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THOS. W. ATKIN,
EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA. Prepared for the Anniversary Meeting, June 4th, 1845.

The Secretary, in the performance of what he has deemed one of the duties attached to his office, begs leave to submit the following Report:

A distribution of the matter under the two heads of what has been accomplished by the Society, and what it may reasonably calculate upon as its prospect for the future, it has been thought will give proper method to its arrangement.

For the purpose of comparing what has been done by the Historical Society with that which was anticipated in its formation, it will be necessary to revert to the professed objects of the Institution as they were succinctly stated in the first publication, which appeared under its auspices. It was there said that—
"This Society has been established, first, for the purpose of endeavoring to excite such interest in the public mind, in regard to the history of the State, as may induce the Legislature to adopt early and efficient measures, to obtain from England the most interesting documents in relation to the Royal Government, together with such papers as may be found to reflect light upon the obscure history of the Proprietary Government of North Carolina; and secondly, to collect and arrange at the University, as far as may be possible, one or more copies of every book or pamphlet, and newspaper published in this State since the introduction of the Press among us in 1740; all books published within the State, or our own or foreign countries, in the History of Carolina, and especially all the Records, documents and papers to be found within the State that may tend to elucidate the history of the American Revolution."

To any one who bestows thought upon the subject, it must appear singular, and indeed almost unaccountable, that down to the present day, when seventy years have elapsed since North Carolina took her stand as an Independent State, no Institution having in view an object similar to this has flourished within her borders. The antiquaries and patriots of the Revolutionary story, to which may well be applied the *longinqua tabula perfracta* of Lord Bacon, lie confusedly scattered in every direction over the scene of the late storm. Owing to this fact, many manuscripts, of great importance to the illustration of the War, have been irretrievably lost. To prevent the progress of an evil, which so far as it has yet gone, is irreparable, is a principal object of this Society. It can scarcely be expected that our diligences so dilatorily awakened, shall be rewarded by an elucidation of our Revolutionary annals, to what has taken place among the more active, Northern members of the Confederacy; yet it is hoped that, by bringing together and reducing to some more indestructible form the materials of a generation whose place upon history is again to more forever, we shall in some degree acquit ourselves of debt to the past and posterity.

From deficiencies, such as those existing among the records of our own State, it must be evident, that a history of the American Revolutionary war whose merits are commensurate with the importance of that great struggle, is yet to be written. Narratives have appeared, without doubt, ranking high as literary productions, or, for the most part, as authentic accounts of whatever facts they may pretend to relate; but as general histories of the several campaigns, it will be found that they are essentially, although perhaps, not unaccountably deficient. It could hardly be expected that an accurate collection of the journals and other memoranda of a war, which extended over three hundred and sixty thousand square miles comprehended by the limits of the thirteen original States, could be made by a gentleman residing as most of our historians do, in one part of the Union. This fact has impressed itself strongly upon our Revolutionary annals. Whilst the events of Middle portions of the Confederacy, have been fully recorded, that part of the narrative which extended through Carolina and Georgia is strikingly imperfect. No history has yet appeared, which does not discover, simultaneously, the events which distinguished the rest of the Kingdom of Chaldaea; although

its head and breast are composed of gold and silver, its lower extremities being made of iron and brass. The duty of pointing out and remedying these deficiencies, must necessarily devolve upon gentlemen at the South. In appropriating this task, the Historical Society has determined, that although it cannot consider itself at all committed to the labor of preparing such a stable record of Revolutionary events as is understood by the term history, yet the simplest form of its duty will be to render accessible to the historian, whoever he may be, as far as possible, all the facts which may be connected with the war in North Carolina.

In attempting to make a collection of these facts, it was clearly necessary to succeed, that the general attention of the State should be aroused to an appreciation of our important undertaking. The degree of curiosity and interest already excited among distinguished portions of our fellow-citizens is held to be plausible proof that this enterprise is by no means premature or unaccountable; and the amount of material already contributed may be assumed as a fair precursor of a greater degree of success than had been anticipated in the organization of the Society. In the opening Message of Gov. Morehead to the Legislature, at the commencement of its last Session, the subject of the "History of the State" was urged on the attention of that body in a very decided manner; and so strongly was it impressed with a sense of its importance, that on the 23d of December, it formed the matter of a special communication, in which was suggested the collection by public authority of those Revolutionary "memorials" which are scattered over the State, and gradually disappearing; and which, like the leaves of the Sibyl, are rising in value as their numbers decrease. Action was taken by the Legislature in accordance with the suggestions contained in this message, and a considerable sum was appropriated for the purpose of carrying them out. Since that time, Gov. Graham, who has entered into the scheme with great spirit and cordiality, has been assiduously engaged in performing the duty imposed upon him by these Resolutions.

No. V. A collection of the Statutes of the Parliament of England, in force in the State of North Carolina. By Francis Xavier Martin, Esq., Newbern: 1792. (One volume, quarto; which, together with Nos. I, III, and IV, was presented by the President of the Society.)

No. VI. A collection of the Private Acts of the General Assembly of the State of N. Carolina, from the year 1715, to the year 1790, inclusive, now in force and use.—Newbern: 1794. (One thin quarto volume; from Weston R. Gates, Esq., of Raleigh.)

No. VII. Historical collections of South Carolina, embracing many rare and valuable pamphlets, and other documents relating to the history of the State, from its first discovery, to its independence, in the year 1776. Compiled, with various notes, and an introduction, by B. R. Carroll. 2 vols. 8 vo.; (from William A. Wright, Esq., of Wilmington.)

The first pamphlet in order in its compilation is entitled "A brief description of the province of Carolina, and the coasts of Florida. And more particularly, of a plantation begun by the English at Cape Fear, on that river, now by them called Charles River, the 29th May, 1664," &c. Mr. Carroll might, with obvious propriety, have given his work the title of Historical Collections of Carolina. The northern part of the Province was first settled, and a respectable portion of his pages have quite as much relation to the reign North as South of Cape Fear. If with this change of title, he would give us a third volume, made up of Lawson's and Brinkell's Histories of North Carolina, he would render his compilation nearly complete, and would present a fair claim for liberal patronage on "the colder side of the Tweed."

No. VIII. Order and authority of a Justice of the Peace; by James Davis, Newbern: 1774. (Presented by Hon. John L. Bailey, of Hillsborough.)

No. IX. Proceedings and Debates, of the Convention of North Carolina, convened at Hillsborough, Monday, the 21st day of July, 1788, for the purpose of deliberating on the Constitution recommended by the General Convention at Philadelphia, the 17th day of September, 1787. To which is prefixed the same Constitution. Edenton: Printed by Hodge & Willis, Printers to the State.—MDCCLXXXIX. (Presented by Rev. Prof. Green of Chapel Hill.)

No. X. Journal of the Convention which accepted the Constitution of the U. States, and which met at Fayetteville, 1790. From Hon. John Bailey of Hillsborough.

No. XI. A complete Revision of all the Acts of Assembly of the Province of North Carolina, now in force and use. Together with the titles of all such laws as are obsolete, expired or repealed. With Marginal Notes and References, and an exact Table to the whole. Newbern, Printed by James Davis, Printer to the Honourable the House of Assembly.—MDCCLXXXII.

No. XII. Laws of the State of North Carolina. Published according to the Act of Assembly, by James Iredell, now one of the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States. Edenton: Printed by Hodge & Willis, Printers to the State of North Carolina: 1791. (One volume folio; presented by William B. Ryan, Esq., of Raleigh.)

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