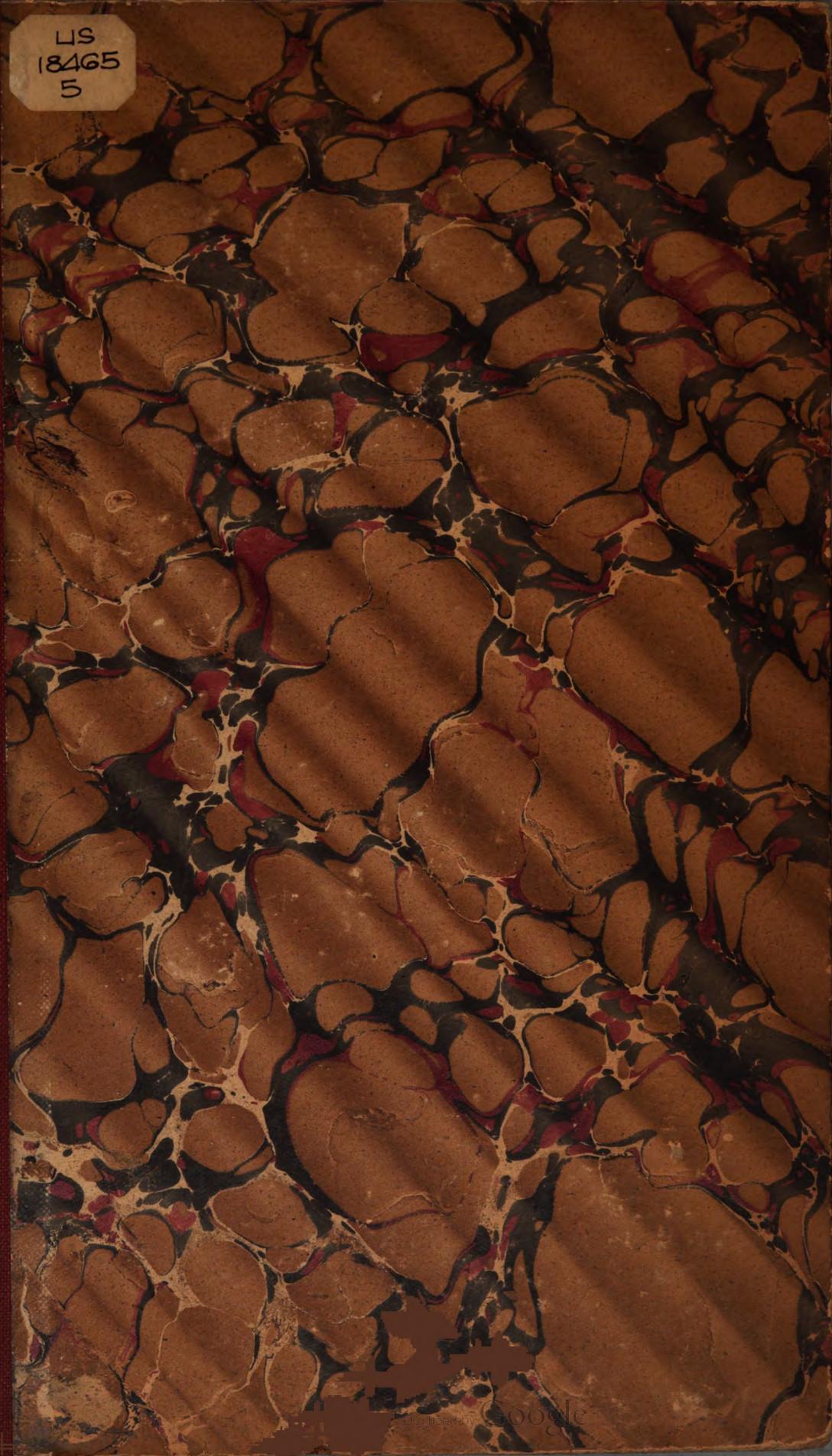


Henry - The Causes which Produced the Virginia of the
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The Causes which Produced the Virginia of
the Revolutionary Period.

By

William W. Henry.

Annual Report
of American Historical Society.
1891.

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II.—THE CAUSES WHICH PRODUCED THE VIRGINIA OF THE
REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF HON. WILLIAM WIRT HENRY.
PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION.

READ AT THE ANNUAL MEETING, DECEMBER 29, 1891.

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INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF WILLIAM WIRT HENRY, LL. D., DE-
CEMBER 29, 1891.

*THE CAUSES WHICH PRODUCED THE VIRGINIA OF THE REVOLUTION-
ARY PERIOD.*

Members of the American Historical Association,

Ladies and Gentlemen :

It is with the highest appreciation of the honor conferred on me at your last meeting in electing me as your presiding officer for the year 1891 that I now enter upon one of the duties imposed upon me, and bespeak your attention, for a short time, while I read the annual address.

And first, I heartily congratulate you on the flourishing condition of our association. Its constantly increasing membership, and the appreciation of its work both by the Government and the public, prove incontestably the wisdom and the practical ability with which its affairs have been conducted. A great work lies before us, and we each should feel honored in being permitted to take part in its accomplishment.

But while we have abundant cause for thankfulness for the past, we can not look back over the year just closing without a painful feeling of loss in the death of some of our most distinguished and useful members. Within three weeks after the adjournment of our last annual meeting intelligence came of the death of our distinguished ex-president, Hon. George Bancroft. His valuable life had been prolonged till it was entering on the last decade of a century, in the first year of which he was born; and although exhausted nature had for some time been giving plain evidences of the approaching end, yet such was the loving regard in which he was held by his countrymen that they were not prepared for his death, and the feeling was universal that America had met with a grievous loss in the death of one of her greatest citizens.

He was the great American historian, whose work will live, however excellent the coming historians of our country may

be. To him we are indebted for the lifting up of American history from the subordinate place it had theretofore held, and fixing it among the highest niches in the temple of Clio. No one could have been better equipped for his great work. Learned, industrious, striving for accuracy, with ample means, and opportunities for gathering materials, he was filled with that which gave soul to his work, an ardent attachment to American institutions. He succeeded in touching the public heart and in popularizing our history to a degree seldom attained by historians of any age or country. His living connection with our association will ever be regarded as one of our highest honors.

During the month of January the Hon. James Phelan also departed this life. He had not lived to old age, but he had made his mark by his most valuable history of Tennessee, which will ever entitle his name to an honorable place on the roll of American historians. We will ever bear in mind, too, that it was his exertions on the floor of Congress which obtained for us our charter.

During the fall our losses have been more numerous. Among them several names occur to me. The Hon. John H. B. Latrobe, of Baltimore, who died in the eighty-eighth year of his age, after having distinguished himself in various walks of life, in all of which he displayed remarkable versatility and strength.

Dr. George B. Loring, of Massachusetts, whose commanding figure and genial face we shall miss from our meeting. He too had walked in various paths of life, and always with distinction; but perhaps his greatest work was in stimulating the agricultural interests of New England.

Prof. John Larkin Lincoln, for more than half a century a distinguished instructor in Brown University, whose memory will ever be green, not only in that institution, but in the breasts of all who were so fortunate as to be taught by him.

Gordon L. Ford, esq., of Brooklyn, whose devotion to learning was not only shown in his own acquirements, but in the magnificent library he accumulated. Happily he trained and left to us two most learned and accomplished sons, whose lives are devoted to historical work.

Useful and distinguished lives have also been ended in the death of P. W. Sheaffer, esq., of Pottsville, Pa., author of an historical work on Pennsylvania; of Prof. Charles W. Bennett, of Garrett Biblical Institute, Evanston, Ill., who obtained the

Ranke library for Syracuse University; of Hon. Rufus King, of Cincinnati, and of Thos. B. Akins, D. C. L., commissioner of public records of Nova Scotia.

But I must hasten to the subject of this address.

Every effect is the resultant of antecedent forces, and our study of any people will not be complete until we learn the various causes which have united to produce the condition of the people we study. Such a tracing of antecedents is history in its largest sense.

Taking the American colonies during the Revolution period, nothing could be more interesting or instructive to an American, nor indeed to any student of history, than a full account of the influences which conspired to produce the remarkable people who thus were found in their bodies. Each colony had an individuality of its own, resulting from its development in a state of almost perfect isolation from the rest of the world. Each contained a large number of men of great capacity, of pure morals, and of unsurpassed patriotism. The Continental Congress of 1774 was a representative body which distinctly reflected the purity of character, the great intelligence, and the high state of Christian civilization to which the colonists had attained. That celebrated body of men were the admiration of Europe. The splendid tribute of Lord Chatham is familiar to every one, in which he declares as the result of his study of history "That for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion under such a complication of difficult circumstances, no nation or body of men can stand in preference to the General Congress at Philadelphia."

Not so familiar is the saying of Lord Camden concerning it. Said he, "I would have given half my fortune to have been a member of that which I believe to be the most virtuous body of men which ever had met or ever will meet together in this world."

It is true these were picked men, but the communities from which they were selected and which selected them must have been high in the scale of intelligence and purity to have had such men in their midst. It is true that men of great genius and force of character are from time to time met with in history who seem to direct, if not shape, the destinies of their countries; but we must remember that these great characters, so gifted by nature, were themselves shaped by their environments, and to these we must look for an explanation of their work.

S. Mis. 173—2

Following the ideas I have suggested, I propose in this paper to touch hurriedly upon the causes which conspired to produce the Virginia of the revolutionary period.

The English of the seventeenth century were the outcome of an evolution during three centuries, of a people who were an amalgamation of three branches of the great Teutonic family, with each other, and with the aboriginal Britons. They were a people superior to any existing in the world. Developing in their sea-girt island, without the disturbing influences of outside nations, they formed a distinctive people in their habits, customs, and civil institutions. In these last they had attained a degree of freedom not known to the rest of the world. The great rights of person and of property were enjoyed under a protection that was fundamental to their system of jurisprudence, and in the arts and sciences, in philosophy and literature, they were in the front rank of Christendom. In religion they were Protestants, and had all the advantage of that great unshackling of the human mind which was accomplished by the reformation.

These were the people that colonized Virginia in the early part of the seventeenth century. They came to a fertile land, lying in a temperate climate between 36° and 40° northern latitude, and one which was peculiarly fitted for agricultural pursuits from the sea on the east to the mountains, the western border of their settlements. Every variety of vegetable production which is found in the temperate zones, was raised in this area in profusion. And such as bore transportation to the mother country were easily shipped from convenient landings on the banks of the Chesapeake, or on the noble rivers which emptied into the great bay. Speaking of the favored region of Virginia and the Carolinas, and the mountains which constitute its western border, Prof. Shaler in his late valuable work styled "Nature and Man in America," says:

This region of southern uplands has in its soil, its forests, and its mineral resources, a combination of advantages perhaps greater than those of any other equal area in the world. In addition to these favorable conditions, the region possesses an admirable climate. In winter the temperature falls low enough to insure the preservation of bodily vigor; in summer the heat is less ardent than in the lower lying regions of the New England and New York group of States. In the Virginia section we find a climate resembling in range of temperatures those which characterize the most favored regions of the Old World; and it is there perhaps we may look for the preservation of our race's best characteristics.

After the English had planted Virginia, there was a small emigration of Germans, and a larger one of French Huguenots, but they did not sensibly affect the characteristics of the colony, and soon became intermixed with the English. A much larger addition to the colony was the stream of Scotch-Irish from the North of Ireland, that poured into the valley between the Blue Ridge and Alleghany Mountains during the first half of the eighteenth century, overflowing sometimes the mountain barriers. In the valley they retained their national characteristics in a remarkable degree. They were strict Presbyterians, and the church and schoolhouse were always found among the first houses they built. Tenacious of their rights in church and state, they were foremost in opposing tyranny in every form; their constant warfare with the Indians made them a race of warriors, and they have added to the glory of Virginia in every war in which she was ever engaged. It has been said that the Virginians were an agricultural people, they were preëminently so; and the geography of the colony, as well as the climate, gave direction to their employment. Between the mountains and the sea many streams water the land, affording fertile bottoms. The accessibility of deep water to nearly every part of the colony prevented the growth of large cities. In fact, as late as the Revolution Norfolk was the largest town in the colony, and it only contained 6,000 inhabitants. The very wealth of Virginia in harbors contributed to her poverty in cities.

The profusion of productions afforded by the soil and climate stimulated the hospitality of the inhabitants, of whom generous living became a characteristic. But while soil and climate thus united to give ease to Virginia life, they rendered the colonists too well satisfied with what they enjoyed to engage in arduous or speculative enterprises in pursuit of wealth. They were content to work their lands, and leave to others merchandise, mining, and manufacturing.

Undoubtedly the production of the soil which had most influence on the development of Virginia's character was tobacco. It is said that John Rolfe, the husband of Pocahontas, first cultivated it in a systematic and intelligent manner. Certain it is that from an early period of Virginia's history it was considered its most valuable product. It was easily transported across the Atlantic, and found a ready market in Europe. It became and continued until the Revolution the money crop

of the planters, and from it was derived the wealth which characterized them as a class. Its value was a strong preventive of the growth of towns, as the planters lived in great comfort, and often in elegance, on their plantations, and felt no desire to exchange plantation for city life. It was by the cultivation of this plant, too, that slavery became fixed on the colony, an institution which was most potent in shaping its history. The slaves were cheap labor in the cultivation of the soil, and were brought to the colony in such numbers that, with their natural increase, they became nearly half of the population in the eighteenth century. Their use in different kinds of manual labor induced the whites to hold themselves aloof from it, and as it came to pass that nearly every white man owned one or more slaves, the whites devoted themselves to superintending their own slaves or those of the larger planters.

The custom of entailing estates kept up the large plantations, and their owners soon developed into representatives of the ancient barons of England. To a large degree they lived independent of the world around them, producing on their plantations whatever they needed. The following picture of William Cabell, of Union Hill, in Nelson County, from the accomplished pen of the late Hugh Blair Grigsby, is a fair representation of the class to which he belonged:

He was a planter in the large acceptance of the word as it was understood rather in the interior than on the seaboard, which included not only the cultivation of a staple, in its ordinary agricultural aspect, but the construction of the instruments and the preparation and manufacture of articles, which the eastern planters of that day, like many of their successors, were content to find ready-made to their hands. He fashioned his iron on his own smithy; he built his houses with his own workmen; he wove into cloth the wool from his own sheep, and cotton from his own patch; he made his shoes out of his own leather. He managed his various estates with that masterly skill with which a general superintends his army, or a statesman the interests of a community intrusted to his charge.

The institution of slavery had its evils, which may be traced in the history of the whites, and which have been much discussed and often exaggerated, into which, however, I do not propose to enter. But as regards the African race, there is little to lament in comparison with the great benefits slavery conferred on the slaves. From a state of barbarism it raised the race into a state of civilization, to which no other barbarous people have ever attained in so short a time. The late

African slave is now rated by our Government as superior to the American Indian and to the natives of the celestial Empire of China, and is intrusted with the highest privileges of an American citizen.

The effect upon the whites was in some respects ennobling, as it greatly stimulated that independence of character and love of freedom which characterize rulers, whether in kingdoms or on plantations. That profoundly philosophical statesman, Edmund Burke, in his speech on conciliations with America, delivered March 22, 1775, remarked upon the spirit of liberty developed in the masters of slaves in these words:

In Virginia and the Carolinas they have a vast multitude of slaves. When this is the case in any part of the world, those who are free are by far the most proud and jealous of their freedom. Freedom is to them not only an enjoyment, but a kind of rank and privilege. Not seeing there that freedom, as in countries where it is a common blessing, and as broad and general as the air, may be united with much abject toil, with great misery, with all the exterior of servitude, liberty looks, among them, like something that is more noble and liberal. I do not mean to commend the superior morality of this sentiment, which has at least as much pride as virtue in it, but I can not alter the nature of man. The fact is so; and those people of the Southern colonies are much more strongly, and with a higher and more stubborn spirit, attached to liberty than those northward. Such were all the ancient commonwealths; such our Gothic ancestors; such in our days were the Poles; and such will be all masters of slaves who are not slaves themselves. In such a people the haughtiness of domination combines with the spirit of freedom, fortifies it, and renders it invincible.

The institution of slavery had a marked effect on the women of Virginia. By it they were exempt from the menial duties of life; and in their country homes they devoted themselves to the management of their households and the cultivation of their minds and manners. By reason of this the name, Virginia matron, became a synonym of all that was refined in manners and pure and lovely in character. It is a great mistake to suppose that the Virginia matron led an idle or useless life. While her duties were not menial, they were nevertheless ample to occupy her whole time. As a mistress on the plantation she had the care of much that only a woman can attend to. To feed, to clothe, to teach, to guide, to comfort, to nurse, to provide for, and to watch over a great household, and keep its complex machinery in noiseless order; these were the duties which devolved on her, and which she performed to the admiration of all who came in contact with Virginia life. The mild

climate in which they lived developed in the Virginia women a beauty of person commensurate with their loveliness of character, and these two conspired to stimulate the chivalrous regard in which they were held by the men. This regard was indicated in the courteous bearing of the men towards them. The Virginian indeed became courteous to all, and his bearing in life came to be described in the two words, "Virginia gentleman."

The English people who came to Virginia, with few exceptions, did not leave England because of oppression in church or state. They brought with them the literature, the manners and customs, and the civil and religious institutions of the mother country, to all of which they were profoundly attached. It was simply the planting of the English acorn in the rich Virginia soil of America, from which sprang an American British oak, which under the genial sky of the new world was destined to outstrip its English original.

The form of government allowed by the early charters was potent in the development of Virginia character, and this form, with admirable flexibility, adapted itself to the individuality assumed by the colony in its progress. The executive was a governor appointed by the crown, or was his authorized deputy. He was advised by a council selected from the colony and similarly appointed. They were considered as representatives of royal authority and constituted a mimic court. Their style of living was in accordance with their high rank, and was more or less imitated by the rich men of the colony according to their proximity to the capital. Their influence was great, as they dispensed the patronage of the colony. In addition to their executive functions, the governor and council sat as a court, and for years was the only court in the colony. After the institution of county courts the governor and council retained much original jurisdiction and became also a court of appeals. This important body also acted as a branch of the assembly and thus took the place of the House of Lords in the colonial system. Its members were the representatives of the aristocracy of the colony.

As a legislative body it was merged into an assembly in 1619, when a house of burgesses was summoned, composed of members chosen by the people. This, the first representative body which ever sat in America, had a controlling influence in the development of Virginia character. The elective franchise,

which was for years exercised by all adult males, gave, as nothing else could, a dignity to citizenship. Each man felt himself a part of the State in the fullest sense and became interested in knowing and directing its affairs. The house of burgesses was the Cerberus that guarded, with ever-watchful eye, the political rights of the colonists. Thus as early as 1624 we find it declaring that "The governor shall not lay any taxes or ympositions upon the colony, their lands or commodities, otherway than by authority of the general assembly, to be levyed and ymployed as the said assembly shall appoynt."

This claim of the representatives of the people to the sole right to lay taxes, the great principle which is the corner stone of British freedom, was never abandoned by the Virginians.

The acts of assembly were subject to royal supervision and were sometimes disallowed. But enough were approved to allow the development of the colony, according to the law of evolution to which it was subjected. This separate assembly for the colony of necessity led to the straining and final snapping of the cords which bound it to England, and impeded its progress towards a great State. Men who became accustomed to a distinct legislative body, their own immediate representatives, ceased to regard a Parliament, sitting beyond the ocean, in which they were not represented, as authorized to legislate for them; and with this right claimed by Parliament, the question of separation became a mere question of time.

The county organization of the colony was based upon, and followed very closely the shire system of England. It was a microcosm of the State. The county lieutenant, its chief officer, was vested with executive powers, and had command of the militia. He was selected from the upper class, known as "gentlemen." The county court exercised judicial functions, and was composed of justices of the peace, who were selected from the men of the highest character and intelligence in the county, and held office for life. It was a self-perpetuating body, vacancies being filled by appointment of the governor upon the recommendation of the court. No pay was attached to the office of justice, except the possibility that the incumbent might become the sheriff of the county for a limited time, which last office was filled from the bench of justices in the order of their commissions. The office of justice thus being a highly honorable one, and filled by the best men in the county, the influence of the incumbents was very great. These resided

in different parts of the county, and thus each neighborhood was supplied with an officer. They were the advisers of the people, the composers of their difficulties, as well as the judges in their petty litigations. Naturally they came to be regarded with the greatest respect, and to be looked up to as examples of purity and intelligence, to be imitated by their fellow-citizens. Thus their influence was most elevating in its tendency. To this class Virginia was chiefly indebted for the high character of her people. Indeed, most of the Virginians who were distinguished in the Revolutionary era were, or had been, justices of the peace.

While the sheriffalty was in their hands defaults in the payment of revenue collected were almost unknown.

The courts in which they sat had their jurisdiction enlarged from time to time till it became very extensive. They also laid the county levy and passed on the claims to be paid out of it. These courts, unlike their English originals, were held at the several county seats, and during most of their history were monthly. These monthly county courts were important factors in Virginia life. At them there was always a large gathering from different parts of the county, and much business was transacted, while county men, living at a distance from each other, met and formed acquaintances, and entered into business relations. Candidates for office, elective by the people, attended, and they were required to set forth their claims in public speeches and debate with their opponents. This contributed to the cultivation of public speaking, and by these public debates the ordinary citizen was instructed in the questions of the day. In these tribunals the lawyers of Virginia were trained, and this training equipped for the higher walks of professional life the great lawyers and judges that Virginia furnished before, during, and after the Revolution. Such men as Edmund Pendleton, Peter Lyons, St. George Tucker, Spencer Roane, and John Marshall.

When in the convention of 1829 it was sought to change the system, there was a united protest from a number of the ablest men in the body. The accomplished P. P. Barbour, who afterwards sat in the Supreme Court of the United States, said:

After a twenty-five-year acquaintance with the county courts of Virginia, it is my conscientious opinion that there is not, and never has been, a tribunal under the sun where more substantial, practical justice is administered. * * * The idea was suggested to me fifteen years ago by one of the most distinguished men we had among us, who declared it to me as

his belief, that the county courts of Virginia exerted an important political influence on her population; the monthly meeting of neighbors and of professional men caused the people to mingle and associate more than they otherwise would do, and produced a discussion of topics of public interest in regard to the administration of government and the politics of the community. These meetings perpetually recurring in all the counties of the State constitute so many points from which political information was thus diffused among the people, and their interest increased in public affairs.

The distinguished lawyer and statesman Benjamin Watkins Leigh followed Mr. Barbour, and said: "The eulogium pronounced by the learned gentleman from Orange is perfectly just, in declaring that these tribunals are not merely good, but the best on earth." He further declared that only two charges of corruption had been brought against Virginia justices during the existence of the office, for 200 years. Judge John Marshall joined in the praises of this venerable body of public servants, and added:

I am not in the habit of bestowing extravagant eulogies upon my countrymen. I would rather hear them pronounced by others; but it is a truth that no State in the Union has hitherto enjoyed more complete internal quiet than this Commonwealth, and I believe most firmly that this state of things is mainly to be ascribed to the practical operation of our county courts. The magistrates who compose those courts consist in general of the best men in their respective counties. They act in the spirit of peacemakers, and allay rather than excite the small disputes and differences which will sometimes arise among neighbors. It is certainly much owing to this that so much harmony prevails amongst us. These courts must be preserved.

In front of the court, when in session, sat the clerk, always an accomplished officer. He held his office by appointment by the court and during good behavior. The interests of the community at large were closely connected with the responsibilities of his office. He was the keeper of the records of the court, and of the muniments of title to the lands in the county. His fellow-countymen sought him for information on many subjects, and he became the legal adviser of the ordinary citizen. The office was often retained in families for generations, and the incumbents were, as a class, as admirable as any country ever possessed. Besides these officers there were sheriffs, coroners, constables, and surveyors, of whom I need but make mention.

The colony was laid off into parishes, in order to accommodate the affairs of the established church. Those were man-

aged through vestries, which laid levies for the purchase of glebes, the building and repairing of churches, the support of the ministers and of the poor. The members of the vestries were also men selected from the best class in the community, by the parishes, and were generally prominent members of the church.

This county organization was a practical training of the people in local self-government, and this principle, so important in our form of government, was one to which the Virginians have been ever ardently attached.

In a new country, with a sparse population, the advantages of education were of necessity very limited. The children were taught by their parents or not at all. But as the country filled up and the people became prosperous they became more anxious to educate their children, and schools were multiplied. The historian Beverly, in describing the state of the colony in 1720, says:

There are large tracts of land, houses, and other things granted to form schools for the education of children in many parts of the country, and some of these are so large that of themselves they are a handsome maintenance to a master; but the additional allowance which gentlemen give with their sons render them a comfortable subsistence. These schools have been founded by legacies of well-inclined gentlemen, and the management of them hath commonly been left to the discretion of the county court or to the vestry of the respective parishes. In all other places, when such endowments have not been already made, the people join and build schools for their children, where they learn upon easy terms.

Those last being often situated in worn-out fields acquired the name of "old-field schools." They furnished the education of the average Virginian, male and female, in colonial days. That education was what has been facetiously styled the three R's, "reading, writing, and arithmetic," and was very general. This is proved by the ancient records preserved in some of the counties. These show that of those who came for marriage licenses, the number who could not write their names was small.

As early as 1660 the assembly moved for a college in which the higher branches of education were to be taught. But the scheme only took practical shape when, in 1692, the English sovereigns, William and Mary, endowed the college which has ever since borne their names. The influence of this institution for good upon the colony and the State of Virginia has been

incalculable. When its halls were opened the necessity of sending Virginia youths to England to acquire the higher education no longer existed, and the leaders of thought in the colony thereafter had the advantage of early training in their own capital. This intensified the peculiar characteristics of Virginia society. The college trained and gave to the world during the Revolutionary period a host of statesmen whose names are indelibly impressed on the page of American history. Had it numbered among its alumni only Thomas Jefferson and John Marshall, it would have laid America under lasting obligation. But besides these towering figures we recognize on her roll Benjamin Harrison, Carter Braxton, Thomas Nelson, and George Wythe, all signers of the Declaration of Independence; Peyton Randolph, president of the first Continental Congress; James Monroe, President of the United States, and a host of others, whose names are interwoven in the history of their country.

Nor must it be forgotten that by charging the college with the examination and commission of land surveyors it was made a part of governmental machinery, and that in giving his first commission to George Washington it was instrumental in training the Father of his Country to the great part he bore in the affairs of America.

I have thus hurriedly indicated some of the elements which united in the making of colonial Virginia. On the nobility of her people at the Revolutionary period and their great services in that memorable struggle which secured free institutions to America and to the world I need not dwell, as these are too well known to all. There is one thing, however, that may be mentioned, for which the continent can not be too grateful to her. It is her efficient services in forming and securing our Federal Union. Indeed, the Virginia leaders of the Revolutionary period were most conspicuous for their broad and national views. These views extended not only to a National Union, but to the cultivation of a distinctive American character. Of these leaders none showed more interest in this subject than Washington. In concluding this paper I would call the attention of the association and of the country to one of his earnest recommendations having this end in view. It was the establishment of a grand national university at the Federal Capital. His views upon this important subject will

be best shown by the following extract from his will, by which he dedicated to this object fifty shares in the Potomac Company put at his disposal by the State of Virginia. Said he :

It has always been a source of serious regret with me to see the youths of these United States sent to foreign countries for the purposes of education, often before their minds were formed, or they had imbibed any but inadequate ideas of the happiness of their own, contracting too frequently not only habits of dissipation and extravagance, but principles unfriendly to republican government and to the true and genuine liberties of mankind which thereafter are rarely overcome. For these reasons it has been my ardent wish to see a plan devised, on a liberal scale, which would have a tendency to spread systematic ideas through all parts of this rising empire, thereby to do away with local attachments and State prejudices as far as the nature of things would or ought to admit from our national councils. Looking forward to the accomplishment of so desirable an object as this is in my estimation, my mind has not been able to contemplate any plan more likely to effect the measure than the establishment of a university in a central part of the United States, to which youths of fortune and talents from all parts thereof might be sent for the completion of their education in all branches of noble literature, in the arts and sciences, in acquiring knowledge in the principles of politics and good government; and as a matter of infinite importance in my judgment, by associating with each other and forming friendships in juvenile years, be enabled to free themselves in a proper degree from those local prejudices and habitual jealousies which have just been mentioned, and which, carried to excess, are never-failing sources of evil to the public mind and fraught with mischievous consequences to this country.

The establishment of such an university he urged in his speech to Congress on December 7, 1796, at the same time that he advised the establishment of a national military school. Had his well-matured views been then acted upon in establishing such a liberal national school, the result might have been a check to that passionate sectionalism which made inevitable the great civil strife of 1861-'65. But it is not now too late to act upon the dying request of the Father of his Country. Indeed the lapse of a century seems to bring with it the fullness of time for the realization of Washington's great conception. The subject has been ably discussed by our accomplished secretary, Dr. Herbert B. Adams, in his most valuable monograph upon William and Mary College, issued in 1887 by the Bureau of Education. Among other most important results which might be accomplished by such an institution, he points out the education of youth from all parts of the Union in the special branches required to be learned for the proper conduct of our civil service, and he most justly remarks that "there is in these

times a great need of special knowledge in civil service as in military or naval science. A civil academy for the training of representative American youth would be as great boon to the American people as the military and naval academies have already proved."

Such a national university should not excite the jealousy of our many admirable institutions of higher learning, but should be made the capstone of the American educational system.

It is a hopeful sign of the interest which is awakening on this subject to find that among the committees of the United States Senate one is appointed to consider the subject of a national university.

Let us hope that the day is not far distant when an additional memorial will be erected to Washington in the establishment of a grand national school of universal learning, into which not only American youth may proudly enter, but to which will be attracted the youth of other lands, eagerly seeking to imbibe American ideas with which to infuse new life into the older governments of the world.

But I have detained you long enough and will now give way to the rich feast our programme promises.

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