

PREFACE.

This volume continues the Acts and Proceedings of the Assembly from October, 1678, to November, 1683. The former session was the first held after June 15, 1676, so that there is no break in our series. Of the session of 1678, the Upper House Journal, and of the two sessions of 1681, the Lower House Journal, are wanting. Of the session of April-May, 1682, we have only a small fragment of the Lower House Journal.

Although several of these original journals are in a pitiable state from the ravages of damp and insects—which probably is the reason that they were not transcribed in the later copies—we have printed them as they stand, as they are the original and only records extant, and, in the main, intelligible. Where we happened to have another copy of any part of the proceedings, we have filled out the gaps, marking the inserted words by brackets. It is almost needless to repeat that the verbal and orthographical errors or eccentricities of the originals have been faithfully reproduced.

As the Province grew to the north, St. Mary's at the extreme south was found not central enough to be a convenient place of meeting, while it had the further disadvantage of being insecure, as we find mention of pirates threatening Matapany, and the need of a guard to protect the Proprietary and the military stores. In 1654 and 1657 the Assembly had met in Ann Arundel County, though rather for political than geographical reasons. The session of 1683 was now held in the same county, to the gratification of the delegates, though the seat of government was not removed.

While there were some very slight chafings between the two Houses, and while the presence among the Burgesses of that unsavory reprobate Coode boded no good, yet great good feeling seems to have prevailed throughout the entire Province; to which, no doubt, the personal presence of the Proprietary, who seems to have been sincerely liked and respected, greatly contributed. Three times the Assembly voted him a considerable gift, with expressions of gratitude, but he declined it as unwilling further to burden the people. The records show no trace of any ill feeling on religious grounds. Yet in a brief time many of these very men were fomenting armed rebellion, and memorializing the King on the subject of "the Popish injustice and tyranny under which they had long groaned."