

*We maintiendrait.* But when the stadtholderate fell into the same vice as the old rulers, and supported itself on an oligarchy, it lost its hold on the people, and the last stadtholder, William of Orange, left the Hague in 1795, pursued by popular execration.

But the admission of the French into Holland proved a woful mistake. Napoleon, having given the *coup de grace* to the Revolution, put his foot on the neck of republican France, and upon those of her allies. Holland was chained to his triumphal car, and, without having struck a blow, the Dutch saw their whole history reversed. Once more they associated the national cause with the house of Orange, and William V., welcomed back in 1815, was created king of the Netherlands with the title of William I. It was a veritable reaction, for with him came back the oligarchic rule, and thus, notwithstanding all its revolutions, Holland is, as it has ever been, ruled by a small class of influential people. The suffrage is limited to three hundred thousand electors, not one workman in twenty possessing it. In Rotterdam not a single dock laborer has a vote for either the deputies to the Second Chamber or the City Councillors. The mass have, as ever, no part or lot in appointing their rulers, or in making the laws they have to obey. No wonder that the interests of the workers have not only been neglected, but powerfully opposed.

It is clear, however, that among the Dutch ruling class there are some who struggle for justice, and one or two disgraceful laws have recently been removed from the penal code, and a few positive reforms have passed into law. Until 1872 it was penal for workmen to attempt any combination whatever which tended to fetter work or raise the price of labor; any one joining in such a combination, or in a denunciation of particular directors or managers of a factory for such an end was liable to imprisonment from one month to three, and the leaders or originators to two to five years' imprisonment, with subsequent police surveillance for another three to five years. Other efforts have been almost stifled by governmental dilatoriness. In 1863 a commission was appointed to inquire into the conditions of child labor in the factories, but eight years elapsed before the report was published, and then another three years passed away before a law was enacted prohibiting the labor of children, except in agriculture, under twelve years of age; and it was not until fifteen years later still—that is, in 1889—that a second law was obtained limiting the labor of women and young persons under sixteen years of age to eleven hours a day, with a pause of one hour, interdicting them from night work and Sunday labor. Another commission into the condition of the working class commenced its inquiries in 1887, but it has only yet covered a fraction of the country.

There has also been considerable improvement in the dwellings of the poor. It is a peculiar trait in

Dutch family life to desire to have a house to itself, however small. Thus, there are many streets in the suburbs of Rotterdam composed of houses of two rooms; if larger ones are erected they are so built that the families no more interfere with each other than in houses semi-detached. Formerly they lived in courts leading out of the lanes between the larger streets. Here even they had, as in the suburbs, miniature gardens, and the interiors were, considering the circumstances, peculiarly clean. But even this national characteristic of cleanliness was decaying in the presence of poverty induced by low and uncertain wages, and its too common concomitant—drink.

Holland is, above all things, a commercial country, and its well-to-do classes are among the richest in Europe; nevertheless, its workers are miserably paid. Wages average throughout the country from 11s. to 12s. a week; in a city like Rotterdam from 16s. to 20s. One of the dockers in Rotterdam sent an account to a newspaper of his wages during seven years. The annual average was £38 16s. 11d., a little more than 15s. a week. For such wages the Dutch workman, and especially the dockers, labor long hours. A skilled workman—as, for example, a carpenter—works from six in the morning until eight at night, including pauses for rest and meals, and cannot make more than 4s. a day. A painter must be very clever if he makes 4d. an hour. As to the hours of the docker, Pieter Sas, the leader in the late strike, gave me his own case. If he worked in unloading a ship in the grain trade the hours were from six to eight at 4d. per hour (since the strike, 5d.); if it was in the iron ore trade, he would have to work sixteen hours a day with eight hours off, the working time being sometimes at day, sometimes at night. As his home is three-quarters of a mile from his work, he loses, with the time consumed in washing and taking a meal, three hours, reducing his rest to five. No wonder, with such exhausting labor, the workers die off prematurely, and that old men are not numerous among them.

The well-to-do classes in Holland live as generously as in any part of the world, but the working man is miserably fed. He rarely tastes meat, especially if he has a family. Vegetables and tea are his chief diet. One excellent authority describes the food of the worker as consisting of "potatoes and gin." And it is a fact that the consumption of alcohol has considerably increased in Holland of late years. In 1870 the Dutch drank 7.46 litres of alcohol per inhabitant, in 1887 it had reached 9.02 litres. This is nearly half a litre less than in 1884, but this cannot count for much in the presence of the fact that the excise on gin in Holland yields annually £2,000,000 sterling. At the same time we have Pieter Sas's authority that in Rotterdam drunken workmen are the exception, and not at all countenanced by their mates. No one, however, could be surprised if the ginshop should have attrac-

tions for a people worked in this manner and fed on such a diet—a diet all the more strange in a city which exports in one year to England 24,250 cattle, 19,850 calves, 22,880 pigs, 258,000 sheep.

It will be seen from the above facts that the process of "beating God's people to pieces, and grinding the faces of the poor," is as much the custom in Holland as in other commercial countries.

The Dutch worker's misery may be further illustrated by the following facts extracted from the "Statistical Year Book of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for 1887." Out of a total of 1,390,115 houses in Holland in 1886-7, 258,030 had only one room; 479,642, two rooms; 241,551, three rooms; 104,908, four rooms; 67,710, five rooms; 147,674, six rooms or more. If, then, we consider families living in houses of three rooms and under as the poorer classes in Holland, and those living in houses of six rooms or more as the richer, it appears that the poorer class is seven times as numerous as the richer—that nearly one-half of them live in houses of two rooms and under, and more than a quarter of them in houses containing only one room.

Rental returns show a similar result, and that the general poverty these facts indicate is not confined to the artisan class is shown by the returns of failure in business. The figures in 1873 and 1886 are respectively 403 and 583, considerably more than double, and these failures were mostly among the smaller tradesmen. Naturally, the trade of the *monts de piete* increases, and the pauperism of Holland is portentous. In 1871 an eighteenth part of the population were in this condition, and more than half of those unable to support themselves were heads of families. The increase in the number of persons supported in 1888 by the Reformed Church at Hague, as compared with the number in 1880, shows the rapidity with which the pauperism of the country is increasing. In 1880 the number was 1,163, in 1888, 1,950—an increase of more than 67 per cent. in eight years.

Thus we see that the bulk of the Dutch people are on the road to that terrific gulf which yawns in every great city in Europe and America, and that they have no means of making themselves heard, for in no country in Europe does poverty more completely imply loss of political power.

Hardly anywhere, on the other hand, is the wealth and political power so concentrated in a few hands. Between the persons who live in houses of four rooms and less, and those who live in houses of six rooms and more, there is a great gap, filled only by a small contingent of five-roomed householders. Those who live in houses of six rooms and more form only a ninth part of the population, and this ninth part engrosses the enormous wealth of this rich little corner of the earth, the reservoir of the treasures of the Indies. For, be it remembered that the Dutch colonial possessions exceed the mother-country fifty times in area, and seven times in