

Groningen was not again rendered defensible until 1255, when the construction of another stone wall around it was undertaken. The circuit of the place was then estimated to be about two and a half English miles.

About the year 1334, the *Ommelanders* or country-people of Friesland became antagonistic to the interests of the town-people, and an open war with the people of the city of Groningen ensued, in which the inhabitants of the rural districts, principally those of Hunsingo, Fivelgo, Langewold, Vredewold, Drenthe, and the Eight Parishes, participated. The Groningenburghers at first twice defeated the combined forces of their antagonists, but in a third engagement they themselves were worsted. The struggle thereafter was indifferently prolonged until the contestants consented to have an arbitration commission appointed to settle their differences. Thereupon a body of ecclesiastical dignitaries and distinguished laymen¹ was selected to render decisions for the settlement of the disagreements existing between the people of Frisia and those of the city of Groningen.

The Latin text of the unique decree, published on the festival of Saint Paul, June 30, 1338, is engrossed on a scroll of parchment, twenty inches wide and ten long, in the lower border of which slits were made for attaching the seals of the eight districts designated in the instrument. The valuable document is carefully preserved in the Government or Old Archive (*Rijks of Oud-Archief*), a fire-proof building behind the Province-house (*het Provinciehuis*), opposite but back of Saint Martin's Church, in Groningen. Written as it was a century and more before the art of printing by movable type became serviceable for the publication of books, the antique method of abbreviating words and of punctuating sentences is curiously exemplified in the remarkably legible text.

The residence of Otto Swartewold, at that time in the district of Drenthe, in Friesland, lying south of the city of Groningen, and about thirty English miles southeast of the site of Zwartewoude, was probably caused by a marriage contracted by him there, or by an inclination to attempt the betterment of his fortune in that locality, which was only a day's journey from the family manor. It may be well to remark that a beginning of the Dutch way of spelling the family name is evident in his writing it Swartewold, for he omits using the German adjective *schwarz* and adopts the Dutch adjective *swarte* while retaining the ancient Teutonic substantive.

Otto Swartewold was undoubtedly a man of marked integrity as well as of considerable intellectual ability, since he was selected one of the number of arbi-

¹ "*De talrijke hooge geestelijken en leken*" (the numerous high ecclesiastics and laymen) *Wandelingen door het oude Groningen*, vi. Door Mr. J. A. Feith, Rijksarchivaris in Groningen.—Jaarboekje voor Geschiedenis, Taal-en Letterkunde der provincie Groningen. 1895, p. 89.