

Dutch Artist Wagers He Can Paint His Way Around the World

Monnickerdam Seeks 50,000 Guilders

JACQUES MONNICKERDAM had the courage of his paint brushes. He was willing to bet five years of his life that he could paint his way around the world. If he wins—and Mr. Monnickerdam admits there still are chances of his failure—he gets a nice little nest egg of 50,000 guilders, which represents in American money nearly \$20,000.

Mr. Monnickerdam arrived in New York a few days ago, two years out from home and more than half the globe still to be traveled. Literally, he is working his way around the world, paying his bills and those of his wife, who accompanies him, only from commissions received from his paintings. According to the contract, he must act as his own agent in every sale that he makes. Art dealers are not permitted to enter into any of his transactions.

Details of the peculiar arrangement date back to 1918 in a little town in Holland. Jan Bilderbeck, a rich patron of the arts, believed in adversity as a stimulus to genius. He offered 50,000 guilders to Monnickerdam and another artist, S. Degen, if they would work their way around the world by their art.

Provided For in Will

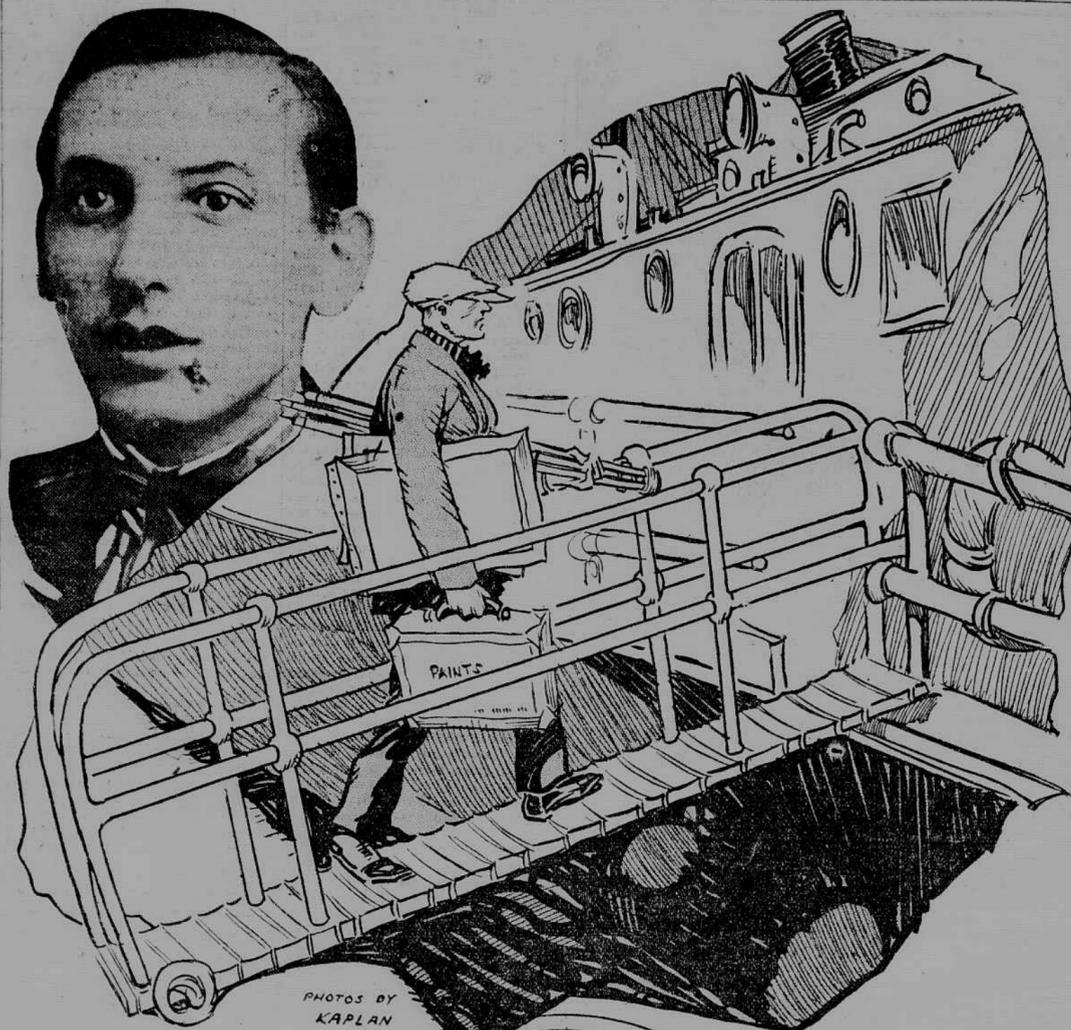
Before negotiations were completed, Bilderbeck died, but he made provisions in his will for the artists when they had fulfilled their end of the contract.

Monnickerdam and Degen started out on January 1, 1919. They worked their way through Belgium and on into France. Degen fell by the wayside, but Monnickerdam and his wife continued on the journey to Italy, Spain and England.

In Italy Monnickerdam received the Prix de Rome for a portrait. He sold the picture for enough money to carry him to London. There, through Holland officials, he obtained an audience with King George, who commissioned him to paint several pictures.

With the proceeds of these sales he bought passage to America for himself and wife and arrived here almost out of funds.

One of the first pieces of American



PHOTOS BY KAPLAN

ABOVE is a picture of Jacques Monnickerdam, who has wagered he can paint his way around the world.

good luck that befell the Dutch painter was the offer of a studio. Mrs. Polah, wife of the violinist, and daughter of Richard le Gallienne, has given up her studio, 2 East Twelfth Street, to Monnickerdam during his New York visit. As the artist does not speak English, he has to borrow an interpreter on frequent occasions. Mr. Polah consented to act in that capacity for an interview.

"I had the hardest time in Paris," Mr. Monnickerdam said. "But I had always to come back to Paris again and again from Spain and from Italy to sell my pictures, as Paris is the art center. This took time and made my trip very expensive."



MRS. MONNICKERDAM is accompanying her husband on his trip

It was in Paris that Mr. Degen died, his companion and fellow-artist, to whom the original offer was also made.

"When I go to a country," Mr. Monnickerdam continued, "I never know just where I am to go until I see our consul for the Netherlands.



ONE of the Dutch artist's paintings, a Holland interior

best of all. It is the first place where I have not been hungry."

"How will it be in India?" he was asked. "Will that not be as bad as China?"

"I have some friends in India," he replied, "and I expect to be able to get some commissions there."

"It will be a terrible ordeal," Mr. Polah said, "but when he comes back he will be absolutely made. This trip will make him known all over the world and he will be established, even without the fortune awaiting for him. He and his wife both realize this and the prospect keeps up their courage, even under great hardship. Many artists have the hardship without the reward, so they are very fortunate after all."

Jacques Monnickerdam was born in Amsterdam and will be thirty-one years old when he comes into his fortune, if he keeps his contract. If he once sells to a dealer, or allows a dealer to exhibit a picture, the whole sum is forfeited. Nor can he enter into any commercial agreement or try to make money on

My passport shows that I go to all the places required. Now, in America I must stop in every state on the way across to California. I must visit, besides, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles and San Francisco, and I must make enough money while I am here to pay my way through Japan and China, where I cannot expect to sell anything. That will be the worst time of all."

One of the visitors suggested that Mr. Monnickerdam's early life of poverty would make it easier for him to undergo the coming hardships, but the artist replied humorously, though with feeling, that being hungry was one of the things he did not seem to get used to.

"Even very poor people like to eat sometimes," he said, and added, enthusiastically, "America is the

any large scale during the time of his probation, nor in any way evade the spirit of the contract. He is to earn just enough to pay his expenses and earn it only by painting and selling his pictures with no outside aid.

His Second Venture

This is his second experience in adventuring for art, according to Mr. Polah. "His father was the typical father of an artist and was so much opposed to his son's painting that Jacques ran away from home in order to study with Hobbema. He competed for and won many prizes offered by various art societies in Holland and later became a pupil of Joseph Israels. The influence of this greatest of moderns is very plain in Monnickerdam's work. It was as the result of a competition that Mr. Bilderbeck's offer was made to Monnickerdam and Degen, for the jury could not decide between them, so they started out together. In Paris their hardships were very great, and Mr. Degen, who was frail and of a nervous temperament, contracted pneumonia and died.

Neither Mr. Monnickerdam nor his wife shows any sign of strain so far.

Arrives in New York, Out of Funds

Both are young, strong and happy looking and are delighted to be in America.

"What is it you like best about America?" the painter was asked. "Is it the place or the people?"

"Oh, the people," he answered without hesitation. "They are so different, so interested. Over there nobody cares anything about you, but here everybody is interested. I have many 'jobs' already, enough to keep me busy for several weeks."

It was suggested that Mrs. Monnickerdam, who was not present, might have her own side of this story of adventure, and Mr. Polah at once volunteered to give it.

"I can speak for a woman also," he said, "for I have imagination and I know it is this way. She chooses all this hardship rather than to have him go alone. She will stick to him right straight through and help him by making a little home as they go along and making the hard life a little pleasanter."

However, Mrs. Monnickerdam was sought and found that she might speak for herself.

New York Harbor Appeals

"Yes, I have made the whole trip with my husband from the start," she said, "and I shall go all the way. We were married in Amsterdam, September 16, 1916. We have no children. On this trip we have spent one year in France, four months in Brussels, three months in Spain, six months in Italy."

The question "Which did you like best?" brought out: "Paris—but, oh, I like New York best of all!"

"And the women, what women did you like best?"

"The ladies of Paris, they are very chic, but, oh, I like the ladies of New York! They are very chic, too."

Of the hardships of the two years past and the three years to come she had not one word to say, but was full of enthusiasm for the pleasures of the trip. "I like everything," she says. One of the first pictures Mr. Monnickerdam plans to do is of the harbor of New York, which, he says, has "overwhelmed" him. He has already found in New York City more "magnificent prospects" for painting than in any other place he has been. He has few completed pictures with him, but those show him to be distinctively a genre painter of the modern Dutch school, which, according to Mr. Polah, is rather conservative as well as modern and very colorful.

Chile Is to Capitalize Robinson Crusoe's Island by Making It a Tourist Resort

WOULD you like to visit Robinson Crusoe's island? Would you like to explore his cave, hidden behind the grove of tropical trees, where his hammock swung in the shade and his ship's parrot scolded the pet goats through the drowsy summer afternoons? Would you enjoy wandering on the beach looking for mysterious footprints in the sand, and thrilling with a delicious horror of cannibals?

Of course you would, and the government of Chile knows it. Therefore a scheme is on foot to make Juan Fernandez, "Crusoe's Island," a national park, and to provide it with hotels, caves, parrots, picture postcards, cannibals and all other necessary appurtenances to a successful tourist resort—all this, presumably, except Man Fridays, for it is doubtful if the labor problem can be so easily solved now as it was in Crusoe's time.

Revises Old Controversy

But delightful as the proposition sounds to persons addicted to South Sea cruising, it has had the result of stirring up again the old controversy as to where Robinson Crusoe's island really lies. Juan Fernandez has only a doubtful claim to the title. Tobago, a tiny island in the Caribbean Sea, off the coast of Venezuela, is the rightful heir to the title, but being a little known and sparsely populated scrap of palm jungle, it has had to sit

silent and see its more famous rival reap the honors. Once in a while, every five years or so, it has voiced its protest, and at the time of the World's Fair some enterprising Tobagoan found a skeleton of a huge goat in a cave, which was promptly and joyously bundled off to Chicago as the final convincing proof that Robinson Crusoe had lived and hunted goats on that island.

Nevertheless, most people will tell you to-day that Juan Fernandez is Robinson Crusoe's island, and now the government of Chile is planning improvements in the island which will add to its popularity with tourists.

Juan Fernandez is 700 miles off the western coast of South America, a rugged, mountainous pile, very popular with the pirates of old, but never taken seriously by any white men as a place of habitation. For many years it was used by the Chilean government as a penal settlement. In 1868 it was leased to some Germans who made an experiment in colonization, but this, too, failed, and it is only recently that the Chilean government has seen its possibilities as a tourist resort.

Monarch of All He Surveyed

How does it happen, then, that there is this mistake in the identity of two islands, on opposite sides of the equator, divided by the continent of South America, thousands of miles apart and differing from

each other in climate and natural characteristics?

Alexander Selkirk is the answer. Selkirk was a real person who lived alone for four years on Juan Fernandez. He was history, not fiction, like poor old Robinson Crusoe. It only goes to show how much stronger the human interest of a story is than the dull geographical facts.

Selkirk was not shipwrecked, but voluntarily exiled himself on Juan Fernandez after a quarrel with the captain of his ship, in which he told that personage bluntly that he would rather risk the perils of solitude than trust himself another minute in a leaky ship under such a captain.

He thought it over for four years and then was glad to exchange the perils of the deep for his island security. He took passage on the first ship that happened along. It was in command of one Captain Woodes Rogers. They knew a good story in London, even in those days, and Selkirk's adventures were snapped up by the best feature writer of the day, Richard Steele, who had a beat in the Englishman. This was in 1713. Defoe is supposed to have based his romance on this account, and on Captain Rogers's own book "Cruising Voyage Around the World."

Selkirk's Story

Selkirk's story differs from Robinson Crusoe's in many details, yet bears a close resemblance to its main features. He was provided for his island life with a sea chest, clothes, a gun, a firelock, some gunpowder and bullets, a hatchet, knife and kettle, a Bible and other books, and a few pounds of tobacco. Thus he

missed all the fun of discovering a wrecked ship on his beach, and his story is deprived of the most interesting elements of Crusoe's adventures, the transporting of the treasures from the ship by raft.

On the island the only animals he found were goats, cats and rats, and from the first he subsisted chiefly on turtles, just as Robinson Crusoe did. For eighteen months he suffered intensely from loneliness and melancholy, "scarce able," says Steele's account, "to refrain from doing himself violence, till by degrees, by the force of reason and frequent reading of the Scriptures, and turning everything to account to better his condition. He now, taking delight in everything, made the hut in which he lay, by ornaments which he cut down from a spacious wood on the side of which it was situated, the most delicious bower."

Provided Against Illness

"The precautions which he took against want, in case of sickness, was to lame kids when very young, so that they might recover their health, but never be capable of speed. "His habitation was extremely pestered with rats, which gnawed his clothes and feet when he slept. To defend himself against them he fed and tamed numbers of young killings, who lay about his bed and preserved him from the enemy. When his clothes were quite worn out he dried and tacked together the skins of goats, with which he clothed himself, and was inured to pass through woods, bushes and brambles with as much carelessness and precipitance as any other animal. It happened to him once that running on the summit of a hill he made a stretch to seize a goat, with which

under him he fell down a precipice and lay senseless for the space of three days, the length of which he measured by the moon's growth since his last observation."

Juan Fernandez had been for many years a favorite haunt of pirate ships, the first globe trotters, and it may be assumed that Defoe was familiar with many an account of landing on its lonely shores, as with the many stories of shipwreck and rescue which filled the London coffee houses during those adventurous years.

Pirate Stories

He may even have read John Esquemeling's account of the buccaniers of America, published in 1678, which mentions a predecessor to Alexander Selkirk, who was left on the island of Juan Fernandez during one of the pirate raids in which he participated.

He tells how the pirate ships, resting in the harbor of Juan Fernandez, received warning of the approach of three men of war, "but one, William, a Mosquito Indian, was then left behind on the island, because he could not be found at this sudden departure." The goats which figured so frequently in Selkirk's reminiscences also were useful to the pirates. On the first day they went ashore to drive goats; they killed three score, and similar quantities every day following. They also found great numbers of seals, lying so thick on the shore that they had to kill them before they could find space to land, and had to beat them off with clubs before they filled their water jars at the fresh water springs.

Robinson Crusoe, it will be remembered—or will be told you by

any ten-year-old boy of your acquaintance—made no mention of any fur-bearing animals on his island. He found few animals of any kind save goats and turtles. It is rather from his description of the plants and fruits which he found on his island that the location is definitely ascertained to be in the tropics rather than the temperate zone. Tobacco he found growing wild, as well as sugarcanes and aloes. He found melons on the ground and grapes growing in such abundance upon the trees that he made them the mainstay of his diet for years. He also mentioned oranges, lemons and limes, which he made into summer drinks.

He also described the alternation of wet and dry seasons, and the terrific heat of the summer months, which prevented him from doing any work during the middle of the day.

Put It in Caribbean

It is evident from these painstaking and accurate descriptions of tropical vegetation that Defoe had a tropic island in mind for his hero's abode. The reason it is definitely located in the Caribbean Sea, and can in fact be no other Caribbean island than Tobago, is found in the actual wording of the book. He mentions the mouth of the Orinoco River several times, and in one place says the land in sight from his island was Trinidad.

When "The Life and Surprising Strange Adventures of Robinson Crusoe" was first published, on April 25, 1719, the full title was "The Life and Surprising Strange Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner; who lived eight and twenty years all alone on an uninhabited island on the coast of Amer-

ica, near the mouth of the great River of Oroonoko; having been cast on shore by shipwreck, wherein all the men perished but himself. With an account of how he was at last strangely delivered by pirates. Written by himself."

When Crusoe was shipwrecked he was on a voyage from Brazil to Africa in search of slaves for his plantation, and was blown from his easterly course by the storm. Of his location at this crisis he says:

Crusoe's Account

"The master of the ship made an observation as well as he could, and found that he was in about 11 degrees of north latitude, so that we had gotten beyond the coast of Guiana and beyond the River Amazonas, toward the great River Oroonoko (Orinoco). . . . So we changed our course and steered away northwest by west, in order to reach some of the English Islands, but a second storm came upon us and drove us so far out of the way of all humane Commerce that, had all our lives been saved to the sea, we were rather in danger of being devoured by the savages than of ever returning to our own Country."

The definite mention of 11 degrees of north latitude makes it clear that Tobago, rather than any other of the numerous Caribbean islands, was Defoe's choice for his hero's refuge. Tobago had been discovered by Columbus on his third voyage and named by him from its resemblance to the shape of a tobacco pipe.

At the time Defoe wrote his romance the island was familiar to Londoners as the scene of many contests between French, Dutch and English men of war, but had been declared by the treaty of 1684 a

neutral island, to be visited by European fleets only for wood and water, and left entirely in the possession of its aboriginal inhabitants. Therefore, while Defoe chose to ignore the natives when he planted Robinson Crusoe on an uninhabited island he was at least historically correct in placing him on an island which had no European residents.

Modern visitors to the island declare that his description of the currents which swept between the islands is a faithful description of the same tides to-day; and, finally, in Crusoe's own words, it is recorded that the island of Trinidad was in sight, as follows:

"When I passed the Vale where my Bower stood, I came within view of the Sea, and it being a clear Day, I fairly descried Land—whether an island or a Continent I could not tell; but it lay very high and at a great distance. . . . I ask'd him (Friday) how far it was from our island to the shore, and whether Canoes were not often lost. And he told me there was no Danger—no Canoes ever lost; but that a little Way out to Sea there was a Wind and a Current, always one way in the Morning and another in the Afternoon. This I understood to be no more than the sets of the Tyde, as going out and coming in; but I afterward understood it to be occasion'd by the great Draught and Reflex of the mighty River Oroonoko in the Mouth or Gulph of which our Island lay. And the Land which I perceiv'd was the great Island of Trinidad, on the north point of the mouth of the River."

This seems to prove the case. Juan Fernandez is Selkirk's island, but Tobago is Robinson Crusoe's.