

## LEE OF VIRGINIA.

GENEALOGICAL NOTES PROVING THE ERROR OF THE  
PREVIOUSLY ACCEPTED PEDIGREE.

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SOME years since a lively discussion arose over the genealogy of the distinguished family of Lee of Virginia, excited by the appearance of a clumsy forgery\* which was fully exposed in the columns of the *Nation* by Mr. W. H. Whitmore of Boston. The burden of evidence at that time seemed to point to Richard Lee of Stratford-Langton, in Essex, a suburb of London, the son of Sir Robert Lee, Knt., of that place, as identical with the Col. Richard Lee who, in 1640, emigrated to Virginia and founded there a family which has perhaps given more statesmen and warriors to their new home than any other of our old colonial progenitors. This evidence, although rather shadowy,—being in fact nothing more than that the emigrant, in his will, called himself “late of Stratford-Langton,”—was nevertheless generally accepted, *faute de mieux*, by most genealogists, and it is believed, by the family themselves, while a recent magazine article by Rev. F. G. Lee in the *Miscellanea Genealogica*, afterward reprinted in pamphlet form,† assumed this descent as proven and so constructs the pedigree without more evidence than he is able to adduce for his own many and frantic attempts to connect himself with the same noble family.‡

The writer has, however, in the course of other investigations on which he has been engaged for some years past in the English Records, fully satisfied himself that this Richard Lee, son of Sir Robert, died in his youth, and that another Richard Lee who was also of Stratford-Langton and Stepney in the first half of the 17th century and distantly, if at all, connected with the Quarrendon Family, was the true ancestor of the Virginia stock. Who this Richard may have been he hopes at some not distant day to be able to clearly prove. Meanwhile we must not lose sight of the fact that the son of the emigrant, in his monumental inscription in Westmoreland county, Virginia, is described as “*de antiqua familia in Merton Regis in comitatu Salopsiensis oriundi*,” a fact utterly irreconcilable with the Quarrendon theory, but which may hereafter give a clue to the true descent.

\* Genealogical History of the Lee Family of Virginia and Maryland, from A.D. 1300 to A.D. 1866. With Notes and Illustrations. Edited by Edward C. Mend. New York: Richardson & Co. 1868.

† Genealogy of the Family of Lee of Chester, Bucks and Oxon, showing the Lineal Descent of the late General Robert E. Lee of Virginia, America, from Sir John Lee, Knt. Compiled by the Rev. Frederick George Lee, D.C.L., F.S.A., Vicar of All Saints, Lambeth, London. London: Mitchell & Hughes, 140 Wardour Street. 1884.

‡ Compare the Pedigrees in Herald and Genealogist, 1865, Vol. III, fo. 486 *et seq.*, and that given at fo. 635 of same author's *History, Description and Antiquities of the Prebendal Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Thame in the County and Diocese of Oxford, &c. &c.* London: Mitchell & Hughes. 1883.