

lature, and was so favorably received as to induce the grant of twelve thousand dollars in aid of the funds of the society. Its library to this day remains a noble monument of the munificence of the State, and of the liberality of individuals.

In this memorial, the prescient mind of Clinton suggested, in effect, the measure which it was left to after days to see carried into execution. Referring to the gaps and deficiencies in our own existing records, the papers of the Dutch West India Company and the archives of the then Government of the Netherlands were pointed out, as the sources whence materials for the Dutch portion of our history were to be obtained ; and the records of the Plantation Office, (Board of Trade,) in London, and the library of the British Museum, were also alluded to, as affording an important and inestimable fund of information respecting the period of our subjection to the crown of Great Britain. The public offices in Canada, it was also suggested, might contain much of interest to our historians. But circumstances for a long time prevented any direct effort being made by the society, to obtain the favorable consideration of the subject by the Legislature ; and it was not until the year 1838, that any formal steps were taken in the matter. In the month of April of that year, upon the motion of Mr. George Folsom, a memorial was prepared and presented to the Legislature, urging the importance of an investigation of European archives, for the purpose of procuring those materials for the illustration of our history, which our own State records could not furnish ; and praying the State to undertake, for the benefit of the people, an enterprise the society of their own means were unable to carry into execution. This memorial, however, was presented so near to the close of the session, as to render it expedient to postpone further efforts till the next year ; when, the subject having been clearly and forcibly introduced by a message from the Governor, and its importance urged upon the members of the Legislature, by the zealous and unwearied attention of Mr. John L. Stephens, the late Mr. William L. Stone, and others, an act was passed, with great unanimity on the 2d May, 1839, authorizing the appointment of an agent "to visit England, Holland, and France, for the purpose of procuring, if possible, the originals, and if not, copies of all such documents and papers in the archives and offices of those governments, relating to, or in any way affecting the colonial or other histo-