

horns projecting at either side, and large, clumsy-looking pendants in their ears. These must be of considerable value, but Dutch thrift secures to almost every peasant woman this singular and ugly head-gear.

The railway from the Hague to Amsterdam, by way of Leyden and Haarlem, traverses the sand-dunes of the Northern Sea, and a broad "polder" reclaimed from the ocean.

Amsterdam, the Venice of the North, contrasts very unfavourably with the Queen of the Adriatic. It may be more thrifty, but it is far less poetic. The busy traffic of its canals continually perturbs their muddy waters, which have the



DUTCH WINDMILLS.

colour and consistency of pea-soup, and the tall, dull, red brick houses, through the sinking of the piles on which they rest, lean at various angles as though they would topple over.

Like Venice, Amsterdam has grown from a few fishermen's huts, built like sea-gulls' nests on an oozy sandbank, to be a great commercial entrepot. It has a thrifty population of 300,000. Its ninety islands are connected by three hundred bridges, and, as in Venice, almost every house can be reached by water. The stately rows of elms, however, that border the canals have no counterpart in the fairer southern city. The finest building is the Palace, a massive Renaissance structure, built for a town hall, on 14,000

piles—hence the jest of Erasmus about the people living on the tops of the trees. Its interior is exceedingly sumptuous, and the Council Chamber of those merchant princes is one of the most magnificent in Europe.

I went to see the famous fish auction, and was glad to escape from its unsavoury crowds of sailors and fishwives and their slimy merchandise. I lodged at the old Bible

House, in which the first Dutch Bible was printed. I was shown a copy of the original edition of 1542—a massive black-letter book with queer old cuts. The son of the printer opened an inn, and set up as his sign an open Bible inscribed with the text, "Take a little wine for thy stomach's sake!" and there, above the door, it is to this day.

Amsterdam has nearly forty thousand Jews, with ten splendid synagogues. Here, in 1632, the celebrated Spinoza, the "father of modern philosophy," was born.

Several of our cuts illustrate the quaint costumes and customs of the Dutch in the mild dissipations of church-going and the Kermesse.

One of the strangest phenomena of history is the changing of the