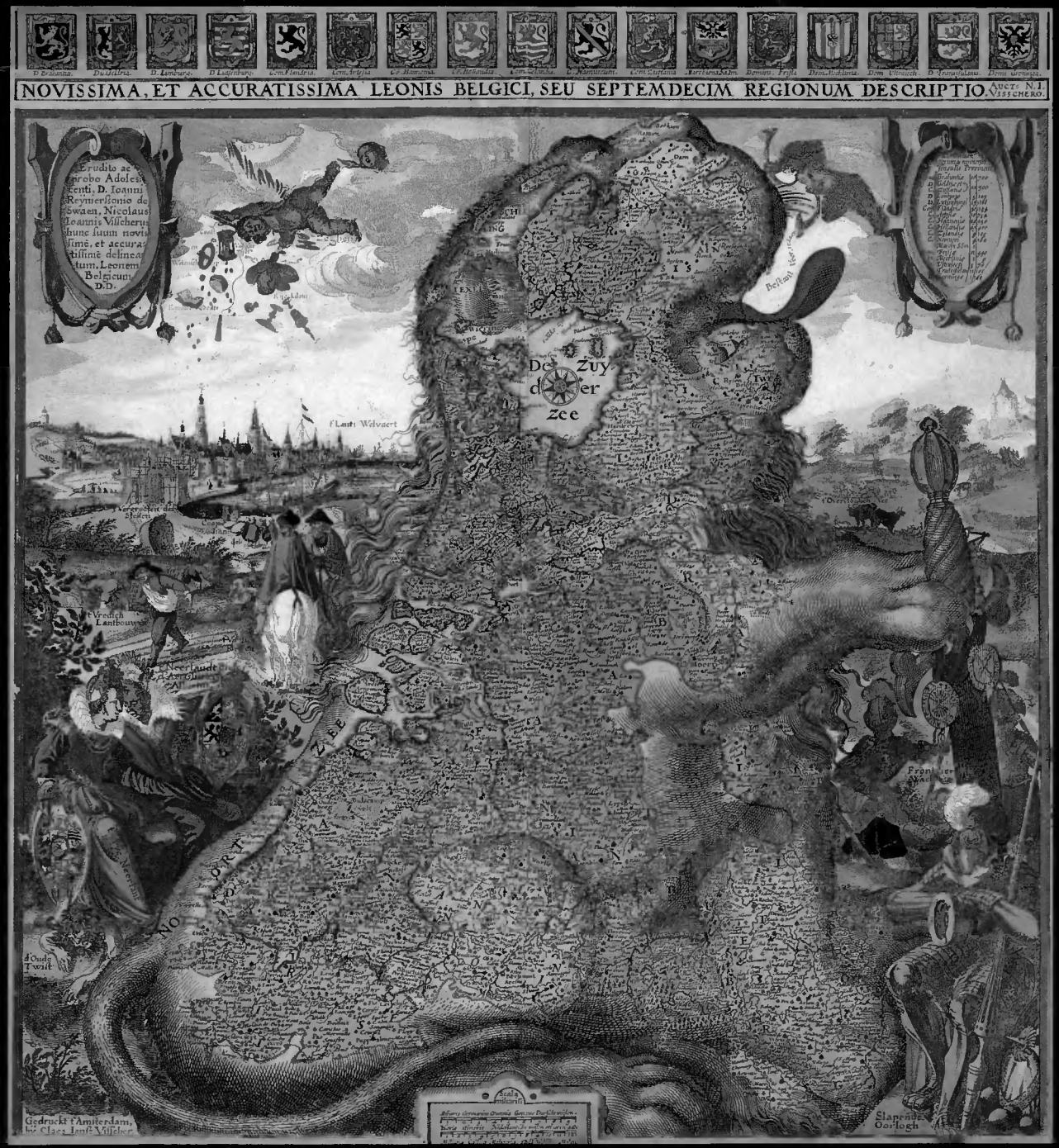
DUTCH ARTS

Ministry of Cultural Affairs



CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE NETHERLANDS

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Allegorical map – by Cl. Visscher in about 1610 - from the early period of the Repoublic of the United Netherlands. Atlas van Stolk Collection, Rotterdam.

FOREWORD

In this theme number of *Dutch Arts* we take a look at Dutch history in order to discover the tangible traces it has left. The survey reveals the characteristic traits of the Netherlands, an independent nation since 1581, as well as pinpointing many influences from international contacts throughout the ages.

In view of the immensity of the Dutch cultural heritage, this number cannot claim to be more than a *tour d'horizon* past a series of highlights in libraries, museums, archives and ancient monuments. These highlights, however, amply compensate any lack of completeness. Collections of art, architecture and literature are not discussed here, either because they have been treated in previous numbers of *Dutch Arts* or are scheduled to feature in future numbers.

Two historians, Erwin van de Pol and Rob Berends, are the authors of the following chapters.

Erwin M. van de Pol (1957) studied history in Amsterdam and Rome. His activities include freelance journalism in the fields of international politics, cultural developments, government structures and history. He also writes reviews. Van de Pol is the author of an English guide to Amsterdam with a cultural-historical focus.

Rob Berends (1957) studied history at Groningen University, obtaining his Master of Arts in 1985 with a study of Dutch broadcasting. He has written about a variety of themes in Dutch history in books, newspapers and magazines.

The editor of this issue of Dutch Arts is, as usual, Hugo Verschoor, who also collected and selected the illustrations for this theme-number.

CONTENTS

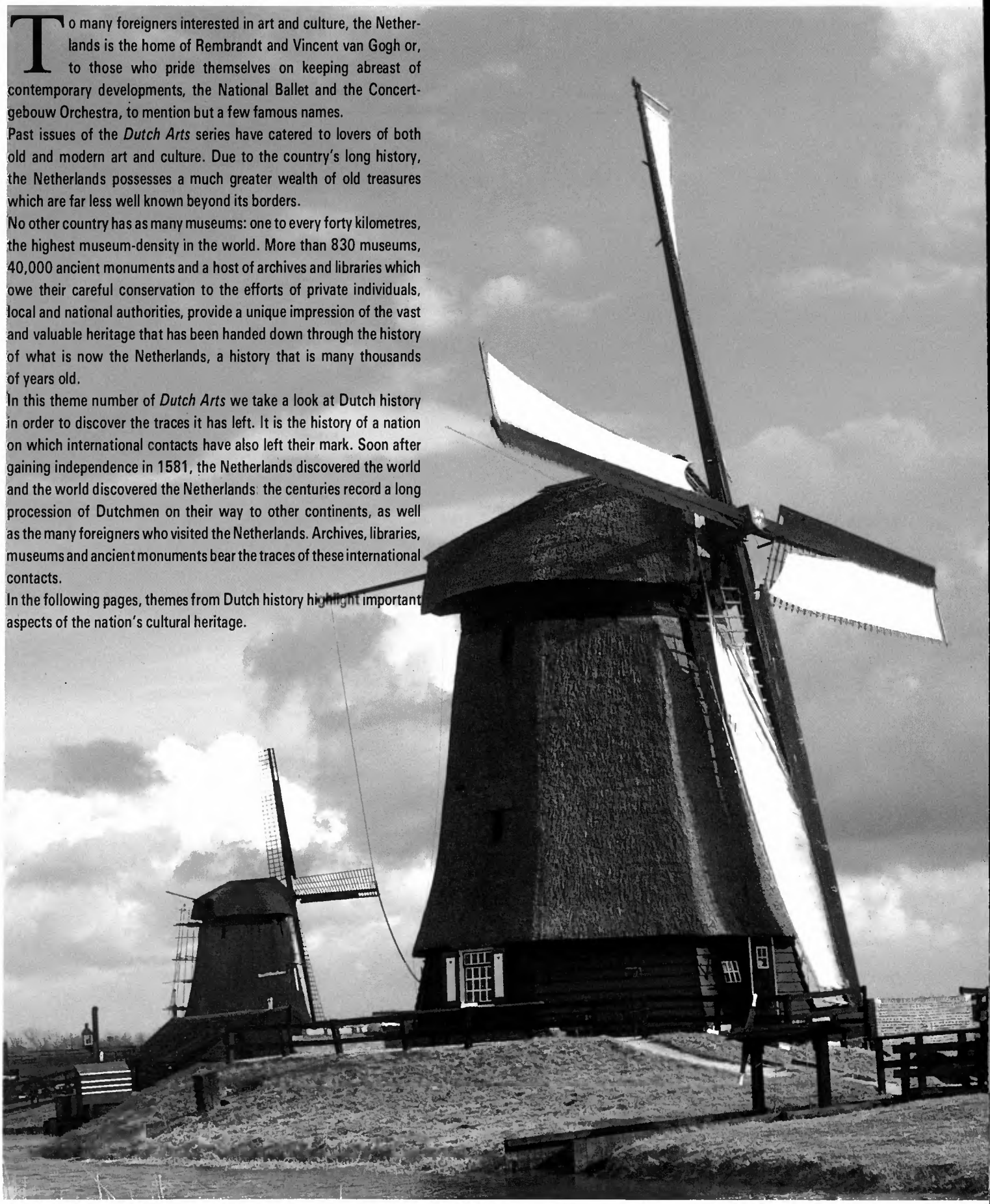
To many foreigners interested in art and culture, the Netherlands is the home of Rembrandt and Vincent van Gogh or, to those who pride themselves on keeping abreast of contemporary developments, the National Ballet and the Concertgebouw Orchestra, to mention but a few famous names.

Past issues of the *Dutch Arts* series have catered to lovers of both old and modern art and culture. Due to the country's long history, the Netherlands possesses a much greater wealth of old treasures which are far less well known beyond its borders.

No other country has as many museums: one to every forty kilometres, the highest museum-density in the world. More than 830 museums, 40,000 ancient monuments and a host of archives and libraries which owe their careful conservation to the efforts of private individuals, local and national authorities, provide a unique impression of the vast and valuable heritage that has been handed down through the history of what is now the Netherlands, a history that is many thousands of years old.

In this theme number of *Dutch Arts* we take a look at Dutch history in order to discover the traces it has left. It is the history of a nation on which international contacts have also left their mark. Soon after gaining independence in 1581, the Netherlands discovered the world and the world discovered the Netherlands: the centuries record a long procession of Dutchmen on their way to other continents, as well as the many foreigners who visited the Netherlands. Archives, libraries, museums and ancient monuments bear the traces of these international contacts.

In the following pages, themes from Dutch history highlight important aspects of the nation's cultural heritage.



WATER, SOURCE OF LIFE AND ANCIENT ENEMY

For twenty centuries the Dutch have battled against the water. Sometimes they lost, as in the St. Elizabeth flood of 1421, depicted here by master-painter v.d. Sint. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

The very name reflects the most characteristic feature of the past and present Kingdom of the Netherlands. *The Netherlands* means the Low Countries - low in relation to the water that borders and crisscrosses the country.

The Dutch sailed over the water to the four points of the compass in order to trade, convert, wage war and pursue scientific research. Their struggle with the water has been going on for twenty centuries. Some battles were lost, causing grief and bitterness, others were won by transforming water into land, thus giving new hope to people and crops.

Water is everywhere in the Netherlands. A ditch, a canal, a river, a lake or the sea itself are never very far away.

For a first tour of the multitude of historical collections in which Dutch cultural heritage is recorded, *water* is thus a highly appropriate element on which to embark on our voyage of discovery.

Shipping

Just north-east of Amsterdam's impressive city centre, the harbour is dominated by a massive brown-and-white building, a more commanding sight, even, than the naval vessels moored close by. It is the *Zeemagazijn*, a former warehouse where all the necessities for a sea voyage used to be stored, collected and distributed. It was the largest industrial building of its day, the hub of all mercantile naval activity from 1656 on.

On its premises were an apothecary's shop, stores of nails, cables, ropes, sails and cannons, an abattoir where cattle was killed, cut up and salted, a drinking-water cistern, a ship's chandlery which carried a wide range of goods, a loft where cinnamon, pepper and spices were stored, and even a stock of shells for use as negotiable currency in foreign parts.

As time passed, a large industrial zone grew up around the warehouse – wharves, docks, mills and workers' tenements.

Today the buildings and population of the neighbourhood have changed, but its history is still very much in evidence. Many ships still moor at artificial islands built hundreds of years ago. There is also a naval barracks in Oostenburg, as the district is called.

Commendably, Oostenburg has preserved its cultural heritage in two ways. The restored *Kromhout* dock is a monument to largely nineteenth-century technology. The old slipways are still in use, and a collection of old ship's engines, some of which are still in working order, are a fine illustration of their historical development.

The *Zeemagazijn* still stands in all its glory, despite having undergone several conversions during its long history. The prominent building retained its original function until 1971, and still houses a variety of items connected with Dutch shipping since becoming the *National Maritime Museum*. The collection is impressive – numerous models of ships, marine paintings and drawings (many of them by sailors), oceanic charts, naval engineering diagrams, navigation instruments, globes, gauges and, of course, ships. Moored alongside the building is a splendid steamboat formerly used by *Rijkswaterstaat*, the government department in charge of waterways, to patrol the waters of the province of Zeeland. The museum also contains an extensive maritime library of more than sixty thousand books, many of them antique. Here the tremendous significance of water for the history of the Netherlands, notably its mercantile and shipping history, is manifest. Water was the gateway to the rest of the world and its commercial potential. Amsterdam is not the only city to have benefited from this circumstance. Similar collections can be seen in Zierikzee in Zeeland (the *Zierikzee Maritime Museum*), in Sneek in the province of Friesland (the *Frisian Maritime Museum*) and in Groningen where a specific commodity brought from overseas is featured in the *Northern Maritime and Niemeyer Tobacco Museum*. These museums display their collections in regular rotation, so that parts not permanently on show can be viewed every so often.

Not surprisingly, Rotterdam, the city with the world's largest port, has its own historical collection of maritime objects. The exhibits in the *Prince Hendrik Maritime Museum* range from the small craft in which Dutch tribes plied the Rhine in Roman times, to the oil tankers which are such a prominent feature of Rotterdam today, thus illustrating the history of a vital economic area of the Netherlands. A small harbour beside the museum accommodates a fine collection of some twenty ships.

Last, but not least, the indoor *Zuyderzee Museum* focuses on the history of shipping in the former Zuyder Zee, now the IJssel Lake.

One of the principle reasons for the country's growth into a mercantile power was its coastal yet fairly central situation in Europe at the intersection of trade routes. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Amsterdam was an important transshipment port for cargoes bound for the Baltic and sometimes for destinations further away.

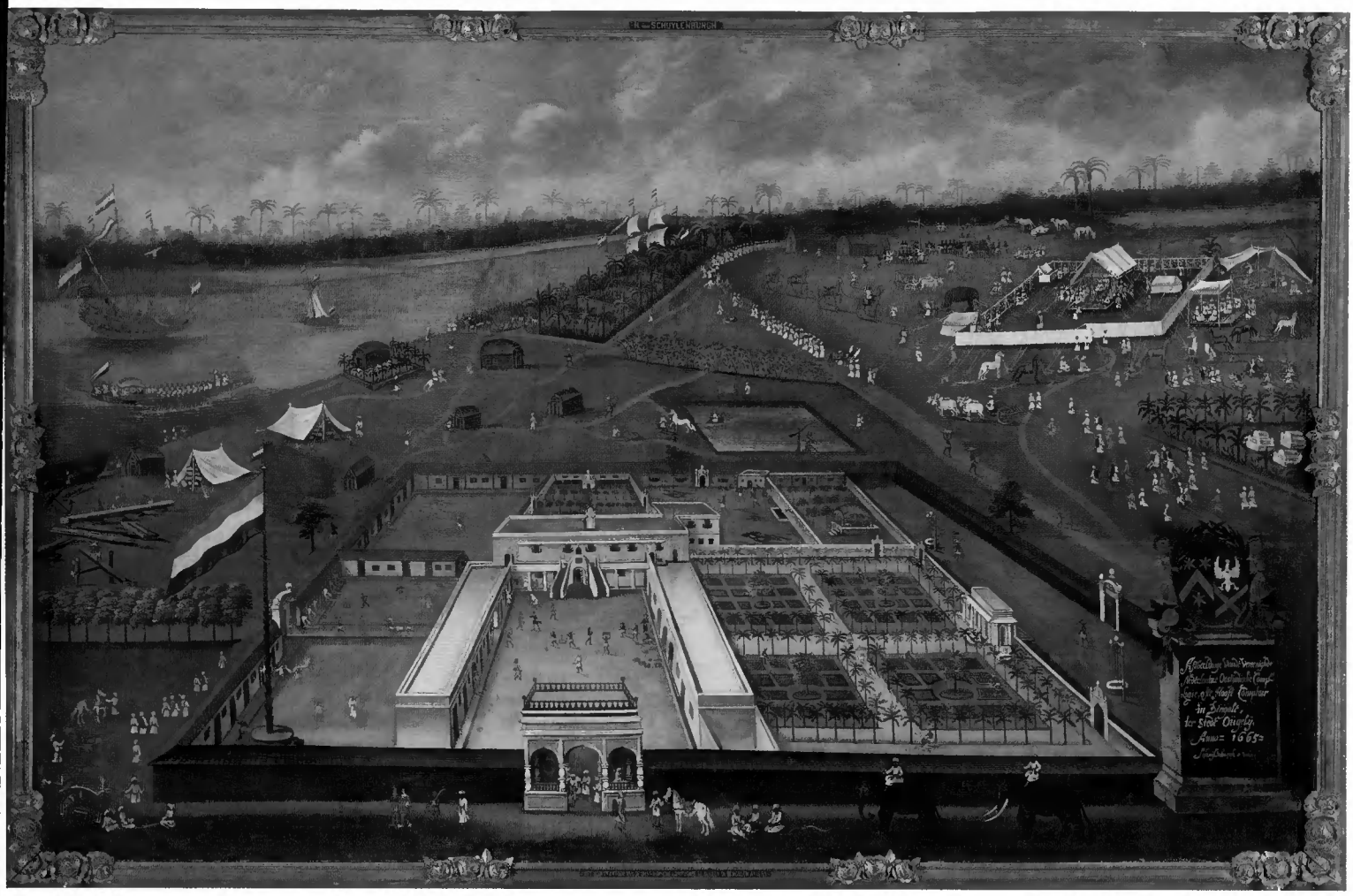
's Lands Zeemagazijn in Amsterdam, painted by J. Mulder in 1720. Today this building houses the Netherlands Maritime Museum.

The Far East

Most ports of call were in the Far East. Dutch trading with this part of the world was in the hands of a single organization, the United East India Company, which had a monopoly on all contacts with what is known today as Indonesia and the surrounding countries.

The Company was founded in 1602, when overseas trading, particularly in virgin territory, was too hazardous an undertaking for a single merchant. The Dutch government was only too happy to cooperate. The country was at war with Spain, and it was hoped that the Dutch merchants' activities would weaken the enemy's commercial position.

In a manner of speaking, the United East India Company was one of the first multinationals. Many traces of its activities can still be seen in the Far East, and even more, of course, in the Netherlands, whose prosperity was built on Oriental imports. In Amsterdam, for instance, big warehouses from the time of the Company have survived. Today



they are no longer used to store spices, but have been converted into apartments for 20th-century Amsterdammers.
Practically all archives pertaining to the Company are kept in the General State Archives in The Hague. Objects from the Company's various outposts are exhibited in the Dutch history department of the *Rijksmuseum*, Amsterdam. Paintings of Asian coasts and showcases of porcelains give the 20th-century visitor an impression of the Dutch trading empire, an empire which a number of Dutch towns and cities helped to build.
Take Hoorn, in the north-west of the country, on the IJssel Lake. Today it is a quiet little town, but in the seventeenth century it was a flourishing trade centre with an open corridor to the sea (now closed off by a dike). In the middle of town is a statue of Jan Pieterszoon Coen, military general, merchant, director-general of the East India Company and fourth governor-general of the Dutch East Indies. He proudly faces a magnificent stone building with finely wrought gates. Inside, a variety of objects imported by the Company from

Factory of the United East India Company in Bengal, painted by H. van Schuylenburg in 1665. In a manner of speaking, the Company was one of the first multinationals in the world, perhaps the very first one. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

An Amsterdam warehouse in the time of the East India Company. Several such warehouses have been converted into flats with every modern convenience, others into offices, in many cases without affecting the appearance of the historical facades. Photo Hugo Verschoor.

foreign parts can be viewed; the building, the former seat of the Provincial government, is now the *West Frisian Museum*, which mounts special exhibitions to illustrate this particular aspect of Dutch history.

In Delft, the *Nusantara Ethnographical Museum* houses a collection of Oriental imports. The ethnographical objects, largely donations to the museum, were used as instructive material for colonial civil servants with postings to the Dutch East Indies, now Indonesia. *Nusantara* is Indonesian for 'many islands'. The collection duly reflects the decorative art of the multitude of Indonesian cultures on the islands that make up the 'Emerald Archipelago', as the Dutch call it. From a historical point of view, too, the collection is extensive and varied, surveying cultural developments from prehistory to the present. As well as a large collection of textiles, the Nusantara has important holdings in the form of brass objects, Wajang puppets (used in a specific kind of Indonesian marionette show) and weapons. Set up in a room reserved for traditional Javanese music is a gamelan – an ensemble of Javanese instruments, mostly percussion. The Nusantara also possesses an extensive library on Indonesia.

Chinese and Japanese porcelain imported by the East India Company can be seen in the *Princessehof* in Leeuwarden, the principle city of the province of Friesland.

Collections in the country's anthropological museums reflect its forefathers' commercial activities. The oldest and one of the most renowned collections is in Leiden, a fitting location for the *National Museum of Ethnology*, for the university of that city has always been specially oriented towards non-western cultures.

More ethnological collections are in Breda, Groningen, Tilburg and Rotterdam (the last with some twenty thousand photographs of non-western cultures, most of them dating from the late nineteenth century).

In the same category are the *America Museum* in Cuijk and the *Africa Museum* in Berg en Dal, a collection of African masks, statues and utensils plus a complete reconstruction of an African village with various forms of habitation.

Missionary work

The Dutch have frequently been characterized, somewhat simplistically, as a nation of shopkeepers and parsons. However, throughout history, Dutchmen, whether Protestant or Catholic, have had a strong urge to instil their religious values in the inhabitants of remote parts.

Catholic missionaries, usually from the southern part of the country, which was and still is predominantly Roman Catholic, did not come home empty-handed. The space in their trunks reserved for bibles on the outward voyage was crammed with art and kitsch from all corners of the earth on their return from the tropical climes where they had sometimes spent many years. More art than kitsch, fortunately, as is borne out by ethnological collections in the southern provinces (North Brabant and Limburg). Museums in this tradition are to be found in the towns of Cadier en Keer, Oudenbosch, Nimwegen and Steyl.

'White Fathers', as the missionaries were called because of their characteristic tropical attire (of priestly cut, though), are not as numerous as they used to be. Consequently, the past two decades have been marked by dwindling supplies of exotic objects, giving the collections an increasingly historical value.

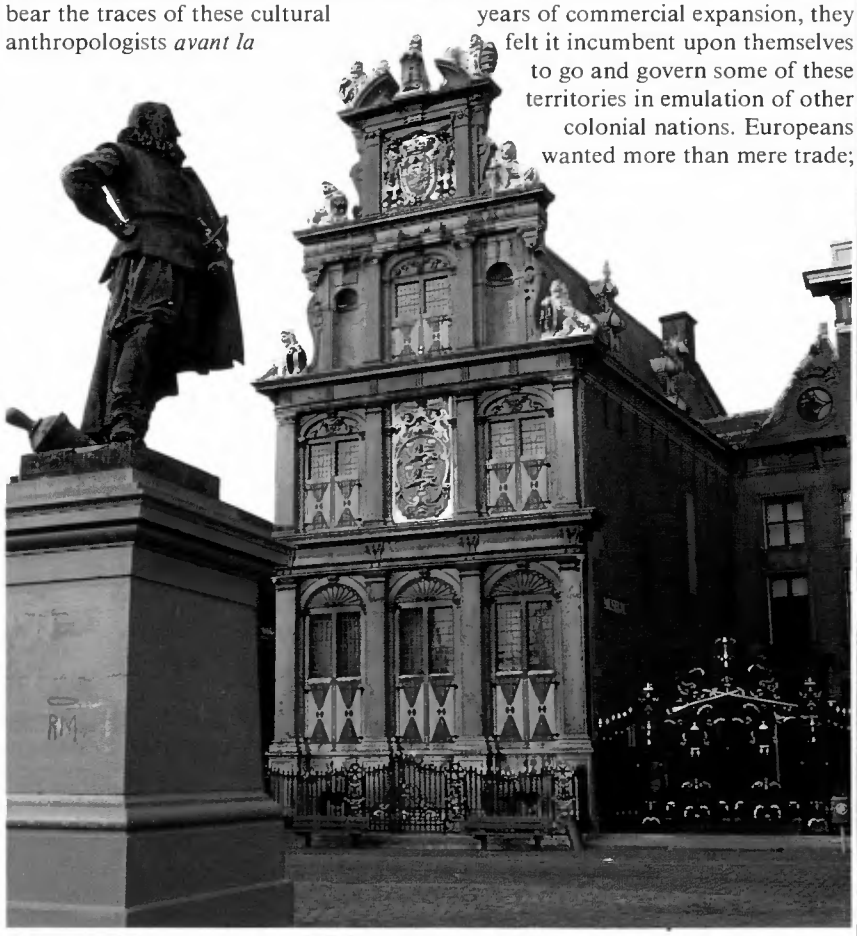
Protestant missionary work also encouraged missionaries to take a keen interest in the peoples and cultures in which they found themselves. One of libraries which bear the traces of these cultural anthropologists *avant la lettre* is in the *Hendrik Kraemer Institute* in Oestgeest, named after Professor Kraemer, a well-known twentieth-century promotor of missionary and ecumenical work.

Colonies

Two projects are of particular interest to people keen on learning more about the seafaring Dutch. In Lelystad the *Batavia*, a seventeenth-century East India Company ship, has been reconstructed down to the minutest detail. Batavia was the colonial name of the present capital of Indonesia, Jakarta (Coen, incidentally, wanted to name it Nieuw-Hoorn after his home town, a privilege later awarded to Cape Horn, the southernmost tip of the American continent).

The *Batavia* is scheduled to sail to Jakarta this year. When she gets back, she will be on permanent display in her home port, Lelystad.

In Amsterdam, close to the maritime museum, a similar ship is being built. This one, however, will have a modern interior suitable for official receptions. This kind of vessel carried Dutchmen all over the world in pursuance of their trading and missionary activities. In the nineteenth century, after two hundred years of commercial expansion, they felt it incumbent upon themselves to go and govern some of these territories in emulation of other colonial nations. Europeans wanted more than mere trade;



Many of the East India Company's imports from distant lands can be seen today in the West Frisian Museum in Hoorn. In front of the museum, formerly the seat of the Provincial parliament, is a statue of Jan Pieterszoon Coen, military general, director-general of the East India Company and governor-general of the Dutch East Indies.

hey wanted political power. For a long ime a number of tropical regions were Dutch territory. Links with some of hem still exist today. Not very far from he aforementioned *National Maritime Museum* in Amsterdam is the *Royal Tropical Institute*, which since the latter half of the nineteenth century has amassed a vast amount of knowledge about the Dutch tropics. A widespread region: the Indonesian archipelago, Surinam in South America, a number of Caribbean islands and, during the first wave of expansion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), parts of North America (including New York, formerly called Nieuw Amsterdam), the West-African coast (for the slave trade), parts of Brazil, and South Africa, where a form of Dutch is still spoken today.

A great number of documents pertaining to these regions are kept in the *General State Archives* in The Hague. Municipal archives, in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, for instance, keep numerous records of the houses of merchants who traded with America or Asia. Also reposing in the General State Archives in The Hague are many files on the Dutch diplomats who represented the Netherlands for four hundred years, from Stockholm to Ningpoo (in China) and from Caracas to Adrianopolis (Turkey).

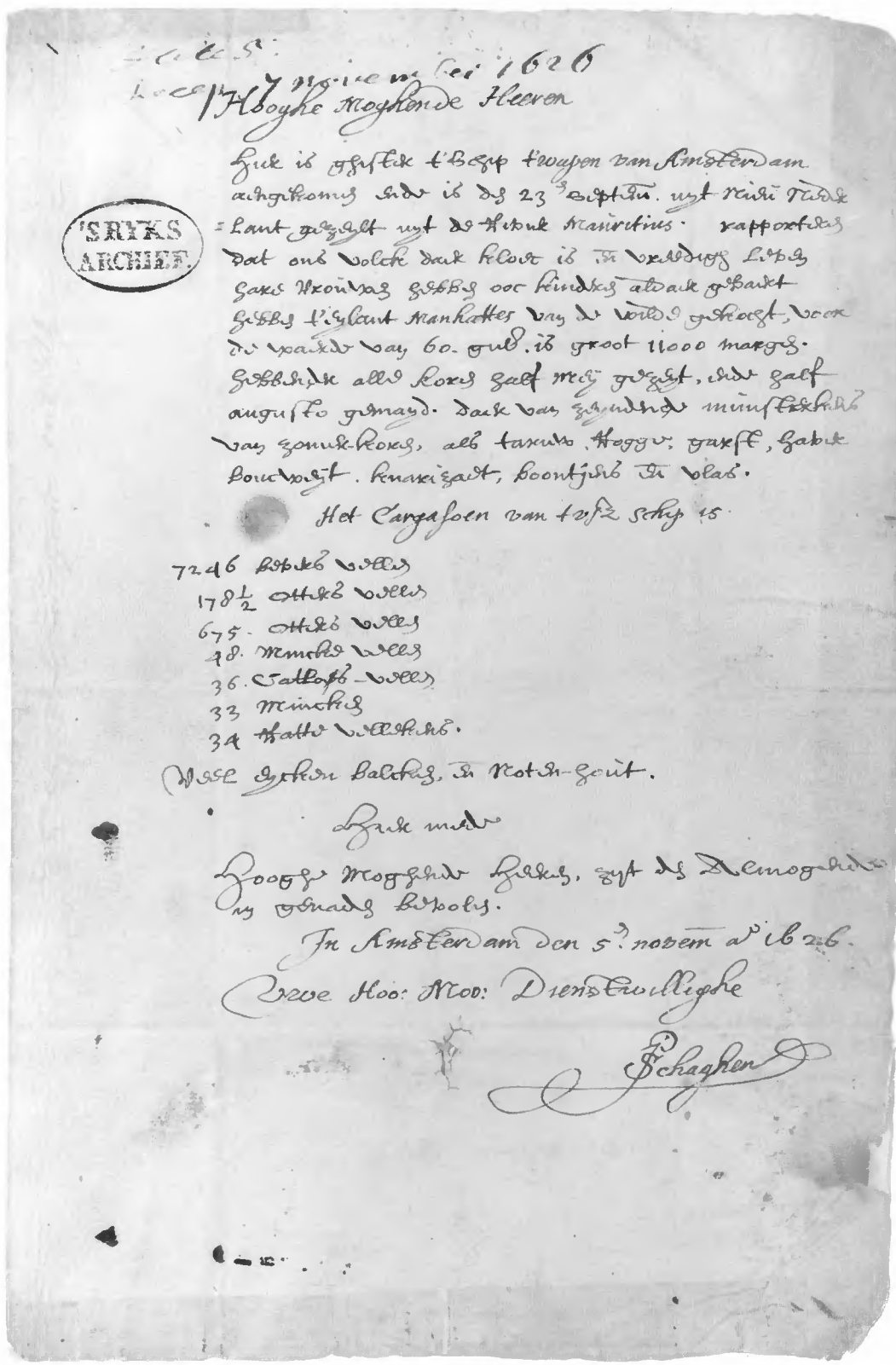
For a long time the Dutch were the only foreigners permitted to trade with Japan from 1639 to 1868, albeit on a limited scale. One of the few Japanese who had commercial dealings with the Dutch described them as follows: 'These foreigners have five striking characteristics: a large nose, blue eyes, red hair, white skin and a tall build. Their garments are usually made of a woollen material, and whether their station be high or low, all of them wear a felt hat. They are skilled craftsmen and very good at inventing various mechanical devices.'

This description must date from a visit to Deshima, an island allotted to the Dutch for their business dealings where they lived in a kind of guarded camp. Ironically, a conspicuous souvenir of the Dutch presence can be seen quite near that very spot: a reconstruction of the harbour front of Hoorn, accompanied by a number of other striking historical Dutch buildings.

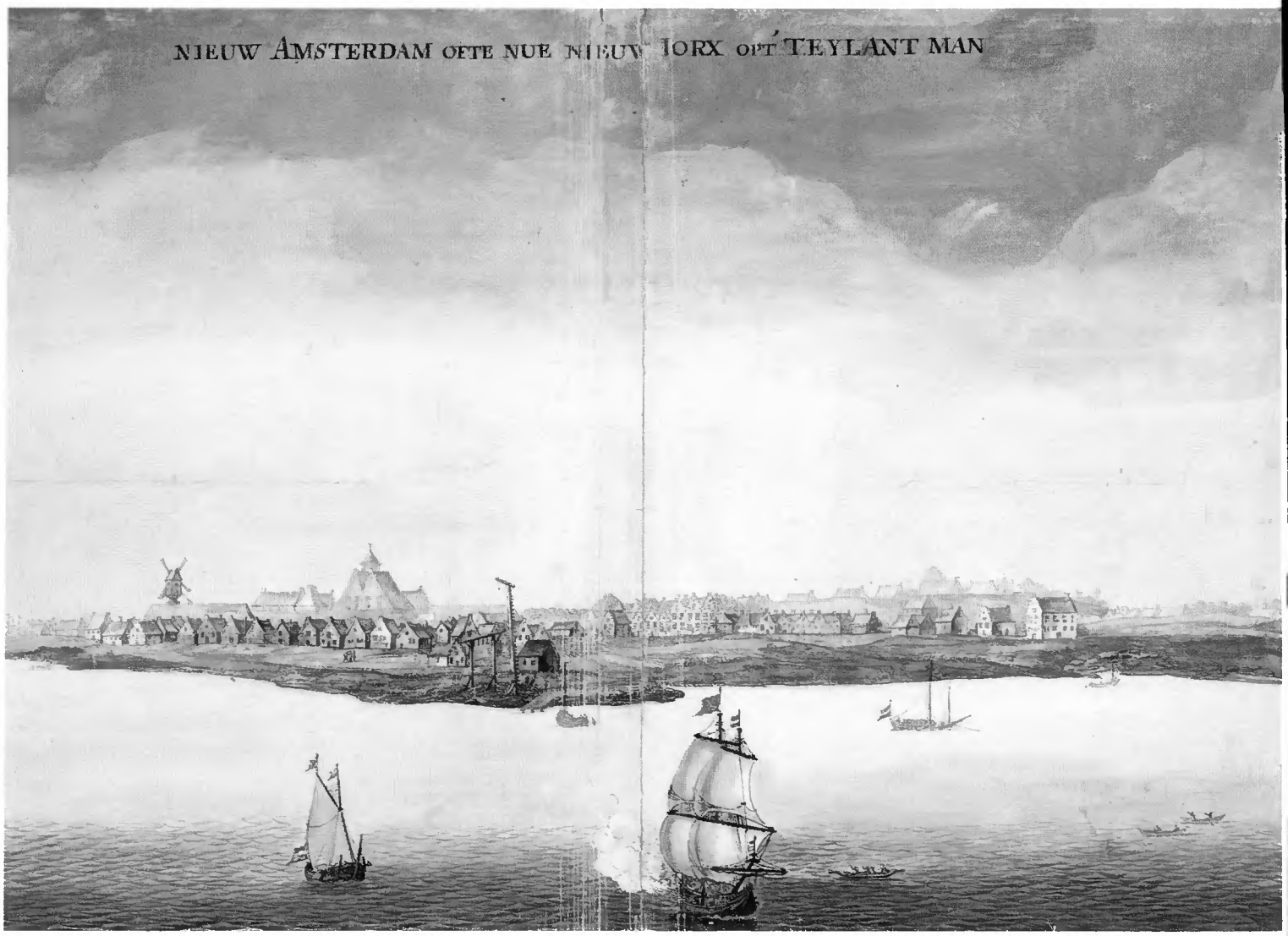
Dutch merchants left their traces in China too. During the Golden Age (which for the Dutch was the seventeenth century), as many as four attempts were made to set up a trading post in Macao. Men of all ages from Haarlem, Alkmaar and Amsterdam never saw their homes again. The graveyard in Macao, like another one in Malaya, is a record of world history and of many minor dramas.

All this eventually led to colonization and to a *Tropical Institute*. Today the Institute is still a repository of knowledge and information about the tropics – knowledge no longer bounded by the limits of the Dutch empire.

The *Tropenmuseum*, housed in the same building, focuses on the Third World in semi-permanent presentations. There are departments of clothing, music, dance and theatre, the environment, technology and a host of other subjects.



Letter to the Sates General, dated November 5 1626, mentioning the purchase of Manhattan by the West India Company for 60 guilders! A little later Nieuw Amsterdam, now New York, was built on Manhattan (see other photo). General State Archives. The Hague.



The *Tropenmuseum* is famous for its blockbuster exhibitions.

Naturally, trading activities called for a strong military presence at sea. The *Naval Museum* at the naval basis in Den Helder has a collection of paintings, watercolours, prints, uniforms, weapons, emblems, flags and even mines, recalling the glorious, worldwide and at times dramatic maritime history of the Netherlands.

Worldwide is a term that certainly applies to the *Marine Corps Museum* in Rotterdam in view of the motto of the Dutch Marine Corps, which was founded in 1665: *qua patet orbis*, 'as wide as the world extends'. A fitting motto for Dutch cartographers too. Geographical knowledge increased by leaps and bounds as a result of European and continental trading, and was used for the benefit of other merchants. Substantial imports of raw materials like copper from Sweden facilitated map-engraving on a large scale. In the seventeenth century, Amsterdam was the world centre of cartography. The Amsterdam merchant-cum-poet Roemer Visscher had this to say about Dutch map-making: 'Common folk, not learned scholars, possess the knowledge of how to sail in and out of ports, since the prosperity of these lands depends upon it; thus the good Lord blesses the faithful with as much understanding as each needs for his trade. Learned scholars need rude peasants and sailors just as much as blunt Dutchmen need shrewd Athenians or Italians.' Those 'rude' cartographers, however, were masters of their trade. Indeed, the United East India Company and the West India Company employed their own cartographers to chart new sea routes and trading territories, pledging them to strict secrecy. This classified information is now accessible to the public in the form of more than 100,000 items in the cartographic archives of the General State Archives in The Hague. Among these records are many maps of Dutch or colonial territory which were made for the Dutch government.

17th-century maps did more than convey geographical knowledge pure and simple. Many of them were superb works of art, collector's items for wealthy merchants and civic authorities. Like fine paintings, they adorned the walls of rich houses. Geographical knowledge of the world was compiled in special atlases, the finest examples of which were made by the Blaeu family and coveted by universities and municipal authorities. Civil servants in the city of Maastricht even sacrificed part of their salaries to pay for a prestigious Blaeu Atlas! Many old libraries and municipal archives still own these masterpieces of cartography. Apart from the aforementioned General State Archives, the *University Libraries* of Amsterdam and Leiden contain important collections of old maps and atlases.

The advent of the Dutch in overseas regions naturally produced progeny all

Hand-coloured map of Europe by Blaeu, c. 1630. It comes from an atlas of the world in Amsterdam University Library.

over the world. Although many people's surnames no longer reflect their Dutch origins, innumerable foreign families must have occasionally wondered where the corrupted form of their names came from. Genealogy is a popular hobby in the Netherlands, encouraged in recent years by the large number of available archives. The *Central Bureau of Genealogy* in The Hague possesses a wealth of documentation on Dutch family trees and history, including a collection of family trees of foreigners of Dutch extraction. For example, it appears that the van Valkenburgs of America are the descendants of a van Valkenburg who emigrated to the colony of Nieuw Amsterdam in 1642. To researchers from abroad, the Genealogical Office is an interesting introduction to genealogical detective work in Dutch archives.

Fishing

The military, merchants and missionaries were not very interested in what swam under their keels. They opted for sea travel because it was faster and usually safer than the overland routes. Nonetheless, the treasures of the deep were vital to many Dutchmen. Fishing was traditionally the chief source of income in coastal towns. There are salt-water aquariums and ships' models in the *Netherlands Institute of Sea Fishery* in Vlaardingen, where demonstrations of crafts associated with the fishing industry are given. Interiors with local costumes and folklore objects can be viewed, as well as a room furnished in eighteenth-century style.
Museums in the fishing-towns of Urk, Katwijk, Woudrichem, Elburg and Scheveningen (The Hague's seaside resort) also provide a comprehensive picture of the fascinating world of fishing. The sea yields more than just fish. Countless objects are washed up after

Because of the soft sediment, Dutch coastal waters are extremely rich in archeological remains. Near Texel, the mostnorthern part of the Netherlands, a large 16th century merchant vessel was excavated in 1989.

storms. The *Maritime and Beachcombing Museum* on the northern island of Texel has a large and surprising collection of flotsam and jetsam.
As a matter of fact, nearly every coastal town in the Netherlands of any size has its marine collection. Despite the lavish displays of shells, fossils, dried fish and stuffed seabirds, visitors to these museums come away with a good impression of human and animal life on the coast.
Nowadays such specialized collections reap the occasional benefits of a rapidly growing branch of science in the Netherlands: submarine archeology. The *Museum of Naval Archeology* in Ketelhaven is a case in point. The riches of the watery depths of the Dutch sea are becoming more and more apparent. Examination of wrecks provides valuable information about life and shipbuilding during and long before the Golden Age.

Survival behind the dikes

The Low Countries on the North Sea are permanently threatened by water. In the course of the centuries, the Dutch have often been made painfully aware of its annihilating force. Time and time again, large stretches of land, particularly in the west, have been inundated. As recently as 1953, thousands perished in a disastrous flood – the country's ancient enemy had struck yet again.
Way back at the beginning of the Christian era, the Roman writer Pliny described the life of the denizens of this barren region. He also wrote of the *terpen*, artificial mounds on which the people of the northern provinces of Frisia and Groningen lived. Similar elevations have been found in Zeeland, in the south-west of the country. The *Terpenmuseum* in Genum features this early, primitive form of habitation barely above the surface of the sea. Many ancient villages built on *terpen* have been painstakingly restored.
The *terpen* were succeeded by dikes. Slowly but surely, a 'band of gold' was forged to protect the land. By degrees, the country assumed its shape, alluvial deposits becoming an increasingly integral geographical unit.
A large number of monasteries on the coast played an important part in the battle against the water and in land reclamation. Unfortunately many of these coastal monasteries have disappeared, but the landscape and maps still bear the traces of the monks' industry. Monastery life is immortalized in the 'Wittewierum Chronicle', a celebrated 13th-century account by two monks, Emo and Menko. This valuable manuscript is kept in Groningen University Library.

Windmills near Shermerhorn. Photo Stichting Museummolen, Schermerhorn.

Life was dominated by the struggle against the water in times of emergency. Under the terms of the *dijkvrede*, or dike peace treaty, people laid their private and political differences aside to join forces in strengthening the threatened dike.
More and more land was gradually wrested from the unpredictable sea. This in turn gave rise to equally urgent problems. True, the water inside the dikes was now fresh instead of salt, but still gave cause for concern. For centuries our low-lying country has been governed by the motto: no land without drainage. The Netherlands consists to a large extent of polders. A polder is a tract of land that lies below sea-level, formed by hydraulic operations. Excess water is pumped into higher-lying water, a river or the sea.
Take polders, dikes and a lot of water, add the striking structures which were built to drain off the water, and you have a picture of the Netherlands that is famous all over the world. For without windmills and dikes, the lower-lying areas of the country simply would not be there.
Back in about 1000 A.D., things were the other way round. The wind-propelled mills did not carry off the water; on the contrary, water was their source of energy. Watermills were driven by water from brooks and streams. Right into the twentieth century, water-mills continued to grind flour and cocoa, saw wood and make paper.
The advent of the windmill – for a stiff breeze nearly always blows in coastal regions – changed hydraulic history in the Netherlands in the thirteenth century.
Windmills are a national symbol. In a country without hills or mountains they are salient features, often landmarks. A thousand of many more thousands have survived, and are cherished, restored and repaired. They are all over the country, even in the cities. A fine specimen can be seen from the entrance of the Shipping Museum in Amsterdam.
The many 'avenues' of windmills in the Netherlands were built in rows like this to drain the polders. Famous examples of such concentrations can be seen in Schermerhorn and Kinderdijk, where visitors can see how the millers used to live. Mills were handed down from one generation to the next. The polders had to kept at a different level in winter than in summer. The wind was the miller's greatest ally and his greatest enemy too. Was it changing direction or gathering strength? Work went on all day and all night for the whole family. In a steady breeze one miller could keep an eye on a large complex of mills, warning his neighbours if the wind changed. When there was no wind, he would go fishing or reed-cutting. Even though millers were government employees who lived rent-free in return for their services to

the community, and often grew their own vegetables, they had to earn money. Mills have a language of their own, expressed by the position of the sails. The death of the miller or his wife, a wedding – the sails told people what was afoot, in a code which differed from one region to the next.
Some people objected to windmills. Like the pylons which spoil the countryside today, mills were regarded as eyesores in the early industrial age.

New land

Time and time again, the sea has threatened the land and its industrious inhabitants. Attack being the best defence, the Dutch are still reclaiming land in the last decade of this century, pursuing an activity that has been going on for five centuries. In no country in the world has the map changed so much in the past few hundred years. As early as the seventeenth century the Dutch started to drain their inland lakes. Notably the northern part of the province of Holland was formed in this way: the lakes of Beemster, Purmer, Schermer and Heerhugowaard were transformed into fertile polderland. Visitors to the *Polder Museum* in Heerhugowaard can trace the progress of a drained lake through the centuries towards its present state.
Schiphol is a familiar place to visitors from abroad. Now an international airport, ships sailed there until the mid-nineteenth century – Schiphol is built on a former lake, the Haarlemmermeer, which was drained in the 1850s. The region still goes by that name. 'Fish for crops' reads an optimistic inscription on a farmhouse near Schiphol.
It took only thirty-nine months to drain the lake. The operation was performed so quickly because the traditional mills had been supplanted by three steam pumping stations. One of them, the *Cruquius* in Vijfhuizen, now houses a collection of models, old machinery, maps and drawings which provide a record of dike-building and drainage in the Netherlands in general and Haarlemmermeer in particular.
It is a history which continues into our own century. In 1932 the provinces of Holland and Friesland were connected by the long Enclosing Dike which turned the famous Zuyder Zee into the IJssel Lake. Traditional ports like Hoorn, Enkhuizen, Elburg and even Amsterdam suddenly found themselves on a lakeshore instead of the coast. And the traditional herring fishers of Urk and Volendam were netting nothing but eels.

Part of the Outdoor Museum at the Zuyderzee Museum, Enkhuizen.

A spectacular attempt has been made to recreate the past at the *Zuyderzee Museum* in Enkhuizen. No fewer than 134 dwellings, shops, workshops, a factory and a church from towns on the former Zuyder Zee have been moved to the outdoor museum and rebuilt there. The result is a sizeable village, a truly fascinating record of the past. Nowhere else is the past so authentically manifest. All the buildings are open to the public. The indoor museum also focuses on the history of the Zuyder Zee with a display of ships in large rooms and a small harbour.
The enclosing dike made a lake of the Zuyder Zee, but there was more to come. Extensive tracts of this new lake were drained to yield new land. A whole new province was created: Flevoland, on which new towns are still rising.
In the soil of one of these new polders lies Schokland, once an island in the Zuyder Zee. On show in the *Schokland Museum* are archeological and geological findings from the bottom of the Zuyder Zee. The museum is surrounded by *terpen*, the remains of a small harbour and the lost seven churches of Schokland.

The Delta Plan

In the aftermath of the disastrous flood of 1953, an even more ambitious plan was conceived to protect Zeeland from fresh inundations. The unique Delta Plan, an ingenious system of dikes, weirs and dams, has completely changed the face of the province.
The East Scheldt river, which penetrates the land deeply from the sea, remains open until such time as danger threatens. In an emergency a dam, several kilometres long, will close, and the people of Zeeland will be able to sleep quietly in their beds. The scheme was approved by the government in the seventies for environmental reasons and to guarantee salt water for the oyster beds. Only under exceptional circumstances is flooding likely to occur. On Neeltje Jans, one of the artificial islands in the East Scheldt dam, the *Delta Expo* informs visitors about the immense Delta Plan and more than 2000 years of hydraulic engineering.
An important aspect of water is the drinking-water supply, exemplified by a fine piece of nineteenth-century architecture in Utrecht, a water-tower of 1895. Today it houses the *Waterworks Museum*, where visitors can follow the history of domestic water economy in the Netherlands.

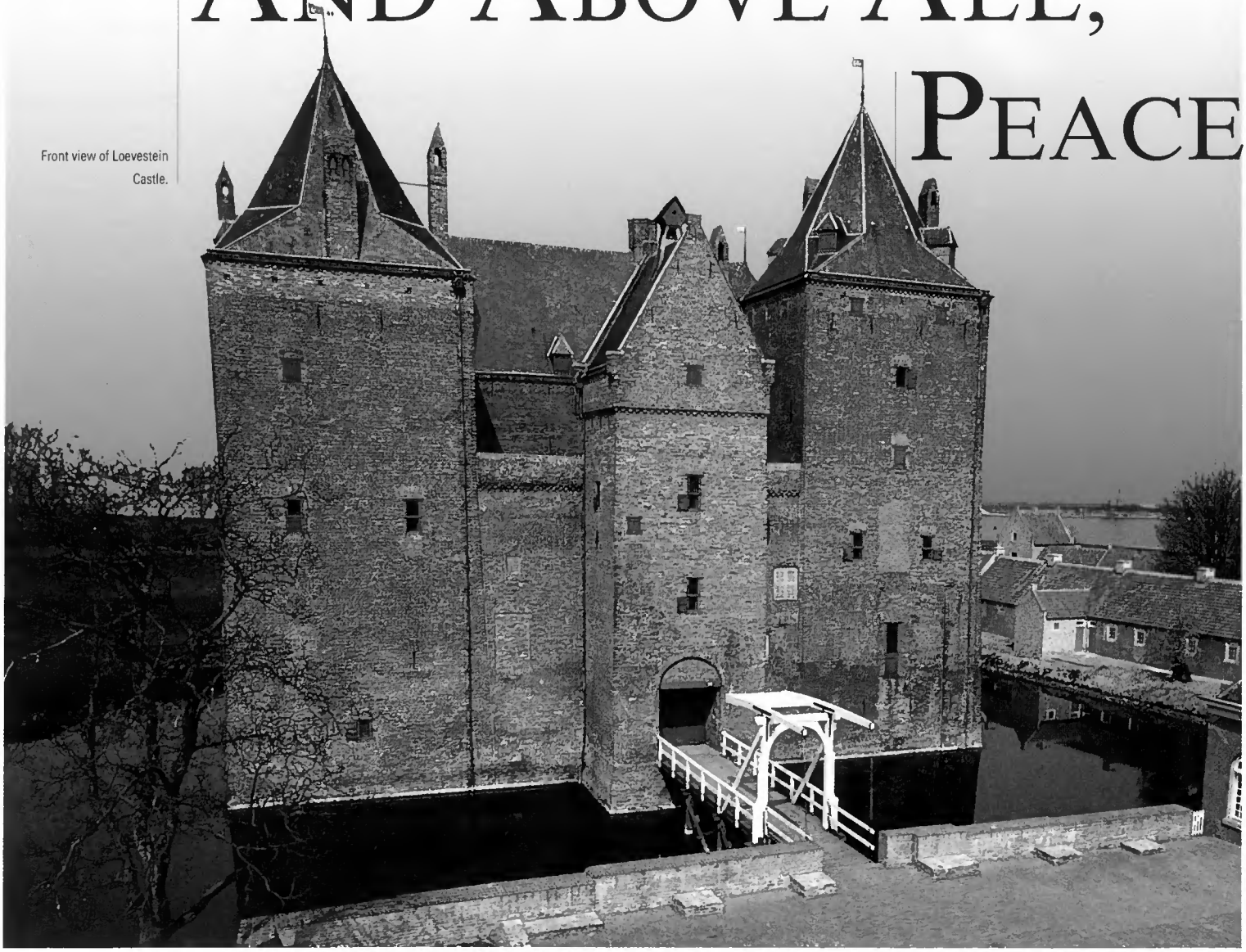
War, And Above All, Peace

The Dutch do not like war. What nation does, one may well ask. Still, one is struck by the fact that the Dutch, diehard individualists that they are, have never seen fit to indulge in the rhetoric and heroics that seem to characterize the history of other nations. Perhaps the country's modest size has something to do with it. Nor do pride and vanity, typical traits of nationalism, thrive in the Calvinist climate of the Netherlands. The mercantile spirit of the Dutch is commonly thought to account for their lack of belligerence: war is bad for business, unless one is actually involved in it. Warfare, then, has never enjoyed great popularity behind the Dutch dikes.

Nevertheless, the Dutch have waged wars: to liberate the country, in order to have a voice in international politics, or simply to avoid annexation. All this has left an indelible mark on the nation's cultural heritage.

Obviously, though, peace has played a greater part in shaping the Dutch character. The significant factors that created a nation with a unique society were those which flourished in times of peace: trade, the arts, crafts and industry.

Unavoidable war and prosperous peace are the themes in the next stage of our reconnaissance of the cultural heritage of the Netherlands.



Front view of Loevestein Castle.

Castles

The Dutch nation emerged from a long period of hostilities known as the Eighty Years' War (see below). It was not the first period of upheaval in the Low Countries. For a considerable period of the Middle Ages, the Netherlands was a fairly under-developed region. A Dutch historian once described his mediaeval fatherland as 'mud, with the occasional small town'. Quite an apt description, really. The country was sparsely populated. Power was not concentrated in the towns, as it was in Italy or nearby Flanders, but in the castles.

Originally, the castles had a purely military function. A good example is *Loevestein*. Built in a strategic position at the confluence of the Maas and Waal rivers, the sturdy mediaeval structure has a turbulent history. During most of its existence, Loevestein was a prison. Among the statesmen and scholars who were incarcerated there was the celebrated jurist Hugo Grotius. Grotius was allowed to carry on with his scholarly pursuits in Loevestein, for which he understandably required a large number of books. And books were provided. Nonetheless, the strict prison regime did not appeal to Grotius. He made his escape . . . hidden in a chest of books! After serving as a garrison for a time, Loevestein is now a historical monument where visitors can see what life was like in a mediaeval castle. The same applies to *Radboud Castle*, built in the thirteenth century to subdue the rebellious folk of Medemblik and the surrounding area. Most castles, however, offered protection to the local peasants and, significantly, to the agricultural land that they tilled. In exchange for this protection, the lord of the manor claimed part of the harvest. Protection was sorely needed, for Europe was a dangerous place in the Middle Ages. *Muiderslot*, formerly a fortress and now a national museum, was built in the same period as Radboud Castle, which lies a little further north. Muiderslot's heyday was in the seventeenth century, when the dramatist and poet P.C. Hooft made the castle into a centre for art and science. The largely seventeenth-century interior contains furniture, carpets and weapons. *Limbricht Castle*, in the south of Limburg, is quite a different kind of stronghold – originally a motte and bailey, built on an artificial hill ('motte' in French). Many of these fortresses were built around 1000 A.D., and had a mainly military function. Inside Limbricht, the popular culture of Limburg is exhibited: festivals, music and religion, and the typical Limburgian phenomena of civic guards and carnival. The castle was rebuilt in 1630 to withstand the rigours of modern warfare, for the invention of gunpowder meant that mediaeval castles were no longer unassailable. Thicker walls and wider moats were needed to deter the enemy.

The Eighty Years' War

From 1568 on, that enemy was Spain. The Dutch war of independence from Spanish rule, the aforementioned Eighty Years' War, lasted until 1648.

In the course of the sixteenth century, the Catholic kings of Spain, Charles V and Philip II, had become estranged from the Calvinist 'heretics' in the country they ruled.

The Dutch revolt was led by William of Orange, also known as William the Silent, *pater patriae* (the present royal family descends from him, though not in direct line). William was a military and political leader during the first and most violent phase of the revolt. He was assassinated in Delft in 1584. A bullet-hole in a wall in *Het Prinsenhof Museum* – Saint Agatha's Convent at the time of the murder – commemorates the deed. Paintings recording the history of the House of Orange hang in the museum, along with works by Delft masters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Carpets, silver and of course Delftware are also on show.

War was a matter of capturing and defending towns. The undefended countryside was roamed by the *Geuzen* ('Beggars'), a guerrilla force of Protestant refugees who had returned to the Netherlands to fight the Spanish. Long sieges often preceded the capture of a town. The relief of cities like Leiden and Alkmaar is still celebrated today with traditional ritual. The Municipal Museum of Alkmaar records this specific episode of Dutch military history in paintings and a model.

Gradually, the State of the Netherlands took on shape. In 1579 a number of northern provinces banded together to form the Union of Utrecht. In 1581 these provinces abjured the head of state, Philip II, thus giving birth to the Republic of the United Netherlands. Sovereignty was in the hands of the individual provinces. The most important

Front view of Het Prinsenhof Museum, Delft.

man in the republic was the Stadholder. Formerly appointed by the Spanish king, the elected stadholder of the Republic was answerable to the Provincial States, a body of delegates representing the provinces. It became the custom to elect William of Orange's descendants to this office.

The stadholder of the three northern provinces, Friesland, Groningen and Drenthe, came from the House of Nassau, a branch of the Oranges. The importance of the Orange-Nassau family is reflected in numerous buildings and collections. *Huis ten Bosch*, where Queen Beatrix lives in The Hague today, is a palatial residence which was built and furnished by her 17th-century ancestors Frederick Henry and his consort Amalia van Solms. In the *Archives of the Royal House*, countless documents, certificates and objects bear witness to the prominent historical role played by the House of Orange-Nassau. In Groningen, Leeuwarden and Breda, buildings several hundred years old recall the Oranges. The southern part of the Netherlands, now Belgium, remained largely under Spanish domination. Many Calvinists from the south fled north, in the first place to Amsterdam, bringing with them their skills, capital and international business connections. Notably Zeeland and Holland benefited from the influx – in fact the economic development of these two provinces became the motor of the new nation.

Holland was the most important province (consisting of the north and midwest Netherlands, although the whole country is often called 'Holland'). This richest and most densely populated region was an economic and a cultural centre for all Europe and further afield.

William of Orange, from the book *d'Afbeeldinge van alle gouverneurs der Nederlanden*, C. van Sichem, 1603. Collection of H.M. The Queen of the Netherlands. Royal House Archives, The Hague.

Left
Library in the Royal House Archives, The Hague.

In the other provinces, the army remained active. It had gained a reputation for exemplary warcraft, and stadholder Frederick Henry had made a name for himself as a 'subduer of cities'. However, military prowess was not only expressed in practice, but in theory too.

Jacques de Gheyn, a refugee from the south, was frequently commissioned to illustrate the new theoretical treatises on warfare. His work became extremely popular, notably a series of soldiers bearing assorted weapons, which was copied in various forms on Delft tiles during this period.

Many of de Gheyn's military illustrations can be seen in Delft. Fittingly housed in the former arsenal of the province of Holland, situated in the beautiful city centre, is the *Royal Netherlands Army and Weapon Museum*. The collection traces Dutch military history down the ages, and is the most complete of its kind in the country. Naturally, ample space is devoted to the Eighty Years' War.

Page 16
Orange Room in Huis ten Bosch Palace, The Hague, residence of H.M. Queen Beatrix.
Photo B. Hofmeester B.V.

An interesting example of modern warfare can be seen in the north, near the German border. *Bourtange Fortress* was built at the orders of William the Silent for the purpose of blocking all routes to the important city of Groningen. The fortress, completed in 1593, contains fine examples of seventeenth and eighteenth-century military fortifications. Visitors can view the buildings inside the fortress with its five bastions. Bourtange recently underwent extensive renovation. In an old barracks, archeological discoveries and documents illustrating Bourtange's history are on show.

Not all military objects have survived intact, like Bourtange. The Eighty Years' War left a trail of destruction in its wake. The famous stronghold of Brederode still exists. Ever since the Spanish siege of 1573, however, it is more appropriately referred to as the *Brederode ruins*. Inside is an exhibition of objects found during excavations in the area, most of them dating from mediaeval times.

The ruins of Brederode stand on the spot where the dunes end and the plain begins near Haarlem, in Santpoort. Military fortifications were strung out along the entire coastline, the sea offering a more convenient means of transport for soldiers. Most of these strongholds were not imposing castles like Brederode, but fortified towers or keeps. Practically all of the coastal keeps have disappeared. However, *'t Huys Dever* still stands in all its glory in Lisse.

The Golden Age

The seventeenth century was the Golden Age of the Netherlands. After the Union of Utrecht was formed (in 1579), the country rapidly became a world power. It took less than a hundred years for Dutch traders and sea carriers to build up a worldwide commercial empire, and for the geographically modest republic of the seven united provinces to become a major political power in Europe.

Amsterdam was the hub of that commercial empire, and a major power in the Netherlands. To emphasize the status of the metropolis, the city council caused a new town hall to be built in 1650, a Classicistic structure which echoed the magnificence of the city. On the marble floor in the main hall, which the citizens of Amsterdam could enter freely, was a map of the world with Amsterdam in the centre. Only the most skilled artists, among whom was Rembrandt, were considered good enough to decorate the building.

The Eighty Years' War ended in 1648 with the Treaty of Munster. By this time the Republic was already a major power. At first its greatest rival on the international scene was England. A vital part in the two ensuing naval wars was played by the most celebrated admiral in Dutch history, Michiel Adriaanszoon de Ruyter. In 1667 he sailed up the Thames into the Medway and captured the British flagship, the *Royal Charles*. The guns could be heard in London. The British were compelled to make peace. Under the terms of the treaty they exchanged Surinam for Nieuw-Nederland and the fort Nieuw-Amsterdam, today New York. Part of the *Royal Charles* is now on show as a trophy of war, together with other objects recalling Dutch naval prowess, in the department of Dutch history in the *Rijksmuseum*, Amsterdam. Admiral de Ruyter was killed in a naval battle in the Mediterranean in 1677. So great was his fame that Holland's bitterest enemy, Louis XIV of France, the *Roi Soleil* himself, who disparagingly referred to the Dutch as *marchands de fromage*, ordered salutes to be fired in sight of the ship that bore de Ruyter's

Mirror from the Royal Charles, the English flagship captured in 1667 on the Thames by Dutch admiral Michiel de Ruyter. For this feat he was rewarded with a gold and enamel cup on which the naval battle is depicted (see page 19). Dutch History Department, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

corpse. An enormous mausoleum in the *Nieuwe Kerk* (New Church) in Amsterdam commemorates the famous Dutchman. So do numerous paintings by Willem van de Velde the Elder and Younger, who immortalized many a naval battle on canvas.

The Republic slid downhill in the eighteenth century. The final blow was the French occupation at the turn of the century. Napoleon's brother was appointed king, and took up residence in the town hall of Amsterdam. After Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo in 1815, the town hall passed to the Dutch royal family, whose property it has remained ever since. The *Royal Palace*, as it is now known, and the royal apartments are open to the public in the summer months. The paintings and ornaments inside refer to the various Calvinist virtues which the city fathers were expected to possess in order to rule the city properly.

Neutrality, war and persecution

In the nineteenth century, interest in military matters dwindled. Bourtange fell into decay. Uniforms, on the other hand, became smarter. The *Military Tradition Collection* in Driebergen contains some fine examples, complete with medals and documents.

In this period, a device last used in the Eighty Years' War was revived. In 1573, during the siege of Alkmaar, artificial flooding had proved an effective means of putting the enemy to flight. This passive form of defence was now implemented to protect the province of Holland, which was still the country's economical and administrative centre. The 'Holland Waterline', as the system was called, was a combination of fortifications in land prone to flooding. Forts manned with cannons covered vulnerable spots. To this day they are still dotted all over the countryside. An example is the sturdy tower near Muiden, built in 1850. The defence system, probably unique of its kind, remained in use up and into this century. Sluice-gates regulated the water-level, which was just high enough to disguise the difference between land and water, creating the appearance of an endless stretch of water too deep to wade through. Of course, the water froze over in winter . . .

The nineteenth-century Dutch soldier spent most of his time in barracks. Most garrisons were in the Veluwe, a wooded region in the middle of the country. Life in a garrison village, and the development of a village populated by soldiers, is the theme of the *Schietkamp Harskamp Museum*. As its name suggests, the *Artillery Museum* in the nearby village of 't Harde illustrates the history of the Dutch artillery. Among the exhibits are some fifteenth-century cannons.

A more modern picture is presented in the *Military Aviation Museum* at Soesterberg air base, where some thirty aeroplanes are displayed in two old factories. Pieces of wreckage, documents and photographs describe aviation history, recording how a period of relative peace was rudely disturbed in the twentieth century. On the first occasion, World War One, the Netherlands managed to remain neutral. Nonetheless, there was no escaping the effects of the cataclysm. The period was marked by large-scale mobilization, food shortages and a slump in trade. Taking advantage of Dutch neutrality, the German Kaiser fled to the Netherlands after the defeat of his army. Wilhelm II spent his last years in *Huis Doorn*, a country house in Doorn near Utrecht, where his luxurious furnishings are on view to the public today.

In 1940 Dutch neutrality was violated by his ex-corporal Hitler. For five years the country groaned under the yoke of occupation. Rotterdam was bombed, the country ransacked, the Jewish population decimated. The last of these tragedies yielded a poignant cultural document: Anne Frank's diary. The Amsterdam house in which the events described in the diary took place is now a memorial to Anne and the cruelly persecuted Jews. The *Anne Frank House* is a merchant's house of 1635, the back part of which was the hiding place of the Frank family during the German occupation. Attention is also paid to this episode of recent history in the *Jewish Historical Museum*, housed in an old synagogue which before World War Two was the heart of the Amsterdam Jewish community. The collection contains objects connected with Judaism and Israel, persecution and survival, Jewish culture and the history of the Jews in the Netherlands.

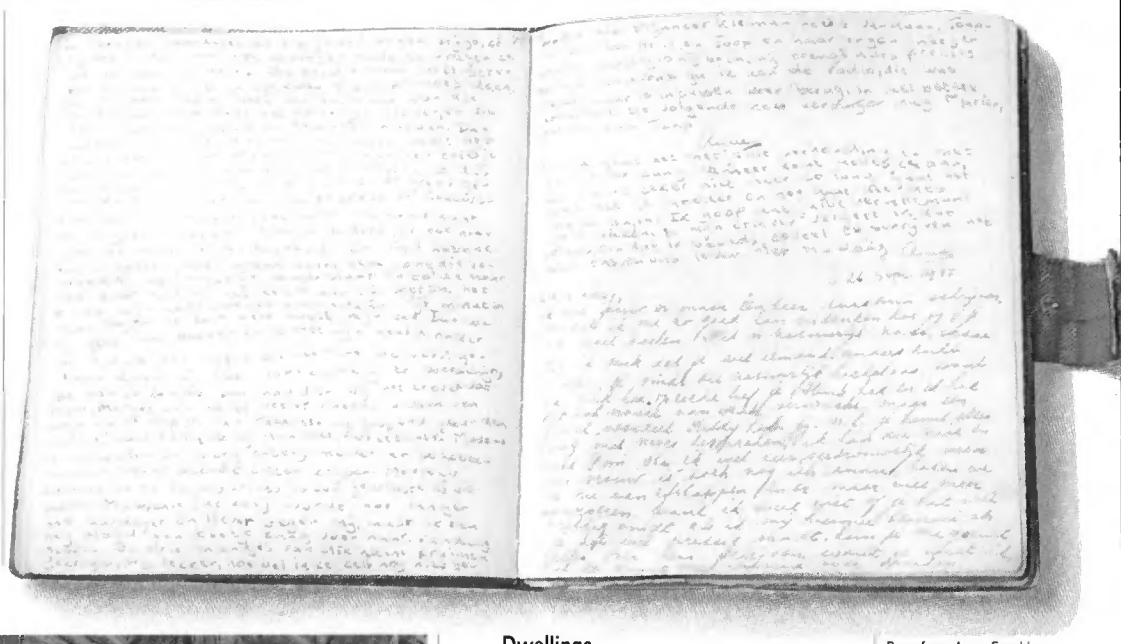
The large collection in the *National War and Resistance Museum* in Overloon, Brabant, covers the period from 1941 to 1945. It is not the only place where reminders of the war can be seen. Memorials to those who died abound in the form of monuments, statues and street-names. An impressive example is the *Hollandse Schouwburg*, an Amsterdam theatre where the inhabitants of the nearby Jewish quarter were rounded up before being deported. The *National Monument* on Dam Square, in the city centre, is another reminder of the war years and of those who died in subsequent conflicts.

After 1945 the Kingdom of the Netherlands, with its many colonies, was caught up in postwar decolonization. In the process, troops were sent to regain control of the Republic of Indonesia, which had been proclaimed in 1945. A vain endeavour, as it transpired after several bitter incidents. In 1949 the transfer of sovereignty took place, with the exception of New Guinea which was incor-

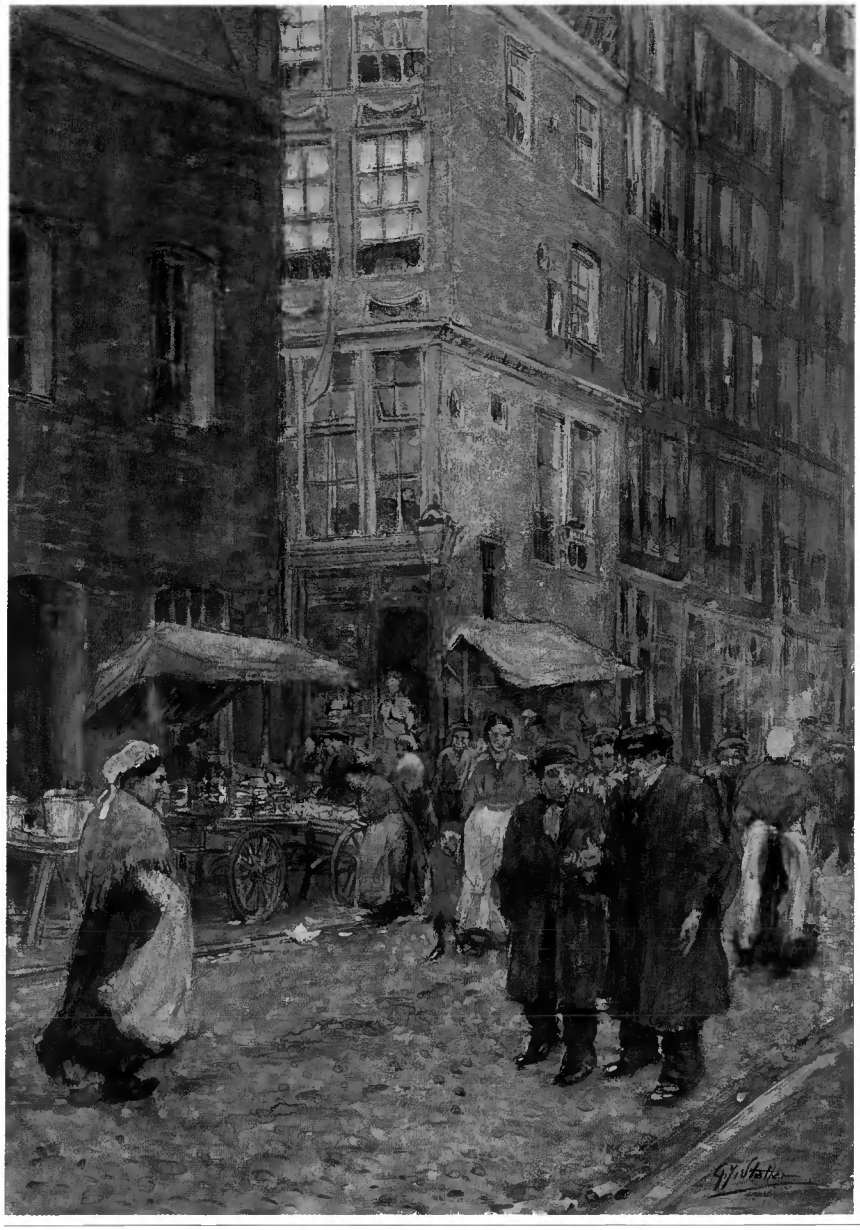
The Burgerzaal or main reception hall in the Royal Palace – formerly the Town Hall – in Amsterdam.

porated into Indonesia in the sixties. The military history of the Dutch East Indian colonies is recorded in *Bronbeek*, near Arnhem. The house is not only a home for retired soldiers, many of whom proudly wear their uniforms every day, but also a museum with a unique collection of uniforms, weapons, cannons and ethnographical objects from the former colony, forming a record of the Royal Dutch East-Indian Army's wartime history.

It is to be hoped that there will be no further occasion for bellicose additions to this survey of the nation's cultural heritage. Those whose appetite for militaria is still not satisfied can view the collection of tin soldiers in the *Kruittoren*, a former gunpowder magazine in Zutphen.



Page from Anne Frank's diary. The diary has been translated into more than 50 languages. Anne Frank House, Amsterdam.



Vissteeg (Fish Row) in the Amsterdam Jewish Quarter, a painting of 1919 by Gerard Staller, in the Jewish Historical Museum, Amsterdam.

Dwellings

In the many periods of peace and prosperity, various aspects of Dutch cultural heritage came into their own. A great deal of this heritage is not kept in archives, libraries or museums, for nearly every village and town displays its treasures in the streets. Monuments, churches and statues abound. The most fascinating buildings are often the most ordinary ones: the houses in which people lived. Today, more than 30,000 such dwellings are listed buildings.

Apart from its paintings, the Calvinist Netherlands has never really gone in for pomp and circumstance on a large scale. One reason was the absence of a proper royal court until the early nineteenth century. The Stadholders of Orange may have had an air of royalty, but their power was often restricted. The real power was in the hands of the merchant aristocracy, the Regents.

As time passed, more and more of them pulled out of trade and industry. After the 1750s they tended to invest their capital in land and securities, and certainly did not stint themselves when it came to their houses.

The glory of Dutch architecture is thus not manifest in vast palaces or pleasure domes, although they do exist, but in the Regents' mansions. Lining the ravishing canals, these architectural gems have transformed the old city centres into public museums. For many Dutch people they are their everyday surroundings. Towns like Delft, Gouda, Alkmaar, Utrecht, Middelburg, Groningen and Maastricht, to name but a few, bear witness to a rich history and . . . a successfully preserved cultural heritage. The

A variety of ornamental gables gracing historical canal houses in Amsterdam. Photo Hugo Verschoor.

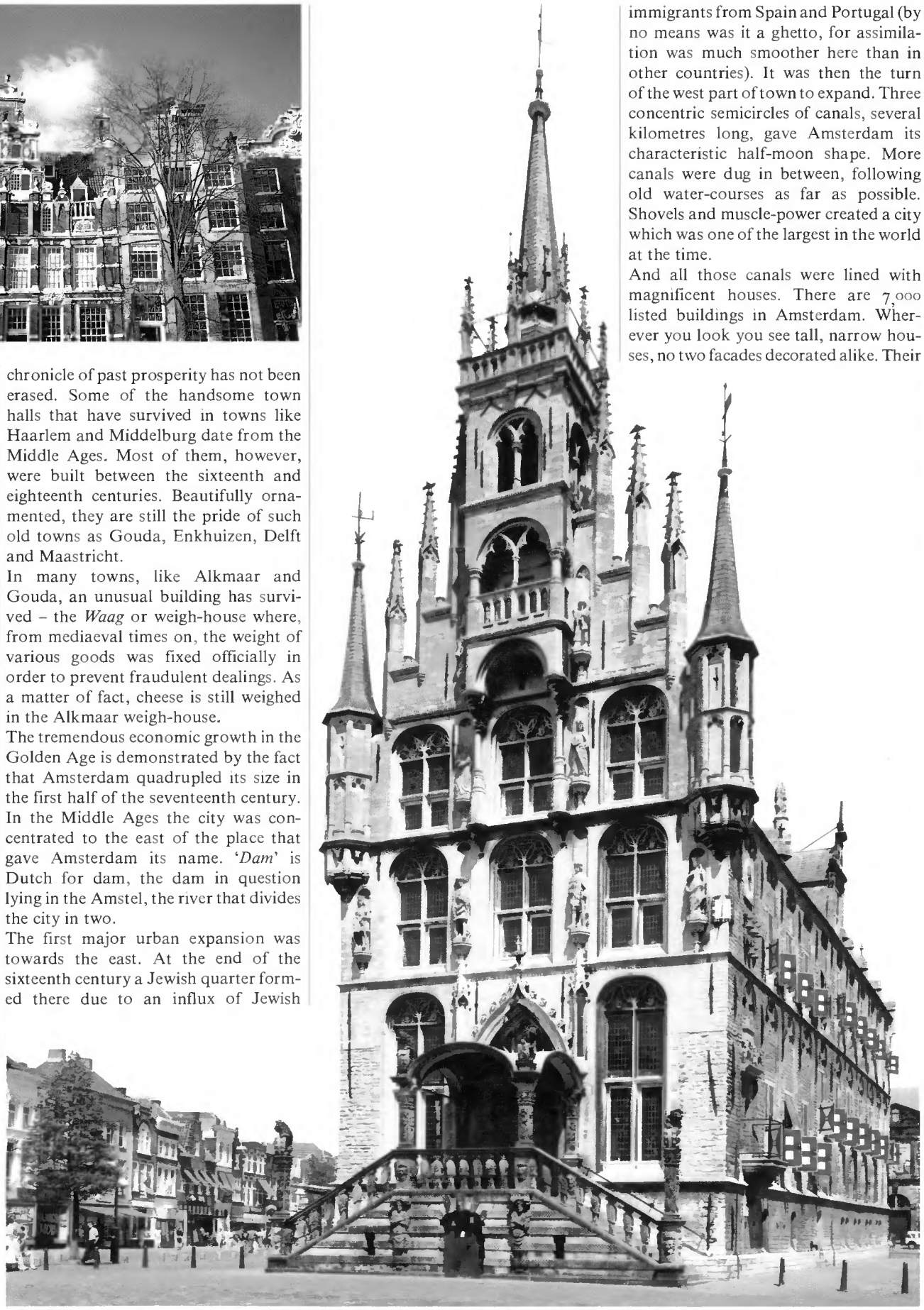
chronicle of past prosperity has not been erased. Some of the handsome town halls that have survived in towns like Haarlem and Middelburg date from the Middle Ages. Most of them, however, were built between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Beautifully ornamented, they are still the pride of such old towns as Gouda, Enkhuizen, Delft and Maastricht.

In many towns, like Alkmaar and Gouda, an unusual building has survived – the *Waag* or weigh-house where, from mediaeval times on, the weight of various goods was fixed officially in order to prevent fraudulent dealings. As a matter of fact, cheese is still weighed in the Alkmaar weigh-house.

The tremendous economic growth in the Golden Age is demonstrated by the fact that Amsterdam quadrupled its size in the first half of the seventeenth century. In the Middle Ages the city was concentrated to the east of the place that gave Amsterdam its name. '*Dam*' is Dutch for dam, the dam in question lying in the Amstel, the river that divides the city in two.

The first major urban expansion was towards the east. At the end of the sixteenth century a Jewish quarter formed there due to an influx of Jewish immigrants from Spain and Portugal (by no means was it a ghetto, for assimilation was much smoother here than in other countries). It was then the turn of the west part of town to expand. Three concentric semicircles of canals, several kilometres long, gave Amsterdam its characteristic half-moon shape. More canals were dug in between, following old water-courses as far as possible. Shovels and muscle-power created a city which was one of the largest in the world at the time.

And all those canals were lined with magnificent houses. There are 7,000 listed buildings in Amsterdam. Wherever you look you see tall, narrow houses, no two facades decorated alike. Their



Town Hall on the market place in Gouda. Photo J. van Meeteren.

Interior of the Willet-Holthuysen Museum, an attractive Amsterdam canal house with 18th and 19th-century period rooms and a kitchen.

height and narrowness was not dictated by a particular architectural style, but by financial considerations – tax was levied according to frontage. Towards the rear the houses are large and spacious. The word '*pijpenla*' (a drawer for keeping pipes in) is often used to describe them. Some houses still have their original furnishings, and are open to the public.

The *Willet-Holthuysen*, *Amstelkring* and *Van Loon* museums in Amsterdam were formerly Regents' dwellings. Together with the *Theatrical Museum*, they provide an excellent idea of the rich yet for the greater part sober interiors of such mansions.

Country estates in Groningen and Friesland show how the rich lived outside town. Period rooms can be seen in *Fraeylemaborg*, *Menkemaborg*, *Borg Verhildersum* and *Heringa State*. The splendid country houses built by rich Amsterdam merchants on the river Vecht in the seventeenth century are a joy to behold.

Interior of the Amstelkring Museum, a lovely house on an Amsterdam canal. The Catholic conventicle Ons Lieve Heer op Solder (see photo on page 38) is in the attic.

On many old buildings and houses, stone tablets on the facades conveyed a religious message or story. Here a series of these tablets on an old house in the Begijnhof in Amsterdam. The other photo shows a tablet above the gate of the Catharina Gasthuis in Gouda, formerly the municipal hospital and now a museum. Photos Hugo Verschoor.

Facades

Back to town, where the Regents held sway. Most wider houses are likely to be less than two hundred years old, unless they had a municipal function – a town hall or law court, for instance.

Some houses tilt forward slightly, a sign that they were built on marshy ground, particularly in the west of the country. It has been suggested that they were deliberately built this way to keep out the rain, a hypothesis which has never had much of a following.

Building in the Netherlands is fraught with specific problems, Amsterdam being representative for many other towns in this respect. The capital is often referred to as a 'city on tree-trunks.' To this very day, piles must be driven into the ground to provide a solid foundation for buildings. No fewer than 13,059 piles support the Royal Palace.

Piles were made of wood in the Middle Ages, as were the houses themselves. Wooden structures, however, were a serious fire hazard. After several towns had been ravaged by fires, a mid-seventeenth-century decree forbade the construction of wooden houses.

The narrow houses were not very conducive to ornamental experiment. Only the gable at the top varied in accordance with fashion. The earliest form was the stepped gable, the steps on either side meeting at the highest point. Many such gables can still be seen in the former ports on the IJssel Lake.

Two styles which came into fashion in 1650 are particularly well represented in Amsterdam. The neck gable came first, remaining popular until 1770. It is a rectangle on top of the house, the corners embellished with stone scrolls. These decorative additions are often of sandstone, which accounts for their sandy colour.

A little later, but in the same period (around the turn of the seventeenth century), there was a vogue for the so-called Dutch or clock gable. Many people have trouble telling neck and Dutch gables apart. The brickwork provides a clue. Unlike the neck gable, where the stone scrolls cover a larger area of the facade, the Dutch gable widens at the top into a pediment over the entire width of the house.

Gables became plainer in the eighteenth century, partly because of economic recession. The cornice or Italian gable was introduced. Many older houses acquired cornice gables in the course of restoration. Several examples can be seen in Leiden, and in other towns too.

The nineteenth-century bottle-shaped or ogee gable is prevalent in many provincial towns in the north. By this time there was no longer an urgent reason for narrow house-fronts, and architects and owners no longer had to confine embellishments to gables.

Life in a bygone age

A wealth of information about the past can be seen in the *Amsterdam Historical Museum* and consulted in the *Municipal Archives* of the same city. Many seventeenth-century architectural views depict the bustling metropolis of that period. Strolling through the museum, the visitor comes face to face with rich burghers who proudly donned splendid garments to pose for their portraits as members of the civic guard or militia. Many other aspects of life in Amsterdam in the seventeenth century and later are also illustrated.

The stadholders of Orange featured prominently in the history of the Republic of the United Netherlands from the very outset of the nation's independence. Notably in times of crisis, when the Republic was threatened by foreign enemies, they were called upon by the Regents, who normally tried to restrict the powers of the Oranges, to command the army. However, for the duration of the Republic – from 1581 to 1795 – the stadholders were never really kings like their French or English counterparts. Nevertheless, a number of stadholders built residences with a regal air. Some of them; like *Noordeinde Palace* in The Hague and *Soestdijk Palace* in Soestdijk, near Utrecht, are still lived in. The previous chapter cited examples of re-

sidences which are still inhabited or turned to another purpose. An example of the latter is *Loo Palace* in Apeldoorn, which is open to the public. It was built in 1684 by stadholder William III (who later became King of England as well). In a number of reconstructed rooms (furnished in styles ranging from the seventeenth to the twentieth century), collections of silver, glass, porcelain, coins and medals are displayed. The stables and the magnificent gardens are also well worth a visit. Indeed, the garden at Loo is one of the most beautiful of the more than thousand classical gardens and parks in the Netherlands.
In The Hague, the stadholders resided in the *Binnenhof*, built in the Middle Ages as the seat of the Counts of Holland. (The Hague's official name is 's-Gravenhage, compounded from the Dutch words '*Graven*', meaning counts, and 'Hage', meaning wood.) The stadholders of Orange lived in this noble complex for hundreds of years, furnishing it in accordance with contemporary fashions. Today the Binnenhof is the seat of the Dutch parliament. Every year, on the third Tuesday of September, the Queen opens the new session of parliament in the mediaeval *Ridderzaal*, or Knights' Chamber. First, though, in a scene redolent of ancient pageantry, she rides through the city in a golden coach. The Ridderzaal and the other parliament buildings are open to the public. If you are lucky, you might be admitted to the Trêves Chamber, the finest of the seventeenth-century apartments and currently the scene of the government's deliberations.

Bedchamber of Queen Mary II, wife of Stadholder William III, in 't Loo Palace, Apeldoorn. The two were joint monarchs of England from 1688-1702.

Opposite is the *Gevangenpoort*, or gatehouse, a prison for those who had lost the current round in the power game. It contains documents and mementoes of the sojourns of several Dutchmen who later became famous, as well as the instruments of torture inflicted on them in an age of less enlightened views on criminal justices.
Of course all these buildings are listed monuments. More recently, late nineteenth-century constructions are also protected, following a lengthy period in which the architecture of the period between 1850 and 1940 was not fully appreciated.
As we have seen, Dutch cultural heritage is richly represented in its houses and architecture. As well as this, a number of collections illustrate life in the towns and rural areas. In the *Zuyderzee Museum* mentioned above, and in the *Netherlands Outdoor Museum* in Arnhem, houses have been moved from other towns and rebuilt in their original form. Some eighty authentic houses in the Outdoor Museum represent the period from 1600 on. Even the original furniture has been preserved. These two museums offer a comprehensive picture of everyday life in the Netherlands throughout the centuries. In particular, life in smaller towns and rural areas is illustrated in interiors and old workshops. The picture is completed by the multitude of local historical museums in the Netherlands.

Interior of a farmhouse from the province of Overijssel, now on view in the Dutch Outdoor Museum in Arnhem.

Coach, known as a tent wagon, c. 1880. National Coach Museum, Leek.

Transport

The Netherlands is not a large country. But whether people, mail or goods have to be carried ten or a thousand kilometres, the problems, apart from the distance to be covered, are the same.

The Dutch have always had one big advantage: water. It took them everywhere. That is why it took them so long to build a national network of roadways. Where there wasn't any water, they simply dug a canal. Two big ones were dug in the nineteenth century to link Amsterdam with the sea.

For as long as people can remember, tugs have towed big ships through these canals. Damaged ships from all over the world are towed to the Netherlands for repair. Literature and films have always tended to invest towboats with a romantic aura. The collection of photographs and models in the *National Towing Museum* in Maassluis illustrates the more mundane importance of towage for the Dutch maritime sector.

Dredging is a closely related activity, in which mud is dredged from the bottom of waterways and ports in order to make them deeper. The work is done by specially equipped vessels called, of course, dredgers. Sliedrecht is the traditional centre for dredgers, and hence an appropriate location for the *National Dredging Museum*.

Water transport has its hazards, as the *Dorus Rijkers Rescue Museum* in Den Helder reminds us. Heroism, grief and self-sacrifice are no empty concepts on the coast. Coastal towns take pride in their rescue brigades, and their members are proud of their noble occupation.

Back to transport. For a very long time, barges were the commonest form of transport in the Netherlands. They glided along the waterways, pulled by a horse on the towpath or, if needs be, by the skipper's wife and children. Conditions permitting, they hoisted sail. Barges carried goods and passengers. As the postal service developed, they also carried mail. Soon after the Netherlands started to take an active part in the international economy, the bargemen united in a guild. (From the Middle Ages up to the French revolution, every self-respecting occupation had its own guild.) The bargees had a monopoly on scheduled river, canal and lake services from one town to another. The Dutch provinces were served by an inland navigation network which performed a vital role in the economic development of the Republic and subsequent Kingdom. This form of activity is highlighted in the various maritime museums.

The rich travelled by coach, of course. A carriage of one's own was a sign of prestige. These upper-class status symbols are exhibited in the *National Carriage Museum* in De Nienoord, a country house in Leek, and at Loo Palace in Apeldoorn.

Overland travel was not very pleasant, as foreigners found out for themselves. Pierre Sartre, a Frenchman who visited the Netherlands in 1719 for discussions with fellow-priests, painted his travelling experiences in the Republic in anything but rosy colours.

'When you need a carriage, you ring a bell in the harbour, and all the coachmen run up and throw dice for the fare. Nobody questions the result, and in a trice the horses are hitched and the coach is pulled out of the stable. But what a coach! It is not an attractive sight to travellers who have not seen a bed for two nights. Picture, if you can, a rather long vehicle set directly on four wheels without springs or straps. In that vehicle are three benches, each with room for two people, over which hoops covered with oilcloth are erected. The box is on top of the axles and is thus very high, so that an iron ladder must be climbed to gain access. Since the coach is not sprung, it shudders violently at every stone on the road. It makes an appalling din, and no passenger alights without a splitting headache. The Dutch are accustomed to this, for, with the exception of private carriages, they use no other form of conveyance. Admittedly, these coaches are very light and the Dutch horses excellent. They do not know what it is to walk, but always trot. The roads are conducive to this, being completely flat, lined with trees alongside canals and covered with a kind of gravel.'

New means of transport

The railways did not initiate the decline of water and road transport. In terms of efficiency, though, they were a significant advance. Prior to the advent of the automobile, trains were the principal means of pas-

senger transport. The first train rode from Amsterdam to Haarlem in 1839. A lifesize (working!) replica of the *Arend* (Eagle), the legendary steam locomotive on the first scheduled service, can be seen, along with a lot of other exciting rolling stock, at Maliebaan station in Utrecht, the heart of the Dutch railway system. The station, built in 1874, is now the *Netherlands Railway Museum*.

The *Northern Bus Museum* (Winschoten), *Histo-Mobil* (Giethoorn) and the *Auto Museum* (Assen) provide a picture of recent transport history in the Netherlands, notably the north. The *National Tram Museum* (Weert), the *Public Transport Museum* (Rotterdam) and the *National Automobile Museum* (Raamsdonkveer) are treasure troves of information about passenger transport.

A very special item in this category is formed by the steam engines that still ride in a few parts of the country. Trains no longer halt at Amsterdam's *Haarlemmermeer Station*, where a collection of eighty splendid old trams can be seen, the oldest dating from 1913. They have been lovingly restored by enthusiastic hobbyists, who actually operate a regular service to the nearby satellite town of Amstelveen.

Not very far away is Schiphol airport, where the history of air and space travel is illustrated by a large number of authentic examples and models in the *Aviodome*. The Dutch aircraft constructor Anthony Fokker and the industry he made so successful are treated to the limelight that the Dutch aircraft industry so richly merits, likewise the world's oldest aviation company, Royal Dutch Airlines (1919).

A vehicle seen everywhere in the Netherlands but not heard, rendering it dangerous in the opinion of foreigners, is the bicycle. Nowhere else in Europe is it so popular. Indeed, there seem to be as many bikes as people. It goes without saying that a large collection of historical bicycles can be inspected – in the *Velorama National Bicycle Museum* in Nijmegen.

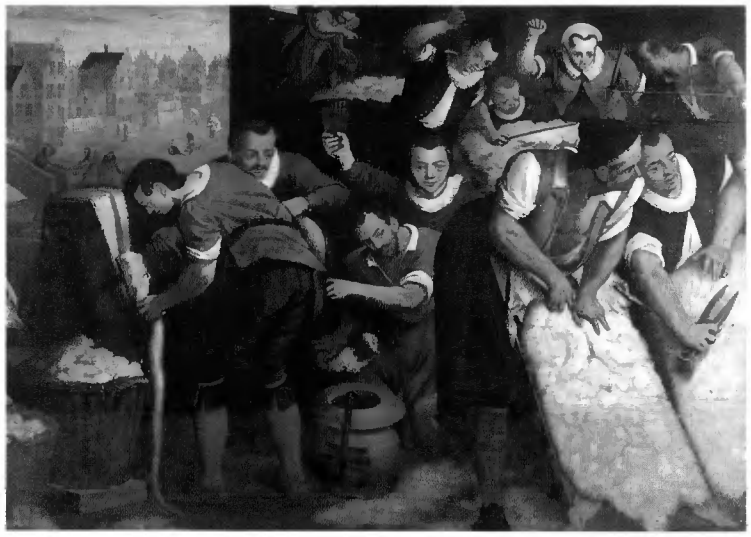
Finally, skates, nowadays used solely for recreation or top-class sport. Lacking an adequate means of transport across the frozen waterways in winter, people used to skate considerable distances. Sometimes they hitched themselves to a sleigh in order to pull heavy loads across the romantic panorama of frozen waterways and snow-covered fields.

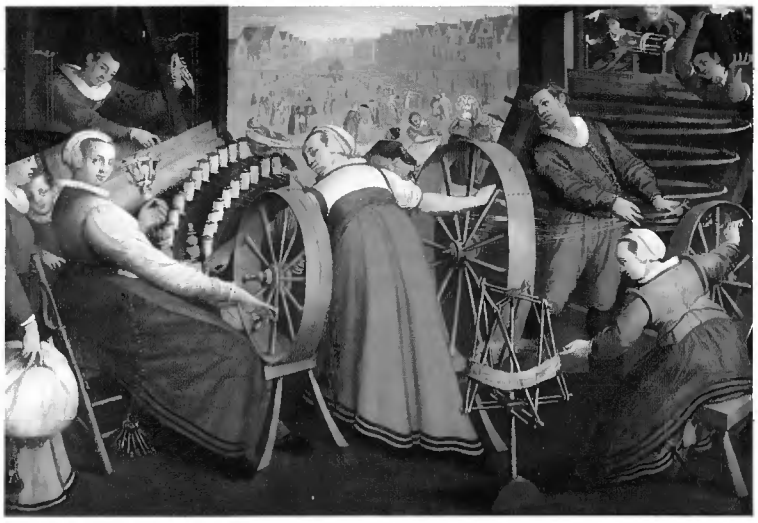
Friesland is the home of skate-making. In Hindeloopen, the *First Frisian Skate Museum* records the history of skating. It also contains documents on the famous *Elfstedentocht*, a 200-kilometre race on ice past eleven towns in Friesland. The race is not only part of the colourful Frisian folklore but a major national event. It can only take place in severe winters, when the ice is thick enough. The last three races were held in 1963, 1986 and 1987. The whole country eagerly followed their progress. The first man to skate past the finishing post (no woman has ever won) becomes a national hero for the rest of his life. Thousands of people treasure the little badge that is evidence of their having competed in the Eleven Town Race.

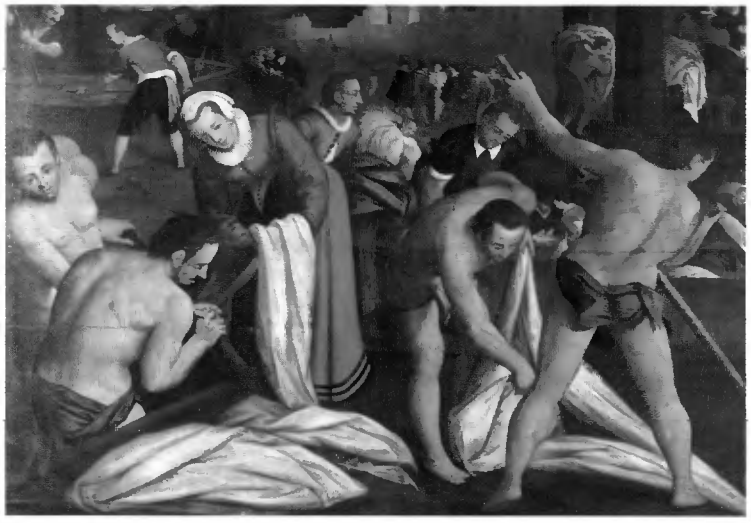
Historical rolling stock – a third-class train compartment in the National Railway Museum, a former station in Utrecht. Photo R. de Heer.

Left
Clog skates, one of the models in the large collection in the First Frisian Skate Museum in Hindeloopen.

Bicycle of 1926 with a woman wearing the traditional costume of Volendam. Velorama National Bicycle Museum, Nijmegen.







How wool was made into worsted and linen is depicted on four paintings by Isaac Swanenburgh (1537-1614) in the Lakenhal Museum in Leiden, the building where the quality of the cloth was checked in the old days. The successive stages shown in the paintings are the washing of the sheepskins and sorting of the wool; pulling (a process to loosen the fibre by pulling or cutting hairs from the pelts) and carding; spinning, shearing, napping and weaving; rolling and dyeing.

Industry and craft

Industry, craft and trade were important factors in the emergence of a Dutch national identity. None of these social activities thrives in times of war. Prosperity comes with peace.

The cultural or artistic element was not the paramount aspect of everyday Dutch life. As we know, Rembrandt died in poverty. His celebrated colleague Ferdinand Bol only painted for money and never touched a brush again after making his packet.

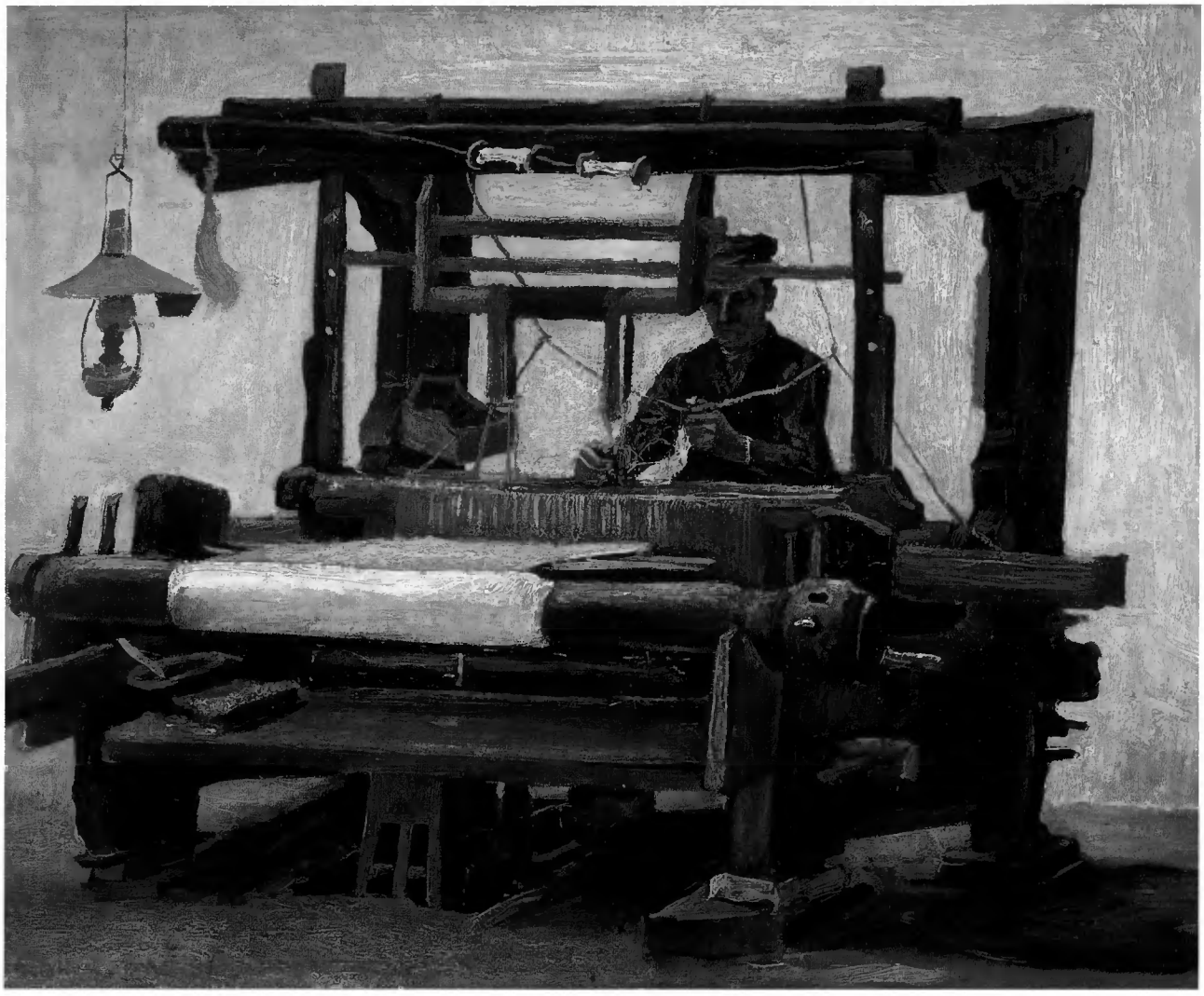
Business acumen has always been a Dutch trait, expressed mainly in trade. Commercial dealings at home and abroad hinged on goods from Holland. Although there were plenty of craftsmen, the country was first and foremost a trading nation. The industrial revolution occurred comparatively late in the Netherlands – at the end of the nineteenth century. There was a marked increase in industrial production after World War Two. Although a number of big multinationals go back to long before the war, industry was never as much in evidence as in other West-European lands. Nevertheless, many relics of the industrial revolution have survived in the Netherlands, and are protected as monuments of industrial archeology today: old factories, including the Amsterdam gasworks, steam pumping stations, railway bridges, like the one over the Rhine at Culemborg, and water-towers.

The Dutch textile industry goes back a very long way. Leiden had a flourishing cloth industry in the fifteenth century, as the Middle Ages drew to a close. The raw material – wool – came from England. The product – worsted and linen – was sold all over Europe. In the clothmaker's hall, where the quality of the material was checked, now the *Lakenhal Museum* in Leiden, the history of the textile industry unfolds. The Eighty Years' War and its attendant turmoil crushed the Leiden cloth industry. It revived in the south, near Tilburg, and the east, in the Twente region near the German border, in the eighteenth century. Indeed, Twente owes its prosperity to the textile industry.

A famous Dutchman painted several pictures of weavers. Vincent van Gogh was well acquainted with the weaving industry, a familiar phenomenon in his native region. Two paintings of 1884 are faithful renderings of weavers in the farmhouses of Twente. One of them shows a peasant at his loom, seen from the side. In the other, a peasant is weaving in a dim room by the light of an oil lamp. Later, the sons of the Twente peasants went to the textile mills, contributing to the growth of Enschede, Hengelo and Almelo.

Textiles were exported further afield than Europe. They were shipped to the Dutch East Indies, where the natives used them for their decorative batik work.

The rise, heyday and decline of the textile industry is reflected by the buildings which were not demolished to make room for housing or bombed in the war.



Loom and weaver. Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890). Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo.

Traditional costume worn in Hindeloopen and period rooms in the Hidde Nijland Foundation, Hindeloopen. A special feature of this museum is the enormous quantity of tiles - practically the whole museum is decorated with 17th and 18th-century tiles.

In Enschede, which still has the atmosphere of an industrial town, the *Twente-Gelderland Textile Museum* provides a comprehensive view of the textile industry. Tilburg, too, still has the appearance of a factory town. The *National Textile Museum* there records the decline of the weavers of Brabant, Vincent van Gogh's native region.

The history of clothing is closely linked with textile history. It is documented in two collections: in the *Haags Gemeentemuseum* in The Hague and the *Historical Costume Museum* in Utrecht. However, there is no need to visit a museum to see fashions that do not come straight from Paris or Milan. Some models can be seen in the streets, in areas where traditional local costume is still worn – not just for the entertainment of the tourists. To the inhabitants of these 'costume enclaves' it is their everyday attire.

What is local costume actually? Generally speaking, clothes worn by the natives of a particular area, model, co-

lour, material and trimmings being dictated by tradition. No individual frippery is allowed, and the costume must be rooted in the past.
Peasants and fishermen wear local costume. A shared form of traditional clothing continues to forge a common bond in the small village communities where traditional costume is still worn. The islands of Zeeland, the towns of Urk, Spakenburg, the more touristic Volendam and Marken on the IJssel Lake are showcases of local fashion, particularly on market day. Differences in regional costumes tell the observer where their wearers, old and young, come from. Even traditional costume is subject to gradual change, although such change may not be apparent to outsiders.
The collection in the *Hidde Nijland Foundation* in Hindeloopen, Friesland, allows visitors to compare the various stylistic periods in Hindeloopen costume. The Foundation exhibits other forms of folk art too. Incidentally, Hindeloopen is a typical example of a town where local costume is not worn every day but only on special, usually festive, occasions.

Saint Ursula and her Travelling Companions. Germany, Lower Rhine, c. 1530. Catharijneconvent Museum of Christian Culture, Utrecht.

The pillars of Dutch society

In keeping with the Dutch tradition of tolerance, there is and always has been a certain consensus on what course the country should steer. This is closely linked with '*verzuiling*', a typically Dutch phenomenon which translates, somewhat cumbersomely, as 'pillarization'. The Dutch were traditionally compartmentalized into a number of confessional and political blocs, roughly Protestants, Catholics, liberals and socialists. These blocs were strictly separate, each with its own organizations. Press, school, radio, television, unions, sport clubs, even pigeon-fanciers, all had their Catholic, Protestant, liberal (or non-confessional) and socialist societies. Mixed marriages were frowned upon. This curious system persisted until the sixties. As a matter of fact, its traces can still be observed in the Dutch press, radio and television (the various broadcasting stations have different religious and political principles and adherents) and in the student movement.
The Dutch split up into groups towards the end of the 19th century, prompted by the struggle for emancipation in classes which had previously had little or no say in the running of the country. Government was largely in the hands of liberally minded, affluent citizens.
An abundance of material pertaining to the history of the socialist movement in the Netherlands has been preserved. The huge new building of the *International Institute of Social History* (IISH) in Amsterdam keeps comprehensive archives on everyone and everything germane to the Dutch workers' movement. The Institute's chief claim to fame, however, is international. Understandably so, it being the repository of the Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Leon Trotsky and Mikhail Bakunin archives. Furthermore, the IISH has a long tradition of rescuing collections and archives. In the thirties, for instance, it snatched a lot of material from under the very noses of the Fascist dictators. The Institute pursues similar activities today: in 1989, during the student riots in China, a member of the IISH was on the spot to save student material from destruction.
Founded in 1935, the Institute now houses more than a thousand archives, filling six kilometres of shelf space. The library contains roughly a million books, brochures, journals, pamphlets and handbills. The collection also boasts 100,000 photographs, 35,000 posters, 35,000 caricatures, 10 banners and a variety of objects such as badges, but-

tons, paintings and even toilet-paper printed with politicians' faces. There is also a large audiovisual archive.

Catholic and Protestant groups got organized at the end of the 19th century with a view to acquiring more political power for their chief aims. One of these aims was freedom of education, which they knew would benefit their specific doctrines. Protestant and Catholic political parties and unions were founded in order to organize workers who had strayed from the church. Under the inspiring Catholic leader, archbishop Schaepman, treasures of Catholic art from all over the country, many of them in poor condition, were gathered together and preserved in Utrecht, where they now form the heart of the *Catharijneconvent National Museum of Christian Culture*. A host of archive material pertaining to the history of the Catholic population of the Netherlands is currently kept in the *Catholic Documentation Centre* in Nimwegen. A similar institute for Protestant history is the *Historical Documentation Centre for Dutch Protestantism* in Amsterdam.

Collections of prints

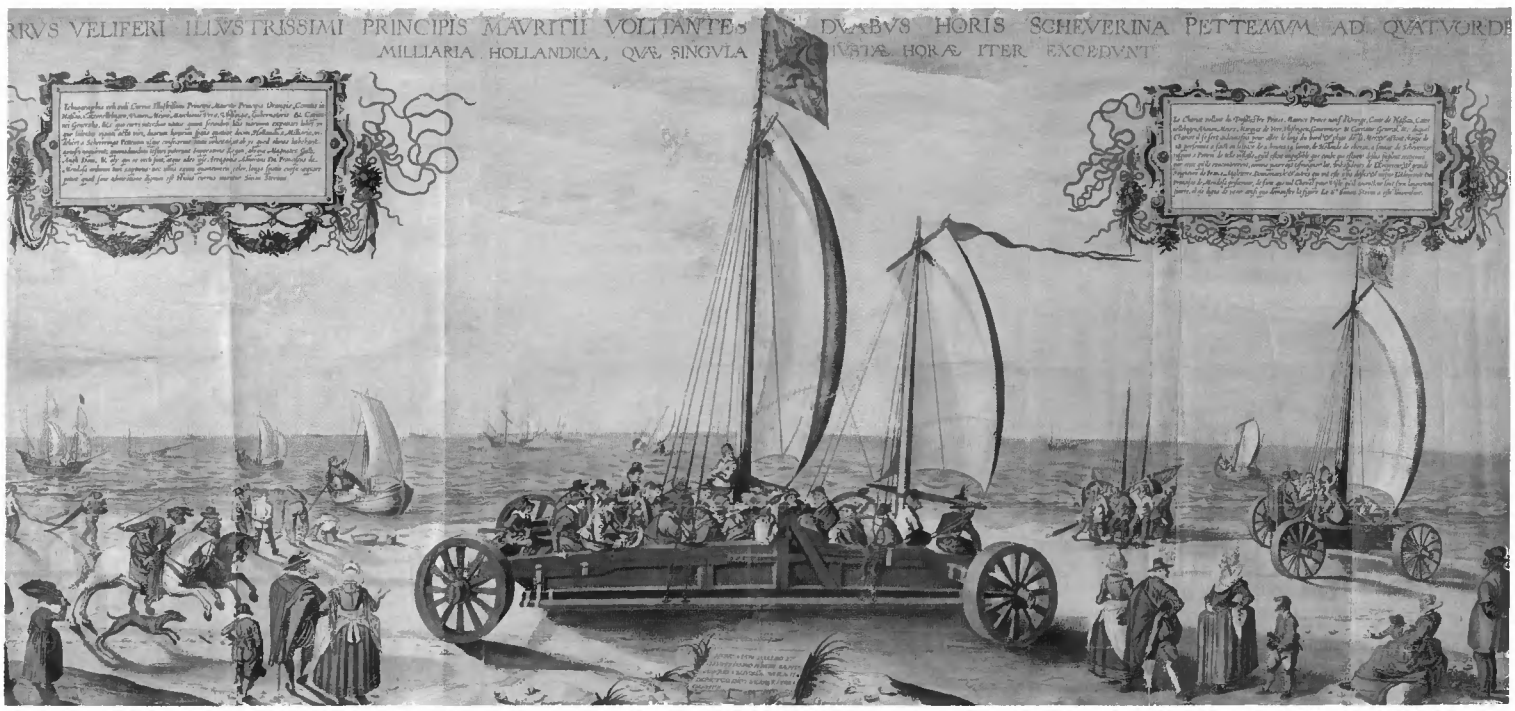
Another important source of information about the country's socio-economical and political history are the so-called 'atlases'. In the nineteenth century the word 'atlas' was used to refer to a collection of prints and drawings rather than a book of maps. Many such collections, focusing on the fascinating subject of Dutch history, were compiled in the last century. The material consisted of historical scenes on maps, portraits and depictions of events. The compilers of these atlases preferred pictures from the actual period of such events. Occasionally, though, prints were made 'to order' later. Some of them were painstaking reconstructions; others were largely inspired by the artist's imagination.

The prints were classified into three standard categories: Satirical and Symbolic, History, and Morals and Customs, i.e. daily life. The History prints were a useful source of news information. Television and radio were as yet unborn, and there were few newspapers (and many illiterates). Engravers, publishers and dealers were keen on keeping track of current affairs for their customers. The many battles, sieges, executions, royal visits, whales washed ashore, burst dikes and other news items were often accompanied by a brief commentary, rendering the sizeable prints even larger. The 'everyday life' category tended to be rather a mixed bag. Matters regarded as ordinary in one century are not necessarily so in the next. The secondary visual information on a print, such as garments worn by people in the background, turned out to be more important later for the historically interested beholder. Sometimes extra series on special themes were made, such as costumes, crafts or religious customs.

Some of these atlases have been lost to posterity or scattered, victims of the auctioneer's hammer, wars or eager collectors. Some of them have survived, and can be partially viewed. Partially, because they are often too large for permanent display. The Frederik Muller Atlas is now in the *Rijksmuseum* in Amsterdam. A renowned bibliophile, Muller was professionally involved with books as a bibliograph, an antiquarian book dealer and a publisher. He gave his name to the Frederik Muller Academy, now the faculty of informatics and communication at the Amsterdam Polytechnic.

Then there is the *Meester Simon van Gijn* collection in Dordrecht; but the most extensive and renowned specimen is the *Van Stolk Atlas* in Rotterdam. Abraham van Stolk's collection has an international reputation. Born in 1814, van Stolk, a timber merchant, started to collect in 1835 and managed to catalogue his impressive and informative collection before he died.

Another collection which provides a wealth of information about everyday life in bygone days is the *Lambert van Meerten Museum* in Delft. Van Meerten, another merchant (he dealt in yeast and methylated spirit), was a famous collector. His home, 'Huize Oud Holland', now the museum, features fragments of Renaissance and Gothic architecture. Inside, objects of fine and decorative art are displayed. Tiled tableaus show scenes from nineteenth-century Dutch life – all in Delftware, naturally, for the artistic advisor of a famous porcelain factory had worked on the design.



S. Stevin's sailing carriage. 3-page engraving in plano, after J. de Gheyn by G. Swanenburch, in the Atlas van Stolk Collection, Rotterdam. Simon Stevin was a leading Dutch inventor of the 17th century.

Markets and bells

No exploration of the Dutch cultural heritage would be complete without a visit to the country's historical market towns. Every village and town has a market. Some are held once a week, sometimes specific articles are sold at annual fairs, others daily or only on Sundays. In Amsterdam, for example, there are as many as twenty markets, thirteen of which are open every day.

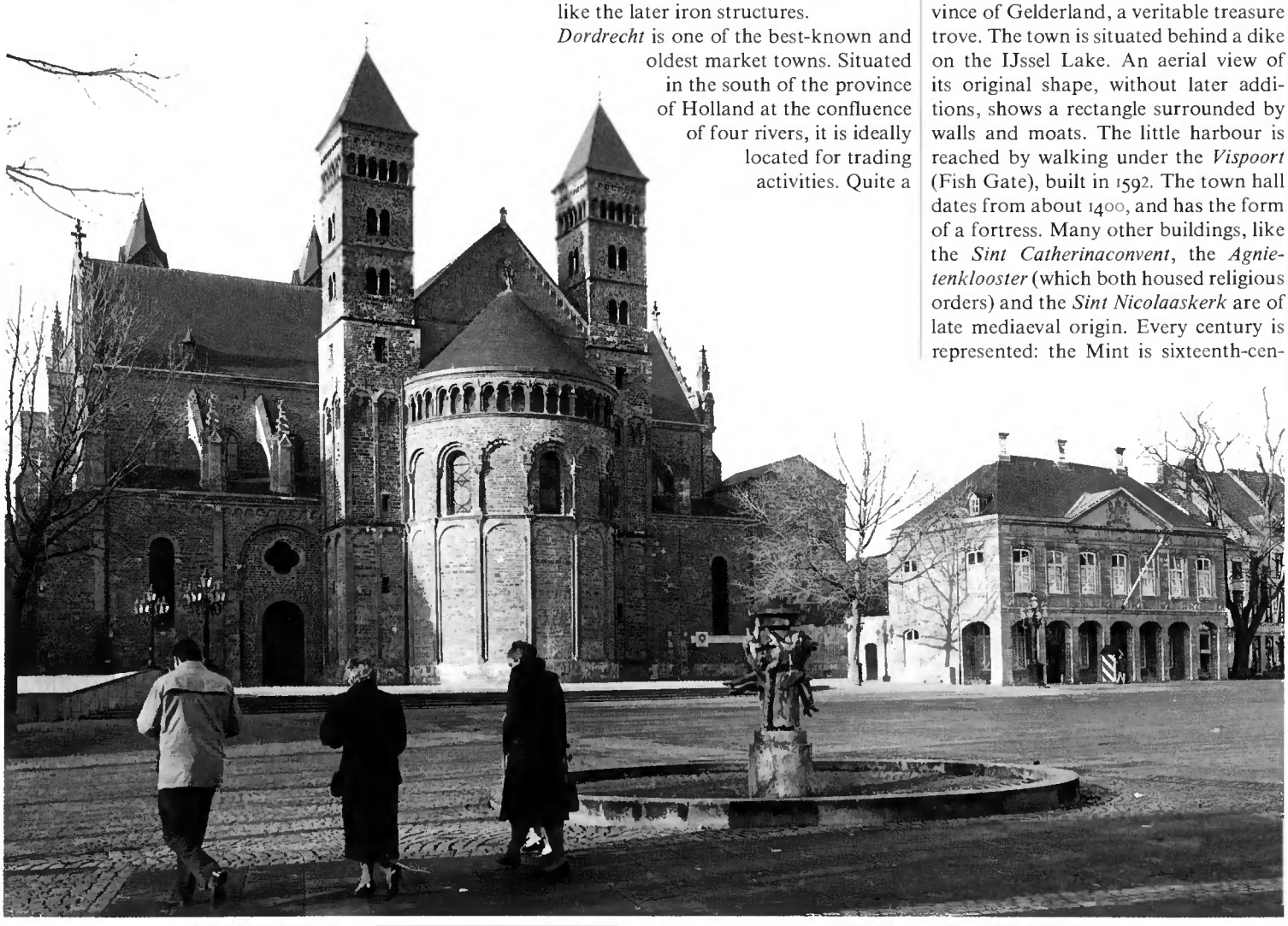
Around 1000 A.D. there was a surge in commercial activity. Europe had become a safer place, technical progress had boosted agricultural productivity, the population was growing, and with it the demand for commodities. Throughout the Middle Ages trade became more and more international. Ordinary folk reaped the benefits of this development in their local town or village markets. Permanent shops are a relatively modern phenomenon. The markets had an important social function too – people could get together, and farmers came to town for a variety of purposes. Indeed, markets have retained that function to this day.

The centres of many Dutch towns are still dominated by squares called *Markt*, *Oude Markt* or *Grote Markt*. They often boast several ancient buildings, as is the case in *Delft*, where the market place is bordered on either side with rows of houses from various periods, forming a link between the New Church, where William the Silent is buried, and the Town Hall, built in 1618.

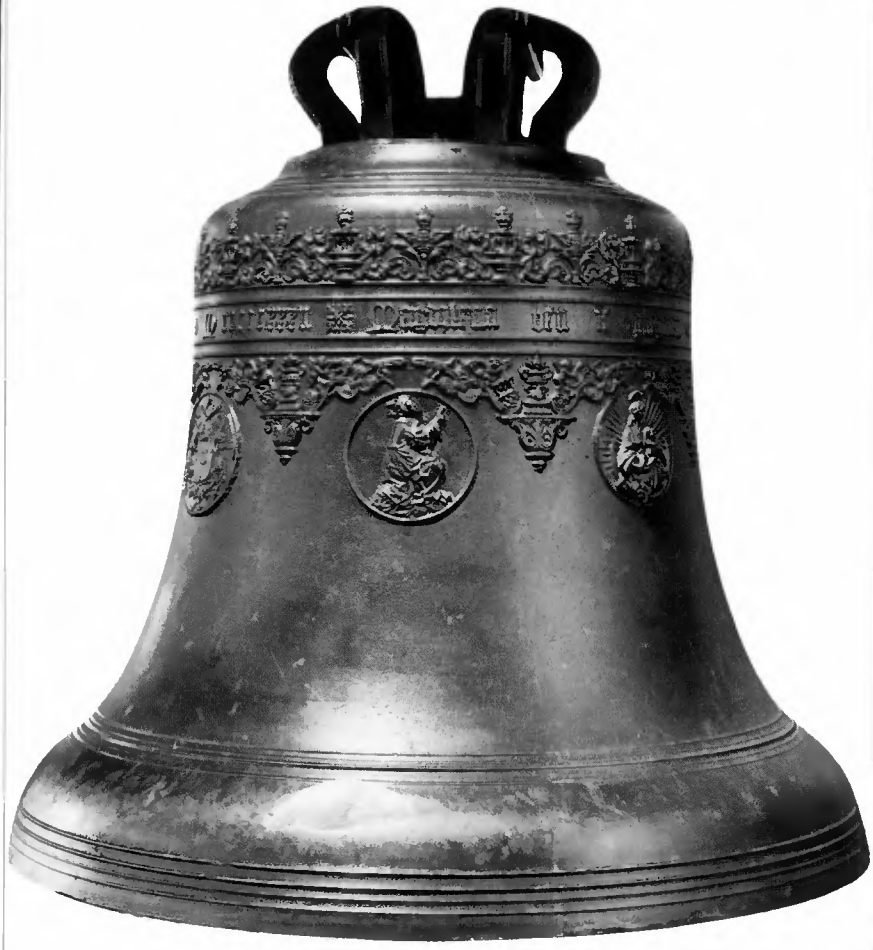
Many streets and squares owe their names to what was sold there: *Veemarkt* (cattle), *Vogeltjesmarkt* (birds), *Korenmarkt* (corn), *Turfmarkt* (peat) or *Kaasmarkt* (cheese).

A small nineteenth-century building on the market place in *Deventer* bears an inscription which is appropriate to every form of market activity: 'Look, but be watchful'. This relic of the nineteenth century is fairly unusual. Covered fish counters, corn halls and other market buildings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are still quite common. Being brick-built, they cannot rust away like the later iron structures.

Dordrecht is one of the best-known and oldest market towns. Situated in the south of the province of Holland at the confluence of four rivers, it is ideally located for trading activities. Quite a number of the town's squares duly bear the names of the markets that were held there: of course there is the *Grote Markt* or main market place, as well as the *Botermarkt* (butter market), *Groenmarkt* (vegetable market), *Varkenmarkt* (pig market), *Vismarkt* (fish market) and even an *Aardappelmarkt* (potato market), a name unique to Dordrecht. The market places are lined with old houses in a variety of authentic styles. The most striking building is the *Grote Kerk*, or Great Church, with its characteristic squat tower which rises high above the Dordrecht skyline. The town boasts a theological tradition. At the National Synod of 1618/1619, the Dutch Calvinists settled a number of disputes, bringing themselves into one ideological line. They also commissioned a new translation of the Bible, thus giving an important impulse to the development and standardization of the Dutch language. Holland is not the only province with monuments to Golden Age prosperity. Other regions have their beauties too. Take *Elburg*, a small town in the province of Gelderland, a veritable treasure trove. The town is situated behind a dike on the IJssel Lake. An aerial view of its original shape, without later additions, shows a rectangle surrounded by walls and moats. The little harbour is reached by walking under the *Vispoort* (Fish Gate), built in 1592. The town hall dates from about 1400, and has the form of a fortress. Many other buildings, like the *Sint Catherinaconvent*, the *Agnietenklooster* (which both housed religious orders) and the *Sint Nicolaaskerk* are of late mediaeval origin. Every century is represented: the Mint is sixteenth-cen-



As well as a market place, Maastricht boasts an even bigger square, the Vrijthof, dominated by the Basilica of St. Servatius. St. Servatius was an early Christian preacher in the Netherlands. Maastricht, one of the oldest cities in the country, has the greatest number of ancient monuments after Amsterdam.



16th-century bell. National Carillon Museum, Asten. The museum houses a collection of bells and carillons from all over the world, focusing on bells made in the Netherlands.

Clock, c. 1775, in the collection of the Gold, Silver and Clock Museum, Schoonhoven.

tury, the Law Court is seventeenth-century, and the *Feithenhof*, a courtyard of cottages for the aged, dates from 1740. Elburg owes its many late mediaeval buildings to its membership of the Hansa, or Hanseatic League. The Hansa was a North-European commercial organization in which towns in the Baltic region, North Germany and the North Netherlands banded together to defend their mutual trading interests. Founded in the thirteenth century, the league's heyday was from 1450 to 1550.

Where there was trade, there was prosperity. Probably the oldest market in the country is in *Maastricht*. The principal city of the province of Limburg was founded by the Romans. It is situated at the intersection of three countries, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany, and has always had a strong influence on the hinterland. As well as a market place, there is an even larger square: the magnificent *Vrijthof*, dominated by the Basilica of St. Servatius and the *Sint Janskerk* (St. John's). Maastricht is second only to Amsterdam in the number of ancient buildings. Situated in the south of the country, South Limburg is the only hilly region in the Netherlands. A system of canals was thus not feasible in Maastricht. Nonetheless, water is a characteristic feature of the city. The banks of two rivers, the wide Maas and its tributary, the Jeker, are lined with beautiful houses. Notably on the Jeker a lot of conservation has been extremely well done, the 'Jeker quarter' being an admirable example of restoration.

In all these monument-crammed towns, markets and daily life in general, bells played an important part. They were the only means of telling the time for many people – indeed, for everyone at first. Odd though it may seem, the chimes were often unexpected, prompting the idea of warning the community in some way, so that the townsfolk would be prepared for the striking of the hours. Several bells were used instead of one, with the addition of visual material if the sound was not sufficiently differentiated. In the clock tower of *Monnickendam*, for instance, the chiming mechanism is accompanied by small figures on horseback who emerge at set times. Some towers make do with one bell to strike the hour, but have a carillon as well. The celebrated *Westertoren* (West Tower) in Amsterdam has a 47-bell

carillon under the imperial crown presented by the Austrian emperor; the heaviest bell in the country (7,059 kilos to be precise) strikes the hours.
The Netherlands has always been expert in this field. In World War Two, some 9,000 bells were melted down for the German arms industry. It took years to replace them. No Dutch town is complete without a bell made by Dutch craftsmen to echo along the canals and old houses.
A large collection of bells and clocks – ranging from church-tower clocks to wristwatches – can be seen in the *Dutch Gold, Silver and Clock Museum* in Schoonhoven, whose rich silver collection is also well worth seeing.

Music

The passing of time can sound quite pleasant when marked by an agreeable ticking rhythm. The *National Museum from Musical Clock to Street Organ* in Utrecht not only presents a survey of the history of carillons and musical clocks, two typically Dutch phenomena, but also has an exciting collection of automatic musical instruments. These instruments have their own characteristic sound-sources, and are operated by mechanical music programs. An example is the street organ, a mechanical, rather raucous instrument which entertains passers-by with familiar tunes at busy places in town. The museum in Utrecht, housed in an old church (with an imposing organ of its own), contains musical boxes, orchestrions, pianolas and a large collection of drawing-room, fairground and dance organs. The huge dance organs in the last room are overwhelming – even before the attendant switches them on. So is a wonderful German pianola of 1910: its doors suddenly open to reveal three violins played by three automatically controlled bows in a rendering of a violin trio.
The owners of street organs take great pride in their possessions. In the working-class districts where they were and still are popular, a brightly painted organ was a real attraction. Flowers, landscapes, popular figures, lovely ladies or cherubs – they all served as decorative motifs.
Carillons, street organs, musical clocks and Christian psalms would appear to be the keywords of Dutch musical history. On show in the music department of the *Haags Gemeentemuseum* in The Hague is a large collection of traditional and modern instruments, evidence that the ear could be charmed in other ways.

One of the splendidly decorated street organs in the National Museum from Musical Clock to Street Organ in Utrecht.

Traces Of A Religious Past

Religion played an important part in the life of our Dutch forefathers. Traces can be found in the large archives left by the Dutch religious communities, and in numerous museum and library collections. And, of course, in the many churches which, lovingly restored, have survived.

Foreign visitors to the Netherlands over the centuries have been struck by the large number of religious denominations that existed side by side. The Reformed (Protestant) Church was the principal one from the late sixteenth century on, but there were others. The French scholar Jean de Parival wrote in 1651: 'Freedom of conscience is granted to all; nobody is examined as to his religion, nor forced to enter the Reformed Church; indeed, nobody is despised by the upright Hollanders if he adheres to a different religion than theirs.'

The oldest traces of Christianity in the Netherlands lead back to the fourth century, when a Christian priest, Bishop Servatius, settled in Maastricht in the South Netherlands. One of the first Christian churches rose above his grave, and round his venerated person a legend was woven – '*Sint Servaes*', one of the earliest examples of Dutch poetry.

In the seventh and eighth centuries, missionaries such as Willibrord and Boniface spread Christianity in the Netherlands. By this time the religious centre of the country was Utrecht, which in the international diocesan structure acquired a bishop's seat in 695. To this day, Utrecht is the most important city for the Dutch Catholic Church. It possesses not only some of the country's largest ecclesiastical buildings, but also the *Catharijneconvent Museum of Christian Culture*, housed in one of the many mediaeval monasteries built in Utrecht

Detail of an 18th-century Neapolitan crib; wood, tin and terracotta. Catharijneconvent Museum of Christian Culture, Utrecht.

from the eleventh century on. Where monks once walked, visitors can now stroll past the landmarks of 1500 years of Christianity in the Netherlands.
As the country's most important religious leader, and financially supported by neighbouring monarchs, the Bishop of Utrecht was regaled with magnificent objects which enhanced the prestige of his church. He could drink wine from an ivory goblet of the ninth century, read beautifully illuminated manuscripts and officiate in splendid robes. The most sacred areas of the church were decorated with the finest art available: altarpieces and statues of saints. Not only do the museums provide a wealth of information about this period, but a large number of churches built in the Middle Ages (500-1500) have survived and are preserved as ancient monuments. At first churches in the Netherlands, as elsewhere, were square, with round roofs, thick walls and small, round windows (for example the *Church of Saint Servatius* in Maastricht). From the thirteenth century on, Gothic churches were built: a cruciform groundplan enclosed by light, high walls (with high, narrow windows) and topped by vaulted ceilings. These beautifully decorated churches were a fitting enhancement to increasingly rich cities like 's-Hertogenbosch (*St. John's*) and Utrecht (the *Cathedral*).

Tapestry with the arms of William of Orange and the Province of Zeeland with the motto Luctor et Emergo (I struggle and I rise), bordered by the arms of Zeeland's six most important towns. The tapestry can be seen in the Zeeland Museum, Middelburg.

Monasteries, convents and religious orders

Monasteries and convents began to appear in the eleventh century. Secluded from the outside world, their inmates lived pure and devout lives governed by strict rules. Work was also part of their daily round – some monks worked on the land. In Middelburg, a coastal town in the Middle Ages, but now further inland due to alluvial deposits, there was a large monasterial complex. Fortunately, the abbey has survived, thanks to major restoration after the war, during which the centre of Zeeland's principal city had suffered serious damage. Today the abbey is the scene of a wide range of functions and a lot of surprises. Two gates leading to the courtyard, the *Giftpoort* and *Balanspoort*, and Middelburg's highest tower, *Lange Jan*, are landmarks in the townscape. Lange Jan ('Long John') stands between the *Nieuwe Kerk* (New Church, which is actually very old) and the *Koorkerk* (Choir Church). The cortyard provides access to the administrative centre of the Province of Zeeland. It is where the Provincial States, or parliament, meets. The abbey also houses the *Zeeland Museum*, which surveys the province's history from Roman times to the present. Zeeland's heraldic motto, *Luctor et Emergo* ('I struggle and I rise'), an allusion to the province's fight against the water, is reflected in the museum's collection of tapestries, porcelain and archeological discoveries (including Roman altars). The *Roosevelt Study Centre* is another feature of the abbey. The American presidents Theodore and Franklin Delano Roosevelt had Zeeland connections, albeit very remote. The Centre organizes high-level seminars, lectures and symposia on American history (summer courses too), and has a library on the history of the United States. Not all the monasteries were on the Groningen or Zeeland coast. Further inland, monks often copied and decorated books. In the fifteenth century a new group of 'producers' emerged. Around 1400 a religious lay movement grew up in Deventer, in the east of the country. Its members disapproved of the churches' growing wealth and flagging spiritual strength, and advocated a return to the sober, devout life that Christ had led. These 'Modern Devotionalists', as they were called, spent most of their time reproducing religious books, copying them at first, and printing them from the end of the fifteenth century. During this period, Deventer was a leading European centre of book (re)production. The Municipal Library there still owns very many of these beautiful late Mediaeval books. There are also large collections in a variety of Dutch museums and other libraries, for instance the *Book Museum* in The Hague, the aforementioned *Catharijneconvent Museum of Christian Culture* in Utrecht, the *Royal Library* in The Hague and the *University Libraries* of Amsterdam, Utrecht, Groningen and Leiden. The Royal Library and the Book Museum are discussed in more detail a little further on.

Schism

The Modern Devotionalists' austere, unassuming way of life was already an implicit criticism of the rich Catholic priests. In the sixteenth century, however, European Christianity split down the middle. Leading figures in this development were Martin Luther and John Calvin. Calvin, a French theologian who advocated the pursuance of a religious life based wholly on the Bible, acquired a large following in the Netherlands after about 1540. The Calvinists' ultimate victory in the revolt against the Catholic Spanish oppressors had a tremendous impact on the churches. All the large ones were now used for

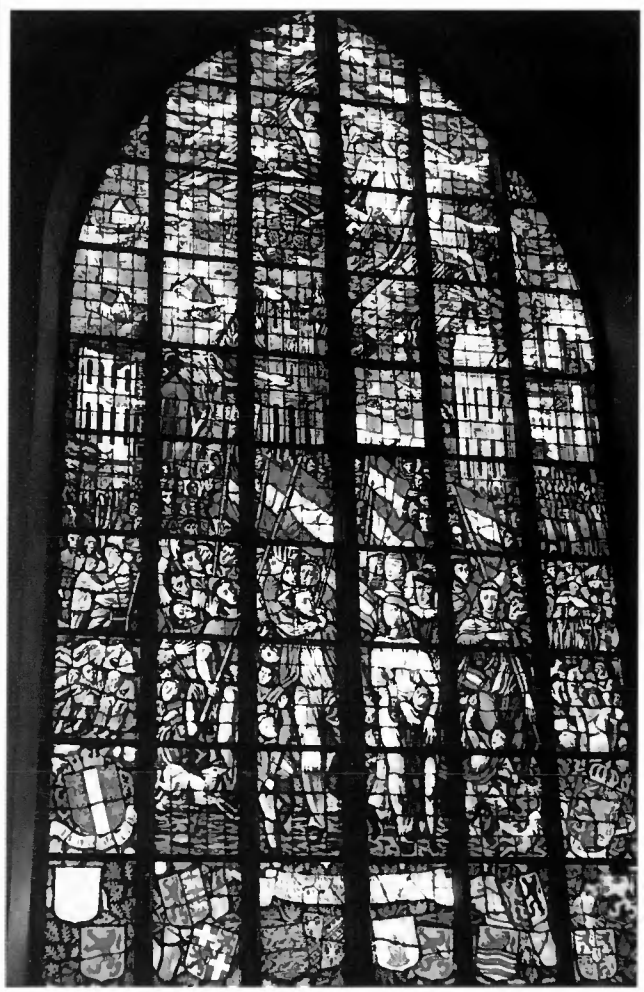
Reformed (Protestant, Calvinist) worship, and all the monasteries' possessions were impropriated by the Calvinist municipal authorities. When a Catholic church turned Protestant, its altar and statues were removed and its fine mediaeval frescos whitewashed. Not until this century were they uncovered during restoration work. A pulpit and tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments were placed in the austere white Protestant church interior: the word – read, spoken or sung – and not the image being paramount in the Dutch Reformed Church. In the new seventeenth-century churches, the pulpit occupied pride of place. The elongated cruciform groundplan was abandoned in favour of a square-based cross, so that everyone could have a good view of the preacher. Objects of Protestantism, such as pulpits, tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments, parts of the Communion Service, as well as paintings like Rembrandt's 'Baptism of the Eunuch', are on view in the *Catharijneconvent Museum of Christian Culture* in Utrecht, which thus displays art from both Catholic and Protestant churches.

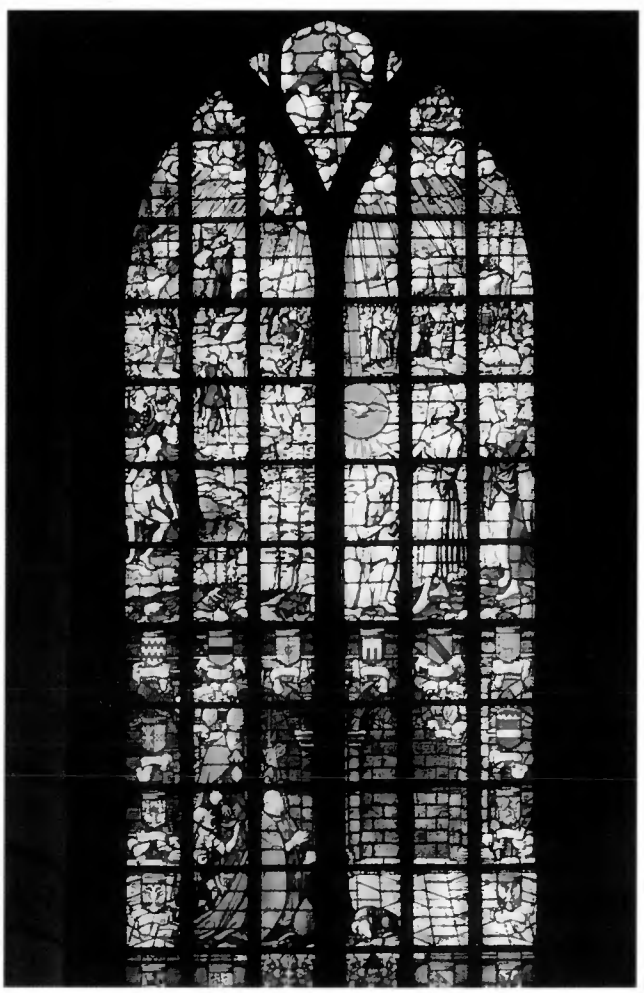
In the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, organs became an increasingly important addition to Reformed churches. These huge bellow-operated instruments provided a sonorous, solemn atmosphere during services, and musical entertainment at other times. Some 600 historical organs have survived: organs which, like the churches they stand in, are built in various architectural and decorative styles ranging from sixteenth-century Renaissance to nineteenth-century Neo-Gothic.

Having overcome the Spanish oppressors, the Calvinist Protestants now established their religion as the only officially acknowledged form of worship. One of the consequences of this was that Calvinist preachers endeavoured to spread their faith in the wake of the Dutch merchants of the United East and West India Companies. Traces of their activity can seen be seen in various parts of the world. In the Sri Lankan capital Colombo, for instance, '*Wolvendael*', a restored Dutch Reformed church recalls seventeenth-century Protestant worship. In the nineteenth century, Dutch Protestant missionary work was aimed chiefly at Indonesia.

Although the Calvinist Reformed Church was the only official religion in the Netherlands, dissenters were fairly free to worship as they pleased. Frequent theological differences of opinion between strict adherents to the faith and freethinkers were not conducive to a united church. In any case, the whole purpose of the revolt against Spain had been to put an end to persecution. Tolerance towards all forms of worship was thus considered a major achievement. As a result, other forms of Protestant and even Catholic worship were permitted, although not in public, and – the Dutch were still tradesmen! – on payment of a certain sum of money. This led to the seventeenth-century *conventicles*, inconspicuous houses where non-Calvinists held their services in secret. Some fine examples have survived, for example *De Duif* (The Dove) and the appropriately named *Ons Lieve Heer op Solder* (Our Lord in the Attic), two Amsterdam Catholic churches.

Not until the arrival of French revolutionaries in the Netherlands in 1795 did





The stained-glass windows in St. John's Church, Gouda, are world-famous. The photos show the oldest and youngest of them. The oldest was made in 1555 by Dirk Crabeth, a master in stained-glass art, and depicts the baptism of Jesus. The youngest, made by Charles Eyck in 1947, is called the Liberation window and commemorates World War Two and the liberation of the Netherlands in May 1945.

Rembrandt painted The Baptism of the Eunuch in 1626. It can be seen in the Catharijneconvent Museum of Christian Culture, Utrecht.

Right
Moreau organ in St. John's Church, Gouda. The organ, made by Moreau in c. 1735, has 3800 pipes and 53 registers.

'Ons Lieve Heer op Solder' (Our Lord in the Attic), a Catholic conventicle in Amsterdam between 1663 and 1795. During this period many towns had conventicles, inconspicuous houses where non-Calvinists worshipped. Religious discrimination came to an end in 1795.

the discrimination of non-Calvinists cease. Henceforth they were allowed to hold administrative posts. The new freedom and equality for Catholics led to the erection of a large number of Catholic churches in the nineteenth century. Their Neo-Romanesque or Neo-Gothic architecture echo the Mediaeval heyday of the Dutch Catholic Church.

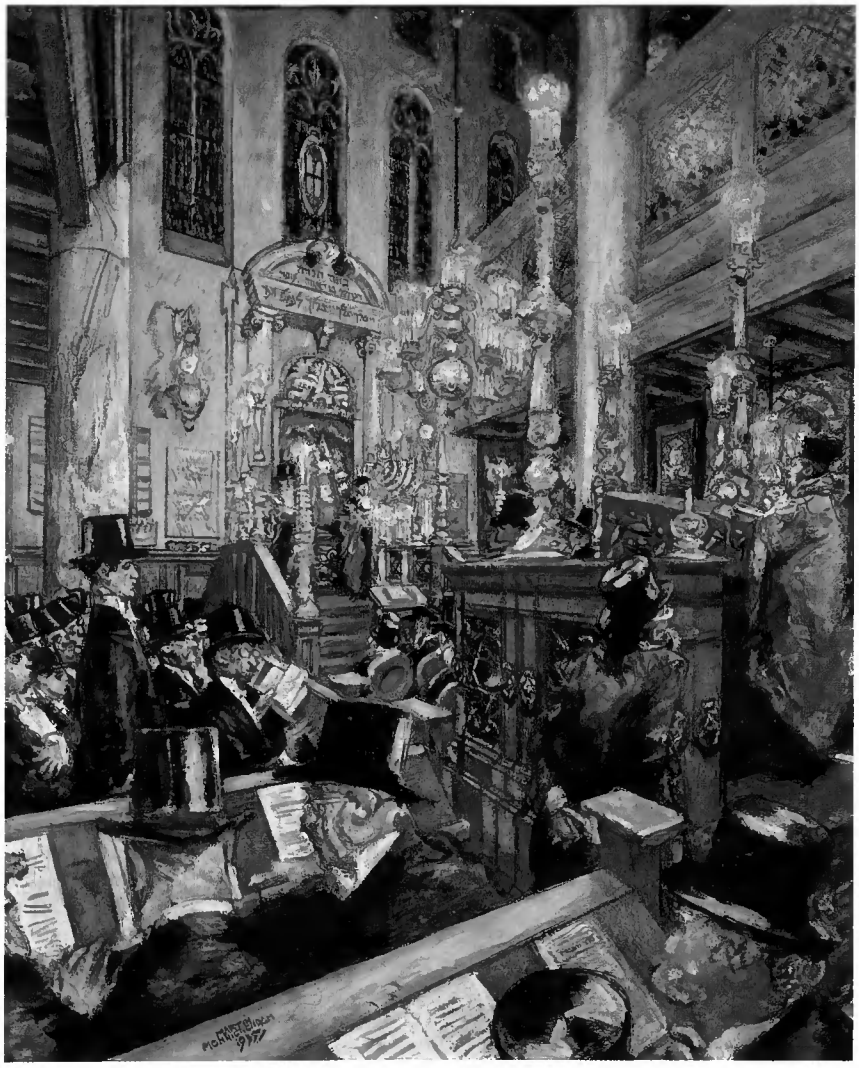
Religious refugees

Religious tolerance and prosperity in the Republic of the United Netherlands attracted countless foreigners who fled from religious persecution in their own countries. Portuguese, German and Polish Jews, Armenians, Belgian and French Protestants and Moravian friars from Germany and Czechoslovakia were but a few of those who sought refuge in the Netherlands towards the end of the sixteenth century. The Portuguese Jews came to Amsterdam, where they became prosperous merchants. After about 1650 they were followed by Jews from Poland and Ger-

many. Amsterdam became the Jewish centre of the country. By the end of the eighteenth century about fifteen per cent of the population had Jewish antecedents. A large part of the Dutch Jewish community perished in the holocaust of World War Two. A great deal of Jewish property was destroyed too. Even so, many important traces of Judaism survive. There are the old synagogues, for instance – in Amsterdam, Jews still worship in the first Portuguese-Jewish synagogue, built in 1675. In the nearby High-German synagogue is the *Jewish Historical Museum*, where numerous religious objects made by Jewish craftsmen in the Netherlands can be seen. The Jews took the religious freedom they enjoyed in the Netherlands overseas on their trade missions – in 1671 the first synagogue in the Caribbean was inaugurated in Willemstad on Curacao (Dutch Antilles).

Due to the great freedom of the Dutch press in the seventeenth century, most uncommon for that period, Jewish printers were allowed to print both religious and non-religious publications. An example of the former is the Babylonian Talmud of 1644, and of the latter the world's first Yiddish newspaper, the 'Dinsdagse en Vrijdagse Courant' (the Tuesday and Friday Paper). Both now repose in the *Bibliotheca Rosenthalia* in Amsterdam, a large library of Hebrew and Judaic writings donated in 1880 by the German-Jewish scholar Leser Rosenthal to Amsterdam University Library. The collection has been progressively enlarged and is now the largest library on this subject in the Netherlands.

Belgian and French Protestants who fled religious persecution in their own countries at the end of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries respectively, also left their traces here. Many Dutchmen bear French names (Dumoulin or Lebrun, for instance); strolling through Dutch cities the visitor will often come across beautifully restored *Wallonian Churches* in which French Protestant services were held for hundreds of years – and still are, in some. The big wave of French Protestant refugees, the Huguenots, took advantage of the freedom of the press in the Netherlands to embark on an enormous production of books. Renowned French scholars such as Pierre Jurieu and Pierre Bayle wrote their religious, political and philosophical works here, to the considerable annoyance of their enemy Louis XVI, the Catholic king of France. Many of these works are kept in Dutch libraries, notably the *Bibliothèque Wallone* in Amsterdam.



The Great Synagoge in Amsterdam. Service on November 14 1935 to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the Ashkenazic community in Amsterdam, painted by Martin Monnickendam. The synagoge now houses the Jewish Historical Museum.

Illustration of the Paschal Lamb, from a handwritten Haggada, telling the story of the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt. This Haggada, made in 1738, is in the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana in Amsterdam, the largest library of Hebraica and Judaica in the Netherlands.

A group of English Calvinist refugees also fled to the Netherlands, though not for long. The *Leiden Pilgrim Collection* focuses on a group who settled in Leiden in 1609, only to set sail for America on the Mayflower a few years later, landing at Cape Cod on November 19 1620 (ever since, Americans celebrate Thanksgiving Day on the fourth Thursday in November). Objects, photographs, interiors and suchlike provide a picture of the Pilgrim Fathers' life in Leiden. There are also models of the Mayflower and a printing-press in the museum. Many Americans, including President George Bush, are the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers.

Poor relief

A special aspect of religious activity in the past was poor relief. The Netherlands has a reputation for its good social services today, based on a centuries-old tradition of caring for

The oldest and best know *hofje* in Amsterdam, the Begijnhof, is a tranquil oasis in the heart of the city. Photo Hugo Verschoor.

the needy. Many traces of that tradition can still be seen. Municipal archives keep records of organizations and institutions which concerned themselves with the problems of the destitute, the sick, the disabled and orphans with money from church collections and city council aid. This concern spread beyond the Dutch borders. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, days of national prayer and collections were organized on behalf of the victims of religious persecution abroad – in France, for instance, where Protestants had an extremely hard time of it.

Practically every Dutch town boasts beautifully restored houses which were formerly hospitals, orphanages or almshouses. The latter were built in the form of *hofjes*, a courtyard of cottages with a central archway leading to the street. Opening the big gates to one of these *hofjes*, the visitor enters an oasis of tranquillity, but will be surprised to see that both young and old people live there. However, in Amsterdam's best-known and oldest *hofje*, the *Begijnhof*,

The old Regentenkamer in the former Burgerweeshuis, an orphanage in Amsterdam, now the Amsterdam Historical Museum.

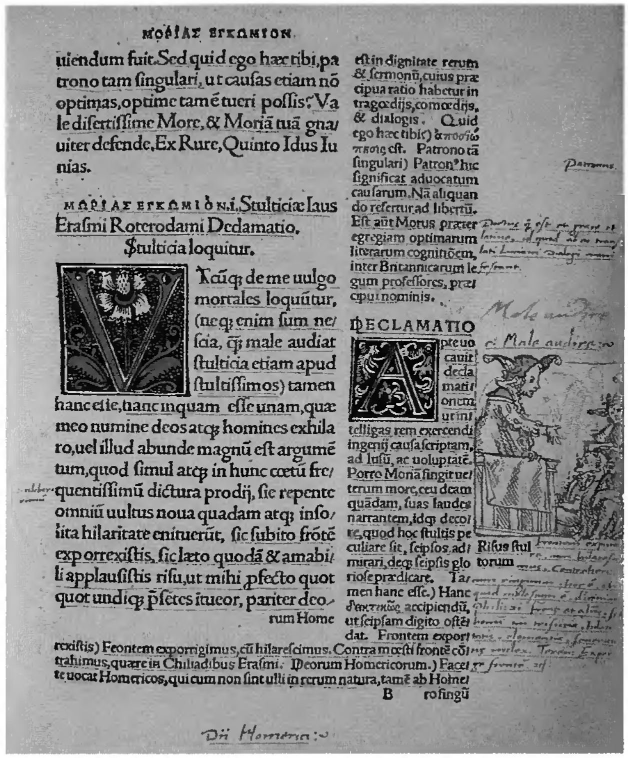
the original intentions of the late Mediaeval founders are still complied with, the cottagers being old ladies. Groningen has no fewer than 33 *hofjes* which were founded in the course of the past few hundred years.
Most of the old orphanages have a different function today. The *Burgerweeshuis* in Amsterdam, for instance, is now the *Amsterdam Historical Museum*. The room where the governors of the orphanage held their meetings, the *Regentenkamer*, still contains superb portraits of the former administrators of the institution.

Freedom of thought and writing

The Netherlands was not only known for its freedom of conscience, expressed in a variety of forms of worship, but also for its freedom of thought and writing, a most propitious circumstance for science and printing. One of the great champions of religious and scientific freedom of conscience and thought was the Dutch scholar Desiderius Erasmus (1469-1535). Erasmus, a humanist, wrote many polemics against prevailing church dogmatism and the evils of the Catholic church. He also recommended the study of Classical writers for a better understanding of the Scriptures. He himself made a new Latin translation of the New Testament. Erasmus' fame spread all over Europe. The *Municipal Library* of his native city, Rotterdam, has a huge collection of all his works and their various translations, including his 'Praise of Folly', which is still entertaining reading.
A large number of books by other Dutch Christian humanists, such as Erasmus' contemporaries Rudolf Agricola and Wessel Gansfort, have been preserved, one repository being the University Library of their home town, Groningen.

Scientific traces

The development of the sciences in the modern Netherlands was tremendously stimulated by the founding of universities and colleges towards the end of the sixteenth century. The country's first university was founded in Leiden in 1575. William of Orange had singled out Leiden for this honour as a reward for the town's heroic resistance to the Spanish forces during the Dutch Revolt. Other universities appeared in Franeker (Friesland) in 1585, Groningen in 1614, Utrecht in 1636 and Harderwijk in 1647. Institutions for advanced education, known as Athenea Illustra, were founded in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Deventer. Important libraries emerged from these scholastic centres. Several of these seats of learning laid the foundations for today's museums. This is particularly evident in Leiden, which now boasts National Museums of Antiquities, Natural History, Geology and Mineralogy, Ethnology and Sciences. As a matter of fact, Leiden University begot the first Dutch museum



ΜΩΡΙΑΣ ΕΓΚΩΜΙΟΝ

uiendum fuit. Sed quid ego hæc tibi, patrono tam singulari, ut causas etiam nō optimas, optime tamē tueri possis? Vale disertissime More, & Moriā tuā gnauiter defende. Ex Rure, Quinto Idus Iunias.

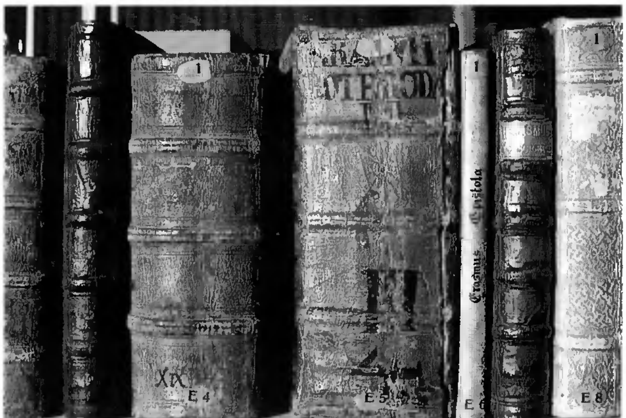
ΜΩΡΙΑΣ ΕΓΚΩΜΙΟΝ. i. Stulticiæ laus Erasmi Roterodami Declamatio.
Stulticia loquitur.

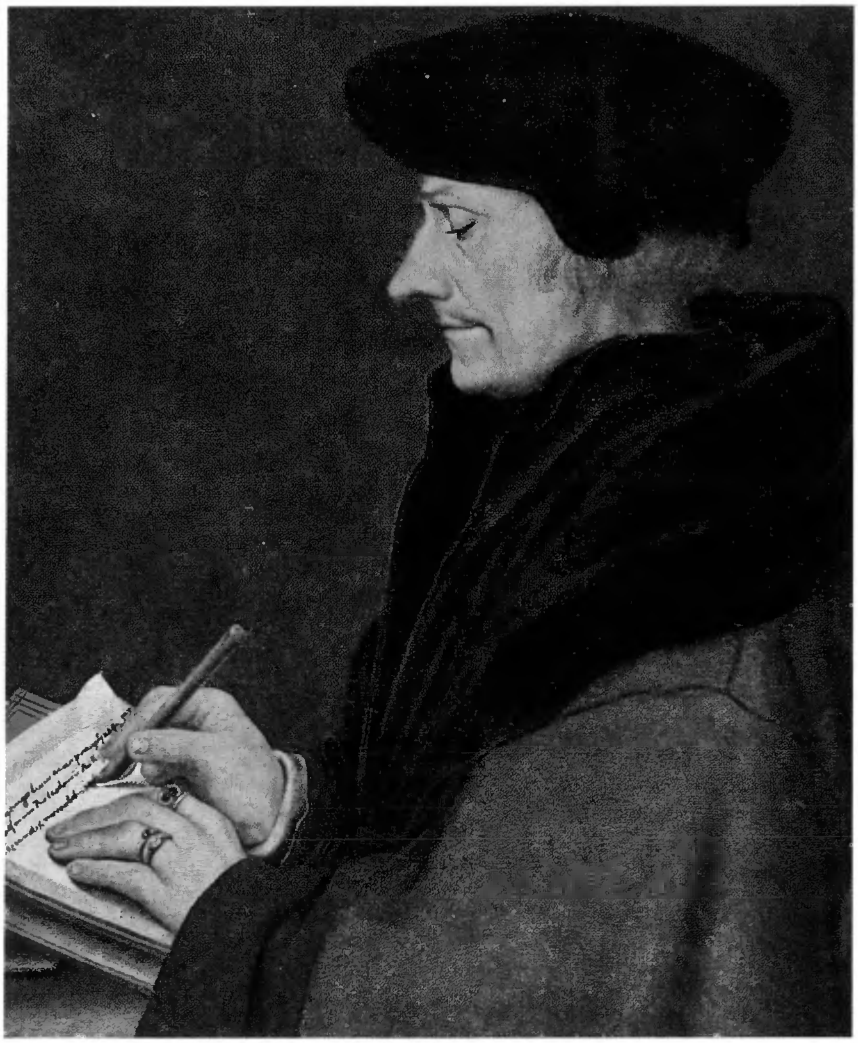
Vtcūq; de me uulgo mortales loquūtur, (neq; enim sum nescia, q̄ male audiat stulticia etiam apud stultissimos) tamen hanc esse, hanc inquam esse unam, quæ meo numine deos atq; homines exhilaro, uel illud abunde magnū est argumētum, quod simul atq; in hunc cœtū frequentissimū dictura prodij, sic repente omniū uultus noua quadam atq; insolita hilaritate enituerūt, sic subito frōtē exporrexistis, sic læto quodā & amabili applausistis risu, ut mihi pfecto quotquot undiq; pſetes intueor, pariter deorum Home
rexistis) Frontem exporrigimus, cū hilarescimus. Contra mœsti frontē cōtrahimus, quare in Chiliadibus Erasmi. Deorum Homericorum.) Facete uocat Homericos, qui cum non sint ulli in rerum natura, tamē ab Home ro fingū
B

est in dignitate rerum & sermonū, cuius præcipua ratio habetur in tragœdijs, comœdijs, & dialogis. Quid ego hæc tibi?) ἀποσιώπησις est. Patrono tā singulari) Patron' hic significat aduocatum causarum. Nā aliquando refertur ad libertū. Est aūt Morus præter egregiam optimarum literarum cognitiōem, inter Britannicarum legum professores, præcipui nominis.

DECLAMATIO Apte uocauit declamationem, ut intelligas rem exercendi ingenij causa scriptam, ad lusū, ac uoluptatē. Porro Moriā fingit ueterum more, ceu deam quādam, suas laudes narrantem, idq; decore, quod hoc stultis peculiare sit, seipsos admirari, deq; seipsis gloriose prædicare. Tamen hanc esse.) Hanc δεικτικῶς accipiendū, ut seipsam digito ostēdat. Frontem expor

Risus stultorum





Top: The beginning of one of Erasmus' most famous works, *Lof der Zotheid* (Praise of Folly). 1515 edition with a drawing in the margin by Hans Holbein the Younger. Rotterdam Municipal Library.

Part of the vast Erasmus collection in Rotterdam Municipal Library. There are about 5,000 volumes in the collection.

The Dutch scholar Desiderius Erasmus (1469-1535), one of the great champions of religious and scientific freedom of conscience and thought, by Hans Holbein the Younger, 1523. Rotterdam Municipal Library.

Group of figures, Maya and Merit, c. 1300 B.C., National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden.

avant la lettre. In 1591 the school of medicine opened a Theatrum Anatomicum, where the citizens of Leiden were allowed to observe dissections. A reconstruction of the Theatrum will be on view in the *Boerhaave Museum* in Leiden in 1991. In the anatomical amphitheatre the Professor of Anatomy, Otho van Heurn, displayed not only skeletons but also, in keeping with the Renaissance interest in Antiquity, objects from ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome and the Netherlands. Enriched by a host of later donations, including items presented by the Dutch royal family, and substantial acquisitions in the nineteenth century, this four-hundred-year-old collection became the basis of the *National Museum of Antiquities* in Leiden. As well as the areas already mentioned, the Near East is also represented. The Egyptian collection, largely assembled during a period of keen interest in Egyptian Antiquity at the beginning of the nineteenth century, is one of the most important in the world.

The Museum of Antiquities is by no means the only place in the Netherlands where prehistorical traces can be seen. The most spectacular relics of that era are megalithic tombs called *hunebedden* (literally giants' graves). Made of huge boulders (some of them weighing more than 20,000 kilos), these were the graves in which the inhabitants of what is now the East Netherlands buried their dead. At the beginning of the eighteenth century so many of these boulders were used to reinforce the dikes that the unique structures were in danger of disappearing. Timely intervention by the local authority of Drenthe, the province where most of the *hunebedden* are, rescued these archeological monuments. Prehistorical objects can be viewed in many local museums. The *Drenthe Provincial Museum* in Assen owns several top-ranking items from this early period of Dutch history.

In the southern province of Limburg many remains and objects from the period of the Romans' sojourn in the Netherlands (1 B.C. to 4 A.D.) can be seen. The Romans had extended their empire from Italy to the Rhine. In Heerlen, the *Museum of Thermae* contains the remains of a Roman bath-house, and objects dating from the time of the Romans in the Netherlands are exhibited in the *Bonnefantenmuseum* in Maastricht.

Even though Dutch museums display a host of archeological discoveries, many of them dating from Mediaeval times, the soil is still full of the traces left by 'Netherlanders' throughout the millennia. Many places are therefore protected areas. There are even special routes leading past the interesting sites of prehistorical settlements. One such route links the villages of Leersum and Rhenen, in the middle of the country.

Page 43
The great Persian epic by Firdawsi, the Shahname, Book of Kings, was completed in 1010. The photo shows a page from the Leiden manuscript which was made in 1437. The manuscript contains 19 miniatures, some of which were modified in the 16th century to cater to contemporary taste. Leiden University Library acquired the manuscript in 1668.

Collections

The cradle of Dutch archeology was Leiden University, where in 1818 the first professor of archeology was installed. Professor Reuvens was also the founder of the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden.

Theology and law were the principal faculties at Leiden University from its very inauguration. There was a great demand for preachers in the Protestant Netherlands. In keeping with the Pro-

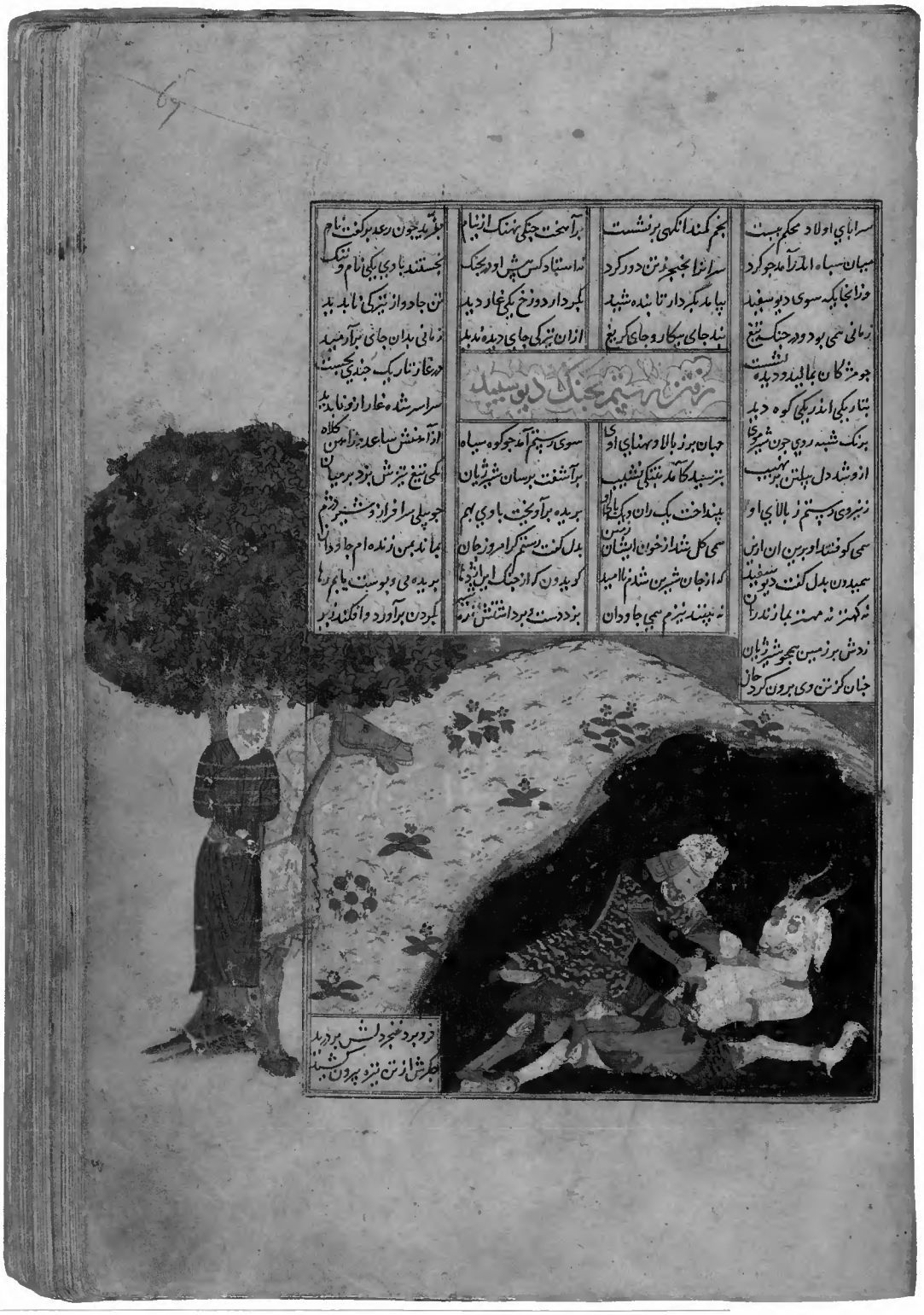
testant emphasis on reading and studying the Bible, and with the humanist tradition of studying the writers of Classical Antiquity, the curriculum featured Greek, Hebrew and even Arabic when the university was founded in 1575. In the nineteenth century the languages of the Dutch East Indian colonies, now Indonesia, were added to the Oriental language curriculum. Thanks to a more than 400-year-old tradition of Oriental studies, Leiden University Library owns a large and valuable collection of manuscripts and books in this field.

The university owes its oldest 'oriental' collection to a bequest from a former student of Arabic in 1665. Levinus Warner was so interested in the language that he lived in Constantinople from 1644 until his death, amassing thousands of Hebrew, Persian, Turkish, Armenian and Arabic manuscripts and books dating from the ninth to the seventeenth century. These works, both religious and literary, form one of the most valuable collections in the University Library at Leiden.

Theology and law may have been the principal studies at Leiden, but science gradually became more and more important. One of the most renowned Leiden scientists was Herman Boerhaave (1668-1738), a professor of medicine, botany and chemistry. His didactic talents in these fields were so great that students from all over Europe flocked to Leiden. The *Boerhaave Museum*, or *National Museum for the History of Science and Medicine*, is currently housed in one of Leiden's oldest university buildings, an old hospital called the Caecilia Gasthuis. From February 1991, instruments and documents pertaining to leading Dutch scientific scholars will be exhibited there, including the first microscopes of the Dutch inventor Anthonie van Leeuwenhoek (1632-1723), and the equipment used by Nobel prizewinner Heike Kamerlingh Onnes (1853-1926) to liquefy helium.

Other university towns have historical scientific collections as well. Utrecht, for example, has dental and paleobotanical collections and a University Museum. In Franeker there is a very special astronomical museum, the *Eise Eisinga Planetarium*. Eisinga, a wool carder, was also a keen amateur astronomer. In order to share his interest with his fellow-townsmen he constructed a realistic reproduction of the planetary system in his living-room. Eisinga's planetarium, the oldest surviving one in the Netherlands (1781), faithfully reproduced the movements of the planets, but the owner's bedroom and attic were crammed with wheels, shafts and gears.

As in other countries, science acquired an increasingly empirical character in the eighteenth century. The teachings of the ancient Greeks and Romans were no longer good enough – scientists wanted to carry out their own empirical investigations, not only in medicine, but in botany and zoology too. These branches of science flourished in Franeker, Harderwijk, Amsterdam, Groningen and Leiden. Scholars like Carl Linnaeus wrote important works, such as the *Systema Naturae* (1735). In these works, existing knowledge of plants and animals was systematically classified. Many interesting examples of this systematic work can be seen in the Netherlands. The Franeker municipal



Part of the 18th-century 'xylothèque' of timber-producing plants in the Franeker Museum. Designed by A. von Schlumbach, it consists of 158 boxes in the form of a book in which written information is combined with examples of the various trees.

muscum, *'t Coopmanshûs*, still possesses an eighteenth-century 'xylothèque', a collection of 158 wooden boxes in the form of a book in which written information was supplemented by examples of the various kind of timber. Systematic plant studies usually appeared in the form of 'herbaria': loose-leaf descriptions and dried plants. The *National Herbarium* in Leiden has many old herbaria in its library, as well as numerous 'florilegia' with illustrations of plants, often fine watercolours by artists like Laurens Jacobsz. van der Vinne (1712-1742). Not only was Dutch flora classified in this way, so was flora from other parts of the world where the Dutch had commercial interests, for example the Dutch East Indies, now Indonesia. The German scholar Von Siebold (1796-1866) spent seven years on Deshima, a Dutch island off the coast of Japan opposite Nagasaki, researching Japanese natural history and ethnology. He even brought a Japanese herbarium back to the Netherlands, where it can be seen in the National Herbarium.

Not only do the museums and libraries contain the traces of an age-old interest in natural history: open-air collections of plants, some of them very old indeed, have also survived: the 'horti botanici' of Leiden (1590), Amsterdam (1682), Haren and Kerkrade, where many exotic plants also grow.

Planetarium, c. 1800, in the Boerhaave Museum. The collection records the history of science and medicine, and consists of scientific instruments such as microscopes, telescopes, globes and surgical instruments.

Commercial contacts

From the late sixteenth century on, as a result of the country's foreign commercial contacts, books describing lands which were new and exotic to the Dutch appeared. One of the first scientific expeditions undertaken in the wake of the traders was to Brazil, under the leadership of Count Johan Maurits of Nassau, governor-general of the Dutch colony on the Brazilian coast. He commissioned a study of the inhabitants, flora and fauna of the new country: the 'Historia Naturalis Brasiliae', which was purchased by Franeker University in 1648. Descriptions of remote regions became very popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The old libraries contain many examples of these descriptions.

Those of our nineteenth-century ancestors who wished to become acquainted with other cultures in a different manner could visit the National Museum of Ethnology, referred to in the first chapter of this book, where Chinese, Japanese and Indonesian objects were exhibited. The Japanese section consisted largely of the collection assembled by

the above-mentioned Von Siebold between 1823 and 1830. Today there are several other museums of ethnology in the Netherlands, also mentioned in Chapter One.

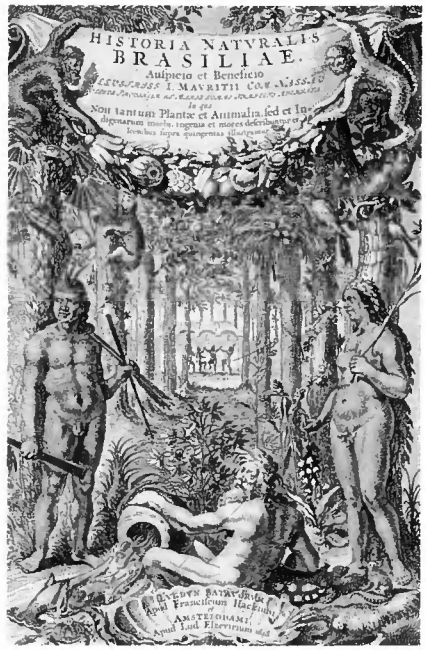
The development of zoology in the Netherlands can be followed in the *National Museum of Natural History* in Leiden and in the library of the Amsterdam Zoo, which was founded in 1838 under the name 'Natura Artis Magistra' (nature as the teacher of art), called '*Artis*' for short.

In the latter half of the eighteenth century, scientific study became an increasingly extramural pursuit. The public's growing scientific interest led to the founding of numerous societies whose members followed the latest scientific, and often artistic, developments in their spare time. Furthermore, many wealthy citizens started to collect objects pertaining to the various sciences. Many of these private collections formed the basis for the major Dutch museums in the nineteenth century.

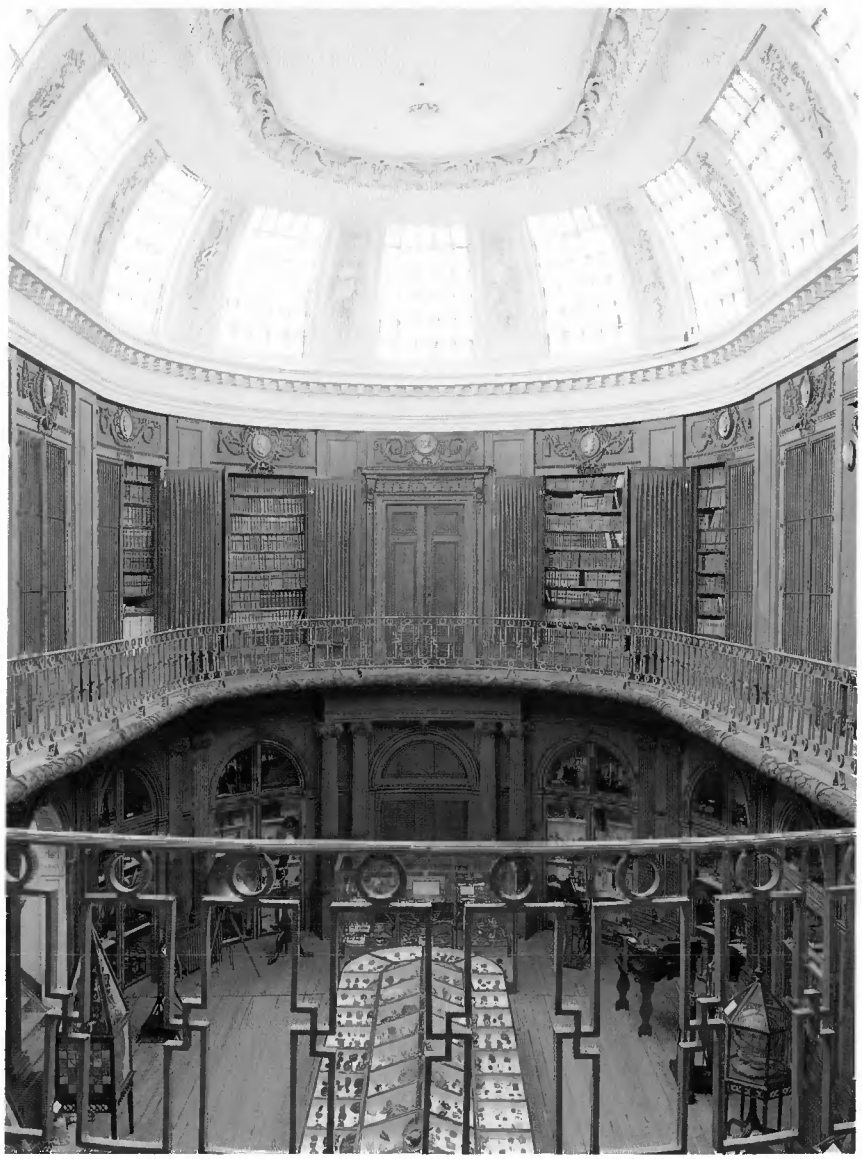
The most important of these societies was the *Hollandse Maatschappij van Wetenschappen*, or Dutch Scientific Society, founded in Haarlem in 1752. A similar society was formed in the province of Zeeland in 1768: the *Zeeuws Genootschap*, or Zeeland Society. The extensive library of this ancient body is currently housed in one of the oldest libraries in the Netherlands: the Zeeland Library in Middelburg. The country's oldest public museum was born in an atmosphere created by a public active in science and the arts: *Teyler's Museum* in Haarlem. In 1777 the rich Haarlem textile manufacturer Pieter Teyler bequeathed his house and capital for the promotion of art and science. More than two hundred years later, Italian and Dutch old masters are displayed there, as well as a collection of paleontological and mineralogical objects. Moreover, scientific research was actively pursued in the laboratory at Teyler's until 1955, by the Nobel prizewinner H. A. Lorentz (1853-1928), among others. In the museum's scientific department is a late eighteenth-century electrification machine invented by Martinus van Marum, a famous scientist of the day and the then director of the museum. People came from far and wide to admire this device for generating electricity. Many of them, convinced of the beneficial effects of static electricity, had themselves hooked up to the machine!

Teyler's Museum also owns the country's second most important collection of medals and coins. It is not surprising that in a land as commercially active as the Netherlands, money was a collector's item. The largest collection is in Leiden, in the *National Museum of Coins and Medals*, where Greek and Roman coins and banknotes can be seen, as well as old Dutch coins.

For centuries the Dutch universities were exclusively male institutions. Women's cultural role, long neglected in the annals of history, was played outside these hallowed walls. Although Anna Maria van Schuurman, a seventeenth-century noblewoman, was not a university professor, her theological, philosophical, medical and botanical erudition and her immense command of languages (including Syrian, Arabic and Spanish) brought her into close contact with the great scholars of her time, such as René Descartes and Christiaan Huygens. Her life and work are featured in the municipal museum at Francker.

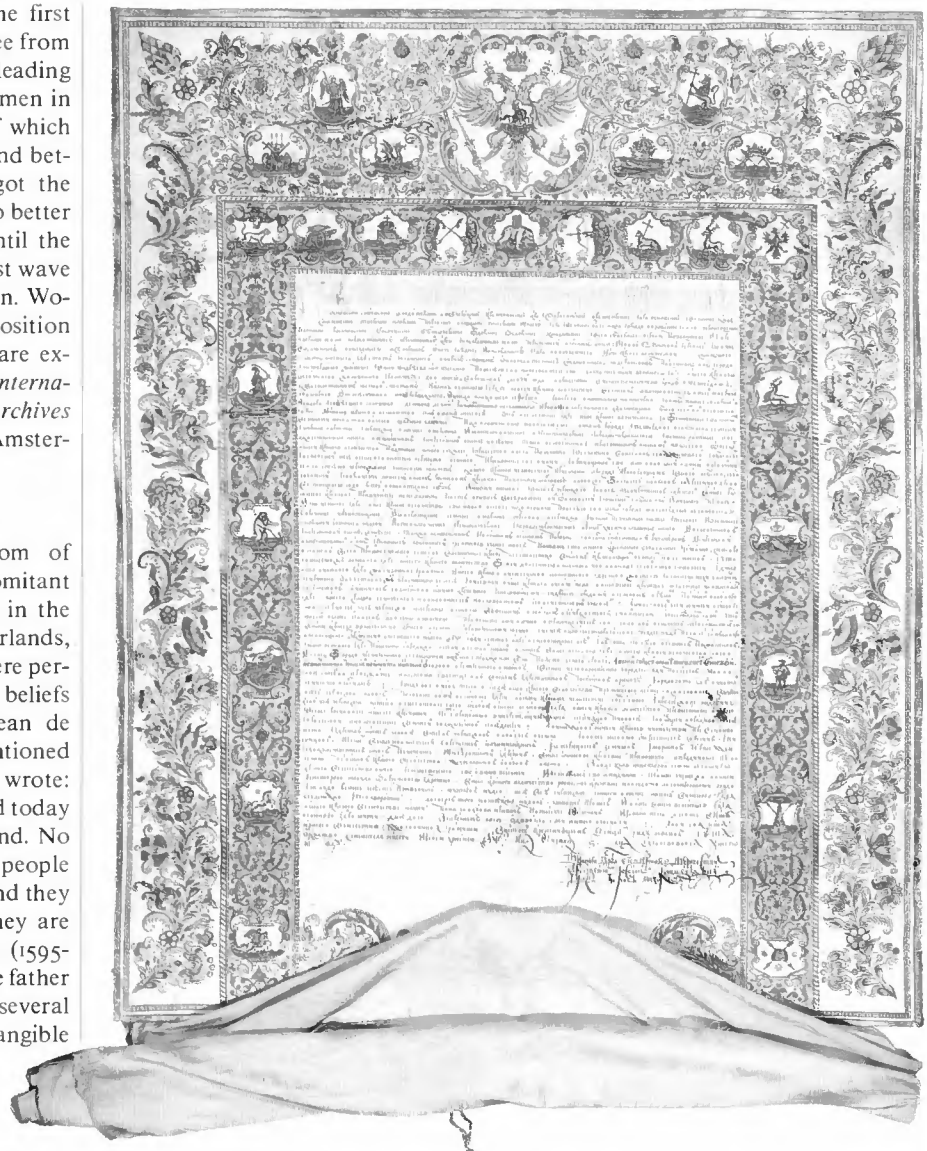


Title-page of the Historia Naturalis Brasiliae, in the Provincial Library, Leeuwarden. The book (c. 1640), which Franeker University acquired in 1648, deals with the former Dutch colony in Brazil, describing its inhabitants, flora and fauna.



The Oval Room, the earliest part of Teyler's Museum, Haarlem, c. 1780. Teyler's is the oldest public museum in the Netherlands. On show are historical scientific instruments, minerals, fossils, medals and coins, Dutch paintings (19th and 20th century), Dutch, Italian and French drawings (16th-20th century) by Michelangelo and Raphael among others, and a large collection of Rembrandt etchings.

Document of February 7 1700, in which Peter the Great, Czar of Russia, grants Jan Thesing of Amsterdam a 15-year monopoly to print maps and books and export them to Russia. Amsterdam Municipal Archives.

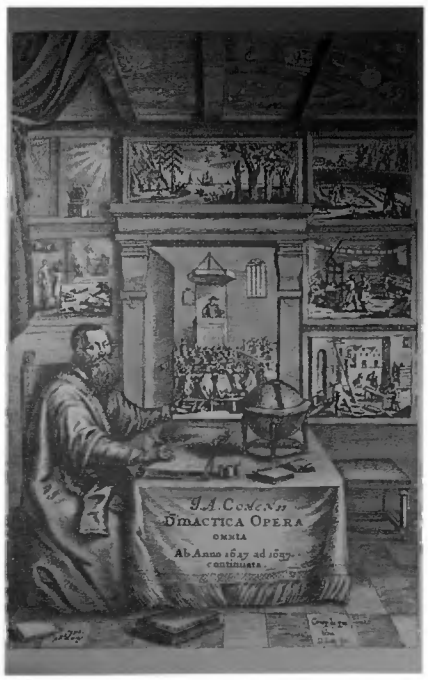


Aletta Jacobs, a doctor, was the first woman to obtain a medical degree from a Dutch university. She became a leading champion of equal rights for women in Dutch society, in many walks of which men played a more prominent and better-paid part. In 1922 women got the vote, but this did precious little to better their position in society. Not until the nineteen-sixties did a new feminist wave succeed in improving the situation. Women's past and present role and position in the Netherlands and abroad are extensively documented in the *International Information Centre and Archives for the Women's Movement* in Amsterdam.

Centre of printing

The fairly generous freedom of thought, and the concomitant flourishing of the sciences in the Republic of the United Netherlands, attracted foreign scholars who were persecuted for their ideas or religious beliefs in their native land. In 1651 Jean de Parival, the French scholar mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, wrote: 'Scarcely any country in the world today enjoys more freedom than Holland. No sooner does the Lord convey people from foreign parts to Holland, and they set foot in this country, than they are free and frank.' René Descartes (1595-1650), another Frenchman and the father of modern philosophy, spent several years in the Netherlands, where tangible proof of his proposition 'cogito ergo sum / I think, therefore I am' can be found in libraries.

Title-page of a rare edition (1666) of the collected educational works of Comenius (Komensky), pedagogue, philosopher and educational reformer, which can be seen in the Comenius Museum, Naarden. As well as a variety of objects connected with Comenius, the museum has a library of some 2200 works about this 'discoverer of the child's world'.



Two seventeenth-century scholars are represented in museums. The Czech-born philosopher and pedagogue Jan Amos Komensky is buried in Naarden, a little north of Amsterdam. He wrote his most important works in the Netherlands; he was the first pedagogue to contend that children's books should link on to their experiential world, which was different from that of adults. Writings and books associated with this 'discoverer of the child's world' are kept in the *Comenius Museum* in Naarden.

A special museum in the village of Rijnsburg, north of Leiden, records the life and work of the Amsterdam-born philosopher and theologian Baruch Spinoza, whose ancestors were Spanish Jews.

The great intellectual freedom that was enjoyed in the Netherlands produced a veritable spate of books from the end of the sixteenth century on. Amsterdam rapidly became the centre of publishing and printing. Protestant refugees from Catholic Belgium brought the necessary expertise along with them. Books on a variety of subjects were printed in the metropolis: navigation guides, theological works, legal treatises and so forth.

Books were printed not only in Dutch but in German, French, Armenian, Yiddish, English, Italian and other languages. A collection of Armenian publications, many of them printed in Amsterdam, is kept in Amsterdam University Library. Amsterdam printers were even invited to work in Russia by Peter the Great in 1700.

In a commercial metropolis like seventeenth-century Amsterdam there was naturally a keen interest in news: merchants wanted to be kept informed about

The library in the Meermanno-Westreenianum Museum in The Hague, a typical 19th-century collector's museum in which objects from Egypt, Greece and Italy are also on show.

events at home and abroad that might be important for their business. Periodical newspapers were duly printed in the Republic, most of them weeklies. The oldest known Dutch newspaper is the 'Courant uyt Italien, Duytsland, etc.' of June 14 1618. Dutch news became more and more important to other Europeans, particularly after 1685, when the massive influx of French Protestant refugees gave rise to an international network of correspondents who reported for French-language newspapers printed in the Netherlands. With the growing importance of French in intellectual circles, the 'Gazette de Leyde', a French-language paper printed in the Netherlands, merited the status of a truly European paper. The *Dutch Press Museum* in Amsterdam provides a comprehensive record of the Netherlands as the cradle of the modern press.

Among the media used for reporting news in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were maps. Important events, such as developments in the Dutch War of Independence, or the Eighty Years' War (1568-1648), were depicted on a map or a print. The two were often combined, and sometimes accompanied by an explanatory text. Two of the nation's extensive map collections, in the *University Libraries* of Amsterdam and Leiden, still own innumerable examples, including news items from other countries. Dutch provincial and municipal archives also contain a wealth of relevant material. Many events were described in pamphlets, single-run booklets on a particular theme. All the big Dutch libraries have pamphlet collections, notably the scientific libraries. The largest collection is in the *Royal Library* in The Hague, consisting of more than 30,000 treatises, indictments, satires, triumphal hymns, elegies and suchlike, dating from the fifteenth century to the present. For an impression of how the Dutch reacted to important events like the French Revolution, this collection contains invaluable information. The Royal Library is at present the Dutch national library in that all books published in the Netherlands are represented there. In view of the major role played by the Netherlands since the seventeenth century in book publishing and production, one might expect this library to contain important collections. And so it does: originally the royal family's private library (made accessible to the public in 1798), it is the repository of vast collections of mediaeval manuscripts made in the Netherlands, as well as incunabula. The library is also famous for its large collection of old newspapers. If you cannot find what you are looking for in the Dutch Press Museum, it is bound to turn up in the Royal Library's collection of international papers published in the Netherlands.

A very special kind of collection consists

of 'alba amicorum'. Many seventeenth and eighteenth-century university students invited their professors and other important people who crossed their paths to write a verse or short story or do a drawing or painting in albums kept specially for that purpose. Some of these books contain fine drawings or paintings by Rembrandt, for example.

Those interested in the history of chess and draughts will find the world's largest collection of relevant books in the Royal Library.

As we have seen in our examination of various themes from Dutch history, there are more old libraries with extensive historical collections. The *Provincial Library of Friesland* in Leeuwarden is the present home of the library of Franeker University, which was disbanded in 1810. Besides the aforementioned collections in the *University Libraries* of Leiden, Amsterdam, Utrecht, Groningen and Nimwegen, the collections in the *municipal libraries* of Deventer, Arnhem, Maastricht and other cities date from the Middle Ages.

Of course these libraries have enlarged their holdings over the centuries by acquiring the bibliophilic collections by purchase or bequest. Two of the greatest book-fanciers in Dutch history were Gerard and Johan Meerman, an aristocratic father and son who assembled a large collection of manuscripts and rare books at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. They left part of their collection to their kinsman, Baron van Westreenen, who housed his new possessions in a monumental mansion on a canal in The Hague, where he also displayed his collections of medals, coins and Egyptian, Greek and Roman objects. On his death his house and its contents passed to the Nation, which established the *National Meermanno-Westreenianum Museum* in it. The authentic entourage of the period has been preserved, making visitors feel they are breathing the same atmosphere as an early nineteenth-century collector. The library contains more than 300 precious manuscripts, including a lavishly illuminated Bible of 1371 which belonged to King Charles V of France. Some 1,200 incunabula provide an impression of early printing in the Netherlands, Germany, France and Italy. Understandably, in view of the quality of the manuscripts and books in the collection, this was the ideal place for the *Book Museum*, the home of which it became in 1960. Here, books are preserved and displayed for the beauty of their covers and print. As well as Dutch bibliophile editions, the Book Museum possesses the entire production of the first English private press, the Kelmscott Press founded by William Morris in the late nineteenth century.

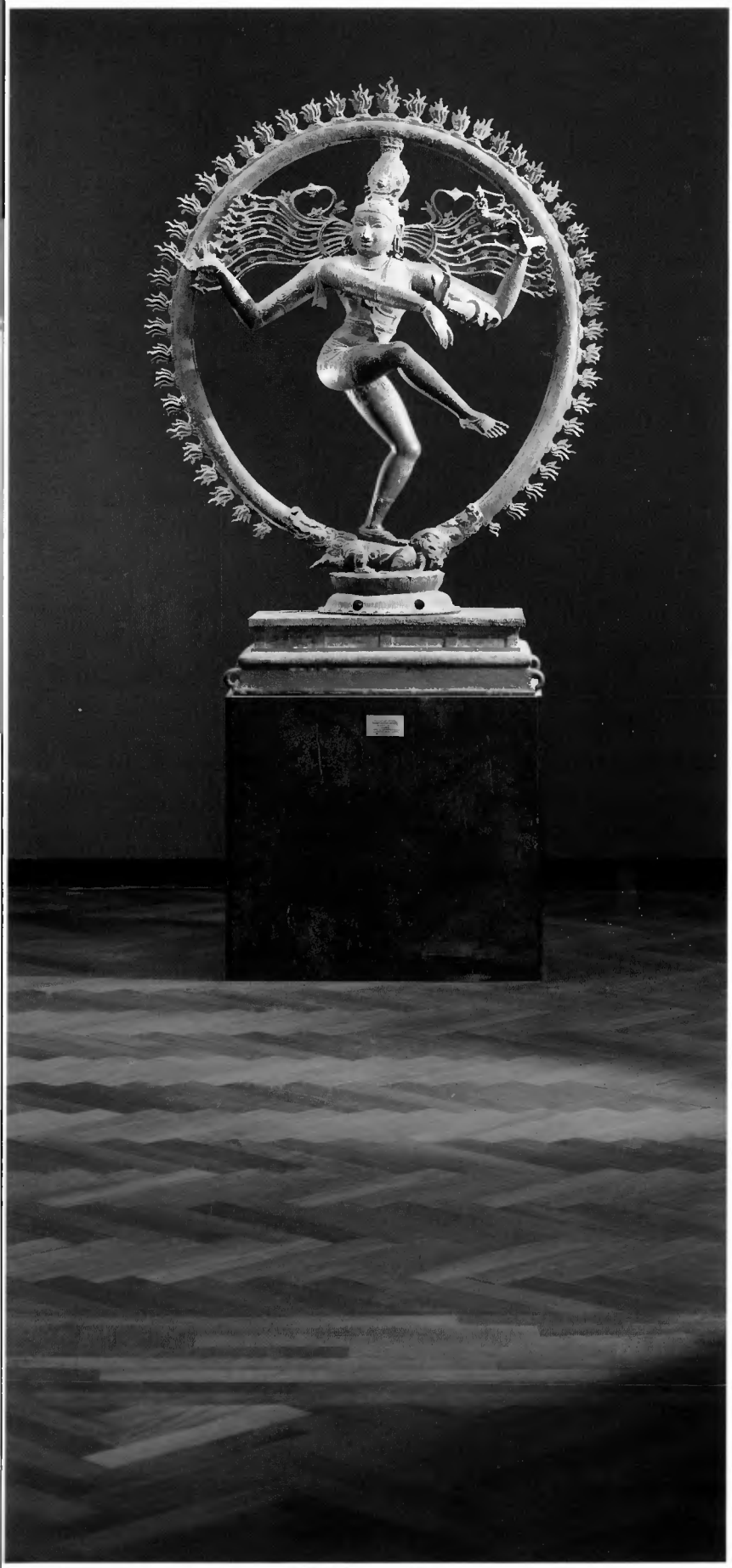
The *Script Museum* in Amsterdam, part of the University Library, delves further back into the past to trace the development of the oldest written forms of communication. Pictographic scripts such as Egyptian hieroglyphs, cuneiform script, cylinder seals (from Mesopotamia) and Chinese manuscripts are on view. Examples of alphabetic scripts are shown in Ethiopian, Hebrew and Syrian manuscripts, Arabian and Iranian calligraphy and Indian characters on tree-bark, palm-leaves, metal and stone. Writing materials, including decorative Japanese and Arabian cylindrical holders, are also displayed.

Miniature from a manuscript by Petrus Comestor, *La Bible Hystorians ou les Hystoires Escolastres*, 14th century. The miniature shows councillor Jean de Vaudetar offering the manuscript to King Charles V of France. The Meermanno-Westreenianum Museum, which is also the home of the Book Museum where this manuscript is kept, exhibits a wide range of specimens of the book from the Middle Ages to the present.

National heritage

The nineteenth century has been frequently mentioned in these pages as a significant period for the cultural heritage of the Netherlands. We have seen that several important museums were founded in that century, and that their growth was based on private collections or items in the possession of local or regional bodies.

The nineteenth century was a century of history, in the Netherlands as elsewhere. In the last quarter of the century, people's interest in their nation's past took the form of individual activities and a growing concern on the part of the government for the preservation of the vast cultural heritage that had been amassed in the course of the centuries but that was in danger of being lost. Many ancient buildings seemed unlikely to survive. This was the period in which the idea of conserving historical buildings and monuments was born. Today, more than 40,000 listed buildings are protected. In Amsterdam alone there are



Shiva, Lord of the Dance, bronze, 12th century, Chola Dynasty, India. This sculpture can be seen in the Asiatic Art Department of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

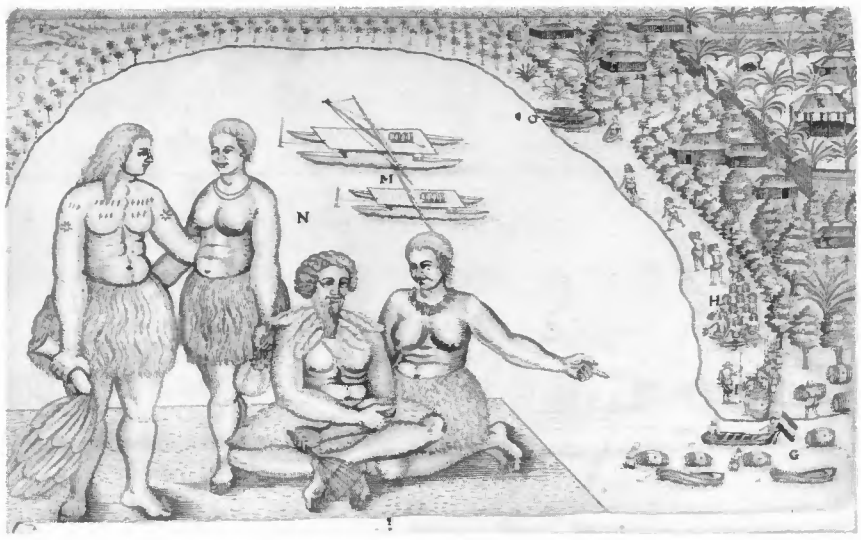
more than 7,000 of them. Ancient monuments still under water or the earth's surface are also protected.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century was also significant for the great national museums which the country is now proud to possess. The world-famous *Rijksmuseum* in Amsterdam, for instance, was founded in this period to accommodate large and precious historical and art collections. One of the most celebrated Dutch architects, Pierre Cuypers, designed a new building which was inaugurated in 1885. Because of its ambitious design and ornate decoration, it has been called a cathedral to Dutch history and art. The museum is best known for the Painting department with its Old Dutch Masters. There is however more to see. We have already touched on various aspects of Dutch history in the previous chapters – foreign expansion, the history and role of the royal family and political developments. As

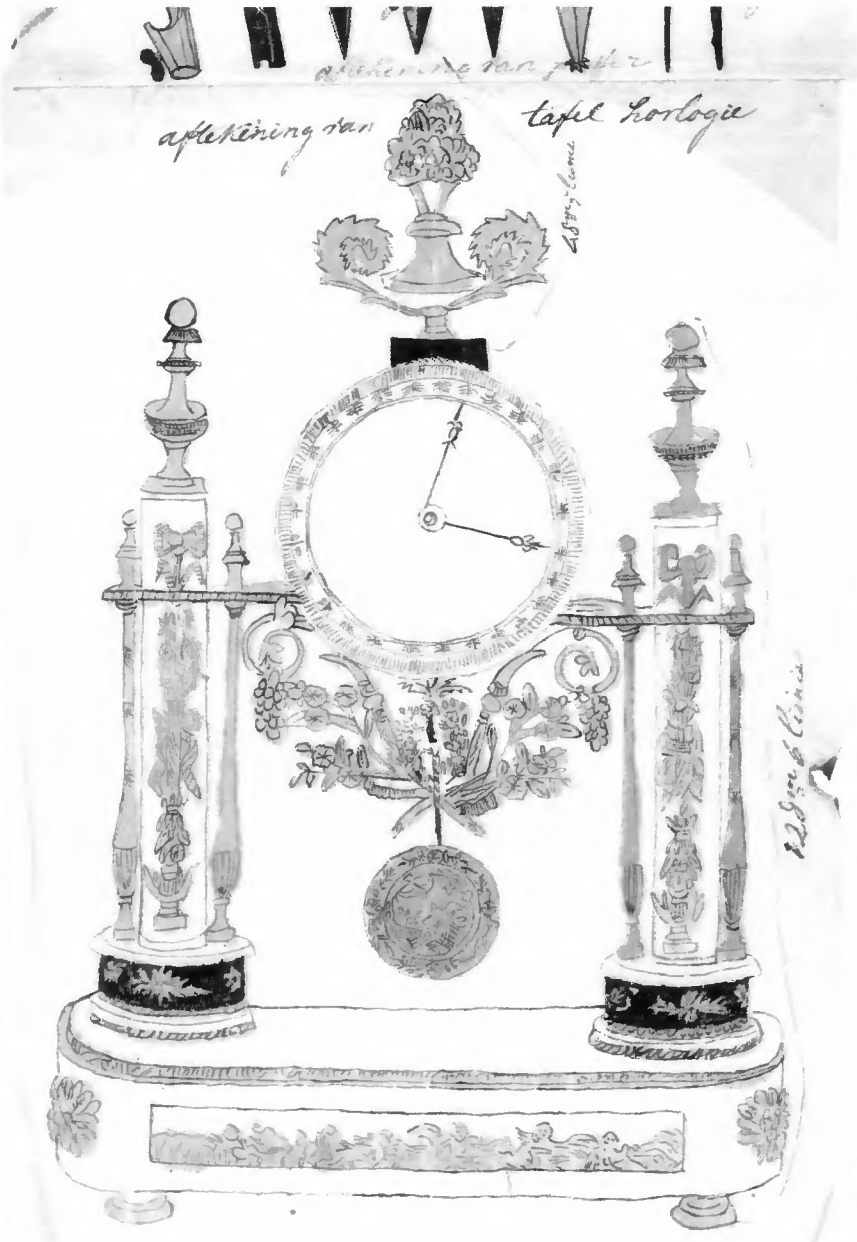
Dish decorated with a synoptic representation of paddy cultivation. China, 18th century. Asiatic Art Department of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

well as fine examples of furniture, the Rijksmuseum's Decorative Art department owns the largest museum collection of Delftware. On show in the Asiatic Art department are examples of lacquer, ceramics, paintings, prints and other objects from Japan, China, Korea, Thailand, Annam and other Far-Eastern countries. The drawings and prints in the museum's Print Room are mainly Dutch, dating from the fifteenth century to the present. The Print Room also owns the most complete collection of Rembrandt etchings.

It was towards the end of the nineteenth century that Dutch archive work started



Dutchmen were the first Europeans to set foot on Australia. The illustration shows St. Mary's Bay on the island of Amsterdam, the former name of one of the islands in the Tongatapu group in the south-west Pacific (about 2,000 miles north-east of Sidney) on which the Dutch explorer Abel Tasman landed in 1642. The illustration comes from the 'Journaal Abel Tasman', a ship's log of voyages of discovery, kept in the General State Archives, The Hague.



Clock (a 'tafel horlogie'), part of the so-called 'Japanese Demands'. The clock belonged to the 1813 Demand, with lists of the goods required by the Japanese authorities. These demands, an item of the trade agreement between Japan and the Netherlands, sometimes contained drawings and samples, and are kept in the General State Archives, The Hague.

to acquire its present form. With the disappearance of the class society as a result of the advent of the French revolutionaries in 1795, archive records lost their purely legal function and became worth preserving for their historical value. In 1802 the first archivist was put in charge of all state archives. In the course of the nineteenth century, provincial and municipal archives were set up along similar lines. At the end of the century, *national archives* were established in the principal cities of the eleven Dutch Provinces for the preservation of important government archives in the respective cities. Records from small towns also reposed in these archives. Private archives have also gradually passed into the various national and municipal archives.

All archives of state institutions and of one colonial institution are kept in the General State Archive in The Hague, which has cropped up occasionally in our discussion of various themes in Dutch history.

Hundreds of kilometres of records are kept in the various Dutch archives, where they are accessible to the public once the files are more than 50 years old. The visitor will encounter more than just files and marriage lines, for there is often a topographical department where the town or region in question is depicted in a variety of ways. The State Archives alone possess more than 500,000 maps, drawings and prints, which provide a picture of literally more than a thousand years of Dutch 'foreign' history. Photographic archives and audiovisual material can also be consulted.

Whether in archives, libraries, museums or ancient monuments, the modern explorer of the precious heritage of the long history of the Netherlands will discover an unexpected treasure trove.

DUTCH

ART 2