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# THE NORTH CAROLINA BOOKLET


## GREAT EVENTS IN NORTH CAROLINA HISTORY

## SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN COLONIAL NORTH CAROLINA

BY

ALEXANDER Q. HOLLADAY, LL.D.


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# THE NORTH CAROLINA BOOKLET.

GREAT EVENTS IN NORTH CAROLINA HISTORY.

## VOL. III.




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"CAROLINA! CAROLINA! HEAVEN'S BLESSINGS ATTEND HER!
WHILE WE LIVE WE WILL CHERISH, PROTECT AND DEFEND HER."

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# PREFACE.

The object of the North Carolina Booklet is to erect a suitable memorial to the patriotic women who composed the "Edenton Tea Party."

These stout-hearted women are every way worthy of admiration. On October 25, 1774, seven months before the defiant farmers of Mecklenburg had been aroused to the point of signing their Declaration of Independence, nearly twenty months before the declaration made by the gentlemen composing the Vestry of St. Paul's Church, Edenton, nearly two years before Jefferson penned the immortal National Declaration, these daring women solemnly subscribed to a document affirming that they would use no article taxed by England. Their example fostered in the whole State a determination to die, or to be free.

In beginning this new series, the Daughters of the Revolution desire to express their most cordial thanks to the former competent and untiringly faithful Editors, and to ask for the new management the hearty support of all who are interested in the brave deeds, high thought, and lofty lives of the North Carolina of the olden days.

Mrs. D. H. Hill.

# SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN COLONIAL NORTH CAROLINA.

By ALEXANDER Q. HOLLADAY, LL.D.,

(In answer to Colonel William Byrd, of Westover, Virginia).

There are few figures in the stately pageant of American colonial history so brilliant and fascinating as that of Colonel William Evelyn Byrd, son of the first William Byrd, who came to Virginia about 1656, and, purchasing the fertile lands on James River previously owned by the Pauletts and Blands, created there the noble old home of Westover, the dwelling place of the Byrd descendants for considerably more than a century; and now, after several changes of ownership, fortunately in the possession of a chatelaine in sympathetic touch with all the associations of the place, and dowered with the graces of temperament, taste and talent to cherish and perpetuate its traditions of social charm and polished hospitality.

Colonel Byrd was born to one of the amplest estates in America, and may be said to have been a favorite child of fortune to the very end of his active and prosperous life, at the age of three score and ten. He possessed much solid ability, as well as the lighter, sparkling gifts of the *salon*. He was noted for the beauty and commanding grace of his person, and endowed with a magnetic bearing which drew men to him and made him a central figure in every circle, the cyno-

sure of neighboring eyes. As a fitting crown and climax to so many shining qualities, his character was strong, enterprising, and sagacious, continually spurring him on to profitable and public-spirited uses of the extraordinary advantages and opportunities he enjoyed. Wise, well-bred, and witty; rich, and respected; generous, and genial; surely all the good fairies brought their best gifts to his cradle, and on his tombstone might well be engraved the one word *"Felicissimus"* instead of the somewhat labored inscription we may still read in the pleasant old-time garden at Westover.

And yet one fairy must have been present at his birth with a spice of malice in her nature, since with all his goodly gifts this brilliant and lordly gentleman of a lordly age grew up with one foible that never left him—a sharp and cynical wit, the shafts of which he was prone to scatter with something of careless levity, leaving his auditors uncertain whether he spoke in jest or earnest, and his readers doubtful lest he might be quite capable of distorting facts to heighten his antithesis, or of sacrificing accuracy to make a better background for his *bonmot*.

Colonel Byrd, though not a professional author (perhaps he thought with the great Mr. Congreve that professional authorship was beneath the dignity of such a magnate as himself), had very considerable literary talent, not excelled, if equaled, by any American of his day, and left behind him a folio volume of manuscripts, evidently carefully copied by a neat amanuensis, and afterward studied by the author, with many revisions and corrections in his own handwriting. This

volume was preserved for more than a hundred years, first at Westover and then by Colonel Byrd's Harrison descendants at Lower Brandon in Prince George County, Virginia. After their century-long slumber, these sprightly and entertaining manuscripts were published in 1841, and since that time have been several times reprinted, the last time in very sumptuous form, and edited by a North Carolina scholar. The subjects treated by Colonel Byrd are as follows: "The History of the Dividing Line between Virginia and North Carolina" (Colonel Byrd being one of three commissioners from Virginia appointed to meet a similar commission of representative gentlemen from North Carolina, and jointly with them to determine the line), "A Progress to the Mines," and "A Journey to the Land of Eden in 1733." All of these are written with an ease and vivacity that lead us to wish that instead of being as it were, born in the purple, the conditions of Colonel Byrd's life had been such as to force him into authorship as a profession, and so led him to the production of works that might have achieved permanent fame and greatly enriched the scanty treasury of American colonial literature. It is in "The History of the Dividing Line" that we find the utterances to which we demur, for the reason that the witty writer, in the recklessness of his satire, makes statements about North Carolina which cast slurs upon the conditions of that colony, not only unneighborly and unnecessary, but, as may be easily shown, wholly unjustified by the facts themselves, or by any serious investigation on his part. We proceed to quote freely and literally some of his caustic remarks, not omitting the severest,

to show the worst that a mocking wit could say of a young colony, not yet removed by one long human life from its first settlement:

"And because a good number of men were to go upon this expedition a chaplain was appointed to attend them, and the rather because the people on the frontiers of North Carolina, who have no minister near them, might have an opportunity to get themselves and their children baptized." Speaking of a certain piece of land, he says: "It would be a valuable tract of land in any country but North Carolina, where, for want of navigation and commerce, the best estate affords little more than a coarse subsistence." "And considering how fortune delights in bringing great things out of small, who knows but North Carolina may one time or another come to be the seat of another great empire?" "Flax thrives likewise extremely, being perhaps as fine as any in the world, and I question not might with a little care be brought to rival that of Egypt; and yet the men are so intolerably lazy they seldom take the trouble to propagate it." He says of the Quaker creed: "That persuasion prevails much for want of ministers to help the people to a decenter way to Heaven."

"It is natural for helpless man to adore his Maker, in some form or other; and were there any exceptions to this rule, I should expect it to be among the Hottentots of the Cape of Good Hope and of North Carolina." These be somewhat bitter words. We once heard of an exemplary English lady who, finding occasion to remain a considerable time in Paris, resolutely refused to speak French, and nobly submitted to all the

discomfort of never being able to make herself understood during her sojourn, because she felt it wrong to encourage the perverted inhabitants of that frivolous but interesting city to persevere in the use of their absurd mother tongue. Perhaps for reasons of State or conscience, Colonel Byrd thought it unwise to encourage the North Carolina settlers to persevere in making their own fortunes in their own way and in making a Commonwealth to suit themselves.

But we proceed with our quotations: "If a parson come in their way, they will crave a cast of his office, as they call it, else they are content their offspring should remain as arrant pagans as themselves. They account it among their greatest advantages that they are not priest-ridden, not remembering that the clergy is rarely guilty of bestriding such as have the misfortune to be poor. They do not know Sunday from any other day, any more than Robinson Crusoe did, which would give them a great advantage were they given to be industrious. But they keep so many Sabbaths every week that their disregard of the seventh day has no manner of cruelty in it, either to servants or cattle." "Some borderers, too, had a great mind to know where the line would come out, being for the most part apprehensive lest their lands should be taken into Virginia. In that case they must have submitted to some sort of order and government, whereas, in North Carolina every one does what seems best in his own eyes." "Surely there is no place in the world where the inhabitants live with less labor than in North Carolina. It approaches nearer to the description of Lubberland than any other, by the great felicity of

the climate, the easiness of raising provisions, and the slothfulness of the people. The men, for their part, just like the Indians, impose all the work on the poor women. They make their wives rise out of their beds early in the morning, at the same time that they lie and snore till the sun has risen one-third of his course and dispersed all the unwholesome damps. Then, after stretching and yawning for half an hour, they light their pipes, and, under the protection of a cloud of smoke, venture out into the open air, though if it happens to be never so little cold they quickly return, shivering, into the chimney corner. When the weather is mild they stand leaning with both arms upon the corn-field fence, and gravely consider whether they had best take a small heat at the hoe, but generally find reasons to put it off till another time. Thus they loiter away their lives like Solomon's sluggard, with their arms across, and at the end of the year scarcely have bread to eat. To speak the truth, it is a thorough aversion to labor that makes people file off to North Carolina, where plenty and a warm sun confirm them in their disposition to laziness for their whole lives." "Since we were like to be confined to this place till the people returned out of the Dismal, it was agreed that our chaplain might safely take a turn to Edenton to preach the gospel to the infidels there and christen their children. He was accompanied thither by Mr. Little, one of the Carolina commissioners, who, to show his regard to the church, offered to treat him on the road with a fricassée of rum." "Very few in this country have the industry to plant orchards, which in dearth of rum might

supply them with much better liquor." A page or two further on, when not very distant from Edenton, he says: "Here there may be forty or fifty houses, most of them small and built without expense. A citizen here is counted extravagant if he has ambition enough to aspire to a brick chimney. Justice herself is but indifferently lodged, the court-house having much the air of a tobacco house. I believe this is the only metropolis in the Christian or Mahometan world where there is neither church, chapel, mosque, synagogue nor any other place of public worship of any sort or religion whatsoever. What little devotion there may happen to be is much more private than their vices. The people seem easy without a minister as long as they are exempted from paying him." "For these reasons, these reverend gentlemen have always left their flocks as arrant heathen as they found them. This much, however, may be said for the inhabitants of Edenton: that not a soul has the least taint of superstition or hypocrisy, acting very frankly and above-board in all their excesses. Provisions here are extremely cheap, and extremely good, so that people may live plentifully at a trifling expense. Nothing is dear but law, physic and strong drink, and the last they get with so much difficulty that they are never guilty of the sin of suffering it to sour upon their hands." "Our chaplain returned to us in the evening from Edenton. He had preached there in the court-house, for want of a consecrated place, and made no less than nineteen of Father Hennepin's converts." "We christened two of our landlord's children, which might have remained infidels all their lives had we not

carried Christianity to his own door. The truth of it is, our neighbors of North Carolina are not so zealous as to go much out of their way to procure this benefit for their children; otherwise, being so near Virginia, they might, without exceeding trouble, make a journey to the next clergyman upon so good an errand; and, indeed, should the neighboring ministers once in two or three years vouchsafe to take a turn among these gentiles, to baptize them and their children, it would look a little apostolical, and they might hope to be requited for it hereafter, if that be not thought too long to tarry for their reward." "Then we went to Mr. Kinchin's, a man of figure and authority in North Carolina, who lives about a mile to the southward of the place where the surveyors left off. By the benefit of a little pains and good management this worthy magistrate lives in much affluence. Amongst other instances of his industry, he had planted a good orchard, which is not common in that indolent climate, nor is it at all strange that such improvident people, who take no thought for the morrow, should save themselves the trouble to make improvements that will not pay them for several years to come; though if they could trust futurity for anything they certainly would for cider, which they are so fond of that they generally drink it before it has been done working, lest the fermentation might unluckily turn it sour." "This being Sunday, we had an opportunity of resting from our labors. The expectation of such a novelty as a sermon in these parts brought together a numerous congregation. When the sermon was over, our chaplain did his part toward making eleven

of them Christians." "This part of the country being very proper for raising cattle and hogs, we observed the inhabitants lived in great plenty without killing themselves with labor." And on another occasion "Our chaplain did his office and rubbed us up with a seasonable sermon. This was quite a new thing to our brethren of North Carolina, who live in a climate where no clergyman can breathe any more than spiders in Ireland." "The indolence and dissipation of the middling and lower classes of white inhabitants are such as to give pain to every reflecting mind. Horse-racing, cock-fighting and boxing matches are standing amusements, for which they neglect all business, and in the latter of which they conduct themselves with a barbarity worthy of their savage neighbors. The ferocious practice of stage boxing in England is urbanity compared with their mode of fighting. In their combats, unless specially precluded, they are admitted (to use their own term) "to bite and gouge," which operations, when the first onset with fists is over, consists in fastening on the nose or ears of their adversaries with their teeth and dexterously scooping out an eye, on which account it is no uncommon circumstance to meet men in the prime of youth deprived of one of those organs. This is no traveler's exaggeration; I speak from knowledge and observation. In the summer months it is very common to make a party on horseback to a spring, near which there is usually some little hut with spirituous liquors, if the party are not themselves provided, where their debauch frequently terminates in a boxing match, a horse race, or perhaps both. I was myself accidentally

drawn into one of these parties, where I soon experienced the strength of the liquor, which was concealed by the refreshing coolness of the water. While we were seated round the spring, at the edge of a delightful wood, four or five countrymen arrived, headed by a veteran Cyclops, the terror of the neighborhood, ready on every occasion to risk his remaining eye. We soon found ourselves under the necessity of relinquishing our posts and making our escape from these fellows, who evidently sought to provoke a quarrel. On our return home, whilst I was rejoicing at our good fortune and admiring the moderation of my company, we arrived at a plain spot of ground by a woodside, on which my horse no sooner set foot than, taking the bit between his teeth, off he went at full speed, attended by the whoops and hallowings of my companions. At the end of half a mile my horse stopped short, as if he had been shot, and threw me with considerable violence over his head. My buckle—for I was without boots—entangled me in the stirrup, but fortunately broke into twenty pieces. The company rode up, delighted with the adventure, and it was then for the first time I discovered that I had been purposely induced by one of my friends to change horses with him for the afternoon; that his horse had been accustomed to similar exploits on the same *race ground;* that the whole of the business was neither more nor less than a native piece of pleasantry, and that my friends thought they had exhibited great moderation in not exposing me at the spring to the effects of "biting and gouging."

Before turning to such illustrative records on these subjects as are accessible to us, we will cite the judgment of another, of higher authority than ourselves, upon Colonel Byrd's trustworthiness as a historian, and, holding as we do with the gentleman who said that for a really nice, dignified and influential job he would rather have that of a bishop than any other, we will first quote the late venerable Bishop Meade of Virginia, so long one of the foremost figures in American church history. Referring to one of Colonel Byrd's characteristic sarcasms leveled at the inhabitants of Governor Spottswood's once noted town of Germanna on the Rapidan, the good Bishop says: "Mr. Byrd's writings being full of such remarks, we may conclude that he does not always expect us to receive them as historical verities."

The observations of our witty Colonel seem to have been limited to a few miles along or near the undetermined line between the two colonies, now on one side, now on the other, sometimes uncertain on which side he was sojourning, and to have been made in exactly thirty days, being wholly incidental to the tedious and harassing work of directing the surveyors through swamp and wilderness, scarcely inhabited. For rather more than half the time specified the commissioners seem to have made their halting places on the Virginia side of the line, though the shafts of the Colonel's satire are invariably leveled, not indiscriminately, but at the dwellers on what he supposes to be the Carolina side. It seems hardly credible that a mile or two either way from an unknown boundary should show such remarkable variation. If true,

it presented an interesting and difficult problem to scientific investigators, and we grieve that there was no Humbolt or Darwin to sift these extraordinary facts to the bottom and explain the causes producing phenomena so unexpected. It seems to us, however, more reasonable to suppose that our traveling Colonel, with the celerity of impatient genius, was a little too hasty in his generalizations to be accurate. Perhaps he pursued the novel though somewhat unsatisfactory method of collecting information practised later by Mrs. Leo Hunter's noble guest, Count Smartlark, when making notes for his monumental work on Chinese Metaphysics. With the directness and simplicity of real genius this accomplished nobleman accumulated everything the encyclopedias contained, first under the heading Metaphysics, and second under China, and then dexterously united the two subjects into one, thereby producing an immortal work, ingenious and unique, and probably quite as beneficial to mankind as if it had emanated from the mind of Hobbes or Kant. Colonel Byrd's account of the habits, morals and general condition of Edenton is in the Count's happiest vein. He never saw Edenton, not having accompanied the chaplain on his notable visit, but setting out with the axiom that the North Carolina settlers were Hottentots, and Hottentots being admittedly fond of intoxicating liquors, and Edenton being a North Carolina town, *qu. e. d.*, the inhabitants of that unhappy metropolis cannot have any other virtue but that of being without hypocrisy and are shamelessly open and above-board in their vicious lives. We feel like crying out with the pious fruit peddlers of Smyrna,

"In the name of the Prophet! Figs!" but nothing shall make us believe there was ever any dearth of "cakes and ale," to say nothing of good Nantes and Madeira, among the dainties of hospitable Westover.

If all this captious badinage only means that the colony of North Carolina was younger than Virginia or Massachusetts, with a less numerous and more scattered population, and, as a necessary consequence, the details of governmental routine perhaps less completely organized at the extremities of its territory, and the settler's life in general somewhat simpler, then nobody wishes to deny that the settlement of that colony began about two generations later than the planting at Jamestown. Georgia was first settled two generations later yet than North Carolina, and we fail to see wherein the age of either colony furnishes occasion for ridicule or criticism.

If Colonel Byrd's sarcasms seriously mean (which we are loth to believe) that in his deliberate judgment the brave men and good women who as pioneers opened the ground and laid the foundation on which was built the colony and State of North Carolina were not as respectable and respected as those of other American colonies, then we say bluntly and emphatically he either wrote in utter ignorance or in great disregard of all the authorities on the subject. Colonel Byrd was too well-read a scholar not to know that everything solid and lasting must have its modest beginning. Never yet has any nation sprung into the arena of earthly grandeur, all panoplied, magnificent and mighty, like Minerva with the majesty of Jove encircling her. The mighty empire of Persia began

with the enterprise of a petty tribe of mountain shepherds. The still greater power of imperial Rome grew out of the banding of a handful of outlaws under a bold, ambitious captain. England, the Rome of modern times, has grown out of repeated incursions of creek pirates who at last took possession of the soil, driving the native British into the swamps and mountains to lodge and feed with their own swine. In every pioneer State the whole method and apparatus of living is naturally simpler and less elaborate than it becomes in even one generation later, and the simplicity of life characteristic of the first settlers of every State in this great Union is in no sense the badge of that bitter poverty and unthrift which degrade or destroy. It is rather the beginning of affluence and the parent of luxury, and American manhood should feel a noble pride in the character, ideals and energy which enabled our forefathers, under many difficulties and privations, to lay broad and deep the foundation of various Commonwealths, out of which has grown a nation so populous and mighty that from the beginning of the present century it must be compared with the greatest empires of history. About the time Englishmen were busy planting settlements along the American coast, quaint Sir Thomas Browne wrote: "With all his faults, man is a noble animal." And so indeed he is, as he ought to be, since he is, even though faintly, the image of his Divine Maker; and it is one of the highest and noblest qualities of any race that it can send forth its young men, strong and brave, to subdue a wilderness, to form new societies and found new States, in the proud confidence that instead of sinking

into savagery and degradation they will patiently endure temporary hardship, privation and, as actually happened at Jamestown, even starvation, and march steadily on, stubborn, invincible, triumphant, to their destined goal. North Carolina has every right to feel proud that at a period when the daily exigencies of life in a new settlement made constant demands upon time and energy her founders could show so much accomplished in the way of creating and organizing a new Commonwealth, with its varied needs and all the complex machinery of government for a territory larger than England, with a scattered population about equal in all to some of the parishes of London. It would be an interesting and useful work to make a thorough study of this matter in all its phases, and investigate the social conditions of colonial North Carolina in the broadest sense, and it could not fail to throw light on the genesis of a nation if it were possible to fully set forth all the conditions and environments of one of its component units. We should, indeed, like to see the founders as they really were, to know all about their ways and means of living, their domestic economies, their primitive manufactures, their schools and libraries, their recreations; in short, every interest, great or small, that made up the sum of their lives. None of these are without value to a faithful historian; but to study and present the subject would require a huge volume, and is far beyond the power or scope of the present writer, whose only purpose is to refute Colonel Byrd's flippant criticisms.

To be more specific, we may, without unfairness, sum up his charges as follows: total depravity, almost universal idleness, and general roughness and grossness of living.

On the first count of this sweeping indictment, the utter disregard of all religious or moral obligation, we will first quote again from Bishop Meade: "Colonel Byrd was a man of great enterprise, a classical scholar, and a very sprightly writer. The fault of his works is an exuberance of humor and of jesting with serious things, which sometimes degenerates into that kind of wit which so disfigures and injures the writings of Shakespeare. He never loses an opportunity of a playful remark about Christians, and especially the clergy. He was under the impression that there was not a single minister of the church in North Carolina. *In this we think he is mistaken.*" The venerable Bishop might have spoken his *last sentence* much more positively. We know that Colonel Byrd was entirely wrong. In the third volume of the Rev. Dr. Anderson's "History of the Colonial Churches," published in London (and a most instructive and valuable work it is to American students), we find ample evidence bearing directly on this subject. Speaking of the labors of missionary clergymen sent out by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, just two hundred years ago, Dr. Anderson says: "Foremost among these were the services of John Blair, who first came out to North Carolina in *1704* as an itinerant missionary, through the courtesy of Lord Weymouth, and after suffering many hardships returned to encounter them a second time as one of the permanent missionaries of the society and

commissary of the Bishop of London. At the time of Mr. Blair's *first visit* to North Carolina he found three small churches already built in the colony, with glebes belonging to them. His fellow-laborers sent out by the society in *1707* and the next few years were Adams, Gordon, Urmstone, Rainsford, Newman, Garzia and Moir. Governor Eden, and after him Sir Richard Everard, appear to have actively exerted themselves to promote the extension and welfare of the church, and later Governor Dobbs urgently begged that a bishop be sent to the colony to take energetic charge of the spiritual needs of the people. In *1715* the Assembly passed an act dividing the colony into nine parishes, affixing a stipend to each, not to exceed fifty pounds per annum [a sum then equal to about seven hundred dollars now]." "Two more of the North Carolina clergy at this time deserve to be named with especial honor, because they had both resided as laymen for some years in the province, and therefore been eye-witnesses of the hardships to which the church there was exposed. The first of these, John Boyd, received from the Bishop of London authority to enter upon his arduous work, and the manner in which he discharged his duties in Albemarle County, North Carolina, till his death, six years later, proved how fitly it had been conferred upon him." "Clement Hall was the second of these two consecrated men, and his career even more distinguished. His labors and journeyings remind us of those of the great Wesley. In eight years he traveled about fourteen thousand miles, preached near a thousand sermons, baptized more than six thousand grown persons and

children, administering the Lord's Supper frequently to as many as two or three hundred persons on a single journey, besides performing the incidental labors of organizing churches and classes, catechising children, visiting the sick and burying the dead." This would seem to be no indifferent example of a true Christian soldier and shepherd of souls, not unworthy of comparison with St. Paul himself. He stands out in pleasing contrast with the Rev. John Dunbar, who distinguished himself by fighting a duel in Westover churchyard, behind the wall of the pulpit from which he had often preached, and celebrated the Last Supper of the Prince of Peace. This edifying specimen of a Christian minister was the son-in-law of Colonel William Byrd, whose intimate knowledge of his character may have added sharpness to the Colonel's many gibes at the clergy. We do not think the figures given in the above account of Rev. Clement Hall's labors make any bad showing for the Hottentots of Colonel Byrd's satire. They seem to have heard the Word gladly, to have welcomed Mr. Hall's ministrations and yielded such fruit to them as must have mightily lifted up that good man's soul and given him strength and courage for still greater exertions in the Master's service.

It is not easy to produce direct evidence of the industry or indolence of any community a hundred and seventy years ago, but we can form a safe judgment from admitted indicative facts. There is no doubt that a mild climate, a fertile soil and teeming waters offer strong temptations to indolent enjoyment; and as Colonel Byrd concedes all these natural

advantages and attractions to North Carolina, the wonder is, not that some surrendered to the allurements of this earthly Paradise (their kind is by no means unknown north as well as south of this particular Elysium), but that a sufficient number resisted their temptations to create material for export not proportionately exceeded in quantity or value by any of the thirteen colonies. Certainly no other colony paid such taxes as $14 for a marriage license, or dreamed of building a vice-regal palace to cost a quarter of a million. All the facts go to show that a great majority of the people were resolutely bent on accumulating values and improving their fortunes as rapidly as possible, and we can draw pretty accurate inferences as to the general industry of a people when we look into the books of the tax-gatherer.

The personality of the influential men of a community, its statesmen and leaders, their character, public and private, their homes and way of living, furnish a sure guide to the standard of intellect, culture and refinement obtaining among their people. Does not Edward Moseley, statesman and patriot, stand out the peer of any public man in America of his own or any earlier day, not excepting Vane in Massachusetts, or Nathaniel Bacon in Virginia? Governor Gabriel Johnston was a worthy rival of Governor Spottswood in the energy and good sense with which through his long and successful administration he pushed forward the development of his province. No fair-minded student will assert that the names of Pollock and Harvey, Samuel Johnston, Harnett, Porter, Caswell, Ashe or Hewes do not deserve as high and honorable

place in our eighteenth century as those of Hancock or Adams, Dickenson, Trumbull, Rutledge, Pendleton, Wythe or Mason. William Hooper was a greater statesman than Charles Carroll, and a much better man than Benjamin Franklin. In the military service Waddell, Nash, Davidson, Rutherford, John Ashe, Sumner approved themselves in all things worthy brothers-in-arms and true "knights companion" of Warren or Mercer.

No cavil can break down the evidence of a Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence on May 20th or May 30th, 1775, an action more spirited and dangerous to its participants than the famous wresting of *Magna Charta* by the united Barons of England from a powerless King, and entitling the names of Alexander and Brevard to a lofty niche in the American Walhalla.

Truly there were giants in those days in North Carolina as elsewhere. Stately men were there, too, and if Colonel Byrd had dined with Governor Eden or Sir Richard Everard he would have met some of them and have been invited to visit their hospitable homes, some of them not unworthy of comparison with his own fair Westover; and we feel sure that when "put on his book oath" he would have freely admitted that not grand homes but grand souls make a people great. Distinction of social charm, high breeding and refinement of domestic life are matters of local tradition rather than of statistical record. It is not often that one man or fmaily can draw the eyes of a nation to these neighborhood particulars, though it was said of Sir Walter Scott at Abbots-

ford that he did the honors for all Scotland; but all the country-side in North Carolina is rich in the legend of these virtues, clustering around the hearth-stones of many a gallant mansion whose very ruins are more than a century old. These are only echoes now around the sites of Belfont and Brompton, The Hermitage, Lillington Hall, The Neck, Winendale, Ormond House and Mosely Hall—*"etiam ruinæ perierunt."* But when we remember the great men who dwelt in these vanished homes, and the kindred spirits who gathered around them, we bow in silent reverence over their honored names. Clay Hill and Wakefield still remain, old and faithful custodians of the precious memories of their gentle owners. Orton still stands in solitary grandeur, keeping watch and ward over the lower Cape Fear, and King Roger Moore was a worthy counterpart in every respect to King Carter of the Rappahannock.

Is Buncombe Hall, with its open doors, its princely welcome and boundless hospitality, no more to be remembered of men because its mutilated grounds and crumbling walls are now silent monuments of by-gone splendor, "whose lights are fled, its garlands dead" almost a hundred and fifty years ago? As Steele finely said of a gifted lady in London, it was a liberal education to have enjoyed the privileged entrée to the Montfort House, that realm of maiden beauty and purity, the home sparkling with wit and innocent mirth, of every refining influence, where Colonel Willie Jones and Colonel John Ashe found those exquisite wives, whose grace and wit and spirit not only charmed their countrymen but put to the

blush and silenced armed foes, even the surly and savage Tarleton.

It is difficult to imagine a more brilliant and attractive home than that of Colonel Willie Jones himself, in historic Halifax. It was like Monticello, the home of his friend, Thomas Jefferson, a roof which by the magnetism of genius and high breeding drew to its cherishing hearth-stone everything of wit and wisdom and cultured merit that came within reach, and which gave out of all these as freely and richly as it received.

There was no fairer home in all America than the old Johnston House by Edenton, later known as Hayes. Not even Drayton Hall on the Ashley near Charleston, nor splendid Hampton near Baltimore, nor Livingston Manor on the Hudson, nor Rosewell on the York, speak more eloquently of home refinement in the olden time nor look down more gloriously upon the shining waters. The last time we saw it was near sunset. From the mossy walls of the grave-yard where rests so much honored dust we walked through the beautiful grounds by the windows of the library toward the bay, striving as we walked to bring before our mind's eye the forms of the long-vanished fair women and great men who once lived and moved amid these exquisite scenes. Ships were gliding on to their appointed havens. "The horns of Elfland" seemed to send out their mellow notes, echoing from shore to shore, and over everything was shed a golden glow that gave one moment's fleeting vision of a celestial "light that was never on

sea or land." Almost unconsciously the words rose to our lips: *"Vede Napoli é muori."*

We do not believe a more dignified and polished society ever met in America than gathered in Governor Tryon's palace in New Bern. We look back through the mists of a century and a half, and may fancy we see in powdered hair and rustling brocade the gorgeously-attired figures gliding through solemn minuet and quick gavotte, keeping joyous time to bassoon and viol, all unconscious of the storm destined to break so soon and bring to an end forever these loyal and royal fêtes. The last ball in that grandest of all the vice-regal palaces on the American continent must have been sounding like the Duchess of Richmond's entertainment in Brussels the night before Waterloo, "where youth and pleasure met to chase the glowing hours with flying feet," and

> "There was a sound of revelry by night,
> And Belgium's capital had gathered there
> Her beauty and her chivalry; and bright
> The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;
> A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
> Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
> Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spoke again,
> And all went merry as a marriage bell."

But hush! hark! A deep sound strikes like a rising knell, and the stern Governor must go forth, like a fierce eagle, to rend with bloody talon the plain of Alamance, and open the first act of the coming tragedy. Belles and beaux, courtiers, councilors, Governor—all are dust now, but we may be sure

they made a gallant show in New Bern "in the auld time of the King."

We will not pursue the subject further. It is not worth while to invoke the thunderbolts of Heaven to crush a butterfly. Men do not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles, and both blossom and fruit of this Carolina century plant, in every season and sort of trial, have never failed to furnish proof beyond dispute or cavil as to the kind of seed from which it sprung. North Carolina can proudly rest, *"sans peur et sans reproche,"* upon the made-up record of what her past has been. Her brave and good men, her fair and noble women of the present are the sure pledges of what her future shall be.

Before we close perhaps we ought to state that the last and longest of our quotations—the one describing certain offensive and barbarous diversions of the natives—is not taken from Colonel Byrd's volume, but is to be found in the journal of the Marquis de Chastellux, a French officer under Rochambeau, and is not written of North Carolina, but narrates a personal experience in 1782 near the Potomac River in Virginia, in one of the most fertile, salubrious, beautiful and wealthy districts of that grand old State, fifty-four years later than Colonel Byrd's flying journey along its southern borders.

The late famous orator, Henry A. Wise, Governor of Virginia, used to say of Williamsburg, the old capital, where was and is a magnificent hospital for the insane, and which was a part of the district he represented in Congress, that it had about one thousand inhabitants, one half lazy and the other

half crazy; yet we can assure all who may read this tract that if they ever visit that ancient burg they will find there one of the most polished and charming societies on our continent. We will not quote the indictment drawn by the Commissary of London against the inhabitants of Charleston. His epithets art so sweeping and terrible that we might well wonder if he is describing Algiers or Hades, and we ask in amazement if he is speaking of the haughty Charleston we have read of, enthroned by the sea, and, like Tyre or Carthage, receiving tribute from the nations. Nothing that he can say, however, can shake our conviction that from a time "whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary" Charleston has been one of the most delightful of American cities. We make no argument out of the *"tu quoque,"* for we feel sure these unpleasant pictures are no more accurate than Colonel Byrd's, and we refer to them only in order to show how easy it is to draw caricatures and use hard words. There is no just foundation for quarrel or mutual jealousy in the family group of the South. In essentials the old slave-holding agricultural States of the South were one, as the same colonies were; in heart they should be indivisible. True comrades have they been in the past, alike in good and evil fortune; true brethren may they ever be, even to the last hour of recorded time.

We confess to no small admiration for Colonel William Byrd. His public life was distinguished and useful, his private life manly and generous, and he was a fine specimen of the grand *seigneur* of olden time. In the Presence to which

he was summoned a hundred and sixty years ago, rivalries, quarrels, ambitions, jealousies, earthly passions all are stilled. We doubt if he was ever very much in earnest in his satirical extravagancies, and, having entered good-humored protest against some of them, we call a truce to battle and reverently breathe a *requiescat* over his silent dust.