

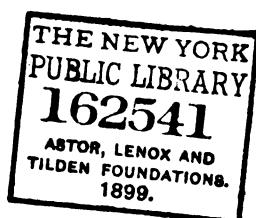
SKETCHES
OF
VIRGINIA,
HISTORICAL
AND
BIOGRAPHICAL.

BY THE
REV. WILLIAM HENRY FOOTE, D.D.,
PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ROMNEY, VIRGINIA.

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having accepted a call from the congregations of Hopewell and Concord on Holston, in Tennessee, his ordination was appointed to take place with that of Mr. Scott. The records of the meeting for the ordination are lost; but Mr. Scott appears as a member at the next meeting.

The year succeeding his settlement, as he was riding through the neighborhood, he came unexpectedly upon a company of men putting up a large log building. Upon inquiry, he found it was designed as a meeting-house. The people worshipping at the old North Mountain meeting-house, had been talking about a new church building, and a new position, but nothing had been decided upon by the congregation. Fearing lest evil might spring from this sudden movement of one part of the congregation, the young pastor says—"Are you not too fast, my boys?" "No," said Col. Doak, "we will end the dispute by putting up the Church." The church building was completed and called Bethel, and the dispute was heard of no more. This church building became notorious for two politico-religious meetings during the Revolution.

In the year 1784, the Presbytery of Hanover presented a memorial to the General Assembly of the State, on the Bill for a general assessment for the support of religious teachers, brought forward and advocated by Patrick Henry, who thought that support should be given to the public instructors in religion, of whatever denomination, under the sanction and provisions of law. That memorial was presented by Messrs. Smith and Todd. A few days after, these gentlemen handed in one in their own name.

TO THE HONORABLE THE SPEAKER AND THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES—The petition and memorial of John Todd and John B. Smith respectfully shows—that your memorialists as members of the Presbytery of Hanover, entrusted by them to wait upon the Assembly with their late memorial, (see 1st Vol. of Sketches, pp. 337 and 8), beg leave to explain that particular which refers to the incorporation of clergymen, as we are afraid that some gentlemen in the house may entertain a misapprehension of it. The Presbytery suppose that the only incorporation, which government is adequate to, is of a civil nature, by which societies in a collective capacity may hold property for any lawful purpose. And in their view, to incorporate clergymen exclusively of the religious community which they serve, would be an unequal, impolitic and dangerous measure. As to the incorporation of any order of men, or any religious society by the State, under the express idea of conveying to them any powers of Church government, the Presbytery absolutely protests against it, as inconsistent with the proper objects of legislation and an unnecessary and dangerous measure; unnecessary, because it would be to acknowledge the state as the indulgent parent of any class of citizens, whose consciences would permit them to become obedient children in spirituals, whilst those who should refuse submission in this respect, though equally good citizens, might be treated with a partial coldness, which would be undeserved. We

therefore pray in the name of the Presbytery, that this distinction of the two kinds of incorporation may be preserved as their true meaning. We are gentlemen your humble servants,

JOHN TODD,

JOHN B. SMITH.

Richmond, Nov. 18th 1784.

At the next Spring meeting, held in Bethel meeting-house, May 19th, 1785, a petition came up from the session of Augusta church, requesting an explanation of the word *liberal* in the late memorial. This led to consultation by Committee, and in Presbytery at large, which ended in the Presbytery declaring, unanimously, against any assessment whatever. The Presbytery were unanimously of the opinion, that a Convention of the Presbyterian body was expedient. In concurrence with several members of different congregations, the 10th of the succeeding August, was fixed upon. This Convention met and adopted an able memorial, (see 1st vol. of Sketches, pp. 342, 43, 44), in which the memorialists say — "We oppose the bill, because it is a departure from the line of legislation; because it is unnecessary and inadequate to its professed end, impolitic in many respects, and a direct violation of the declaration of rights." On this memorial, J. B. Smith was heard on the floor of Assembly, in Committee of the Whole. In the event, Mr. Jefferson's bill on the freedom of conscience was adopted.

The members of this congregation took some share in the struggles of the Revolution. Captain Tate was in the battle of the Cowpens, and shared in Morgan's retreat to Virginia with the prisoners. He returned to Carolina with the militia that were sent from Bethel and Tinkling Spring, to join General Greene, and assist in turning Lord Cornwallis back from his approach to Virginia. When his company of militia assembled at Midway, or Steele's tavern, Dr. Waddell addressed them on the eve of their departure, and exhorted them to patriotism and courage, and prompt obedience to the military rules, under which they now came. They joined Greene, and were with him in the battle of Guilford, March 15th, 1781. Captain Tate was in the second, or Virginia line of militia. The first line of militia had orders to fire once and retreat; the second to act as circumstances required, and when necessary, to fall back on the regulars. Tate bravely maintained his post; being a little deaf, it is supposed he did not hear the signal call for the militia to retire, and was surrounded and slain with a number that stood courageously with him. The majority of his company returned, and were assembled with their neighbors to worship God, from Sabbath to Sabbath, at Tinkling Spring and Bethel. Many of these militia carried scars from Guilford to their graves. Some of these militia soldiers were for a time hearers of the present minister, Dr. McFarland, the last of whom, Mr. Wilson, he attended to an honorable grave.

In the June succeeding the battle of Guilford, an alarm was given on a Saturday, that Tarlton having surprised Charlottesville, was