Saturday night", in which a number of prominent planters figured. Those in the game who most concern us were Thomas Gerrard, Lord of St. Clement's Manor, a former member of the Governor's Council, and a certain Daniel Johnson. Gerrard lost to Johnson who was paid in part by a bill given at Gerrard's request by the merchant, Samuel Smith, who may also have been in the game, or only a spectator. Smith died soon after, and Johnson recently a servant, sued his administrator, Capt. Robert Slye, also a former member of the Governor's Council, who refused payment of the bill on the ground that there had been no consideration, and also that the bill "was passed on a Sunday". The court ordered payment (pp. 277, 295-296). Perhaps the game lasted after midnight, or the old custom of beginning the Sabbath at sundown on Saturday may have been invoked by the defendant.

At the June 1671 session of the Talbot County Court the suit of Stevenson *vs.* Drywood came up. Matthew Ward, as attorney for the defendant, asked that the case be postponed, promising to bring before the court "a statute of England that Play debts above the value of 40^{s} is not pleadable". His request for delay was granted, and as no further reference to the suit is to be found, it is probable that it was dropped, or possibly settled out of court (*Arch. Md. liv,* 499).

A bet made on a horse race came before the Talbot County Court at the January, 1672, sitting. This race for a purse of 1000 pounds of tobacco was arranged and run between John Browne and George Hurlocke, Browne winning. It was shown that Dr. William Hemsley, a prominent planter of "Peach Blossom", and a former sheriff and court clerk, had made himself liable to pay Browne a thousand pounds of tobacco should Hurlocke lose. The court ordered Hemsley to pay his bet with costs of suit (*Arch. Md. liv,* 594). In a similar case which came before the Talbot Court at its February, 1672/3, session, Thomas Hallings sued Peter Whaples for 200 pounds of tobacco, lost on "a wagger at a Horse Rasse". The defendant answered that as such it was not actionable, and the court ordered the writ be abated, the plaintiff "not proving his actionable" (*Arch. Md. liv,* 550-551).

Suits for slander or for "defamation", as they were usually called, were perhaps next in frequency among civil cases to those for debt and difficulties between masters and servants. The act of 1654 provided that the offender be assessed damages, not only by way of satisfaction to the party injured, but to the public for breach of the peace (*Arch. Md. i,* 343). Damages in such cases were defined and limited by the act of 1669 (*Arch. Md. ii,* 201). These defamation suits were very frequently brought by women, or by their husbands, for slanderous remarks involving the sexual behavior of the women. But there were various other causes of defamation which came before the court. Thus in one instance a widow brought suit against the Rev. Francis Doughtie of Charles County, and several members of his congregation for insinuating that she was a witch, a story to be told in more detail later (pp. liii, lv). An amusing defamation case is one in which a recent widow, about to remarry, was incensed by a letter sent to this same minister, signed by a helpless blind man, declaring that the lady was his "before God". She at once instituted suit