

PREFACE.

This volume completes the correspondence of Governor Sharpe. All his letters that could be found, either in his letter-books or elsewhere, have been printed, and all communications to him, except such as properly belong to Council business.

The period covered by this volume is one of great interest in Maryland's history. It includes the settlement of the boundary-dispute with Pennsylvania and the establishment of Mason and Dixon's line, the stamp-act, the violent resistance to it and its repeal, and various matters of importance in the internal policy of the Province.

It was the good fortune of Maryland that during this critical time the executive power was lodged in the hands of a man so wise, just, energetic and moderate as Horatio Sharpe. These volumes of his correspondence are at once a revelation of his character, and record of his actions; and it would be hard to find in one of them any just ground for censure. As a colonial governor, responsible to the British government, he was the conservator of the rights of the crown, and bound to carry out the instructions of the ministry; as the sworn representative and executive officer of the Proprietary he was the custodian of the Proprietary rights, which the people were always ready to invade, curtail, or impede—not always without reason; and as a citizen and well-wisher of the Province his wish as well as his duty was to administer justice and promote prosperity and good-feeling. While the clashing of these interests often rendered his action difficult, he seems to have weighed in an impartial balance his duties to the crown, the Proprietary and the people.

During the period covered by this volume, the old Secretary Cecilius Calvert, Lord Baltimore's uncle, died, and was replaced by Hugh Hamersley. Calvert seems to have been a well-meaning man of a rather chaotic mind, and his letters, though intelligible, are extraordinary examples of confusion in expression. Doubtless this was partly owing to age and long sickness. Hamersley, on the other hand, was an able, clear-headed man, and his letters are full, intelligent, and lucid. It has seemed worth while to reproduce the protests by the minority in the Lords against the repeal of the Stamp Act (inclosed in Hamersley's letter of March 22, 1766) because of the great importance to American history of all the proceedings of that critical time.

On the same ground of general interest some papers connected with the relief sent by Maryland to the sufferers by the great Boston fire of March 20, 1760, have been printed in an appendix.