Where the Puritans Prayed in Holland

OLD CHURCH AT ROTTERDAM.

MR. CARPENTER'S PORTER.

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ROTTERDAM, Feb. 4.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—Do you want to pray with the ghosts of your Pilgrim fathers?

You can do so if you go to Delfshaven, a village on the Maas two miles from Rotterdam. There is a church there where Elder Brewster, Miles Standish, John Alden, Priscilla and the rest of the saints worshiped before they left on the Speedwell for Southampton, where they got the Mayflower, which landed them at Plymouth and on its famous rock. They had been driven from England to Holland, where they settled at Leyden and lived for twelve years. The Dutch treated them well, but they wanted a land of their own. They bought a vessel at Delfshaven, and upon it made their first start for America. They remained at Delfshaven some time before they sailed and during that time worshiped in the old church which still stands.

I went there today on the top of a car, paying 4 cents for the round trip. We rode out through one of the fine residence sections of Rotterdam, past a beautiful park, and on through tenement streets which swarmed with Dutch babies and older children as clean as new pins. We passed many wind mills on the farms outside the city, and in about half an hour found ourselves in one of the sleepiest towns of this sleepy Dutch country. It was Delfshaven, the port of the city of Delft, which a few centuries ago was one of the important cities of Holland, but is now almost forgotten except for its blue porcelain dishes and tiles.

Delfshaven has now but a few hundred people. It is composed of two and three-story Dutch houses, old and black and quaint in the extreme. The roofs are steep and ridge-shaped, with little dormer windows poking their heads out here and there. The houses are flush with the sidewalks, and the chief street has a canal running through it filled with barges and fishing boats, upon which the boat families were cooking their suppers at the time of my visit.

There were many children in clogs running about, some chasing each other and others climbing the trees with their clumsy feet. I posed three of the smallest of the girls on the wall of the canal, and had my son snap the camera at them to get a sample of how the littles ones looked when our Pilgrim Fathers were here. I say when they were here, for the children of Delfshaven dress about the same now as they did then, holding tight to the wooden shoes of their forefathers. Indeed their mothers are quite as thrifty as were our Pilgrim foremothers; for the stately old dame in short skirts and lace cap, with a golden corkscrew over each eye, whose daughters I posed, looked on and laughed until I gave each of them 10 Dutch cents as a present. She then came forward, and as I looked back I saw that all the coins had found their way to her itching palm to the evident disgust of the babies.

A little further on I found the old church. It stands facing the canal just below the drawbridge which crosses it. There are old houses on each side of it, and the street looks as though it were a slice taken out of the Middle Ages and dropped down into the present. The church is made of well-burnt brown bricks, with doors and window frames painted white. The windows are arched and they have many panes. The church has a clock tower and a cupola, and in its day it must have been one of the best of its kind.

The sexton lives in a little house next door. She is a kind old Dutch lady, who would be good looking if it were not that she has lost her front teeth. She has the whitest of caps, the rosiest of cheeks and a most pleasant smile. She took me through the church and showed me its curious features, including the pulpit Bible, which dates back to 1628, or to eight years after the Pilgrims left Holland. She pointed out a stone in the wall which was sent to the church by some of the people of Chicago, and said that the Chicagoans had also taken away a stone from the floor. She said that two of the gravestones had been taken by a Philadelphia man for the New England Society of Pennsylvania, and that this society also had the old alms box.

A DUTCH BUSINESS STREET.

This old church has been used since the Pilgrims left and it is in use today. It has seats for about 200 people—quaint oak benches, with reading desks in front of them, upon which lie many Bibles. The Bibles are in Dutch and they look as old as the church itself. They are somewhat like the $4 kind sold by our itinerant book agents, each containing the hymns as well as the full text of the Scriptures.

Underneath each bench is a little square box-like footstool with auger holes in the top. These stools are the only heating arrangement of the church. Before service the sexton puts a little pot of glowing charcoal or peat in each stool and the women put their feet on the top of the stools and thus keep them warm during the long service. The peat must be well lighted and glowing or it will smoke, making one think that the church is on fire. When I went up into the pulpit I noticed there were holes in its floor, and was told that boxes of burning charcoal or peat were placed below it to keep the dominie hot.

The collections are taken up in little black bags fastened to long poles, which the elders carry about during each service. There are always two collections, one for the poor and the other for the church and the elders. The elders have seats of honor, not far from which is the pew of the parson. The poor are given the poorest seats, being shoved away on benches behind the preacher.

I took a look at the records of the church, some of which chronicle the leaving of the Pilgrims on July 22, 1620, and then wrote my name in the signature book as all Americans who honor the Pilgrim Fathers and appreciate the hospitality of the Hollanders are requested to do—with a donation. I also gave the donation.

The Dutch are very much like other nations as regards church-going. They attend more regularly in the country than in the city. The village churches are full in the morning, and notwithstanding the long sermons the people usually sit out the service. The first chapter is read by the schoolmaster, and in some churches a part of the collection is given to the schoolmaster. The offerings are more often copper than silver, and in the poorer villages a cent is a common donation. The preachers are not well paid, especially where they depend upon the people for their salaries.

The government gives certain yearly allowances to the different churches. The Protestants, who are in the majority, get a little over $500,000 a year, the Roman Catholics not half so much, and the Jews only about $4,000. All religions are tolerated, but the royal family and the most of the people belong to the Dutch Reformed church, which is governed according to Presbyterian methods.

Speaking of the schools, they are about as good as any in Europe. The Dutch are noted for their intelligence and learning and the government has for almost 100 years paid more or less attention to educational matters. Only lately, however, has education been compulsory, the school age being from 6 to 13.

Holland has four universities, with about 3,000 students. It has twenty-nine classical schools, with more than 2,000 students, and has academies and schools of all classes. There is a national academy of art, a royal school of music, a horticultural school and a national normal college for drawing teachers as well as others for training. There are also night schools for the working classes, industrial schools for the women and in Amsterdam there is a school for the training of women chemists.

In the fine arts academy at The Hague there are eight different courses attended by about 500 students and other art schools in Amsterdam and elsewhere.

The Dutch have housekeeping schools for girls, schools for butter making, fruit growing, horse doctoring and horseshoeing, and, in short, schools for almost everything under the sun. Lectures on agriculture are given to the farmers at the expense of the government, and in Utrecht the night schools have classes for carpenters, bricklayers, stonecutters, goldsmiths, sculptors, painters and lithographers.

Holland has also schools for the training of boys who expect to enter the government service, and especially the service of the colonies. In these schools the languages of Sumatra, Java and others of the East Indies are taught. The boys learn all about the chief religions of the natives, they study their laws, their prejudices and customs so that when they are sent out to govern them they are able to do so intelligently. I doubt, in fact, whether any government service is so well educated and so efficient as that of the Dutch East Indies.

Take for instance a retired Javanese official who was with me during this trip to Delfshaven. As we were riding back to Rotterdam he told me that he spoke German, French and English as well as the Dutch, and that he could write and speak two of the languages of Java. He had to pass an examination in these languages before he was sent out to the East Indies, and this is the case with every man who represents Holland in her Asiatic colonies.

I like Rotterdam. It is one of the quaintest cities of Europe, and at the same time the most business like. It is somewhat like Venice, but more like Venice was in the middle ages, in the height of its prosperity. Almost the whole city is a quay or dock. It is cut up by canals, which lead in and out through the Maas, and one wanders through street after street of tall, lean buildings, finding barges, launches and sailing boats almost everywhere.

Along the Boompjes and in the islands of the Maas are enormous ships of every description, and in the canals smaller vessels abound. Venice is a town of gondolas, Rotterdam is one of business craft. There are no carts in Venice. The town boasts that it has not a cow nor a horse in it. Rotterdam is filled with wagons, carts and drays of all kinds. There are street cars and carriages.

The canals have big drawbridges and swinging bridges, and when you are walking or driving along you frequently find yourself suddenly in front of a blank wall of boards twenty feet high. The whole street, car track and all, has noiselessly risen in front of you to let a string of boats or barges pass through the canal over which you are going. Some of the bridges swing upon pivots, others divide in the middle and rise upward; others are stationary or suspension bridges, in passing which the smokestacks, masts and spars of the barges swing back upon hinges as they go through.

The traffic is by no means confined to the water. There are more carts and drays than there are boats, and the streets are crowded with men carrying burdens, and with dogs and women and boys hauling carts. Come with me to Hoogstraat and take a look at the Broadway of Rotterdam. This is the chief busines street and it goes through the heart of the city. It is not more than thirty feet wide and its tall four and five-story houses lean across from side to side as though drunk and about to embrace.

Take a stand in one of the doorways and watch the cabs and carriages, the big wagons and the little carts, which jam themselves this way and that. There comes a hay peddler dressed in a cap, blue smock and clogs. He has a cartload of grass, with two dogs harnessed in front of the axle. He pushes and they strain and pull as they run, barking, along. Behind comes a bareheaded woman with a green wheelbarrow filled with vegetables, and a bread peddler follows, dragging a long box upon wheels.

Further up the street are more dog carts, and at every cart the dog does all or half the work. Indeed, I never knew what the expression "work like a dog" meant until I came here. Loads big enough for an American horse are pulled by Dutch dogs. There comes one now, dragging a cart full of beer in bottles, which its master is delivering to his customers as he passes their doors. There is another behind pulling a load of salt, and others pass every few moments dragging cartloads of milk.

Now turn your eyes from the dogs to the people. See how business-like they are. They have a solid look about them. The men are plainly dressed and there are more workmen than loafers. It is rare that we see a tall hat, gloves or frock coat. The derby, the cap and business suits have taken their places. Many of the common women are bareheaded and the ladies out shopping dress more plainly than in London, Brussels or Paris.

The typical Dutch costumes are passing away, and are only worn by the women from the country. There are two now who have on white caps, with gold corkscrews at each side of their eyes. With them is a young Dutchman with velvet pantaloons a yard wide and a short velvet coat, in front of which his white flannel shirt shows out. He wears a soft hat with a turned-up brim, below which his thick hair has been cropped off so that it hangs down like a brush.

Listen to the Dutch talking as you stand here on Hoogstraat. What a jargon! It is not English, it is not German nor French, and it seems to be a mixture of all. Some of the store signs look like English on a drunk, and we have to study to make out what they mean. Over there is a jewelry store with the words, "Nieuw Zilver Metaalwaren" above it, and further on a grocery store with the sign "Boter en Kaas." Any one can see that the first sign means silver and it is not hard to translate the second as butter and cheese. It is more difficult when you spell drug store "Drogerijen," but any one could tell that "Schuwaaren" means shoes, "Koffie" coffee and "Sigaren" cigars.

What bothers me most is the jaw-breaking titles which the people use here for all sorts of firms. For instance, when I arrived in Rotterdam and wanted my trunks brought to the hotel I was advised to get a man from the "Nederlandsche-Maats-

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