

An impartial examination of this correspondence throughout will, the editor thinks, tend to modify the harsh judgment that has been generally passed on Frederick, sixth Lord Baltimore. It is true, he was neither a George nor a Cecilius; but his letters and those of his secretaries, as well as his formal instructions (which, as belonging to Council business, are not printed here) show—in the present editor's judgment—a desire to deal justly, and even generously, with the people of his Province. From almost the very founding of the colony there had been, as was natural enough, a party opposed to the Proprietary, and hostility to him was usually a sure road to popular favor. In Frederick's case this hostility was particularly fierce and unscrupulous, and the impressions it left have descended to our own time. We judge Frederick much as we should judge the loyalists of the Revolution, if we had nothing to guide us but the traditions, pamphlets, and newspapers of the time.

The editor confesses to having shared this prejudice, and in regard to an infamous charge brought against the Proprietary (alluded to in the correspondence) was inclined to believe it true, until he read the official report of the trial and testimony of the witnesses, which left him convinced that the specific charge brought was untrue, and the whole affair an attempt at black-mail.

While this volume was passing through the press, a discovery of the highest importance to Maryland history has been made. Two volumes of original Council Books, of which no later copies are known to exist, which at some unknown time (certainly more than thirty years ago) had been removed from Annapolis, have been discovered, almost by accident, and placed in the custody of the Maryland Historical Society. These volumes, extending with more or less completeness over the years 1671–1685/6, will go far to fill up one of the most deplorable gaps in our colonial record, which, in our published series, was imperfectly bridged by the publication of documents, mostly obtained from England, which shed some light upon the time. The Society trust to be enabled to add these records to our inestimable series of published Archives.

A brief calendar of these two volumes follows.

#### COUNCIL BOOKS.

LIBER — [unnamed]. Original. 1677/8–1683.

A small folio, bound in law sheep: 35 pp. text, paged, and 14 pp. index. Some 20 pp. are missing at the beginning, and the tops of the first two or three leaves are a little damaged; otherwise in good condition. Written in a fine legible court-hand of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Begins with Instructions to W. Burges commanding St. Maries militia, Mar. 16, 1677/8. Council Proceedings begin Mar. 23, 1677/8 and end April 3, 1683.