

APPENDIX.

In 1700 there was published in Annapolis by Thomas Redding, a body of the Laws, the first known compilation of the Statutes of Maryland. (See Archives XXIV, 83, 198). The Library of Congress copy, the only one known to me, which formerly belonged to John Bozman Kerr, is imperfect. The compilation begins with the laws of 1692 and the copy shows that it contained at least 118 pages. The dedication to William Bladen is of such interest that it is worth while to reprint it here. In addition to its intrinsic interest, the production vies with Dr. Bray's contemporaneous sermon before the General Assembly (reprinted in Fund Publication No. 34) as to being the earliest extant imprint from any Maryland press.

“ To my Honoured and Ingenious Friend Mr. William Bladen at the [Port] of Annapolis.

“ Sir—

It is certainly an argument of a most Ingenious Minde as well as . . . Commonwealth, where a Man finds ways to advance his own Interest . . . together, which I doubt not but may be effectually done by your happy . . . designs the printing and publishing the Laws of this Province, whereby the whole Body of them now in force will be to be had at so reasonable a rate that scarce any . . . willing but may have them, and as it is a . . . -able principle for every Maryland . . . himself acquainted with the Laws of the County he lives in, . . . it is very dangerous to be ignorant of them by reason of that maxim that Ignorance of the Law, . . . no excuse, which though it may seem a harsh maxim, when first discussed yet when thoroughly understood is most just and reasonable . . . encouraging men to attain the knowledge of the Laws under which they live and that . . . by . . . -chest springs of human nature hope and fear, hope of knowledge and . . . the nature and constitution of the government they live in, which is in the most lively manner discovered in the laws of the Country—and fear, being punished for the breach of any of them that through a willful ignorance of them . . . know not: this maxim will appear more beautiful when compared with . . . if ignorance of the Law should excuse, then the more ignorant the more . . . could be punished by the law but them that know it, so that knowledge would be a dangerous thing, and yet it is the experience of all ages that the more knowledge people have (which is to be more wise) they are the happier in their government and constitution: but this is but in general, this worthy