

An Account of our Late Troubles
in Virginia, written by

Mrs. Ann Cotten.

A List of those who have been
executed for the Late Rebellion in
Virginia, by Sir William Berkeley.

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AN ACCOUNT OF OUR LATE TROUBLES IN VIRGINIA, WRITTEN IN 1676 BY MRS. ANN COTTON OF Q. CREEK. PUBLISHED FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT, IN THE RICHMOND (VA.) ENQUIRER OF 12TH SEPTEMBER, 1804.

A LIST OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN EXECUTED FOR THE LATE REBELLION IN VIRGINIA, BY SIR WILLIAM BERKELEY, GOVERNOR OF THE COLONY.

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Published from the original manuscript in the Richmond (Va.)
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OUR LATE TROUBLES.

To Mr. C. H., at Yardly, in Northamptonshire :

SIR: I having seen yours directed to —————, and considering that you cannot have your desires satisfied that way, for the forementioned reasons, I have by his permission adventured to send you this brief account of those affairs, so far as I have been informed.

The Susquehanians and Marylanders of friends being engaged enemies, as hath by former letter been hinted to you, and that the Indians being resolutely bent not to forsake their fort, it came to this point, that the Marylanders were obliged, finding themselves too weak to do the work themselves, to supplicate—too soon granted—aid of the Virginians, put under the conduct of one Colonel Washington, him whom you have sometimes seen at your house, who, being joined with the Marylanders, invests the Indians in their fort with a negligent siege, upon which the enemy made several sallies, with as many losses to the besiegers, and at last gave them the opportunity to desert the fort, after that the English had, contrary to the law of arms, beat out the brains of six great men sent out to treat a peace ; an action of ill-consequence, as it proved afterwards, for the Indians having in the dark slipped through the Legure, and in their passage knocked ten of the besiegers on the head, whom they found fast asleep, leaving the rest to prosecute the siege (as Scoging's wife brooding the eggs that the fox had sucked), they resolved to employ their liberty in avenging their commissioners' blood, which they speedily effected in the death of sixty innocent souls, and then sent in their remonstrance to the governor in justification of the fact, with this expostulation annexed: demanding what it was moved him to take up arms against them, his professed friends, in behalf of the Marylanders, their avowed enemies ; declaring their sorrow to see the Virginians of friends to become such violent enemies as to

pursue the chase into another's dominions ; complains that their messengers, sent out for peace, were not only knocked on the head, but the fact countenanced by the governor, for which, finding no other way to be satisfied, they had revenged themselves by killing ten for one of the English, such being the disproportion between their men murdered and those by them slain, theirs being persons of quality, the other of inferior rank ; professing that if they may have a valuable satisfaction for the damage they had sustained by the English, and that the Virginians would withdraw their aid from the Marylanders' quarrel ; that then they would renew the league with Sir W. B.,* otherwise they would prosecute the war to the last man, and the hardest fend of.

This was fair play from foul gamesters. But the proposals not to be allowed of as being contrary to the honor of the English, the Indians proceed, and, having drawn the neighboring Indians into their aid in a short time, they committed abundance of unguarded and unrevenged murders, by which means a great many of the outward plantations were deserted, the doing whereof did not only terrify the whole colony, but supplanted what esteem the people formerly had for Sir W. B., whom they judged too remiss in applying means to stop the fury of the heathen, and to settle their affections and expectations upon one Esquire Bacon, newly come to the country, one of the council, and nearly related to your late wife's father-in-law, whom they desired might be commissioned general for the Indian war, which Sir William, for some reasons best known to himself, denying, the gentleman, without any scruple, accepts of a commission from the people's affections, signed by the emergencies of affairs and the country's danger, and so forthwith advanced with a small party, composed of such that own his authority, against the Indians, on whom, it is said, he did signal execution. In his absence he, and those with him, were declared rebels to the state, May 29th, and forces raised to reduce him to his obedience, at the head of which the governor advanced some thirty or forty miles to find Bacon out, but not knowing which way he was gone, he dismissed his army, retiring himself and council to Jamestown, there to be ready for the assembly, which was now upon the point of

* Sir William Berkeley, the Governor of Virginia.

meeting, whither Bacon, some few days after his return home from his Indian march, repaired to render an account of his services, for which he, and most of those with him in the expedition, were imprisoned; from whence they were freed by a judgment in court upon Bacon's trial, himself readmitted into the council, and promised a commission the Monday following (this was on Saturday) against the Indians; with which deluded, he smothers his resentments, and begs leave to visit his lady, now sick, as he pretended, which being granted, he returns to town at the head of four or five hundred men, well armed, and resumed his demands for a commission, which, after some hours' struggle with the governor, being obtained, according to his desire, he takes order for the country's security against the attempts of sculking Indians, fills up his numbers and provisions according to the gage of his commission, and so once more advanced against the Indians, who, hearing of his approach, called in their runners and scouts, betaking themselves to their subterfuges and lurking-holes. The general, for so he was now denominated, had not reached the head of York river, but that a post overtakes him and informs him that Sir W. B. was raising the train-bands in Gloucester, with an intent either to fall into his rear, or otherwise to cut him off when he should return, weary and spent from his Indian service. This strange news put him and those with him shrewdly to their trumps, believing that a few such deals or shuffles, call them which you will, might quickly ring both cards and game out of his hands; he saw that there was an absolute necessity of destroying the Indians, and that there was some care to be taken for his own and the army's safety, otherwise the work might happen to be wretchedly done, where the laborers were made cripples, and be compelled instead of a sword to make use of a crutch. It vexed him to the heart, as he said, to think that while he was a hunting wolves, tigers, and bears, which daily destroyed our harmless and innocent lambs, that he and those with him should be pursued in the rear with a full cry, as more savage beasts; he perceived, like the corn, he was light between those stones, which might grind him to powder if he did not look the better about him, for the preventing of which, after a short consultation with his officers, he countermarched his army, about five hundred in all, down to

the middle plantation, of which the governor being informed, ships himself and adherers for Accomack (for the Gloster men refused to own his quarrel against the general), after he had caused Bacon, in these parts, to be proclaimed a rebel once more, July 29th.

Bacon, being sate down with his army at the middle plantation, sends out an invitation to all the prime gentlemen in these parts, to give him a meeting in his quarters, there to consult how the Indians were to be proceeded against, and himself and army protected against the designs of Sir W. B., against whose papers of the twenty-ninth of May, and his proclamation since, he puts forth his replication and those papers upon these dilemmas.

First, whether persons wholly devoted to the king and country, haters of sinister and by-respects, adventuring their lives and fortunes to kill and destroy all in arms against king and country; that never plotted, contrived, or endeavored the destruction, detriment, or wrong, of any of his majesty's subjects, their lives, fortunes, or estates, can deserve the names of rebels and traitors. *Secondly*, he cites his own and soldiers' peaceable behavior, calling the whole country to witness against him if they can; he upbraids some in authority with the meanness of their parts, others, now rich, with the meanness of their estates when they came into the country, and questions by what just ways they have obtained their wealth, whether they have not been the sponges that have sucked up the public treasury; questions what arts, sciences, schools of learning, or manufactories, have been promoted in authority; justifies his aversion in general against the Indians; upbraids the governor for maintaining their quarrel, though ever so unjust, against the Christians' rights, his refusal to admit an Englishman's oath against an Indian, when that Indian's bare word should be accepted of against an Englishman; said something against the governor concerning the beaver trade, as not in his power to dispose of to his own profit, it being a monopoly of the crown; questions whether the traders at the heads of the rivers, being his factors, do not buy and sell the blood of their brethren and countrymen, by furnishing the Indians with powder, shot, and firearms, contrary to the laws of the colony; he arraigns one Colonel Cowell's assertion, for saying that

the English are bound to protect the Indians, to the hazard of their blood; and so concludes with an appeal to the king and parliament, where he doubts not but that his and the people's cause will be impartially heard.

To comply with the general's invitation, hinted in my former letter, there was a great convention of the people met him in his quarters, the result of which meeting was an engagement, for the people (of whatsoever quality, excepting servants) to subscribe to, consisting of three heads: *First*, to be aiding, with their lives and estates, the general in the Indian war; *secondly*, to oppose Sir William's designs, if he had any, to hinder the same; and *lastly*, to protect the general, army, and all that should subscribe to this engagement, against any power that should be sent out of England, till it should be granted that the country's complaint might be heard, against Sir William, before the king and parliament. These three heads being methodized and put into form by the clerk of the assembly, who happened to be at this meeting, and read to the people, they held a dispute from almost noon till midnight, pro and con, whether the same might, in the last article especially, be without danger taken. The general, and some others of the chief men, were resolute in the affirmative, asserting its innocency, and protesting, without it, he would surrender up his commission to the assembly, and let them find other servants to do the country's work; this, and the news that the Indians were falling down into Gloster county, and had killed some people around Carter's creek, made the people willing to take the engagement. The chief men who subscribed it at this meeting were Colonel Swan, Colonel Beale, Colonel Ballard, Esquire Bray, all four of the council, Colonel Jordan, Colonel Smith of Purton, Colonel Scarsbrook, Colonel Miller, Colonel Lawrance, and Mr. Drommond, late governor of Carolina, all persons with whom you have been formerly acquainted.

This work being over, and orders given for an assembly to sit on the fourth of September, the writs being issued in his majesty's name, and signed by four of the council, before named, the general once more sets out to find the Indians: of which Sir William having gained intelligence, to prevent Bacon's designs by the assembly, returns from Accomack with about one thousand soldiers, and others, in five ships and ten sloops,

to Jamestown, in which were some nine hundred Baconians, for so now they began to be called for a mark of distinction, under the command of Colonel Hansford, who was commissioned by Bacon to raise forces, if need were, in his absence, for the safety of the country. Unto these Sir William sends in a summons for a rendition of the place, with a pardon to all that would decline Bacon's, and entertain his cause. What was returned to this summons I know not, but in the night the Baconians forsake the town, by the advice of Drommond and Lawrance (who were both excepted in the governor's summons, out of mercy), every one returning to their own abode, excepting Drommond, Hansford, Lawrence, and some few others, who went to find the general, now returned to the head of York river, having spent his provisions in following the Indians, on whom he did some execution, and sent them packing a great way from the borders.

Before that Drommond, and those with him, had reached the general, he had dismissed his army to their respective habitations, to gather strength against the next intended expedition, excepting some few reserved for his guard, and persons living in these parts, unto whom, those that came with Hansford being joined, made about one hundred and fifty in all. With these, Bacon, by a swift march, before any news was heard of his return from the Indians, in these parts, comes to town, to the consternation of all in it, and there blocks the governor up, which he easily effected by this unheard of project: he was no sooner arrived at town, but by several small parties of horse, two or three in a party, for more he could not spare, he fetcheth into his little League all the prime men's wives, whose husbands were with the governor, as Colonel Bacon's lady, Madame Bray, Madame Page, Madame Ballard, and others, who, the next morning, he presents to the view of their husbands and friends in town, upon the top of the small work he had cast up in the night, where he caused them to tarry until he had finished his defense against his enemies' shot, it being the only place, as you do know well enough, for those in town to make a sally at, which when completed, and the governor understanding that the gentiewomen were withdrawn to a place of safety, he sent out some six or seven hundred of his soldiers, to beat Bacon out of his trench.

But it seems that those works, that were protected by such charms while raising, that plugged up the enemy's shot in their guns, could not now be stormed by a virtue less powerful, when finished, than the sight of a few white aprons, otherwise the service had been more honorable and the damage less, several of those who made the sally being slain and wounded, without one drop of blood drawn from the enemy. Within two or three days after this disaster, the governor reships himself, soldiers, and all the inhabitants of the town, and their goods, and so to Accomack again, leaving Bacon to enter the place at his pleasure, which he did the next morning before day, and the night following burned it down to the ground, to prevent a future siege, as he said, which flagrant and flagitious act performed, he draws his men out of town, and marched them over York river, at Tindell's point, to find Colonel Brent, who was advancing fast upon him from Potomack, at the head of twelve hundred men, as he was informed, with a design to raise Bacon's siege from before the town, or otherwise to fight him, as he saw cause ; but Brent's soldiers no sooner heard that Bacon had got on the north side of York river, with an intent to fight them, and that he had beat the governor out of the town, and fearing if he met with them that he might beat them out of their lives, they basely forsook their colors, the greater part adhering to Bacon's cause, resolving with the Persians to go and worship the rising sun, now approaching near their horizon ; of which Bacon being informed, he stops his proceedings that way, and begins to provide for another expedition against the Indians, of whom he had heard no news since his last march against them ; which while he was a contriving, death summoned him to more urgent affairs, into whose hands, after a short siege, he surrenders his life, leaving his commission in the custody of his lieutenant-general, one Ingram, newly come into the country.

Sir William no sooner had news that Bacon was dead but he sent over a party, in a sloop, to York, who snapped Colonel Hansford and others with him, that kept a negligent guard at Colonel Reade's house, under his command. When Hansford came to Accomack, he had the honor to be the first Virginian born that was ever hanged ; the soldiers, about twenty in all, that were taken with him, were committed to prison, Captain

Carver, Captain Wilford, Captain Farloe, with five or six others of less note, taken at other places, ending their days as Hansford did; Major Cheesman being appointed, but it seems not destined to the like end, which he prevented by dying in prison, through ill-usage, as it is said.

This execution being over, which the Baconians termed cruelty in the abstract, Sir William ships himself and soldiers for York river, casting anchor at Tindell's point, from where he sent up one hundred and twenty men, to surprise a guard of about thirty men and boys, kept at Colonel Bacon's house, under the command of Major Whaley, who, being forewarned by Hansford's fate, prevented the designed conflict, with the death of the commander-in-chief, and the taking some prisoners; Major Lawrence Smith, with six hundred men, meeting with the like fate at Colonel Pate's house in Gloster, against Ingram, the Baconian general, only Smith saved himself by leaving his men in the lurch, being all made prisoners, whom Ingram dismissed to their own homes; Ingram himself, and all under his command, within a few days after, being reduced to his duty, by the well contrivance of Captain Grantham, who was now lately arrived at York river, which put a period to the war, and brought the governor ashore at Colonel Bacon's, where he was presented with Mr. Drommond, taken the day before in Chickahominy swamp, half famished, as he himself related to my husband; from Colonel Bacon's, the next day, he was conveyed in irons to Mr. Bray's, whither the governor had removed, to his trial, where he was condemned, within half an hour after his coming to Esquire Bray's, to be hanged at the middle plantation within four hours after his condemnation, where he was accordingly executed, with a pitiful Frenchman. Which done, the governor removed to his own house, to settle his and the country's repose, after his many troubles, which he effected by the advice of his council and an assembly, convened at the Green spring, where several were condemned to be executed, prime actors in the rebellion, as Esquire Bland, Colonel Cruse, and some others, hanged at Bacon's trench, Captain Yong of Chickahominy, Mr. Hall, clerk of New Kent court, James Wilson, once your servant, and one Lieutenant-colonel Page (one that my husband bought of Mr. Lee, when he kept store at your house), all four executed at Colonel Read's, over against

Tindell's point, and Anthony Arnell, the same that did live at your house, hanged in chains at West Point, besides several others executed on the other side of James river—enough, they say, in all, to outnumber those slain in the whole war on both sides, it being observable that the sword was more favorable than the halter, as there was a greater liberty taken to run from the sharpness of the one than would be allowed to shun the dull embraces of the other, the hangman being more dreadful to the Baconians than their general was to the Indians, as it is counted more honorable and less terrible to die like a soldier than to be hanged like a dog.

Thus, sir, have I rendered you an account of our late troubles in Virginia, which I have performed too wordishly, but I did not know how to help it. Ignorance in some cases is a prevalent overture in pleading for pardon; I hope mine may have the fortune to prove so in the behalf of,

Sir, your friend and servant,

From Q. Creek.

AN. COTTON.

To his wife, A. C., at Q. Creek:

MY DEAR: Although those who have depicted that fickle goddess, Fortune, have represented her under various shapes, thereby to denote her inconstancies, yet do I think there is not anything sublunary subjected to the vicissitudes of her temper so much as is the condition and estate of mankind. All things else partake something of a steadfast and permanent degree except man in the state of his affairs. The sun is constant in his annual progress through the zodiac, the moon in her changes, the other planets in their aspects. The productions of the earth have a fixed constant season for their growth and increase, when that man, in his creation little inferior to the angels, cannot promise unto himself a fixed condition this side of heaven.

How many hath thou and I read of, that the sun hath shined upon in the east, with honors and dignities, which his western beams hath seen clouded with poverty, reproaches, and contumelies. The same moment that saw Cæsar chief man in the senate, beheld him in a worse condition than the meanest

slave in Rome ; and in less than six hours Phœbus eyed the Marquis of Ancrey, in the midst of his rustling train of servitors, not only streaming out his blood, but spurned and dragged up and down the dirty streets of Paris, by the worst of mechanics. It is but the other day that I did see N. B.* in the condition of a traitor, to be tried for his life, who but a few days before was judged the most accomplished gentleman in Virginia to serve his king and country at the council table, or to put a stop to the insolencies of the heathen, and the next day raised to his dignities again. Thus doth fortune sport herself with poor mortals, sometimes mount them up into the air, as boys do tennis balls, that they may come with the greater violence down, and then again strike them against the earth, that they may with ye greater speed mount up into the air, etc.

From Town, June 9, '76.

* Nathaniel Bacon.

A LIST
OF THOSE THAT HAVE BEEN EXECUTED
FOR THE
LATE REBELLION
IN
VIRGINIA

BY SIR WILLIAM BERKELEY, GOVERNOR OF THE COLONY.

Copied from the original manuscript (Harleian collection, codex 6845,
page 54) in the Library of the British Museum, London,
by ROBERT GREENHOW, ESQ., of Virginia.

A LIST OF THOSE THAT HAVE BEEN EXECUTED FOR YE
LATE REBELLION IN VIRGINIA.

1. One Johnson, a stirrer up of the people to sedition, but no fighter. .

2. One Barlow, one of Cromwell's soldiers, very active in this rebellion, and taken with forty men coming to surprise me at Accomack.

3. One Carver, a valiant man and stout seaman, taken miraculously, who came with Bland, with equal commission, and two hundred men to take me and some other gentlemen that assisted me, with the help of two hundred soldiers; miraculously delivered into my hand.

4. One Wilford, an interpreter, that frightened the Queen of Pamunkey from ye lands she had granted her by the Assembly, a month after peace was concluded with her.

5. One Hartford, a valiant, stout man, and a most resolved rebel.

All these at Accomack.

AT YORK WHILST I LAY THERE.

1. One Young, commissioned by General Monck long before he declared for ye king.

2. One Page, a carpenter, formerly my servant, but for his violence used against the royal party, made a colonel.

3. One Harris, that shot to death a valiant loyalist prisoner.

4. One Hall, a clerk of a county, but more useful to the rebels than forty army men, who died very penitent, confessing his rebellion against his king and his ingratitude to me.

AT THE MIDDLE PLANTATION.

One Drummond, a Scotchman, that we all supposed was the original cause of the whole rebellion, with a common Frenchman, that had been very bloody.

CONDEMNED AT MY HOUSE, AND EXECUTED WHEN BACON
LAY BEFORE JAMESTOWN.

1. One Colonel Crewe, Bacon's parasite, that continually went about ye country extolling all Bacon's actions and justifying his rebellion.

2. One Cookson, taken in rebellion.

3. One Darby, from a servant made a captain.

WILLIAM BERKELEY.

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