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COLONEL WILLIAM BYRD OF WESTOVER, VIRGINIA.



He who has courage to turn his back upon Richmond all abloom in a lovely day of spring,—whose impatient spirit is content to abandon stimulating thoughts of modern progress and to steep itself in the by-gones of Virginian history,—may join in a May-day pilgrimage upon the classic James. To achieve it in the flesh there is but one method known to the ordinary traveler, who must take heed to a porter's knock sounding on the door of his room at the hotel all too soon in the morning, and commit himself to a jolting drive down the full length of stony Main street to the steamboat wharf at Rocketts. There waits the steamboat *Ariel*, plying three times a week between Richmond and Norfolk; such a lame old sprite, so short of breath, so patched and broken-backed, that the dwellers along the river-banks, accustomed to see it pass, may well live in continual expectation of news of its collapse. But, with the usual confiding cheerfulness of the American public, passengers by the *Ariel* come and go. With the exception of a few outsiders not to the manner born, the company on board is like a family gathering. Most of them live in the isolated mansions of the many-acred plantations we shall see at intervals during the day's slow voyaging. They are returning from the busy centers of civilization to an existence that in its salient features repeats that of the eighteenth century. In the kindly, cordial life they lead the three matters of first interest for discussion are the negro, the crops, the church; and then the government of these United States in general comes in for a share of notice. They are

all, each to the others, "Cousin"; and of the late war nothing remains as a reminder, after the fortifications at Drewry's Bluff and the canal at Dutch Gap, but the titles of colonel, major, captain, and occasionally an empty sleeve or a crutch among the groups of planters smoking and chatting upon deck. The fine-looking, intelligent stewardess who flits about among the ladies attending to their wants is of the old-time type of a colored housemaid of the higher class. She is on familiar terms with the river gentry, and can single out their bags and rugs with a glance of her experienced eye, conveying also indifference to the luggage, however smart, of the mere transient who is beyond the pale of Virginia aristocracy.

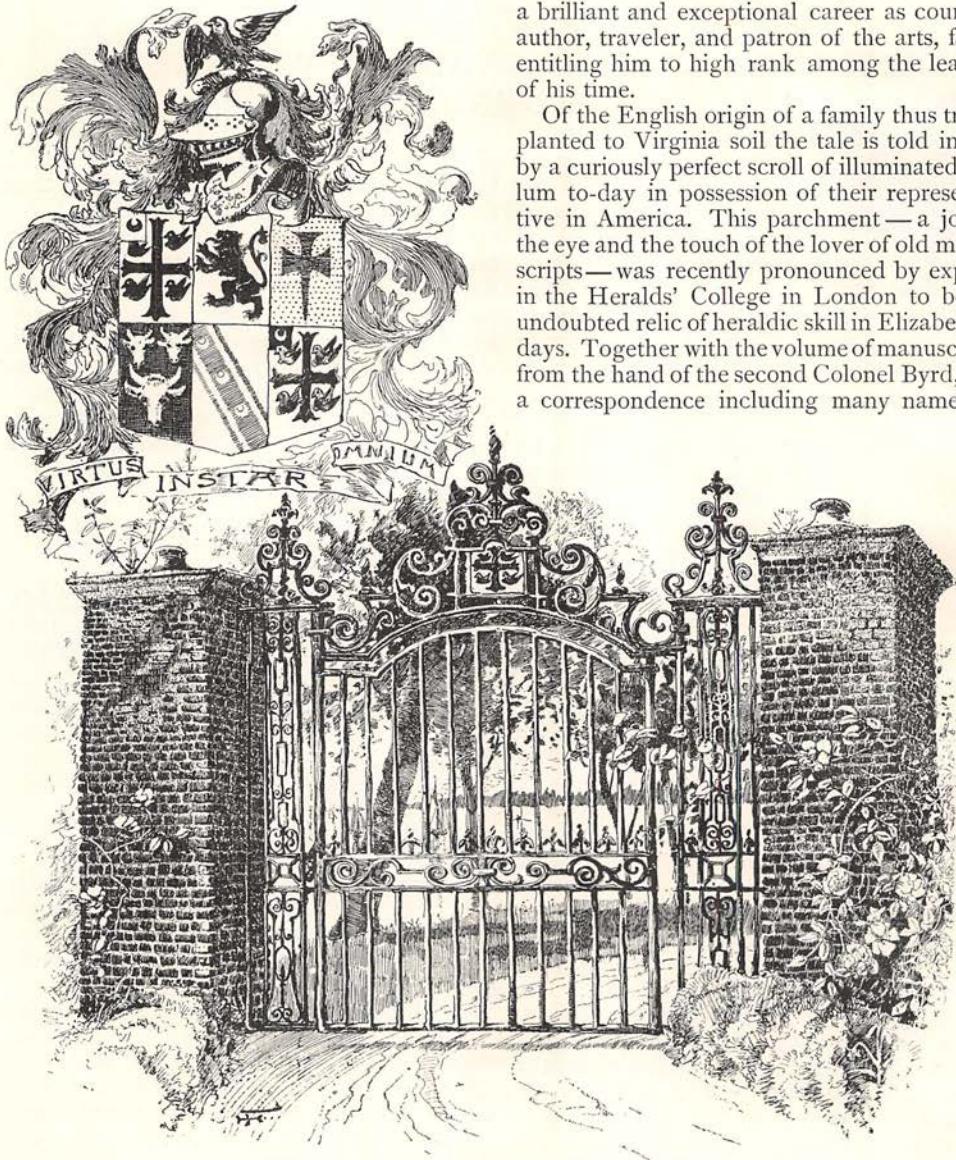
Standing and looking back from the *Ariel's* deck at Richmond upon her seven hills in the light of early morning, one's mind reverts to the various shocks of revolution the old town has survived. Blended with memories of the war between North and South are traditions of Indian onslaught and the raids of English troopers. Down yonder steep incline of Richmond Hill galloped at breakneck speed Arnold's cavalry in the wild ride of 1781, when, working havoc in the town, the British flooded the streets hereabout with rum, till, so the story goes, cows and hogs partook of it, and were seen staggering about the thoroughfares.

At this point, in the early days of the seventeenth century, the Indians fell upon Master West's little settlement — one of the first mentioned in colonial history — of contumacious Englishmen who had refused to be guided by Captain Smith, and slaughtered a number of them. Here, also, about sixty years thereafter, a young Cheshireman named Byrd

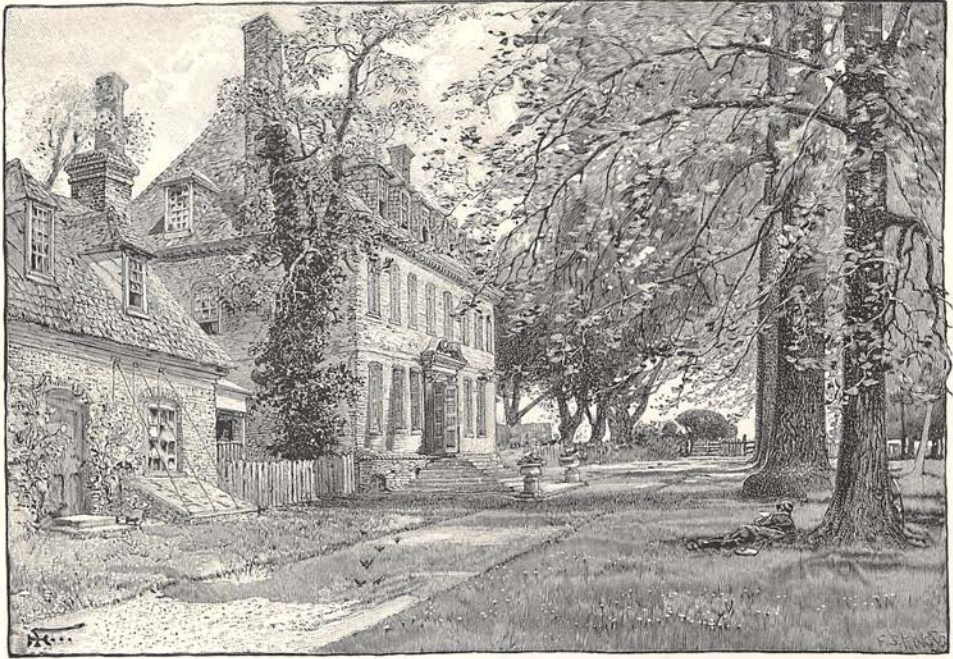
secured a grant of land from the crown, covering nearly the whole site of modern Richmond, and of Manchester on the opposite bank of the James. With his wife Mary, daughter of a Kentish cavalier named Warham Horsemanden, and a garrison of fifty able-bodied men, Captain Byrd took up his abode in a dwelling called Belvidere, built by him on the height overlooking the present State penitentiary, and well-fortified against Indian forays. Behind these stanch walls and solid palisades children were born to the young pioneer. Thence, more than once, he, like a Scottish border lord, led his followers to dashing sorties

upon enemies in ambushade. He was feared by the Indians, and respected by his fellow-colonists. Fortune smiled on his various mercantile endeavors, and he inherited a large estate from his uncle Stagg. He was chosen to be a burgess, aided Commissary Blair in establishing the College of William and Mary, and, as receiver-general of the king's revenues for the province, acquired the title of colonel, so often repeated in the annals of colonial history as to be puzzling to the student of the times. To his son, the second William Byrd, who in 1733 mapped out near the site of his father's little fortress of Belvidere a town "to be called Richmond," was reserved a brilliant and exceptional career as courtier, author, traveler, and patron of the arts, fairly entitling him to high rank among the leaders of his time.

Of the English origin of a family thus transplanted to Virginia soil the tale is told in full by a curiously perfect scroll of illuminated vellum to-day in possession of their representative in America. This parchment—a joy to the eye and the touch of the lover of old manuscripts—was recently pronounced by experts in the Heralds' College in London to be an undoubted relic of heraldic skill in Elizabethan days. Together with the volume of manuscripts from the hand of the second Colonel Byrd, and a correspondence including many names of



THE WEST GATE, WESTOVER.



WESTOVER.

note at the courts of Anne and the two succeeding Georges, now at Brandon on the James, it furnishes a chain of history of which none of the links are missing, and none are dull. Such relics, as much a matter of course in the hereditary homes of England as ghosts or rats behind the arras, are more rare, but should not be less esteemed, in republican America.

As the boat at seven A. M. moves from her dock at Rocketts, and proceeds leisurely downstream, there is ample time to consider Virginia's relation to the past, and at every turning of one's head or glass there is some point familiar through association with the founders of the Commonwealth. But in this paper it will suffice to consider the family best known in the person of William Byrd the second — and in their ancestral home, Westover, to be seen from the boat soon after passing City Point.

Westover House, with its broad façade of red brick, its steep slated roof, and its glorious row of overshadowing trees, stands amid close-shaven lawns and wide encompassing fields of wheat and clover, close to the river's edge. These fields are to-day the pride not only of their owner but of the State. One does not readily forget a drive over grassy roads behind fleet Virginia horses, skirting on one side the fence inclosing a hundred and forty acres of growing wheat, a vast sea of living green rippled by winds of May, but showing neither dimple nor ridge in the soil below, and on

the other, clover as rich, wherein stand Jersey cattle knee-deep in purple blossoms amid the booming of inebriated bees. The mansion and estate, more fortunate than many others in being admirably kept up, convey to modern guests some of the same impressions carried away by Chastellux, the airy marquis, who as he journeyed through Virginia at the close of the Revolutionary war threw kisses from his fingertips to kindly entertainers. At Westover the Frenchman broke into pæans over the great extent of rich acres, the happy slaves, the elegance indoors, the sport, the sturgeons, and the wall of honeysuckle covered with humming-birds. Seen through the hall, always open in summer weather upon outer flights of quaint three-sided steps of stone, the great gates, surmounted by the martlet crest, display their iron tracery against a background of wheatfields girdled in by woods. To the right and the left of the door upon the river-front the avenues from the boat-landings are cut off for vehicles by smaller gates of delicate design, wrought in England two hundred years ago, their hinges moving stiffly in the embrace of the roses and the wistaria of yesterday. The line of trees whose tops caress the dormer windows of the roof has grown up since the founding of the house. Some of them have survived war, fire, and lightning-stroke. Looking out through their branches by moonlight from the bedroom windows at the wide reach of shining river beyond a lawn washed in silver brightness, one

may, if he listens keenly, hear them whisper the secrets they have been hoarding this century or so.

There have been many stirring scenes at Westover since the redman ceased to launch his canoe in the river that was for so long Virginia's highway. The dispossessed monarch brought his tomahawk back to these forest glades in 1622, and thirty-three souls of white settlers were here called to a swift accounting. Once owned by Sir John Paulet, the estate passed into the possession of Theodoric Bland and his brother before it was bought and built upon by William Byrd of Belvidere. The house erected by Byrd stood intact until 1749, when, through the upsetting of a brasier of hot coals on which a careless housekeeper had left her posset simmering, it took fire and was partly destroyed. The dwelling, as at present seen,

was restored in the same year, and has since been little changed. In the track of successive armies, it has known rough visitors but no material harm. Bacon's men, bivouacking here on their daring expeditions against the Indians, ate, drank, slept upon their arms, and rode away. Benedict Arnold, on his way to capture Richmond, landed and slept at Westover. In the old nursery on the ground floor Cornwallis quartered the horses of his troopers, but stout timbers and well-set brick defied their ravages. During our recent war several generals of the invading army made their headquarters at the mansion so popular with the soldiers of earlier revolutions.

Such was the pleasant home in which young William Byrd the second and his little sister Ursula ("Nutty" they call her in the family chronicles, afterward married to Beverley the historian of Virginia, and dying a wife and mother at seventeen) spent their years until of an age to be put aboard slow-sailing ships and despatched to England to be educated. That was frequently a feature of colonial life. The letters of parents written to friends across the sea are full of prayers and yearnings for the little travelers sent oftentimes alone under the captain's care. Schools in the province there were none; and even if a tutor might be had, the solitude of those great estates peopled by negroes was not adapted to the development of youth in an age that held polish for the manners to be as indispensable as powder for the hair.

The second William Byrd's history is epitomized by the inscription upon a stately shaft rising in a garden full of old-fashioned shrubs and flowers in the rear of Westover House. The monument is still in excellent preservation.

Here lyeth

The Honorable William Byrd, Esqr.

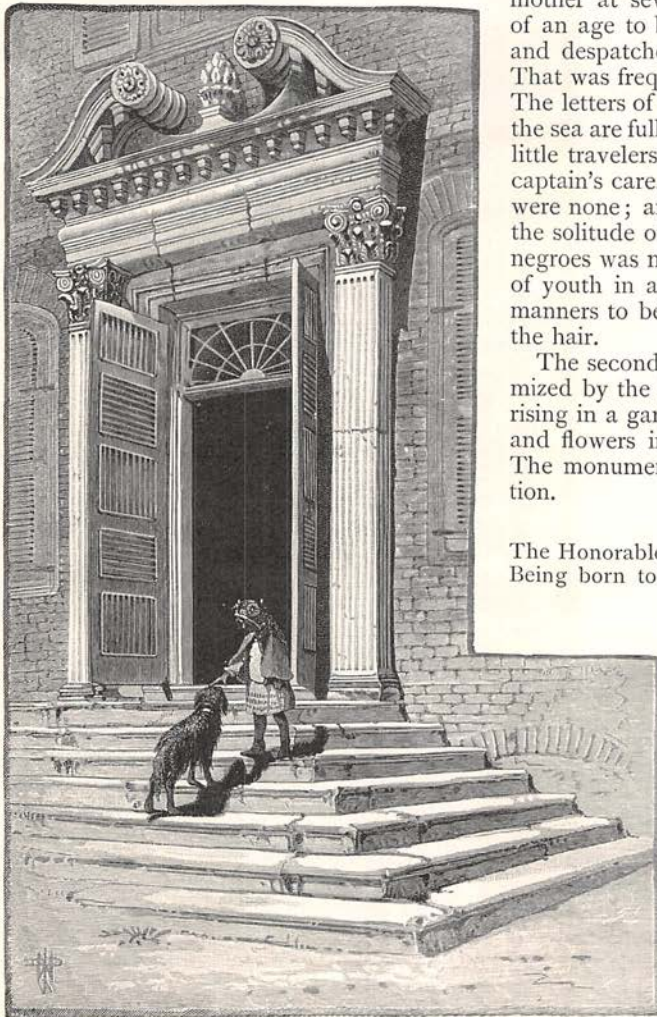
Being born to one of the amplest fortunes in
this country,
he was sent early to England
for his education,

where,
under the care and direction
of

Sir Robert Southwell,
and even favoured with his
particular

instructions,
he made a happy proficiency
in polite and various learning;
by the means of the same
noble

friend he was introduced
to the acquaintance of many
of the
first persons of that
age for knowledge, wit, virtue,
birth, or



THE DOORWAY AT WESTOVER.



COLONEL WILLIAM BYRD. (FROM THE PORTRAIT AT BRANDON.)

and particularly attracted a most high station, close and bosom friendship with the learned and illustrious Charles Boyle, Earl of Orrery. He was admitted to the bar in the Middle Temple, studied for some time in the low countries, visited the court of France, and was chosen Fellow of the Royal Society.

On the other face of the tomb is continued : Thus eminently fitted for the service and ornament of his country, he was made receiver-general of his Majesty's revenues here, was thrice appointed

publick agent to the court and ministry of England ; and being thirty-seven years a member, at last became president of the Council of this Colony. To all this were added a great elegancy of taste and life, the well-bred gentleman and polite companion, the splendid oeconomist and prudent father of a family, with the constant enemy of all exhorbitant power and hearty friend to the liberties of his country. Nat. March 28, 1674. Mort. Aug 26, 1744. Ætat 70

When, at his good father's death, this Colonel Byrd took possession of the Virginian property

he was about thirty years of age, debonaire and handsome, to judge from the portrait in the drawing-room at Brandon. Although the general style of the picture suggests what Macaulay irreverently styles "the round-faced peers, like each other as eggs to eggs, who look from the middle of the periwigs of Kneller," the features are clear-cut, the brows arch over almond-shaped dark eyes, and beneath the line of the thin lips the chin is cleft with the dimple said to be fatal to the peace of mind of woman. But the rather effeminate appearance of the portrait is contradicted by what we know of the man. Hardy and virile, he spent days in the saddle, tracking the pathless wildernesses of Virginia and North Carolina, enduring all hardships with an airy indifference that inspired his followers to continual endeavor. He was an ardent agriculturist, sportsman, hunter, fisherman, and, in fine, knew as well when it was time to put away his lace ruffles and silver snuff-box, as when to take them out.

Two years after coming into his inheritance—his father died in 1704—Colonel Byrd married Lucy Parke, daughter of the aide-de-camp of the Duke of Marlborough who carried the news of the victory of Blenheim to Queen Anne. Another daughter was the progenitress of Martha Washington's first husband and of the wife of General Robert Edmund Lee. One of Kneller's portraits of Colonel Daniel Parke hangs in the dining-room at Brandon, another in the house of General Custis Lee at Lexington, Virginia. In both he is gorgeously attired in crimson velvet, with embroidery, and with a steenkirk and ruffles of costly lace, wears around his neck the queen's miniature set in pearls, presented to him by her placid majesty in reward for his good tidings, and looks prodigiously well pleased with himself, while the battle of Blenheim is raging in the background.

Mrs. Lucy Parke Byrd did not too long enjoy her life at Westover, for, on going to London to join her husband for a visit in 1716, the poor lady was swept away by smallpox, that scourge of our ancestral homes. In the same year a lonely, motherless little girl was sent out from Virginia to console her widowed father, and remained in England until ready to make her appearance before the fashionable world. This was Evelyn Byrd, the charmer who, in immortal youth, from her place of honor in the Brandon gallery continues to win hearts. Her portrait, which in the lapse of years has had several backings of canvas, has lost the artist's name, but possesses a charming quality of tone and style to which reproduction can do no justice. She is painted as a shepherdess in a robe of blue-green, in color like Enid's of the "shoal-

ing sea," a red-crested *bird* perched on a brown bough overhead, a straw hat wreathed with morning-glories in her lap, a knot of the same flowers in her hair, one brown lock escaping upon her shoulder, and a little *accroche-cœur* upon her brow, her pretty pensive face set on a swanlike throat. Thus she has received the homage of generations of pilgrims both before and since her removal from Westover to Brandon, whither all the family portraits went on the marriage of their owner. With the exception of one adventure,—that of being hurried with grandfathers and grandaunts, statesmen and warriors, into a farm wagon and jolted miles away into a remote country where the chance of war might not invade their solitude,—Evelyn has hung on the wainscoting at Brandon since before the century came in. When, on her return from this enforced journey, her mild gaze again rested on her accustomed haunts, it was to find a house with roof and walls indeed, but without windows; the floors knee-deep in drifted leaves; birds, squirrels, and foxes its tenants; a house wantonly made desolate by useless gunshots from gunboats in the James, and by vagabond marauders. And now that Evelyn once more beholds the outward semblance of a happy home restored, of that which is irrevocably gone her sad eyes seem to say, "What matters it to one who has seen almost two centuries of sorrow, one to whom a war or a heartbreak more or less means nothing?"

Let us glance in passing at the conditions of English society under which this fair scion of Westover grew up to womanhood, and, at sixteen, made her courtesy to the king. Of the toilet worn upon the great occasion of Miss Byrd's presentation at court there remains, in possession of Miss Harrison of Brandon, a tiny carved fan of Chinese ivory carried in the maiden's hour of triumph. To handle it is to be transported to the time of England's history when the Jacobite cause had just received its death-blow in the banishment of Bishop Atterbury, who had dared tell Bolingbroke that he stood ready to put on his lawn sleeves and proclaim James Stuart king at Charing Cross so soon as the breath should leave the body of Queen Anne. Lord Orrery, Colonel Byrd's nearest friend, was, according to Mahon, one of the junta of five peers suspected of conspiring with the Pretender; and certain we may be that Evelyn,—a daughter of cavaliers and like other women,—carried the white rose of the Stuarts in her heart if not upon her breast. At this period the world of London was recuperating from the collapse of so many hopes and fortunes with the South Sea Company. Sir Robert Walpole, another good friend of Colonel Byrd's, whose clever little boy Horace was then a puny weakling of five years of age, was



MISS EVELYN BYRD. (FROM THE PORTRAIT AT BRANDON.)

bending all his energies to the task of pacifying Europe. In the dawn of peace there was great hilarity, and at all the routs, drums, balls, plays where Mistress Evelyn appeared with her papa, she was fêted and followed to her heart's desire. She was toasted by the young bucks assembled in coffee-houses or strutting upon the Mall. But that the gentle Addison had recently passed into the shadows, he might have been impelled to put this trans-Atlantic blossom between the pages of a choice number of his incomparable "Spectator." But

when it was reserved for the most famous gentleman in Europe—my Lord of Peterborough—to set the stamp of his approval on the new beauty, what could have mattered that of a mere literary man?

In addition to her personal charms, "Mrs." Evelyn had the reputation of great wealth; for the colonel, although vaunted on his tombstone an "economist," shed his guineas with pleasing prodigality. The "Belle Sauvage" the beaux may have called her, in memory of her predecessor, the other American princess,

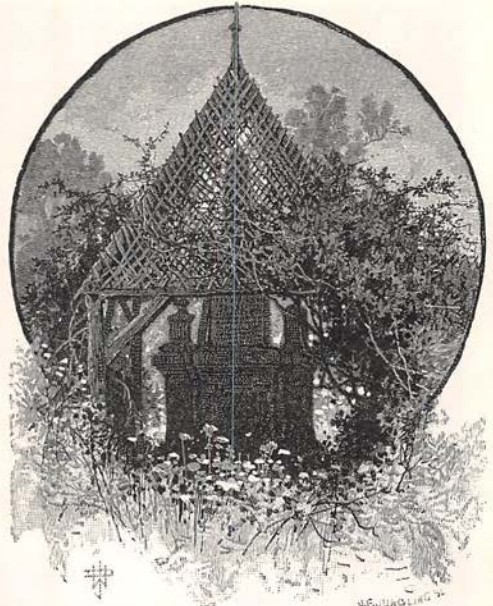
Pocahontas, so much glorified, and to this day so much more respected in England than in irreverent America.

What an atmosphere for the dewy innocence of the colonial girl was that court of George, the brutal husband of the imprisoned Countess of Ahlden! One can fancy the watchful father playing lion to his Una.

And now for the tradition connecting Evelyn Byrd's name with that of the Earl of Peterborough, to whom she is said to have been actually affianced, and for the love of whom, her father interfering, she preferred to die unmarried. It is a thankless task to stick pins into the bubbles of family tradition, but if Evelyn Byrd pined away for the sake of Charles Mordaunt, then verily the world was out of joint. The earl, born in 1658, was sixty-four years old when he is supposed to have been betrothed to the young Virginian of sixteen. Brilliant and renowned, having achieved undying glory as a leader of England's armies on sea and land, a companion of the brightest wits and literati of the day, he may have dazzled her young imagination into fancied love; but this is scarcely credible in view of the reverse of the medal. Peterborough was ever gallant to young women. His approval decided the claims of a fashionable *débutante*. It will be remembered that to Miss Beatrix Esmond he presented "a grinning negro boy with a bird of paradise in his turban and a collar with his mistress's name around his neck." Perhaps Evelyn took one of those tea-table Mercurys, to be seen in the prints of Hogarth, back with her to Westover. Thackeray tells how this unconquerable squire of dames, when full seventy years of age, fell to writing love-letters to Mrs. Henrietta Howard, afterward Countess of Suffolk, who "accepted the noble old earl's philandering; answered his queer letters with due acknowledgment; made a profound courtesy to Peterborough's profound bow, and got John Gay to help her in the composition of her letters in reply to her old knight." But Peterborough was also eccentric to absurdity, notoriously dissolute, even in that age, and threw his glove in so many different directions that it is unfair to think Evelyn would have stooped to pick it up.

It may be that the memoirs destroyed by his widow (the excellent Anastasia Robinson, the singer, whom he married in 1724 and acknowledged as his wife in 1735), and which are said to have contained his confession of three capital crimes committed before he was twenty-one years old, might have thrown light on the Byrd affair.

Peterborough's marriage with Mrs. Robinson had taken place two years before Colonel Byrd's family returned to live in the colony. He died, "laughing and mocking in the intervals of agonizing pain, and entertaining a com-



THE TOMB OF WILLIAM BYRD.

pany of ten at dinner immediately before the end," eleven years later, yet it is still asserted and accepted in Virginia that the persistent wooer followed Evelyn to her home and there renewed the suit upon which her father frowned. Evelyn never married, and two years after her reputed lover was laid to rest found a grave under the oaks at Westover. Upon her tomb is the following melancholy inscription, which yearly the moss and lichens do their best to hide from sight:

HERE IN THE SLEEP OF PEACE
REPOSES THE BODY

OF MRS. EVELYN BYRD,
DAUGHTER

OF THE HON^{ble} WILLIAM BYRD, ESQ.

The various and excellent endowments
of Nature, improved and perfected
By an accomplished education,
formed her

For the happiness of her friends,
For the ornament of her country.

Alas, reader!

We can detain nothing, however valued,
From unrelenting death —
beauty, fortune, or exalted honour.

See here a proof!

And be reminded by this awfull tomb
That every earthly comfort fleets away,
Excepting only what arises

from imitating the virtues of our friends
And the contemplation of their happiness,
To which

God was pleased to call this lady
On the 13th day of November, 1737,
In the 29th year of her age.

And, as no well-authenticated haunt of ancient aristocracy is to be found without its ghost, Westover traditions tell twilight listeners, or groups around the fire at Yule-tide, how the tap, tap of Evelyn's high-heeled slippers continues to be heard in the corridors or on the stairs of the home from which she faded broken-hearted to the grave.

All of this is delightfully consistent with the canons of romance. It has thrown an enduring halo around the memory of the fair one whose hand was kissed by my Lords Oxford and Chesterfield; of whom sneering Hervey deigned to approve; who supped with Pope at his Twickenham villa, while yet the town was ringing with the success of his *Odyssey*; who was noticed by Beau Nash, the autocrat of Bath; who saw Cibber and Mrs. Oldfield play; who read Gulliver's Travels as they were first presented to the public by his reverence the dean of St. Patrick's, then resident in Dublin; who from the presence-chamber of unroyal royalty, through a society reeking with wine and musk and snuff and scandal, passed back to her plantation home in the New World as unblemished as she came.

But a later-day skeptic must protest against allotting for the hero of bonny Evelyn's love-*idyl* one more grotesque than picturesque. "I should have liked to have seen that noble old madcap Peterborough, in his boots," says Thackeray, "(he actually had the audacity to walk about Bath in boots), with his blue ribbon and stars, and a cabbage under each arm, and a chicken in each hand which he had been cheapening for dinner." Hogarth caricatured him upon his knees before the singer Cuzzoni, who draws in his gold pieces with a rake. A spirited description is that of Horace Walpole. "Peterborough was one of those men of careless wit and negligent grace who scatter a thousand *bons mots* and idle verses, which we painful compilers gather and hoard, till the authors stare to find themselves authors. Such was this lord, of an advantageous figure and enterprising spirit; as gallant as Amadis, and as brave, but a little more expeditious in his journeys; for he is said to have seen more kings and more postilions than any man in Europe. . . . He was a man, as his friends said, who would neither live nor die like any other mortal." In one

of the witty letters written by Peterborough to Pope occurs this example of his views of womankind: "You seem to think it vexatious that I should allow you but one woman at a time to praise or love. If I dispute with you upon this point I doubt every jury will give a verdict against me. So, sir, with a Mahometan indulgence, I allow you pluralities, the favorite privilege of our church. . . . I find you don't mend upon correction; again I must tell you you must not think of women in a reasonable way. . . ."

That Miss Evelyn's papa was busy on his own account with secrets of the heart at this time is revealed by a bundle of letters, still extant, addressed in the autumn of 1722 by the colonel to a mysterious "Charmante," one of the Sacharissas of high fashion who had enslaved his fancy in London. The best comment upon them is to be read in his own in-dorsement on the packet.

"These passionate billets were sent to a lady who had more charms than honour, more wit than discretion. In the beginning she gave the writer of them the plainest marks of her favour. He did not hint his passion to her, but spoke it openly, and confirmed it with many a tender squeeze of the hand which she suffered with the patience of a martyr; nay, that she



THE TOMB OF MISS EVELYN BYRD.

might have no doubt of his intentions, he put the question to her in the plainest terms, which she seemed to agree to by a modest silence, and by great encouragements for more than a month afterwards. She saw him every day, received his letters, and fed his flame by the gentlest behaviour in the world, till at last, of a sudden, without any provocation on his part, she grew resty, and, in a moment, turned all her smiles into frowns, and all his hopes into despair. Whether this sudden change was caused by private scandal she had received about him,

or from pure inconstancy of temper, he can't be sure. The first is not unlikely, because he had a rival that had no hopes of success openly, and therefore it might be necessary to work underground and blow him up by a mine. This suspicion is confirmed a little by the rival's marrying her afterwards, who then was so poor that 't is likely the good-natured woman might wed him out of charity; especially as at that time he was so unhealthy that he stood more in need of a nurse than a wife. She did not choose him for his beauty and length of chin, tho' possibly she might for those pure morals which recommended him to his Grace of W——r for a companion. But if, after all, she did not marry him for his virtue neither, then it must have been for that worst quality any husband can have—for his wit. That, I own he has his share of, yet so overcharged and encumbered with words that he does more violence to the ear than a ring of bells; for, if he had never so sharp a wit, a wife may be sure the edge of it will be turned against herself mostly. . . ."

The true name of Charmante and her successful suitor are not given. The colonel, however, lived to fight another day. In 1724 was celebrated his second marriage, with a charming and well-born young lady, Miss Maria Taylor of Kensington. In the reigns of Anne and George the suburbs of Kensington were still a lovely rural region, dedicated to "milkmaids and sportsmen," and carpeted with daisy-sprinkled turf. Here, it is evident, the colonel's wooing sped better than in the garish atmosphere around perfidious Charmante. The new bride, in person, fortune, and connections, was all that he could have asked.

No portrait now certainly known to be that of Maria Taylor remains to rejoice the eyes of her numerous descendants in America. Her letters and those of her husband concerning her give ample proof of her strength of character and unselfish tenderness.

Through this alliance Colonel Byrd became connected with a family handed down to literary history by the biographers of Alexander Pope. A near relative of the Taylors had married Teresa Blount, the elder of the two daughters of Lyster Blount of Mapledurham who were the charm and consolation of the poet's tortured life. An exquisite painting of "Miss Blount," brought to Virginia by Colonel Byrd, is now at Upper Brandon. This is a half-length portrait of a young woman in amber satin, sitting by a harpsichord, and holding a sheet of music in her hand. She is a brunette, with soft dark eyes, and chestnut hair, and a complexion radiant with the tints of the peach on its sun-kissed side. Gazing upon her mellow loveliness, one does not wonder that Pope

chose Teresa first, Martha afterward. For although tradition has linked with this portrait the name of Martha Blount, we have Walpole's evidence that Patty was a blonde, with "blue eyes that survived her other beauties." Warton says, "Swinburne the traveler, who was Martha's relation, tells me she was a little, neat, fair, prim old woman, easy and gay—her eldest sister, Teresa, had uncommon wit and ability." Teresa, also described as "religious and jealous," was "in the full bloom of her beauty at the coronation in 1714, and it is most natural to suppose that Colonel Byrd would have selected for transportation to Virginia her portrait rather than that of Martha.

It was through the Blounts, no doubt, that Evelyn Byrd formed the acquaintance of Pope, and received the hospitality of his villa at Twickenham, since Pope declared to Gay that for fifteen years he had spent three or four hours of every day in Patty Blount's society.

A delightful, laughter-loving dame, whose name repeatedly appears in the letters of Colonel Byrd, is she who is called "my invaluable sister," and "Cousen Taylor," the wife of Mrs. Byrd's brother, and a member of the family of Lord Camden. As viewed in the line upon the Brandon walls she is tall, slight, long-waisted, dressed in red satin over a hooped white satin petticoat, with agraffes of pearl and gold fastening the bodice, and her dark hair secured with a pearl dart. One pink-tipped hand is extended, the other holds back her gown coquettishly. She is a fair illustration of her correspondence, merry, witty, and a creature not too bright and good for human nature's daily food. She was, after his return to Virginia, the colonel's fountainhead of town talk, and her letters sparkle with gossip and philosophy—news about a new game called "whisk" (whist), the latest scandal in high life, and what is said in private circles about the affairs of the "Queen and Mistress Vane."

"Lord Orrery," says Walpole of him who was called Byrd's bosom friend, "was one of a family where genius had hitherto been a sort of heirloom, and he had not degenerated." But modern biography, which despoils us of ideals, gives another version of the character of this earl. "He was a dull member of a family eminent for its talents," writes Mr. Leslie Stephen. "His father had left his library to Christ Church, Oxford, ostensibly because his son was not capable of profiting by it. The son, eager to wipe off this imputation, sought the society of Swift, Pope, and other wits." A portrait of him is among those now at Brandon, as is also a rather saturnine-looking, life-size picture of Sir Robert Southwell, who



MISS BLOUNT. (FROM THE PORTRAIT BY KNELLER AT UPPER BRANDON.)

died in 1702, and had been a second father to the young Virginian during the time of his tutelage in England. He was a barrister, statesman, and diplomatist of high rank, and was five times chosen president of the Royal Society.

Sir Charles Wager, whose fine monument may be seen in Westminster Abbey, and whose portrait is included in Colonel Byrd's gallery, was a sailor of the best old British stock, treasurer of the British Navy, first lord of the admiralty, and is said to have originated and

matured the idea of Commodore Anson's voyage around the world. In private he was manly, simple, and beloved. Brave as a lion when in action, cheerfully submitting to be bled or hacked by the surgeon's knife, if needs must, he had a fierce antipathy to doctoring by medicine. "You may batter my hulk as long as you please, but don't attempt to board me," he would say to his surgeons, when they prescribed pills or potions.

To Sir Charles Wager some of Colonel

Byrd's most pleasant letters from Virginia are addressed. He was a believer in the colony, and interested in many schemes for its development.

Colonel Martin Bladen, the gallant soldier of Queen Anne's wars, and later one of the lords of trade and plantations, who was also a litterateur, finding time to edit Caesar's Commentaries in the intervals of service to the State, was a close associate with Colonel Byrd in affairs of business and of pleasure.

There is a letter from Byrd to him, projecting a canal between the sister colonies of Virginia and North Carolina, "one moiety of the stock to be subscribed in England, one moiety here, that the project may have friends on both sides the water," and naming as additional members of the ring Sir Charles Wager, the Earl of Orkney, and Governor Gooch.

Another correspondent and ally was Peter Beckford, son of the governor and commander-in-chief of Jamaica, whose grandfather had been a tailor in Maidenhead, and whose descendant was to be the author of "Vathek" and the builder of Fonthill Abbey, that new wonder of the world. Mr. Beckford, indeed, had thought of settling in Virginia near the Byrds, but decided in favor of Jamaica. He was the father of the well-known Alderman Beckford, and grandfather of the owner of Fonthill.

Of William Anne Keppel, second earl of Al-
bemarle, there is a finely executed portrait in miniature style. He wears a red coat covered with gold embroideries and looped with gold cords, and a resplendent periwig. This nobleman, who was a godson of Queen Anne, fought gallantly at Dettingen, Fontenoy, and Culloden, and was commander-in-chief of his majesty's forces in Scotland. He was well liked by George II., and was appointed colonial governor of Virginia in 1737.

The Duke of Argyll, who to readers of Sir Walter Scott will claim remembrance as the protector of Jeanie Deans, has a place among the portraits selected by Colonel Byrd. Near him hangs Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax, a dilettante scholar, and collaborator of the poet Prior, with whom he composed the well-remembered parody of "The Town and Country Mouse." Byrd, with his own bias for elegant literature, would have been sure to affiliate with this polished amateur. The Earl of Egremont and Sir Robert Walpole complete the list of portraits of the nobility brought to Westover, but now at Brandon.

In this aristocratic circle a certain Master

Waltho, clerk of the court at Williamsburg, offered Colonel Byrd a diamond ring for permission to hang his own picture, wearing his cocked hat. The merry colonel took Waltho at his word. Facing the stately line of English noblemen may be still seen the swarthy countenance of the grim little republican under a self-assertive hat, and his ring sparkles on the finger of the chatelaine of Brandon.

One of the most notable of Colonel Byrd's collection, however, and prized now for its intrinsic worth as a work of art, is a lovely half-length portrait, handed down as a Sir Peter Lely, and said to be Elizabeth Claypole, Cromwell's favorite daughter, whose death preceded her father's by a few weeks only. She is sitting with a book in her left hand, resting her cheek in the right hand, an exquisitely graceful figure, a beautiful face, with reddish brown hair escaping in a single errant lovelock, and with drapery of palest blue. Is not this Mrs. Byrd herself? ¹

And now we have come to the time when, renouncing the congenial joys of London life, Colonel Byrd decided to return to Virginia and to take up his duties as a colonist. He not only covered the walls of Westover House with pictures but filled the stables with horses and stocked the cellars with fine wine. From far and near came his friends and kinspeople to taste his royal hospitality. The iron gates he put up were ever ready to fly open at a touch. In his library, the best in the province, the catalogues of which, in the Historical Society of Virginia, show the shelves to have been exceptionally furnished with well-chosen books, he sat penning numerous letters, verses, fables, full of quips and quirks of wit, and bristling with his favorite points at the expense of womankind. His visitors and cronies were Sir Alexander and Lady Spotswood; Sir John and Lady Randolph, and many Randolphs, all descended from his father's friend, "Will" Randolph, the squire of Turkey Island; the Reverend Peter Fountain, the rector of his parish; the Carters, Burwells, Harrisons, Bassetts, Pages, Amblers, Carys, Bollings, Digges, Nicholases, Beverleys, and other friends and neighbors, arriving in relays to wait upon the master of Westover, and to kiss the hands of his fair English lady, and of the celebrated Miss Evelyn, whose praises had long since come across the sea to gladden the ears of her compatriots.

Although we have no time to touch upon his connection with colonial affairs, the colonel was not one to rust in idleness. With pen, purse, and brain he was ever ready to serve

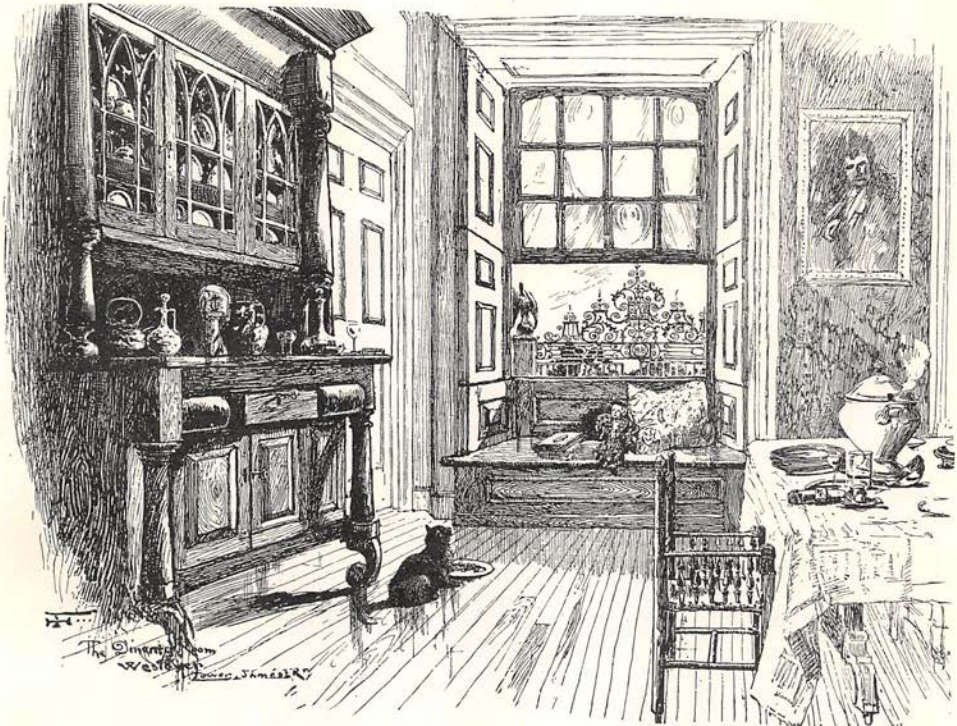
¹ Why should Colonel Byrd have included in a collection of family pictures and portraits of his friends a likeness of Cromwell's daughter? And how could he have failed to secure a portrait of his own beautiful wife? This canvas, in the dress and pose and in the

arrangement of the hair, seems to be of the same date as the pictures of the other ladies I have mentioned; and it appears to be the work of the same school, if not of the same hand.

the king and the province. As a pleasant picture of a plantation of the day, we insert here a letter written to Mr. Beckford, which, with a few changes, might serve to describe the Virginia of immediately before our war.

I had the honour to pay you my respects in June last and to send you as perfect a description of my seat of Westover as truth would permit me. I represented it honestly as it is, and used not the French liberty of dressing it up as it

gouverneur must first outwit us before he can oppress us. And if ever he squeeze money out of us, he must first take care to deserve it. Our negroes are not so numerous or so enterprising as to give us any apprehension or uneasiness, nor indeed is their labour any other than gardening, and less by far than what the poor people of other countrys undergo. Nor are any crueltys exercised upon them, unless by great accident they happen to fall into the hands of a brute, who always passes here for a monster. We all



THE DINING-ROOM AT WESTOVER.

ought to be. But since my last I have got a person to make a draught of it, which perhaps will appear a little rough; but if it should not be found according to art, it will make amends by being according to truth. I wish with all my heart it may tempt you at least to make us a visit in the spring. But if the torrid zone be still your choice, and you should resolve to lay your bones where you first drew your breath, be so good as to honour this country with one of your sons, of which I hear you are blessed with several. You may make a prince of him for less money here than you can make him a private gentleman in England. We live here in health, in plenty, in innocence and security, fearing no enemy from abroad, or robbers at home. Our Government, too, is so happily constituted that a

travel the whole country over without arms or guard. And all this not for want of money or rogues, but because we have no great city to shelter the thief, or pawnbrokers to receive what he steals.¹ If these happy advantages can tempt either you or any of your friends or relatives hither, my plantation of Westover is at your service.

By the summer of 1728 we find the frequenter of courts and coffee-houses settled down to the life of a Virginia burgess, and father of an increasing family. To "Couzen Taylor" he writes: "Your great-niece Griz begins to prove her sex by the fluency of her tongue,

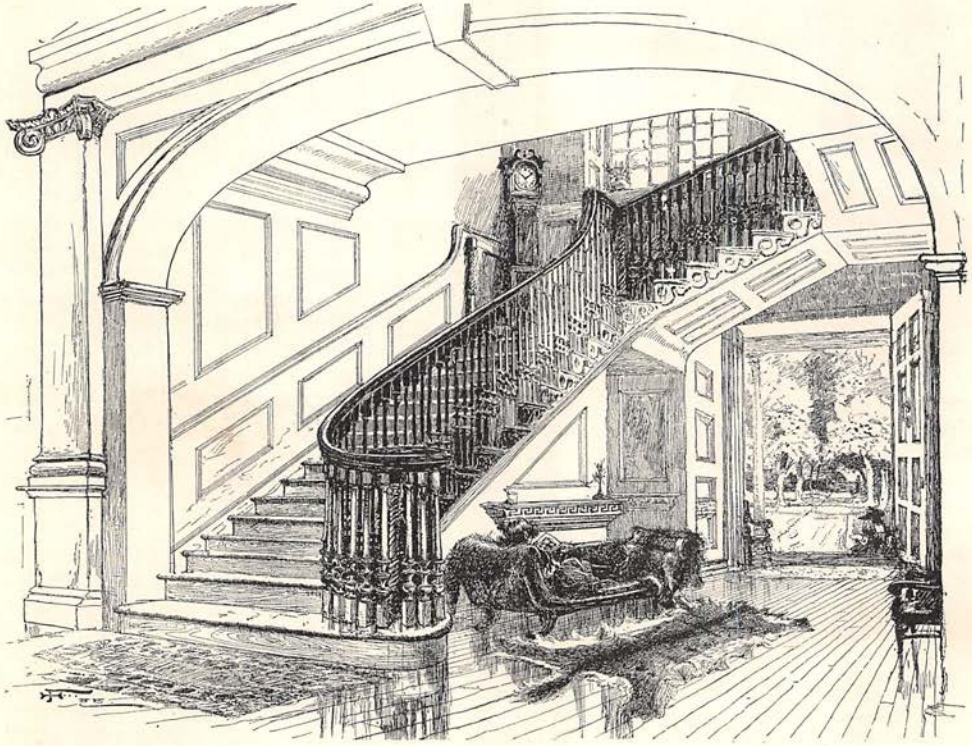
¹ The first provision to give shelter to such marauders was made by Colonel Byrd himself, in 1733, when he mapped out two towns, "one at Schocoes, to be called Richmond, the other at the point of the Appo-

mattox, to be called Petersburg, localities naturally intended for marts. Thus we build not castles but cities in the air," he wrote, commenting on his project.

and, like Mrs. P——, talks nonsense very prettily. She is a sound, sturdy little wench, never having had any disorder but from breeding teeth." He complains of having had no recent letters from England, and says he is reduced to read the former ones as often as he does the Psalms. He protests against being forgotten as if he were dead, but asserts "a substantial advantage over the harmless people of the other world. We can at least pelt you with plaintive epistles, which no dead person ever

disquisitions upon English politics, fears that "the ally of Hanover, and particularly Great Britain, hath shewed a very unusual patience in bearing with the peevish humour of the Spaniard," and hyperbolic satires after the manner of the day.

It was thanks to the piping times of peace enjoyed by Virginia during that second quarter of the eighteenth century that Colonel Byrd found such opportunity for literary dalliance. He has left behind, in addition to these numer-



THE HALL AT WESTOVER.

sent to the living in our days, but Tom Brown to the Bishop of Cambray." He assists in carrying out the "darling project" of Sir Jacob Acworth, of growing hemp in Virginia. He receives from Lord Islay and from Mr. Warner—"the owner of extensive gardens of curiosities in the North of England"—grafts of vines and fruit-trees, with which he is experimenting on the sun-warmed slopes of Westover. He frequents the polite society of Williamsburg during the sessions of the House of Burgesses, and entertains at Westover many coachloads of pleasure-seeking gentry. Above all, he dictates to his secretary—for whose legible chirography the student of colonial manuscripts must ever be grateful—page after page of letters to the originals of his gallery of portraits, jaunty

ous drafts of letters, a large manuscript volume bound in vellum, and beautifully transcribed, containing the three works known as "The Westover Manuscripts." A recent perusal of this ancient tome in its stronghold behind the ivied walls of Brandon, and under supervision of the smiling author in his frame, has revealed a fascinating glimpse into Virginia life during that period, of which the records are so scant.

The most considerable of William Byrd's productions is the "History of the Dividing Line," a chronicle of his expedition, in 1728, as a commissioner from the crown to establish the boundary line between North Carolina and Virginia. The "Journey to the Land of Eden" and "Progress to the Mines" are briefer but not less sprightly diaries of local travel.

In the autumn of 1728, after due waiting "for the snakes to retire into winter-quarters," the party, consisting of three commissioners and two surveyors from each State, reinforced by a famous guide named Epaminondas Bampton, and accompanied by Indians, negroes, pack-horses, and dogs, pushed their toilsome way on horseback from the lowlands near the Dismal Swamp to the Appalachian mountains, across three hundred miles of bog, brake, flood, and forest, returning as they went. An addition supplied by authority was the chaplain, good Mr. Peter Fountain, "sent along by Government for our edification and to christen the Gentiles on the frontier of Carolina"; and there were as many as one hundred baptisms, by gurgling wayside springs, in tents, and in cabins, wherever the family of a pioneer had pierced the fringe of the wilderness to live, for the changing of little backwoods heathen—called by the colonel "arrant pagans"—into legitimate appendages of Mother Church. The chief part of the way lay through virgin woodland. Daily they must force a trail through resisting undergrowth; burst from the embrace of strangling vines; fight intermittent fever with tea from the bark of dogwood; ford torrents; scale precipices; feed on their own bread and "rumm" and pork, supplemented by the meat of "buffalo, deer, bear, and turkeys;"—the last three killed every day,—and at night, listening to the bark of wolves, fall asleep upon oozy soil, till they "were more like otters than men." And always they were in continual fear of a surprise from Indians. Through these varied adventures the colonel's bright spirit seems never to have abandoned him. He "travels five miles on a Sunday, and pays for violating the Sabbath by losing a pair of gold buttons"; takes a hand at tooth-pulling; "knocks down" game; discovers ginseng, the "plant of life," by its scarlet blossom; picks chestnuts that his men, "too lazy to climb the trees, cut them down to secure"; runs upon an inscription carved on a tree by "traders who slept there in 1673"; and makes fun of all his comrades, especially "the small major, who has had a small fever, and bore it like a child." On a supposed alarm from hostile Indians "the little major, whose tongue had never lain still, was taken speechless for sixteen hours. . . . After we put ourselves in battle array we discovered the whistle to be nothing but the nocturnal note of a little harmless bird. We were glad to find our mistake, and, commending the sentinel for his great vigilance, composed our noble spirits again to rest till morning. Some of the company dreamed of nothing but scalping all the rest of the night."

To obtain the full account of this successful expedition, we recommend a search for the now

rare volumes of a small edition which was allowed by the owners of the Westover Manuscripts to be printed in 1866. Elsewhere the original documents tell of Byrd's visit in 1732 to Germanna, the settlement where Virginia's late governor, the martial Spotswood, had first established his palatines sent over by Queen Anne to assist in the manufacture of wine and iron in the colony. At the outset of his ride to the Rapidan Colonel Byrd, "for the pleasure of the good company of Mrs. Byrd and her little governor, my son," drives in his chariot from Westover about half-way to what is now Richmond. "There we halted not far from a purling stream, and, on the stump of a propagate oak, picked the bones of a piece of roast beef. By the spirit which it gave me I was the better able to part with the dear companion of my travels and to perform the rest of the journey on horseback by myself. I reached Schocoes before two o'clock, and crossed the river to the mills. I had the grief to find them both stand as still for the want of water as a dead woman's tongue for want of breath. It had rained so little for many weeks above the falls that the naiads had hardly water enough left to wash their faces."

Stopping overnight at a friend's house, the colonel is caught in a flood of long delayed rain, and makes himself agreeable to the ladies by reading aloud the "Beggar's Opera," which had enjoyed a run of forty nights in London; then, getting sleepy, goes off to bed, leaving "Mr. Randolph and Mrs. Fleming to finish it, who read as well as most actors do at a rehearsal. Thus we killed time and triumphed over the bad weather."

Beyond the deserted village of Germanna—for the palatines had by that time moved on across the river—Byrd espies the "enchanted castle" where Sir Alexander has enshrined his bride, Mistress Anne Butler Bryan of Westminster, goddaughter of the Duke of Ormond. The master of the house being from home, he is graciously made welcome by my Lady Spotswood in a saloon "elegantly set off with pier-glasses." While they are chatting a tame deer strays into the room, catches sight of his own reflection in one of the mirrors, makes quickly for his imaginary rival, crashes the glass with his antlers, and overturns a table laden with the china nothings dear to a lady's heart. Lady Spotswood, however, meets this trial with "moderation and good humor." The host returns; they talk of iron chiefly, Spotswood complaining of one Graeme's management, and says he "is rightly served for committing his affairs to the care of a mathematician whose thoughts are among the stars." They walk with my lady and her sister "Miss Theyk"

through a shady lane, and drink "fine water from a marble fountain," thence to the banks of the Rappahannock, "fifty yards wide and so rapid that the ferryboat is drawn over by a chain, and is here therefore called the Rapidan." At night they sup, and tell "a legion of old stories"; "drink prosperity to all the Col.'s projects in a bowl of rack punch, and then retire to our devotions."

"Having employed about two hours in retirement," writes the traveler, "I sally'd out at the first summons to breakfast, where our conversation with the ladys, like whipt syllabub, was very pretty, but had nothing in it. This, it seems, was Miss Theky's birthday, upon which I made her my compliments, and wish't she might live twice as long a marry'd woman as she had lived a maid. Then the Colonel and I took another turn in the garden to discourse further on the subject of iron. He was very frank in communicating his dear-bought experience.

"We had a Michaelmas goose for dinner of Miss Theky's own raising, who was now good-natured enough to forget the jeopardy of her dog. [There had been a scene at breakfast between Sir Alexander and his sister-in-law over her offending lap-dog.] In the afternoon we walked in a meadow by the river, which winds in the form of a horseshoe about Germanna, making it a peninsula containing about four hundred acres.

"30th. The sun rose clear this morning, and so did I. It was then resolved to wait on the lady's on horseback, since the bright sun, the fine air, and the wholesome exercise, all invited us to it. We forded the river a little above the ferry, and rode six miles up the neck to a fine level piece of rich land where we found about twenty plants of ginseng with the scarlet berries growing on the top of the middle stalk. The root of this is of wonderful vertue, particularly to raise the spirits and promote perspiration. The Colonel complimented me with all we found in return for my telling him the vertues. We were all pleased to find so much of this king of plants so near the Colonel's habitation, and surprised to find it on level ground, instead of on the north side of a stony mountain. I carried home the treasure with as much joy as if every root had been a graft of the Tree of Life, and wash'd it and dry'd it carefully.¹

¹ There is a letter to Sir Robert Walpole from Colonel Byrd recommending this plant for some malady, and forwarding a decoction of it made at Westover.

"This airing made us as hungry as so many hawks, so that between appetite and a very good dinner 't was difficult to eat like a philosopher. In the afternoon the lady's walk't me about amongst all their little animals with which they amuse themselves and furnish the table. The worst of it is, they are so tender-hearted they shed a silent tear every time any of them are kil'd. At night the Col. and I quitted the threadbare subject of iron and changed the scene to politicks. [How the ministry had receded from its demand to raise a standing salary for all succeeding governors of Virginia, for fear "some curious members of the House of Commons should enquire how the money was disposed of that had been raised in the other American colonies for the support of their governors," etc.]

"Then the Colonel read me a lecture on tar, affirming that it can't be made in this warm clymate after the manner they make it in Sweden and Muscovy, etc.; and then we entered on the subject of hemp."

This is almost the only glimpse history affords us of the latter-day life, at home, of the famous leader of the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe, the Tubal Cain of Virginia, as he has been called for his ardor in founding the iron industry in America, the ex-soldier under Marlborough who carried about with him a wound in the breast received at Blenheim, the stern ruler of Virginia, who, as deputy of the absent Earl of Orkney, is among the few of the crown governors deserving to be held up for the praise of future generations. After it we must stop for want of space, leaving again to their mellow solitude the writings of "Will Byrd, gentleman," who, surnamed in Virginia the "Black Swan" or "*Rara Avis*" of his day, lived to the green old age of seventy, and sleeps at his own Westover in the sunshine of the garden near the river-bank.

By the passing traveler Westover, and Brandon too, may be descried under summer garniture of leaves as the boat plows down the James. But to absorb the full flavor of the legends of both homes one must know them from within.

Constance Cary Harrison.

Ginseng would seem to have been much discussed in England at the time, and is still in great demand among the Chinese.

