

## PREFACE.

The period covered by this volume is one of peculiar interest, including, as it does, Maryland's transformation from a dependent Province to a sovereign State.

The determined purpose of the British government to raise a revenue in America, and the violent invasions of liberty contemplated by Townshend's Act, plainly showed the people that they must offer a spirited resistance unless they were resigned to the loss of all political freedom. Resistance by arms was not at first thought of: it was hoped that energetic remonstrance, backed up by a show of resolution, might bring about a change of policy in the mother country. The plan adopted was that of a commercial war. To refuse to import British goods or to buy them if imported, could hardly be called treason; and such a course might enlist on their side the manufacturing and commercial interests of Great Britain, which could not but suffer from the loss of so important a market. But to do this effectually, it must be done by all and in an organised way. Hence non-importation associations were formed in all the colonies, and around these associations the whole spirit of resistance crystallised.

The partial recession of the government when it abandoned the duties laid by Townshend's Act, except that on tea, caused a considerable relaxation of the non-importation policy; but the Boston Port Bill and other violent measures rekindled the alarm and the spirit of resistance. The resolutions of Massachusetts, recommending a return to the strict non-importation system, but gave a voice to feelings that were spreading everywhere. It was seen that something more organic than the associations was necessary; and the people of Baltimore, assembled in a town-meeting held May 31, 1774, recommended that a congress of deputies chosen from each county should assemble in Annapolis, there to determine on a plan of conduct for the whole Province.

This congress, or Convénion as it was called, met for the first time in Annapolis on June 22, 1774, and organized with Matthew Tilghman as chairman. At no time in the history of Maryland did a representative body meet characterised by greater wisdom, truer patriotism, and more lofty unselfishness of purpose. Clearly declaring their real motives and aims, they resolved upon a general system of non-intercourse and appointed deputies to a Congress of all the colonies to insure unity of action.