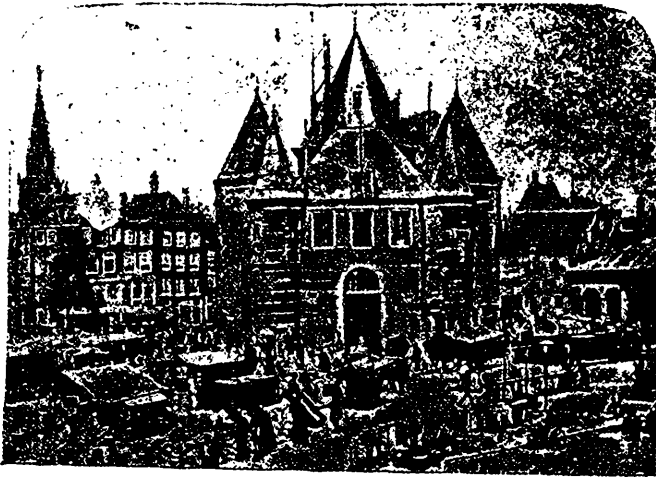


siege of Antwerp by the French in 1832, the dikes were cut, and the country for three years was flooded by the sea, and gunboats cruised about the fields and anchored amid the orchards. The stratum of saline sand deposited almost prevented cultivation for many years.

The route from Antwerp to Rotterdam traverses a characteristically Dutch landscape—vast meadows, level as a floor and divided by trenches of water. Canals ramify everywhere, along whose silent highways stealthily glide the “trek-

are generally high and narrow, built of red brick, with crow-stepped gables, each with a large crane for hoisting goods from the streets, or from the canals, which flow below. The lazy barges creep along, and just as you want to cross a canal up swings the counterpoised draw-bridge, and you envy the Dutch patience of the vrows and mynheers who quietly wait—the latter stolidly pulling at their porcelain pipes, as though it were life’s sole concern—till the bridge falls again.

The men and women one meets



FISH-MARKET, AMSTERDAM.

schuits,” or “draw-boats,” often dragged by men, or even women, harnessed like horses. Along the horizon, wherever one looks, are rows of picturesque windmills, ceaselessly brandishing their mighty arms, as if to challenge any overvaliant Quixote to mortal combat. I have seen a dozen in a single view.

The villages, country houses, and gardens are scrupulously, almost painfully neat and clean. At Broek, near Amsterdam, no horses are allowed in the streets and no one may enter a house with his shoes or boots on. The town houses

in the street seem built on the same principle as the Dutch boats in the canals—very broad and staunch-looking craft. I saw, at last, where Rubens found the models for his very solid saints and angels, and for his exceedingly ample, not to say exuberant, allegorical figures.

The throngs of people consisted largely of peasants in their gala dress—the men in stiff high-collared coats with big horn buttons, and high-crowned hats; the women in stuff gowns with a white neckerchief, a lace cap and a broad gold band across the forehead with spiral