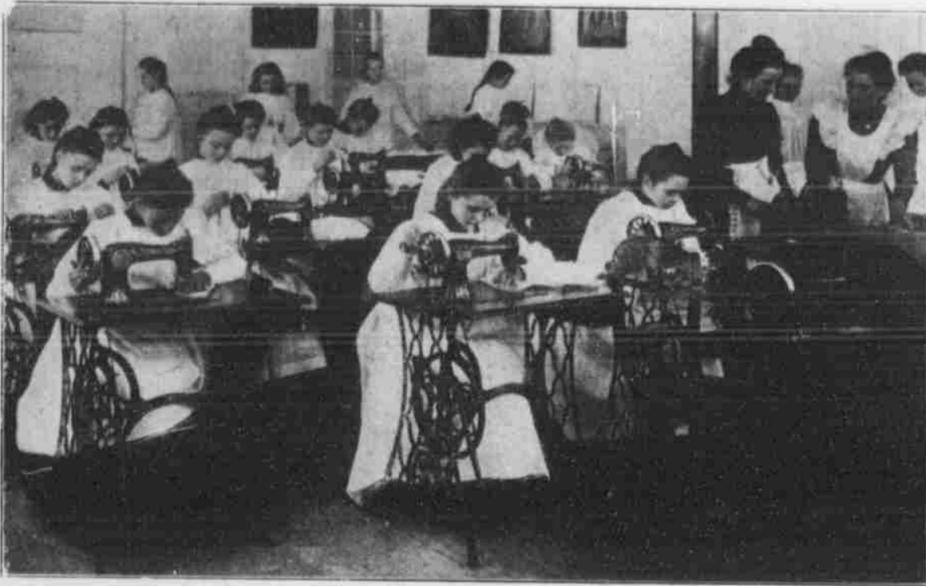


# How American Goods Are Flooding the Netherlands



DUTCH GIRLS LIKE THE AMERICAN SEWING MACHINES—SCENE IN THE SCHOOL OF SEWING AT ALKMAAR, HOLLAND.



WAGON LOAD OF STANDARD OIL BARRELS.

(Copyright, 1903, by Frank G. Carpenter.)  
**R**OTTERDAM, Jan. 21.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—I stubbed my toe on the American invasion the moment I landed in Rotterdam. The obstruction was a square box marked:

Organ.  
 From Meriden, Connecticut, U. S. A.  
 C. Keltner Groote Magazijnen van Pianos.  
 Kaiverstraat, Amsterdam.

A little further on were barrels of machine oil from New York, and next to them a lot of American sewing machines in crates. Out in the river Maas, anchored to a floating buoy, were great steamers unloading Minneapolis flour into two large barges to be sent up the Rhine, and all along the Boompjes were American goods of various kinds.

I took a carriage and drove for several miles up the wharves, crossing the bridges to the Noorderdijk and onto the left bank of the Maas. We went by warehouse after warehouse, and everywhere I saw more or less stuff from the United States.

On the Holland-American quay there was an acre or so of cotton bales from Galveston awaiting transshipment for the Dutch cotton mills. Nearby was a yard filled with resin barrels from Savannah which gave forth a smell like a canning factory, which stuck in my nostrils until driven out by the coffee warehouses where the rich-smelling beans of Java and Sumatra were being loaded on a ship for New York.

At one place I stopped my carriage and photographed a wagon load of Standard Oil barrels, and at another I took a snapshot of a gang of Dutch emigrants about to board a ship for New York. I saw cargoes of American lumber, buckets and boxes of American meats, wagon loads of lard and tallow and all sorts of crates holding American machinery. One item was a cargo of Chicago mowing machines being loaded on barges for the interior of northern Europe, and another was barge after barge of American cottonseed oil which passed through under one of the drawbridges as I waited to cross.

At the same time I saw a score of ocean steamers loading for Asia, Africa and the Dutch East Indies and rode past miles and miles of river and canal craft.

As I went on I could see something of the enormous business which the Dutch have with the rest of the world. They are the little giants of commercial Europe. They do not number as many as three times the population of Chicago, but they have twice as much foreign trade as the 120,000,000 Russians, three times as much as the Spaniards or Italians and twice as much as the whole South American continent. Holland stands sixth in the point of business done among the commercial nations of the world, and about one-tenth of its trade is with the United States. It makes exchanges to the extent of more than \$1,000,000,000 a year, and it annually buys more than \$100,000,000 worth of goods from us.

Let us stop a moment and think what this means. This little country has in round numbers just about 5,000,000 people, or 1,000,000 families, but it buys \$100,000,000 worth of Uncle Sam's goods every year. This means that on the average every family buys \$100 worth annually and this notwithstanding its sales to us will not average more than \$12 or \$15 per family. Of course, much of the goods are bought to sell again, and some go to the Dutch East Indies, which are eighty times as large as Holland itself, but the trade is there all the same, and the business is so big that it will pay the most careful nursing and the most enthusiastic pushing. The South American continent is less important to us than Holland. Our trade with the Chinese brings in nothing like as much as our trade with the Dutch, and in its possibilities it is worth as much as the business of any of the countries of Europe with the exception of England, Germany and France and that undeveloped empire, Russia.

Just now is the best time to increase this

trade. The Dutchmen do not like the English. They can't get over the troubles of their South African cousins, the Boers, and other things being equal, they will give the United States the preference every time. There are hundreds of articles which we make that ought to be sold here, and by studying the wants of the people and drumming the trade there can be an enormous increase.

But first let me tell you what our business now consists of. I have before me the Dutch reports from the United States for the first half of the year 1900. They are a little old, but the trade is practically the same today. I will give you some of the items. They consist of cotton, cottonseed oil, lard, tallow, margarine, meat and tobacco, as well as a large variety of other articles.

The cotton they bought amounted to 20,000,000 pounds, equal to more than 3,000,000 pounds of cotton per month. This went to the Dutch mills and a large part of it was made into clothes for Java, Sumatra and different parts of Africa.

The cottonseed oil weighed just twice as much as the cotton itself, and thereby hangs a tale. These Dutch are among the chief artificial butter makers of the world. They bought 43,000,000 pounds of margarine of us during that six months, but at the same time they used this forty-odd million pounds of cottonseed oil to make other margarine and low-grade butter, for use not only in Holland, but in England and other parts of Europe. There is one factory here which makes over 3,000,000 pounds of such butter every month. A Frenchman invented the process of making this butter, but the Dutch have the biggest factories and they do the bulk of the world's business along this line. They make also cow butter for export, so much, indeed, that Holland has been called the dairy farm of London.

Our biggest Dutch export in point of weight is American corn. In this six months it amounted to almost 100,000,000 pounds per month and brought in several millions of dollars. What do you suppose it was used for? To feed the Holstein cattle, to furnish butter for London? No, the grass here is good and it makes the sweetest of milk. For cornbread for the people? No, the Dutch don't eat maize, though they take vast quantities of our second-grade flour and like it. What, then? I can easily show you if you will come with me to Schiedam, a little way out from Rotterdam. At that place are the great distilleries which make the Holland gin or schnapps. There are 200 of them, and their business is to grind up American corn and reduce it to alcohol, which mixed in a certain way with the juice of the juniper berry forms gin. Holland gin is considered the best, and the Dutch think it is the best drink of the world. They consume vast quantities of it and it warms them body and soul. It is used not only here, but throughout the Dutch East Indies, where the hotels give you free gin cocktails before every meal and where the people drink gin almost every hour of the day.

A large part of what Holland sells to us is gin, alcohol and wines. She sends us Java coffee and something like 2,000,000 pounds of spices every year, all of which comes from her colonies in the East Indies.

Rotterdam is by far the best place for pushing our trade. It is, with the exception of Hamburg, the best distributing point on the coast of northern Europe, and it has fewer trade restrictions than Hamburg.

The city is about sixteen miles back from the sea, built upon piles on both banks of the Maas. The piles are driven as much as fifty feet into the soil and upon them have been constructed miles of stone quays, enormous warehouses and a city of about 350,000 people. The town controls all public improvements, and it is spending vast sums to increase its shipping facilities and trade. If I remember correctly the cost of deepening the river Maas, so that the big-



AMERICAN SKYSCRAPER IN ROTTERDAM.

gest ocean steamships could come right into the city, was more than \$15,000,000. This work, however, has made Rotterdam superior to Amsterdam as a port, and it now ranks second among the ports of continental Europe, and is surpassed by none in its safety and in its conveniences for handling goods. I have spoken of its miles of stone quays.

It has also shipyards and floating dry docks and every means of repairing and taking care of shipping. It has mooring buoys in the Maas, so that the vessels can unload into the barges in midstream, and its quays are so fitted with cranes that all sorts of freight can be rapidly moved. At present there are seventy-five ocean lines which call regularly at Rotterdam, and the river and canal craft which annually enter this port number 125,000. The river is always free from ice, and business goes on all the year round.

In my ride around the wharves I was surprised at the number of ships loading for and unloading from the United States. Our trade is very important to Holland. Of all its tonnage more than 26 per cent comes from our country, and the only country which surpasses the United States in this is Great Britain, which has about 26 per cent of the total tonnage, but some of this consists of American goods which come to Holland via England.

There are more than 400 ships leaving Rotterdam every year for the United States, or more than one every day. There are thirteen regular steamship lines, which do business between the two countries.

The Holland-American line is the greatest. It has a passenger line to New York and freight steamers for Newport News.

The passenger ships make the journey from Rotterdam in eight or ten days, while the freight steamers take from nine to twenty days.

This line is making money and it has for several years paid dividends of 10 per cent and upward.

Outside of the Holland-American line the chief steamship companies which deal with the United States are freighters, and the most of the vessels going to the southern states. There are tank steamers belonging to the German-American Petroleum company and the American Petroleum company which ply regularly between New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia and Rotterdam, and there are tramp steamers which carry oil. The Neptune line has one or more steamers a week to Baltimore. The Cosmopolitan and the Keystone lines make regular shipments to Philadelphia, and the Johnson Blue Cross line and North American Transport line do a business between here and Norfolk and Newport News. Then there is the Charleston Transport line, with irregular sailings, the Texas Transport and the Terminal Transport, with steamers to New Orleans and Galveston, and the Gulf Stream line, which sails bi-weekly to the same ports. Barnard & Co. have steamers from Savannah to Rotterdam, and the Cuban line goes from Rotterdam or Antwerp to New Orleans every three weeks. There is also a line from Holland to Boston, with steamers every ten days and other lines to Philadelphia and New York. So you see that the Dutch-American trade keeps the Gulf stream sizzling the greater part of the year.

I have letters from Chicago to the Holland representatives of Armour & Co. and

Swift and Company, and I asked my porter at my hotel where to find them. He took me to the corner and pointed to a big white building facing the river at the end of the Boompjes. "That," said he, "is the Witte Huis. It is the only American building in Holland and is the headquarters of the chief American firms."

I crossed several bridges and, strolling down to it, found it even so. The building is on the American plan, although it was erected by a Belgian. It is made of bricks faced with white porcelain tiles. The Dutch call it a sky-scraper and talk of the dangerous height, although it has only ten stories. It is, I am told, the only ten-story building in Europe; it is a giant in Rotterdam, although in New York it would be but a baby. It is perfectly plumb, notwithstanding 900 trees were driven down into the sand to make its foundation. The average building of Rotterdam is of from three to five stories, and many buildings lean this way and that so that parts of the city are apparently drunk.

The American house has electric elevators worked by little Dutch boys dressed in white smocks. It was by them that I went from story to story calling on some of our largest American agents. I find that the meat men here are selling vast quantities of our meat and lard not only to Holland, but to all the countries along the Rhine, and that the American Cereal company is pushing its goods into this part of Europe. It has its offices in the American building, and its advertisements are everywhere. Indeed, the Americans are far better advertisers than the Europeans and you see "Kwaker Oats," American typewriters, kodaks and California fruits everywhere.

I find a great many American sewing machines used in Holland. They are scattered over the continent, and are considered far superior to any made in Europe. One or two of our firms are pushing their foreign business more than any other, and especially the Singer company, which has its advertisements everywhere and branch houses in all the cities of England and the continent. In fact, I found a store here on the Hoogstraat—the Broadway of Rotterdam—which had photographs of some of the sewing schools of Holland, in which the little Dutch girls are working away on American machines. One of these pictures is of a school at Alkmaar, one of the oldest towns of Holland.

Not far from this shop are hardware stores, with a great variety of American goods, including Philadelphia lawn mowers and Michigan pitchforks, and in the music store, just over the way, I saw windows filled with the marches of Sousa printed with the American flag on the cover. They are made by a Rotterdam firm and sell in sets at 40 cents a copy.

The American shoe does not seem to be walking into Holland as rapidly as could be desired. The climate is so wet that thicker soles than ours are needed. Nevertheless, it is no worse than England, and our shoes will sell if properly pushed. There is one store in Rotterdam with a big sign above it advertising American footwear, and another store, which was intended for selling American shoes, is vacant. The Dutch merchant opened his place on contracts which he had with Americans, leasing one of the best places and planning to make our shoes a specialty. His goods, owing to the carelessness of the American exporters, failed to come on time, and the result was that he compromised his lease and gave up the business.

Indeed, the Americans have a bad reputation in Europe as exporters and traders. We make the best goods, but we don't know how to sell them. Such trade as we have is because our goods are so good, and not because of our business ability in selling or care in filling orders.

Take for instance an order which a stationery dealer here sent to New York and had filled at a loss. The man has a shop right next to the Witte Huis, and I dropped

(Continued on Seventh Page.)