

**COLLECTIONS OF THE
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SOCIETY, VOL. VII**

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WM. ELLIS JONES,
PRINTER,
RICHMOND, VA.

ABSTRACT
OF THE
PROCEEDINGS OF THE
Virginia Company of London,

1619—1624,

PREPARED FROM THE
RECORDS IN THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

BY
CONWAY ROBINSON,

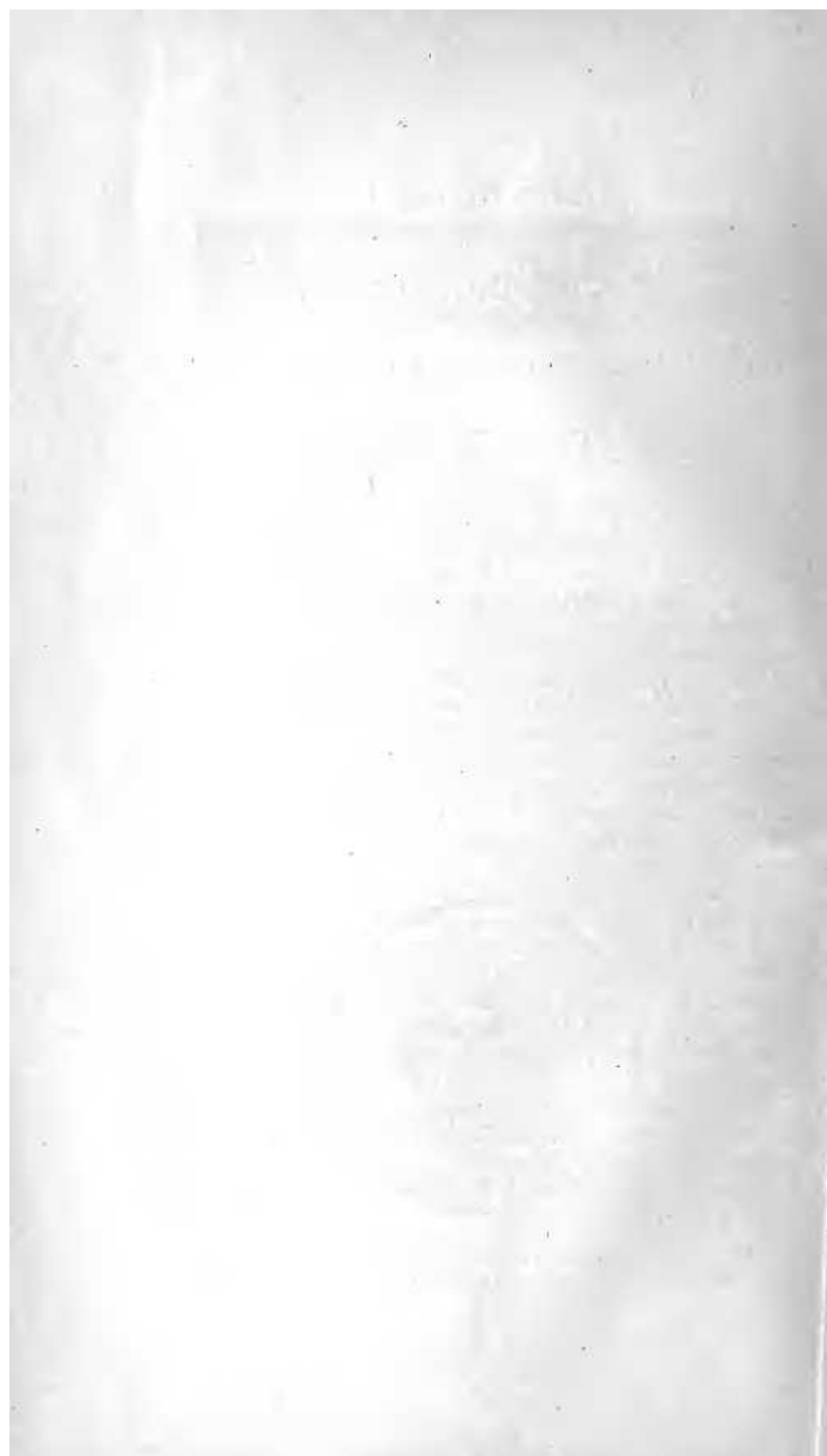
AND EDITED WITH AN
INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY
R. A. BROCK,
Corresponding Secretary and Librarian of the Society.

VOL. I.



RICHMOND, VIRGINIA.
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.
MDCCCLXXXVIII.





INTRODUCTION.

The essential value of the Proceedings of the Virginia Company of London, towards a due knowledge of the planting of the first of the American Commonwealths, is patent. Although highly useful excerpts from them have been presented by the zealous and indefatigable investigator, Rev. Edward D. Neill, D. D., in his publications illustrative of the early history of Virginia, it is believed that the abstracts now offered will prove an acceptable aggrandizement of his labors, and inasmuch as they were prepared by a scholar of singular discernment—the late eminent jurist, Conway Robinson, whose professional works are held in prime authority and as of enduring worth—it may be hoped, with confidence, that they are comprehensive as to all desirable details.

The Virginia Historical Society is greatly indebted to Mr. Robinson for a signal devotion to its interests, which only ceased with his life. He was one of its founders, on December 29th, 1831; its first treasurer; from 1835 until his removal to Washington, D. C., in 1869, a member of its "Standing," or Executive Committee, serving for a greater portion of the period as chairman, and subsequently and continuously as vice-president of the Society.

The abstracts, it is thought, were made by Mr. Robinson in or about the year 1856. They were recently generously presented to the Society by his widow.

The history of the preservation of a contemporaneous copy of the original records is thus given:

"In one of the old mansions of rural Chelsea, which tradition says was the home of Sir Thomas More, the warm friend of

Erasmus and author of the political romance of *Utopia*, there dwelt, in 1624, Sir John Danvers, a prominent member of the Virginia Company, who had married the gentle and comely widow Herbert, already the mother of ten children, two of whom were George, the holy poet, and Edward, the philosophic deist. After the King resolved to annul the charter of the Company, an attempt was made by their opponents to obtain the records. The Secretary of the Company, Collingwood, probably under the direction of Deputy Nicholas Ferrar, visited Sir John Danvers, and mentioned that three London merchants had lately called upon him to obtain information. A clerk of Collingwood was immediately secured as copyist, and, to preclude discovery, was locked up in a room of Danvers' house, while he transcribed the minutes.

"After the transactions were copied on folio paper, to prevent interpolation, each page was carefully compared with the originals by Collingwood and then subscribed 'Con. Collingwood,' when Danvers took them to the President of the Company, Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton. The Earl was highly gratified in the possession of a duplicate copy of the Company's transactions, and expressed it by throwing his arms around the neck of Sir John, and then turning to his brother, said: 'Let them be kept at my house at Tichfield; they are the evidences of my honor, and I value them more than the evidences of my lands.'

"During the same year Southampton died, and Thomas, his son, was heir and successor to the title; became Lord High Treasurer of England, and lived until 1667. Shortly after the death of the latter, William Byrd, of Virginia, the father* of the

* This was Colonel William Byrd, Auditor and Receiver-General of the colony, the first of the family, name and title in Virginia. In a MS. letter-book of his, covering the period January, 1683,—August 3, 1691, in the Collections of the Virginia Historical Society, there is a hiatus in his correspondence between "Feb'y ye 12th, 1686," and "April ye 16th, 1688," dating letters, both addressed to "Messrs. John Thomas and Company, in Barbadoes." In that of the last date, he remarks, by way of beginning: "Last yeare when I was going out of the country I wrote to you." It may then be assumed that the year of acquisition was 1687, when, also, Byrd was entrusted with and brought to the colony, a broad-seal, appointed for the colony by James II, but which

Honorable William Byrd, of 'Westover,' purchased the manuscript records from the Earl for sixty guineas.

Rev. William Stith, who subsequently became President of William and Mary College, while living at the glebe at Varina,^b on James river, the old settlement of Sir Thomas Dale, better known, since the civil war, as Dutch Gap, obtained these records from the Byrd library at "Westover"; and most of the material of his *History of Virginia*, completed in 1746, was drawn therefrom.

it appears was never used. (See Note, *post* 154, and further as to the seals of Virginia, it may be here noted, that John Esten Cooke, in an article in the *Magazine of American History*, August, 1883, page 88, gives an account of an alleged seal of the Virginia Company, representing "an Indian being helped up from a crouching posture by Britannia, with the motto 'Resurges.'" Several years previous to the publication by Cooke, a pencil drawing of this design was sent to the present editor by his friend Christopher J. Cleborne, M. D., Medical Inspector United States Navy, who had obtained it in New Orleans, La. It was probably a design submitted for the great or broad seal of the colony, subsequent to the dissolution of the Company. The insignia mentioned in the note above referred to, was also used in gilt decoration on the backs of Bibles and Prayer-Books provided for the colonial churches. The editor has seen a number of such examples. For a history of the State seal, see Report by Col. Sherwin McRae to Governor Wm. E. Cameron, February 25, 1884, House Documents, No. XI. Soon after the death of the third Colonel William Byrd, of Virginia (born 6th September, 1728; died 1st January, 1777), his library, the formation of which was commenced by his grandfather, and which by continuous accessions included 3,625 volumes, in various departments of science and *belles-lettres*—was sent by his widow, *née* Mary Willing, of Philadelphia, to that city and was there sold at auction. The editor possesses a *verbatim* copy of the original catalogue, from which it appears that many of the books could never have been taken beyond the limits of Virginia. A portion of the library must have been sold in Virginia, or many of the books had been loaned out, as they have frequently appeared with the book plate of the second Col. Wm. Byrd, in sales of books made at auction in Richmond, Virginia.

^b So called because the lands in the section produced a tobacco nearly resembling the Spanish Varinas. Stith was rector of Henrico parish, the glebe of which was at Varina from 18th July, 1736 to 1st October, 1752. Varina was formerly the county seat of Henrico, and its records were kept there until the invasion of the traitor, Arnold, in October, 1781, when they were removed to Richmond. Varina was the point at which Confederate and Federal prisoners were exchanged during the late war between the States of our Union.