My dear Children:  

Many years since, in 1821, Mr. Thomas Moran, of this place, called to see me. He had recently returned from a summer excursion to the Eastern States. During his visit, he stated to me that while at Newport in the State of Rhode Island, he had accidentally become acquainted with a gentleman who had been in India shortly before they met. This gentleman, learning from Mr. Moran that he was from Virginia, enquired if he knew any of the Farewell family in this State. Upon his replying that he knew me, and that I was his townsmen, the gentleman thus explained the motives of his inquiry.

He said that while he was in the East Indies, he had met with an old man holding some place in the service of the East India Company, who, finding that he was from the United States, had asked if he knew any person in this Country by the name of Farewell. He explained that he was not personally acquainted with any such, but he knew well there was a family of that name in America, because he had seen the name subscribed to several Acts of Congress, then in his possession, as the name of the President of the Senate of the United States. The enquirer expressed much solicitude to see this; and calling upon him the next day, for that purpose, he exhibited to him a volume of the Laws of the United States, several of which were subscribed as he had represented, by Henry Farewell as President of the Senate. The old man manifested much satisfaction at this, immediately invited him to his house, and even afterwards, while he remained in India, had shown much attention, hospitality, and kindness, for which he felt very grateful.

Mr. Moran's acquaintance added, that the name of this old man was Farewell, and that during their intercourse, he had communicated the following account of himself. That he had long believed he was the only person of his name known in existence. His family, he said, had once been numerous, but it had lost all its male branches; and that as he was then an old man and a bachelor, he had supposed his name would soon become extinct. Reflection upon this circumstance, had brought to his memory a family tradition he had often heard while a boy in England, that some younger
branch of the family had migrated to America, before he was born; and that a desire to obtain some intelligence of this branch, had induced him, during many years, to seek out all the Americans he could find, with a view of making the same enquiries of them which he had addressed to him, when they first met. But until this meeting, he could never learn any thing; and that the book he had seen gave him the first certain information he had ever received of the existence of any other person of his name.

The old man closed this account of himself, with an earnest request to his guest; that upon his return to America, he would make every necessary enquiry to ascertain whether the person whose name he had seen derived his lineage from English ancestors; who those ancestors were; and that he would communicate to him the results of these enquiries as speedily as possible.

Mr. Moram's friend stated further, that since his return to the United States, he had been informed that Henry Farewell, The former President of the Senate, had resided in Virginia, and was dead, but whether he had left children he had not been able to learn; and that he had written to his East Indian acquaintance to that effect. He then enquired of Mr. Moram, if he could give any information upon this subject. Being answered that I was a son of Henry Farewell, the gentleman requested that upon his return to Virginia, Mr. Moram would communicate this narrative to me, and would beg of me to write to him, giving such an account of my family as I thought proper, to the end, he might transmit it to the East India, as a testimonial that he still bore in grateful recollection the numerous acts of kindness he had formerly received from old Mr. Farewell. To enable me to comply with this request, he sent me a card with his address.

When I first received this communication, I resolved to comply with the wish it expressed; but being much occupied at that time, I delayed doing so, until the subject escaped my memory. Before I thought of it again, the war of 1812, between the United States and Great Britain, had taken place. Soon after the commencement of this war, all my affairs were removed from my office, very hastily, at a time when I was absent from home. In
The arrangements occasioned by this sudden and hasty removal of my papers, the address of Mr. Morgan’s Newport acquaintance was lost, and I have never been able to recover it since.

No circumstance has ever given me more regret than my omission to render a prompt reply to this polite request. The kind and disinterested manners of him who made it, claimed such a compliance at my hands; and every dictate of benevolence required that I should contribute the little that was asked of me to satisfy the anxious solicitude of this forlorn old man, who was certainly prompted by no idle curiosity, to beg this small favor. The more hopes of obtaining some intelligence of a distant relative so long long lost, induced him to strive to obtain the good will of a perfect stranger, by acts of hospitality and kindness; and to unbosom to this stranger, the secret yearnings of his heart and the wishes springing from its utmost recess. While I, although conscious of this, and really sympathizing very sincerely with this isolated being, could yet find some apology, satisfactory to myself, for delaying until it could not be made, a communication that would most probably have removed much of his anxiety by removing all his doubts. Yet to have made it, was an act of cruelty, of which, when I think, I can scarcely believe I was ever capable, and now censure and deplore more than I will state.

Before I was apprised of the loss of the address of the gentleman who wished to have some account of my family, I had commenced making some memoranda concerning my ancestors, partly from memory, and partly from documents then in my possession. Having expended some labour in making these necessary researches to procure these, I felt no inclination to desist from further investigation, even after I knew that the object for which some of these information was collected could never be satisfied, probably. What I had learned nearly inspired an ardent wish to learn more, and accident afterwards gave me an opportunity of gratifying this wish to a much greater extent than I had ever expected.

In the year 1820, business carried me to Northampton Courthouse, on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Bad weather detained me there after my business was dispatched. While so detained, I endeavored to occupy the time as agreeably as I
could, in examining the ancient records of that county, which I found in the clerk’s office, only near the Court-house. This was a pastime in which I had long been in the habit of indulging myself, whenever I had an opportunity to do so; and from its indulgence, I had often derived much amusement and not a little curious information.

I found the old records of Northampton in a state of much better preservation and furnishing the history of a more early period than I had expected. While amusing myself by perusing many of the ancient documents and curious narratives there recorded, I accidentally met with names long familiar to my ear, as those of my early forefathers. Much gratified at this discovery, I made copious extracts of all such matters as I then thought useful. Upon my return home, when I compared these extracts with the memoranda I had before made, and with the statutes and histories of Virginia, I found the most perfect concordance in everything; and I was astonished to discover that I had thus collected materials which would enable me to trace back my family history for nearly two centuries, almost to the first settlement of Virginia.

Thereupon formed the resolution of preparing this work, so soon as my leisure would permit me to do so. This resolution itself gave me much satisfaction, by enabling me to enjoy, in anticipation, the pleasure which you, my dear children, would probably feel in perusing this manuscript account of your family, prepared by the proper hand of your father. I soon became impatient for the leisure I desired to fulfill my purposes; and reflection increased, each day, my inclination to commence the task.

If "a lively desire of knowing, and of recording our ancestors," is the result of the influence of some common feeling in the minds of men, as Gibbon the eloquent historian has said, and as I believe you too, my dear children, will one day feel this wish. Before that time arrives, I shall be no more, most probably. A singular fatality seems to have attended our family. With a single exception, the father has always died during the minority of his children; and none of our forefathers have ever enjoyed the benefits of a parent’s countenance and advice, when they arrived at manhood. Should I also share this
fate; and but few of our ancestors have reached my present age;) however, strong may be your inclination to look back upon your progenitors and to live in the persons of your forefathers; your desire could never be gratified, without this assurance. No labour, no industry, no research which you could employ, would yield to you the traditional knowledge I speak of; and it would be singular indeed, if any similar accident should ever disclose to you the sources of information which accident first opened to me. But if such chances should again occur, to you it would yield little advantage, probably. Time, in long, must mutilate and obliterate much of the ancient records I have seen. That time may spare, you would find written in a text no longer read, and which few, in this country, can now decipher. To you, however, it would seem but a collection of haphazard blocks. Should you be able to surmount all these difficulties, yet wanting the key tradition has furnished to me, the facts you might discover would exhibit but a mere puzzle, whose parts you could never perfectly connect or rightly arrange. Even my memorandum, should they be preserved, which is not probable, would assist you very little. These are written on separate scraps of paper, often so hastily as to be illegible by any other than myself; and they have been prepared sometimes under circumstances and for purposes I no longer remember. To separate those really useful from those apparently not so, would be a difficult task; to arrange and connect them, impossible to any other than myself. Therefore, I feel it to be a duty, which I owe you, to relieve you from the labour of all such vain attempts; and to set before you, in tolerable order, every thing which I have collected in relation to our family.

I came into life precisely at that period, when the habits, the manners and the customs of Virginia, were beginning to undergo that great change which was both the cause and the effect of the political Revolution that secured this colony from its parent country and gave it a name as an independent State. The events of my early life, placed me in a situation to learn; by most lively description, much of what had before occurred, some of which is even now buried in general oblivion; to test the accuracy of those descriptions by my own observations; and to witness the progress of the astonishing changes that have since taken place. Changes so great, in some
instances, that posterity will scarcely be disposed to credit them. So circumstances, I have often been disposed to regard myself as the connecting link that was to bind the past to the future; as the medium through which alone the knowledge of what had been could be communicated to what was to be, so far at least as my own family was concerned. Of my Jetnegs to do so, and of the sources from whence it has been derived much of what you will find here recorded, you will be better judges, when I tell you, that having lost my mother while I was of very tender years, I was immediately taken into the house of her father, with whom I continued to reside ever afterwards, until his decease. He was an old man, who having lost his wife, and having lived to see all his children grown up and established, then passed his days in retirement. In this retirement I was his only companion, and upon me all his remaining affections were fixed. We loved each other tenderly, better I believe than he had ever done any of his own children; and in my little heart he held the place of the only parent it had the power to know.

Of my excellent grandfather, I shall have occasion to speak more at large hereafter. It will be sufficient now, to say that he had lived long, and by his situation had necessarily been made acquainted with most of those who resided in Virginia and with all its events worthy of notice in his time. He had known, almost all my ancestors who lived during that period, and often, very often, he would employ his idle hours in amusing me with anecdotes and descriptions of them.

After the death of my maternal grandfather, I went to live with my father, in whose house his mother then resided. She too was an old woman, a perfect chronicle of the times gone by. From her I derived more information of my family. This I was enabled to connect by the assistance of the more methodical narratives of my grandfather. It filled up many gaps in his statements, and made my stock of traditional information much more complete.

It is very probable, I think, that the gratification
I received, from listening, at so early a period of my life, to the tales and vivid descriptions of these old people, caused the disposition I have ever since felt, to delve into the ancient records of the country and to search for the histories of the earliest events. My profession too made this offering easy access to most of our oldest archives, and in some measure necessary; and by furnishing the most ample opportunity for satisfying my thirst for that sort of knowledge, what tradition first gave me orally, I have often had occasion to compare with what I afterwards found recorded in written documents. Enjoying the blessing of a very retentive memory, these have been enabled to detect errors and inaccuracies that were not supposed to exist, and to trace and connect events by means that have appeared to others wonderful and extraordinary.

Such, my dear children, are the causes and motives which first induced me to undertake the little work I am now about to commence, and such the means I profess to enable me to complete it faithfully. Although it has cost me some trouble to collect the materials from which it will be principally compiled, yet I have derived much gratification while engaged in collecting them. It is designed, solely, for your use; and should it be finished, will not meet any other eye than my own, probably, during my life.  

[Signature]

The plan I shall adopt in preparing these sketches, is induced by many reasons. It will be this. I shall begin with the first of our ancestors who came to this country, and will give you all the information I profess concerning him, as well as such as I think you may regard as probable. If in the course of this narrative, any thing of curious or useful suggest itself, I will state what I know, or have reason to believe to be true, in relation to that. By this means, I shall be enabled to give you some information which the histories of the country do not supply, and to correct some of the errors into which these histories will probably lead many of their readers.

In tracing the progress of our family, although I shall give you some general account of its collateral branches, yet this account will be very brief. I have merely been tempted to pursue any minute inquiries as to these collateral branches; therefore, my account of many of them would be very imperfect, especially when the relationship is remote. Besides if I were to relate all I know concerning our distant relatives, it would augment my labour greatly, and probably would not interest you much.
The course of our own direct descent, will be that to which I shall adhere steadily, pursuing, in relation to every succeeding ancestor, the same plan I shall adopt as to the first; and never turning aside to speak of the collateral branches of our family, unless for some special and particular reason.

By pursuing such a plan, I shall attain this end, at least. Should my death, or any other circumstance, prevent the completion of this intended work, I shall have succeeded, most probably, in relieving you from some of the greatest difficulties you would have to encounter, in tracing this subject through the dim twilight of a remote time; and shall have laid a sure foundation, upon which you may rest hereafter any superstructure you may then please. Many materials will have been placed before you which you could not acquire otherwise; and the sources will be pointed out from whence you may derive many others, should you wish to do so.
I. Nathaniel Littleton.

The first of our family who came to this country, was Nathaniel Littleton. He was an Englishman by birth, I believe, that his family was of Shropshire, and resided near Shrewsbury in that county. I think so, because I see in the will of Mrs. Ann Littleton, his widow, a copy of which I have, that in the event of their children dying without issue, the estate is devised over to James Littleton esquire, Shropshire, near Shrewsbury. From this I infer, that this devise must have been a very near connexion of the family, which, probably, migrated from the neighbourhood in which he is said to have resided, when they first came to Virginia.

In the "Proemium" or preface prefixed by Sir Edward Coke to his "Commentaries upon Littleton," he gives a brief account of the life and family of Thomas de Littleton, the author of the Treatise on Tenures, which is the text of the Commentary that forms the "first part" of what are called Coke's Institutes. In his account, I find, that Thomas de Littleton, the third and youngest son of the author above mentioned, married Anne, daughter and heir of John Botreaux esquire, whose posteriorly in Shropshire continued prosperously to this day. I think it highly probable that Nathaniel Littleton was a descendant of this stock. This is mere conjecture, however, derived from similitude of names, and from the fact that the family of Nathaniel Littleton was of the same county of Shropshire, in which Sir Edward Coke represents the prosperity of Thomas de Littleton to have prosperously in his day. This was in 1623, shortly after which time, Nathaniel Littleton must since migrated from France, as we shall presently see. (a)

(According to the account given by Lord Clarendon, in his "History of the Rebellion," Doctor Edward Littleton, who, during the reign of Charles the first, was made the Solicitor General, then the Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, and who was afterwards ennobled and succeeded Finch as Lord Keeper of the great seal,) was of a very good extraction in Shropshire, and inherited a fair "fortune and inheritance from his father." This gentleman, as the same historian states, was the intimate friend and companion of Selden, and a lawyer of very high and deserved,

(a) The first edition of Coke's first Institute, containing this Proemium, was published in 1623. See Charles Butler's preface to the 10th edition (4th. ed.), dated November 4th, 1797.
reputations. A family tradition, induces me to believe that he was an
close branch of the same stock from which Nathaniel Stilton derived his
descent, and that they were nearly connected, but how I know not. The latter
came to Virginia, certainly, before the Lord Deeper could have acquired
much eminence, or received any marks of distinction. (b)

Several circumstances collect from the will of Mrs Ann
Stilton, incline me to the opinion that Nathaniel Stilton
married her in England, before they removed thither. From the name
of their second and youngest son, which seems to have been preserved in
the family long afterwards, I presume the maiden name of Mrs Stilton
was Scethy. This too is little else than curious, as everything of the kind
must be, in this country, after the lapse of so great a length of time. Whatever
might have been her name however, her will plainly proves that she was
a woman of exemplary piety, and prudience. The provisions it contains
minon
relative to her younger children, show that she possessed a strong
understanding, very well cultivated for the age in which she lived;
that she had amassed a large estate, by her own efforts, after the
death of her husband; and that she occupied the highest rank in
the society where she moved.

Nathaniel Stilton must have come to Virginia very soon after
the dissolution of the proprietary government, by the revocation of the
charter granted to the London Company, and the establishment of the
new royal government which derived its authority immediately from
the sovereign. This event occurred in the year 1624; and in the ancient
records of Northampton County, I find the following entry, at a Court
"held at Accawmacke this 6th day of September 1626, Present Coa[1]:

(a) See Calverley's History of the Rebellion. Book V. page 186.
(b) See Byner, Vol. XXII. page 615. "
(c) Chaloner, page 62.
(d) The whole peninsula now known as the Eastern Shore of Virginia,
originally formed but a single county, called in the ancient records of
this county, Accawmacke and sometimes Accomacke, but variously
spelt in the old statutes of the country, as Accawmacke, Accawmacke,
Accomack, Acawmack. The name of this county was changed to
Northampton, in 1649; and it was afterwards, in 1669, into two counties,
as it now is. Upon this division of the peninsula, its southern
extremity retained the name of Northampton, and the new county,
comprehending the larger and northern part, was called the old.
William Clayborne, Mr. Obedience Robins, Mr. William Bonne, Mr. William Good. The Governor and Council, at the next meeting, have chosen these names under writs for the office of Sheriffs, to be presented to the Governor and Council. These names appear to have been selected by the Governor and Council, and to have qualified and acted as Sheriff afterwards.

This was probably the first appointment of a Sheriffs for this county, not an office, in any of our ancient records or statutes, until 1664, when the Colony was divided into eight Shires or counties, of which Accomack was one. It was then directed also, that Sheriffs should be elected for each shire, as in England, to have the same power as there. The nature and importance of such an office, at that time, prove that Nathaniel Stilton must have been well known and much respected, or he could not have been so selected and appointed. Most probably, therefore, he had resided in Accomack some time previously to the election; and if so, he must have been a very early settler there.

The first white settlement on the Eastern Shore, was made about the year 1620, when, as we are told, a salt work was set up at Cape Charles. About the same period, as is well established by the title papers for my Old Plantation estate, the London Company having acquired a body of about 1200 acres of land, situated on Chesapeake Bay, at the mouth of what is now called Old Plantation Creek, on its north side, retained this tract of land for itself; and establishing a name of Accomack. The ancient records of both the present counties remain in Northampton, that being the elder county of the two. See Hening's Statutes, Vol. I. pages 129, 129, 124, 224, 249, and Vol. II. page 97.

The name is thus spelled in the earliest entries in these ancient records, but the orthography is afterwards changed; and the deeds and all other instruments signed by Nathaniel Stilton himself, as well as those signed by Ann Stilton his widow, and by his two sons (of which there are many) show that the proper mode of spelling the name is Stilton and not Stilton.


Beverley's History of Virginia, page 97.
many persons upon it as tenants, so formed there a Settlement, or Plantation as it was then called. This land, being acquired by the voluntary cession of the tribe of Indians called Accomackes, to whom it belonged, was at first called Accomack. When other Settlements or Plantations were afterwards established, to distinguish this from the other lands acquired, in like manner, from the same Indian tribe, it was called The Old Plantation of Accomack, and then The Old Plantation simply, which latter name it still bears, as you well know.

In 1621, another body of 800 acres of land, situated at the confluence of Changuetails and the Kings Creek, was acquired by the London Company, and then set apart for the use of the Secretary. This tract was settled by Master John Roy, the Secretary, in the same year, as appears by his Observations. In these, he states that he went to plant the Secretary's land on the Eastern Shore, near Accomack, and Captain Wilkes's plantation, The latter to secure and protect each other. (b)

These two primitive settlements, although very near, did not join each other, the Secretary's land was bounded, on the north, by the Kings Creek, and the Company's plantation of Accomack was bounded, on the north, by the Great Pond, then called the Persimmon Ponds. So that a large part of what is now the Kings Creek estate intervened to separate them. Upon this, according to the ancient tradition in that part of the country, the king of the Accomackes then dwelt.

Notwithstanding the seclusions of these remote, detached and infant settlements, neither of them was disturbed during the general massacre of the whites, which was effected by the Indians in March 1622. It is mentioned by our early historians, as a singular fact, that they never gave the English any trouble, but waited and befriended them from first to last. It was owing to this cause, probably, not least than to the peculiar situation of this region, that after the great massacre mentioned above, when the disaffected condition of the colony was considered, many persons were urgent to abandon James River, and to retire to The Eastern Shore. (c)

So long as the proprietary government continued, that any land on

(c) See Smith's History of Virginia, Vol. II, page 75, 76.
(f) See Smith's History of Virginia, page 226.
The Eastern Show was granted in fee simple to any individuals, except for very special reasons, and then in small parcels. I have met with but one such grant. This bears date in 1620, and is for 100 acres only, situated at the mouth of Old Plantation Creek, within the limits of the Company's Plantation at Accomack. All the other lands within this region, at that time, were held by the tenants of the London Company or of the Secretary, under short leases. But after the dissolution of the Charter of the London Company and the assumption of the government by the Crown, a different policy seems to have been adopted. Lands on the Eastern shore were then granted in fee to individuals, precisely as in other parts of the colony.

This new regulation seems to have been introduced by Sir George Yeardley, the Royal Governor, in 1626. Under it, the tenants of the former Plantation of the Company at Accomack, were converted their leasehold estates into estates of inheritance; the body of land intervening between this Old Plantation and the Secretary's land was quickly granted to various private persons in fee simple; plantations new settlements were established to the eastward of these, extending to the sea shore; and a cordon of white inhabitants was formed quite across the peninsula in this quarter, stretching from the Bay to the Sea. As the white settlements gradually spread contiguously to each other, the name of Accomack, that was applied at first to the Company's old Plantation only, was then given to the whole of this compact body, including even the Secretary's land, and this name was retained, as applicable to this particular district, long after the whole peninsula had received the name of the shore. Nay, after the name of the shore had been changed to Northampton, and after the division of that county, when the new county had been called Accomack, the same name was still used to distinguish the narrow district, on both sides of the Chesepeake Creek, and it was still employed to denote also the whole territory called the Eastern Shore.

After the formation of the white settlements, in the manner stated, the Indian tribe of Accomack's finding itself divided, by the new settlements, into two parts, one of which was surrounded by the whites, and both much encircled in their intercourse and hunting grounds, seem to have voluntarily abandoned all their original possessions, and to have removed further up the peninsula, uniting themselves to the Chickahominy and other Indian tribes who dwelt to the northward of the white settlements. The territory situated to the south of the Old Plantation Creek being then deserted by the aboriginal occupants of it, was quickly granted to new
white settlers. Of these, Nathaniel Littleton must have been among the first.

The earliest mention I have found made of him, is in a patent on the Eastern shore for land granted to Charles Harnes on the 4th of June, 1605. This grant is of a tract of land, part of which is that now called Arlington. The original patent is not now to be found, but it is referred to in another grant, which the land granted is thus described, beginning at the south side of a branch of the Old Plantation creek, thence running easterly up the said branch unto marked trees, being at the eastermost angle of this land, bounded on the west by the magpie bay; on the south by magpie bay sound; on the east by

The land of Mr. Nathaniel Littleton, esq. This document renders it certain that Nathaniel Littleton was a proprietor of land on the Eastern shore before he was elected Sheriff, as has been stated; and from the situation of the land which he then held and upon which he resided, as well hereafter appear, it is very probable that he was one among the first of the settlers in the region then described by the tribe of Accoanaks, as have before said. This was about the year 1615, during the administration of Sir John Harvey. The extent of the tract then acquired by Nathaniel Littleton, as well as the designation of Esquire given to him in the grant to Harnes, a designation then never applied to any but persons of some distinction, seem to show that he was one of those Gentlemen of condition, several of whom, according to the accounts of our early historians, came to Virginia, about this time, with their whole families. (a)

In the ancient records of Northampton County, I find the name of Nathaniel Littleton again mentioned in the following entry. "A Cth. holden at Accoanaks: This first day of May, 1607. Present, Mr. John Harnes Contra, Mr. Nathaniel Littleton, Mr. Wm. Standen, Mr. Wm. Candall, Mr. Wm. Andrews, Mr. Wm. Copes." From this it would appear, not only that Nathaniel Littleton was then one of the Commissioners of the County of Accoanaks, but that according to the custom of the country, at that day, the Sheriff of the County retained his place on the bench and actually sat in Court as one of the Commissioners, notwithstanding he had been appointed and was then acting as Sheriff. Oldmixon, therefore, is probably right and Beverley mistaken, in this respect. (a)

(a) See the grant to Elizabeth Harnes, the daughter and sole heir of Charles Harnes, recorded in the Register's Office, in the volume labeled "Patents from 1640 to 1651.
(b) See Beverley's History of Virginia, page 56. (a) Ed. Preface, p. vi.
Nathaniel Stilson's name occurs very frequently after this, in these old Records, as that of one of the Commissioners of the County, in which office he seems to have acted as long as he lived. The office of a Commissioner of a County at that time, corresponded very nearly with that of our present Judges of the Peace. But in those days, when the number of these officers was much less, their duties were more important, and their powers greater than they are at present, the Government was much more desirous in filling such offices than it is now. The form of the Commission granted to Commissioners of Counties, and the oath prescribed for them, is given in Hemings's Statutes. From these, the nature and character of the office may be easily understood. (m)

It is shown, by many entries in the ancient records before mentioned, that Nathaniel Stilson had been appointed Commander of the County of Accomack as early as 1685; that he presided in the County Court for many years, in that capacity, being at first distinguished by the military rank of Captain and afterwards by that of Colonel. Hence, that at a "monthly court held at Accomack, the 7th day of Nov. anno Domini 1698," present, Mr. Nathaniel Stilson Commander, Mr. W. Burwell, Capt. W. Barber, Mr. John Wilkins. Again, at a County Court held on (n)

Northampton County, the 28th day of April 1699, present, Capt. Nathaniel Stilson Commander, and others; and some Courts afterwards he is styled "Colonel Nathaniel Stilson esquire Commander." Many of his orders, given as Commander, relative to the Indians and other subjects, are still extant in these ancient records.

The form of the Commission granted to the Commanders of Counties, is given by in Hemings Statutes, and their powers and duties are stated in several of the Acts relative to this index to the third volume of these Statutes, under the head of Commanders of Plantations. It would seem, from thence, that this office conferred both civil and military authority upon the incumbent. He presided in the County Court, as one of the Justices of the Peace, and fulfilled all the duties of a County Lieutenant in England, with even larger military authority. In short, the Commanders of a Plantation, or (o)


The name of the County of Accomack was changed to that of Northampton in 1675; and during the same session of the Assembly, County Courts were first established, by that name.

of a County, was the highest officer in it, either civil or military. In 1617, in consequence of the great defects and defects in receiving and collecting the public revenues, the sheriff, the assembly appointed certain persons, in each county, collectors for receiving and gathering in, of all levies by the Grand Assembly, assessed. Under this act, Mr. Nathaniel Sentell, Esquire, and Mr. Edmond Scarbrough were appointed collectors for Northampton County. This appointment was to continue but one year, when new collectors were to be appointed. But such was the confidence reposed in these gentlemen, that the next year, 1618, when the act for authorizing the appointment of new collectors, it contained an express proviso, that it should not extend to them, so that the power of collecting the leakage of Northampton County, was again given, notwithstanding that act, anything to the contrary. (p)

Such was the situation and standing of Colonel Sentell in 1617, when the insurrections took place that were occasioned by the execration of Charles the First, and the spoliation of the government of England by the Parliament. Occupying the highest station in his county, both civil and military, as he then did, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for such a man to have remained neutral, at such a season. Colonel Sentell did not do so, but seems to have taken a very early and decided stand in favor of the country, of his residence. It was in consequence of this, probably, that after the convention for the surrender of this colony to the government of the Commonwealth, of England was concluded, on the 12th of March 1619, when the first assembly met, on the 26th of April 1622, to settle a provisional government of Virginia, it was the further pleasure of the states to name, "Coll: Nathaniel Sentell" was one of the thirteen persons then elected by the Grand Assembly to compose the Council of State. (p)

The authors who have written the history of Virginia, differ so much in the accounts they give of the sentiments prevalent in this colony and of its conduct, during the interesting period, intervening between the death of Charles the First and the restoration of his son, that it is now very difficult to ascertain the truth. By some of these, it is said, that all the monarchy was abolished in England, after one king had been beheaded, and another driven into exile, "The authority of the crown continued to...

be acknowledged and received in Virginia. Instituted at this, the Parliament drew a powerful squadron, with a considerable body of land forces, to reduce the Virginia obedience. Berkeley, the Governor, with more courage than prudence, set arms to oppose this formidable armament; but he could not long maintain the unequal contest. He was ultimately forced to yield, when he was suffered to go into retirement, and continued to reside in Virginia as a private man, beloved and respected by all over whom he had formerly presided. Under Governor appointed by the Commonwealth, or by Cromwell when he assumed the supreme power, Virginia remained almost nine years, in perfect tranquility. During that period, many adherents to the Royal party deserted Virginia. They, by their intercourse with the colonists, confirmed them in principles of loyalty; and working upon their impatience and insatiability under the restraints imposed upon their commerce, by their new masters, on the death of Matthews, the last Governor named by Cromwell, the People forced Sir Williams Berkeley to quit his retirement, and unanimously elected him Governor of the colony.

As he refused to act under an usurped authority, they boldly erected the Royal Standard, and acknowledging Charles the Second to be their lawful sovereign, proclaimed him with all his titles. Therefore, the Virginians long boasted, that as they were the last of the happy subjects who announced their allegiance, so they were the first to return to their duty.

This is the account given by Doctor Robertson, which Judge Marshall has followed and Mr. Jefferson seems to consider correct. Doctor Robertson refers in support of it to Chalmers and Beverley, who, although they do not confine this representation, in all its parts, yet concord in most of its statements, substantially at least. (5)

But, the latest historian of Virginia, denies the correctness of this account. He admits the apparent existence of the loyal attachment of the colonists to the Royal cause, even after they had fallen into disrepute and contempt in the mother country; and he ascribes the Ordinance of 1650, to the irritation felt by the Parliament of England at this supposed attachment. But he asserts that this apparent loyalty must be ascribed to religious zeal alone. For he contends, that as the cause of the colonists was palpably the same with that of the Parliament, nothing but the superstition or phrenzy of superstition could have made them separate.

In proof of this opinion, that the loyal attachment of Virginia existed more in appearance than in fact, he says, 'that it does not appear she took any steps to open an intercourse with the Royal party, or that she extended any consolation or succour to the distresses of the exiled family. She forbore indeed to acknowledge the present government, but this might have been the effect of caution and reserve.'

He concurs with all the other historians, in doing justice to the gallantry of Berkeley in opposing the formidable force he had to encounter. "Gallant," he says, "worthy a better cause:" but he regards the surrender of the colony, rather as the effect of the spirit of expansion so prevalent through the empire, and of the division of sentiment there certainly existing, than of the necessity produced by the presence of a superior force. Finding the most conclusive evidence that Sir William Berkeley was exonerated in his government, after this, and before his master was restored to his throne, he contends that "Berkeley received his authority from a humbleness of assembly of cavaliers and aristocrats, without the agency of the Crown," and "that his appointment never did receive that sanction, until Charles the Second was formally seated on the throne."

If an opinion of the correctness of these two conflicting statements, was to be formed only by comparing their authors, but little doubt ought to exist as to which should be preferred most relied upon. Beverley, from whom most of the first account was extracted by the subsequent writers, had long resided in Virginia. He was the Secretary, and therefore, had the freest access to all the public archives and documents existing in his day. His work was written not fifty years after the period the events of which he records, when many who must have been actors and eye-witnesses of what he described were still living, most probably.

Burke, on the contrary, had none of these advantages. I knew him well. He was an Irishman, who being compelled to leave his own country, by reason of the part he had taken in some insurrection there, had come to this about the year 1797. Here he studied the law, and settling himself in the town of Petersburg, began its practice there. Meeting with little success, however, and accident having placed him in his profession some ancient records, which, some years before our revolution, had been copied from documents remaining in the (f). See Burke's History of Virginia. Vol. II. Chap. II. from 75 to 120.