

County) received by the Upper House on June 14, 1768, was referred to the Lower House for consideration (p. 303). As no mention of this is entered in the journal of the Lower House, it is probable that it was not accepted for filing because it had not been presented within the limit of time required by the rules of the Lower House (p. 382). Its nature is not disclosed. The petition of St. Paul's Parish, Baltimore County, for authority to levy a tax to employ an organist is discussed later (p. cvi).

Roman Catholics. The Catholic question did not flare up violently in the General Assembly during the 1766-68 period, but it looms in the background in two bills which came before it. An old bill "for the security of purchasers and others claiming by and from aliens", excluding Roman Catholics from the benefits of the act, had since 1758 been regularly passed by the Lower House, and as regularly rejected on this account in the Upper House (*Arch. Md.* LVI, lxiv; LVIII, lxv; LIX, xxxv). The bill again came before the November-December, 1766, and the May-June, 1768, sessions, was passed by the Lower House, amended by the Upper House to extend its benefits to Catholics, and rejected on this account by the Lower House (pp. 114, 187, 190-191, 378, 388, 303, 307). The law providing for apprenticing orphans and children abandoned by fathers, passed at the November-December, 1766, session, provided for their placement in Protestant families, but made no exception for children of Roman Catholic parents (pp. 235-238).

LANGUISHING PRISONERS FOR DEBT

At each of the three sessions held during the 1766-1768 period acts were passed for the relief of various "languishing prisoners" confined in the several county jails for debt. The terms of all three of the acts are identical with those passed at recent preceding sessions. Such relief acts have already been discussed at length by the editor in a previous volume of the *Archives* (LIX, lix-lx). Apparently all of the cases were brought to the attention of the Assembly by petitions from individual debtors, telling of their sufferings, the length of imprisonment, the circumstances resulting in their plight, and their willingness to make all restitution possible to their creditors. For unexplainable reasons none of the original petitions for this particular period have been preserved. To show the extent of imprisonment for debt in Maryland at this time it is to be noted that in this three-year period 200 debtors were released by legislative action, and there were many others to whom relief was not granted. To prevent petitions trailing in during the entire session, the Lower House, towards the close of the May, 1766, Assembly, passed a resolution, in the form of a standing rule, that thereafter no petition for the discharge of a prisoner for debt would be entertained unless advertisement of intention to apply for Assembly relief were "set up at the Court House door" of the respective counties at least thirty days before the meeting of the Assembly, and then to be certified to by at least three justices of the county (p. 63). The disgraceful conditions found in the Anne Arundel County jail in 1766, narrated in another section (pp. xxi-xxii), tells of the horrible conditions in some of these county jails.