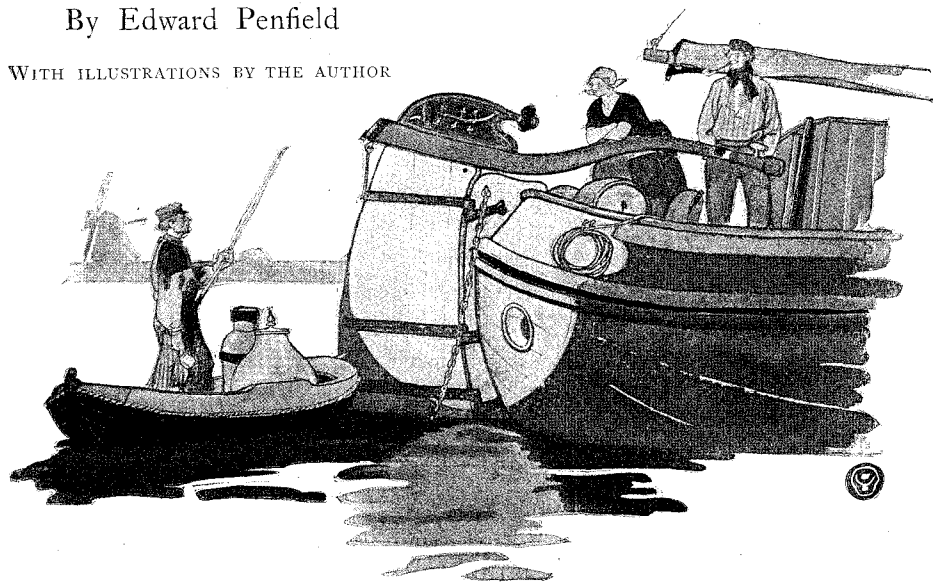


HOLLAND FROM THE STERN OF A BOEIER

By Edward Penfield

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

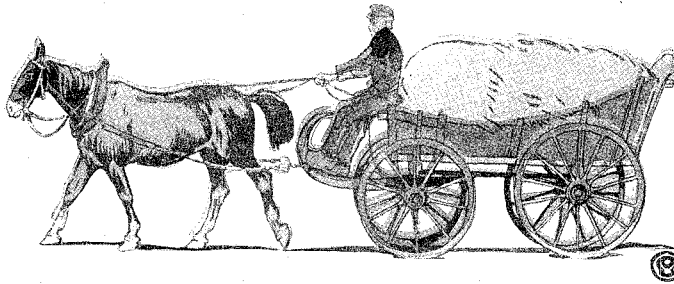


A LONG the quay in the busy harbor of Rotterdam, the quaint Dutch boats are crowded, creaking rhythmically with the rise and fall of the water, side by side, stern to rudder-post, jostling one another in a great confusion of picturesque lines and gay carvings. At all the little cabin windows are clean lace curtains, and on the deck, brass and copper pots are drying in the sun. Hanging from spars and ropes, the family wash flutters its many hues against the windy sky. Chubby, red-cheeked children climb in and out of the cabin doors, or press their round noses against the tiny window panes. The women gossip in the sun, or clatter around in pursuit of their household duties, while the men lounge about, their hands in the pockets of their baggy breeches, and through clouds of tobacco smoke survey this scene of nomadic housekeeping with phlegmatic content.

My object was to find a boat to take me through the canals and across the Zuyder Zee to Friesland. Certainly here were boats enough for an invading army; but how, in the name of Neptune, was I to strike the bargain, with barely enough Dutch with which to order breakfast? As I stood pondering this weighty matter, the quaintness and charm of the scene was be-

coming more and more insistent, so that finally I began to jot down a few notes at random, like a greedy boy in a jam closet taking a hurried taste of each preserve. "Let the shoemaker stick to his last," thought I, "the potter to his wheel," and the artist to his mooning; with which sage musing I gradually forgot my troubles and rested my full weight on Providence.

The sound of many sabots coming nearer and nearer soon warned me of a deepening interest on the part of the loungers, and on looking about I saw a semicircle of stolidly curious faces, each face wreathed with tobacco smoke and each pair of steel-blue eyes fixed intently upon my note-book. There may be some heroic souls who enjoy that sort of thing. However, I assumed a look of sweet-tempered complacency, and went to work again. Soon I felt a warm breath at my ear and then a chin was rested confidently on my shoulder. At this critical juncture my Muse mocked me and fled, and I turned with a wooden smile and saw a weather-beaten old face, with a fringe of sparse whiskers around it. A kindly face, too, and so far as it could express anything whatever, there was admiration and consuming curiosity. "Mooi! mooi!" he said, and as that means "good" in Dutch,



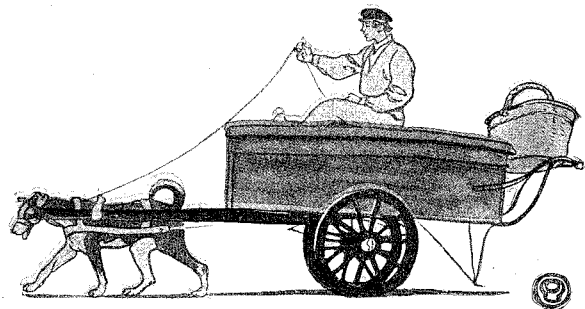
Quite a nautical arrangement.—Page 724.

I felt myself growing a little stronger. Then, praised be the Patron Saint of Travellers! he spoke to me in English. A very quaint and Gothic English, it is true, but infinitely better than my Dutch. It soon developed that he had picked up his English on his frequent trips to London with cargoes of eels; that it was his boat which I had been trying to hand down to a doubtful posterity, and that she was now loaded with a cargo of clay bound for Friesland. "Yes, there was room for a passenger," and "we sail any time to-day." "Any time to-day!" How delightfully Dutch! Every one has time to talk and smoke, and no one is ever in a hurry. For a life of elegant leisure, commend me to Holland.

Early that afternoon the great brown sail was hoisted and our tubby boat waddled through the lock, into the placid canal, and out into the country. How fresh and clean and flat it was, and how vividly green was the grass! It usually rains twenty days in the month, but this was one of the

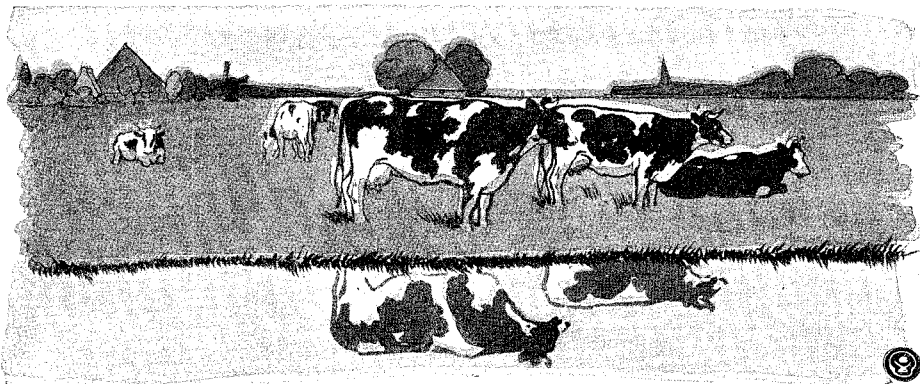
the arms of a windmill were silently whirling, and occasional red-tiled roofs made a lovely note of color above their encircling trees.

A brick roadway ran along by the canal that we travelled, and I was constrained to

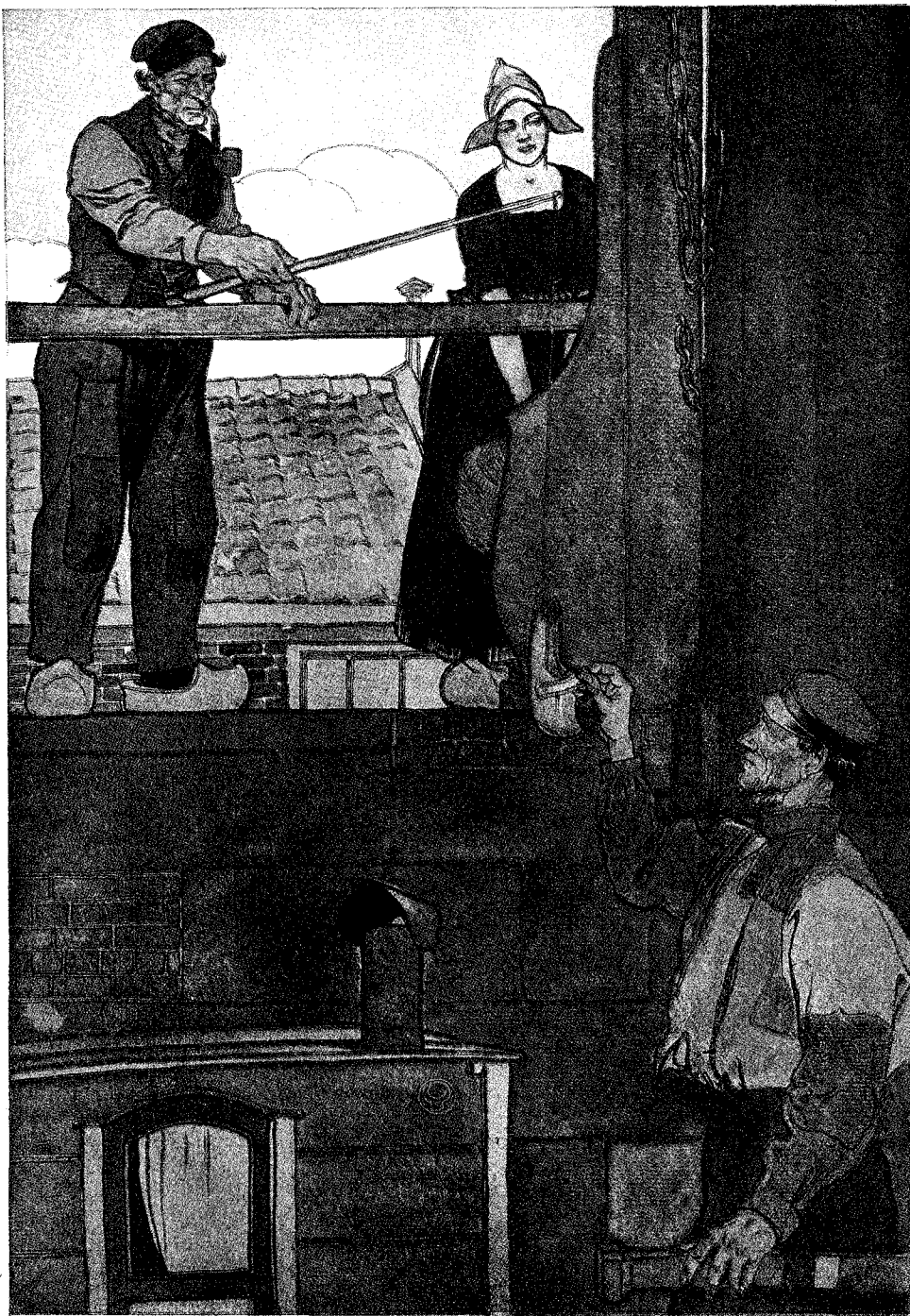


Patient little slaves.—Page 724.

make an occasional note of the people and traffic that passed to and from the town. I don't know why, but all the men seemed preternaturally grave. They were dressed—in many instances it would be more correct to say that they were patched—

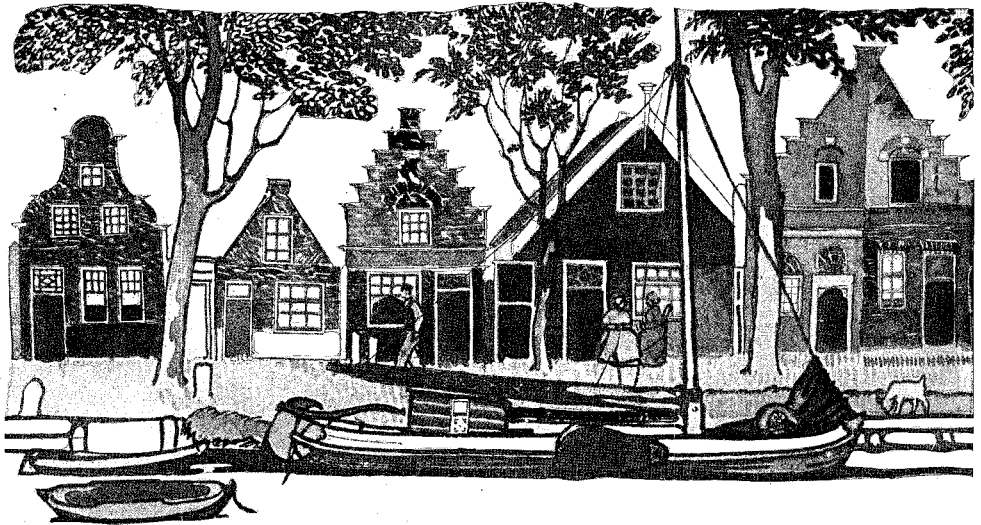


We were sailing through the heart of the dairy country.—Page 725.



Drawn by Edward Penfield.

Taking toll.—Page 725.



A perfect adjustment of space and proportion,

in blue and brown, with an occasional admixture of red. Holland is certainly the land of artistic patches. Take, for instance, our very worthy captain; a thrifty man, and prosperous, with a neat sum tucked away. Yet, see his shirt! Patched and re-patched—and patched again, in varying shades of red and brown, until it has been completely metamorphosed. As to the original color, no man knoweth, but here is a wonderful mosaic of soft tones, put together with infinite skill and patience. It is, moreover, still in a state of evolution, for the process may go on indefinitely. I take it that the purchase of a new shirt is a solemn rite, and not to be entered upon with indecent haste or thoughtlessness. Here is a prospective heirloom, and one's children's children may gaze with pride upon it. And yet Barney O'Toole, whose specialty is mortar, and who possesses nothing save a numerous progeny and a very doubtful insurance policy, would flee in terror at the thought of wearing it.

The women are not nearly so solemn, or so be-patched as the men, and they seem to be waging an incessant warfare against dirt and rust. Scrubbing pots and pans at the backs of the quaint little houses, scrubbing the door-sills and steps in front; and we passed one over-zealous soul, scrubbing a weather-beaten fence as if it were the one ambition of her life.

Here comes a cart at a brisk pace, drawn by a dog so small as to be ridiculously out of proportion to his burden. Patient little slaves and too often abused! Not infrequently the driver perches himself on the top of an already heavy load and uses his whip with an animation that would much better be employed elsewhere.

Occasionally we passed curiously fashioned wagons drawn by heavy, slow-moving horses. These wagons have no shafts. In their stead is a big rudder-like affair in front, with which the driver steers. Quite a nautical arrangement, this, and suggests a possible recourse to the water, when the roadbed grows irksome.

So through the bright afternoon we sailed, and on through the lingering purple twilight, until we seemed to be the only moving things in all the wide landscape. The traffic on the roadway had ceased; the restless arms of the windmills were stilled; the herds of cattle were contentedly chewing their cuds in the home fields, or lowing softly through the dusk, while a belated milkmaid, as she finished her evening task, crooned a sweetly simple folk-song.

We moored for the night beside the roadway, and I lay on the deck, industriously burning tobacco, and listening to the sibilant noises of the wind in the grass and the rigging. I saw the twinkling lights in the farm-houses disappear, one by one, and I



and withal, so cosily homelike.—Page 726.

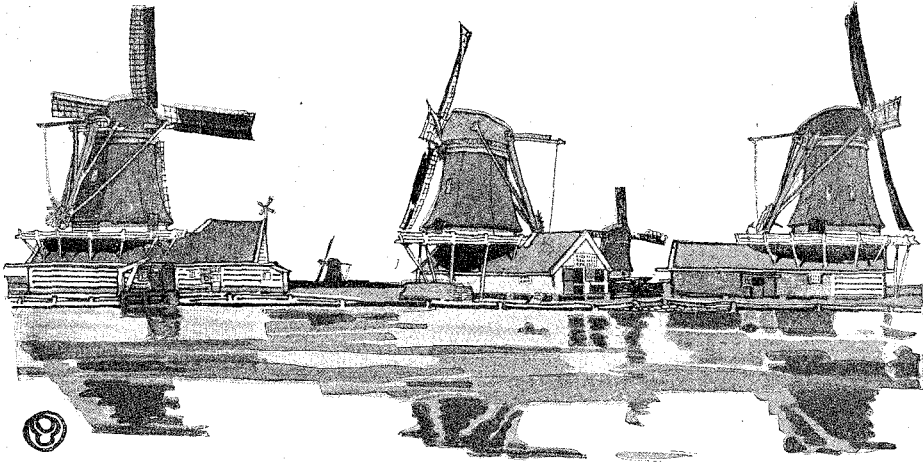
felt the indescribable hush that settles over a sleeping country. But hark! what is that softly musical gurgle, from the direction of the companionway? It is the captain, pouring a libation to the Great God Neptune, and, incidentally, guarding against malaria. Oh! All-wise captain! I will haste and follow thy example.

I was aroused next morning by the clattering of the sabots on the deck above my head, and turned out just in time to see a man in a stubby little boat, deliver our morning supply of milk. He made quite a picture in his faded blue coat and baggy brown breeches; with his milk-pans in the bow of the boat; one white with wide blue bands about it, and the other copper, of a most beautiful design.

It was another fine day, and we were soon under sail, with a cracking breeze at our backs. Everything glistened with dew, the roofs of the farm buildings shining in the early sun as if freshly rained upon. The great sail bellied in the wind and the water curled merrily back from the blunt nose of the "Boeier." We were sailing through the heart of the dairy country, past the wide fields, whose insistent greenness was now broken by great patches of buttercups, shining like gold in the freshness of the morning; past herd upon herd of black-spotted cattle grazing; past groups of milkmaids, whose rosy freshness was good to

look upon, and brawny picturesque chaps, carrying pails of foamy milk suspended from yokes across their big shoulders. A boat loaded down with sweet-smelling cheeses was towed slowly by, against the wind. And always the same flat distance, with little clusters of red roofs and wind-blown limes. The farm buildings, almost without exception, have high pyramidal-shaped roofs, the main building serving the double purpose of dwelling and barn. But as the stable is kept immaculately clean, this is not as unpleasant as it would seem at first glance.

Presently, away up the shining canal a town appears, its red roofs and church spires nestling in the trees. We soon approached one of the many little bridges that span the canals in the towns, and the captain inflated himself and blew a fierce blast upon a tin horn. The bridge was raised by the stolid keeper, who, as we passed, lowered a green sabot, attached by a string to a short fish-pole, into which quaint receptacle we dropped our toll. The bridges are worked by an ingenious arrangement of weights, and when we were past, the keeper simply climbed upon the slanting structure, and by the addition of his own weight, brought it back in position. This was a beautiful little town, and as we stopped there several days, I had a good opportunity to study its quaint charm.

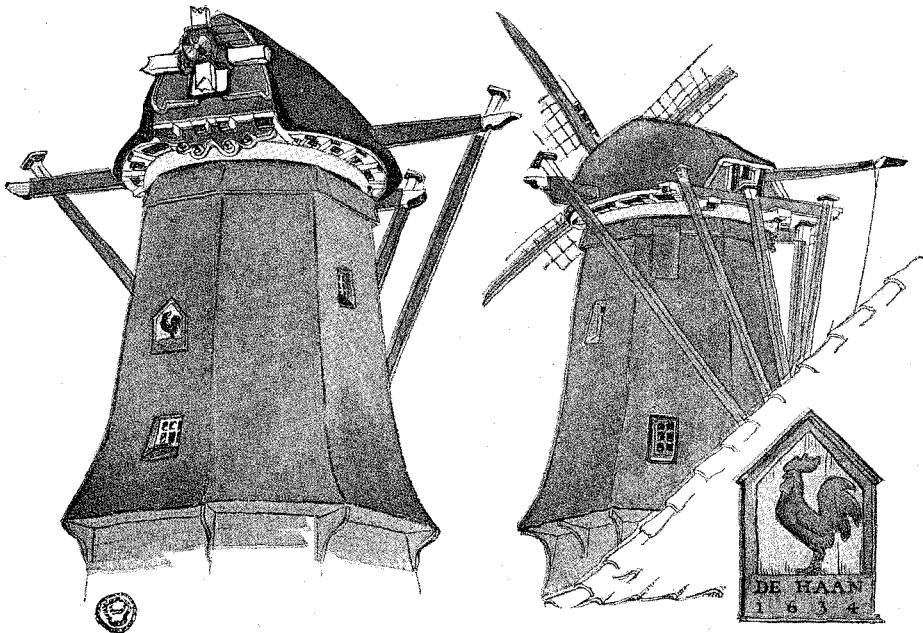


They stood crowded together on the canal banks.—Page 727.

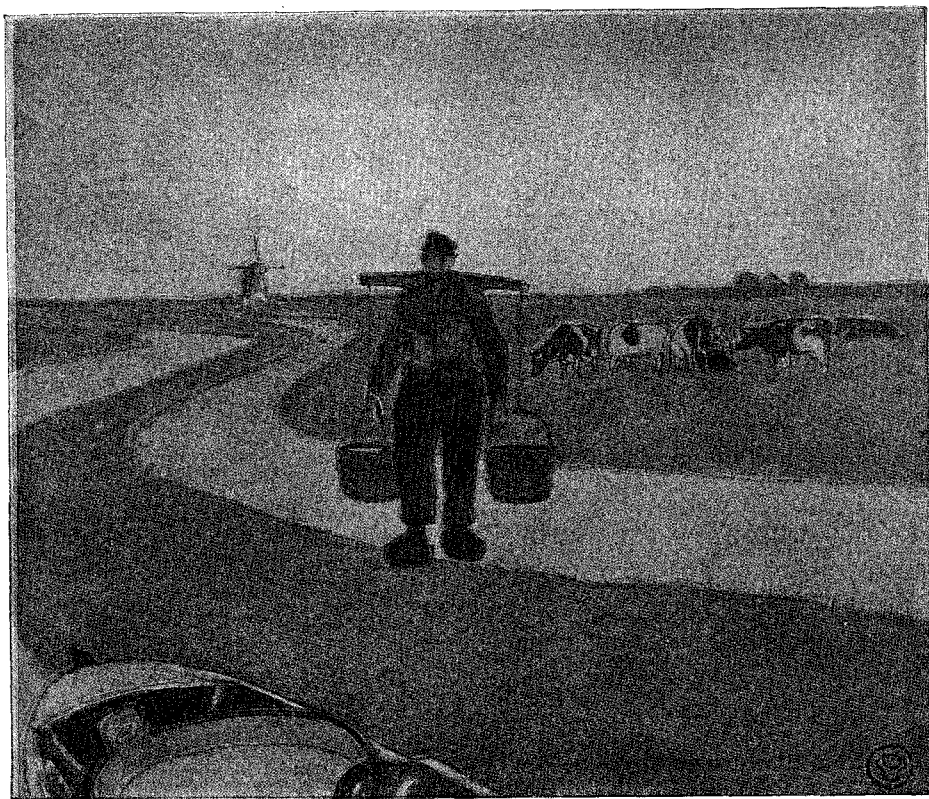
Many of its buildings were very old, the tablet upon one of them being dated 1628, and I have no doubt that some were older still. One cannot but admire these beautiful examples of brick-work, the lines and colors of which have been so deftly softened by time: nothing jars, nothing is out of harmony; a perfect adjustment of space and proportion, and withal, so cosily home-like. The early Dutch settlers in New

Amsterdam undoubtedly built in this fashion and it takes little imagination to picture Broadway at the Bowling Green as it was 250 years ago.

By reason of my clothes, I attracted considerable attention from the small boys, who mistook me for an Englishman. They followed me about in pestiferous little groups, occasionally enlivening the tedium of things by singing, "Long live the Boers."



The detailed study of the "De Haan" mill.—Page 727.



On through the lingering twilight.—Page 724.

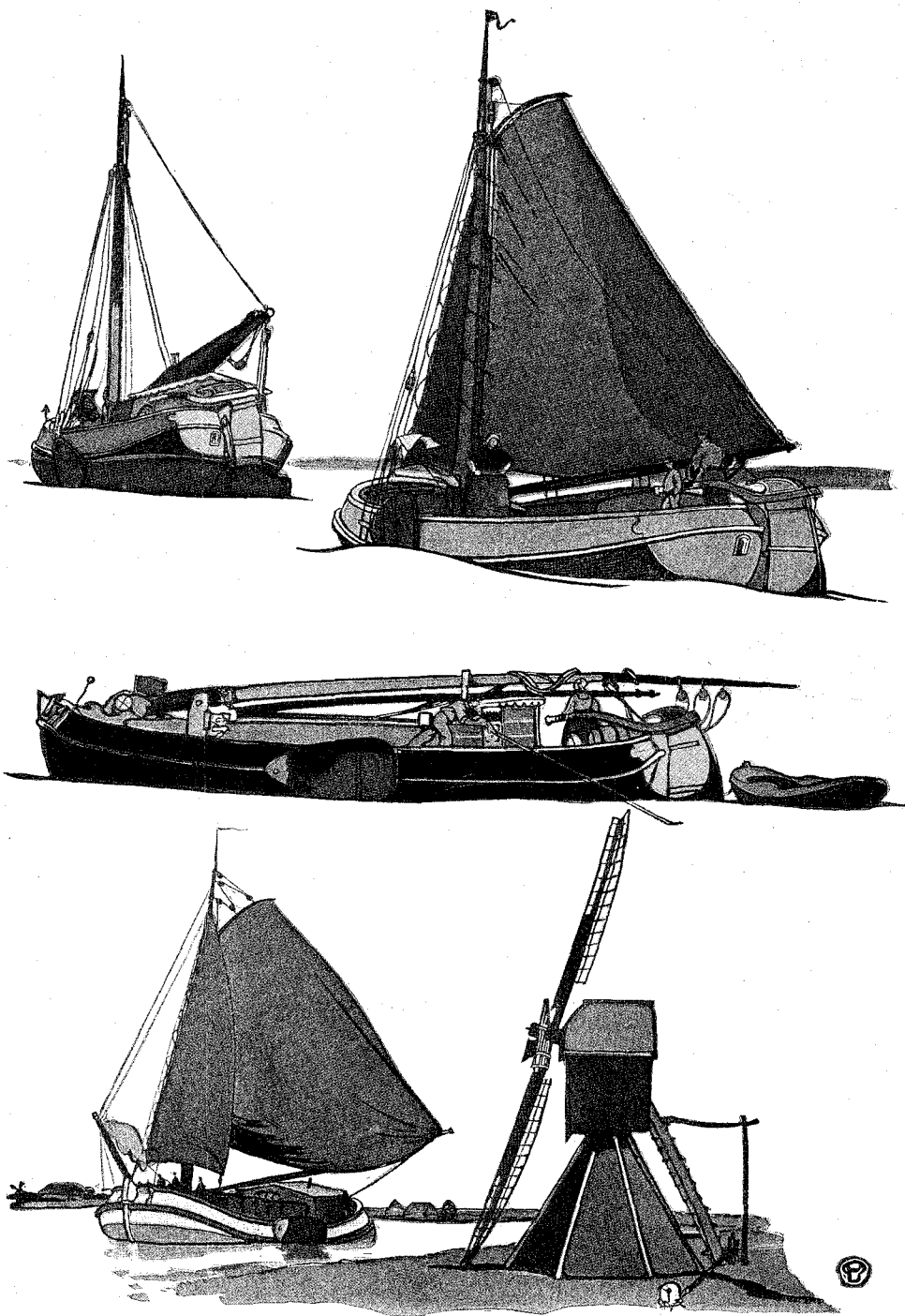
Now I have no special objection to the Boers living to a ripe old age, but I did most decidedly object to having publicity forced upon me; so I straightway purchased a little Dutch cap and a pair of "Klompen" (sabots). These I donned, together with a sadly patched shirt which I bought from the captain, and went my way unmolested. The sabots are most sensible things to walk in, by the way, much cooler than leather shoes, and quite "dry."

At about this time, in a fervor of patriotism, I purchased an American flag—at least it was sold to me as such. They must have been pretty nearly out of stripes when they made it, for it was "shy" several, and the lovely azure in the corner was liberally sprinkled with four-cornered stars. This masterpiece I finally persuaded the captain to hang, after a heated argument.

I was beginning to feel quite at home in the little town, when we again got under sail, and beneath a leaden and threatening sky

made our way slowly towards the north. We had passed a great many windmills, little and big, on our previous voyaging, but now we came into the windmill country, where they stood crowded together on the canal banks, so close that their great arms almost touched as they revolved. Saw-mills and grist-mills and mills for pumping the water; old mills and new, and mills that have gone out of commission and have been superseded by the ugly brick powerhouse with its towering chimney.

In the construction of these mills, they generally hold to one pattern—the original one, evidently. The dull thatched body is relieved by green woodwork and striped with red and white. They are most beautiful in their lines, and on the front of each, where the arms attach, there is usually some fanciful carving, gaudily painted. Some of the mills bear tablets, showing that they were built in the seventeenth century. I made studies of one in particular, called "De Haan" (the cock), dated 1634,



Drawn by Edward Penfield.

We passed many boats.—Page 729.

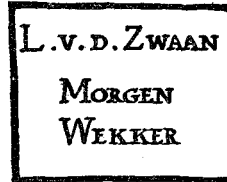
which is a very good average example. The sails that are stretched over the wings or arms are generally stained some soft red, or green or brown, to preserve them from the weather. In the detailed study they have been purposely omitted, so as to show the decorations around the upper part.

At last we sailed out of the canal into the muddy, brown waters of the Zuyder Zee; the wind, which was blowing half a gale, drove a fine mist before it, and after contemplating the white-capped tumult of the "Zee," which stretched out before us, vast and menacing, I turned and looked longingly at the fast-receding shore, on which a solitary windmill loomed huge and ghostly through the mist. We passed many boats laden with merchandise, close reefed and with glistening decks. The fishing boats all bore a number and the initial of the home port on their patched canvas, and the sailors were the most picturesque beings I had seen in all Holland.

We arrived in Friesland wet, but happy, and at Leeuwarden, the destination of our

cargo of clay, I packed my cap, sabots, and patched shirt, and bade the captain farewell.

In passing through the narrow, crooked little streets of Leeuwarden I chanced upon a sign that held my attention and compelled thought. It read:



This is faultless Dutch for Morning Waker, and it signifies that L. v. d. Zwaan will, for a paltry sum, leave his bed in the frosty hours of early morning, and putting sweet sleep behind him, arouse his slumberous clients. Truly, a worthy calling! Yet, tell me, you who are versed in occult things, who or what, in this somnolent land, wakes the Morgen Wekker?

NABOTH'S VINEYARD

By Robertson Trowbridge

My neighbor hath a little field,
 Small store of wine its presses yield,
 And truly but a slender hoard
 Its harvest brings for barn or board.
 Yet though a hundred fields are mine,
 Fertile with olive, corn, and vine;
 Though Autumn piles my garners high.
 Still for that little field I sigh,
 For ah! methinks no otherwhere
 Is any field so good and fair.
 Small though it be, 'tis better far
 Than all my fruitful vineyards are,
 Amid whose plenty sad I pine—
 "Ah, would that little field were mine!"

Large knowledge void of peace and rest,
 And wealth with pining care possess—
 These by my fertile lands are meant.
 That little field is called Content.