

Rest are on their march to take up their Winter Quarters either in the Forts on the Frontiers of these Colonies or among the Inhabitants. Letter Bk. III

[Sharpe to Baltimore.]

Annapolis the 16th Decem^r 1758.

Letter Bk. IV
p. 20

My Ld

M^r Calvert Your Ldps Secretary having intimated to me some time ago that it had been reported by some Persons in England who were supposed to have Correspondents here that Roman Catholicks are too much Countenanced in Your Ldps Province, that in Consequence thereof their Number increases & that many of them have lately behaved in such a manner as to give His Majesty's Protestant Subjects in the Province great Offence & Uneasiness, I think it my Duty & in justice to myself. I can do no less than to assure Your Ldp that since I have had the honour to bear Your Commission Nothing has been farther from my Inclination than to countenance or give Encouragement to persons of that Persuasion nor has there to my knowledge been any given them by any Persons in Authority under me, but on the Contrary extraordinary Burthens have been lately laid on them particularly by an Act of Assembly that was made in May 1756 whereby all Landholders of the Romish Faith are obliged to pay by Way of Land Tax twice as much as the Rest of Your Ldps Tenants who are Protestants. It might perhaps be unknown if not to the Authors at least to some of the Propagators of the abovementioned Report that the People who first settled in this Province were for the most part Roman Catholicks & that altho every other Sect was tolerated a Majority of the Inhabitants continued Papists till the Revolution soon after which Event An Act was made here for the Support of a Clergyman of the Church of England in every Parish which is still in force & the Papists as well as Protestants are thereby obliged to pay annually very considerable Sums for that purpose. Other Acts of Assembly were made afterwards in the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Ann subjecting all Popish Priests that should be discovered here to all the Penalties to which such Priests would be lyable in England but Her Majesty was pleased to disapprove thereof & to order that no Popish Bishop Priest or Jesuit should be prosecuted or indicted for exercising his Function in any private Family within this Province. But notwithstanding Her Majesty thought fit to allow the Papists in Maryland the free Exercise of their Religion they were not permitted to sit in either House of Assembly, to Vote at the p. 21