

brary could be developed, and possibly served the useful purpose of encouraging other friends of the college to follow Nicholson's example.

The library thus accessioned a collection that was mainly theological in nature. Its Protestant tone failed to substantiate, moreover, the implications of rumors that the donor had once knelt during Mass said in the tent of James II on Hounslow Heath.¹⁹ The Biblical commentaries, catechistical and inspirational works, and studies touching dogma, doctrine, and ecclesiastical history were appropriate to the library of an institution dedicated to the propagation of the Anglican faith. The subject matter of the thirty-five folios provides a key to the entire collection. These heavy volumes included copies of Richard Hooker's *Of the lawes of ecclesiastical politie*, Gabriel Towerson's *Explication of the decalogue* and *Explication of the Lord's prayer*, John Strype's inspiring *Memorials of . . . Thomas Cranmer*, the works of Henry Hammond and of Joseph Mede, the sermons of Edward Stillingfleet, Hugh Davis' *De jure uniformitatis ecclesiasticae*, and William Cave's historical study *Antiquitates apostolicae*. The octavos included, naturally enough, a copy of *The works of the learned and pious author of The whole duty of man*.

Devotional works comprised a large segment of the collection. John Kettlewell's widely read *Measures of Christian obedience* was present; so were copies of Sir Matthew Hale's *Contemplations moral and divine*, Robert Boyle's *Seraphic love*, Abraham Seller's *Devout communicant*, and John Tillotson's *Rule of faith*. Ecclesiastical history was represented by Louis Ellies Dupin's *Evangelical*

history; William Cave's *Primitive Christianity and Dissertation concerning the government of the ancient church*, the latter describing "the rise and growth of the First Church of God"; John Sleidan's important *General history of the reformation*; and Peter, Lord King's *Enquiry into the constitution, discipline, unity and worship of the primitive church*.

Factional dispute, which engaged many learned seventeenth-century minds, was represented by such works as Robert South's previously mentioned *Animadversion upon Dr. Sherlock's book* and by copies of Samuel Clarke's *Demonstration of the divine authority of the law of nature*, Thomas Roger's *True Protestant bridle*, and William Sherlock's *Vindication of the doctrine of the holy and ever blessed Trinity*. Polemics accounted for numerous anti-Quaker tracts. These included John Faldo's *Quakerism no Christianity*, Henry Hallywell's *Account of familism as revived by the Quakers*, William Allen's bitter little volume entitled *Grand error of the Quakers detected*, and John Norris' *Two treatises concerning the divine light*.

Other polemical works calculated to edify Protestant thought appeared on the college shelves as a result of Nicholson's piety and generosity. Edward Fowler's *Examinations of Cardinal Bellarmine's fourth note of the church* was present; so were copies of Edward Stillingfleet's *Discourse concerning the idolatry practised in the Church of Rome*, Edward Gee's *Jesuit's memorial*, and the more scholarly *Letters of Father Paul*, a production of the celebrated Venetian friar, Paolo Sarpi. One of the more curious diatribes among these treatises was directed by John

Williams at the strange sect discussed in his *Absurd and mischievous principles of the Muggletonians considered*.

The usual assemblage of sermons popular with colonial readers could be found in the Nicholson donation. Wilkins, Glanvill, Hezekiah Burton, Tillotson, Stillingfleet, Clagett, Wake, and Burnet were well represented. And among the miscellaneous religious works were copies of D'Emiliane's *Short history of monastical orders*, John Conrad Werndly's Calvinistic *Liturgia Tigurina*, Bishop Jewel's *Apology*, Symon Patrick's *Mensa mystica*, as well as innumerable "paraphrases."

Aside from a formidable array of Anglican learning and devotion, the Nicholson collection failed to emphasize any particular field of literary interest. Belles-lettres made a scattered showing in such works as Samuel Wesley's heroic poem entitled *The life of Our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, in the prose and poetry of Abraham Cowley, and in the essays of Montaigne, Saint-Évremond, and Sir William Temple.

History, travel, and biography were more generously treated. Heading the list was Sir Walter Raleigh's *Historie of the world*, a work greatly admired in seventeenth-century Virginia. The presence of a copy of Raleigh's *Remains* was an additional token of the author's popularity. The popularity of another great figure in Virginia history was demonstrated by the presence of two historical studies treating the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Camden's *History of . . . Princess Elizabeth* and Edmund Bohun's *Character of Queen Elizabeth*. Nicholson's donation also brought to the library copies of Christopher Helwich's *Historical and chronological theatre*, Edward D'Auvergne's *History of the last campagne in the Spanish Netherlands*, George

Walter Story's finely illustrated *Impartial history of the wars of Ireland*, and an anonymous work entitled *An historical account of the memorable actions of the most glorious monarch, William III*.

Among the notable pieces of Americana in the accession were copies of Increase Mather's *Brief history of the warr with the Indians*, George Warren's *Impartial description of Surinam*, Acosta's *Natural and moral history of the East and West Indies*, Thomas Gage's *New survey of the West Indies*, and the anonymously produced *Relation of the invasion and conquest of Florida by the Spaniards*. Travel and description were further buttressed by copies of Lewis Du May's *Estate of the empire . . . of Germany*, Gabriel de Megalhaen's *New history of the empire of China*, an account of the earl of Carlisle's Russian mission by Guy Miede entitled *Relation of three embassies*, and Jean de Thévenot's *Travels . . . into the Levant*. Useful adjuncts to these relations were present in the form of Edmund Bohun's *Geographical dictionary* and Robert Morden's *Geography rectified*.

Nicholson's gift failed to supply much sustenance in the classics. Here could be noted copies of Sir Robert Stapylton's translation of Pliny's *Panegyricke*, Meric Casaubon's translation of Marcus Aurelius Antonius' *Meditations*, John Norris' translation of *Hierocles upon the golden verses of the Pythagoreans*, and an abridgment of Caesar's *Commentaries*, but not a single volume in the original tongue.

Nicholson, however, was conscious of Whitehall's goals for its colonial appointees, for his books exhibited considerable strength in materials relating to trade and commerce. This brought to the library copies of Gerard de

Malynes' widely quoted *Lex mercatoria*, Lewis Roberts' useful *Merchants mappe of commerce*, Sir Josiah Child's important *Discourse about trade*, and Roger Coke's *England's improvements*. These volumes were backed up by copies of John Smith's *England's improvement reviv'd*, William Leybourn's *Panarithmologia*, Thomas Mun's *England's treasure by forraign trade*, Thomas Houghton's work on American and African gold and silver mining entitled *Royal institutions*, and the thirty-nine unspecified books and pamphlets on trade and commerce in general.

The books on gardening and husbandry that the library received from Nicholson may have been inappropriate to the college collection. In any event, the donation included copies of Jean de La Quintinie's *Compleat gard'ner*, Evelyn's famous *Sylva* and the separate edition of his *Kalendarium Hortense*, Leonard Meager's *English gardener*, John Worlidge's practical *Systema agriculturae*, John Pechey's *Compleat herbal*, and Moses Cooke's *Manner of raising, ordering and improving forest-trees*. Related to these, but perhaps of greater academic value, was a copy of Sir Thomas Pope Blount's *Natural history*.

The rest of the books in the donation touched diverse subjects. Several courtesy books, books that a seventeenth-century Virginia gentleman's library was sure to contain, were present. Among these were editions of Nicholas Cox's *Gentleman's recreation*, and Baltasar Gracian's *Courtier's oracle*. More welcome, perhaps, to the college shelves were Nicholson's copies of Elisha Coles's *English dictionary*, William Evats' translation of Grotius' *Rights of war and peace*, George Tully's *Discourse of the government of the thoughts*, and Milton's *Letters of state*.

The first disbursement of college funds on behalf of the library was made in 1697. Building accounts forwarded to England that year by Governor Sir Edmond Andros carried an entry dated February 27 for the disbursement of £32/11/10 for "books Mapps & papers as per Accot."²⁰ No other details regarding this sizable expenditure were supplied. The same accounts, however, carry another entry covering the purchase of "Bloomes History of the Bible," that is, Nicholas Fontaine's *History of the Old Testament* and *History of the New Testament* issued by the enterprising publisher, Richard Blome.²¹ The funds for this purchase, in the amount of £1/10/—, were given by a friendly London merchant, Sir Jeffrey Jeffreys. The second major expenditure—to be sure, the only other major expenditure that can be dredged from the surviving records of the original library—was made possible with funds contributed by "Dr. Bray's Associates." A donation of £50 for the acquisition of library books was received from that philanthropic source prior to 1700.²² But again no records remain to show what was acquired. Contributions from the "Associates" might have become more frequent had not considerable coolness developed between Bray and the cantankerous Blair.²³

Donations of books from English friends of the college began to reach Williamsburg before the century ended. This was publicly noted in a 1699 May Day speech by one of the "scholars," whose eloquence bore the imprint of Blair's adroit coaching:

and here I must not omitt the generosity of the two famous Bishops of London & Sarum, who has broke the Ice to the other Bishops, in making a noble present of well chosen

bookes to our Library, intending hereby to take care that our Youth be well seasoned with the best principles of Religion and Learning that can be taught by the most sound & Orthodox Divines.²⁴

The ice was broke indeed, but the titles of the "well chosen" books donated by Bishops Compton and Burnet were left to conjecture. Mungo Ingles asserted some years later that the resources of the original library had come mainly as gifts from the bishop of London. But this officious observation must be discounted inasmuch as it is set forth in a petition which the canny Scot addressed to Bishop Compton begging books on his own behalf.²⁵ The natural patron of the library was the bishop of London. It lay within his ecclesiastical jurisdiction and, as a general rule, he alternated with the archbishop of Canterbury as its chancellor. Throughout the colonial period, moreover, the president of the college served as the bishop's commissary or personal representative in Virginia.

The same "scholar" who praised Bishops Compton and Burnet for their generosity, optimistically added:

This example will be quickly followed by the present Lord Primate of England, a worthy successor to Dr. Tillotson, who continues to water this Nursery wch his predecessor took such pains to plant.²⁶

Dr. Tenison, the prelate in question, was not moved by this expression of confidence to emulate his spiritual associates. And had not Blair taken steps to correct any misapprehensions existing in his Grace's mind, the "Nursery" might have waited in vain for nourishment from Lambeth. Blair reminded the archbishop of his derelictions, claiming: "I

must continue to beg, that if it lies in your Grace's way you will encourage our new City of Williamsburg, and help our College Library."²⁷

The plea was shortly joined by a more positive supplication, dated May 29, 1700, in which Blair informed Tenison that

I must upon this occasion beg leave to put your Grace in mind of your good intentions to help our Library to some good books. We are of opinion that if application were made to the severall good authors in England, they would enrich it at least with a present of their own books. And the Governours of our College have desired me to signify this much to your Grace that if you will employ any young Scholar that you think fit to ask books for us, we will allow him 20 pound a year for his pains. I have enclosed a Catalogue of what Books we have at present that your Grace may the better judge what we want. If any books are procured, let them be sent to the house of Mr. Micajah Perry a Virginia merchant in Leaden hall Street over against the end of Billiter Lane, who will take care to send them to us, and will likewise pay the charges of packing &c., and the said 20 pound.²⁸

How far these enterprising efforts were rewarded cannot be fully ascertained. Yet the archbishop notified Nicholson in 1701 that "I have some books for Yor Library but have not sent them yet. . . . Nevertheless what is delayed is not designed not to be performed."²⁹ The catalogue mentioned in Blair's letter, which would constitute an invaluable addition to the records of the first book collection formed by the college, has either been destroyed or misplaced.

In this respect, it can be noted that Thomas Hearne,

antiquarian and Bodleian library keeper, recorded in his journal shortly after the first book collection at William and Mary was destroyed by fire that

letters from Virginia say that the College at Williamsburg, a most Stately Fabrik & one of the best in all America, & to wch the late King Wm had been a Benefactor, was on the 29th of October last [1705] utterly consum'd by fire wch by an unknown accident broke out in the very dead of the Night together with the Library, to wch divers persons bearing any Love to Learning had been Contributors, & in all probability would in some time have grown very famous.⁸⁰

This observation came from a professional librarian, familiar with the intricacies of his calling and well acquainted among the English literati of his day. His comments on the "divers persons" who contributed to the library would seem to indicate a knowledge of the aforementioned efforts to solicit books from "the severall good authors" in England.

Such diligence in seeking contributions for the library in England should not be construed as an indication that opportunities in Virginia were neglected. Some of the more active colonial promoters of the college possessed plantation libraries of considerable size and distinction. Three of the six private book collections analyzed by Louis B. Wright in his *First gentlemen of Virginia* were owned by members of the college board of visitors—Ralph Wormeley II, Robert ("King") Carter, and William Byrd II. In the search for benefactors, these collectors would have been fair targets. The Philip Ludwells—the elder brother-in-law to James Blair and the younger soon to become a member of the board of visitors—may have

donated books from the library at Green Spring, the Ludwell seat near Williamsburg. It is idle but intriguing to speculate on the works that could have come from such a source. The Green Spring collection was begun by Sir William Berkeley, a man of literary pretensions and the author of several dramatic pieces.⁸¹

Even visitors passing through Virginia were approached in the campaign to secure books for the library. The only volume known to have survived the fire of 1705, a copy of Paolo Sarpi's *History of the Council of Trent*, was the gift of an English sea captain who occasionally made the Virginian voyage. This volume, recovered by the college in 1947, carries an inscription stating that it was "The Gift of Captain Nicholas Humfrys, Commander of the Ship Hartwell to Wm & Mary College, Anno 1703/4."⁸²

But the college remained little more than a grammar school for nearly two decades following its establishment. The actual need for library resources was therefore not acutely felt until early in the eighteenth century. This may explain a failure to uncover any rules governing the administration and use of the original collections. Comments by Hugh Jones in 1724 indicate quite clearly that use of the library was restricted to the college masters.⁸³ Such a policy would have been in accord with contemporary practice at other collegiate establishments.⁸⁴ There is nothing to indicate, though, that any of the books at William and Mary were chained to their cases, despite the fact that English colleges retained the practice until the end of the eighteenth century.⁸⁵ The University of Edinburgh, on the other hand, got rid of its chains before 1688,⁸⁶ and chains were never used on the library books at William

and Mary's colonial counterpart, Harvard in New England.³⁷

Hugh Jones's comments also reveal that one of the grammar school ushers was usually charged with the custody of the library "in order to make his Place more agreeable to his merit."³⁸ As the college was without an usher until 1699, either Blair himself or Mungo Ingles may have filled the post during the interim. This could account in part for the lamentations of the latter, who, in referring to ushers, complained that the first "Dyed at Cowes & he that was to succeed him Married a Wife . . . & could not come."³⁹ William Robertson, who became clerk of the college at the turn of the century, signed a receipt on at least one occasion for books given to the collection.⁴⁰ This might mean that his predecessor in the clerkship, Francis Clements, rather than Blair or Ingles, served as first keeper of the library. In fact, if Blair assigned the responsibility to Clements, he could well have pointed out a precedent at Edinburgh, where the secretary of the university was charged with the same duties.⁴¹

The furnishings of the library room probably consisted of wooden presses or cupboards arranged flat against the walls, plus necessary tables and stools. Just how the books were arranged on the shelves will perhaps remain a mystery. In this respect, it might be noted that the second Bodleian catalogue, published in 1620, recommended that library books be arranged according to size: folio, quarto, octavo, and so on.⁴² Perhaps the library keeper at William and Mary followed this advice. The printed Harvard catalogue of 1723 certainly demonstrates that the Massachusetts authorities were guided by the Bodleian precepts.⁴³



3. Francis Nicholson (1655-1728), "the Great Maecenas of the College." From a painting by Alexis Simon Belle. (Courtesy of Virginia Historical Society)



4. Henry Compton (1632–1713), bishop of London and first chancellor of the College of William and Mary. From an engraving by Isaac Becket based on the portrait by John Riley. (Courtesy of Virginia Historical Society)

The original book collection at William and Mary was not large enough to have presented any problems in classification, so press and shelf marks probably were not used.

Because of the lack of evidence, the nature of these resources, roughly estimated at fewer than one thousand volumes, cannot be properly evaluated. It would be unjustified to surmise that the traits of the Nicholson donation characterized the other components of the collection. That would overlook the Compton and Burnet gifts of “well chosen Bookes,” the Tenison and Dr. Bray’s Associates contributions, the books actually purchased with college funds, and gifts doubtless received but not recorded in lasting fashion. It is hardly to be expected that in point of size the collection compared very favorably with the older and by then well-established library at Cambridge, Massachusetts. Yet Professor Morison’s evaluation of the seventeenth-century Harvard collection as “lots of theology and a little of everything else” could also doubtless be applied to the first collection at the College of William and Mary.⁴⁴

All the high hopes and good intentions embodied in the library were dashed to the ground on October 29, 1705. About eleven o’clock that evening William Eddings, Blair’s overseer, who was chasing some stray horses out of a nearby cornfield, discovered that the college building was on fire.⁴⁵ The flames spread rapidly and by dawn the building was a gutted ruin.⁴⁶ It does not appear likely that any of the books in the library were saved. Several students—including an inevitable scion of the Randolph clan—were hard pressed even to save themselves.⁴⁷ If books were salvaged, subsequent fires in 1859 and 1862 obliterated the

traces that remained in the possession of the college. The opportunity for pillage was doubtless inviting, so it might be expected that the eye of some unscrupulous bibliophile could well have alighted on a desirable piece. But the previously mentioned copy of Sarpi's *History of the Council of Trent* is the only volume that has turned up to support this possibility.

The loss of books and papers was not confined to the contents of the library room. Benjamin Harrison, Jr., who was residing in the building at the time—or, according to Mungo Ingles, “for his greater Grandeur must needs keep his Court in the Colledge”—lost all of the materials he had collected for a projected history of Virginia.⁴⁸ Ingles himself suffered the loss of his “study full of books,” which, he declared, cost him “many a deep sigh.”⁴⁹ These sighs were wafted to Bishop Compton in 1707 when Ingles complained that

I can not enough lament the loss of my books, 18 boxes or shelves crambed as full as could hold, 'tis very much contrary to my Nature to turn beggar, yet willingly be obliged to his Grace my Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, and any of your friends for a small but choice collection of books of Divinity.⁵⁰

One intrepid soul, a Mr. Reedwood, attempted to save a “Genll. Map of the World,” presented by Colonel Nicholson, that was hanging in the grammar school room but “durst not for the flame that came pouring in from the south end.”⁵¹ The same individual then dashed “out of the School, and saved the Douk of Milan [an otherwise unidentified portrait] that hung next to the dore that opens into the Piazza.”⁵²

Despite contemporary rumors, there appears to be no reason for believing the fire was other than accidental. Several previous fires, all extinguished in time to avert disaster, were definitely attributed to faulty construction. On this fatal occasion a spark from one of the chimneys found lodgment on the wooden shingles of the roof and from there spread over the entire building. “When I first heard of its being burnt,” exclaimed Mungo Ingles, “I had so much charity for all mankind, that I was of opinion that none under a Fury let loose from Hell could be capable of so much Mischief.”⁵³ A less spiritual Virginia General Assembly immediately instituted proceedings to inquire into the calamity, thereby provoking much lively testimony but few definite conclusions.⁵⁴

Several responsible witnesses testified that the fire broke out in the south end of the building and endeavored to imply that it originated in President Blair's chamber chimney. Others argued that the conflagration was the work of three men, ominously “clothed like Gentlemen,” who were seen running from the building and across New Kent road shortly after the fire was discovered. In referring to this possibility, an ever-articulate Mungo Ingles offered up the pious hope that “if there be such devils out of Hell, God Almighty will bring their work of darkness to light.”⁵⁵

CHAPTER THREE

Rebuilding the Book Collection

1705-1743

AFTER 1705 the college, in the words of Hugh Jones, "revived and improved out of its own Ruins."¹ Reconstruction of the charred edifice got under way with the help of funds contributed by Queen Anne.² Governor Alexander Spotswood, another patron of the undertaking, was able to report in 1716 that "the building is well nigh compleated again [and] those under whose Care it is, have resolved to prosecute the original design of its foundation."³ The college board of visitors, reasonably apprehensive, took appropriate measures to insure the safety of the structure. William Craig, appointed porter in 1716, was given explicit directions to permit no vagrants "to loyter or lodge in the sd Colledge" and to see that "the chimneys be kept clean swept."⁴ The visitors also prudently ordered from England "1 ingine for Quenching Fire" and "2 Doz: leather Bucketts with the Colledge Cypher thereon."⁵

The fabric of the building was modified somewhat during the course of its restoration. But there is no reason to believe that the changes, mainly on the exterior, brought about any substantial rearrangement of the interior. A room was definitely set aside for the library.⁶ Yet again there are no surviving clues as to its specific location. No-

tations referring to the assignment of student living quarters later in the century show that it was not on the first floor.⁷ And it is not likely that it would have been given space on the third floor, which, in the reconstructed edifice, was reduced on the main front to a half-story lighted by dormer windows. The sloping walls of the modified third-floor rooms would have made them unsuitable for the placement of the presses and cases needed in shelving books. This leaves only the second floor, which is doubtless where the room was located. It can be said with certainty that it did not have northern or southern exposures, for it was flanked by rooms that were occupied as living quarters by students.⁸

The college in 1716 began to acquire academic qualifications that made proper library facilities essential. Two chairs of learning were filled, the one combining philosophy and mathematics going to Rev. Hugh Jones. Jones had performed his undergraduate and graduate work at Jesus College, Oxford, where he had learned what to expect of an institution of higher learning. These ideas, applied to Virginia, were ably expounded in his *Present state of Virginia* published in 1724.

Little had been done to invigorate the library program prior to Jones's arrival. Indeed, the first reference to a library accession after the fire of 1705 occurs in 1716 in connection with the dismissal from the faculty of the unfortunate Arthur Blackamore. President Blair and Mungo Ingles had violently parted company in 1705, at which time Blackamore succeeded Ingles as head of the grammar school. But, alas, Blackamore was more often in his cups than out and finally, in 1716, was placed on probation by

the board of visitors. "If he behaves himself well," the visitors decided, "he [is to] be allowed and paid £12 curr[e]nt money."⁹ But the reward was not high enough. After one final binge the wretched schoolmaster was summarily dismissed, only to undergo humiliating financial embarrassment in seeking passage home to England. The board of visitors generously acquitted Blackamore of sizable debts due the college and ordered that "the Books & Globes belonging to the said Blackamore be valued and purchased for the use of the Colledge Library."¹⁰ No receipts or other records remain to show what the library acquired through this dispensation. In view of Blackamore's training—he was a graduate of Christ Church, Oxford—it is reasonable to suppose that his books reflected the classical tradition in which he had been grounded.¹¹

The only surviving proof that English friends of the college remembered the depleted status of its library resources during the period of reconstruction can be found in a copy of John Gibbon's *Introductio ad Latinam blasoniam* held by the Library of Congress. A longhand inscription on the flyleaf states:

Ego: Author [*sic*] huius libri, donavi eundem Bibliothecae Collegij nuper fundati in Virginia. Sic Testor propria mea manuscriptione aetatis meae 87: 1717.

[signed] Johannes Gibbon.

Gibbon had enjoyed the hospitality of Virginia in 1659 and 1660 as the guest of Colonel Richard Lee. In 1660, after the restoration of the Stuarts, he returned to England and devoted the remainder of a long life (1629–1718) to heraldic pursuits. His *Introductio ad Latinam blasoniam* contains textual references to his sojourn in Virginia, and

the Library of Congress copy is embellished with manuscript annotations also relating to his stay in the colony. Both the Latin inscription quoted above and the manuscript notes were characteristic of the author. His biographer explains that after Gibbon was promoted to the College of Arms as Bluemantle Pursuivant "he injured himself by his arrogance towards his less learned superiors . . . whose shortcomings he had an unpleasant habit of registering in the margins of library books, which he also filled with calculations of his own nativity."¹² A good Latinist has concluded that the Library of Congress copy "of this book"—*huius libri*—was almost certainly not the copy that Gibbon donated to the college in 1717. Gibbon's use of the word "the same"—*eundem*—in his reference to the gift, the Latinist explains, consequently means no more than a copy of the "same" work.¹³

Hugh Jones was distressed by the inadequacies of the book collection that he found at the college in 1716. Even so, the hopeless picture of the library that he painted in 1724 has familiar undertones of promotional endeavor:

For it is now a College without a Chapel, without a Scholarship, and without a Statute. There is a Library without Books, comparatively speaking, and a President without a fix'd Salary till of Late. . . . These things greatly impede the Progress of Sciences and learned Arts, and discourage those that may be inclined to contribute their Assistance or Bounty towards the Good of the College.¹⁴

In his more detailed treatment of the library and what ought to be done to improve its condition, Jones admitted it "is better furnished of late than formerly by the kind Gifts of several Gentlemen."¹⁵ Unfortunately, he neg-

lected mentioning the names of the benefactors and did not describe their donations. In assessing the library collections, Jones also observed that "the number of Books is but very small, and the Sets upon each Branch of Learning are very imperfect, and not the best of the Sort." In order to remedy the defect, he recommended steps recalling the earlier efforts made by Blair to solicit books from "the severall good authors in England." Jones suggested that application be made to the societies and superior clergy in England, "who would give at least what Duplicates they have upon such an useful Occasion."

The sets and collections that could not be obtained through gifts should be purchased, Jones stipulated, as soon as the college might find funds for restocking the library. These funds, he believed, would be forthcoming from "the Clergy, Burgesses, and Gentry of the Country, if upon easy Terms they were allowed the Use of the Library at certain Hours, at such Times as they shall be at Williamsburgh, either for Pleasure or upon Business."¹⁶ This enlightened proposal came firmly to grips with the need for modifying traditional concepts of college library functions to the requirements of colonial life. The college library needed financial support, Jones reasoned, and the colonial population needed a public library, so why not satisfy the former by meeting the needs of the latter?

Jones's proposal to open the library to a select constituency of the public is surprising in view of his conservative thoughts respecting collegiate use of the book collection. His recommendations on this score merely reaffirmed a traditional policy of restricting the library facilities to the masters and graduate students:

Such scholars, Commoners, and Servitors, as have behaved themselves well, and minded their Studies for three Years, and can pass proper Examination, and have performed certain Exercises, should have the Degree of a Batchellor of Arts conferred upon them . . . being allowed the Use of the Library as well as the Masters, paying proper Fees upon their Admission for the Good of the Library.¹⁷

The undergraduate, in other words, did not figure in Jones's scheme for improving the library program. His recommendation for the assessment of library fees supplied a glimpse of things to come, but was not adopted until events fifty years later necessitated that course. Indeed, despite their forceful appeal, no evidence remains to indicate that any of Jones's recommendations got beyond the pages of his book.

Jones's complaints may have influenced the allocation of a bequest of £150 left to the college around 1720 by Colonel Edward Hill of Shirley. The board of visitors, prior to 1729, decided that the full amount would be applied "towards the better furnishing of the Library of the said College with Books."¹⁸ Hill was thereby cast in the role of one of the foremost colonial benefactors of the library. The sum was considerable, but just how it was spent is not reported in the surviving records.

The college in 1727 attained full academic status. All of its chairs were filled with qualified men of learning, and students for the first time were enabled to pursue the full course of instruction envisioned by its founders.¹⁹ On the advice of Chancellor William Wake, archbishop of Canterbury, a set of rules was drawn up for its good government. One of these statutes provided that the library

keeper was to be nominated and elected by the president and masters. Perhaps this merely confirmed a longstanding practice. Hugh Jones said that John Harris held the post in 1724.²⁰ And Harris is the first library keeper whose name is definitely known. His predecessors and his successors down to the middle of the eighteenth century were in all probability, like himself, ushers in the grammar school.

Another clause in the same statutes has denied posterity a glimpse of the detailed regulations under which the library operated:

Because the Circumstances of the College in this its Infancy, will not as yet admit many Officers . . . Therefore referring the Rules concerning the . . . Library-Keeper . . . and other Officers to the President and Masters, who are to direct their Offices and Salaries, as the College shall find them useful and necessary; we shall only at present lay down some Rules concerning the Bursar or College Treasurer.²¹

In 1729 the surviving original trustees of the college, following a schedule established by the 1693 charter, transferred its government and property—"also all the Books to the said College belonging"—to the president and masters.²² This step, taken on February 27, formally marked the maturity of the foundation. The transfer instrument referred to the fact that the main building "hath in it a convenient Chamber set apart for a Library, besides all other Officers necessary for the said college." An able faculty, recruited from English universities, was nevertheless hampered by the inadequacies of the book collection. In consequence, when the ambitious building program approached completion in 1732, an aggressive campaign was launched to improve the library.

President Blair, whose efforts to develop the book collection had commenced with the founding of the college, led off with a forceful communication to Chancellor Edmund Gibson, bishop of London, explaining:

We are in hopes too, of other bounties towards our library, and perhaps from his Majesty in honor of King William and Queen Mary whose names we bear. My Lord Archbishop of Canterbury did a few years ago signify to us his intentions of a donation towards our Library which we doubt not he will now promote.²³

William Dawson, a Queens College master of arts who had become professor of moral philosophy at William and Mary in 1729, advanced a more ingenious scheme for securing financial aid.

Dawson, in a letter to Chancellor Gibson dated August 11, 1729, described the recent dedication of the college chapel, the president's house that was being constructed, and the Brafferton building that had been erected for the Indian school in 1723. Following these polite preliminaries, he proceeded to the matter of the library:

In short, my Lord, the whole is only not compleat for want of the most useful and ornamental Furniture, Books. Mr. [John] Randolph, who is intrusted with the negotiations of some public Affairs at Home, will wait on your Lordship and propose a method to supply this Defect in some measure. Now, my Lord, if our humble proposal to lay out part of the Brafferton money which is in Mr. Perry's hands, to this purpose, meets with approbation and encouragement from your Lordship, we have a very convenient room for a Library over the Indian School. My Lord Burlington, I am informed, has promised to present us with the Hon. Mr. Boyle's Picture, which we intend to hang up in the aforesaid Library. His

Philosophical and Theological works, together with those which were written by his encouragement, may be thought no improper part of this Collection. The Books published by our Rt. Rev. Lord and Chancellor would do honour and service to the College. A compleat set of the Classicks is very much wanted.²⁴

The Brafferton monies eyed by Dawson were held in trust for the education of Indian youths.²⁵ The college authorities were therefore obliged to act cautiously in formulating plans for the diversion of those funds to other ends. Richard Boyle, the architect earl of Burlington, justified Dawson's expectations by donating to the college a portrait of Robert Boyle that, miraculously enough, is still hanging in the main building. But no records have survived to show whether Burlington presented books to the library or not.

John Randolph, later knighted for his services to the colony, proceeded on his mission to England, armed with detailed instructions drafted by the president and masters. Randolph was enjoined to remind the chancellor that the college officials were "good husbands" of the Brafferton revenues and that even though a handsome building had been erected for the Indian school, and all the necessary charges defrayed, a balance of some £500 sterling remained in the Brafferton account.²⁶ Randolph, following these preliminaries, was to stress that "as we do not live in an age of miracles, it is not to be doubted that Indian scholars will want the help of many books to qualify them to become good pastours and teachers." Why not, in other words, lay out part of the £500-Brafferton-fund balance "in a well-chosen library"?

Anticipating the charge that this was merely a subterfuge to enrich the main library, Randolph was instructed to argue that "our funds are so poor, and theirs [that is, the Indians] so rich, that they can better supply us than we them." The college, the memorial continued, provided the Indian school with instructors in "Latine, Greek, and Hebrew, and Philosophy, Mathematics, and Divinity." It was only fair, the president and masters concluded, that "they should in turn help themselves and us to a few necessary books for those studies." To clinch the argument, the president and masters promised that whatever books might be secured by this means would be "repositied in distinct presses marked with the name of Boyle or Brafferton," and that each book would carry an appropriate inscription on its cover. It was further promised that the collection would be housed in the Brafferton building. With the parting shot that "books we think as necessary a means and instrument of their [that is, the Indians'] education, as they paying for their victuals and cloaths," the whole design was left to the discretion of Chancellor Gibson and Lord Burlington, managers of the Boyle bequest.

Randolph was furnished with two catalogues, one listing the books already in the library and the other listing those books that "an ancient minister"—meaning, of course, Rev. James Blair—"designs shortly to leave to it." The authorities thus took suitable precautions to prevent a needless duplication of printed resources in the event Randolph were to succeed in getting his hands on the Brafferton funds. Randolph was directed to take the advice of Chancellor Gibson "concerning the properest books for our use, and their best editions." These maneuvers were

successful, producing a letter of credit to Micajah Perry, custodian of the Brafferton funds, authorizing Randolph to draw a sum "not exceeding two hundred and fifty or three hundred pound" for purchasing books.²⁷

Randolph was entrusted with other commissions. Supplementary instructions directed him to wait on the archbishop of Canterbury, who "was pleased particularly to signify his good intentions of giving or loaning something towards our Library," and to coordinate his book selecting so as not to duplicate any books that his Grace might give. Randolph was also given carte blanche to treat with any charitable individual who might be interested in the library, "that being at present our chief want."²⁸

A regular source of income for the library was tapped when the president and masters petitioned the Virginia General Assembly for financial support. The assembly complied in 1734 by passing "an Act for the Better Support and Encouragement of the College of William and Mary in Virginia." The measure renewed an earlier levy of a duty of one penny on every gallon of rum, brandy, other distilled spirits, and wine imported into the colony and appropriated the sizable sum of £200 per annum therefrom for the use of the college, provided

part thereof shall be laid out and applied for buying such books, for the use of the Scholars and students in the college, as the . . . visitors and governors, or the greater part of them, shall think most necessary; and such books, so to be bought, shall be marked thus, *The Gift of the General Assembly of Virginia in the year 1734*, and shall for ever be preserved and kept in the public library of the said college.²⁹

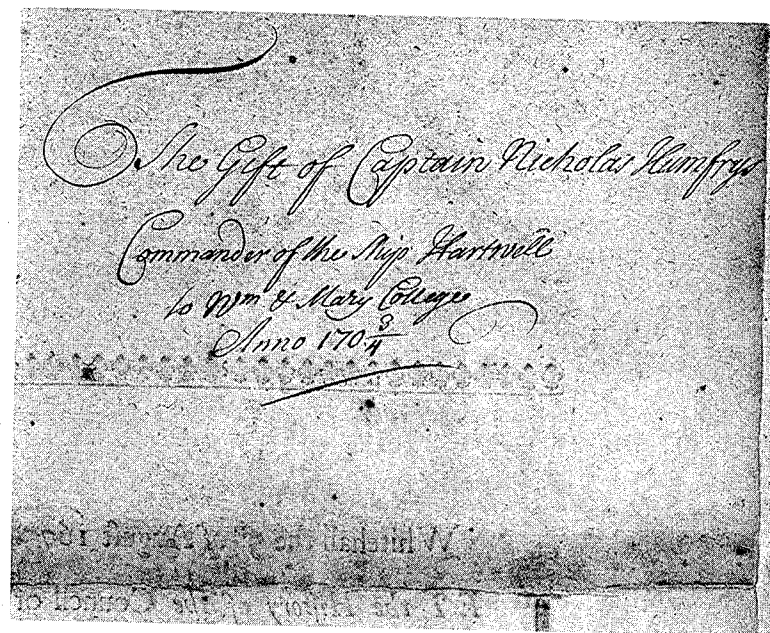
The act was periodically renewed throughout the remaining life of the colonial government.³⁰ Only one volume purchased with the income from this alcoholic source, a copy of Pitt's translation of *The Aeneid of Virgil*, escaped destruction in the fire of 1859. It still bears on its inner front cover the printed label required by the colonial legislature: *The Gift of the General Assembly of Virginia, in the year 1734*.

Archbishop Wake, of whom much was expected, passed to his reward in 1737. The good man did not forget the anxious Virginians, for his will provided a legacy of fifty pounds for "William & Mary College in Virginia to buy books."³¹ President Blair, in whose care the fund was entrusted, turned to Chancellor Gibson for advice as to its proper application. Both agreed "to let the Classicks alone at this time" and to spend the money on "more useful books of Divinity."³² Gibson himself undertook to make the selections. It cannot be determined what was purchased, but the bishop's choices naturally met with Blair's approval. On May 12, 1739, Gibson was notified that "we have received the late Archbishops donation of Books, and desire to return our most hearty thanks to your Lo^p for so good a Choice."³³

Death brought other bequests to the library. Rev. Emanuel Jones, rector of Petsworth parish in Gloucester County, died in 1739, leaving some, if not all, of his books to the college.³⁴ Only one volume, Arrian's *Enchiridion*, a handbook of Stoic advice by the Greek philosopher Epicuretus that Jones had acquired in 1687 while studying at Oriel College, Oxford, somehow or other escaped destruc-

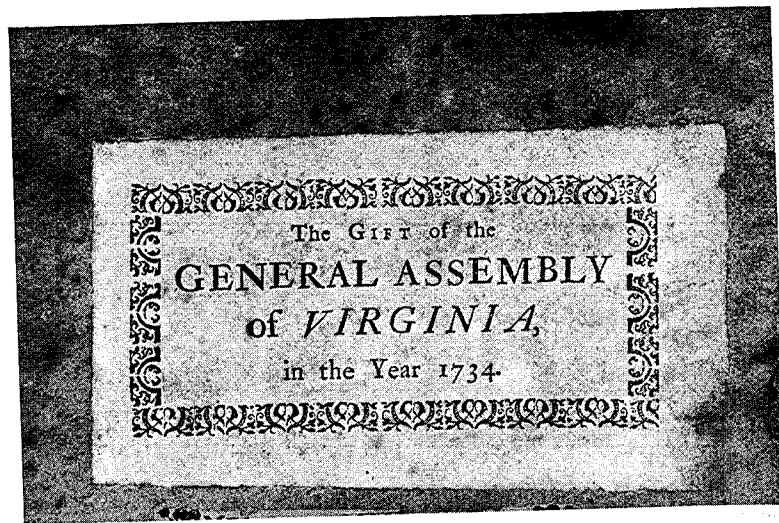
tion in the fires of 1859 and 1862. Governor Spotswood, who, despite frequent altercations with the irascible James Blair, cherished friendly feelings for the college, died in 1740, leaving to the library all his "Books, maps and mathematical instruments."³⁵ Again, only one volume has survived as evidence of the bequest. But this volume must have struck an unusual note in the mighty chorus of theological and philosophical works that lined the library shelves. It is Spotswood's copy of Piganiol de La Force's *Description des châteaux et parcs de Versailles, de Trianon, et de Marly*.

And death in 1743 finally called "the ancient minister" whose firm hand had guided the college and its library for a full half-century. But in death as in life, Blair sought to improve the library. His entire personal collection of books, together with £500 in cash, was left to the college.³⁶ William Dawson a decade earlier had claimed that Blair did not own "many Good Editions of the Fathers."³⁷ If patristical literature was wanting, Blair's acquaintance and friendship with scholars in England would certainly have brought to his shelves significant materials on contemporary theological thought. The great monument of sixteenth-century learning, the Antwerp polyglot, described by Blair as "my Arius Montanus' Bible," would have lent distinction to any collection.³⁸ The catalogue of Blair's library that Sir John Randolph carried to England in 1732 has been lost. And a perusal of Blair's surviving correspondence fails to bring to light supplementary data covering titles in his collection. A nineteenth-century Virginia collector somehow or other acquired a copy of



5. Presentation inscription in Paolo Sarpi's *History of the Council of Trent*, given to the college in 1703/4 by Captain Nicholas Humfrys. (Courtesy of College of William and Mary)

Bryan Robinson's *Treatise of the animal oeconomy* stamped in red with the name of "Doctor James Blair."⁸⁹ But all other evidences of the "ancient minister's" legacy to the library were apparently consumed in the fires of 1859 and 1862.



6. Book label affixed to volumes acquired by the College of William and Mary between 1734 and 1776 with funds appropriated from the provincial levy on wines and liquors. (Courtesy of College of William and Mary)

CHAPTER FOUR

Expanding the Book Collection

1743-1776

PRESIDENT BLAIR'S death in 1743 placed the college in the hands of a faculty that was closely allied to Queens College, Oxford. Blair's successor, William Dawson, who had assumed the chair of moral philosophy at William and Mary in 1729, was a veteran of nine years of undergraduate and graduate work at Queens. Dawson, throughout his career in Virginia from 1729 until his death in 1752, maintained close contacts with his former associates at Queens.¹ Dawson's successor as president of the college, William Stith the historian, was also a Queens graduate. Indeed, a majority of the William and Mary professors and masters from 1729 to 1757 were Queens alumni.² Symbolic of the relationship was the dramatic appearance of President William Dawson and three of his full professors in complete Queens academic regalia on the occasion of the formal celebration of Transfer Day at William and Mary in 1747.³ Dawson, in a letter to his friend, George Fothergill, chaplain of Queens, reported that after this ceremony, the quartet repaired to the common room and "cheerfully drank Prosperity to Col. Reg. Oxon."⁴ The Queens relationship, moreover, was further strengthened through the person of another alum-

nus, Edmund Gibson, bishop of London. Gibson, as chancellor of William and Mary, was influential in matters of academic policy.

The link with Queens doubtless accentuated a need for improving the resources of the library in the area of classical literature. Student compositions, preserved among the Dawson papers in the Library of Congress, suggest a new emphasis on classical studies at the college after 1743. Dawson, it will be remembered, regretted in 1732 that the library lacked "a compleat set of the Classicks." And in 1738 that hard and fast theologian, President Blair, was still stubbornly resolved "to let the Classicks alone." It is therefore likely that after 1743 funds were earmarked to bridge those gaps in the library collection.

Insofar as finances were concerned, Blair left the library in good shape. Income from the tax on wines and liquors enabled the college authorities to make regular investments in books until the levy expired in 1776. The library was better off in this respect than most of its counterparts in England, where a regular income for academic libraries was the exception rather than the rule.⁵ Eyewitness accounts of the conflagration of 1859, in which the book collection was consumed, stressed the loss of large numbers of volumes bearing the General Assembly bookplate, evidence that the volumes had been acquired with funds appropriated by the colonial legislature.⁶

The only colonial accounts of the college bursar that have been preserved commence in 1764. These list numerous expenditures on the part of the librarian, ranging in sums from one to sixty-two pounds.⁷ Payments were made to several Williamsburg booksellers—such as Purdie and

Dixon and Thomas Dixon—but the entries are skimpy and do not spell out the titles that were acquired. Several loose invoices have also survived in the college archives showing that books were consigned to the college in 1765 and in 1771 by its London agents, C. and O. Hanbury and Osgood Hanbury and Company.⁸ But, as usual, none of the volumes were listed by title. In general, it would be reasonable to assume that most of the library books were ordered from London. Yet bookstores were operating in Williamsburg. When William Parks, Virginia's first printer, decided to open a shop in 1742, the fact was carefully noted in the journal of the president and masters of the college.⁹

In 1761 the president and masters finally got around to appointing a librarian. Before this, as was noted earlier, the post was held by one of the grammar school ushers. But on June 26, 1761, Emanuel Jones, son of the earlier benefactor of the library, was formally appointed to the post.¹⁰ Jones, who had been master of the Indian school since 1755, remained at the college until 1777.¹¹ In addition to serving as librarian, Jones acted as "Clerk to the Society," that is, secretary of the faculty.¹² The combination of these responsibilities continued in force at William and Mary well into the nineteenth century. As librarian, Jones received an annual salary of ten pounds sterling; as "Clerk to the Society," the sum of six pounds; and as master of the Indian school, approximately sixty pounds per annum drawn from the Brafferton revenues in England.¹³

Several entries in the Bursar's accounts between 1764 and 1770 suggest that Jones also handled the distribution of college textbooks.¹⁴ This activity would have com-

menced in 1756 when the president and masters resolved that

mr. Em: Jones be appointed to sell those Books wch the Colledge shall imp[or]t—that he is not to stand to any Loss—but sell them for seventy-five per cent: & be allowed ten per cent: for his Trouble in selling & collecting.¹⁵

From 1743 until the outbreak of the American Revolution the library must have continued to enjoy the patronage of English friends of the college. It had become customary for the various bishops of London and archbishops of Canterbury, who alternated in the office of chancellor, to contribute books to the collection. Tangible proof of their benefactions would have disappeared in the fire of 1859. Nothing remains, for example, to show that Bishops Sherlock and Hayter or Archbishops Herring, Hutton, and Secker ever contributed to the collections. Nor is there any surviving evidence that the only nonecclesiastical chancellors of the college during this period, the earls of Hardwicke and of Egremont, made donations to the library. But a failure to conform to precedent in this respect would have brought forth pointed reminders from the academic officials.

The learned classicist, John Potter, archbishop of Canterbury from 1737 to 1747, presented to the library a welcome addition to its church fathers, the great Benedictine edition of the works of St. John Chrysostom.¹⁶ Along with this gift came Potter's own important two-volume folio edition of *Clementis Alexandrini opera quae extant*. And George III, soon after ascending the throne, donated what was later described to his royal granddaughter as a "superb copy of the authorized English version of the

Bible" in two volumes folio.¹⁷ To all of this piety and learning, the naturalist Mark Catesby, who was well-known in Williamsburg, added his *Natural history of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands*.¹⁸ Catesby's work, in two elephant folios with magnificent plates colored by the author, was highly prized by its custodians. Indeed, it was proudly displayed at every opportunity to visitors passing through Williamsburg. The text referred both to the college and to its Indian school. Thomas Jefferson, at some time or other during the course of his long association with William and Mary, carefully noted on a flyleaf that "it should never go out of the College."¹⁹ It was among the most loudly bewailed treasures lost in the fire of 1859.

Colonial governors also continued the contributions to the library which their seventeenth-century predecessor, Colonel Nicholson, had taken such pains to encourage. Before departing for England in 1758, Governor Robert Dinwiddie—who "always looked on Seminaries of Learning with an awful respect and true Regard" and who held to the opinion that "the College of William and Mary is undoubtedly a very great Blessing to Virginia"²⁰—turned over to the library the bulk of his personal collection of books.²¹ Two of these miraculously escaped destruction both in 1859 and in 1862. One of the survivors is Dinwiddie's copy of Henry Grove's *System of moral philosophy* and the other is his copy of Felix Anthony de Alvarado's *Spanish and English dialogues: Containing an easy method of learning either of those languages*. The latter was far from the building when the fires of 1859 and 1862 took place. Luis Hue Girardin, an early nineteenth-century professor of modern languages at the college, removed

Alvarado at some time or other from the library shelves and added it to his own personal collection of books. Over Dinwiddie's elaborate armorial plate, the wayward professor casually pasted his own austere label. The book remained in the possession of Girardin's descendants until recovered by the college shortly after World War II. The subject matter of the volume is significant: it indicates that the library possessed some resources, at least, touching a field in which the college pioneered in 1779 with the establishment of the first American professorship of modern languages.

Gifts to the library occasionally arrived from unlikely sources. In 1747 John Sherwin, a seagoing friend of President Dawson, donated to the collection a copy of Benjamin Hederick's useful and popular *Graecum lexicon manuale* and a set of the two-volume folio edition of Anthony à Wood's *Athenae Oxoniensis*. Sherwin explained that he felt these "wou'd not ill suit a Colledge Library." The donation, recalling that of Captain Nicholas Humfry's in 1703/4, apparently stemmed from "the Genteel entertainment" which the donor received "from Mr. Dawson when at Williamsburg." In announcing the gift to Dawson, Sherwin expressed a hope that "you'l observe I am but a Voyager & accept this Mite, when I have a better Oportunity I shan't be mindful of something greater."²²

The library also profited from the evangelical activities of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge. From 1742 to 1765 first William Dawson, then his brother Thomas, who succeeded Stith as president of the college in 1755, maintained active relations with the two organiza-

tions. Virtually all of the letters directed by the Dawson brothers to the officials of the two societies mention the distribution of pious literature.²³ Many of the books dispatched to evangelical arenas by the SPG and the SPCK probably ended up on the college shelves. The hapless students paid in sweat and tears for this flood of inspiration and devotion. On July 12, 1744, for instance, William Dawson advised Philip Bearcroft, secretary of the SPG, that he had received 150 copies of the Bishop of Sodor and Man's (that is, Thomas Wilson's) *Essay towards an instruction for the Indians*. That tract, begun at Oglethorpe's insistence and dedicated to Georgia's trustees, carried a commendatory preface written by Dawson himself. Dawson notified Bearcroft that a copy was given to each "of our Scholars," who were employed "every Night last Lent, in reading audibly, distinctly and solemnly, so much of this excellent Work, as the Understandings of the Hearers, in general, were able to receive."²⁴

One of the most unusual accessions made by the library in the years immediately preceding the American Revolution was drawn from the estate of Rev. James Horrocks. Horrocks, holder of a master of arts degree from Trinity, Cambridge, and one-time usher at Wakefield School in England, had come to Virginia in 1762 to serve as master of the grammar school at William and Mary.²⁵ In 1764, amid some bitterness within the faculty, he succeeded Rev. William Yates as president of the college. Death came to Horrocks while he was en route to England in 1771. The following year, the college selected and purchased from the deceased president's effects a small but choice collec-

tion of volumes that were wanted on its library shelves.

Samuel Henley, who had joined the faculty in 1770 as professor of moral philosophy and who later acquired dubious distinction in translating William Beckford's *Vathek*, apparently assumed the task of selecting the books for the college.²⁶ An inventory of Henley's selections, in his own hand and dated December 8, 1772, is still preserved in the college archives.²⁷ The list of titles exhibits a shift in emphasis at the college from theology and the classics to the physical sciences. Indeed, the books purchased from the Horrocks estate, costing £17/12/—, reflected the impact of entirely new intellectual ideals. This shift must be attributed in part to the lectures of Professor William Small, a man described by Jefferson, one of his students, as "profound in most of the useful branches of science."²⁸ Small's lectures at William and Mary from 1758 to 1764 stressed disciplines that in a decade or so were to become dominant features of the curriculum.

Foremost among the works selected by Henley from the Horrocks collection was that indispensable adjunct to eighteenth-century enlightened thought, a set of Pierre Bayle's *Dictionnaire historique et critique*. As Professor Fraser Neiman notes in his introduction to *The Henley-Horrocks inventory*, Horrocks' set of Bayle may have been in French or in English, for the entry in Henley's inventory fails to specify the edition. Of equal significance is the fact that the Horrocks accession brought to the college shelves two of Sir Isaac Newton's greatest works, his *Principia mathematica* and his *Opticks*, as well as a copy of his *Universal arithmetick*. Another major work in