

TR A V E L S
THROUGH THE
MIDDLE SETTLEMENTS
IN
N O R T H A M E R I C A,

IN THE YEARS 1759 AND 1760;

WITH
OBSERVATIONS UPON THE STATE OF THE COLONIES.

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REVISED, CORRECTED, AND GREATLY ENLARGED, BY THE AUTHOR.

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C O N T E N T S.

	Page
PREFACE to the Third Edition - - - - -	vii
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INTRODUCTION - - - - -	xiii
TRAVELS - - - - -	I
APPENDIXES; viz.	
N° 1. Catalogue of Trees, Plants, Birds, Fishes, Animals, &c. mentioned in the Course of this Work; with their common Names, and the Names given them by Catesby and Linnæus - - - - -	125
N° 2. Tables and Statements relating to the commercial Situation of the United States, both before and since the American War - - - - -	130
N° 3. Anecdotes of the Indians - - - - -	153
N° 4. ——— of several Branches of the Fairfax Family, now domiciliated in Virginia - - - - -	159
N° 5. Diary of the Weather - - - - -	173

T R A V E L S
THROUGH THE
MIDDLE SETTLEMENTS
IN
N O R T H A M E R I C A.

ON Friday the 27th of April 1759, I embarked, in company with several North American gentlemen, on board the *Dispatch*, captain Necks, for Virginia; and the next day we set sail from Spithead, under convoy of his majesty's ship the *Lynn*, captain Sterling, commander, with thirty-three sail of trading vessels. We came to an anchor in the evening in Yarmouth Road, and the next day sailed with a fresh easterly wind through the Needles.

April 30. We passed by the *Lizard*, and in the evening discovered a sail, which proved to be an English sloop laden with corn. She had been taken by a French privateer, and was steering for France: there were three Frenchmen and one Englishman on board. The commodore sent some hands to her, with orders to carry her to Penzance.

May 1. Thick, hazy weather with a fair wind. A large ship passed through the fleet about four o'clock in the afternoon: and in the evening another vessel bore down upon the sternmost ships, and spoke with them.

May 2. Fair, pleasant weather. The next day we found by our reckoning that we had made a hundred leagues from the Land's End.

May 4. Strong, violent gales at north-and-by-west. In the evening the Molly, captain Chew, had her main-top-mast carried away, and hoisted a signal of distress.

May 5. From this time to the 14th, nothing remarkable happened: the wind was seldom fair; but the weather being moderate, we made frequent visits, and passed our time very agreeably.

May 14. Captain Necks fell ill of a fever, and continued indisposed several days: he began to mend about the 17th.

May 19. In the afternoon, a sudden and violent squall from the north-west obliged us to lye-to under our reefed main-sail: it continued to increase, and blew a storm for about thirty-six hours, when it began to moderate.

May 21. We made sail in the afternoon, with four ships in company; and the next day in the evening were joined by eighteen more. From that time to the 28th, nothing remarkable happened: we had generally pleasant weather, but adverse winds. We frequently visited;

and were much entertained with seeing grampuses, turtles, bonetas, porpoises, flying and other fish, common in the Atlantic*.

May 28. We discovered a large sail; she directed her course towards the east. We supposed her to be an English man of war going express. She carried three top-gallant sails.

May 31. We spoke with a sloop bound from Antigua to London. She acquainted the commodore with the agreeable news of his majesty's forces at Guadaloupe having reduced that whole island under subjection to the British government. The wind still continued unfavourable.

June 5. We spoke with a snow from Carolina, which informed the commodore, that a French frigate was cruising off the capes of Virginia. From that time to the 11th, we had nothing remarkable. The wind was generally from west to north-west, and there were frequent squalls with lightning. We saw several bonetas, grampuses, albicores, and fish of different kinds.

June 11. The water appeared discoloured; and we concluded that we were upon the Banks of Newfoundland: we cast the lead, but found no ground. The weather was thick and hazy. Nothing remarkable happened from this time to the 3d of July: we had pleasant wea-

* See Appendix, N° 1.

4 TRAVELS THROUGH NORTH AMERICA.

ther, though now and then squalls with lightning. We fell in with several currents and had variable winds.

July 3. We had fine weather, with a gentle breeze at N. W. We were now, according to the commodore's reckoning (which we afterward found to be true) about sixty leagues from land. The air was richly scented with the fragrance of the pine-trees.

July 4. We saw a great many flocks, from whence we imagined that we were near the coast. The wind was at east-by-north.

July 5. About six in the morning we caught some green fish: upon this we founded, and found eighteen fathom water. At ten we discovered land, which proved to be Cape Charles; and about three hours afterward sailed through the capes into Chesapeak Bay. The commodore took his leave to go upon a cruise; and at eight in the evening we came to an anchor in York river, after a tedious and disagreeable voyage of almost ten weeks.

The next morning, having hired a chaise at York, a small inconsiderable town, I went to Williamsburg, about twelve miles distant. The road is exceedingly pleasant, through some of the finest tobacco plantations* in

* The tobacco growing upon York river, is esteemed superior to any other in North America; particularly that which is raised upon the plantations belonging to colonel Edward Diggs, which is said to have a flavour excelling all others.

Of the growth of one plantation, distinguished from the rest, the tobacco is in such high estimation, that colonel Diggs puts upon every hoghead in which it is packed, the initials of his name; and it is from thence called the E. D. tobacco, and sells for

in North-America, with a beautiful view of the river and woods of great extent.

Williamsburg is the capital of Virginia: it is situated between two creeks; one falling into James, the other into York river; and is built nearly due east and west. The distance of each landing-place is something more than a mile from the town; which, with the disadvantage of not being able to bring up large vessels, is the reason of its not having increased so fast as might have been expected. It consists of about two hundred houses, does not contain more than one thousand souls, whites and negroes; and is far from being a place of any consequence. It is regularly laid out in parallel streets, intersected by others at right angles; has a handsome square in the center, through which runs the principal

for a proportionably higher price. Some time ago, colonel Diggs having a tract of land, seemingly of the same quality, and under the same exposure and aspect as the plantation producing the E. D. tobacco, from which it was separated only by a small rill of water, he directed it to be planted; and as the produce was apparently similar in quality, colour, flavour, and every other particular, he thought himself warranted to delineate E. D. upon the hogheads in which it was packed. Accordingly, it was sent to market with this recommendatory mark or token. But some time after, he received a letter from his factor or merchant in London, inform-

ing him that his inspector or agent, had been guilty of some great oversight or error, as the tobacco contained in certain casks, which he specified, though marked with E. D. was of a different and very inferior quality to that commodity; and that if the same fault should be again committed, it would ruin the reputation and sale of the E. D. tobacco. It is to be observed, that the soil or mould had been carefully analysed and examined previous to its being planted; and that not the smallest difference could be perceived between that of the old and new plantation. The experiment, it will easily be believed, was not repeated.

street,

street, one of the most spacious in North America, three quarters of a mile in length, and above a hundred feet wide. At the opposite ends of this street are two public buildings, the college and the capitol : and although the houses are of wood, covered with shingles *, and but indifferently built, the whole makes a handsome appearance. There are few public edifices that deserve to be taken notice of ; those, which I have mentioned, are the principal ; and they are far from being magnificent. The governor's palace is tolerably good, one of the best upon the continent ; but the church, the prison, and the other buildings, are all of them extremely indifferent. The streets are not paved, and are consequently very dusty, the soil hereabout consisting chiefly of sand : however, the situation of Williamsburg has one advantage, which few or no places in these lower parts have ; that of being free from mosquitoes. Upon the whole, it is an agreeable residence ; there are ten or twelve gentlemen's families constantly residing in it, besides merchants and tradesmen : and at the times of the assemblies, and general courts, it is crowded with the gentry of the country : on those occasions there are balls and other amusements ; but as soon as the business is finished, they return to their plantations ; and the town is in a manner deserted †.

* These are formed in the shape of tiles, and are generally made of white cedar or of cypress.

† Since the revolution, the seat of go-

vernment has been removed to Richmond, a town situated just below the falls of James river.

The situation of Virginia (according to Evans's map) is between the 36th and 40th degree of north lat. and about 76 degrees west long. from London *. It is bounded on the north by the river Potowmac, on the east by the Atlantic Ocean, by Carolina on the south, and, to include only what is inhabited, by the great Alleghenny on the west.

The climate is extremely fine, though subject to violent heats in the summer: Farenheit's thermometer being generally for three months from 85 to 95 degrees high. The other seasons, however, make ample amends for this inconvenience: for the autumns and springs are delightful; and the winters are so mild and serene (though there are now and then excessively cold days) as scarcely to require a fire. The only complaint that a person can reasonably make, is, of the very sudden changes to which the weather is liable; for this being intirely regulated by the winds, is exceedingly variable. Southerly winds are productive of heat, northerly of cold, and easterly of rain; whence it is no uncommon thing for the thermometer to fall many degrees in a very few hours; and, after a warm day, to have such severe cold, as to freeze

* Mr. Ebeling, of Hamburgh, in a note to the German translation of this work, says, "Virginia is situated between 37 and 40 degrees of north latitude, and extends from 77 to 81 degrees west longitude from London;" but I believe he

is mistaken, for the latest and best maps generally agree with Mr. Evans in regard to the situation he has given to this country; at least, they approximate nearer to the account here given than to that of Mr. Ebeling.

over a river a mile broad in one night's time *. In summer there are frequent and violent gusts, with thunder and lightning; but as the country is very thinly inhabited, and most of the gentry have electrical rods to their houses, they are not attended with many fatal accidents. Now and then, indeed, some of the negroes lose their lives; and it is not uncommon in the woods, to see trees torn and riven to pieces by their fury and violence. A remarkable circumstance happened some years ago at York, which is well attested: a person standing at his door during a thunder gust, was unfortunately killed; there was an intermediate tree at some distance, which was struck at the same time; and when they came to examine the body, they found the tree delineated upon it in miniature. Part of the body was livid, but that which was covered by the tree was of its natural colour †.

I believe no country has more certainly proved the efficacy of electrical rods, than this: before the discovery of them, these gusts were frequently productive of melancholy consequences; but now it is rare to hear of such

* On the 19th of December, 1759, being upon a visit to colonel Washington, at Mount-Vernon, upon the river Potowmac, where the river is two miles broad, I was greatly surpris'd to find it intirely frozen over in the space of one night, when the preceding day had been mild and temperate.

† I have related this circumstance upon the authority of the honourable John Blair, President of the Council of Virginia, who mentioned it as a well-known fact: but it appears so improbable and unphilosophical, that I do not pledge myself for the truth of it.

instances. It is observable that no house was ever struck, where they were fixed : and although it has frequently happened, that the rods themselves have been melted, or broken to pieces, and the houses scorched or discoloured along the sides of them, which manifested that they had received the stroke, but that the quantity of lightning was too great to be carried off by the conductor, yet never has any misfortune happened ; such a direction having been given to the lightning, as to prevent any danger or ill consequence. These circumstances, one would imagine, should induce every person to get over those prejudices which many have entertained ; and to consider the neglect, rather than the use, of them as criminal, since they seem to be means put into our hands by Providence, for our safety and protection.

The soil of Virginia is in general good. There are barrens where the lands produce nothing but pine-trees ; but taking the whole tract together, it is certainly fertile. The low grounds upon the rivers and creeks are exceedingly rich, being loam intermingled with sand : and the higher you go up into the country, towards the mountains, the value of the land increases ; for it grows more strong, and consists of a deeper clay.

Virginia, in its natural state, produces great quantities of fruits and medicinal plants, with trees and flowers of infinitely various kinds. Tobacco and Indian corn are the original produce of the country ; likewise the pigeon-
c berry,

berry, and rattle-snake-root so esteemed in all ulcerous and pleuritical complaints : grapes, strawberries, hiccory nuts, mulberries, chefnuts, and several other fruits, grow wild and spontaneously.

Besides trees and flowers of an ordinary nature, the woods produce myrtles, cedars, cypresses, sugar-trees, firs of different sorts, and no less than seven or eight kinds of oak ; they are likewise adorned and beautified with red-flowering maples, sassafras-trees, dog-woods, acacias, red-buds, scarlet-flowering chefnuts, fringe-trees, flowering poplars, umbrellas, magnolias, yellow jasmynes, chamædaphnes, pacoons, atamusco-lilies, May-apples, and innumerable other sorts ; so that one may reasonably assert that no country ever appeared with greater elegance or beauty*.

Not to notice too the almost numberless creeks and rivulets which every where abound, it is watered by four large rivers of such safe navigation, and such noble and majestic appearance, as cannot be exceeded, perhaps, in the whole known world.

James river, which was formerly called Powhatan, from its having been the seat of that emperor, is seven miles broad at the mouth, navigable to the falls (above 150 miles) for vessels of large burden, and thence to the mountains for small craft and canoes.

* See Appendix, N^o 1.

The falls are in length about six or seven miles ; they consist of innumerable breaks of water, owing to the obstruction of the current by an infinite number of rocks, which are scattered over the bed of the river ; and form a most picturesque and beautiful cascade.

The honourable colonel Byrd has a small place called Belvedere, upon a hill at the lower end of these falls, as romantic and elegant as any thing I have ever seen. It is situated very high, and commands a fine prospect of the river, which is half a mile broad, forming cataracts in the manner above described ; there are several little islands scattered carelessly about, very rocky, and covered with trees ; and two or three villages * in view at a small distance. Over all these you discover a prodigious extent of wilderness, and the river winding majestically along through the midst of it.

York river, for about forty miles, to a place called West Point, is confined in one channel about two miles broad : it flows in a very direct course, making but one angle, and that an inconsiderable one, during the whole way. At West Point it forks, and divides itself into two branches ; the southward called Pamunky ; the northward Mattapony : each of these branches, including the windings and meanders of the river, is navigable seventy or eighty miles, and a considerable way of this space for large ships.

* Amongst the rest, Richmond, the present seat of government.

The Rappahannoc is navigable to the falls, which are a mile above Fredericksburg, and about 110 from the bay. Vessels of large burden may come up to this place; and small craft and canoes may be carried up much higher.

The Potowmac is one of the finest rivers in North America: it is * ten miles broad at the mouth, navigable above 200 miles, to Alexandria, for men of war; and, allowing for a few carrying places, for canoes above 200 farther, to the very branches of the Ohio. Colonel Bouquet, a Swiss gentleman in the Royal Americans, came down this autumn from Fort Cumberland † to Shenando with very little difficulty; whence to the great falls, I have been told, a navigation might easily be effected: so that this river seems to promise to be of as great consequence as any in North America.

In all these rivers the tide flows as far as the falls, and at Alexandria it rises between two and three feet. They discharge themselves into Chesapeak Bay, one of the finest in the world, which runs a great way up the country into Maryland; is from ten to twenty miles broad; navigable

* The Potowmac, according to Mr. Jefferson, is only $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles broad at its mouth, and perhaps his account may be founded upon better authority than my own. I had no opportunity of ascertaining the fact, and the statement which I have made rests intirely upon the credibility of those Virginian gentlemen, who favoured me

with the information, and who, I am persuaded, did not intentionally mislead me; though it is possible they might be mistaken.

† The distance from Fort Cumberland to Shenando is above 100 miles; from Shenando to the great falls about 60; and from the great falls to Alexandria about 17 or 18.

near a hundred leagues for vessels of almost any burden ; and receives into its bosom at least twenty great rivers.

These waters are stored with incredible quantities of fish, such as sheeps-heads, rock-fish, drums, white perch, herrings, oysters, crabs, and several other sorts. Sturgeon and shad are in such prodigious numbers, that one day, within the space of two miles only, some gentlemen in canoes, caught above 600 of the former with hooks, which they let down to the bottom, and drew up at a venture when they perceived them to rub against a fish ; and of the latter above 5,000 have been caught at one single haul of the seine.

In the mountains there are very rich veins of ore ; some mines having been already opened which turn to great account ; particularly Spotswood's iron mines upon the Rappahannoc, out of which they smelt annually above six hundred ton : and one of copper upon the Roanoke, belonging to colonel Chiswell. This last mentioned gentleman is also going to try for lead upon some hunting grounds belonging to the Indians, towards New River, and the Green Briar ; where, it is said, there is fine ore, and in great plenty, lying above ground. Some coal mines have also been opened upon James river near the falls, which are likely to answer very well.

The forests abound with plenty of game of various kinds ; hares, turkiës, pheasants, woodcocks, and partridges, are in the greatest abundance. In the marshes
are

are found foruses, a particular species of bird, more exquisitely delicious than the ortolan; snipes also, and ducks of various kinds. The American shell-drake and blue-wing exceed all of the duck kind whatsoever; and these are in prodigious numbers. In the woods there are variety of birds remarkable both for singing and for beauty; of which are the mocking-bird, the red-bird or nightingale, the blue-bird, the yellow-bird, the humming-bird*, the Baltimore bird, the summer-duck, the turtle, and several other sorts.

Insects and reptiles are almost innumerable. The variety of butterflies is not greater than is that of the rich and vivid colours with which each particular species is distinguished and beautified; and such is the number and appearance of the fire-flies, that on a summer's evening the whole air seems to glow and to be enlightened by them. Several snakes of this country are harmless and beautiful; such as the black snake, the wampum-snake, the bead-snake, the garter-snake, and some others: but

* The humming-bird is the smallest and most beautiful of all the feathered race: its colours are green, crimson, and gold; it lives chiefly by suction upon the sweets and essences of flowers; and nothing can be more curious than to observe numbers of them in gardens, where there are honey-suckles or trumpet-flowers, flying from flower to flower, putting their slender bills into every one, and sucking out the sweetest

juices. The motion of their wings is incredibly swift, and produces a humming noise, not unlike that of a large humble bee. They are frequently kept in cages, but seldom live longer than two months. The food which is given them, is either honey or sugar, mixed with water. Repeated attempts have been made to send them alive to England, but always without success.

the

the rattle-snake and vipers are exceedingly venomous and deadly. There are two curious species of frogs here: one is called the bull-frog, which is prodigiously large, and makes so loud a noise, that it may be heard at a great distance; the other is a small green frog, which sits upon the boughs of trees, and is found in almost every garden.

Of quadrupeds there are various kinds; squirrels of four or five different species *, opossums, racoons, foxes, beavers, and deer: and in the deserts and uninhabited parts, wolves, bears, panthers, elks or moose deer, buffaloes, mountain-cats, and various other sorts. Such are in general the natural productions of this country †.

Viewed and considered as a settlement, Virginia is far from being arrived at that perfection of which it is capable. Not a tenth of the land is yet cultivated: and that which is cultivated, is far from being so in the most advantageous manner. It produces, however, considerable quantities of grain and cattle, and fruit of many kinds.

* Of the several species of squirrels, the ground and flying-squirrels are much the smallest and most beautiful. The former are of a dusky orange hue, streaked with black; the latter grey or ash-coloured, and elegantly formed. These have a spreading or fan-tail, and two membranes adhering to their sides; which, when they spring or leap from a tree, they expand, and are thereby enabled to fly through a consider-

able space. The former are of a very wild nature; but these may be easily, and are frequently tamed.—There is a species of polecat in this part of America, which is commonly called a skunk. This animal, when pursued, or assailed by its enemy, ejects its urine; which emits such a fetid and insupportable stench, as almost to stifle and suffocate whatever is within the reach of it.

† See Appendix, N^o I.

The Virginian pork is said to be superior in flavour to any in the world ; but the sheep and horned cattle being small and lean, the meat of them is inferior to that of Great Britain, or indeed, of most parts of Europe. The horses are fleet and beautiful ; and the gentlemen of Virginia, who are exceedingly fond of horse-racing, have spared no expence or trouble to improve the breed of them by importing great numbers from England.

The fruits introduced here from Europe succeed extremely well ; particularly peaches, which have a very fine flavour, and grow in such plenty as to serve to feed the hogs in the autumn of the year. Their blossoms in the spring make a beautiful appearance throughout the country.

Virginia is divided into fifty-two counties, and seventy-seven parishes, and by act of assembly there ought to be forty-four towns * ; but one half of these have not more than five houses ; and the other half are little better than inconsiderable villages. This is owing to the cheapness of land, and the commodiousness of navigation : for every person may with ease procure a small plantation, can ship his tobacco at his own door, and live independent. When the colony shall come to be more thickly seated, and land grow dear, people will be obliged to follow trades and manufactures, which will necessarily make

* These numbers have been since greatly increased.

towns and large cities ; but this seems remote, and not likely to happen for some centuries.

The inhabitants are supposed to be in number between two and three hundred thousand. There are a hundred and five thousand tytheables, under which denomination are included all white males from sixteen to sixty; and all negroes whatsoever within the same age. The former are obliged to serve in the militia, and amount to forty thousand.

The trade of this colony is large and extensive. Tobacco is the principal article of it. Of this they export annually between fifty and sixty thousand hogheads, each hoghead weighing eight hundred or a thousand weight : some years they export much more *. They ship also for the Madeiras, the Streights, and the West-Indies, several articles, such as grain, pork, lumber, and cyder: to Great Britain, bar-iron, indigo, and a small quantity of ginseng, though of an inferior quality; and they clear out one year with another about † ton of shipping.

Their manufactures are very inconsiderable. They make a kind of cotton-cloth, with which they clothe themselves in common, and call after the name of their country; and some inconsiderable quantities of linen, hose, and other trifling articles : but nothing to deserve attention.

The government is a royal one: the legislature consist-

* In the year 1758, it is said that seventy thousand hogheads were exported.

† See Appendix, N^o 2.

ing of a governor appointed by the king; a council of twelve persons, under the same nomination; and a house of burgesſes, or representatives, of a hundred and eight or ten members, elected by the people; two for each county, and one for each of the following places, viz. the College of William and Mary, James-town, Norfolk-borough, and Williamsburg. Each branch has a negative. All laws, in order to be permanent, muſt have the king's approbation; nor may any be enacted, which are repugnant to the laws of Great Britain.

The courts of judicature are either county, or general courts. The county courts are held monthly in each county, at a place assigned for that purpose, by the justices thereof; four of them making a quorum. They are appointed by the governor, and take cognizance of all causes, at common law, or in chancery, within their respective counties, except criminal ones, punishable with loss of life, or member. This power they are not permitted to exercise except over negroes and slaves, and then not without a special commission from the governor for each particular purpose *. The general court is held
twice

* How necessary it may be that they should have such a power, even in this case, I will not pretend to say; but the law which transfers it to them seems so inconsistent with the natural rights of mankind, that I cannot but in pity to humanity recite it.

“ Every slave committing any offence,

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“ by law punishable by death, or loss of
“ member, shall be committed to the
“ county gaol, and the sheriff of the county
“ shall forthwith certify such commitment,
“ with the cause thereof, to the governor,
“ or commander in chief, who may issue a
“ commission of oyer and terminer to such
“ persons

twice a year at Williamsburg. It consists of the governor and council, any five of which make a court. They hear and determine all causes whatsoever, ecclesiastical or civil, and sit four and twenty days: the first five of these are for hearing and determining suits in chancery appeals from the decrees of the county or inferior courts in chancery; and writs of superseatas to such decrees. The other days are for trying suits or prosecutions in behalf of the king; and all other matters depending in the said court: appeals are allowed to the king in council, in cases of 500 l. sterling value. The governor has a power of pardoning criminals in all cases, except of treason or murder: and then he can only reprieve till he knows the king's pleasure.

The established religion is that of the church of England; and there are very few Dissenters of any denomination in this province. There are at present between sixty and seventy clergymen; men in general of sober and exemplary lives. They have each a glebe of two or three hundred acres of land, a house, and a salary established

“ persons as he shall think fit, which per-
 “ sons, forthwith after the receipt of such
 “ commission, shall cause the offender to
 “ be publicly arraigned and tried at the
 “ court-house of the said county, and take
 “ for evidence the confession of the of-
 “ fender, the oath of one or more credible
 “ witnesses, or such testimony of negroes,
 “ mulattoes, or Indians, bond or free, with

“ pregnant circumstances as to them shall
 “ seem convincing, *without the solemnity of*
 “ *a jury*, and the offender being found
 “ guilty, shall pass such judgment upon him
 “ or her as the law directs for the like
 “ crimes, and on such judgment award
 “ execution.”

Mercer's Abridgment of the Virginian
 Laws, p. 342.

by law of 16,000 weight of tobacco, with an allowance of 1,700 more for shrinkage. This is delivered to them in hogheads ready packed for exportation, at the most convenient warehouse. The presentation of livings is in the hands of the vestry; which is a standing body of twelve members, invested with the sole power of raising levies, settling the repairs of the church, and regulating other parochial business. They were originally elected by the people of the several parishes; but now fill up vacancies themselves. If the vestry does not present to a living in less than twelve months, it lapses to the governor. The diocesan is the bishop of London; who has a power of appointing a commissary to preside over, and convene the clergy on particular occasions; and to censure, or even suspend them, in cases of neglect or immorality. His salary is 100 l. sterling per annum; and he is generally of the council, which is of equal emolument to him*.

An unhappy disagreement has lately arisen between the clergy and the laity, which, it is to be feared, may be of serious consequence. The cause of it was this. Tobacco being extremely scarce from a general failure of the crop, the assembly passed an act to oblige the clergy and all public officers to receive their stipends in money

* The commissary is commonly president of the college, and has the parish of Williamsburg, or some other lucrative parish, which render him about 350 l. a year: so that his annual income is between 5 and 600 l.

instead

instead of tobacco. This the clergy remonstrated against, alledging the hardship of being obliged to take a small price for their tobacco, when it bore an extravagant one; seeing they never had any kind of compensation allowed, when it was so plentiful as to be almost a drug. They sent over an agent to England, and the law was repealed. This greatly exasperated the people; and such is their mutual animosity at this time, that, I fear, it will not easily subside, or be forgotten.

With regard to the law in question, it was certainly a very hard one; and I doubt whether, upon principles of free government, it can be justified; or whether the assembly can legally interpose any farther, than, in cases of necessity, to oblige the clergy to receive their salaries in money instead of tobacco, at the current price of tobacco. They may, I am persuaded, in cases of exigency, always make, and might then have made, such a law, without any considerable detriment to the colony: for, supposing the price of tobacco to be, what it was at that time, about fifty shillings currency per hundred, what would the whole sum be, were the clergy to be paid ad valorem? Not 20,000 l. sterling. There are in Virginia, as I observed before, about sixty-five clergymen: each of these is allowed 16,000 weight of tobacco; which, at the rate of fifty shillings currency per hundred, amounts to 400 l.; 400 l. multiplied by 65, is equal to 26,000; which, allowing 40 per cent. discount, the difference of exchange,

exchange, is about 18,571 l. sterling. Now what is this sum to such a colony as Virginia? But to this it will be said, perhaps, why should the clergy be gainers in a time of public distress, when every one else is a sufferer? The clergy will doubtless reply, and why should the clergy be the only sufferers in plentiful seasons, when all but themselves are gainers? However, as on the one hand I disapprove of the proceedings of the assembly in this affair; so, on the other, I cannot approve of the steps which were taken by the clergy: that violence of temper; that disrespectful behaviour towards the governor; that unworthy treatment of their commissary; and, to mention nothing else, that confusion of proceeding in the convention, of which some, though not the majority, as has been invidiously represented, were guilty; these things were surely unbecoming the sacred character they are invested with; and the moderation of those persons, who ought in all things to imitate the conduct of their divine Master. If, instead of flying out in invectives against the legislature; of accusing the governor of having given up the cause of religion by passing the bill; when, in fact, had he rejected it, he would never have been able to have got any supplies during the course of the war, though ever so much wanted; if, instead of charging the commissary with want of zeal for having exhorted them to moderate measures, they had followed the prudent councils of that excellent man, and had
acted

acted with more temper and moderation, they might, I am persuaded, in a very short time, have obtained any redress they could reasonably have desired. The people in general were extremely well affected towards the clergy, and had expressed their regard for them in several instances; they were sensible, moreover, that their salaries were too scanty to support them with dignity, and there had been some talk about raising them: had the clergy therefore, before they applied to England, only offered a memorial to the assembly, setting forth that they thought the act extremely hard upon them, as their salaries were small; and that they hoped the assembly would take their case into consideration, and enable them to live with that decency which became their character; I am persuaded, from the knowledge which I have of the people in general, and from repeated conversations with several members of the assembly, that they might have obtained almost any thing they could have wished; if not, they undoubtedly would have had reason to appeal. But, instead of this, without applying to the assembly for relief, after the act was passed, (for before, indeed, some of them did apply to the speaker in private) they flew out into the most violent invectives, immediately sent over an agent to England, and appealed to his majesty in council. The result has been already related.

The progress of arts and sciences in this colony has
been

been very inconsiderable: the college of William and Mary is the only public place of education, and this has by no means answered the design of its institution. It has a foundation for a president and six professors. The business of the president is to superintend the whole, and to read four theological lectures annually. He has a handsome house to live in, and 200 l. sterling per annum. The professor of the Indian school has 60 l. sterling, and a house also; his business is to instruct the Indians in reading, writing, and the principles of the Christian religion: this pious institution was set on foot and promoted by the excellent Mr. Boyle*. The professor of humanity has the care of instructing the students in classical learning: he has an usher or assistant under him. The four other professors teach moral philosophy, metaphysics, mathematics, and divinity. Each of the professors has apartments in the college, and a salary of about 80 l. per annum.† The present chancellor of the college is the bishop of London.

From what has been said of this colony, it will not be difficult to form an idea of the character ‡ of its inhabitants.

* See Appendix, N^o 3.

† They have since been raised, I believe, to 100 l.

‡ General characters are always liable to many exceptions. In Virginia, I have had the pleasure to know several gentlemen adorned with many virtues and ac-

complishments, to whom the following description is by no means applicable. Amongst others, I cannot resist the inclination of mentioning George Wyth Esquire, who, to a perfect knowledge of the Greek language, which was taught him by his mother in the back woods, and of the ancient,

tants. The climate and external appearance of the country conspire to make them indolent, easy, and good-natured; extremely fond of society, and much given to convivial pleasures. In consequence of this, they seldom show any spirit of enterprize, or expose themselves willingly to fatigue. Their authority over their slaves renders them vain and imperious, and intire strangers to that elegance of sentiment, which is so peculiarly characteristic of refined and polished nations. Their ignorance of mankind and of learning, exposes them to many errors and prejudices, especially in regard to Indians and Negroes, whom they scarcely consider as of the human species; so that it is almost impossible, in cases of violence, or even murder, committed upon those unhappy people by any of the planters, to have the delinquents brought to justice: for either the grand jury refuse to find the bill, or the petit jury bring in their verdict, not guilty*.

The

ancient, particularly the Platonic philosophy, had joined such a profound reverence for the Supreme Being, such respect for the divine laws, such philanthropy for mankind, such simplicity of manners, and such inflexible rectitude and integrity of principle, as would have dignified a Roman senator, even in the most virtuous times of the republic.—This gentleman is, I believe, still living.

* There are two laws in this colony,

which make it almost impossible to convict a planter, or white man, of the death of a Negroe or Indian. By the first it is enacted, that “if any slave shall die by reason
“of any stroke or blow, given in correction by his or her owner, or by reason
“of any accidental blow whatsoever, given
“by such owner; no person concerned in
“such correction, or accidental homicide,
“shall undergo any prosecution or punishment for the same; unless, upon exami-

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The display of a character thus constituted, will naturally be in acts of extravagance, ostentation, and a disregard of œconomy ; it is not extraordinary, therefore, that the Virginians out-run their incomes ; and that having involved themselves in difficulties, they are frequently tempted to raise money by bills of exchange, which they know will be returned protested, with 10 per cent. interest*.

The public or political character of the Virginians,

“ nation before the county court, it shall
 “ be proved by the oath of one lawful and
 “ credible witness, at least, that such slave
 “ was killed wilfully, maliciously, and
 “ designedly; nor shall any person in-
 “ dicted for the murder of a slave, and upon
 “ trial found guilty only of manslaughter,
 “ incur any forfeiture or punishment for
 “ such offence or misfortune.” See Mer-
 cer’s Abridgment, p. 345. By the second,
 “ No Negroe, Mulatto, or Indian, can be
 “ admitted into any court, or before any
 “ magistrate, to be sworn as a witness, or
 “ give evidence in any cause whatsoever,
 “ except upon the trial of a slave for a ca-
 “ pital offence.” Mercer’s Abridgment,
 p. 419.

* By an act of assembly, if any bill of exchange is drawn for the payment of any sum of money, and such bill is protested for non-acceptance or non-payment, it carries interest from the date thereof, after the rate of 10 per cent. per annum, until the money be fully satisfied and paid.

A very curious anecdote relative to this

law was mentioned to me at Williamsburg, of which I am persuaded the reader will excuse the relation.—An usurer, not satisfied with 5l. per cent. legal interest, refused to advance a sum of money to a gentleman, unless, by way of security, he would give him a bill of exchange that should be returned protested, by which he would be intitled to 10 per cent. The gentleman, who had immediate occasion for the money, drew a bill upon a capital merchant in London, with whom he had never had any transaction, or carried on the least correspondence. The merchant, on the receipt of the bill, observing the name of the drawer, very readily honoured it, knowing the gentleman to be a person of great property, and concluding that he meant to enter into correspondence with him. The usurer upon this became intitled to only 5l. per cent. He was exceedingly enraged, therefore, at being, as he supposed, thus tricked: and complained very heavily to the gentleman of his having given him a good bill instead of a bad one.

corresponds

corresponds with their private one : they are haughty and jealous of their liberties, impatient of restraint, and can scarcely bear the thought of being controuled by any superior power. Many of them consider the colonies as independent states, not connected with Great Britain, otherwise than by having the same common king, and being bound to her by natural affection. There are but few of them that have a turn for business, and even those are by no means expert at it. I have known them, upon a very urgent occasion, vote the relief of a garrison, without once considering whether the thing was practicable, when it was most evidently and demonstrably otherwise *. In matters of commerce they are ignorant of the necessary principles that must prevail between a colony and the mother country; they think it a hardship not to have an unlimited trade to every part of the world. They

* The garrison here alluded to, was that of Fort Loudoun, in the Cherokee country, consisting of a lieutenant, and about fifty men. This unfortunate party being besieged by the Cherokee Indians, and reduced to the last extremity, sent off runners to the governors of Virginia and Carolina, imploring immediate succour; adding, that it was impossible for them to hold out above twenty days longer. The assembly of Virginia, commiserating their unhappy situation, very readily voted a considerable sum for their relief. With this, troops were to be levied; were to rendezvous upon the frontiers 200 miles distant from

Williamsburg; were afterward to proceed to the fort 200 miles farther through a wilderness, where there was no road, no magazines, no posts, either to shelter the sick, or cover a retreat in case of any disaster; so that the unfortunate garrison might as effectually have been succoured from the moon. The author taking notice of these difficulties to one of the members, he frankly replied, "Faith, it is true: but we have had an opportunity at least of showing our loyalty." In a few days after arrived the melancholy news, that this unfortunate party was intirely cut off.

consider the duties upon their staple as injurious only to themselves ; and it is utterly impossible to persuade them that they affect the consumer also. However, to do them justice, the same spirit of generosity prevails here which does in their private character ; they never refuse any necessary supplies for the support of government when called upon, and are a generous and loyal people.

The women are, generally speaking, handsome, though not to be compared with our fair country-women in England. They have but few advantages, and consequently are seldom accomplished ; this makes them reserved, and unequal to any interesting or refined conversation. They are immoderately fond of dancing, and indeed it is almost the only amusement they partake of : but even in this they discover want of taste and elegance, and seldom appear with that gracefulness and ease, which these movements are calculated to display. Towards the close of an evening, when the company are pretty well tired with country dances, it is usual to dance jiggs ; a practice originally borrowed, I am informed, from the * Negroes. These dances are without method or regularity : a gentleman and lady stand up, and dance about the room, one of them retiring, the other pursuing, then perhaps meeting, in an irregular fantastical manner. After some time, another lady gets up, and then the first

* The author has since had an opportunity of observing something similar in Italy. The trescone of the Tuscans is very like the jiggs of the Virginians.

lady must sit down, she being, as they term it, cut out: the second lady acts the same part which the first did, till somebody cuts her out. The gentlemen perform in the same manner. The Virginian ladies, excepting these amusements, and now and then going upon a party of pleasure into the woods to partake of a barbacue*, chiefly spend their time in sewing and taking care of their families: they seldom read, or endeavour to improve their minds; however, they are in general good housewives; and though they have not, I think, quite so much tenderness and sensibility as the English ladies, yet they make as good wives, and as good mothers, as any in the world.

It is hard to determine, whether this colony can be called flourishing, or not: because though it produces great quantities of tobacco and grain, yet there seem to be very few improvements carrying on in it. Great part of Virginia is a wilderness, and as many of the gentlemen are in possession of immense tracts of land, it is likely to continue so. A spirit of enterprize is by no means the turn of the colony, and therefore few attempts have been

* Mons. de Willd, in his French translation of these travels, makes the following observation upon the word, Barbacue.

“ Cet amusement barbare consiste a fouetter les porcs jusqu’ a la mort, pour en rendre la chair plus delicate. Je ne sache pas que les cannibales même le pratiquent.”

In justice to the inhabitants of Virginia,

I must beg leave to observe, that such a cruel and inhuman act was never, to my knowledge at least, practised in that country.

A barbacue is nothing more than a porket, killed in the usual way, stuffed with spices and other rich ingredients, and basted with Madeira wine. It is esteemed a very great delicacy; and is, I believe, a costly dish.

made

made to force a trade ; which I think might easily be done, both to the West Indies and the Ohio. They have every thing necessary for such an undertaking ; viz. lumber, provisions, grain, and every other commodity, which the other colonies, that subsist and grow rich by these means, make use of for exports ; but, instead of this, they have only a trifling communication with the West Indies ; and as to the Ohio, they have suffered themselves, notwithstanding the superior advantages they might enjoy from having a water carriage almost to the Yoghiogheny, to neglect this valuable branch of commerce ; while the industrious Pensylvanians seize every opportunity, and struggle with innumerable difficulties, to secure it to themselves. The Virginians are content if they can but live from day to day ; they confine themselves almost entirely to the cultivation of tobacco ; and if they have but enough of this to pay their merchants in London, and to provide for their pleasures, they are satisfied, and desire nothing more. Some few, indeed, have been rather more enterprising, and have endeavoured to improve their estates by raising indigo, and other schemes : but whether it has been owing to the climate, to their inexperience in these matters, or their want of perseverance, I am unable to determine, but their success has not answered their expectations.

The taxes of this colony are considerable, and the public debt amounts to at least 400,000 l. currency ;
this

this they have been driven into by the war, having seldom had less than a thousand or fifteen hundred provincial troops in pay, exclusive of the expences of some forts. The ways and means employed for raising the money have been generally the same: they have first made an emission of so much paper currency as the exigency required, and then laid a tax for sinking it. This tax has been commonly upon lands and negroes, two shillings for every titheable; and a shilling or eighteen-pence upon every hundred acres of land. This mode of taxation has occasioned some divisions in the house; for the owners of large tracts being unable, perhaps, to cultivate a tenth part of their possessions, and every man's real income arising from the number of his Negroes, have thought it very hard to pay a tax for what they pretend is of no value to them: but much better arguments may undoubtedly be urged in support of the tax than against it.

The taxes for the present debt are laid till the year sixty-nine, when the whole, if they add nothing more to it, will be discharged. The use of paper currency in this colony has intirely banished from it gold and silver. Indeed the introduction of it was certain in time to produce this effect; but lest it should not, the Virginians fell into a measure, which completed it at once: for by an act of assembly they fixed the exchange between currency and sterling debts at five and twenty per cent. not

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considering that the real value of their currency could only be regulated by itself. The consequence was, that when from frequent emissions, the difference of exchange between bills upon merchants in London and currency, was 40 per cent. the difference between currency and specie* was only five and twenty. So that the monied men collected all the specie they could, sent it to Philadelphia, where it passed for its real value, purchased bills of exchange with it there, and sold them again in Virginia with fifteen per cent. profit: and this they continued to do till there was not a pistole or a dollar remaining.

During my stay in Virginia, I made several excursions into different parts of the country: one in particular to the great falls of Potowmac; of which, as I expected to be highly entertained, I kept a journal.

I departed from Williamsburg, Oct. 1. 1759, in company with another gentleman †; and we travelled that day about forty miles, to a plantation ‡ in King William county; beautifully situated upon a high hill, on the north side of Pamunky river. A little below this place stands the Pamunky Indian town; where at present are

* Fixing the difference between currency and sterling debts, was, in reality, fixing it between currency and specie.

† Col. Bernard Moore.

‡ Belonging to Col. Symes. This gentleman's lady, a very beautiful woman, was said to have just attained her 21st year.

She was at that time the mother of seven children, all living. The women in general, in this country, arrive at maturity very early. Some are marriageable at eleven, many at thirteen, and the generality at fourteen or fifteen years of age.

the few remains of that large tribe; the rest having dwindled away through intemperance and disease. They live in little wigwams or cabins upon the river; and have a very fine tract of land of about 2000 acres, which they are restrained from alienating by act of assembly. Their employment is chiefly hunting or fishing, for the neighbouring gentry. They commonly dress like the Virginians, and I have sometimes mistaken them for the lower sort of that people*. The night I spent here, they went out into an adjoining marsh to catch soruses; and one of them, as I was informed in the morning, caught near a hundred dozen. The manner of taking these birds is remarkable. The sorus is not known to be in Virginia, except for about six weeks from the latter end of September: at that time they are found in the marshes in prodigious numbers, feeding upon the wild oats. At first they are exceedingly lean, but in a short time grow so fat, as to be unable to fly: in this state they lie upon the reeds, and the Indians go out in canoes and knock them on the head with their paddles. They are rather bigger than a lark, and are delicious eating. During the time of their continuing in season, you meet with them at the tables of most of the planters, breakfast, dinner, and supper†.

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* See Appendix, N^o. 3.

† In several parts of Virginia the ancient custom of eating meat at breakfast

still continues. At the top of the table, where the lady of the house presides, there is constantly tea and coffee; but the rest of

Oct. 2. We went to another plantation about twenty-four miles distant, belonging to a private gentleman*, upon Mattapony river. We staid there all that and the next day on account of rain.

Oct. 4. We travelled twenty-five miles to another gentleman's † house; and from thence, the day following, about twenty-five miles farther, to a town called Fredericksburg.

Fredericksburg is situated about a mile below the Falls of Rappahannoc: it is regularly laid out, as most of the towns in Virginia are, in parallel streets. Part of it is built upon an eminence, and commands a delightful prospect; the rest upon the edge of the water for the convenience of warehouses. The town was begun about thirty-two years ago, for the sake of carrying on a trade with the back-settlers; and is at present by far the most flourishing one in these parts.

We left Fredericksburg the 6th instant, and went to see the Falls. At this place is a small mercantile town called Falmouth; whose inhabitants are endeavouring to rival the Fredericksburghers in their trade. It is built upon the north side of the river, and consists of eighteen or twenty houses.

The Falls of Rappahannoc are similar to those of

the table is garnished with roasted fowls, ham, venison, game, and other dainties. Even at Williamsburg, it is the custom to have a plate of cold ham upon the table;

and there is scarcely a Virginian lady who breakfasts without it.

* Major Henry Gaines.

† Col. Bailors.

James

James river, except that they are not upon so large a scale. The whole range scarcely exceeds half a mile, and the breadth not a hundred yards. At the time of our going to see them, there was a fresh in the river, which added very much to their beauty. The center of view was an island of about an hundred acres covered with trees; this divided the river into two branches, in each of which, at regular distances of fifteen or twenty yards, was a chain of six or seven falls, one above another, the least of them a foot perpendicular. The margin was beautifully variegated with rocks and trees, and the whole formed a pleasing romantic scene.

At this place we met with a person who informed us of his having been, a few days before, a spectator of that extraordinary phenomenon in nature, the fascinating power of the rattle-snake. He observed one lying coiled near a tree, looking directly at a bird which had settled there. The bird was under great agitation, uttered the most doleful cries, hopped from spray to spray, and at length flew directly down to the snake, which opened its mouth and swallowed it.

From hence we ascended up the river, about fifteen miles, to Spotswood's iron-mines; and in our way had a fine view of the Apalachian mountains, or Blue Ridge, at the distance of seventy miles. At this place I was much affected by the following incident. A gentleman in our company, which was now increased, had a small

From Colchester we went about twelve miles farther to Mount Vernon. This place is the property of colonel Washington, and truly deserving of its owner*. The house is most beautifully situated upon a high hill on the banks of the Potowmac; and commands a noble prospect of water, of cliffs, of woods, and plantations. The river is nearly two miles broad, though two hundred from the mouth; and divides the dominions of Virginia from Maryland †. We rested here one day, and proceeded up the

* I cannot omit this opportunity of bearing testimony to the gallant and public spirit of this gentleman. Nov. 1, 1753, Lieut. Gov. Dinwiddie having informed the assembly of Virginia, that the French had erected a fort upon the Ohio, it was resolved to send somebody to M. St. Pierre, the commander, to claim that country as belonging to his Britannic Majesty, and to order him to withdraw. Mr. Washington, a young gentleman of fortune just arrived at age, offered his service on this important occasion. The distance was more than 400 miles; 200 of which lay through a trackless desert, inhabited by cruel and merciless savages; and the season was uncommonly severe. Notwithstanding these discouraging circumstances, Mr. Washington, attended by one companion only, set out upon this dangerous enterprize: travelled from Winchester on foot, carrying his provisions on his back, executed his commission; and after incredible hardships, and many providential escapes, returned safe to Williamsburg, and gave an account

of his negotiation to the assembly, the 14th day of February following.

† A very curious sight is frequently exhibited upon this and the other great rivers in Virginia, which for its novelty is exceedingly diverting to strangers. During the spring and summer months the fishing-hawk is often seen hovering over the rivers, or resting on the wing without the least visible change of place for some minutes, then suddenly darting down and plunging into the water, from whence it seldom rises again without a rock fish, or some other considerable fish in its talons. It immediately shakes off the water like a mist, and makes the best of its way towards the woods. The bald-eagle, which is generally upon the watch, instantly pursues, and if it can overtake, endeavours to soar above it. The hawk growing solicitous for its own safety drops the fish, and the bald-eagle immediately stoops, and seldom fails to catch it in its pounces before it reaches the water.

river

river about twenty-six miles, to take a view of the Great Falls. These are formed in some respect like those of the Rappahannoc; but are infinitely more noble. The channel of the river is contracted by hills; and is as narrow, I was told, as at Fort Cumberland, which is an hundred and fifty miles higher up. It is clogged moreover with innumerable rocks; so that the water for a mile or two flows with accelerated velocity. At length coming to a ledge of rocks, which runs diametrically cross the river, it divides into two spouts, each about eight yards wide, and rushes down a precipice with incredible rapidity. The spout on the Virginian side makes three falls, one above another; the first about ten feet, the next fifteen, and the last twenty-four or twenty-five feet perpendicular: the water is of a vast bulk, and almost intire. The spout on the Maryland side is nearly equal in height and quantity, but a great deal more broken. These two spouts, after running in separate channels for a short space, at length unite in one about thirty yards wide; and as we judged from the smoothness of the surface and our unsuccessful endeavours to fathom it, of prodigious depth. The rocks on each side are at least ninety or a hundred feet high; and yet, in great freshes, the water overflows the tops of them, as appeared by several large and intire trees, which had lodged there.

In the evening we returned down the river about sixteen miles to Alexandria, or Bel-haven, a small trading
place

place in one of the finest situations imaginable. The Potowmac above and below the town, is not more than a mile broad, but it here opens into a large circular bay, of at least twice that diameter.

The town is built upon an arc of this bay; at one extremity of which is a wharf; at the other a dock for building ships; with water sufficiently deep to launch a vessel of any rate or magnitude.

The next day we returned to colonel Washington's, and in a few days afterward to Williamsburg.

The time of my residence in this colony was ten months, and I received so many instances of friendship and good-nature, that not to acknowledge them would be an act of ingratitude. It would not be easy to mention particular instances, without being guilty of injustice by omitting others: but, in general, I can truly affirm, that I took leave of this hospitable people with regret, and shall ever remember them with gratitude and affection.

May 26, 1760. Having procured three horses, for myself, servant, and baggage, I departed from Williamsburg, and travelled that night to Eltham*; twenty-five miles.

May 27. I ferried over Pamunky river at Dansies, and went to Todd's ordinary upon Mattopony, or the northern branch of York river; thirty-two miles.

* The plantation of Col. Bassett.

May 28. I went to a plantation in Caroline county* ; twenty-seven miles.

May 29. To Fredericksburg ; twenty-five miles.

As I was travelling this day, I observed a large black-snake, about six feet long, lying cross the stump of a tree by the road side. I touched it with my switch several times before it stirred ; at last it darted with incredible swiftness into the woods. On looking into the hole, where it had fixed its head, I observed a small bead-snake about two feet long ; beautifully variegated with red, black, and orange colour, which the black-snake was watching to prey upon. I took and laid it, half stupified, in the sun to revive. After I had proceeded about a quarter of a mile, it occurred to me that it would be a great curiosity if I could carry it to England ; I therefore sent my servant back with orders to fetch it : but, at his return, he acquainted me that it was not to be found, and that the black-snake was in the same position wherein I had first discovered it. I mention this as an instance of the intrepid nature of the black-snake, which, though not venomous, will attack and devour the rattlesnake ; and, in some cases, it is asserted, even dare to assault a man.

May 30. I left Fredericksburg, and having ferried over the Rappahannoc at the falls, travelled that night to Neville's ordinary, about thirty-four miles.

* Belonging to Col. Bailor, mentioned above.

May 31. I passed over the Pignut and Blue Ridges ; and, crossing the Shenando, arrived, after a long day's journey of above fifty miles, at Winchester*.

The Pignut ridge is a continuation of the south-west mountains. It is no where very high ; and at the gap where I passed, the ascent is so extremely easy, owing to the winding of the road between the mountains, that I was scarcely sensible of it.

The tract of country lying between this ridge and the coast, is supposed, and with some appearance of probability, to have been gained from the ocean. The situation is extremely low, and the ground every where broken into small hills, nearly of the same elevation, with deep intermediate gullies, as if it were the effect of some sudden retiring of the waters. The soil is principally of sand ; and there are few, if any pebbles, within a hundred miles of the shore ; for which reason the Virginians in these parts never shoe their horses. Incredible quantities of what are called scallop-shells, are found also near the surface of the ground ; and many of the hills are intirely formed of them. These phenomena, with others less obvious to common observation, seem to indicate, that the Atlantic, either gradually, or by some sudden

* Greenway Court, the seat of the venerable Lord Fairfax, is situated a few miles on the left of the road, about half way between the Apalachian mountains

and Winchester. His Lordship being absent, I was prevented from paying my respects to him.—See Appendix, N° 4.

revolution in nature, has retired, and lost a considerable part of that dominion which formerly belonged to it.

The Blue-ridge is much higher than the Pignut: though even these mountains are not to be compared with the Alleghenny. To the southward, I was told, they are more lofty; and but little, if at all, inferior to them. The pass, at Ashby's Gap, from the foot of the mountain on the eastern side to the Shenando, which runs at the foot on the western, is about four miles. The ascent is no where very steep; though the mountains are, upon the whole, I think, higher than any I have ever seen in England. When I got to the top, I was inexpressibly delighted with the scene which opened before me. Immediately under the mountain, which was covered with chamædaphnes in full bloom, was a most beautiful river: beyond this an extensive plain, diversified with every pleasing object that nature can exhibit; and, at the distance of fifty miles, another ridge of still more lofty mountains, called the Great, or North-ridge*, which inclosed and terminated the whole.

The river Shenando rises a great way to the southward from under this Great North-ridge. It runs through Augusta county, and falls into the Potowmac somewhere in Frederic. At the place where I ferried over, it is only about a hundred yards wide; and indeed it is no where,

* All these ridges consist of single mountains joined together, and run parallel to each other.

I believe, very broad. It is exceedingly romantic and beautiful, forming great variety of falls, and is so transparent, that you may see the smallest pebble at the depth of eight or ten feet. There is plenty of trout and other fish in it; but it is not navigable, except for rafts. In sudden freshes it rises above forty or fifty feet. The low grounds upon the banks of this river are very rich and fertile; they are chiefly settled by Germans, who gain a comfortable livelihood by raising stock for the troops, and sending butter down into the lower parts of the country. I could not but reflect with pleasure on the situation of these people; and think if there is such a thing as happiness in this life, that they enjoy it. Far from the bustle of the world, they live in the most delightful climate, and richest soil imaginable; they are every where surrounded with beautiful prospects and sylvan scenes; lofty mountains, transparent streams, falls of water, rich vallies, and majestic woods; the whole interspersed with an infinite variety of flowering shrubs, constitute the landscape surrounding them: they are subject to few diseases; are generally robust; and live in perfect liberty: they are ignorant of want, and acquainted with but few vices. Their inexperience of the elegancies of life, precludes any regret that they possess not the means of enjoying them: but they possess what many princes would give half their dominions for, health, content, and tranquillity of mind.

Winchester

Winchester is a small town of about two hundred houses. It is the place of general rendezvous of the Virginian troops, which is the reason of its late rapid increase, and present flourishing condition. The country about it, before the reduction of Fort du Quesne, was greatly exposed to the ravages of the Indians, who daily committed most horrid cruelties: even the town would have been in danger, had not colonel Washington, in order to cover and protect it, erected a fort upon an eminence at one end of it, which proved of the utmost utility; for although the Indians were frequently in sight of the town, they never dared to approach within reach of the fort. It is a regular square fortification, with four bastions, mounting twenty-four cannon; the length of each curtain, if I am not mistaken, is about eighty yards. Within, there are barracks for 450 men. The materials of which it is constructed, are logs filled up with earth: the soldiers attempted to surround it with a dry ditch; but the rock was so extremely hard and impenetrable, that they were obliged to desist. It is still unfinished; and, I fear, going to ruin; for the assembly, who seldom look a great way before them, after having spent about 9000 l. currency upon it, cannot be prevailed upon to give another thousand towards finishing it, because we are in possession of Pittsburg; and, as they suppose, quite secure on this account; yet it is certain, that, in case of another Indian war on this side,

side, which is by no means improbable, considering our general treatment of that people, it would be of the utmost advantage and security.

There is a peculiarity in the water at Winchester, owing, I was told, to the soil's being of a limy quality, which is frequently productive of severe gripings, especially in strangers; but it is generally supposed, on the other hand, to be specific against some other diseases*.

During my stay at this place, I was almost induced to make a tour for a fortnight to the southward, in Augusta county, for the sake of seeing some natural curiosities; which, the officers assured me, were extremely well worth visiting: but as the Cherokees had been scalping in those parts only a few days before; and as I feared, at the same time, that it would detain me too long, and that I should lose my passage to England, I judged it prudent to decline it.

The curiosities they mentioned to me, were chiefly these:

1. About forty miles westward of Augusta courthouse, a beautiful cascade, bursting out of the side of a rock; and, after running some distance through a meadow, rushing down a precipice 150 feet perpendicular.

2. To the southward of this about twenty miles, two

* Professor Haller, in his notes to the German translation of this book, supposes that the water at Winchester may be im-

pregnated with Vitriolic Magnesia, Sal Amarum.

curious hot springs, one tasting like alum, the other like the washings of a gun.

3. A most extraordinary cave.

4. A medicinal spring, specific in venereal cases. A soldier in the Virginian regiment, whose case was thought desperate, by drinking and bathing in these waters, was, after a few days, intirely cured. This fact was asserted very strongly by some officers, who had been posted there: but colonel Washington, of whom I inquired more particularly concerning it, informed me that he had never heard of it; that he was not indeed at the place where it is said to have happened, but that having had the command of the regiment at that time, he should probably have been informed of it. What credit therefore is to be given to it, the reader must judge for himself.

5. Sixty miles southward of Augusta court-house, a natural arch, or bridge, joining two high mountains, with a considerable river running underneath.

6. A river called Lost river, from its sinking under a mountain, and never appearing again.

7. A spring of a sulphureous nature, an infallible cure for particular cutaneous disorders.

8. Sixteen miles north-east of Winchester, a natural cave or well, into which, at times, a person may go down to the depth of 100 or 150 yards; and at other times, the water rises up to the top, and overflows plentifully.

tifully. This is called the ebbing and flowing well, and is situated in a plain, flat country, not contiguous to any mountain or running water.

9. A few miles from hence, six or seven curious caves communicating with each other.

A day or two before I left Winchester, I discovered that I had been robbed by my servant: he confessed the fact, and pleaded so little in justification of himself, that I was obliged to dismiss him. This distressed me very much, for it was impossible to hire a servant in these parts, or even any one to go over the mountains with me into the lower settlements. However, by the politeness of the commander of the place, the honourable colonel Byrd, and of another gentleman* of my acquaintance, I got over these difficulties; for the former, while I continued at Winchester, accommodated me with his own apartments in the fort, ordering his servants to attend and wait upon me: and the latter sent a negroe boy with me as far as colonel Washington's, eighty miles distant from this place. On the 4th of June, therefore, I was enabled to leave Winchester, and I travelled that night about eighteen miles, to Sniker's † ferry upon the Shenando.

The next morning I repassed the Blue-ridge at William's Gap, and proceeded on my journey about forty

* Colonel Churchill.

† Called in Fry and Jefferson's map, Williams's Ferry.

miles. I this day fell into conversation with a planter, who overtook me on the road, concerning the rattlesnake, of which there are infinite numbers in these parts; and he told me, that one day going to a mill at some distance, he provoked one to such a degree, as to make it strike a small vine which grew close by, and that the vine presently drooped and died*.

My accommodations this evening were extremely bad; I had been wet to the skin in the afternoon; and at the miserable plantation in which I had taken shelter, I could get no fire; nothing to eat or drink but pure water; and not even a blanket to cover me. I threw myself down upon my mattrass, but suffered so much from cold, and was so infested with insects and vermin, that I could not close my eyes. I rose early in the morning, therefore, and proceeded upon my journey, being distant from colonel Washington's not more than thirty miles. It was late, however, before I arrived there, for it rained extremely hard, and a man who undertook to shew me the nearest way, led me among precipices and rocks, and we were lost for above two hours. It was not indeed, without some compensation; for he

* Several persons to whom I have mentioned this fact, have seemed to doubt of the probability of it. But were it not true, a question will naturally arise, how an idea of that nature should occur to an ignorant planter, living remote from all cultivated

society; and, more particularly, how he should happen to fix upon that tree; which, supposing the thing possible, is the most likely to have been affected in the manner described.

brought me through as beautiful and picturesque a scene, as eye ever beheld. It was a delightful valley, about two miles in length, and a quarter of one in breadth, between high and craggy mountains, covered with chamœdaphnes* or wild ivy, in full flower. Through the middle of the valley glided a rivulet about eight yards wide, extremely lucid, and breaking into innumerable cascades; and in different parts of it stood small clumps of evergreens; such as myrtles, cedars, pines, and various other sorts. Upon the whole, not Tempe itself could have displayed greater beauty or a more delightful scene.

At colonel Washington's I disposed of my horses, and, having borrowed his curricule and servant, I took leave of Mount Vernon the 11th of June.

I crossed over the Potowmac into Maryland at Clifton's ferry, where the river is something more than a mile broad; and proceeded on my journey to Marlborough, eighteen miles. I here met with a strolling company of

* The chamœdaphne is the most beautiful of all flowering shrubs: Catesby in his Natural History of Carolina speaks of it in the following manner: "The flowers
" grow in bunches on the tops of the
" branches, to footstalks of three inches
" long; they are white, stained with pur-
" plish red; consisting of one leaf in form
" of a cup, divided at the verge into five
" sections. In the middle is a stilius, and
" ten stamina, which, when the flower first
" opens, appear lying close to the sides of

" the cup, at equal distances; their apices
" being lodged in ten little hollow cells,
" which being prominent on the outside,
" appear as so many little tubercles.—As
" all plants have their peculiar beauties, it
" is difficult to assign to any one an ele-
" gance excelling all others; yet consider-
" ing the curious structure of the flower,
" and beautiful appearance of this whole
" plant, I know of no shrub that has a
" better claim to it." Catesby, Vol. II.
p. 98. See Appendix, N^o 1.

players,