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The Hague in War Time

THE first thing I did when I arrived at The Hague was to jump into a low-decked cab to see if the Peace palace was still there, writes Karl K. Kitchin. I found it was, and looking quite new and clean, despite the fact that it is untenanted. I'll confess I wasn't much impressed with the huge pile of brick and stone built by my fellow townsman, Mr. Andrew Carnegie, and I'm sure I caught my cabbie laughing at me because I asked so many questions about it. However, the caretakers were positively enthusiastic about the building, and after I had paid a fifty-cent fee two of them assured me that it would be used for its intended purpose.

As I was in a hurry to reach the Hotel des Indes, I gave its empty marble corridors and yawning council chambers the "once over" and returned to my cab.

"Sehr nett, nicht wahr?" said the cabbie, who thought I was a German. I was tempted to say "nit," but I restrained myself with an effort.

Few people I met abroad spoke of the Peace palace seriously, and in The Hague the mere mention of Andrew Carnegie's name invariably provoked smiles or laughter. For Holland is in a position to know that peace in Europe is a remote possibility. And her own position, geographically and every other way, is a very difficult one.

What The Hague is Like.
The Hague is one of the smallest and least distinguished capitals in Europe. It is really only a suburb of Rotterdam, for it is but twenty-five minutes' ride by electric train. It has a population of about 300,000. Its most imposing pile is the unused Peace palace. The Royal palace looks more like a barracks than a queen's residence.

However, The Hague gives one the impression of being quite an impor-

tant little place, especially in the early hours of the evening. Then the narrow little streets in the heart of the city are thronged with people and the hotels and coffee houses are filled to overflowing. Of course, there are plenty of uniforms in evidence, but what is even more noticeable is the large number of Germans, Belgians, Austrians and English who are on every side. Like all neutral capitals on the continent, The Hague is a clearing house for spies. All the Germans, Belgians, Austrians and English one sees are not spies, but many of them are. They do not keep to themselves, as one might expect, but chat with each other across the tables in the coffee houses and bars.

German, Belgian and English newspapers are sold in the streets, and in large numbers, for the reason that there is nothing in the Dutch papers but rumors. Two Belgian papers, l'Echo Belge and La Belgique, are published in Holland, but the Berlin and London papers, especially the Berliner Tageblatt and the London Times, have the call because a larger proportion of the population reads and speaks either English or German.

The Hotel des Indes, which is the best hotel in Holland, is the mecca of the members of the diplomatic corps. Its prices have advanced slightly since the war owing to the increased demand for accommodations. In general, however, restaurant prices are the same as they were two years ago, and one can have a Dutch treat for very little money.

A French opera company is playing at the leading theater—giving performances of "Rigoletto," "Carmen," "The Jewels of the Madonna" to good houses. In addition, there is a playhouse devoted to musical comedy where "The Marriage Market" is the bill, and a variety theater where a fairly good revue is holding forth. I dropped in to see a portion of the revue. It was played in Dutch, but

there was enough German in it for me to catch a few of the jokes, which were about the war. After the theater I went to the Cafe Central, which is the principal rendezvous for the well-to-do Hollanders, wealthy refugees and international spies. It one is fond of gin and biters—the national drink of Holland—the Cafe Central is not half bad. But the Dutch beer served there is a great disappointment after the wonderful Pilsener at the Deutsches Haus in Vienna. And its cocktails are vile. I discussed the "bloedige corlog" (which is Dutch for the awful war) with a friend from Rotterdam, who is in the shipping business. He was particularly bitter against the English because the ships of his line had been held up for weeks, with the result that the annual dividends were cut in half. "Our sailings are regulated by the British admiralty," he said. "Of course they can wipe us out if they choose to do so and we can't do anything. Literally, we are between the devil and the deep blue sea. And I tell you we'll all be glad when the crazy nations stop killing each other."

"Which side will be victorious?" he repeated. "Well, you can bet on it that peace won't be made here in The Hague. Peace will be dictated either in Berlin or London. You can take your pick. Personally, I pick Berlin, for I don't believe the entire world could crush Germany, let alone the allies, as they are lined up today."

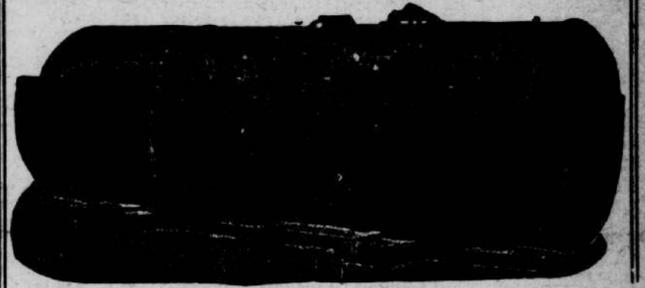
It is interesting to know that conscription is in force in Holland today. Before the war the young men of each district drew lots to determine who should serve and who shouldn't. Today every youth must serve in the army unless physically unfit. Nevertheless, the people of Holland are very well satisfied with their present form of government. The queen is very popular, and is frequently seen walking about The Hague attended

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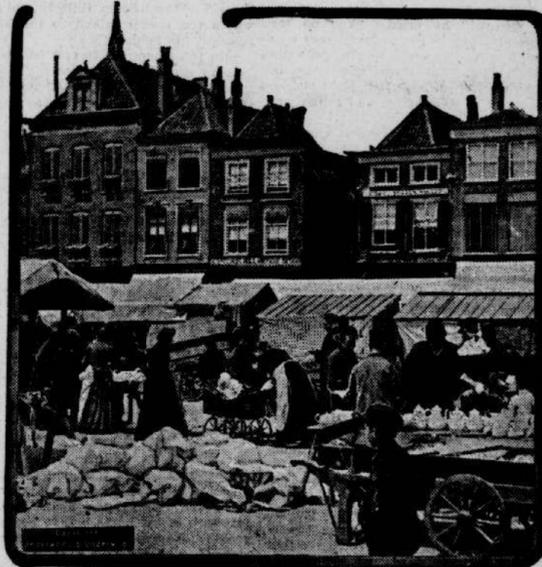
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IN THE MARKET PLACE

tant little place, especially in the early hours of the evening. Then the narrow little streets in the heart of the city are thronged with people and the hotels and coffee houses are filled to overflowing. Of course, there are plenty of uniforms in evidence, but what is even more noticeable is the large number of Germans, Belgians, Austrians and English who are on every side. Like all neutral capitals on the continent, The Hague is a clearing house for spies. All the Germans, Belgians, Austrians and English one sees are not spies, but many of them are. They do not keep to themselves, as one might expect, but chat with each other across the tables in the coffee houses and bars.

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by a single companion. The Socialists make a little noise from time to time, but they are in the decided minority. Little by little the country is regaining its former prosperity, and a big boom is expected after the war. No one was able to give me any real reason for their optimism, but the fact remains that they are optimistic.

Head of German Naval Staff.
Admiral von Holtzendorf, recently announced as the new head of the German naval staff, is former commander of the German high seas fleet and one of the big men of the navy. Emperor William gave him command of the high seas fleet at the outset of the dreadnaught era, when the advent of the all-big gun type of battleship made Germany a dangerous rival of Great Britain, and he retained that command until just before the war began, when he was succeeded by Admiral von Ingenohl, who gave way in turn last spring to Admiral von Pohl.

North Carolina Dobbin is a Loafer.
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St. Joseph, La., May 12, 1915.

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