

the Virginia company was composed of persons of the first quality, wealth and consequence in the nation." The company, probably, would not have exercised so tame and submissive a spirit, had they not been wholly disappointed in their visionary prospects, and met with considerable losses, instead of acquiring enormous profits. They had obtained from individuals, who sported in their lotteries from the hope of sudden riches, twenty-nine thousand pounds: but the transportation of more than nine thousand English subjects had cost them one hundred and fifty thousand pounds. They did not, however, abandon the colony in its distress while they continued a corporation. Timely supplies were sent from England to the Virginia settlers, which so animated them, that they carried on an offensive war against the Indians, pursued them into their fastnesses, and drove them from the neighbourhood of those rivers, where they had fixed their own plantations.

As to King James, he "assuredly considered the colonies as acquired by conquest; and that they ought to be holden of his person, independent of his crown or political capacity; and might be ruled according to his good will, by prerogative: and he endeavoured, agreeably to the strange economy of his reign, to convert them into a mere private estate, descendible to his personal heirs."*

The Virginia company being dissolved, James took the colony under his immediate dependence, which occasioned much confusion. Upon his death, in 1625, King Charles, being of the same judgment with his father as to the government of Virginia, determined to tread in the same steps. In May he named a new governor and council for Virginia, and invested them with an authority fully legislative and arbitrary. They were empowered to make and execute laws, to impose taxes, and enforce payment. Neither the commission nor instructions mentioned expressly, or even alluded to an Assembly, to the laws of England, or to the acts of the provincial legislature, as a rule of government. They were required to transport colonists into England, to be punished there for crimes committed in Virginia. This system increased the colonial dissatisfaction, which continued for years, till the Virginians received a letter containing the royal assurance, that "all their estates, trade, freedom and privileges, should be enjoyed by them in as extensive a manner, as they enjoyed

* See Chalmers's Political Annals under the head of Virginia, for many of the preceding and subsequent articles respecting that colony.