

CHAPTER XII.

VIRGINIA.—THE ROYAL GOVERNMENT.

A ROYAL government was now established in Virginia. To the colonists themselves the change of authorities was scarcely perceptible. The new administration consisted of a governor and twelve councilors appointed by the crown. The General Assembly of the colony was left undisturbed, and all the rights and privileges of the colonists remained as before. The king's hostility had been directed against the London Company, and not against the State of Virginia; now that the former was destroyed the latter was left unmolested. Governor Wyatt was continued in office; and in making up the new council the king wisely took pains to select the known friends of the colony rather than certain untried partisans of his own court. The Virginians found in the change of government as much cause of gratitude as of grief.

King James of England died in 1625. His son, Charles I., a young, inexperienced and stubborn prince, succeeded to the throne. The new king paid but little attention to the affairs of his American colony, until the commerce in tobacco attracted his notice. Seeing in this product a source of revenue for the crown, he attempted to gain a monopoly of the trade, but the colonial authorities outwitted him and defeated the project. It is worthy of special note that while conferring with the colony on this subject the king recognized the Virginia assembly as a rightfully constituted power. The reply which was finally returned to the king's proposal was signed not only by the governor and council, but by thirty-one of the burgesses.

In 1626 Governor Wyatt retired from office, and Yeardley, the old friend and benefactor of the colonists, was reappointed. The young State was never more prosperous than under this administration, which was terminated by the governor's death, in November of 1627. During the preceding summer a thousand new immigrants had come to swell the population of the growing province.

The council of Virginia had a right, in case of an emergency, to elect a governor. Such an emergency was now present, and Francis West was chosen by the councilors; but as soon as the death of Yeardley

was known in England, King Charles commissioned John Harvey to assume the government. He arrived in the autumn of 1629, and from this time until 1635, the colony was distracted with the presence of a most unpopular chief magistrate. He seems to have been disliked on general principles, but the greatest source of dissatisfaction was his partiality to certain speculators and land monopolists who at this time infested Virginia, to the annoyance and injury of the poorer people. There were many old land grants covering districts of territory which were now occupied by actual settlers, and between the holders of the lands and the holders of the titles violent altercations arose. In these disputes the governor became a partisan of the speculators against the people, until the outraged assembly of 1635 passed a resolution that Sir John Harvey be thrust out of office, and Captain West be appointed in his place "until the king's pleasure may be known in this matter." A majority of the councilors sided with the burgesses, and Harvey was obliged to go to England to stand his trial.

King Charles treated the whole affair with contempt. The commissioners appointed by the council of Virginia to conduct Harvey's impeachment were refused a hearing, and he was restored to the governorship of the unwilling colony. He continued in power until the year 1639, when he was superseded by Wyatt, who ruled until the spring of 1642.

And now came the English Revolution. The exactions and tyranny of Charles at last drove his subjects into open rebellion. In January of 1642, the king and his friends left London, and repairing to Nottingham, collected an army of royalists. The capital and southern part of the country remained in the power of Parliament. The High Church party and the adherents of monarchy took sides with the king, while the republicans and dissenters made up the opposing forces. The country was plunged into the horrors of civil war. After a few years of conflict the royal army was routed and dispersed; the king escaped to Scotland, and the leading royalists fled to foreign lands. On the demand of Parliament Charles was given up and brought to trial. The cause was heard, a sentence of death was passed, and on the 30th of January, 1649, the unhappy monarch was beheaded.

Monarchy was now abolished. Oliver Cromwell, the general of the Parliamentary army, was made Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England. By him the destinies of the nation were controlled until his death, in 1658, when he was succeeded by his son Richard. But the latter, lacking his father's abilities and courage, became alarmed at the dangers that gathered around him, and resigned. For a few months the

country was in anarchy, until General Monk, who commanded the English army of the North, came down from Scotland and declared a restoration of the monarchy. The exiled son of Charles I. was called home and proclaimed king, the people acquiesced, Parliament sanctioned the measure, and on the 18th of May, 1660, Charles II. was placed on the throne of England.

These were times full of trouble. Virginia shared in some degree the distractions of the mother-country, yet the evil done to the new State by the conflict in England was less than might have been expected. In the first year of the civil war Sir William Berkeley became governor of the colony, and, with the exception of a brief visit to England in 1645, remained in office for ten years. His administration, notwithstanding the commotions abroad, was noted as a time of rapid growth and development. The laws were greatly improved and made conformable to the English statutes. The old controversies about the lands were satisfactorily settled. Cruel punishments were abolished and the taxes equalized. The general assembly was regularly convened to bear its part in the government, and Virginia was in all essential particulars a free as well as a prosperous State. So rapid was the progress that in 1646 there were twenty thousand people in the colony.

But there were also drawbacks to the prosperity of Virginia. Religious intolerance came with its baleful shadow to disturb the State. The faith of the Episcopal Church was established by law, and dissenting was declared a crime. The Puritans were held in contempt by the people, who charged them with being the destroyers of the peace of England. In March of 1643 a statute was enacted by the assembly declaring that no person who disbelieved the doctrines of the English Church should be allowed to teach publicly or privately, or to preach the gospel, within the limits of Virginia. The few Puritans in the colony were excluded from their places of trust, and some were even driven from their homes. Governor Berkeley, himself a zealous churchman, was a leader in these persecutions, by which all friendly relations with New England were broken off for many years.

A worse calamity befell in a second war with the Indians. Early in 1644, the natives, having forgotten their former punishment, and believing that in the confusion of the civil war there still remained a hope of destroying the English, planned a general massacre. On the 18th of April, at a time when the authorities were somewhat off their guard, the savages fell upon the frontier settlements, and before assistance could be brought murdered three hundred people. Alarmed at their own atrocity, the warriors then fled, but were followed by the English forces and

driven into the woods and swamps. The aged Opechancanough was captured, and died a prisoner. The tribes were chastised without mercy, and were soon glad to purchase peace by the cession of large tracts of land.

The Virginians adhered with great firmness to the cause of Charles I. in his war with Parliament, and after his death proclaimed the exiled Charles II. as rightful sovereign of the country. Cromwell and the Parliament were much exasperated at this course of conduct, and measures were at once devised to bring the colony to submission. An ordinance was passed laying heavy restrictions on the commerce of such English colonies as refused to acknowledge the supremacy of Parliament. All foreign ships, especially those of Holland, were forbidden to enter the colonial harbors. In 1651 the noted statute called the Navigation Act was passed, and the trade of the colonies was still more seriously distressed. In this new law it was enacted that the foreign commerce of Virginia, now grown into importance, should be carried on wholly in English vessels, and directed exclusively to English ports.

The Virginians held out, and Cromwell determined to employ force. A war-vessel called the *Guinea* was sent into the Chesapeake to compel submission, but in the last extreme the Protector showed himself to be just as well as wrathful. There were commissioners on board the frigate authorized to make an offer of peace, and this was gladly accepted. It was seen that the cause of the Stuarts was hopeless. The people of Virginia, although refusing to yield to threats and violence, cheerfully entered into negotiations with Cromwell's delegates, and ended by acknowledging the supreme authority of Parliament. The terms of the settlement were very favorable to popular liberty; the commercial restrictions of the two previous years were removed, and the trade of the colony was made as free as that of England. No taxes might be levied or duties collected except such as were imposed by the general assembly of the State. The freedom of an Englishman was guaranteed to every citizen, and under the control of her own laws Virginia again grew prosperous.

No further difficulty arose during the continuance of the Commonwealth. The Protector was busied with the affairs of Europe, and had neither time nor disposition to interfere in the affairs of a remote colony. The Virginians were thus left free to conduct their government as they would. Even the important matter of choosing a governor was submitted to an election in the House of Burgesses; when so great a power had been once exercised, it was not likely to be relinquished without a struggle. Three governors were chosen in this way, and what was at first only a privilege soon became a right. Special acts of the assembly

declared that such a right existed, and that it should be transmitted to posterity.

In 1660, just at the time of the resignation of Richard Cromwell, Samuel Matthews, the last of the three elected governors, died. The burgesses were immediately convened, and an ordinance was passed declaring that the supreme authority of Virginia was resident in the colony, and would continue there until a delegate with proper credentials should arrive from the British government. Having made this declaration, the house elected as governor Sir William Berkeley, who by accepting the office acknowledged the right of the burgesses to choose. The question of recognizing Charles II. as king was debated at the same session, but prudence suggested that the colonial authorities would better await the natural course of events. For the present it was decided to remain faithful to Parliament. Most of the people, no doubt, desired the restoration, but policy forbade any open expressions of such a preference. It would be time enough when monarchy was actually restored.

In May of 1660 Charles II. became king of England. As soon as this event was known in Virginia, Governor Berkeley, forgetting the source of his own authority, and in defiance of all consistency, issued writs in the name of the king for the election of a new assembly. The friends of royalty were delighted with the prospect. The adherents of the Commonwealth were thrust out of office, and the favorites of the king established in their places. Great benefits were expected from the change, and the whole colony was alive with excitement and zeal. But the disappointment of the people was more bitter than their hopes had been extravagant. The Virginians soon found that they had exchanged a republican tyrant with good principles for a monarchial tyrant with bad ones. King Charles II. was the worst monarch of modern times, and the people of Virginia had in him and his government a special cause of grief. The commercial system of the Commonwealth, so far from being abolished, was re-enacted in a more hateful form than ever. The new statute provided that all the colonial commerce, whether exports or imports, should be carried on in English ships, the trade between the colonies was burdened with a heavy tax for the benefit of the government, and tobacco, the staple of Virginia, could be sold nowhere but in England. This odious measure gave to English merchantmen a monopoly of the carrying trade of the colonies, and by destroying competition among the buyers of tobacco robbed the Virginians to that extent of their leading product. Remonstrance was tried in vain. The cold and selfish monarch only sneered at the complaints of his American subjects and the commercial ordinances were rigorously enforced.

Charles II. seemed to regard the British empire as personal property to be used for the benefit of himself and his courtiers. In order to reward the worthless profligates who thronged his court, he began to grant to them large tracts of land in Virginia. What did it matter that these lands had been redeemed from the wilderness and were covered with orchards and gardens? It was no uncommon thing for an American planter to find that his farm, which had been cultivated for a quarter of a century, was given away to some dissolute flatterer of the royal household. Great distress was occasioned by these iniquitous grants, until finally, in 1673, the king set a limit to his own recklessness by giving away the whole State. Lord Culpepper and the earl of Arlington, two ignoble noblemen, received under the great seal a deed by which was granted to them for thirty-one years all the dominion of land and water called Virginia.

Unfortunately, the colonial legislation of these times became as selfish and narrow-minded as the policy of the king was mean. An aristocratic party which had arisen in the colony obtained control of the House of Burgesses, and the new laws rivaled those of England in illiberality. Episcopalianism was again established as the State religion. A proscriptive ordinance was passed against the Baptists, and the peace-loving Quakers were fined, persecuted and imprisoned. Burdensome taxes were laid on personal property and polls; the holders of large estates were exempt and the poorer people afflicted. The salaries of the officers were secured by a permanent duty on tobacco, and, worst of all, the biennial election of burgesses was abolished, so that the members of the existing assembly continued indefinitely in power. For a while Berkeley and his council outdid the tyranny of England.

And then came open resistance. The people were worn out with the governor's exactions, and availed themselves of the first pretext to assert their rights by force of arms. A war with the Susquehanna Indians furnished the occasion for an insurrection. The tribes about the head of Chesapeake Bay and along the Susquehanna had been attacked by the Senecas and driven from their homes. They, in turn, fell upon the English settlers of Maryland, and the banks of the Potomac became the scene of a border war. Virginia and Maryland made common cause against the savages. John Washington, great-grandfather of the first president of the United States, led a company of militia into the enemy's country, and compelled the Susquehannas to sue for peace. Six of their chieftains went into Virginia as ambassadors, and, to the lasting dishonor of the colony, were foully murdered. This atrocity maddened the savages, and a devastating warfare raged along the whole frontier.

Governor Berkeley, not without some show of justice, sided with

the Indians. But the colonists remembered only the many acts of treachery and bloodshed of which the red men had before been guilty, and were determined to have revenge. In this division of sentiment among the people, the assembly and the aristocratic party took sides with the governor and favored a peace; while the popular party, disliking Berkeley and hating the Indians, resolved to overthrow him and destroy them at one blow. A leader was found in that remarkable man, Nathaniel Bacon. Young, brave, eloquent, patriotic, full of enthusiasm and energy, he became the soul and life of the popular party. His own farm in the county of Henrico had been pillaged and his tenants murdered by the savages. Exasperated by these injuries, he was the more easily urged by the public voice to accept the dangerous office of leading an insurrection.

Five hundred men rushed to arms and demanded to be led against the Indians. Alarm, excitement and passion prevailed throughout the colony. The patriot forces were organized; and without permission of a government which they had ceased to regard, the march was begun into the enemy's country. Berkeley and the aristocratic faction were enraged at this proceeding, and proclaimed Bacon a traitor. A levy of troops was made for the purpose of dispersing the rebellious militia; but scarcely had Berkeley and his forces left Jamestown when another popular uprising in the lower counties compelled him to return. Affairs were in an uproar. Bacon came home victorious. The old assembly was unceremoniously broken up, and a new one elected on the basis of universal suffrage. Bacon was chosen a member for Henrico, and soon after elected commander-in-chief of the Virginia army. The governor refused to sign his commission, and Bacon appealed to the people; the militia again flew to arms, and Berkeley was compelled to yield. Not only was the commission signed, but a paper drawn up by the burgesses in commendation of Bacon's loyalty, zeal and patriotism received the executive signature and was transmitted to Parliament.

Peace returned to the colony. The power of the savages was completely broken. A military force was stationed on the frontier, and a sense of security returned to all the settlements. But Berkeley was petulant, proud and vengeful; and it was only a question of time when the struggle would be renewed. Seizing the first opportunity, the governor left Jamestown and repaired to the county of Gloucester, on the north side of York River. Here he summoned a convention of loyalists, who, contrary to his expectations and wishes, advised moderation and compromise; but the hot-headed old cavalier would yield no jot of his prerogative to what he was pleased to call a rabble, and Bacon was again proclaimed a traitor.



GOVERNOR BERKELEY AND THE INSURGENTS.

It was evident that there must be fighting. Berkeley and his forces left Gloucester, crossed the Chesapeake Bay, and took station on the eastern shore, in the county of Accomac. Here his troops were organized; the crews of some English ships were joined to his command, and the fleet set sail for Jamestown. The place was taken without much resistance; but when Bacon with a few companies of patriots drew near, the loyal forces deserted and went over to his standard. The governor with his adherents was again obliged to fly, and the capital remained in possession of the people's party. The assembly was about to assume control of the government without the governor, whose flight to Accomac had been declared an abdication, when a rumor arose that an English fleet was approaching for the subjugation of the colonies. The patriot leaders held a council, and it was determined that Jamestown should be burned. Accordingly, in the dusk of the evening the torch was applied, and the only town in Virginia laid in ashes. The leading men set the example by throwing firebrands into their own houses; others caught the spirit of sacrifice; the flames shot up through the shadows of night; and Governor Berkeley and his followers, on board a fleet twenty miles down the river, had tolerably fair warning that the capital of Virginia could not be used for the purposes of despotism.

In this juncture of affairs Bacon fell sick and died. It was an event full of grief and disaster. The patriot party, discouraged by the loss of the heroic chieftain, was easily dispersed. A few feeble efforts were made to revive the cause of the people, but the animating spirit which had controlled and directed until now was gone. The royalists found an able leader in Robert Beverly, and the authority of the governor was rapidly restored throughout the province. The cause of the people and the leader of the people had died together.

Berkeley's vindictive passions were now let loose upon the defeated insurgents. Fines and confiscations became the order of the day. The governor seemed determined to drown the memory of his own wrongs in the woes of his subjects. Twenty-two of the leading patriots were seized and hanged with scarcely time to bid their friends farewell. Thus died Thomas Hansford, the first American who gave his life for freedom. Thus perished Edmund Cheesman, Thomas Wilford and the noble William Drummond, martyrs to liberty. Nor is it certain when the vengeful tyrant would have stayed his hand, had not the assembly met and passed an edict that no more blood should be spilt for past offences. One of the burgesses from the county of Northampton said in the debate that if the governor were let alone he would hang half the country. When Charles II. heard of Berkeley's ferocity, he exclaimed, "The old fool has taken

away more lives in that naked country than I for the murder of my father"; and the saying was true.

The history of this insurrection was for a long time recited by Bacon's enemies. Until the present century no one appeared to rescue the leader's name from obloquy. In the light of after times his character will shine with a peculiar lustre. His motives were as exalted as his life was pure, and his virtues as noted as his abilities were great. His ambition was for the public welfare, and his passions were only excited against the enemies of his country.

The consequences of the rebellion were very disastrous. Berkeley and the aristocratic party had now a good excuse for suppressing all liberal sentiments and tendencies. The printing-press was interdicted. Education was discouraged or forbidden. To speak or to write anything against the administration or in defence of the late insurrection was made a crime to be punished by fine or whipping. If the offence should be three times repeated, it was declared to be treason punishable with death. The former tyrannical methods of taxation were revived, and Virginia was left at the mercy of arbitrary rulers.

In 1675, Lord Culpepper, to whom with Arlington the province had been granted two years previously, obtained the appointment of governor for life. The right of the king was thus by his own act relinquished, and Virginia became a proprietary government. The new executive arrived in 1680 and assumed the duties of his office. His whole administration was characterized by avarice and dishonesty. Regarding Virginia as his personal estate, he treated the Virginians as his tenants and slaves. Every species of extortion was resorted to, until the mutterings of rebellion were again heard throughout the impoverished colony. In 1683, Arlington surrendered his claim to Culpepper, who thus became sole proprietor as well as governor; but before he could proceed to further mischief, his official career was cut short by the act of the king. Charles II., repenting of his own rashness, found in Culpepper's vices and frauds a sufficient excuse to remove him from office and to revoke his patent. In 1684, Virginia again became a royal province, under the government of Lord Howard, of Effingham, who was succeeded by Francis Nicholson, formerly governor of New York. His administration was signalized by the founding of WILLIAM AND MARY COLLEGE, so named in honor of the new sovereigns of England. This, next to Harvard, was the first institution of liberal learning planted in America. Here the boy Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, shall be educated! From these halls, in the famous summer of 1776, shall be sent forth young James Monroe, future President of the United States!

After Nicholson's administration, Sir Edmund Andros, recently expelled by the people of Massachusetts, assumed for a while the government of Virginia. The affairs of the colony during the next forty or fifty years are not of sufficient interest and importance to require extended notice in an abridgment of American history. At the outbreak of the French and Indian War, Virginia will show to the world that the labors of Smith, and Gosnold, and Bacon have not been in vain.

CHAPTER XIII.

MASSACHUSETTS.—SETTLEMENT.

THE spring of 1621 brought a ray of hope to the distressed Pilgrims of New Plymouth. Never was the returning sun more welcome. The fatal winter had swept off one-half of the number. The son of the benevolent Carver was among the first victims of the terrible climate. The governor himself sickened and died, and the broken-hearted wife found rest in the same grave with her husband. But now, with the approach of warm weather, the destroying pestilence was stayed, and the spirits of the survivors revived with the season. Out of the snows of winter, the desolations of disease, and the terrors of death the faith of the Puritan had come forth triumphant.

For a while the colonists were apprehensive of the Indians. In February, Miles Standish was sent out with his soldiers to gather information of the numbers and disposition of the natives. The army of New England consisted of six men besides the general. Deserted wigwams were found here and there; the smoke of camp-fires arose in the distance; savages were occasionally seen in the forest. These fled, however, at the approach of the English, and Standish returned to Plymouth.

A month later the colonists were astonished by the sudden appearance in their midst of a Wampanoag Indian named Samoset. He ran into the village, offered his hand in token of friendship, and bade the strangers welcome. He gave an account of the numbers and strength of the neighboring tribes, and recited the story of a great plague by which, a few years before, the country had been swept of its inhabitants. The present feebleness and desolate condition of the natives had resulted from the fatal malady. Another Indian, by the name of Squanto, who had been carried away by Hunt in 1614, and had learned to speak English, came also to Plymouth, and confirmed what Samoset had said.