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STORY and PAGEANT

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND In COLONIAL VIRGINIA

By

EDGAR LEGARE PENNINGTON, S. T. D.

PART II

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The year 1619 is a celebrated year in the history of Virginia. It was then that twenty picked maidens, "pure and undefiled," were sent over to make homes for the bachelor settlers who might be willing to pay for their transportation. They were duly united in wedlock. In August of that year, the first slaves were landed in the colony. But one of the most significant occurrences in the early history of America was the convening of the first legislative assembly on the continent, which lasted from July 30th, 1619, to August 4th. Summons from Governor Yeardley brought together twenty-two burgesses from the eleven several towns, plantations, and hundreds. "The most convenient place we could find to sitt in was the Quire of the Church, where Sir George Yeardley the Governor, being sett downe in his accustomed place, those of the Counsell of Estate sate next him, on both handes, excepte onely the Secretary then appointed Speaker, who sate right before him. . . . But forasmuche as men's affaires doe little prosper where God's service is neglected, all the Burgesses tooke their places in the Quire till a prayer was said by Mr. Bucke, the Minister, that it would please God to guide and sanctifie all our proceedings to his owne glory and the good of this Plantation. Prayer being ended, to the intente that as we had begun at God Almighty, so we might proceed wth awful and due respecte towards the Licutenant, our most gracious and dread Sovereigne, all the Burgesses were intreated to retyre themselves into the body of the Church, w^{ch} being done, before they were fully admitted, they were called in order, and by name,

and so every man, none staggering at it, tooke the Oath of Supremacy, and entred the Assembly."⁵¹

Thus, in the church at Jamestown, with a prayer and a sermon by an Anglican clergyman, the history of popular legislation in America had its beginning. Laws were drawn by the Assembly against idleness, drunkenness, and excess in apparel. To facilitate the conversion of the Indians to the Christian religion, it was enacted that each town, city, borough, and particular plantation "do obtaine unto themselves by just meanes a certain number of the natives children to be educated by them in due religion and a civile course of life. Of w^{ch} children the most towardly boyes in witt & graces of nature to be brought up by them in the firste elements of litterature, so to be fitted for the Colledge intended for them, that from thence they may be sente to that worke of conversion." All ministers were required to submit a record of all christenings, burials, and marriages. "All Ministers shall duly read divine service, and exercise their Ministerial function, according to the Ecclesiasticall lawes and orders of the church of Englande, and every Sunday in the afternoon shall catechize suche as are not yet ripe to come to the Communion. And whosoever of them shalbe found negligent or faulty in this kinde, shalbe subject to the censure of the Gov^r and Counsell of Estate." Ministers and church-wardens were required to present wrongdoers, and help to maintain moral conditions. "All persons whatsoever upon the Sabaoth days, shall frequente divine service and sermons both forenoon and afternoon; and all suche as beare armes shall bring their pieces, swordes, powder, and shotte."⁵²

Of this assembly, George Bancroft the historian said:

"This first American Assembly set the precedent of beginning legislation with prayer. It is evident that Virginia was then as thoroughly a Church of England colony, as Connecticut afterwards was a Calvinistic one.

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- (51) New England Historical and Genealogical Register, XXXI., p. 149; "A Reporte of the Manner of Proceeding in the General Assembly Convented at James City . . ." sent home by John Pory, the speaker of the Assembly; Narratives of Early Virginia, p. 251.
- (52) "A Reporte of the Manner of Proceeding in the General Assembly Convented at James City . . ." (transcribed in Virginia papers, Bancroft collection, New York Public Library).

. . . The earliest Assembly in the oldest of the original thirteen States, at its first session, took measures 'towards the erecting of a 'University and Colledge.' Care was also taken for the education of Indian children. Extravagance in dress was not prohibited, but the ministers were to profit by a tax on excess in apparel. On the whole, the record of these Proceedings will justify the opinion of Sir Edward (sic) Sandys, that 'they were very well and judiciously carried.' The different functions of government may have been confounded and the laws were not framed according to any speculative theory; but a perpetual interest attaches to the first elective body representing the people of Virginia, more than a year before the Mayflower, with the Pilgrims, left the harbor of Southampton, and while Virginia was still the oldest British Colony on the whole Continent of America."⁵³

On the 4th day of August, a petition was presented to the Assembly, relative to the erection of a university or college. From that time until the dissolution of the Virginia Company, the design was never forgotten. During the year a considerable sum was collected in England, through the bishops, for the endowment of a college for the Indians. Henrico was selected as the site. The Virginia Company granted ten thousand acres. Originally the plan was "the training and educating infidel children in the true knowledge of God;" but the design was enlarged to make the University of Henrico extend to the English as well as the natives. King James the First issued letters to the archbishops, authorising them to invite members of the Church throughout the kingdom to contribute to this school and other works of charity; they were to write to the bishops, that they might order the ministers to obtain contributions.⁵⁴

"The first library in British North America which belonged to any public institution was the gift of an Englishman. This was the library attached to the college projected at Henrico."⁵⁵

(53) George Bancroft: Introductory note to Colonial Records of Virginia.

(54) Anderson: Colonial Church, I., pp. 255-256; Perry: American Episcopal Church, I., pp. 69-70.

(55) Bernard C. Steiner: Rev. Thomas Bray and his American Libraries (American Historical Review, II., 59-75).

The Reverend Thomas Bargrave, minister at Henrico, bequeathed a library valued at one hundred marks to the same cause. An unknown donor in England sent over for the proposed library St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, "Master Perkins his works, and an exact map of America." Some religious books followed.

To further the education of the natives, another philanthropic individual proposed a scholarship. Sir Edwin Sandys presented an offer from "Dust and Ashes" (an unknown person) of five hundred and fifty pounds for the maintenance of young Indians of the age of seven, or younger, who would be taught the Christian religion till they reached the age of twelve, and then taught a trade till twenty-one; whereupon they would enjoy the liberties of the English. No one was willing to administer this trust; and the money was turned over to the proprietors of Smith's Hundred. Failing to find the Indian youth desired, it was determined to invest the money with other sums for the endowment of a school to be built as a feeder for the future Indian college. There were other monetary gifts. Nicholas Ferrar willed three hundred pounds to the College of Virginia, to be paid when there should be ten infidel children in it; in the meantime, £24 per year would be given to three godly men in the colony, who would bring up three of the infidels' children in the Christian religion.⁵⁶

There was also an effort to start a school for the Indians at Charles City, which would serve as a preparatory school for the more advanced establishment at Henrico. In 1621, one hundred and fifty pounds had been subscribed for the endowment of this secondary school; and a thousand acres, five servants, and an overseer were allotted. The Reverend Patrick Copland, while cruising in the East India waters, persuaded the sailors and others on the "Royal James" to contribute seventy pounds to the charitable enterprise. The school was to be called the "East India School."⁵⁷

A young clergyman, a nephew of Bishop Hall, published a rudimentary grammar of eighty-four pages for the schools pro-

(56) Perry: American Episcopal Church, I., pp. 71-72; Records of Virginia Company, I., pp. 311, 354-355.

(57) Records of Virginia Company, I., pp. 538-541, 559.

jected among the Indians. This undertaking was presented December 19th, 1621, and received the thanks of the Company, as the work of "a painfull schoolmaster, one Mr. John Brinsley."⁵⁸

Masters were chosen for the schools; and there was keen interest in the conversion and education of the natives. The beginning of the year 1622 found the colony in a more prosperous state than ever before. The population ran into the thousands; industries were established; experiments had been made in vine-growing and silk-making; and tobacco had become profitable. There were several clergymen at work; and some of the Puritans from New England had found their way into the colony. It was unfortunate that this hopeful prospect should be blasted. On the 22nd of March, 1622, the terrible Indian massacre came as a complete surprise. Secretly planned, in a few hours some 347 people, including six members of the Council and many of the oldest colonists, were slain. Attacks were made simultaneously on both sides of the James, from the site of the present Richmond to Newport News. The settlements above the Appomattox were almost exterminated. Jamestown and its vicinity were saved through the warning of Chanco, a Christian Indian. As soon as possible, all the people gathered in a few fortified posts. On the college lands of Henrico alone, seventeen workers were slain, including George Thorpe, who had come from England to take charge of the school. The inhabitants of the town fled to Jamestown. There the Governor concentrated the relics of his colony. This massacre gave a death-blow to the first efforts made in America for the establishment of a college; and years elapsed before the attempt was renewed. It chilled the missionary ardour of the Virginia settlers, and caused a great revulsion of feeling. The conversion of the Indians was deemed hopeless.

Virginia was left in a dreary condition. The settlements were almost wiped out. Captain Nathaniel Butler, in his *Unmasking of Virginia*, drew a gloomy picture of the time. There was much disease. Boats were unable to approach the shores, because of the shallowness of the main river. Many who died were left unburied. There was a want of food. The houses were bad; the fortifications were poor excuses. Henrico and

(58) Perry- American Episcopal Church, I., p. 74.

Charles City were deserted, and left to the Indians. Not over two thousand people were alive, though no fewer than ten thousand had been transported there. "Instead of a plantacon, it will shortly get the name of a Slaughter House."⁵⁹ In 1623, the General Assembly, reflecting the gloomy cast of mind after the horrible disasters which had been suffered, summed up their situation as follows:—

"In those 12 yeers of S^r Tho: Smith his gouernment, we averr that the Colony for y^e most p^rte remayned in greate want and misery under most seuere and Crewell lawes sent over in printe, and contrary to the expresse Letter of the Kinge in his most gracious Charter, and as mercylessly executed, often tymes without tryall or judgment. The allowance in those tymes for a man was only eight ounces of meale and half a pinte of pease for a daye the one & y^e other mouldy, rotten, full of Cobwebs and Maggots loathsome to man and not fytt for beaste, w^{ch} forced many to flee for reliefe to the Savage Enemy, who being taken againe were putt to sundry deaths as by hanginge, shootinge and breakinge upon the wheele & others were forced by famine to filch for their bellies, of whom one for steeling 2 or 3 pints of oatmeale had a bodkinge thrust through his tongue and was tyed wth a chaine to a tree until he starued, yf a man through his sickness had not been able to worke, he had no allowance at all, and so consequently perished many through these extremities, being weery of life digged holes in the earth and hidd themselues till they famished.

"We cannot for this our scarsitie blame our Comanders heere, in respect that o^r sustenance was to come from *England*, for had they at that time giuen us noe better allowance we had perished in generall, so lamentable was our scarsitie that we were constrained to eat Doggs, Catts, ratts, Snakes, Toad-stools, horsehide and w^t nott, one man out of the mysery he endured, killinge his wiefe powdered her upp to eate her, for w^{ch} he

(59) Virginia papers (Bancroft collection in New York Public Library), I., pp. 485ff. Sir Thomas Wyatt wrote a disclaimer to Butler's statements. *Ibid.*, pp. 497ff.

was burned. Many besides fedd on the Corps of dead men, and one who had gotten unsatiabie, out of customs to that foode could not be restrayned, until such tyme as he was executed for it, and indeed soe miserable was our estate that the happyest day that euer some of them hoped to see, was when the Indyans killed a mare they wishing while she was boyling y^l S. *Tho: Smith* was upon her backe in the kettle.”

As for the houses and churches, they were “so meane and poore by reson of those calamities that they could not stand aboute one or two yeeres, the people neuer going to woorke but out of y^e bitterness of their spirits threatening execrable curses upon S^r *Thomas Smith*, neither could a blessinge from god be hoped for in those buildings w^{ch} were founded uppon y^e bloud of soe many Christians.”⁶⁰

At the first General Assembly to follow the massacre, it was evident that the awful scourging had turned man’s thoughts to religion. In 1624, there was a good deal of legislation on religious matters. It was enacted that in every plantation there should be a house or room set apart for the worship of God. The anniversary of the massacre (March 22nd) was ordered set aside and solemnised as a holy day. A penalty of one pound of tobacco for every time one absented himself from Church on the Sabbath and fifty pounds for every month’s absence was imposed; and it was required that “all those that worke in the ground of what qualitie or condition soever, shall pay tithes to the ministers.”⁶¹

Gradually the parish and vestry system assumed definite shape. The parish was the local unit for the administration of the religious affairs and the promotion of the moral health of the community. It was early established in Virginia, as one of the ordinary local divisions of England. It existed by 1624, since it

(60) “The answeere of the Generall Assembly in *Virginia* to a Declaration of the state of the Colonie in the 12 yeeres of S^r *Thomas Smiths* Government” (Neill: *History of the Virginia Company*, pp. 407-411; *Journals of House of Burgesses of Virginia*, ed. by McIlvaine, pp. 21-22).

(61) Hening: *Statutes*, I., p. 144.

was mentioned at that time in an act of the Assembly. The size was evidently suggested by practical wisdom. Every parish was laid off into precincts. In control of the parish was a local body, known as the vestry. This name was in common use in Virginia by 1635; and the vestry represented the best intelligence of the parish.

It was one of the duties of the vestry to appoint the parish clergyman. But there were judicial functions as well. The vestry investigated cases of drunkenness and adultery, for instance. They took depositions; and often presented the defendants to the county courts. They had administrative functions, such as laying the parish levy, collecting taxes for building and repairing the churches, maintaining the minister, buying glebes, paying the readers and clerks and sextons. Their usual time of meeting for fixing the levy was in October, as at that time the tobacco crop was ready for exportation.

By the law of 1641, two church-wardens were to be selected in each parish. It was incumbent on the wardens to present all persons leading a profane and ungodly life, all disturbers of the congregation, all masters and mistresses failing to catechise the young and ignorant dependent on them. By subsequent statutes, the wardens' duties were broadened; and extended to such specific tasks as keeping the church in good repair, purchasing a parish register, buying the communion cloth and the cushions for the pulpit, and seeing that the Book of Common Prayer was used. The wardens called attention to all cases of extreme poverty — orphans, the aged, the bastards — and made provision for them. In most parishes, the poor were dependent on the aid of the vestry, extended through the wardens.⁶²

There was a revival of the college idea about two years after the massacre. It was suggested that the buildings be located on an island in the Susquehanna River, that they might be protected from the Indians. In 1624, this island was granted for the "foundation and maintenance of a university and such schools in Virginia as shall there be erected, and shall be called *Academia*

(62) Hening: Statutes, II., pp. 51-52; Bruce: Institutional History of Virginia, chs. vi., ix.

Virginiensis et Oxoniensis."⁶³ This academy never became a reality: the death of Mr. Edward Palmer, its chief advocate, brought the plan to an end.

On June 16th, 1624, the London Company for Virginia was dissolved. A violent faction had divided the members, who had incidentally incurred the King's ill will. So James the First took the government of Virginia under his own direction, by not only appointing the governor himself but ordering the patents for land as well as public offices and all manner of process to be issued in the royal name, reserving to the Crown a quit-rent of two shillings on every hundred acres of land to be granted forever. From this time, assemblies were called by authority from the Crown; and only capable of enacting laws by and with the consent of the King's lieutenant-governor. His Majesty's Council would act there as an upper house or third part of the Legislature. After this, religious interests received less attention: the Church was left to care for herself.

King James died the following year. A short time before his death, however, he issued a letter to the two archbishops calling attention to the work in Virginia — "The propagation of the Gospell amongst Infidels" — "the erecting of some Churches & Schooles".

"Wee doe require you . . . to write yo^r letters to yo^r severall Bishops of y^e Dioceses in yo^r Province, that they doe give order to the ministers, & other zealous men of their Dioceses, both by their owne exemple in contribution & by exhortation to others . . . to contribute to so good a worke in as liberall a manner."⁶⁴

A census of Virginia, in 1625, showed that the colony contained only 1232 inhabitants. Jamestown had thirty-three houses, three stores, and 175 people. While Governor Wyatt could not convene the House of Burgesses, he held conventions of selected representatives, who united with the Governor and

(63) Neill: *Virginia Vetusta*, p. 183; Motley: *Life of Commissary James Blair*, in *Johns Hopkins University Studies*, XIX., p. 417 (25).

(64) Virginia papers (Bancroft collection in New York Public Library), III., pp. 151-152.

Council in considering public business. Sir George Yeardley became Governor for the second time in 1626; Wyatt's wise and conciliatory administration was terminated by his return home on the death of his father. Yeardley was instructed to be careful that Almighty God be duly and daily served, both by himself and the people under his charge, which would draw down a blessing on all his endeavours.⁶⁵

The legislation of those days shows the constant tension and fear in which the inhabitants lived. The General Court ordered, July 28th, 1626:—

“Y^t a proclamacione be sent to every Plantatione that the Comander and Church wardens thereof do take a list of the names of men women and Children in their severall parishes, and do see y^t the service of God be dewly performed and yf any be found delinquent to be punished accordinge to the statute in y^t case provided by y^e general Assembly.

“And that whosoever cometh wthout his armes fixed and in good order shall receive the like punishment as yf he had Staide awaye, And that every m^t of a familie cale his people together to prayer twyse or once a daye at the least, And that a list of all delinquents be given opp to the Governor & Councill at every quarter Courte.”⁶⁶

Temperance legislation was enacted at the same time.

“Y^t *is ordered* y^t the proclamacione against drunkenness and swearing be renewed, and that two sworne men be chosen in every Plantatione to give informatione of such as shall offende that they may receive punishment accordinge to the act of y^e general assembly. And also that the Comander of every Plantation be very carefull that no sone of evill Government do buy any great quantitie of wyne, or yf they shall soe have

(65) Fulham MSS., Virginia Box III., #14 (Stevens & Brown Transcript in the Library of Congress).

(66) Minutes of the Council and General Court of Virginia, p. 104.

done it wthout his knowledg and commit any disorder
Then shalbe lawful for him to take it from them and
to cawse them spende it more moderately.”⁶⁷

At the General Court, August 7th-8th of that year, it was ordered that, according to the act of the late General Assembly, “some decent house or fitting roome be erected and builte for the service of God in their severall Plantacons and y^t it be sequestered for that purpose only and not for any other vse or purpose w^lsoever.” (This order was extended to the “commanders of every plantation”). It was also decreed that a place be strongly paled or fenced in for the burial of the dead. Other acts of the Assembly were affirmed; and it was provided specifically that after every harvest, when the minister was to receive his support, that the people should bring their share to the commander’s house of the plantation, who should see that the same (that is, the tobacco) was of the best sort; “otherwyse y^e same to be burnt before their faces and the partie forced to pay of the very best.”⁶⁸

In the fall of 1627, King Charles the First permitted the continuance of the House of Burgesses. This news reached Virginia the following March; and the Governor at once called the Assembly. Lord Baltimore visited Virginia in 1628; and his arrival called forth evidence of strong feeling concerning the Church of Rome. The Assembly in session required him and his followers to take the oath of allegiance. He declined and returned to England. The Assembly referred the matter to the King and Council. This action indicates the “prevalent opinion that the Church in Virginia was a branch of the establishment at home, and entitled to the protection of the same laws.”⁶⁹

Quite a bit of communion silver was delivered at Jamestown that year. Lady Yeardley turned over the gifts which had been sent from England for the use of the college, consisting of a silver-gilt cup, two little chalices, a cloth-of-gold cover, and various hangings, besides books. Other silver was received.⁷⁰

Illustrative of the times, we find that a man was prosecuted

(67) *Ibid.*

(68) *Ibid.*, pp. 105-106.

(69) Hawks: Contributions, I., p. 47.

(70) Minutes of the Council and General Court of Virginia, p. 167.

at Jamestown in October, 1628, for postponing the building of a church at Hog Island till he could plant his crops. He had neglected this work, contrary to his agreement; and he was fined and required to finish the same before the 20th of December. The inhabitants were commanded to bring the timber necessary for finishing the work to the place where the church was to be built, and to find the contractor the requisite nails.⁷¹

Sir George Harvey became Governor in 1629. At his instigation, the Assembly passed an act, enjoining strict conformity to the canons of the Church. Laws relative to the observance of the Lord's day and requiring church attendance were enacted, in order to enforce the previous laws. The new Governor was displeased at the laxity with which the discipline of the Church was enforced. There is no reliable evidence that these statutes were carried out with any considerable severity. One writer says that the early records give the account of a trial and execution of a woman for witchcraft; but Doctor Hawks doubts the truth of this statement. Certainly there was no evidence of such a case coming before an ecclesiastical court; and the religious history of Virginia is on the whole free from harshness during the early years.⁷²

We now come to the mooted question of old Smithfield Church. Was it built in 1632, or not? If so, it is probably the oldest building now standing in America, constructed by Englishmen. St. Luke's Church, in the County of Isle of Wight, stands not far below Jamestown Island. It has a solid square tower and massive walls, built of brick probably imported from England. The region in which it is planted was settled as early as 1619; and in spite of the Indian massacre, the population notably increased. The parish records have long since been destroyed; and no one can speak with absolute confidence on the subject. The old brick which reads "1632" might have read "1682." If Joseph Bridger was the actual builder of the church, as tradition says, the later date would be more likely, as Bridger was still an infant in 1632. It is difficult to conceive that such a pretentious structure would be erected ten years after the destructive and

(71) *Ibid.*, p. 175.

(72) Hawks: Contributions, I., p. 48.

disheartening massacre. Yet some of the leading authorities of the country have accepted the earlier date.⁷³

The next few years witnessed a greater prosperity; and the church buildings were of a better sort. New parishes were laid out and more ministers arrived from across the water. There was renewed activity at Jamestown, about the year 1640, which exemplified itself in the building of a brick church, 28 by 56 feet. This church was destroyed during the Bacon rebellion, in 1676. The old tower which stands at Jamestown today is conceded to be the last remnant of this building.

Sir William Berkeley became Governor of Virginia in 1642. He was an ardent royalist; and under his leadership the colony remained loyal to King Charles as long as possible. It "held out the last of all the *King's Dominions* against the *Usurper*; and likewise proclaimed *King Charles II*, before the Restoration."⁷⁴ This attitude enticed several cavalier families to settle in Virginia; and as they strongly resented the opposition to the King, they were intolerant towards the Puritans. Governor Berkeley was instructed to see that Almighty God be duly and daily served according to the Church of England, both by himself and all the people under his charge. Every congregation which had an able minister was to build for him a convenient parsonage house, in addition to his stipend; and two hundred acres of glebe land should be provided, "for the clearing of that ground every of his Parishoners for three years shall give some days labour of themselves and their Servants."⁷⁵ One William Thompson, a Puritan minister from Massachusetts, sought to take up his abode in Virginia, in 1642; but went back probably in a year.⁷⁶ The Reverend Thomas Harrison, who came as Governor Berkeley's chap-

(73) Bruce: *Institutional History of Virginia*, I., pp. 105-106, leans to 1632, but non-committal; an article by R. S. Thomas (*Virginia Historical Collections*, New Series, XI., pp. 129ff.) reviews various traditions in detail. See Brock: *Colonial Churches in Virginia*, p. 22; *Colonial Churches in the original colony of Virginia*, pp. 80-86; Slaughter, in "Historic Churches of America" (Philadelphia, 1890), pp. 124:126; Meade: *Old Churches, Ministers, and Families of Virginia*, I., pp. 299-313; Perry: *American Episcopal Church*, I., pp. 623-625.

(74) Hugh Jones: *Present State of Virginia*, pp. 23-24.

(75) MacDonal Papers, Virginia State Library, pp. 376-388; *Virginia Hist. Mag.*, II., p. 281.

(76) Goodwin: *Colonial Church in Virginia*, p. 312.

lain, later embraced Puritanism, and was dismissed from his parish and banished to New England.⁷⁷ Other Independent ministers drifted down from Boston, encouraged by the Puritan supremacy in the mother country; but they found the Virginia atmosphere uncongenial. The Assembly made a law to prevent non-conformists from propagating their doctrine, and refusing the churches to those who had not been ordained by an Anglican bishop. The Governor was constituted judge of the certificates of ordination.

Still the influence of the Independent party was necessarily felt. The Assembly enacted, November 3rd, 1647, "that all ministers in their severall cures throughout the colony do duely vpon every Sabboth day read such prayers as are appointed and prescribed vnto them by the said booke of common prayer, And be it further enacted as a penaltie to such as have neglected or shall neglect their duty herein, That no pensioner shall be compelled either by distresse or otherwise to pay any manner of tythes or duties to any unconformist as aforesaid."⁷⁸ If this enactment served to hold the regular clergy more assiduously to their duties, it was evidently aimed at the Independents who were trying to take advantage of the strength the Puritans had acquired in Great Britain. Virginia had been intensely loyal to King Charles the First; and felt measures should be taken to prevent the Puritan encroachment. With Cromwell and his followers in the ascendancy, the English Church found itself on the defensive; and its friends resorted to extraordinary means rather than see the liturgy supplanted.

There were various efforts, as we have seen, to suppress the non-conformists and preserve the Anglican spirit. About 1648, a certain congregation of dissenters showed signs of increase; whereupon "their pastor was banished; next, their other teachers; then many by information clapt up in prison, then generally disarmed (which was very harsh in such a country where the heathen live round about them) by one Col. Samuel Matthews, then a counsellor in Virginia, so that they knew not in those

(77) *Ibid.*, p. 277.

(78) Hening: Statutes, I., p. 341.

straights how to dispose of themselves.”⁷⁹ The intolerance of those days was more political than religious; one need only consider the strenuous contemporary events back home to realise how strong the partisan feelings were. Furthermore, much harsher measures were taken against the Anglican loyalists in some of the other colonies.

The Church of England ministers were held to an observance of the moral code; but much that has been written of their laxity of conduct fails to recognise the fact that infractions of the law, overlooked and disregarded in other times and places, were rigidly punished. In 1649, the incumbent of Elizabeth River parish in Lower Norfolk was convicted of adultery. Having presented his confession to the county court, he was ordered to read the same two Sundays before his assembled congregation. His co-partner in crime and her husband were compelled to stand up in sight of the congregation, with placards attached to their heads, bearing expressions of sorrow and a prayer for forgiveness.⁸⁰

After the beheading of King Charles (January 30th, 1649), Virginia remained loyal to the Stuarts, and offered an asylum for fugitive adherents. Some 330 of them arrived near the close of the year on the “Virginia Merchant.” The Governor sent a representative to Holland in 1650 to invite Charles, the late King’s son, to reside in Virginia as its ruler.⁸¹ Efforts were made under Cromwell to subjugate Virginia to Parliament; the loyalists under Berkeley resisted. A squadron approached Jamestown, to compel obedience; but the colony had planned a resistance. Compromises followed. The Governor and Council were excused from giving their oath to the Commonwealth for one year; they would not be censured for praying for the King or speaking well of him; the Book of Common Prayer was permitted for a year, “provided that those which relate to kingship, or that government, be not used publicquely;” and ministers were allowed to retain their places for a year. Still the success of the parliamentary party led to the gradual introduction of Puritans into the colony. The Church suffered during the decade of the

(79) Leah and Rachell, or the two fruitfull Sisters (1656), by John Hammond.

(80) Bruce: Institutional History of Virginia, I., p. 210.

(81) Winsor: Narrative and Critical History, III., p. 148.

fifties; the Puritans gained strength, and Quakers, though much opposed by the people, began to settle in the colony.

With the Restoration of 1660, Berkeley, who had been living in retirement in Virginia, was again made Governor. There were numerous vacancies in the clergy; and the Assembly appealed to the new King, that he use his personal influence with the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge to supply ministers for the parishes.⁸²

The Assembly of 1661 passed resolutions for the founding of a college and free school "for the advance of learning, education of youth, supply of the ministry, and promotion of piety."⁸³ It also voted that the commissioners of the county courts take subscriptions for erecting a college, and that the commissioners send orders to the vestrymen of the parishes to raise money for the same purpose. Considerable sums of money and quantities of tobacco were subscribed as a result, but nothing material was accomplished. A petition was recommended to Sir William Berkeley, that the King be asked for letters patent, authorising collections from "well-disposed people in England for the erecting of colledges, and schooles in this countrye." Berkeley's answer is well known. "I thank God there are no free schools or printing, and I hope we shall not have them these hundred years." It must be said in palliation, however, that ten years before making this statement the Governor had subscribed to the cause of classical education. There was much indifference towards the introduction of schools on the part of many members of the highest classes.⁸⁴

A report was presented to the Bishop of London, September 2nd, 1661, giving the state of affairs in *England*. It was published the following year under the title of "Virginia's cure: or An advisive narrative concerning Virginia: discovering the true ground of that churches unhappiness, and the only true remedy." It is ascribed to Roger Green. The little tract spoke of the

(82) Hening: Statutes, II., pp. 31, 34.

(83) *Ibid.*, II., p. 25.

(84) Hening: Statutes, II., pp. 25, 30; Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1659/60-1693 (ed. by McIlvaine), pp. 12-13; Motley: Life of Commissary James Blair, in Johns Hopkins University Studies, XIX., p. 471 (25).

families dispersed, the thinly settled territory, the lack of churches and glebes, the dearth of ministers — not more than a fifth of the parishes being filled. It told of the people, hindered from attending worship by the great distances and the bad weather. Virginia's planters have robbed God, it charged, by neglecting to build churches, by not assuming the maintenance of the ministry, by so establishing their plantations as to disable themselves from attending God's services. There was a lack of Christian neighbourliness, because of the distances at which the people lived. "The most faithfull and vigilant Pastors, assisted by the most carefull Church-wardens, cannot possibly take notice of the Vices that reign in their Families, of the spiritual defects in their Conversations, or if they have notice of them, and provide Spiritual Remedies in their publick Ministry, it is a hazard if they that are most concerned in them be present at the application of them; and if they should spend time in visiting their remote and far distant habitations, they would have little or none left for their necessary studies." The tract called attention to the general want of schools. Native children were kept from education or usefulness in Church or state. There was no opportunity to bring the heathen in and educate him with the Christian children. The Indians witnessed the bad example set by the whites — the untaught children, the neglected worship, the unbuilt churches; they saw Christians robbing God of His days, His churches, His ministers, and His public worship. There could be no hope of bringing the heathen to Christianity, "whil'st so many evill and scandalous consequents attend the Christians scatter'd manner of planting in that wilderness."

The author advised the promotion of town-building, the collection of funds for the Indians, the sending of workmen from England to build towns and schools, the enjoining of planters to contribute to the development of towns, and a continual supply of able ministers. He suggested the creation of fellowships at Oxford and Cambridge, to which none would be admitted save those who promised to serve the Church in Virginia for seven years. He also urged that a bishop be sent over.

During the Commonwealth, the ecclesiastical laws of Virginia were in abeyance, the use of the Prayer Book being allowed for but one year, as we have seen. Nevertheless the people were

loyal to the Church and to the liturgy; and the General Assembly of 1662 declared that "the canons sett downe in the liturgie of the Church of England" were again made the law of the colony for the conduct of public worship. The law concerning vestries was fixed; they were to number twelve "of the most able men of each parish."⁸⁵ Every parish not having a minister was required to choose "a grave and sober Person, of good Life and Conversation, to read Divine Service every intervening *Sunday* at the Parish-Church, when the Minister preacheth at any other Place."⁸⁶ This regulation was intended to enable the clergyman to visit the distant parts of his parish. In the more isolated sections chapels of ease were being erected, to care for the spiritual needs of the outlying residents; and in the course of time these chapels became the centres of new parishes and served as the *nuclei* of communities and towns.

Dissenters were becoming more numerous in Virginia; and in 1663, severe laws were passed to prevent their progress. As a result, many of them retreated to other colonies. They were accused of insurrection; but the details are very obscure.

The Reverend Morgan Godwyn came to Virginia in 1665, and became the minister of Marston parish, York County. For a short time he was in Jamestown. The great-grandson of Thomas Godwyn, Bishop of Bath and Wells; the grandson of Francis, Bishop of Hereford; and the son of Morgan Godwyn, Archdeacon of Shropshire: he was a priest of remarkable background. His name is associated with an interest in the submerged classes. He was horrified at the immorality and the abject state of the negroes and Indians. Returning to England, after a short stay, he engaged in a crusade against slave-holding. He found the colonists fearful lest baptising their slaves would result in their emancipation. Supposedly under his influence, the Assembly passed a law in 1667, declaring that the baptism of slaves would not make them free. Godwyn preached in Westminster Abbey on the subject: "Trade preferred before religion, and Christ made to give place to Mammon." He published in England a book, "The Negroes and Indians' Advocate," full of animadver-

(85) Goodwin: Colonial Church in Virginia, p. 78.

(86) Trott's Laws, p. 116.

sions upon the clergy and vestries. He found that the clergy were helpless in the hands of the vestry, who sometimes treated them with little consideration. "The ministers are most miserably handled by the plebeian juntos, the Vestries, to whom the hiring (that is the usual word there) and admission of ministers is solely left. And there being no law obliging them to procure any more than a lay reader, to be obtained at a very moderate rate, they either resolve to have none at all, or to reduce them to their own terms Two-thirds of the preachers are made up of leaden lay-priests of the vestries' ordination, and are both the shame and grief of the rightly ordained clergy there."

In 1668, the General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring that the numerous sins of our people are such as to provoke the anger of God and to draw down His punishment unless they repent. The 27th of August was appointed as a day of fasting; and all persons were required to repair to their respective parish churches "with Fasting and Prayer, to implore God's Mercy, and deprecate the Evils justly impending over us."⁸⁷

The parish of Marston, established in York county in 1654, and the old Middletown parish, were united in 1674 under the name of Bruton parish. About the same time a church was started, of brick. (The former church was of wooden construction.) The town, which was afterwards named Williamsburg, grew to assume the highest prominence in colonial Virginia; and the parish church was regularly frequented by the leading men and women of the colony. The edifice was allowed to fall in a ruinous state and was abandoned. The new Bruton Church, erected in 1710, as been in longer continuous use than any other Episcopal church in America.

In Bacon's Rebellion, in 1676, Jamestown was burned, leaving only the ruined church-tower standing. The rebels were suppressed by Governor Berkeley; but Jamestown itself never recovered from the blow. The Middle Plantation (the future Williamsburg) soon proved an effective rival; and in a few years the seat of government was moved there. The Reverend Rowland Jones was the first minister of Bruton parish. Born at

(87) *Ibid.*, pp. 119-120.

Swinbook, Oxfordshire, in 1644, and educated at Merton College, Oxford, he came to Virginia in 1674. He held services at Jamestown and Martin's Hundred, as well as at the Bruton parish church. He died, April 23rd, 1688.⁸⁸

One of the best known scientists to reside in colonial America was the Reverend John Banister, who came to Virginia in 1678 and lived in Charles City county. He died from a fall at Roanoke Falls in 1692. Banister was a distinguished botanist. He made drawings of the plants which he found in the new land, and sent to the Bishop of London an elaborate and beautiful report on the animals, plants, and insects of Virginia. He made a careful study of the native earth, the soil, the flora, and the fauna. A catalogue of the rare roots in Virginia, the leaves, and the flowers, with descriptions in Latin; sketches of coral, sea-growths, seaweeds, ferns, lilies, nasturtiums, gladioli, and laurels — all carefully drawn; minute descriptions of the insects and the *arachnida*; illustrations of various types of mollusks — such comprised the output of this remarkable man during his short stay in Virginia. He collaborated with the celebrated John Ray (1628-1705) in the production of his botanical treatises.⁸⁹

Governor Culpeper, who took office in 1679, had been instructed to enquire the best means of facilitating the conversion of the slaves; but he found himself warned not to throw in jeopardy the individual property in the negro or to render less stable the safety of the colony.⁹⁰ Indifference or excessive caution seemed to retard the efforts to convert the slaves; and it was not until the next century, when the influence of Doctor Bray's Associates was felt, that any systematic instruction was held. Doubtless many pious heads of families imparted religious knowledge to their dependents; certainly the ministers baptised the negroes and ministered to them.

In 1684, the Reverend John Clayton, a well-known naturalist

(88) Tyler's Quarterly Mag., XIII., p. 265; William and Mary College Quarterly, V., pp. 110-112, 192.

(89) Banister's report to the Bishop of London, with illustrations, form British Museum, Sloane MSS., 4002; phostat in the Library of Congress.

(90) Bruce: Economic History of Virginia in the 17th cent., II., p. 97.

who had just taken charge of Jamestown, said that he had found the people "peculiarly obliging, quick & subtile," and the land "fertile comodious pleasant & healthfull saveing only y^e Distemp^r of y^e Colick y^e is predominant & has miserable sad effects." The country he described as "all one continued wood but take this in short its a place where plenty makes pov^rty, Ignorance ingenuity, & coveteousnesse causes hospitality y^e is thus every one covets so m^{ch} & there is such vast extent of land y^e they spread so far they cannot manage well a hundredth of w^t they have." Everyone can live at ease; hence they "scorne & hate to worke to advantage y^mselves so are poor wth abundance." They have few scholars; so "evry one studys to be halfe Physitian halfe Lawy^r & wth a naturall acutenesse would amuse you." "For want of books they read men y^e more."⁹¹

The Virginia of 1685 was a colony of scattered plantations, of wealthy farmers and humble dependents. It was a colony which had been retarded by massacre and rebellion, and still lay exposed to invasion and attack. There were parishes legally constituted and designated; and quite a few substantial churches and chapels had been built, but they were often difficult of access and without regular ministrations. While the majority of the clergy were men of character and education, no single one since the first decade had occupied a commanding influence in colonial life. Little attention was paid to the founding of schools for the general education of the inhabitants. The sons of the rich could have their own tutors — sometimes the parish clergyman — and could receive such practical example and training as might fit them to take their place in the vestry and the Assembly and to manage the affairs of the plantation. There was nowhere a pronounced feeling that the children of the poorer classes could claim an education as a matter of right.

Into the Virginia of 1685 stepped a clergyman, who proved himself the master of the situation. He introduced system and order into the rather haphazard ecclesiastical life of the colony; and he succeeded in leaving permanent marks upon the institutions of Virginia and in bequeathing to the Old Dominion one of

(91) British Museum, Sloane MSS., 1008, f. 335 (Stevens & Brown Transcript in the Library of Congress).

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