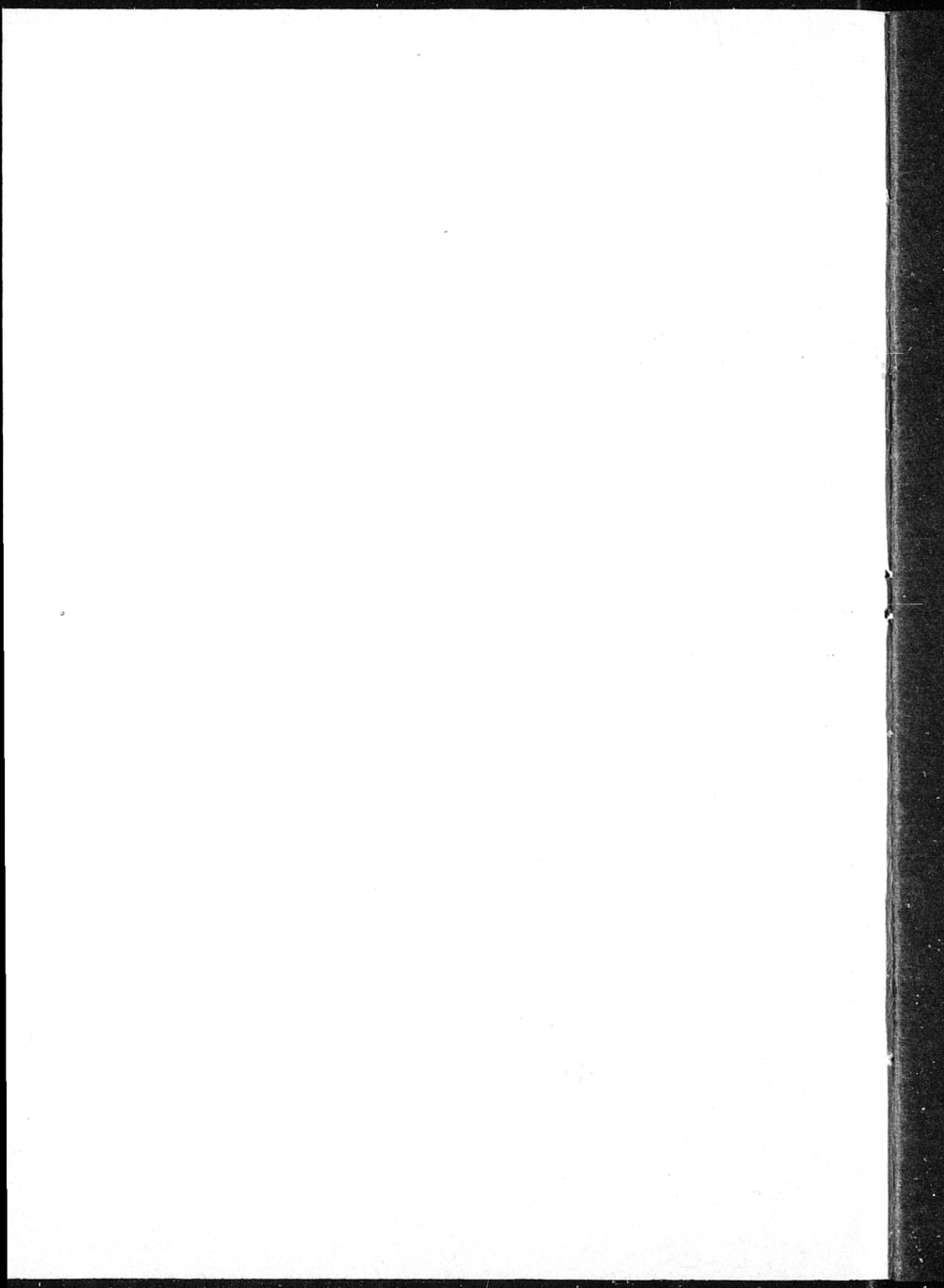


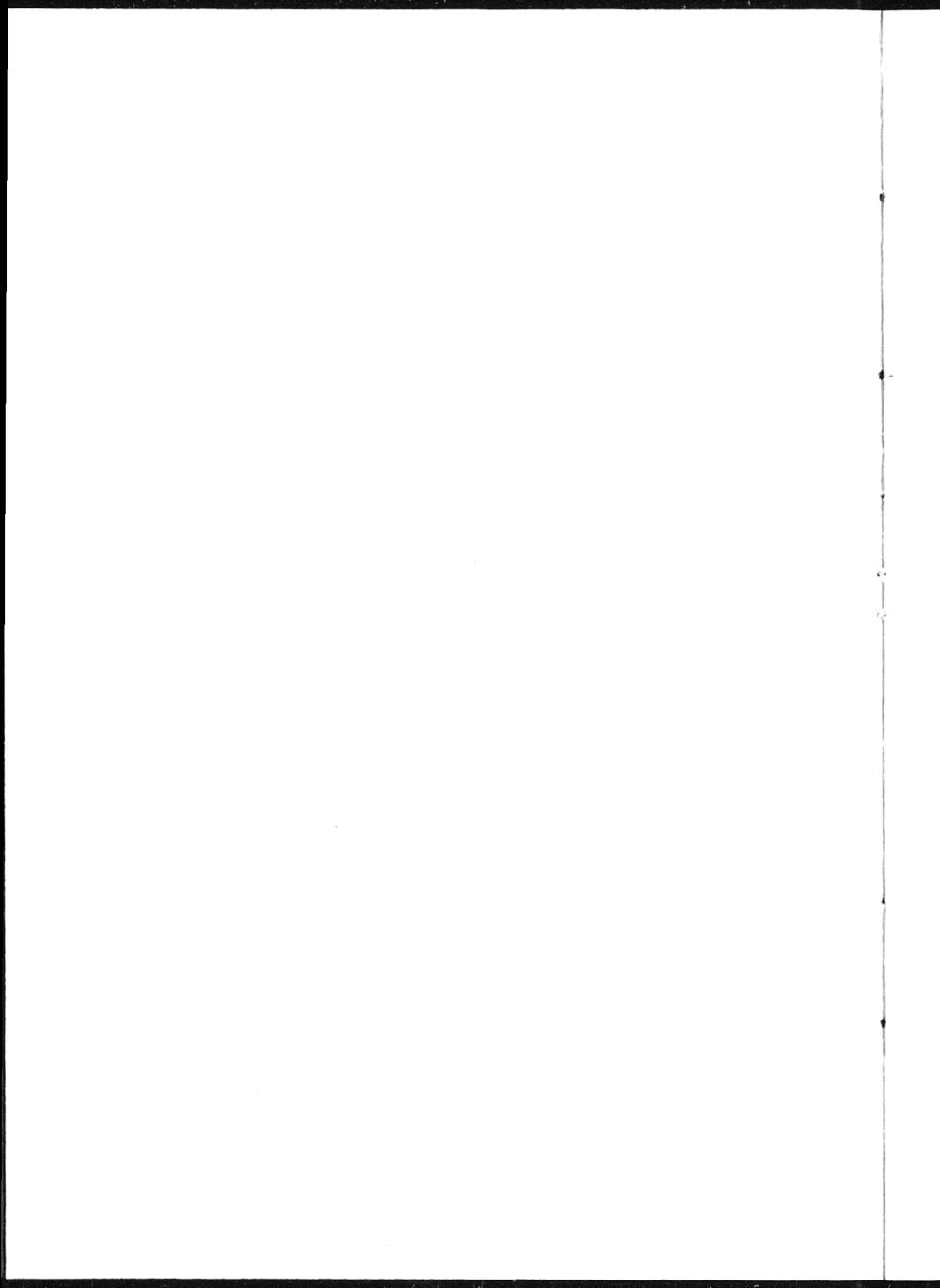
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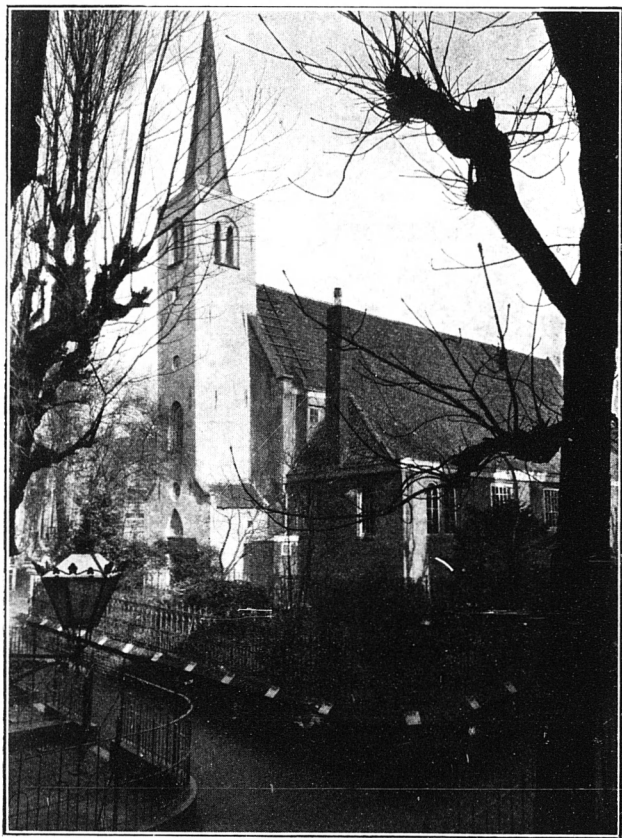




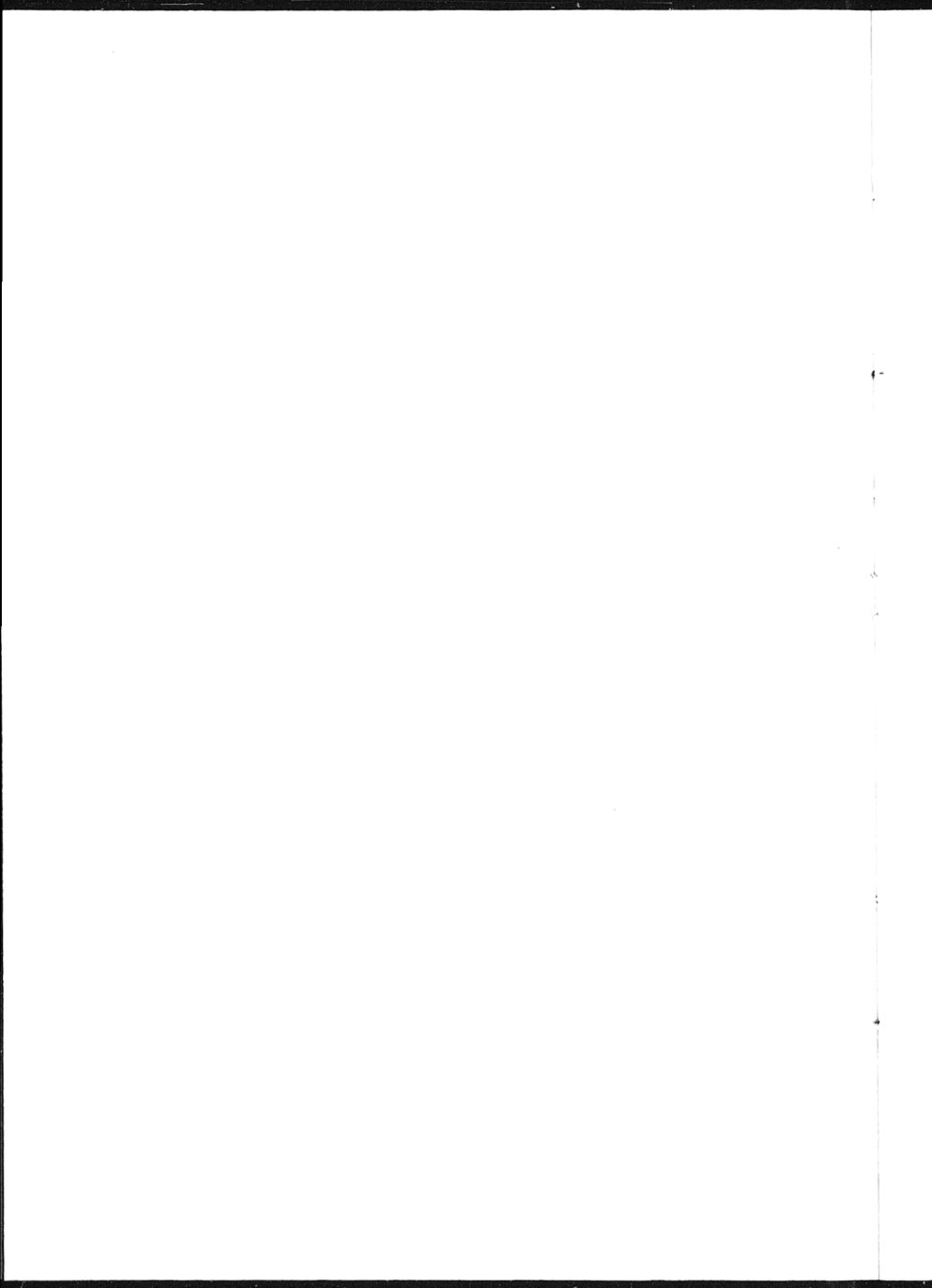
ENGLISH REFORMED
CHURCH

AMSTERDAM.





EXTERIOR OF THE CHURCH.



THIS SHORT HISTORICAL SKETCH
COMPILED MOSTLY FROM THE CHURCH RECORDS
AND PREPARED BY THE CONSISTORY
IS PRESENTED WITH THE
COMPLIMENTS OF THE
MINISTER,
ELDERS AND DEACONS.



ITS OBJECT
IS TO SET FORTH MATTERS OF
INTEREST RESPECTING THIS CONGREGATION.



IT IS DESIRABLE
THAT THE PEOPLE BE ATTACHED TO THEIR
CHURCH BY AN INTELLIGENT
APPRECIATION OF ITS
HISTORY, FAITH,
USAGES AND
SPIRIT.



Minister: Rev. WILLIAM THOMSON, M.A., B.D.
ordained (Church of Scotland) 12th Nov. 1894,
inducted 28th April 1895.

Divine Service: Every Sunday at 10.30 A. M.

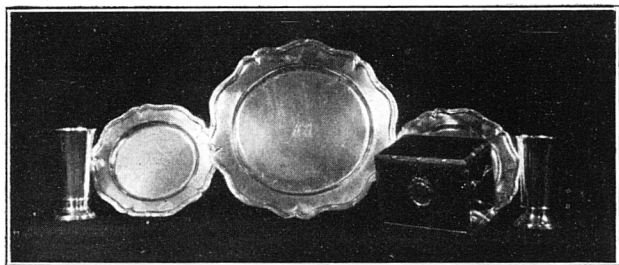
Bible Study at 7.30 P. M.

Catechumen & Guild Classes, Wednesdays at
appointed hours.

Choir Practice on Saturdays at 8.30 P. M.

LESSONS IN ENGLISH are given
on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, and on
Monday and Thursday evenings in the school-room
13 Taksteeg, by a certificated teacher in the
English language.





THE COMMUNION PLATE.

THIS is one of the oldest, and from an historical point of view, one of the most interesting English speaking Congregations on the continent of Europe. It is now almost 300 years since in the quaint language of the Church records, which, with the exception of the years 1813 to September 1817 are complete and in good order: "In the yeare of our Lord and Saviour 1607
 "and on the fourth daye of the month of February
 "after the new stile about 4 of the clock in the after-
 "noone, was the Church in the round bagine hof opened
 "in the presence of mijnheer de Schout, and Ds. PETRUS
 "PLANCIUS, minister of the Dutch Church att Amster-
 "dam, and att that present was the pulpit brought in
 "and sett up for the use of the English Church att
 "Amsterdam publiquely erected by the consent of the
 "honourable the Senate of the forenamed city. Which
 "their love and bountye towards us of the English

"nation the Lord repay unto them a thousand folde in
 "this life and in the life to come with eternal happiness.
 "Amen." The Church, which dates from about the
 year 1400 *, is situated in the centre of the city, near
 one of the busiest thoroughfares — Kalverstraat —
 in a quiet and retired court, called Begijnenhof.
 This HOF or Court derives its name from an ancient
 order of nuns called the Begijnen, for whom it was
 originally erected and who still inhabit it. This order
 got its name from Sr. BEGGA, daughter of PIPINUS,
 Duke of Brabant, who lived about the year 698 and in
 honour of whom the Romish Church observes the 17th
 day of December. It was used as the Chapel of the
 Begijnen until the year 1578, when Amsterdam em-
 braced the Reformed religion and as a consequence
 the Churches of the city passed by authority of the ruling
 powers into the possession of those who had adopted
 the Reformed faith. How it was employed from this
 time up to the year 1607 is doubtful, but in that year
 it was assigned to the English speaking Presbyterians
 resident here in the beginning of the 17th century. The
 terrors of tyranny and persecution and the allurements
 of freedom and commerce brought many to the United
 Netherlands. Especially during the cruel reign of MARY,
 and afterwards at the time of the restored Stuarts many
 were driven to seek refuge here. And there is no reason
 to doubt that the inestimable privilege of having an

* The date 1574 over the entrance to the Court indicates
 the time when the gate was erected.



ENTRANCE GATE.

in 1798, in 1807 and 1827 the members of that community joined in our worship and partook with us of the Communion elements of our common Lord and Saviour.

To Congregationalists it is most interesting to know that this Church existed while the Pilgrim Fathers were in Amsterdam and that some of them worshipped within its walls. About the year 1600 the Brownists — dissenters from the Episcopal Church, so styled from ROBERT BROWN, their founder — who had settled at Amsterdam, chose FRANCIS JOHNSON as pastor and HENRY AINSWORTH as Doctor or Teacher. They were joined by JOHN SMYTH of Gainsborough and several others in 1606, but this new party, adopting doctrines not unlike those shortly afterwards promulgated by ARMINIUS, was forthwith expelled. Mr. SMYTH and his adherents went and settled at Leyden. Up to the year 1701 the small community of Brownists still remaining continued to attend the place of worship in Barndesteeg, off which there is an alley which still goes by the name of Brownists' gang. In that year however their establishment was entirely broken up and their last representatives were, at their own solicitation, received as members of this Congregation.

In addition to their stated pastors the Magistrates continued to supply the Congregation with assistant Ministers till 1709, when they were pleased to institute a second charge and from that year down to the departure of Rev. ALEXANDER BISSET in April 1863, this church, with very short intermissions, enjoyed the

ministrations of two clergymen, whose salaries were in the course of years equalised.

Till a century ago there was also a special visitor of the sick, named Ziekentrooster; and Deaconesses were appointed with short intervals from 1665 down to 1861.

The church has been considerably enlarged and altered since it came into possession of this Congregation and its appearance within is quaint but not inelegant. Its present seating accommodation is about 350. This enlargement was made in 1665, when many English families took refuge in this city after the restoration of CHARLES II to the throne of England in 1660. The Consistorial and Deacons' Chambers with all that lies southward of the pillar, were added at that time. The Congregation appears by its own records to have been larger at this period than at any other time since it was formed. The Rev. Dr. JAMES BLINSHALL, one of the Ministers of this Church, states in the short sketch that he drew up of the Church in 1764 that he was credibly informed that the north wall of the Church was rebuilt from the East door to a little beyond the pulpit about the year 1727 and that some years after that date the small windows on each side of the pulpit were struck out in order to give more light to it.

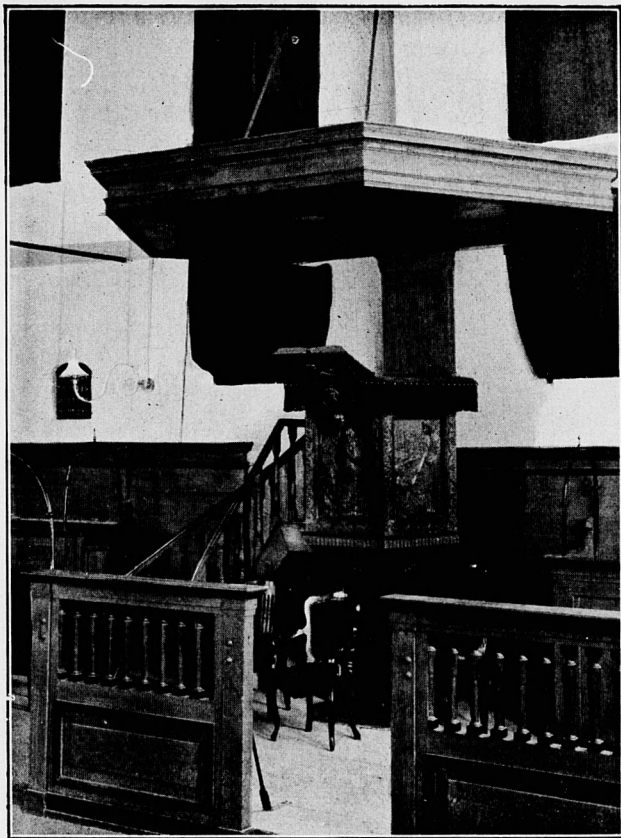
Up to the year 1865 the Church was used as a place of interment, and permission was even granted to the nuns to be buried in a special part of the Church that had been consecrated in the days of Popery. When a Begijn died, 12 of the sisters carried the body

in solemn procession three times round the court-yard immediately before burial.

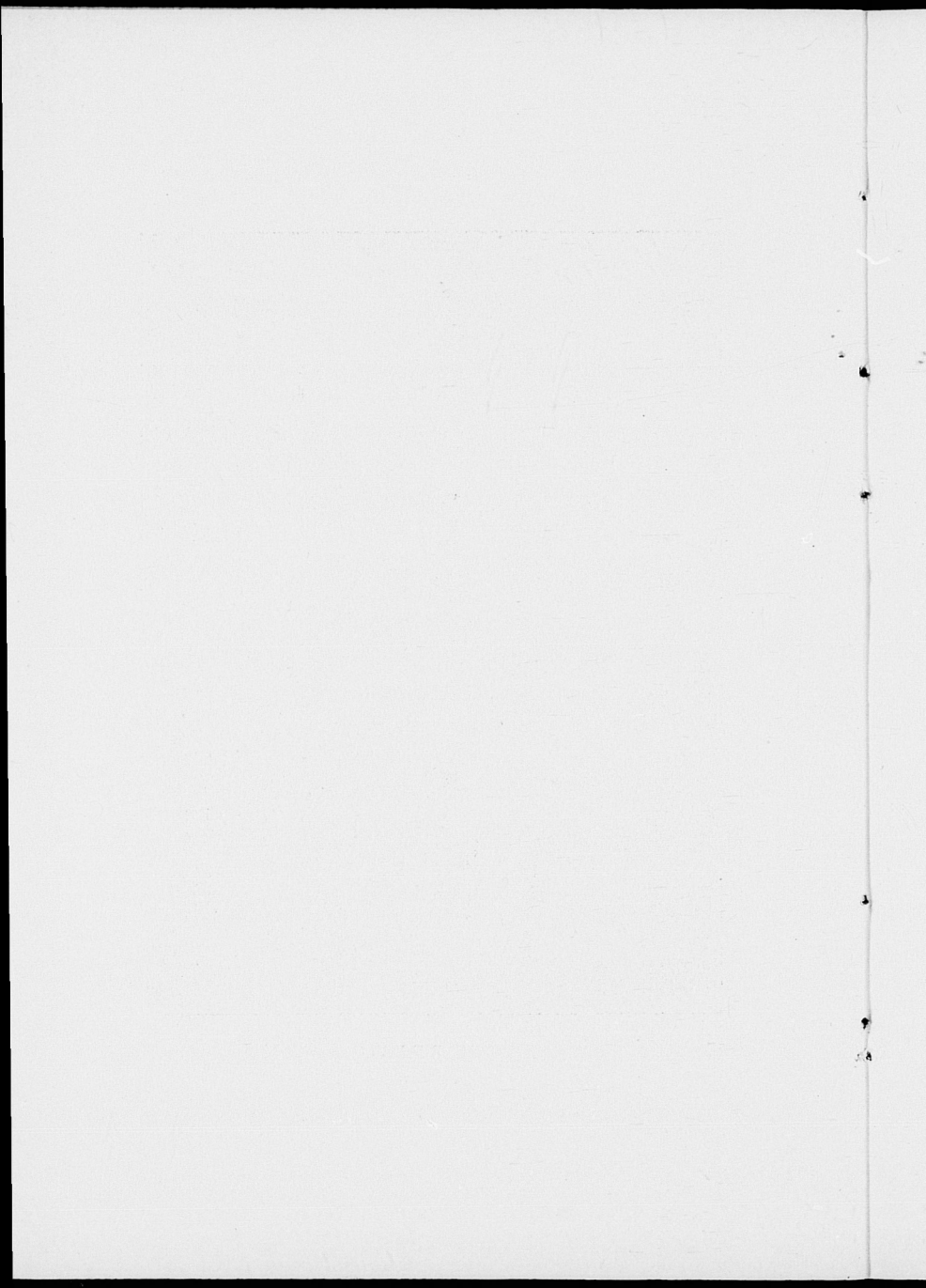
The elegant brass desk on the pulpit with the initials W. M. R. R. anno 1689, together with two candlesticks were presented by WILLIAM OF ORANGE and MARY, King and Queen of England. The brazen sconces are also said to have been given by these high personages. Among other gifts presented to the Church by a few wealthy members may be mentioned a handsome organ, inaugurated in December 1753 and renewed in 1874, a clock, a silver font of baptism (1771) and a magnificent service of silver plate for the Communion Table together with two ebony boxes to be placed on that Table for receiving the gifts of the communicants to the poor. The silver cups were a present from IZAAK SINKESON who was an elder between 1710 and 1720.

As a memorial of the accession of H. M. Queen WILHELMINA to the throne of the Netherlands on the 6th Sept. 1898 four beautiful carved panels were by the voluntary contributions of the members placed on the pulpit. These respectively represent the Church as a Teacher and a Benefactress, as having a message to deliver and a work to do. On another panel Church and State join hands in mutual alliance, while the front panel represents an angel entreating a blessing upon the coat-of-arms of the Netherlands.

In the connection that for long existed between the classis of Amsterdam and the Dutch and German Reformed Churches of America, this Congregation played an important part. This was especially so, in the case



THE PULPIT.



of the German Reformed Church. It was the sister-congregation at Middelburg that gave in 1764 to the (collegiate) Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of the City of New-York its first Minister to preach in the English language. And the Rev. DAVID THOMSON, "a young man of uncommon prudence and extraordinary ministerial qualifications", who was Minister here from 1742 to 1758, used his influence in raising a large fund of some £ 20,000.— in England and Scotland for the Germans of Pennsylvania. In 1751 the Rev. Mr. SCHLATTER had come to Holland to plead for the shepherdless Reformed Congregations in Pennsylvania. His words found a ready response in this land, which is well-known for its liberality and Christian philanthropy, but nowhere more so than in Amsterdam and especially in the heart of the Rev. DAVID THOMSON. With rare generosity this Congregation gave him leave of absence to visit England and Scotland to plead the cause of the shepherdless Pennsylvanians. He managed to get an audience with GEORGE II, King of England, who gave him a contribution of £ 1000, the Princess of Wales gave £ 100, and other nobles and Churches made liberal contributions. He was further successful in getting the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to order a collection in December 1752 which amounted to £ 1200. To this day the Reformed Church in the United States acknowledges that the English Reformed Church of Amsterdam has a peculiar claim upon their interest, because of what she thus did for their forefathers. And some years ago one of her

Ministers gave expression to this feeling of gratitude in the course of a sermon which he preached from this pulpit.

One of the earliest translations into the English language of the Heidelbergh Catechism, the Confession of Faith and of the Liturgy of the Dutch Church, was made by the Ministers and Consistory of this Church. In 1740 TATE and BRADY's versification of the Psalms of David was introduced along with a collection of hymns — the first perhaps ever used in this country — chosen from the collection of Dr. ISAAC WATTS, Mr. JOSEPH STENNEL and SIMON BROWN. And all through its history the Ministers, Elders and Deacons have rivalled each other in promoting the effective celebration of divine ordinances and the spiritual edification of the flock by providing the best collection of hymns with music available. At present *the Scottish Hymnal*, *the Psalter in metre*, and *the Scottish Anthem Book*, are used in the service of the Church.

In common with all the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, this Congregation makes needful if not ample provision for the care of its poor. The collections on Sunday mornings are devoted to this object. Down to the year 1865 there was an orphanage and old people's Home belonging to the Congregation situated at first in Looiersgracht and afterwards in O. Z. Achterburgwal near Stoofsteeg. After that date it was found more economical to board the orphans in private families and the old people in the Home belonging to the Dutch Church, so that this orphanage

was in that year broken up. For a time the building was used as the Sick Children's Hospital before that institution was removed to more extensive premises in Sarphatistraat. The house is now let by the Deacons and the rent added to the funds of the poor.

An interesting historical account of the above named Home and of the Chamber of Deacons was written in the year 1844 by one of its members J. J. TEDING VAN BERKHOUT. This statement shows the great care and attention the various deacons in office have given to this important department of Church work. And it may be interesting to note that among their number gentlemen of high position in the city have held office and rendered willing service, as for example in 1764 the Banker JOHN HOPE, who became schepen (sheriff) of Amsterdam in 1765; in 1787 RUTGER JAN SCHIMMELPENNINCK, afterwards Raad Pensionary of Holland. Further might be mentioned gentlemen belonging to such wellknown Amsterdam families as the following: BIJLEVLT, BORSKI, CLIFFORD, CROMMELIN, HODSHON, LUDEN, MELVIL, PLOOS VAN AMSTEL, ROELL, DE JONG SCHOUWENBURG, STAATS-BOONEN, TEDING VAN BERKHOUT, TAAK TRAKRAANEN, VAN TUYLL VAN SEROOSKERKEN, VOOMBERG.

It may also be stated that a School for the teaching of the English language was with permission of the Magistrates opened by the Deacons in February 1840 and continues to the present day to perform a useful part in the education of the young members of the Congregation.

In May 1842 Consistory established the Amsterdam

British and American Seamen's Friends' Society, the object of which was to visit the British and American vessels, coming to this port and to invite the officers and men to join in the worship of the Church. With the consent of the town authorities a Bethel-flag was hoisted at a conspicuous part of the quay where the men gathered on Sunday mornings and from thence proceeded to Church. In 1878 this Society was dissolved, but the Minister still continues to visit the boats in the harbour and sick sailors in the city hospitals. Consistory is ever ready to consider applications from needy sailors or their families and to grant support to those who are found deserving.

During the digging of the North-Sea-Canal in 1865 and succeeding years our Minister the Rev. JOHN MC. ILRAITH preached every Sunday at Velsen to the large colony of English and Scotch engineers, mechanics and workmen who resided at Velsen and were engaged in these works. As however it was found necessary to have a Minister resident in that neighbourhood, the British and Dutch governments granted means for this purpose, and in 1866 the Rev. ELIAS HENDERSON came from Glasgow to undertake this duty.

It will thus be seen that the work of this Congregation has been of a varied and important nature extending even beyond the borders of the city. Those belonging to many different denominations join in the service, so that the Congregation is at once Catholic and Protestant and is a standing evidence of the unity that exists among Protestant Churches.

During the summer months a very large number of British and American tourists visit this city. It is calculated, from various trustworthy sources, that 20,000 Americans spent some time in Amsterdam during the summer of 1902. Many of these joined in our worship. As far back as the year 1608 it is mentioned in the records that "the young earl of Essex was come to hear the sermon" and in 1621 the King and Queen of Bohemia, the "Winter-king" as he is called, who had found refuge in Holland, came for a like purpose. Since 1900 a visitors' book lies open for signature in the Consistory Chamber after divine service, and hundreds of visitors from different parts of the world have signed their names.

In conclusion it may be stated that the Consistory of the Church is composed of the Minister along with four elders and four deacons. A Sunday School with 50 scholars meets every Sunday immediately after divine service. And in the evening at 7.30 an adult Bible-Class, to which all are made welcome, is conducted in Church by the Pastor. During the week the Catechumens receive instruction at appointed hours, and Biblical and Literary Classes are taught by the Minister.

The Church choir meets for practice every Saturday-evening, and at Christmas and Easter they give special Choral Services, when a collection is made on behalf of some philanthropic or missionary object. The Church Magazine is issued monthly, giving in the supplement details regarding the Christian work carried on by the Congregation.

In fine, the various agencies of the Church are all in

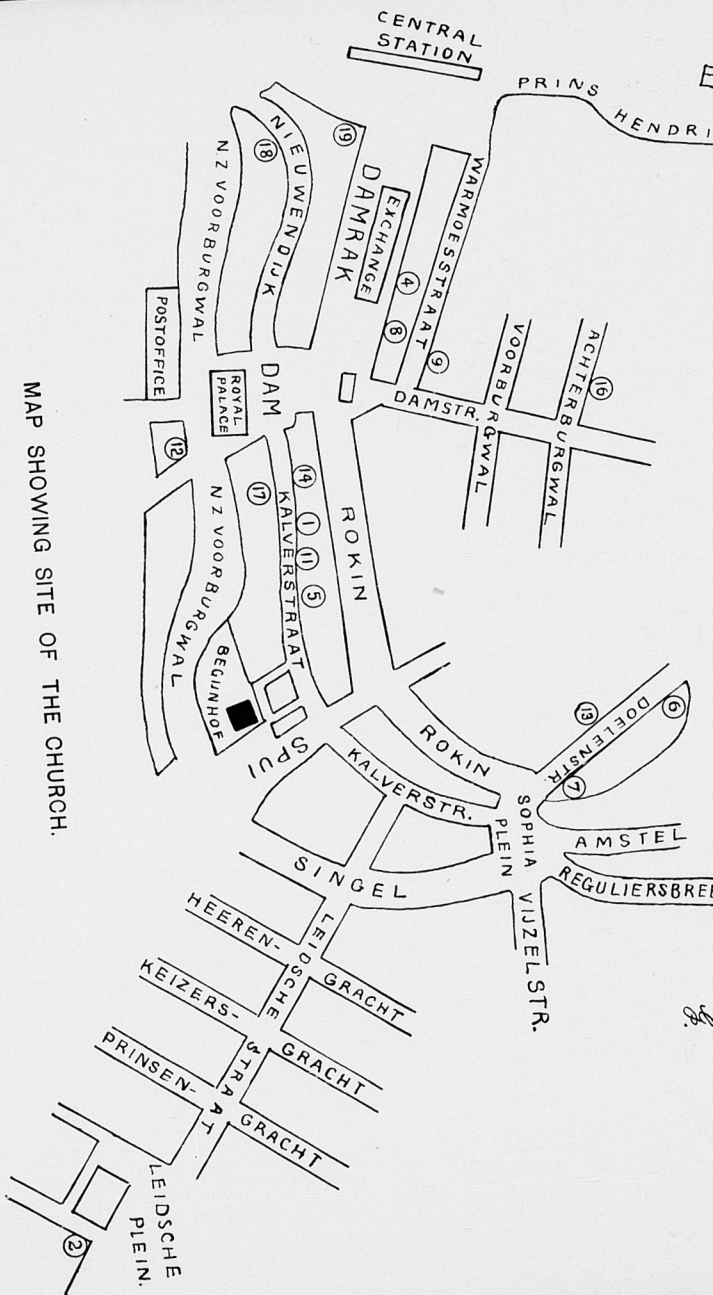
a healthy state and this Congregation is still permitted in the Providence of God, to fulfil an important place in the church life of Amsterdam. The Lord *hath* been mindful of us, He *will* bless us.

Now may the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make the members of this congregation perfect in every good work to do His will, working in them that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.





MAP SHOWING SITE OF THE CHURCH.



PRINS HENDRIK KADE

B.

ACHTERBURGWAL

DOELENSTRAAT

AMSTEL

REGULIERSBREEDST

REMBRANDT
PLEIN

HEEREN-GRACHT

KEIZERS-GRACHT

PRINSEN-GRACHT

FREDERIKS
PLEIN

AMSTEL

SARPHATISTRAAT.

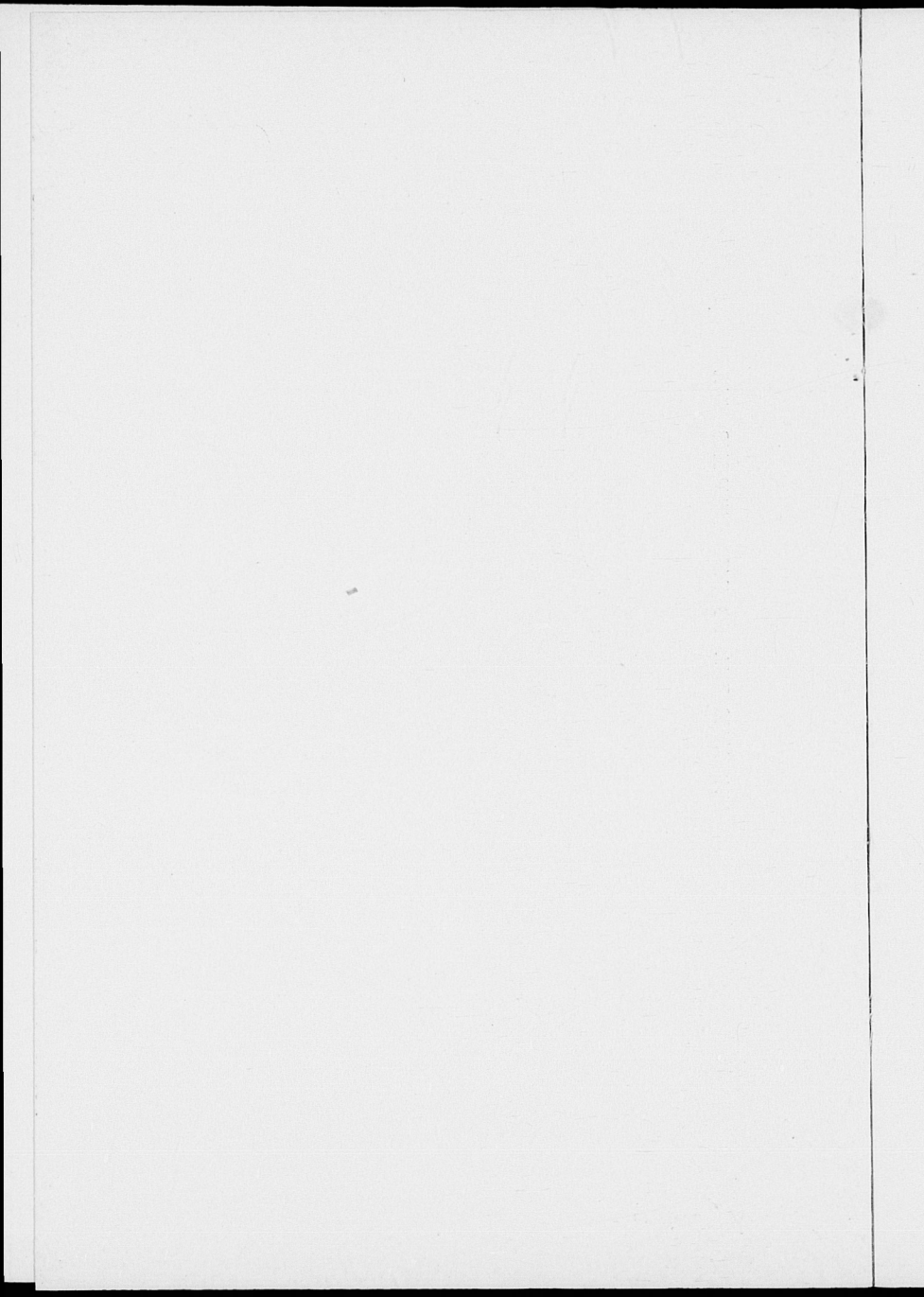
W.P. STATION

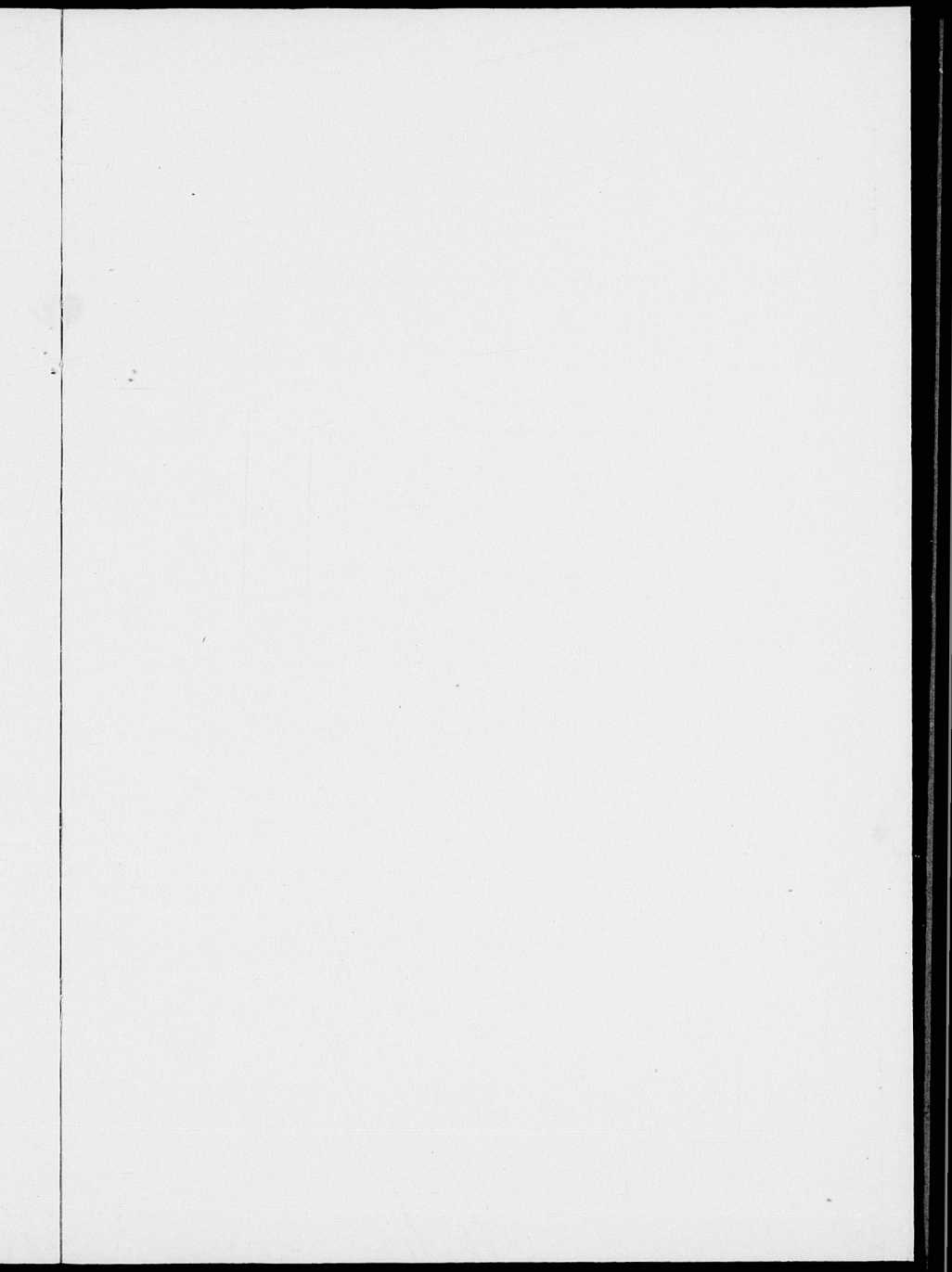
■ English Reformed Church.

1. Hôtel Adrian.
2. » American.
3. » Amstel.
4. » Bible.
5. » Commerce.
6. » Doelen.
7. » Europe.
8. » Hasje.
9. » Krasnapolsky.
10. » Mille Colomes.

11. Hôtel Neuf.

12. » Palais Royal.
13. » Pays-Bas.
14. » Polen.
15. » Rembrandt.
16. » Stadt Elberfeldt.
17. » Suisse.
18. » Vermont.
19. » Victoria.
- A. American Consulate.
- B. British »





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