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*Address*

AT THE

Three Hundredth Anniversary

OF THE SETTLEMENT OF

JAMESTOWN

*By*

HON. THOMAS NELSON PAGE ✓

RICHMOND, VA.

WHITTET & SHEPPERSON, PRINTERS

1919

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It seems to me that what is said on this spot on this occasion should relate to the spiritual side of the work and the fruits of the Jamestown settlement, whose Three Hundredth Anniversary we are here today to celebrate, rather than to the material or physical side. And it is in this spirit that I wish to deal with it in this presence.

And first on this spot on this occasion I wish to mention with reverence the name of Sir Walter Raleigh: "Lord, and Chief Governor of Virginia," to whom, under God's Providence, more than any other human being is due the fact that this Country belongs to the English Speaking Race, and the Civilization which it represents.

Three hundred years ago, on this Island—which until then, through all the ages, since the birth of things, had lain desert and untrodden by any feet save those of the wild beast and the yet wilder savage,—to which Spain had simply asserted a traditionary right as a part of the vast unknown region of the American Continent—landed a little band of sea-worn Englishmen and took possession in the name of God and of the Crown of England. Since the 20th day of December preceding, when they weighed anchor in the River Thames and dropped down the stream with the receding tide, they had in their three little ships been making their way slowly and painfully across the wintry Atlantic. These small vessels: "The Sarah Constant," (of one hundred tons) with Captain Christopher Newport, the Admiral, in command, "The Goodspeed," (of forty tons), with Captain Bartholomew Gosnold, the Vice-Admiral, and "The Discovery," a pinnace, (of twenty tons), with Captain John Ratcliffe, had, reckoning all the time since they weighed anchor in the Thames until they dropped anchor in

the Powhatan, made only about one knot per hour. Time moves slowly when weighted with the burden of Fate. Those frail boats in which men might hesitate now to cruise along the margin of the coast, bore in their wombs the destinies of Nations. When on May 13, 1607, they moored to the trees of this Island in six fathom water, they moored Europe to America. They moored the Old to the New. They moored the English Civilization with all its possibilities to the New World with all its possibilities. There were times when it appeared that their cables were in danger of parting. But though frayed to the slenderest, they never wholly gave way.

Let us pause for a moment to get a view, if we can, of the conditions environing and enveloping their great enterprise.

When that band of "four-score souls" boarded those little ships in the River Thames and weighed anchor, England was just preparing to celebrate the great annual holiday of the English People: Christmas. It was the England of the "spacious times of Great Elizabeth;" for the after-glow of her mighty reign had not yet faded out. Raleigh and Bacon and Coke and Southampton and Burleigh and Walsingham, were among the statesmen of England, and Ben Johnston and Michael Drayton, were among her poets.

Christopher Marlowe and Edmund Spenser had but now laid by their lyres; and in London, Marlowe's fellow-countyman, who gave a new realm to England—a realm out of the imagination, as Raleigh gave a new physical realm, was writing those immortal dramas which are today the heritage of America no less than of England. With the bells of London almost beginning to peal out their Christmas chimes, these men bound for the Virgin land after many prayers and sermons in sundry churches, boarded their little vessels and dropped down the river, headed for Virginia.

For six long weeks they lay anchored in the Downs, thumping up and down, within but a few miles of the English shore; where their courage was sustained, says the chronicle, by "Worthy Master Hunt," the simple parish priest, who though

so ill that his bodily sickness is noted in the report, stood forth at need the first of that courageous band of Soldiers of Christ, whose highest ambition has ever been to serve their Master faithfully by sea or land; reckoning, like the great Apostle to the Gentiles, that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed" hereafter.

It was not until the 18th day of February, two months after starting, that they lost sight of the English coast and found themselves upon the shoreless sea, with naught visible but the heaving waste of waters and the heavens above.

We know from the reports that they touched and rested a few days at the Azores, and found for a brief period a summer land in the Islands of Dominica and of Nevis, where the wonders of the Tropics first dawned on their astonished vision.

At Nevis some trouble occurred, taking shape, as is known, in something like mutiny, and because thereof, one of the chief of the voyagers fell under such suspicion that he was put under arrest, or, to use his own term, "was unjustly restrained of his liberty;" in which condition he remained until the 26th day of June following, when he was sworn of the Council of Virginia, and emerges from obscurity into the romance which has for three hundred years enveloped the fame of "Captain John Smith": Sometime, "Governor of Virginia, and Admiral of New England."

It was the 26th of April when, "about four o'clock in the morning," storm-tost and travel-worn, they entered the Capes of the Chesapeake, and dropped anchor for the first time in the waters of Virginia.

They anchored England to America.

The day that a besieged city capitulates is not so truly the day of its capture as the day on which the besiegers plant their standard upon the walls never again to be taken down. So, much more here. The approach had been long and arduous. Effort after effort, attempt after attempt had been made

through more than half a century to make a breach in Spain's extensive defenses. A break had actually been made twenty-odd years before by a gallant and devoted band on Roanoke Island, some scores of leagues to the southward. But the assault had finally failed: the little band on Roanoke Island had disappeared into the mysterious limbo of Croatan, the vague land of Romance. It was this new band of settlers who on this May day, 1607, finally seized and permanently held the outpost, which was the key to the Continent, and led to the supremacy of the Saxon Race, with its Laws, its Religion, and its Civilization in North America.

The account of the landing given at the time tells how, "After much and weary search with their barge coasting still before, (as Virgil writeth Aeneas did, arriving in the region of Italy called Latium, upon the bankes of the River Tyber) in the country of a Warrowance called Wowinchapuncha, (a ditionary to Powhatan) within this faire River of Paspieheigh, which we have called the King's River, they selected and extended plaine and spot of earth which thrust out into the depth and middest of the channel, making a kinde of Chesonesus or Peninsula. The Trumpets sounding, the Admirall strooke saile and before the same the rest of the Fleete came to an ancor, and here to loose no further time the Colony disimbarked, and every man brought his particuar store and furniture together with the general provision ashore." \* \* \* \* And thereupon, "a certain canton and quantity of that little half Island of ground was measured which they began to fortifie, and thereon in the name of God to raise a Fortresse with the ablest and speediest meanes they could."

Except the historical student, no one knows what the earliest settlers and their immediate successors had to face. Death was nothing to those men. It was a mere incident of the life, as it is today of the soldier's in the field. It was the torture of the savage; the stake and the rack of the Spaniard; "the arrow that flyeth by day and the pestilence that walketh in darkness"—all these they found. Of the one hundred and

four men left by Newport when he sailed from Virginia in June, 1607, he found on his return in January with the first supply, but thirty-four alive: Of the four hundred or thereabouts left in 1609, Lord Delaware found but sixty-two or sixty-three surviving in 1610. In the next twenty years, of the seven or eight thousand who came to Virginia to seize and settle her for England, over six thousand died on the way or in the first year of their "seasoning."

As we stand here today, it is almost impossible for the mind to conceive what these men underwent. The whole world has been not only explored, but become well-nigh as familiar to us as our own home county or town. We read in the morning press accounts of the ordinary happenings in every quarter of the globe. Every sea has been charted and almost every land has become the playground of the tourist. The fabled labors of Hercules, and the far-famed travels of Ulysses are surpassed by a thousand captains who sail the Arctic and the Tropic Seas. But in those days those men faced every danger which the human imagination could conjure up and faced it with a constant mind. If they turned back to England months and months away, of toilsome, tedious and perilous travel, they found the Spaniard with sword and rack and stake on the horizon. If they faced the new Continent, they looked into the vast, impenetrable and illimitable forest, behind every tree of which and in every patch of weeds in which there lurked a murderous foe. They had reached a charmed but an unknown land with a changeable and untried climate; their provisions originally intended to last only until they could seed and harvest a new crop, had been wasted during their long voyage, and would not last them out. Their form of government was one ill calculated as it proved, to meet the needs of their situation. But their direst enemy was one more lurking than the savage Indian and more fell than the cruel Spaniard. They had pitched upon a landing-place simply because of the security which it offered against their enemies, without knowing aught of the climate and its perils, and it proved to be a spot so malarial that before the first summer was out, sixty men of

the one hundred and twenty were dead of wounds and disease. The sounds of their sufferings so impressed itself on that scholarly historian, George Percy, third President of the Colony, that he pictured it in one of his reports, whose virility is today, the wonder of the English writers.

“Burning fevers destroyed them, some departed suddenly, but for the most part they died of mere famine. There were never Englishmen left in a foreign country in such misery as we were in this new discovered Virginia. \* \* \* \* There was groaning in every corner of the Fort most pitiful to hear. If there was any conscience in men,” says the historian, “it would make their hearts to bleed to hear the pitiful murmurings and outcries \* \* \* some departing out of the world, sometimes three and four in a night; in the morning their bodies trailed out of the cabins like dogs to be buried.”

It came to the point, “when ten men could neither go nor stand.”

This was the sickly season when, without knowledge of malarial disease, they were in their half-starved condition at the mercy of the agues and fevers. But happily, the change of the season came at last; the winter, a bitter one on both shores of the Atlantic, drove away the pestilence.

Then came the picturesque incident over which historians of late have quarreled so much, when according to Smith's account, his life was saved by the young Indian Princess, Pocahontas. Time fails to repeat the arguments in this place. To me they appear to establish the fact beyond reasonable question. However, that may be, that winter the small remnant of men explored and charted the waters of the Chesapeake with its noble tributaries to the Falls of the Potomac, where the Capital of the Nation now stands, as within a short period afterwards they explored the northern Chesapeake and the Susquehanna, mapping their discoveries with an accuracy which is the wonder of the present time.

A conspiracy plotted by Kendall, in the absence of the exploration party, to seize the pinnace and sail northward to

the shores of New Foundland, where the fishing fleet from Europe might always be found, was defeated, possibly by the return of Captain Smith;—at least, he has the credit of it. The guns of the Fort were trained on the mutineers, and Kendall, the ring-leader, was promptly tried and shot. Curiously, the discovery of the plot was due to a private who was under sentence of death for having struck the President when the latter was beating him, and who, when he was mounting the gallows, divulged the conspiracy.

Smith himself came near falling the victim to a partisan faction, he was tried for having lost his men during his exploration, but his life was saved by the unexpected return of Newport with provisions and reinforcements for the Colony. Among these was an element which possibly did more to establish the new plantation than even the provisions, for among the new immigrants were a number of women.

Once more came the starving time; but young Pocahontas appears to have been the guardian angel of her new-found friends.

The time is filled with exploration, with attacks on their Indian enemies, and counter attacks, with charges and counter charges; but all the time the little Colony was establishing itself for England and for her Faith, at the cost of as brave and devoted lives as were ever laid down for the cause of Religion and of Freedom.

In the *Nova Britannia*, dated February, 1609, are given the plans, objects and hopes of the Virginia Company. The chief objects are stated, "First to advance the Kingdom of God. Second, to advance the Kingdom of England. And third, to relieve and preserve those already of the Colony, and lay a solid foundation for the future good of this Commonwealth."

Time fails on this occasion to mention the names of even the leaders of those wonderful men, and yet more wonderful women, who laid the foundation for the future good not only of this Commonwealth of Virginia but of this great Commonwealth of the United States. Unnamed as they are, and un-

honored as they have long been, they saved this Continent for Protestantism and the English Civilization.

We have not time here to do honor even to that "valiant gentleman," Edward Maria Wingfield, first successor to Sir Walter Raleigh as Governor of Virginia; or to those brave members of the "First Counsell, who were in front in mayntayning the Forte," on that fierce attack by the Indians, while Newport was exploring the King's River, and planting a "crosse" on Whit Sunday, 1607, at the Falls where now stands the Capital of Virginia.

I can only take time to mention an episode which must have brought happiness into at least two hearts, and more cheer possibly into the little fever-stricken settlement which rose where we stand today.

Soon after Newport's departure for England in December, 1608, there was a marriage betwixt John Ladron, carpenter, and Anne Burrus, the maid of Mrs. Forrest; he aged 26, she but fourteen. Mrs. Forrest was the first gentlewoman, and her maid the first woman servant "that arrived in our Colony," "which was the first marriage we had in Virginia," and was the first marriage according to the Protestant rite of matrimony which occurred on this Continent.

Time fails me to go into the story of the sufferings and struggles, the heroic deeds, and yet more heroic sacrifices that these settlers endured. Of all that brave and gallant company not one found that for which he set forth, save haply, "Worthy Master Hunt," who counted nought so that he might win souls to Christ, and Captain John Smith, who owes his abiding fame even more to his pen than to his sword.

Christopher Newport, who was the Guardian Angel of the Colony, and preserved it from extirpation on more than one occasion, has no monument in all this State of Virginia. It is questionable if even the name with which he is supposed to be associated, actually was derived from him. He explored the Seas of both the East and West; and having had sole command of the first five voyages which brought the first Colonists here



and subsequently relieved their necessities when they were about to perish; his shotted hammock was swung at the last in the long surges of the Indian Seas.

Bartholomew Gosnold, that "worthy and religious gentleman, "bold discoverer and explorer of both coasts of Virginia, was laid in an unmarked grave somewhere there where the waters have cut into the shore, and his heroic dust has long since been swept away by the waters of the James, like that of so many another brave and devoted soldier and mariner. Years afterwards, Captain John Smith declared that he had not one foot of ground in Virginia, "not the very house he had builded; nor the land he had digged with his own hands."

But though these men and their followers are not known save to a few historical students, their work is written large upon the History of the World. They laid the foundation for what we call North America. To use their own term, "they broke the ice and beat the paths," and the rest was comparatively easy.

From their work, and out of their contentions, for there was contention enough, came the enlarged Charters of 1609, 1612 and 1618, which gave and guaranteed to all Virginians and their posterity the rights, privileges and immunities of English-born citizens forever.

Previous to this time Colonists who left their country did not take with them across seas even those rights and privileges that they had at home; the new country was under Martial Law, with all who were therein. But when these English settlers came they insisted on bringing with them, and they brought with them, the rights of free-born Englishmen. And this was the first great service which this first Colony of England rendered to mankind.

If one were summoned to make good the claim that God had set His stamp here, he might point to the course of history which in its wonderful development led up through the strange chances and changes of the Sixteenth Century to the final and abiding settlement of the Continent by the Saxon Race with its

Civilization. He might show how Spain grew so great and powerful that she surpassed Rome in the days of her greatest might and extended her rule over many times the territory Rome ruled. He might show how, ignoring the example of Ancient Rome she endeavored to rule the minds as well as the actions of men; how a bigoted and mind-cramping ecclesiasticism fastened its tyrannical shackles on the aspiring thought of the time and threatened to destroy Civilization in its strongholds.

Then he might picture the great awakening throughout Europe; the apparent workings of Providence through the generations—which produced the Mariner's Compass; Gunpowder—and noblest of all inventions: the Art of Printing. You should see the light of the New Dawn extend as far as England, and there through the pious zeal of the Scholar Priest, John Wyckliffe, suddenly reach the people and as with the enchanter's wand, quicken them to life. Then you should see this awakened and quickened people declare against Foreign Ecclesiasticism, and, for England—and, from this time you should see the fierce struggle between England and Spain; the Saxon and the Latin—the New and the Old—the rights of the Englishmen and the pretensions of Prerogative: Civil, Military and Ecclesiastical.

All the middle of the Sixteenth Century was a long struggle between Spain and England—or, more rightly, between the Old and the New. And Spain had allied herself with the former and England with the latter.

Happily for the world, then came in the Providence of God to the throne of England a woman with the brain not only of a man, but of a man far beyond those who usually wear crowns. And yet more happily, she found herself at the head of an aroused and quickened people at the flood-tide of their force and genius—most of all aroused to the perils of Spanish domination; from which England had escaped by a hair's breadth. She had the blood of the English Gentry as well as of Royalty in her veins and she hated Spain with all her soul, and had good right to hate her!

Burleigh and Walsingham and Essex were her Counsellors; Drake and Hawkins; the Gilberts and Howards were among her seamen; Sidney and Raleigh were among her courtiers; and Raleigh, greatest of all her Statesmen, was but a Knight, knighted for Virginia.

While the statesmen helped her to play her great game in Europe; her sea captains helped her to bring it to success in those seas where Spain's overreaching power had decreed it to be death to fly any flag but her own.

The wealth, the power and the arrogance of Spain, with her bigotry, aroused the people of England to a pitch which had, possibly, not been known since the Norman conquest.

Although England claimed the middle part of North America by virtue of the discovery made in 1496, by John Cabot, under Patent of Henry VII., the Continent was won a hundred years later in the War with Spain, which lasted substantially through the last half of the Sixteenth Century.

For a generation the great sea captains of England had been training in western waters, and garnering up implacable hate against Spain. Sir Philip Sidney had written vigorously of England's opportunity and duty; Hawkins, Drake, the Gilberts, Grenville, and others had flouted Spain and fought her from Cadiz to Peru. And then in God's Providence came Walter Raleigh. Of all the great men of the time, as has been said, to him more than to any other was due the capture of this New World for England and her People. It was his far-reaching prevision that foresaw her worth—his lofty ambition that desired and his all-mastering genius that conceived and carried through the mighty plans which made her an English possession. He was the first and "Chief Governor of Virginia." To him more than to any other one man this Nation owes a monument; and stands as one.

We may not go into the long struggle he made to plant here the Banner of England and of Protestantism. He died after long imprisonment, a victim to the hate of the nation he had so long and implacably fought—the most foolish and

cowardly of all the sacrifices that unbridled power has ever made. But he had planted here a colony which contained the seed of a mighty nation which has made good his wildest imagining, and thank God, that he lived, as he wrote Sidney, he hoped to live, "to see it a Mighty Nation."

The crucial battle was fought in the English Channel in those summer days when the Spanish Armada succumbed to the aroused Saxon Spirit, when sufficiently aroused has always swept everything before it. Had the Spanish Armada been victorious the settlement of America by the Anglo-Saxon would have ended there forever, and with it, doubtless would have gone to decline the Anglo-Saxon civilization.

The victory which England won that day and in the succeeding days when the Sea Dogs of Devon hunted down the broken sections of the fleet which attempted to sail around the British Isles, but to strew their wrecks to the Hebrides to the South and of Ireland, was the inspiration to the English people to seize the American Continent for the Kingdom of God according to the Protestant Religion and for the Kingdom of England. And the victory which Raleigh and others won in Cadiz in 1696, completed the overthrow of the Spanish sea power, and justified Raleigh's title of "Shepherd of the Seas."

It has been charged by those ignorant of the facts or incapable of comprehending them, that Virginia was planted only for gain. The fact is far otherwise.

The planting of Virginia had its origin in the religious zeal of the people of England; the prime objects of the movement were ever expressed to be the "welfare of the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of England," and the final instructions to the first Colony that settled at Jamestown were closed with an exhortation "to serve and fear God, the Giver of all Goodness, for every plantation which our Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted out." This exhortation the new settlers ever observed, and though the forms of worship differed on their part, and on the part of the Puritans, no Puritans were ever more zealous than those Church of England colonists of

Virginia. Religious fervor was the characteristic of the time. The annals and records show that religion was a prominent part of their life, and from that day to this the people of Virginia have been among the most religious people in the world.

On that first Sunday when the Indians attacked the Fort, as soon as the attack had been repulsed, "Worthy Master Hunt" asked the President if it were his pleasure to have a sermon, and Wingfield replied, that the "men were weary and hungry, and if it pleased him we would wait until some other time." And even this failure was made the subject of a charge against him by his enemies.

The records are full of the piety of the time, and the ministrations of those faithful Soldiers of Christ, who came in the true missionary spirit, prepared to lay down their lives even with joy in their Master's service.

The first structure erected on this Island was a sail spread between the trees under which to conduct the service of God.

Possibly, the first edifice erected after the construction of the fortifications, was however rude, built for a Church, and on its site four sacred edifices arose before Jamestown ceased to be the Capital of Virginia. And now the fifth has arisen through the pious zeal of those worthy women, successors of the pious women who first contributed to make that spot holy.

The first act of Lord Baltimore on his arrival, when he had met and turned back the famishing remnant of the Colony, was to fall on his knees before he entered the South Gate of the Fort where Sir Thomas Gates was drawn up with his fifty soldiers to receive him.

The first laws posted in Virginia contained the laws promulgated by Argall and his Council enjoining attendance on Divine Worship under penalty of "lying neck and heels on the corps du garde for a day and night for the first offense, and slaverie to the Colony for a week; for the second, and slaverie for a month, for the third, slaverie to the Colony for a year."

A law was soon passed enjoining upon every plantation to have a room set apart for the service of God, which should be used for no secular purpose. Indeed, whatever the shortcomings of the Virginians were, the lack of piety was not among them. I venture to make the assertion that their attendance upon Divine Worship from the time of Argall's Laws, down to the last ringing of the Church bells has not been exceeded by the people of any other Colony or State in this Country. It gave the complexion to their life, and with chivalry and love of the rights of freemen gave its fibre.

It is true, that the seeking of wealth bore its part in the enterprise, as it has ever borne its part as one of the objects of human endeavor. Sir Walter Raleigh sought El Dorado; but who will be so stupid as to charge that this was his chief aim? So, none can read the true story of the founding of Virginia without discovering on how much broader a foundation it was laid. The aspiration was for the establishment of a great Protestant State: a bulwark for England across seas. The foundation was cemented by the dust of thousands of bold Soldiers of Christ, who left comfort and ease behind them to face death here in its most terrible form.

But there is not time even so much as to mention today the history of their self-sacrifice and lofty endeavor. All that may be done here is to point to their true story and give assurance that you will be well repaid for whatever trouble you may take to burrow out from the musty records of the time, their history; for you will find it the story of as high and as noble fortitude as ever illumined the pages of human endeavor. No embellishment is required. Truly it may be said, as was said at the time, "That nothing can purge that famous action from the infamous scandal some ignorantly have conceded, as the plaine, simple and naked truth."

We may not here even so much as touch on actions which were epoch-making in their results; for there is scarcely time to mention the names of Sir Thomas Gates, Sir Thomas Dale, Sir Samuel Argall, Sir George Yeardley, Sir Francis Wyatt,

William Claiborne and the long following of brave men who spent their lives for the First English Colony in America and her successors.

At the Michaelmas Quarter Court of the Virginia Company, 1619, Sir Edwin Sandys, a name ever memorable in the annals of America's founding, as that of the man possibly second only to Sir Walter Raleigh in his work for Virginia, recalled, "How by the admirable care and diligence of two worthy Knights, Sir Thomas Gates and Sir Thomas Dale, the Colony was set forward in a way to great perfection; whereof the former, Sir Thomas Gates, had the honour to all posterity to be the first named in His Majesty's Patent of grant to Virginia, and was the first who, by his wisdom, valour and industry, accompanied with exceeding pains and patience in the midst of so many difficulties, laid a foundation of that prosperous estate of the Colony, which afterward in the virtue of those beginnings did proceed.

"The latter, Sir Thomas Dale, building upon those foundations with great and constant severity, had reclaimed almost miraculously those idle and disordered people, and reduced them to labour and an honest fashion of life; and proceeding with great zeal to the good of this Company."

It is sufficient to say of Dale, that he abolished communism, under which the Colony had languished, and gave men their holdings in severalty; that he built the new town of Henrico in the loop of the James, which in 1612 had six rows of houses with the first stories of brick; had a hospital with four-score lodgings and beds sent over to furnish it; and that he sent an expedition under Samuel Argall to clear the Virginia coast as far as Nova Scotia of intruders who had settled thereon. That he quelled faction; dominated the Indians, and made a peace with them which substantially lasted until 1622.

It may be said of Argall, that "pleasant, ingenious and forward young gentleman," that he first crossed the Atlantic directly from England to the Chesapeake, and made the discovery that no counter winds or currents existed to prevent

such passage. That he carried out with supreme success Dale's plan of driving the French settlers from the coast of North Virginia, and made that coast secure for those Englishmen who came seven years later to found thereon the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay Colonies; thereby insuring forever the Anglo-Saxon civilization on that shore.

Incidentally it may be said, that Samuel Argall also first brought Negro slaves to Virginia, in his ship, "The Treasure," sometimes called "A Dutch Man-of-War," that being the technical title for a Privateer. So his name is written large on the History of both Virginia and New England.

Of Sir George Yeardley, "The Mild Yeardley," it must be said that under him representative Government which was a growth of the Virginia Colony, first came into actual being.

The Magna Charta of America was issued on November 28, 1618: "The Great Charter of Privileges, Orders and Laws" providing for popular elective government in the Colony. It is recorded that that night "A Blazing Star" appeared in the sky. It was a blazing star, indeed, which appeared in the firmament that day.

Here is the account of Yeardley's proclamation: "And that they, (the People of Virginia,) here have a hand in the governing of themselves, it was granted that a General Assembly might be held yearly once; whereat were to be present the Governor and Council, with two Burgesses from each Plantation, freely to be elected by the inhabitants thereof: This Assembly to have power to make and ordain whatsoever laws and orders should by them be thought good and profitable for our subsistence."

In pursuance of this Proclamation the First House of Burgesses of Virginia—the first representative assembly that ever sat on the American Continent, assembled with the Governor and Council, and on this spot, on Friday, the 30th day of July, 1619, held their first session. This was the beginning of popular government in America. That day they consecrated this spot to Liberty. That day the fountain sprang which was the



source of the great current which today represents American constitutional ideas.

Other fountains have sprung since then and have swelled this mighty current. From the little Mayflower and from her successors, and from that stern coast, once the coast of Northern Virginia, where they landed their brave companies, came vital streams to which I bear my willing tribute this day, as from other directions, South and West have poured in other streams, all tending to swell the mighty waters which make the vast main of American life, whose temperate waters temper every climate, and create on every shore the atmosphere in which Freedom springs. But this fountain, on this spot, was the source, and here, whoever comes, whether from New England; from the far South; from the middle West; or from that vast region on the shores of the farthest sea; come not as visitors, but as those to whom this hallowed spot belongs of right.

Outside of the small class of students of the history of that time little is known of the work accomplished by this Colony of Virginia and the people who founded it. Historians themselves have taken little account of the influence that this plantation and the work of its founders exerted in molding anew the thought of the English People in the direction of Liberty. Yet it was the necessity for a new form of government adapted to the needs of a wholly new system of colonial existence which brought the changes in the charters granted by the Crown to the people who undertook this settlement. It was the protests of Gabriel Archer, of Edward Maria Wingfield, of John Martin, George Percy, Christopher Newport, and others that influenced Sir Edwin Sandys and the Earl of Southampton, the Ferrars and their fellow-adventurers and co-workers to stand for greater freedom in the government, until the Spirit of Freedom had so permeated the English House of Commons that new charters were granted and self-government arose to take the place of royal prerogative. The Virginia courts became the talk of the English people, and every session was thronged with interested onlookers studying the new sys-

tem of government until they came to be known as the "Virginia Parliaments." The Spanish Ambassador warned King James I. that his Virginia Courts "were but a Seminary for a Seditious Parliament;" and James who was desirous to secure an alliance by marriage with Spain, set to work to suppress the liberties granted under the Virginia Charter.

In 1618, as already stated, the Patriot Party secured the right for the settlers of Virginia to elect a Representative Assembly, and this Assembly, composed of two members from each of the eleven Boroughs in Virginia, sat in the choir of that Church, and thus that sacred spot is doubly holy ground: consecrated to Religion and to Liberty.

From the first, the representatives began to assert their rights. They claimed the privilege of the Commons of England, of sitting with their hats on. They appointed a committee to take under consideration the Charter: and ascertain if it contained anything not perfectly squaring with the state of the Colony. "Because," said they, "this Charter is to bind us and our posterity forever." They further presented a petition to the Virginia Company in London urging that as under their Charter no laws could become final without the approval of the Company in London, so no orders issued by the Company in London should become effective unless approved by them as the Representatives of the people in Virginia.

The right thus claimed was accorded them by the Virginia Company in London the following year. And this was the first victory of the American people over the Crown.

Meantime, the contest went on between the Crown and the Court Party on one side, and the Patriot Party on the other. The latter represented by Sir Edwin Sandys, the Earl of Southampton, the Ferrars and other patriots, who by this time were identifying the rights of the people of Virginia with the rights of the people of England as against the claims of high prerogative asserted by King James and the Spanish Party.

The people were now alive to their rights. James awoke to the danger of so much liberty in his "fifth" kingdom, but it was too late. The Virginians had tasted the sweets of popular government and stood on their rights.

Everything appeared prosperous in Virginia, when without warning, on the morning of April 1st, 1622, the Indians fell on the unsuspecting Colonists and massacred over four hundred of them. Jamestown, the seat of Government, was saved through a warning given the night before by an Indian named Chanco; but from the Falls of the James to the Chesapeake the plantations were devastated. The flourishing town of Henrico was destroyed, and with it went the Hospital and the endowed College. Thus, the light which had been lighted with so much zeal was quenched in blood. Six members of the Council fell victims, including Mr. Thorpe, the Deputy for the College.

Had Virginia not already been established on a firm foundation, this blow must have destroyed her. As it was, it only served to excite both the Company and the Colony to renewed efforts. But the University, started with such high hopes, was dead. The settlers from this time applied themselves to the work of clearing all that region of a people who had proved so "subtile," and the leader of the movement upon same was the "Mild Yeardley." From now on, we find the settlers going on "Marches" three times every year to harry and do them all the damage in their power.

Happily for Virginia, and happily for the world by the time that King James felt himself strong enough to attempt to suppress our liberties they had become too firmly established for his plan to be carried out. Sir Walter Raleigh fell a victim; but the great Country which he had done so much to found, and of which he had been the first and "Chief Governor," survived, and survived also the spirit which he had done so much to create.

Any man but Sir Edwin Sandys, "rather the Devil than Sir Edwin Sandys," said the King, speaking of the election of the Virginia Treasurer and Chief Manager. But Sir Edwin

Sandys was elected Treasurer for all that. And though later King James nominated a number of men for Treasurer at another election, the Earl of Southampton, of Sir Edwin Sandys' Party and friends, was chosen by the Company. And when these men with others were arrested by King James by reason of their outspokenness in the cause of Liberty, the English House of Commons entered a protest on its records against this exercise of tyrannous power, and sent a Committee down to Kent to inquire after Sir Edwin Sandys. King James, it is true, was enabled for a time to assert his power. He went to Westminster, got possession of the minutes of the House of Commons and in the presence of his Privy Council, with his own hands tore from the records the pages on which they had spread their protest. He seized the records of the Virginia Company and revoked their Charters, appointing Royal Commissioners to make inquisition in Virginia. But King James's son was tried at the Bar of the English Parliament: that same body whose protest his father tore from their record book, and by law, died on the scaffold. And in that Parliament sat many of the men who had helped to make Virginia.

Virginia was Rolayist, but she was Royalist as Raleigh and Southampton and Sandys were Royalist. And no Republican or Roundhead was ever more jealous for his rights than were her Royalist people. When King James sent his Commissioners here to make their inquisition, and they demanded the Virginia records, the Virginia Assembly refused to give them up, and when their Clerk, Edward Sharpless, gave to the Commissioners a copy of the records, the Assembly stood him in the Pillory and cut off his ear.

It is a commentary on the way in which history is written that this punishment of Edward Sharpless is found in the most recent history of the settlement of this country, and doubtless one of the most complete, set down as an illustration of the form of punishment at that time in vogue in Virginia; but no mention is made of the significant fact that the punishment was inflicted for the crime of obeying the order of the Crown rather than the order of the General Assembly of Virginia.

James I. attempted to suppress their Charters by seizing them, but the records show that laws continued to be passed by the Governor and Council and the people of Virginia in Assembly. And in 1628 they extorted their Charters again from the reluctant hand of Charles I.

The origin of the Republican idea in Virginia has been dated by those ignorant of Virginia's history from the Stamp Act in 1765; by others not quite so ignorant, from Bacon's Rebellion in 1676; while yet others have dated it from the Session of the First Assembly in 1619. But the seed had been sown, and the plan had been growing, though with many a let and hindrance since the first experience of the Colonists and of the managers of the enterprise in England under "the King's faction-producing form of Government."

The popular Charters of 1609 and 1612, which sprang from the sentiment for a freer Government, themselves opened the way for the development of liberal ideas of government in the New Country. From the time that the Representatives of the people first sat on Virginia soil, there was never, as we look back on it now; any real danger that the people would not achieve their liberties. The object of Sir Edwin Sandys, when drafting the popular Charters, was to found a free popular State here. It was this idea, and the known realization of it, which brought the Mayflower and her ship's company of Liberty-seekers to the shores of Northern Virginia in 1620, as it had brought so many ship-loads to Virginia.

In 1624 the Virginia Assembly passed a law providing that no taxes should be levied in Virginia but by and with the consent of the Virginia Assembly. And this was the very ground on which one hundred and fifty years later the American Revolution was based. From this time, during this one hundred and fifty years, the continual assertion of this right was the product of the Virginia Colony and its civilization; for whether it was asserted in Virginia or in New England, it was based on the principle thus first enunciated and asserted by the Virginia Colony.

From this time the people were aroused, and not many years later when one of their Governors, Sir John Harvey, failed to espouse as warmly as they thought proper the cause of William Claiborne, "The Rebel," in his war with the Lord Proprietor of the new colony of Maryland, they "Thrust him out of the Government." This was the first revolution that actually took place on American soil.

They withstood Cromwell to the point of exacting what was a treaty with his Commissioners; but they readily assimilated the defeated Royalists who came over after Edge Hill and Naseby and Worcester, and the exiled Republicans who sought homes among the planters after the Restoration. The deposed Governor appealed to Charles I. who reinstated him as Governor, but the Virginians, though they received him loyally, as they later did his successor, Sir William Berkeley, were now well aware of the strength of their position. They were loyal subjects of the Stuarts, as they were a hundred years later loyal subjects of George III.; but they were more loyal yet to their idea of popular Government. Their petitions were filled with expressions of loyalty. They viewed the death of Charles I. with horror, and offered a realm to his son when in exile. But with it all went enthusiastic devotion to the cause of self-government, and whenever it was assailed they flamed into revolution.

"The Rebellion" led by Nathaniel Bacon in 1676, was at bottom for the same cause with that which a hundred years later was led by George Washington. The immediate occasion was different, but the basic cause was the same in both. The inalienable right of British subjects to have self-government. Both of them were based on the original Charters under which Virginia was planted.

As the years progressed and the settlements extended further to the Westward, other elements came in. Stout Scotch-Irish settlers poured into the Western Districts from North Ireland, particularly after the various revolutions. A strong infusion of Huguenot blood followed, and gave the Old Dominion some of her most noted sons.

Thus, the population of the Old Dominion was composed of sundry strains, all virile; and as the race pushed Westward they carried with them the distinctive civilization which still shows today along the lines they traveled, leaving its impress in Kentucky, Tennessee, Southern Ohio, Missouri and sections of many other States, and materially affecting all of them. For the civilization of the Old Dominion, while naturally more clearly preserved within her own borders, is not limited to her own long-shrunken confines. As the oldest, wealthiest and strongest Colony, she, during the Colonial period, most strongly influenced the life of all the Colonies; leading them finally in their action of breaking the ties which bound them to the Old Country.

She inspired the ideas, encouraged her sister Colonies; supplied the statesmen who led the movement and the Chief who led the Revolutionary Armies to final Victory.

It was by no mere accident that George Washington, Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson; the Lees; the Harrisons; the Nelsons; the Randolphs; the Blands and other leaders of the Revolutionary movement came from the shores of the rivers which pour into the Chesapeake. They were the product of the life established on those shores.

Then when Independence was achieved, she led the movement to establish a more permanent Union by the adoption of the Constitution of the United States, to effect which she surrendered her vast Northwest Territory which her sons had conquered. And having effected this, it was under one of her sons that the great Louisiana Territory was secured, and under another that the loose bonds of the Constitution were welded to make the whole homogeneous and effective.

The place where this Colony planted itself was so strategic that it became the battle ground in almost every war which followed in which America bore a part. Hampton Roads and the Chesapeake into which it pours, where now lie representatives of the navies of the world have been the scene of many of the important engagements of modern warfare.

The head of this Island, seized and fortified by these settlers whose deeds and endurance we are commemorating bears the indelible traces of a later and greater war whose fierceness and bloodshed many of us here remember.

Not long since it was my fortune to walk over this ground and view these imperishable relics of this dreadful strife; where the redouts of the Civil War rose upon the very ground where the first settlers planted their first fortress. Within fifty paces rose the only surviving remnant of the town which gave its name to this Island. The ivy-clad ruin of a Church Tower had survived all else save the foundation and the memories of this fateful settlement. Beyond it rose the rebuilt body of a Church—rebuilt through the pious and patriotic devotion of American women who bearing the patriotic name of the Colonial Dames of America representing more than even that distinguished class whose name they bear, for they represent whatever is best in American womanhood. And bearing the chief part of this work are those who come from the region once known as North Virginia. I cannot but think it the work of God that these pious women should place here as their memorial of the great deed here wrought the restored edifice of the First Christian Temple. And that God will bless the work.

That night I stood on the deck of a boat anchored on the bosom of the river and gazed on this Island as it lay under the moonlight and half veiled by the soft and mysterious haze. It was about midnight, and all nature appeared as though asleep: the veiled sky and long line of the shore with its clump of trees marking this spot, the placid river, the deep unbroken silence of the night transforming it into a scene of peace. The redouts had disappeared; even the sacred edifice itself was veiled from sight; only God's sky looked down upon God's earth. And it seemed to me as though wars and strife were but a dream, as though the differences and contentions and strifes were all petty and transient, and the only thing that was abiding and eternal was Nature and God, who has promised Peace to them who love Him.



Jamestown took on for me that night a new significance. It became the emblem of that earnest, devoted and patriotic zeal which inspires the heart of every true Freeman. In that mysterious haze all parochial lines and insular confines disappeared, and it became the real Cradle of the American People wherever they may be, and of that for which they stand fundamentally, however they may express it. By her shores glided the James bearing its flood of tempered waters to the great ocean whose currents help to create or temper the climates of the World.

The Avon to the Severn runs,  
And the Severn to the Sea,  
And Wyckliffe's dust is spread abroad  
Wide as the waters be.

Thus, the James cutting away through the long generations the edge of this Island in which lay interred the mortal remains of most of those who first came to seize this land for England and her civilization has borne that dust to all shores, and thus the work they performed has been borne on the tide of time to leaven and advance all the institutions of mankind.

This is no occasion for sectional or personal-selfgratulation. On this spot, at this time, such congratulation as we may venture to feel, if properly informed, must be National and Racial. The work, the deeds, the acts performed here belong not to us alone; but to every part of this country, and, in a larger sense, to every part of the world where men strive and aspire. From this spot went forth the streams which have made the great main of American life, and in a way, of all life which has been affected by the American life. Had this Colony not had being, it is possible that no other English Colony might have taken root on these shores. Had this Colony not had being it is almost certain that the life planted here would not have taken the form which it did take. Had this Colony not had being, it is possible that this republic might never have been, and that all the blessings that have flowed therefrom, including the blessing of human liberty, might never have been.

To this sacred spot then we have come this day to render duly our reverent expression of praise and thanksgiving.

It has been well said that God acts through His prepared agencies, and that He prepared Virginia to place the seal of His favor on and the Virginia colonists and their successors as His instruments to accomplish His mighty work.

On this sacred spot, chastened by the solemn associations which this holy ground evokes, we cannot but echo this thought; and when I speak of Virginia, it is not so much the present Virginia that I bear in mind as that "Old Virginia," whose eastern shores extended from her Floridian confines on the south to the forty-fifth degree of north latitude on the north, and whose border to the westward reached to "the furthest sea."

From her northeastern territory of "North Virginia," charted by and cleared of invaders by her Governors, came New England; and from her southern, her western and her northwestern territory, explored and conquered by her sons, have come all the States from the Carolinas to the "Furthest Sea."

In fact, this occasion belongs to all America. This spot belongs to the continent. The heart of it is Old Virginia; the core of the heart is this spot. But the body to which this heart and this heart's core belong is this Land—this People, whose representatives from all over the Union are assembled here today. Virginian as I am in every fibre of my being, I declare my belief before the High God that this spot belongs by indefeasible title to all the people of this country, and that there is no power under heaven to defeat their claim. To Massachusetts and Maine and New York and Michigan as to Kentucky and West Virginia, I say, it is yours—here our forefathers first planted the tree whose fruit was to be for the salvation of the nations. We hold it, but as a sacred trust for all. For here was the cradle not only of the Commonwealth of Virginia, but of the Republic.



















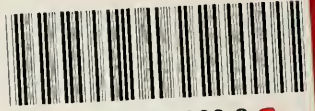


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