

**A TRUE RELATION OF
VIRGINIA, AN
INTRODUCTION AND
NOTES**

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A True Relation of Virginia, an Introduction and Notes by John Smith & Charles Deane

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JOHN SMITH & CHARLES DEANE

**A TRUE RELATION OF
VIRGINIA, AN
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AND NOTES**



SMITH'S TRUE RELATION



A

True Relation

OF

VIRGINIA

BY

CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

By CHARLES DEANE



Boston

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10.



PREFACE TO THIS EDITION.

THE tract here reprinted from the original black-letter volume is the earliest published work relating to the colony at Jamestown, Virginia (the first permanent English settlement in North America), which is known to bibliographers; having been issued the year after the settlement was made. It was written by Captain JOHN SMITH, the master-spirit of the colony, and, as will be seen, in the first person. It records the events which took place under his own observation for a period of a little over thirteen months, and embraces the time from the arrival of the colonists at Cape Henry, on the 26th of April, 1607, to the return of Captain Nelson in the "Phœnix," on the 2d of June, 1608. This is the first printed work of Captain Smith, who was destined to make some figure as an author. It was penned in the country of which he writes, and probably was not intended for publication.

The manuscript, not improbably, was taken to England by Captain Nelson, who, without unusual delays, would have arrived home some time in July. We have no means of knowing to whom the narrative was addressed. It appears to have circulated for a time in private among persons interested in the colony, and then to have found its way into print. By a singular misapprehension as to its authorship, some of the earlier issued copies bore the name of "Thomas Watson, Gent. one of said Collony," as the writer. The error appears to have been very soon discovered and corrected, and the name of Captain Smith substituted on the titlepage; and, in the preface which appeared with the corrected title, the writer, "I. H.," says: "Happening vpon this Relation by chance, (as I take it, at the second or third hand) induced thereunto by diuers well willers of the action . . . I thought good to publish it: but the Author being absent from the presse, it cannot be doubted but that some faults haue escaped in the printing, especially in the names of Countries, Towns, and People, which are somewhat strange vnto us: but most of all, and which is the chiefe error; (for want of knowledge of the Writer) some of the bookes were printed vnder the name of *Thomas Watson*, by whose occasion I know not, vnless it were the ouer rashnesse or mistaking of the workemen, but since hauing learned that the saide discourse was written by Captain *Smith*, who is one