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A poem on the late massacre in Virginia. With particular mention of those men of note that suffered in that disaster

Christopher Brooke

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A Poem on the Late Massacre in Virginia
(1622)

Christopher Brooke

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General introduction to the poem

On 22 March 1622, a confederation of Powhatan peoples raided the English settlements of the Virginia Company at Jamestown killing 347.

According to Edward Waterhouse's authorized report of the event and the months leading up to it, when "Sir Francis Wiat Governor in Virginia, ... arived in Virginia, and entred upon his Government, he found the country settled in a peace (as all men there thought) sure and unviolable, not onely because it was solemnly ratified and sworne, and at the request of the Native King stamped in brasse, and fixed to one of his oakes of note, but as being advantagious to both parts; to the Savages as the weaker, under which they were safely sheltred and defended; to us, as being the easiest way then thought to pursue and advance our projects of buildings, plantings, and effecting their conversion by peaceable and fayre meanes. And such was the conceit of firme peace and amitie, as that there was seldome or never a sword worne, and a peece seldomer, except for a Deere or Fowle. By which assurance of securitie, the plantations of particular adventurers and planters were placed scatteringly and straglingly as a choyce veyne of rich ground invited them, and the further from neighbors held the better. The houses generally set open to the Savages, who were allwaies friendly entertained at the tables of the English, and commonly lodged in their bed-chambers" (12).

According to Waterhouse, the English believed that they had brokered a pledge of peace that underwrote their "security," "the state or condition of being protected from or not exposed to danger; safety" and "the safety or safeguarding of (the interests of) a state (or, sometimes, a coalition of states) against some internal or external threat" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, "security" n. 2a., b.).¹ The attack was unexpected, and due to the sprawl of the settlement, difficult to resist. As such, it can be seen how modern notions of terrorism can be detected in the poem's concern with the breach of security, particularly in a place where sovereign *dominium* has been asserted through settlement and league.

¹ References to the *Oxford English Dictionary* are hereafter abbreviated OED.

Christopher Brooke, a member of the Virginia Company and close friend to figures such as John Donne, published *A Poem on the Late Massacre in Virginia* within months of learning about the attack. The poem is a call to arms, a call to labor, and an expression of grief. It may have also channeled the policy objectives of a faction within the struggling Virginia Company, who had received its first royal charter to plant from James I in 1607.

Brooke's poetic speaker fashions himself after Ezra, a chronicler and prophet of Israel who chides his nation for its idolatry and ritual impurity. As such, Brooke launches into a theodicy of sorts by weighing whether the massacre is God's punishment for the English colonists' idleness and their lapses in "security." Brooke's analogy of his project to Ezra's chronicles invites a comparison with the tone and outlook of Waterhouse's report of the attack. According to Waterhouse, the purpose of his account is to dispel false rumors and exaggerations circulating. For its part, Brooke's poem positions itself as a complementary record of the individual characteristics of the elegized adventurers. Unlike more conventional apologies at the opening or conclusion of narrative poems concerning the poet's prosody or wit, Brooke withholds an apology, arguing instead to those who would reproach his vehemence that affection has driven his labor. This suggests that Brooke's support of an aggressive policy toward the Indians was not unanimously held within the Company. John Donne, the Dean of St. Paul's and an honorary member of the Company, disagreed with Brooke's call for genocidal retaliation in his sermon to the Company delivered in November 1622. While never directly addressing neither the massacre nor Brooke's poem, Donne stressed that the settlers should make the Indians "enamoured" with their civility, while maintaining their "security." Ultimately, Donne calls for renewed apostolic fervor in the preaching of the Gospel in contrast to Brooke's view that the Indians cannot be candidates for catechism and baptism because they are of "inhumane birth."

The poem and early modern critical race studies

This transcription would be useful to scholars of critical race studies in the early modern period. Brooke's depiction of the Powhatan Indians' perceived origins, immutable biological and behavioral characteristics, and their relative subhuman worth undergirds his argument for genocidal policy. The poem fashions

Englishmen as needing discipline and cultivation for their security--behavioral qualities that they can improve--yet, in contrast, the poem represents the Natives as inherently violent. Natives, according to the poem, operate outside of the Law of Nations because they reneged on agreements of peaceable relations and mercenary exchange. With Aristotle's views on the origin of animal species, particularly insects, in mind, Brooke claims that their pedigree is that of scum or else fathered by Satan and are therefore inhuman.

Form and style

The poem is arranged in heroic couplets throughout, with a generally unimpeachable adherence to iambic pentameter. The poem situates its genre and tone within the conventions of elegy with its expression of grief and lamentation for the deceased. Besides the remembrance of the dead, the poem exhorts the members of the Virginia Company to demonstrate greater manly virtue by avenging the fallen English adventurers.

Note on the text

The 1622 printing of Brooke's poem has been available to scholars mostly through a facsimile contained in a 1964 article in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, but is otherwise unavailable on the *Early English Books Online* platform as of April 2020. The aim of this project is to produce a document that makes the poem more accessible in a digital format that supports optical character recognition and search functions.

This edition leaves the original spelling largely unchanged, except it modernizes the latinate alphabet's i, u, v, and vv to j, v, u, and w, respectively. While the printing of the poem italicized proper names and capitalized all nouns, the present edition capitalizes only proper names and withholds italics throughout. For streamlined reading, commas have replaced those semicolons denoting dependent or appositive clauses. Commas for appositive noun- and adjectival-phrases have been suppressed for clarity.

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The Text

A
POEM
ON
THE LATE MASSACRE
IN VIRGINIA

With particular mention of those men of note that suffered in that disaster.

Written by C. B. Gent. [Christopher Brooke]

[Sigil of James I (left) / Seal of Virginia Council (right)]

Imprinted in London by G. Eld, for Robert Mylbourne, and are to be sold at his
shop, at the great South doore of Paul's, 1622

To the Honorable Companie of Virginia

Right Honorable and Worthy:

Though I thinke your discourse² late published of Virginia's disaster be well received of the times, and as effectuall to your designed purposes; yet something more of that tragicall subject (though in a different kinde) I tender here to your noble patronage and acceptance. The enducement of my labor is in the sequell expressed: being hearty affection to the Plantation; for some friends, my peculiar passion; and for the rest, a humane commisseration. Which though I have apparell'd in verse (as an ornament best fitting tragicke matter and condolement) and therein shall (perhaps) lay my selfe open to the malicious censures of some depravers: yet if some few in your Honorable Company (best affected to poesie) vouchsafe to reade me with indifferencie, they will (I doubt not) both distinguish me in my nature from conditions unfeeling and impenitrable; as also finde some things in my poem worthy their approbation and encouragement. In which assurance I rest

Devoted to your noble dispositions and pious actions,

Christ: Brooke

² Addressing the Company, Brooke indicates that his poem offers an elegiac purpose with his poem that is otherwise not available in the published news or "discourse late published" of the attack.

{A Poem on the Massacre in Virginia}

The church (the spouse of Christ) is sayd to be
 A twofold fount of flowing piety;
 The one of joy, to gratulate the state
 Of those that joy; the other beares the fate
 Of such as mourne: and 'tis a friend's true choice 5
 In bad, or good, to suffer, or rejoice.

Then should not Christian hearts keep true proportion,
 And let their gladnesse, with compassion,
 Hold equall poiz; paying to good friends gon,
 As much of grieffe, as their fruition 10
 Did give them comfort; vainly they might boast
 The name of friendship, but the natur's lost.

My selfe I doe distinguish from such men,
 Who from my heart, doe copy with my pen
 This abstract (from the volume of my cares) 15
 For thee Virginia, for whom my teares
 Were all too light; for teares doe onely shew
 Affection in the meane; and sighs o'reblow
 Those gentle showers; and then the sun-like eye
 Quickly renewes the clearnesse of their skie. 20

But in a case extreame, where horror stops
 The milder course of those affections' drops,
 That with amazement, sets the hayre on end,
 Contracts the brow in wrinckles, makes it bend
 Downe to the center, doth the blood displace, 25
 Dim nature's planets, and deforms the face.
 This is a grieffe not easely overblowne,
 And by such causes, like effects, are knowne.

And when I heard of that late massacre
 (Whose generall cause, as the particular, 30
 Have interest in me) my friends, noble, good,
 Leaving to fame (in characters of blood)
 Their ends, by divelish hands, my passion rent

My heart with sorrow, for that dyre event.
 Amazement strooke me, horror ceaz'd my powres, 35
 Tearelesse as tonguelesse, and for certaine howres
 I seem'd a breathing statue;³ but when terror
 Was once digested, and my mazy⁴ error
 Was rectify'd by passages more plaine,
 Sense recollected, I, my selfe againe, 40
 My knowledge wrought in me a temperate change,
 "In wisdom's eye there's nothing should seeme strange."
 Yet as a pen-man in the sacred law⁵
 (Wrapt in confused wonder) when he saw
 Of Israel (God's chosen) the hard fate 45
 Under the heathen nations and the state
 Of Syon,⁶ then oppressed, hee was bold
 (When hidden causes hee could not unfold)
 T'expostulate with God, and to disperse
 Those clouds obscure, which through the universe 50
 Involv'd the course of justice, providence,
 Assaying with the waxen wings of sense
 To fly up to the deitie: so I,
 (To his great light, small as an attomy)
 Out of my grief (which yet makes reason lame 55
 And quite disjoynts my intellectual frame)
 I move this speech. O thou Eternall Beeing,
 All sublunary creatures overseeing,
 Vile (in respect of man) to whom th' hast given
 An arme of septered powre, and under Heaven 60
 Made him thy substitute to take command,
 Predominating all works of thy hand:
 Why do'st thou not thy care to him extend?

³ The speaker uses the irony of a breathing statue to reflect how he feels about the massacre.

⁴ OED "mazy" adj. n. 1. In a state of bewilderment or perplexity; dizzy, confused.

⁵ Marginal gloss notes reference to the biblical figure of Esdras, or Ezra.

⁶ Syon: Refers to Sion, another name for the seat of God's chosen, Israel. Brooke identifies the colonists with the Israelites and the Native Americans as menacing heathen nations.

No difference between a hellish fiend
 And nature's angel? O shall brutish rage 65
 Act scenes so bloody (sparing sex nor age)
 On this world's theater? Shall men-monsters, fell,
 (Confin'd in unbelief, and damn'd to Hell)
 So many images of Christ deface,
 Sign'd with his Crosse, regenerate by his grace? 70
 Shall such a fruitful land (which thou didst plant)
 Be unpossesst, which till of late did want
 The true inhabitants, such men as know
 From whence such hony comes, and milk doth flow,
 Who propagate religion and thy glorie, 75
 There never knowne, now registered in storie?
 And when those bestiall soules before thine eyes
 Should rather have been slain (in sacrifice)
 By Heccatombs⁷ (for 'tis of sins the least,
 Being no better than a herd of beasts) 80
 Thou didst in that hoast of hell's black brood,
 Wolves, tygars, tyrants, that have suckt the blood
 Of Christian soules, hunderds in ruthfull slaughter,
 Those divelish hands have layd upon thine altar,
 Made tunelesse jarrs in musique of their peace, 85
 Fir'd, ransackt, spoyl'd, destroyed their increase.

O God! Is uniformity and order
 Turning to chaos? Shall rapes, incest, murder,
 And all the spawne of sinne bring forth on Earth,
 Prosper, and not be strangled in their birth? 90
 Shall savage men their ignorance advance,
 Who while they thinke all things govern'd by chance
 Worke mischief still in uncontrolled wills,
 And like th'old gyants seeme to rayse up hills

⁷ OED "hecatomb" n. 2. A sacrifice of many victims; a great number of persons, animals, or things, presented as an offering, or devoted to destruction; loosely, a large number or quantity, a heap.

To seale thy throne, breake order's chaine in sunder, 95
 And not be fir'd with lightning, strooke with thunder?
 Is Heaven harmonious still, or do not jarrs
 Confound their musique, which produce these warrs
 That now afflict the Christian world, thus turning
 Their halcyon dayes to outrage, joyes to mourning? 100
 No, no. Heaven moves still round; the fixed starrs
 Maynteine the height and distance of their spheres
 With constant course, and through their influence
 Boade these hard things, that thus amate our sense.
 Yet are they creatures, having love, nor hate, 105
 Nor sense, and know not what they operate.
 But thou, Almighty Essence from on hye,
 Turn'st (with thy beck) those motions of the skye,
 Thou work'st in mortalls, with unmoved cause,
 Govern'st all changes by thy fixed lawes. 110
 The world, and all things in it, must b'indude
 With temporall changes and vicissitude.⁸
 Let me attempt to draw out of my braine
 Some arguments to make m'assertion plaine.
 Let me make more this knot, then it untwine, 115
 Shew subject natures, and the will divine.
 Note through the world, each region, contrey, clyme
 How they are ruled in the course of time,
 With what extremities and sway uneeven,
 The supreme band is practiz'd thorough Heaven, 120
 The sunne, moone, starrs, and other regiments
 Of all the severall fighting elements.
 Here, in one zenith, distant, out of ken,
 The sunne so firie hot, it scorches men,
 Singes their hayre, and (from their heads to soales) 125
 Makes them in nature seeme like breathing coales.

⁸ OED "vicissitude" n. 2. Successive substitution of one thing or condition for another, taking place from natural causes.

Heere, in an other place. So thinns his heate
 And makes the ayre so eager, it will eate
 The verie noses off, and in men's veines
 Freezeth their bloods: it binds in icie chaines 130
 The raging sea, and makes the shoares to show
 Like dead nipt coarses, wound in sheetes of snow.
 In clymes more temperate, vapors thick and foule
 (Breath'd from the spungie earth) seeme to controll
 The light of heaven; rude winds & boystrous storms 135
 Present unto the eye such fearefull formes
 As root up oakes and makes the billowy maine
 Now to front Heaven, and then descend againe,
 Knocking the highest wrinckles of her brow,
 Against her sands, discovering Hell below 140
 From whence, and from Earth's drossie⁹ heapes, we see
 Such passionate weather of inconstancie,
 That any woman would with more stay'd mood
 Governe the fancies altering in her blood.
 Now, if from these effects and incidents 145
 Mortals would murmur, and with discontents
 Find fault with God, let them conceive in hearts,
 Confusion must of force ensue the parts
 For order of the whole; let humanes still
 Submit to power and the eternal will, 150
 Nor set their understandings bent no hier
 Then (what they cannot comprehend) t'admire.
 If then bad chances cannot be withstood,
 And that the Power Almightye (only good,
 And cannot be the cause of bad) have throwne 155
 From his high Seate this awful vengeance down,
 Yet is he just; although from him do flow

⁹ OED "drossy" adj. 1., 2. Of metals, etc.: Characterized by containing dross or scorious matter, or waste and worthless material; of the nature of dross; dreggy, feculent; *figurative*. Impure, mixed with impurities.

Evill and good; and what is he can blow
 The trump of dreadful summons, neere or farre,
 To deeds immane¹⁰ or miserable warre, 160
 And he not agent? Nor is this a sense
 Estrang'd from truth, divines do know from whence
 This ground proceeds; for God hath ever bin
 A righteous punisher of sinne with sinne.
 So long as Israel bow'd not unto Baal,¹¹ 165
 Canaan¹² was free to them, and they not thrall.
 God threw the heathen out, nor did they want
 Meanes to increase their store, nor roome to plant.
 But when they once began t'idolatrize,
 And in excesse to glut and wantonize, 170
 Turning to fond securitie His grace,
 Mercy was gon, and justice came in place.
 Those got of them againe, whom late they chased,
 Possest their seates, their mansions all defaced.
 O yee the remnant, and the parallel, 175
 (Thus not unaptly urg'd) of Israel:
 Yee are call'd Christians in the common voice,
 But are yee so in essence and in choice
 From unbaptized Soules? And do your hearts
 Performe in manners, life, and act those parts 180
 That really confirme you? 'Tis not fashion,
 Nor name, nor forme, knowledge, or speculation
 That God allowes: water makes no impression,
 Faith is substantiall seale of our profession,
 Most hold legitimate to common eyes, 185
 When in themselves, they themselves they bastardize.

¹⁰ Immane: immense; very great

¹¹ A biblical reference to a major deity in the ancient Levant who was depicted as a pagan rival deity to the Israelites' god. Israel often turned to the worship of Baal, angering its priests, prophets, and God.

¹² According to the Book of Genesis, Canaan was the father of the Canaanites, rivals to the descendants of Abraham.

But bee yee, as you seeme, that yee may grow
 Where yee are plac't, that yee may plant, and sow
 To multiply your store. Yet will I quote
 This sentence for you, worthie of your note. 190
 "Corne sow'd and ripened, brings us joyfull seeds;
 But Sinne once sow'd, and ripened, then it bleeds."
 Bend not your selves to Mammon;¹³ let not ease
 Rock yee in sensuall slumbers, so to ceaze
 Your understanding parts. But let fear'd danger 195
 Be present centinell to absent anger,
 Which may ensue more fearefull if yee bee
 Stupid and senselesse in securitie.
 Securitie: the calme before a storme
 That hugs a fearefull ruine in her arme. 200
 Security: boading to states most harmes
 In softned spirits and disuse of armes.
 Security: the Heaven that holds a Hell,
 The bane of all that in this slaughter fell.
 Forever be thou ban'd and banish't quite 205
 From wisdom's confines and prevention's light.
 Let this example (in the text of blood)
 Be printed in your hearts and understood
 How deare 'twas bought; for to the price it pulls
 A field of Golgotha¹⁴ or dead men's skulls. 210
 And for this Crosse, and their most violent deaths,
 May make yee hence more safely draw your breaths.
 Hallow the places where their corps do lye,
 And keepe sad obits to their memorie.
 'Mongst whom (most honest Powle) it is my part 215
 (Our of much love I bore to thee in hart)

¹³ OED "Mammon" n. a. Originally: inordinate desire for wealth or possessions, personified as a devil or demonic agent (now rare). In later use (from the 16th cent.) also (with more or less personification): wealth, profit, possessions, etc., regarded as a false god or an evil influence.

¹⁴ Also called Calvary, Golgotha is a place outside of Jerusalem and the site for the execution of Jesus, according to the gospels.

To give thy life a testimony briefe,
 Of those that suffer'd being a worthy chiefe.

 Thou, that wert one of those that first made way,
 And brake the ice for others, didst assay 220
 (Where bitter letts¹⁵ and sowre affronts did lye)
 To sweeten them with sweating industrie.
 Thou, that when danger with his forked stings
 Did shoot at thee, and ruin's broadest wings
 Threatened to cover all (being but then 225
 A handfull of weake, sick, and crazed men)
 Where slothful spirits on all sides did drop,
 And some through famine, yet thou still bor'st up,
 And scutfledst manly with malignant fate,
 Setting thy spirit above thy mortall date: 230
 Whose temper (put unto the test) was showne
 For currant mettle; theirs, for drosse¹⁶ was knowne.
 And having at the last with sweate and toyle
 Illustrated thy worth upon their soyle,
 And by desert acquired a good estate, 235
 (Which none envy'd, but all did gratulate)
 Wherein thou shewd'st a hospitable mind
 To friends most loving, and to strangers kind,
 Got to thy bosome one of generous blood,
 Equall to thee in vertue and in good, 240
 Whose womb now promising fruit of thy chast bed,
 Wherein thy joyes should be accomplished.

 Heere do I wet my paper with my teares,
 My very incke doth sympathize with my feares,
 And thickens in my pen, as loath t'expresse 245
 My tearfull griefe and carefull heavinesse.
 Heere do I force my heart with bloody straine

¹⁵ OED "let" n. 1. Hindrance, stoppage, obstruction; also, something that hinders, an impediment.

¹⁶ OED "dross" n. 1a. The scum, recrement, or extraneous matter thrown off from metals in the process of melting.

(Which pants in passion and doth feele a paine
 Like to the pangs of death) to shew the rest
 Where lyes more ruth then can by me b'express. 250

Now I come to the point, thy utmost date,
 The mournfull period of thy hardest fate,
 When thou had'st broke all barrs (as say'd before)
 Amidst thy blessings and thy comforts store,
 Then, ev'n as thunder riseth 'gainst the wind, 255
 And calmes fore-run ruine, and rage behind,
 When all thy joyes were full, dreadlesse of harmes,
 Then came these Hell-hounds¹⁷ in their ugly formes
 Which all thy grounds and family o'respread,
 Thee with thy wife, servants, and all, strooke dead. 260

And more (which is remarkable to fame)
 The noblest member of thy manly frame
 Thy head (as even these senslesse blocks¹⁸ well knew)
 Where all thy wit, counsells, and wisdom grew,
 They parted from the rest, as proud to bring 265
 A trophée of such honor to their king.

But let this off-spring of Hell's damned brood
 Vaunt their victorious cruelty; thy blood
 In good men's hearts thy name shall register,
 And be a rubick¹⁹ in time's calender. 270
 And to my comfort this I can apply,
 That thou who lived'st well and worthily
 Could'st not be unprepar'd: and this say I,
 That he who lives well, worthy is to dye,
 For Death is happinesse. Then (nobel Powle) 275
 Earth hath but Earth, just Heaven containes thy soule.

¹⁷ Hell-hound: A mythical watchdog of hell, or a fiendish person. Here it refers to the Native Americans.

¹⁸ OED "block" n. I.1.b. Often used in similes as a type of inertia, senselessness, stupidity.

¹⁹ OED "rubric" n. 2a. A heading of a chapter or other section in a book or manuscript, written or printed in red, or otherwise distinguished in lettering; a particular passage or sentence marked in this way.

And passionate sorrow may but seeme t'envie
Thy happier state of immortalitie.

Yet heere they stinted not; though thou wert first
Assign'd by fate to feed their bloody thirst, 280
Yet have they but a taste; these cupps of gore
Do but incense their appetites to more.

And as the windes met all at wofull fires
Kindled in cities, stuffe with all their ires
Their puft-up cheekes, tosse flames from house to house 285
And never leave till their dire rage carowse
A whole townes' life-blood in a generall flame,
So are they sorted (by their plotted frame)
And at one instant met with big swolne ire
Implacable as windes, cruell as fire, 290
Tossing their spleenfull rage from one plantation
To many more, leaving each habitation
All vast and desolate; in ebon-bowles
Quaffing²⁰ the Life blood of deare Christian soules.

Maycock and Berckley,²¹ of uncommon sort, 295
(Whom I knew not, but in fame's report)
For you my nature doth of reason borrow,
Teaching my pen to weep, my muse to sorrow.
O had yee been of wisdom so prepar'd
(Like men of armes) to stand upon your Guard, 300
Or your prevention (to your lives' availe)
Had with your vallors borne an equall skale,
This chance had ne'er befell yee; for 'tis sure,
That only vigilance makes life secure,
Which yee did want. Chieftains should have their eyes 305
Like to the Lamia,²² whereof one pries
And for intelligence abroad doth roame,

²⁰ OED quaff v. 1. To drink deeply; to take a long draught.

²¹ Maycock and Berckley, Captains of the Virginia Company.

²² OED "lamia" n. 1. A fabulous monster supposed to have the body of a woman, and to prey upon human beings and suck the blood of children. Also, a witch, she-demon.

Whil'st th'other keepes a carefull watch at home.
 So should your eyes have been: one in, one out,
 One still at home, the other as a scout. 310
 But at that time, neither of them so kept,
 Senses might wake, but sure your wisdoms slept.
 However (as w'are mortall) fates encline,
 And starres do governe, yet our parts divine
 Are farre above them, and withstand their sway. 315
 "Where wisdom rules, fate, starres, and chance obey."
 But live in fame, let time record your zeale,
 In propagation of Virginia's weale.
 Yet with this blurre your lives might stil have florisht
 But for security, in which yee perisht. 320
 Brave Thorpe, thou true deserver of thy style,²³
 Whose mind with things exorbitant or vile
 Had no affinity; thy worthy deeds
 Virginia's hand shall spread like virtuall²⁴ seeds,
 And from thy dust they blade shall rise and flourish, 325
 Which time shall dewe, and sonnes of men shall nourish.
 Thou that wert used to negotiate
 In matters of religion as of state,
 Who didst attempt to make those Indians know
 Th'eternall God their sinewie necks to bow 330
 To His obedience, and on that ground
 To make them apt to what thou didst propund
 For our commerce with them: their good, our peace,
 And both to helpe with mutuall increase.
 What though thou faild'st, and of their seeming shew 335

²³ Thorpe's name means an agricultural "hamlet, village, or small town" (OED "thorp" n.). Brooke's reference to the namesake, or "style," underscores Thorpe's humble mindedness and his affinity with the cultivation of the land of Virginia as well as the cultivation of the "seeds" of his manly virtue within the members of the plantation. The implication of Brooke's figure is that Thorpe's virtue is inherent, both implied in his namesake and visible in his conduct.

²⁴ OED "virtual" adj. n. 1a. Relating to particular qualities or virtues; inherently powerful or effective owing to particular natural qualities.

Wert credulous (as all of us may know
 That were our men so multiply'd as sands,
 And each of them Briarius'²⁵ hundred hands,
 They could not loose the hold the Divell hath,
 Or bring them to the knowledge of our faith) 340
 Yet noble Thorpe, be thy attempt renown'd,
 Thy virtue memoriz'd, thy valor crown'd.
 And on thy tombe obscure thus I engrave
 Thy short and well deserving epitaph.

His Epitaph

Here lyes inclos'd the corpes of him, 345
Who had for every dying lim
A living vertue, could extract
From theory and put in Act
Wisdome humane and things divine.
And by the levell of that lyne 350
Drew all his life, and squar'd his deeds,
Who as he sow'd, shall reape those seeds,
To his increase a thousand fold:
Whose noble name is here enroll
With other captaines of this land, 355
Slaine by many a bloody hand.
Heroicke Thorpe, sleepe in thy urne,
Whilst making hearts in incense burne
Of love to thee, and to thy fame,
Thy valor, vertue, and thy name. 360

And yee right worthy spirits that forewent
 Him that succeeds yee now in government,

²⁵ OED "Briareus" n. An imaginary monster or person resembling Briareus, spec. in having a hundred, or many, hands or arms. Hence: a person capable of doing many things at once; a person of wide-ranging power or influence.

Gates, Argol, Yeardley, if so yee should be
 Passionlesse hearers of this tragedy,
 Or if (as wonders are forgot, as gone) 365
 Yee bury this in your oblivion,
 Let me impress your hearts with my sad pen.
 And as ye are discern'd from common men,
 So fleete not with their streame, let me excite
 Your military judgements to give light 370
 In safe securing of the residue,
 Or extirpation²⁶ of that Indian crew.²⁷
 For, but to consider what those creatures are
 (I cannot call them men) no character
 Of God in them: soules drown'd in flesh and blood; 375
 Rooted in evill and oppos'd in good;
 Errors of nature, of inhumane birth,
 The very dregs, garbage, and spawne of earth;
 Who ne're (I think) were mention'd with those creatures
 Adam gave names to in their severall natures. 380
 But such as comming of a later brood
 (Not sav'd in th'Arke) but since the generall Flood²⁸
 Sprung up like vermine of an earthly slime,
 And so have held b'intrusion to this time.
 If these (I say) be but consider'd well 385
 (Father'd by Sathan, and the sonnes of Hell)
 What feare or pittie were it, or what sin
 (The rather since with us they thus begin)
 To quite their slaughter, leaving not a creature²⁹

²⁶ OED “extirpate” n. 3a: The action of extirpation, or rooting out; extermination

²⁷ While Brooke praises Thorpe’s virtue, patience, and simplicity, he nevertheless suggests in his counsel to Wyatt, Gates, Argol, and Yeardley that Thorpe’s policy toward the Indians ultimately undermined the security of the plantation. In effect, Thorpe did not see that the Indians are not human, not inherently innocent, and therefore not subject to cultivation or civility through good treatment. According to Brooke, genocidal annihilation should be the Company’s sole policy.

²⁸ OED “flood” n. 4b: The great deluge recorded in the book of Genesis as occurring in the time of Noah.

That may restore such shame of men and Nature? 390
 And thou, much honour'd Wyat,³⁰ of that land
 Now regent, and hast taken to thy hand
 The guidance of the helme that state to steare
 (In wisdom's safety) from all stormes of feare,
 Thy undertakings the Almighty blesse, 395
 And to thy hopes give haps and fayre successe.
 Yet as th'art mild of temper, and that calme
 Holding of nature partly; next, the balme
 Soft learning hath distil'd into thy spirit.
 Yet now the honor of thy place and merit, 400
 Must chiefly shine in judgement of stern armes,
 And chide soft nature with those loud alarmes.
 Nor in this attribute is here remov'd
 That valour from thy mind, so well approv'd.
 For (Caesar-like) I know both how and when 405
 Thou canst both weild thy sword, and use thy pen;
 Not fortunate rashnesss; wisdom merits praise;
 And senators may weare the conquering bayes,³¹
 As well as men of warre, since policy
 Effects as much as aimes, and both to thee 410
 I doe ascribe in all humility.
 Inflame thy heart, take spleene, the cause is given,
 All men of knowledge, and auspicious heaven,
 Now prompt thee to revenge the blood late shed,
 An expiable warre unto the dead. 415
 Next (as desertfull owner of his place)
 My pen ambitiously aspires a grace
 From noble Sands,³² and rightly, for such men
 Take not from me, they dignifie my pen.

²⁹ OED "quite" or "requite" 2a: To retaliate for, avenge (a wrong, injury, etc.)

³⁰ Sir Francis Wyatt, governor of Virginia, and grandson of Sir Thomas Wyatt the younger.

³¹ OED "bay" n. 3: Leaves or sprigs of this tree, esp. as woven into a wreath or garland to reward a conqueror or poet; hence figurative the fame and repute attained by these (laurels).

³² George Sandys, treasurer and factionary leader within the Virginia Company.

Thou that in vertue's³³ field displaist they banner 420
 As neare to her in blood, as th'house of honor,
 Who ow'st not to thy birth, but that, to thee,
 Having no need of partiall heraldry
 To blaze thy coate: they gentry is thine owne,
 Not blood thy triumph, but desert thy crowne. 425
 Ennobled Sands, thy art and toilefull care,
 (Us'd in Virginia's good) I may compare
 To the laborious chimist in his skill.
 He from some shapelesse formes strives to distill
 A quintessence of worth; and thou likewise, 430
 With an unwearied spirit, thy selfe applies
 (In thy projections) from rude heapes of things
 T'extract a virtuall use; and nature's springs
 (In darknesse hid within the wombe of earth)
 By thee disclos'd in a time-welcome birth. 435
 Beloved sir, how can I then omit
 To praise such agitation of thy wit?
 The Graces decke thee, and thy thirst of soule
 The Muses answer from the thespian boule.
 Rich myne of knowledge, thou art to that land 440
 Treasure, and treasurer. Take from my hand
 These attributes most worthily thine owne,
 And though I be obscure, yet be thou knowne.
 Beare up my muse; droop not, but to thy wing
 Adde yet another pinion. Since I sing 445
 Of living men and memory of the dead,
 Let me hold on (being directly led
 As one line followes other) to restore
 From depth of seas, or graves, two heroes more.
 The first is Dale,³⁴ now lowe, but once was hie, 450

³³ OED "virtuous" adj. n. 1a: Senses relating to the moral virtue, excellence, etc., of a person, action, or quality.

³⁴ Referencing Sir Thomas Dale, who acted as deputy governor for the Virginia Company in 1611, then again from 1614 to 1616, and helped codify the colony's laws and regulations.

And father to Virginia's infancy,
 Who (as true sire) in wrinkles of his brow
 Shadow'd most love; which wisdom doth allow
 For best respect. And though some, undiscerning
 (Children in government, and in state, learning) 455
 Taxt him for cruell; yet he level'd right.
 They went besides the marke; he hit the white.
 The Grecian Draco punisht sloath with death,
 And was approv'd. Corrupted soules have breath
 That taint like poy's'nous ayre, which must be clear'd; 460
 And things goe well, lawes kept, and justice fear'd.
 They that of states manage the steare and helme
 (Where men like billowes threaten to o'erwhelme)
 Must force their passage, spite of spleenful winde,
 And sayle still by the compasse of a minde 465
 That dreads no danger of malevolent spirits,
 But wins the haven and so renowns his merits.
 Such president shall shewdst (thrice-worthy Dale)
 Which to Virginia, and thy fame's avail,
 May be fulfill'd by those that shall succeed, 470
 Left for authenticke testament and deed.
 Now to conclude, and shut up what is writ
 From passionate griefe, from industry or wit.
 As orators and those that write dispose
 Their chiefest phrase and matter for the cloze, 475
 That th'approbation of judicial men
 May crowne or cherish such their speech or pen,
 So for my last place have I kept in store,
 One man of choice, transcending all before,
 Whose very name may give m'invention weight 480
 And tiles of desert my style full height.
 And that is lov'd La-Ware, that noble lord,
 Chiefe in that land, fyl'd upon record,
 Of whom I copy notes, in abstract wise,
 Where worth is large, we must epitomize. 485

Then thus I call to minde his noble toyle,
 His endear'd lady and his native soyle;
 His loved issue, land, and ancient seat;
 His pleasure's progress, and his safe retreat
 His conversation with each fellow peere; 490
 His person's health, lov'd friends, and kindred deare;
 The wracke of seas, and danger threatning death;
 All these he underpriz'd and set beneath
 The hope and strong desire he had to see 495
 Virginia's weale. And if posterity
 Could have but spoke her populous encrease,
 Her gainfull trading, opulence, and peace;
 And that his hopes (answer'd with such event)
 Had but succeeded in his government,
 He would have thought t'have added to his coate 500
 One golden touch of honorable note,
 Or needed not a herald, more than fame,
 To blaze the triumph of his worth and name.
 But as (though unavoyded death prevent) 505
 God measures still the act by the intent.
 So shall the times (or else th'are most uneven)
 Conforme their measure to the right of Heaven.
 And though Virginia's armes enfold his bones,
 Yet not the pressure of her dust and stones
 Shall let him to advance his honour'd head 510
 Above his grave, in conquest of the dead.
 But as th'Arabian Bird³⁵ its selfe remembers,
 Who mixing odorous spices with his embers,
 Renewes his life again in perfum'd ayre:
 So from thy ashes dost thou rise (La Ware) 515
 Spreading a sweetnesse with thy memory.
 "Whom vertue doth embalme, they cannot dye."

³⁵ Arabian Bird: a phoenix.

My Apologie.

Now if those noble heads that there maintaine
 The colonie with industry and paine,
 As also those that here employ their care 520
 In counsel's wife and actions regulare,
 If these (I say) should taxe my pen or me
 In th'imputation of security,
 Which with an emphasis I oft enforce,
 As if I meant thereby t'impeach their course! 525
 Farre be it from me, I should reprehend,
 Being more like to learne: I comprehend
 The mysteries and depth of state designes,
 Or seeme to checke their levell by my lines.
 I neyther can, nor dare: then (with correction) 530
 If I have err'd 'tis th'error of affection.
 If my opinion have led me awry
 (As some have said) that not security
 Produc'd this ill, but leagues confirm'd by oaths,
 Fayre shewes of their unviolated troaths, 535
 Besides, their ignorance in armes, that flye
 And run like hares from our artillery,
 These were the motives of their confidence,
 Whose plea must hold, mine of no consequence.
 These are the razors that take off the blot 540
 My pen hath made. I yeeld, and argue not.
 The world shall judge; yet what I write may stand,
 If faulty, wants a directory hand.
 Though I might instance histories of time,
 T'have branded greater states with self-same crime, 545
 Who well might be reproacht for too much trust,
 In which they have betooke their armes to rust,
 Who (credulous of leagues) have beene deceiv'd,
 And whilst the spinner's busie webb was weav'd
 In their once plumed caskes, there have been twisters 550

Spinning for them as fatall as the Sisters.
 What oaths of theirs can humane brests invade
 With firme believe, being broke as soone as made?
 As Heaven and Hell, their oaths with ours agree.
 They worship devils; we, the deitie. 555
 They covenanted a league of faith and peace,
 But meant to seal't with bloud of men's decease.
 Too dyrefull was th'effect what ere the cause.
 Yet now grave counsels (to prevent more flaws
 Such massacres may make) prepare supply 560
 Of men, munition, and artillery.
 The ribs of ships emboweld are with force,
 Fatall to th'Indians, as the Trojan horse.
 But to your safety and assur'd defence,
 On that be yee secure with confidence. 565
 Nor let adventurers doubt of farther danger,
 Por prosperous calmes after this storme of anger
 Are like t'ensue; couragiously proceed.
 Take heart, and fill your veynes; the next that bleed
 Shall be those fiends: and for each drop of ours, 570
 I strongly hope, we shall shed theirs in showers.
 Then keepe your seates, and fearlesly goe on
 For greater gaine to the plantation
 From the late losse, may probably be found;
 And from this mayme your nerves may grow more sound. 575

Epilogue

Thus have I given vent unto my griefe;
 Which to my burthen'd heart is some reliefe.
 If this the current of my passion may
 O'rewhelme the streame of Lethe³⁶ in its sway,

³⁶ OED "Lethe" n. 1. Greek Mythology. A river in Hades, the water of which produced for those who drank it, forgetfulness of the past.

And that forgetfull men may take from hence 580
A like impression with my humane sense,
Let me with judgment as with love be read,
So shall I thinke the Muses' blood well shed.

FINIS