

sonable in itself. Any Dutch law which is inconsistent with such well-established and reasonable custom, and has not, although relating to matters of frequent occurrence, been distinctly recognized and acted upon by the Supreme Court, may fairly be held to have been abrogated by disuse.'

This *dicum* has been characterized as 'a bold decision,' but it may be regarded as authoritative, and may serve to indicate the difficulties of administering the law and the important discretion which the judges have in declaring it. The bulk of the law is contained in the writings, in Latin or Dutch, of authorities such as Voet and Grotius, and in the *placaats* or statutes passed in Holland mainly about the time of the Reformation. Occasionally the legal and lay world is startled by the unearthing, by a too learned judge, of some long-forgotten *placaat* or manuscript, and the hand of the clock of justice is put back accordingly. The legislature becomes aware, but does nothing. Such antiquarian escapades, however, though disconcerting, are fortunately rare, and the judges have held the telescope to their blind eye, generally preferring to administer justice in accordance with modern ideas, to a pedantic adherence to the letter of the written law of mediæval Holland. The doctrine of *stare decisis*, on the whole, prevails, and thus by a steady stream of decisions, the law which is as flexible as the English law, has been moulded into a more modern form. The basis of the law is the civil law and Germanic customs. In the reported cases, Story occupies an honorable place with Pothier and the Roman-Dutch writers such as, Grotius, Voet, Van Der Linden and Van Leeuwerf. The general law is much akin to that of Scotland. In the early reports, references to Scottish authorities are frequent. The influence of the English law is due to the frequent citation of English text-writers and reports, especially the reports of the Privy Council which are binding.

The statute law has been largely taken from that of England. The law of crimes, contract, tort, evidence and insurance differs little from that of England and America. The marriage law favours the liberty and equality of spouses more than that of England. The Deeds Registry, imported from Holland, facili-