

and the documents are, in general, very well arranged, though not all equally well preserved. The greater part are contained in parchment-bound volumes, in most instances paged and indexed for convenient reference. They consist, chiefly, of minutes of the proceedings of the States General, at their ordinary and secret meetings, kept by their *Greffiers*, or clerks; in which are entered, in detail, the resolutions of that body, on all matters coming before them. These registers commence with the year 1579, and are preserved in an unbroken series, from that date. The diplomatic correspondence of the Government, as well as copies of general letters, and also the instructions and commissions issued from time to time, are preserved in several separate series of books. The original papers and memorials received by the States General from time to time, are arranged on *Liasses*, or files, or are tied up in bundles, which are deposited in the *Secrete*, and *Loket*, Kas. These papers have suffered much more from the effects of time and exposure, than those in the bound volumes.

It was necessary that careful and laborious researches should be made in all these different repositories. Aided by the accurate knowledge and long experience of Mr. J. A. de Zwaan, the "Commis Chartermeester" at the Royal Archives,—and whose enthusiastic and untiring co-operation I am proud to acknowledge, contributed in an essential degree to the success of the research,—I was unremittingly occupied during several months, in a toilsome investigation, in the course of which upwards of four hundred volumes and bundles of papers were carefully examined. Many of the documents were worm-eaten and decayed; and the circumstance that most of them were written in the perverse and obscure characters common in the seventeenth century, increased not a little, the difficulty of the research.

The results of my investigations in the archives at the Hague, however, strengthened the impression I had previously entertained, that though a great and valuable amount of information, on points either entirely novel, or at best but imperfectly known in our history, was there contained, the records of the Dutch West India Company, which had the supervision and direction of the colony of New Netherland, were the grand magazine in which I might hope to find those more particular details of voyages, discoveries, emigrations, settlements and personal narratives, which would be of the highest interest to the descendants of the early settlers, as well as to the his-