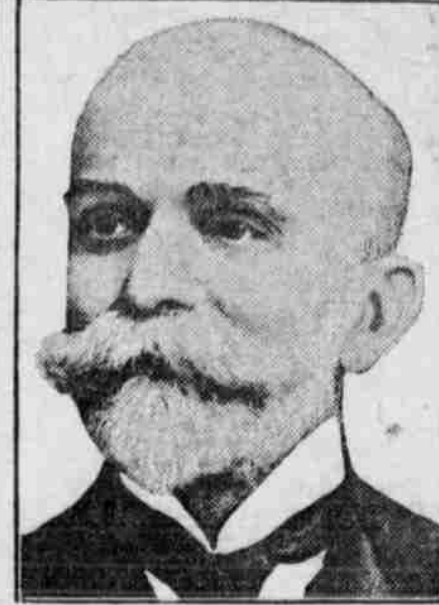
How they managed to have both the prestige of giving it and the solid satisfaction of keeping it is not recorded in any books to which I have access. At all events, there it remains—a very handsome example of a fine period of art in the low countries. Veere also possesses a fourteenth century church, once in ruins but now repaired; also some remarkable old houses, a fountain of 1551 and other agreeable remains. On the whole a traveler on landing in Holland might well spend a night at Middelburg, where he can hire cycle or motor and make in a single day a circuit of entertaining little places, which preserve the charms of old Holland more completely than the larger and more famous cities wherein modern life has compelled much external modernization

ELABORATE EVASION.

"Are the fish biting now?" asked the stranger.
 "Yes," replied the boy. "But you ain't allowed to catch 'em."
 "Do you mean to say you don't fish?"
 "I don't exactly fish. But if a fish comes along and bites at me I do my best to defend myself."

PROMINENT PEOPLE

PORTUGAL'S NEW PRESIDENT



Bernardino Machado, the recently elected president of Portugal, has been prominent for years in public life, having served his country as premier, provisional minister of foreign affairs, minister of the interior and minister to Brazil. He has been considered the foremost man in the republican party, and before the overthrow of the monarchy was regarded as the logical choice of that party for the presidency. In January, 1908, he was accused of conspiracy against the crown, but the charges never were proved.

Senhor Machado, who is sixty-five years old, formerly was professor of philosophy in Coimbra university, but was ousted from his chair because he joined the anticlerical movement. He is an excellent speaker, and during his public career has been regarded as strongly pro-British.

One of the interesting stories regarding Senhor Machado is that he served as Portuguese minister to Washington in 1900 and 1901 under the name of Marquis de Santo Thyrso, but was recalled because he made a premature announcement to his country of President McKinley's death, which resulted in Lisbon sending messages of condolence four or five days before the president died. After his recall, according to the story, he dropped the title, which was of papal origin, and resumed his family name.

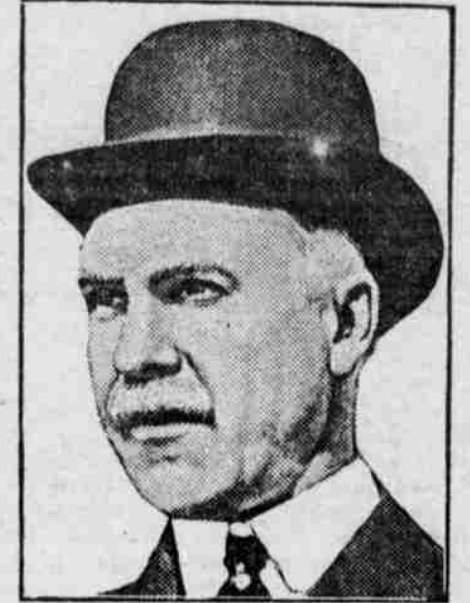
The president of the Republic of Portugal is elected by joint vote of both chambers of parliament for a term of four years, and cannot be re-elected.

PLEASANT TOM TAGGART

The power of personality never was better illustrated than in the career of Thomas Taggart, the Indiana—and national—political leader. Irish by birth, Taggart must have caressed the blarney stone from the earliest days of his infancy to the day of his departure for American shores. This is not to say that he is an orator. He is nothing of the sort. On the contrary, he is no speechmaker at all. But when it comes to saying quickly, in private conversation, or in passing greeting, the right thing in the right way at the right moment, Taggart is without a superior in the whole country. Not even his bitterest enemy will find the slightest fault with Taggart's ever-brilliant, ever-pleasant smile.

That was the gift with which he began life. That was his talent and his capital. A cheery smile, a firm, friendly hand-clasp, a ready sympathy—these went with it. And the combination elevated Thomas Taggart from a clerk's position behind a depot lunch counter and a salary of eight dollars a week to the highest position of political bossism in state and nation and to the millionaire's status in point of fortune.

Taggart's intimate friends are agreed that Taggart's political leadership has cost him, in money, far more than it has ever put in his pocket. His hands, they say, are clean. His fortune was made when he gained control of the company that operates the French Lick Springs hotel.



GUARDS PRECIOUS DOCUMENTS



Woman's sphere in affairs of state extends into one of the most important offices of the government. Especially important at the present day is the library of the state department, where are kept the treaties, records and valuable data that determine the American policy in world affairs.

Miss Lucy Stuart Fitzhugh, who has catalogued and classified the library, is the expert clerk of the library, and cares for its precious documents. She takes the place of the honored "keeper of the rolls," who ranks as a high dignitary in foreign governments.

"We have here a great many publications and documents that are to be found nowhere else in the world," she says. "Among our most precious documents are the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States in the originals, with the articles of confederation, the emancipation proclamation and other papers vital to our country's history."

Miss Fitzhugh is a Kentucky girl. She taught school in Pennsylvania, Georgia and Michigan, and won her present office through the civil service. Dr. Eugene Wambaugh of Harvard, who was a special counsel for the state department when the European war broke out, remarked that the government had at least one employee well placed. She translates foreign languages, and knows the contents of treaties like a book.

CHIEF JUSTICE WHITE'S JOKE

Although ponderous and learned and dignified, Chief Justice White of the Supreme court cracks an occasional joke.

White buys cigars at a certain drug store in Washington, and the man behind the cigar counter has come to know him well enough to talk to him rather freely.

One day as he handed the chief justice his change the cigar salesman inquired breezily, by way of small talk:

"Well, Mr. Chief Justice, how's the Supreme court going to decide those antitrust cases next week?"

"It isn't a matter that we're supposed to talk much about," replied White, pleasantly. "Still I don't mind telling you, provided you'll give me your assurance that it will go no further."

"Oh, I shan't tell a soul," declared the cigar man, earnestly. "Not a word."

White leaned over the counter and whispered: "We're going to decide them—right."

