

in the parish church. Her husband, after placing their son Thomas with a relative, sailed, in April, to resume life at Jamestown.⁹

For two years after his return, Rolfe continued to serve as secretary and recorder of the colony, but he relinquished these offices when he was admitted to the Council in 1619. He participated in the first legislative Assembly, and in 1621 he was designated, by the Company, a member of the new Council of State. Sometime during this period, Rolfe married Jane, the daughter of Captain William Pierce of Jamestown. Within a year, however, before the "Massacre," he died from natural causes, apparently in Jamestown. Putting aside all the romantic tales about John Rolfe and Pocahontas, "he remains," his biographer tells us, "one of the great heroes of our colonial era."¹⁰

John Rolfe was the first planter on record to domesticate West Indian tobacco and initiate the tobacco trade with the mother country—and as late as 1621 he was still shipping barrels of it to England. Very shortly other planters, sensing the opportunity to profit by its production and sale, began to emulate him. Ralph Hamor had insisted in 1612 that "I dare thus much affirme . . . of Tobacco, whose goodnesse mine own experience and triall induced me to be such, that no country under the Sunne, may, or doth affoord more pleasant, sweet, and strong Tobacco, then I have tasted there; even of mine owne planting, which, howsoever, being then the first yeer of our triall thereof, we had not the knowledge to cure, and make up."¹¹

It was George Yeardley, the successor to Dale as deputy governor in April 1616, who should be credited with turning the weed into the prime staple of the Old Dominion. He urged