

an act of that year, it was for the first time appropriated to its legitimate use as a donation to Lower Marlboro' Academy. Each of the other Academies mentioned, received as they were successively established, a share of this donation, until by repeated divisions and subdivisions, a sum, that was originally barely sufficient to maintain *one* reputable school, was, by its dilution, rendered comparatively useless to *any*. During the period under consideration, these five Academies constituted down to the establishment of the Free School Fund in 1816, our only public schools—system there was none: We were in a transition state as regards Education. From the year last named, the Academies began to lose their distinctive character, and either from their inefficiency, or the increasing necessities of the people, numerous *private* schools erected by individual, or neighborhood enterprise, were springing up to compete with them for a share of public patronage. Under the acts of 1816, '21 and '27, nine Commissioners were annually appointed by the Legislature, for the distribution of the Free School Fund in our County, at the rate of \$10 per capita, per annum, for the education of each 'indigent' scholar, who might, at the discretion of the Commissioner, be assigned to any school, public, or private; most of the so-called private schools were largely dependent on the Free School Fund for their support. The only further change affecting our schools during the remainder of this *medieval* period, was, that by the act of 1837, the Orphans' Court was made the custodian of the Free School Fund, and given the power, in lieu of the Legislature, of appointing the Commissioners for its distribution; a change of doubtful utility, as it did not prevent a very loose administration of the funds. The teacher's account for the attendance and tuition of 'charity scholars,' as they were styled, had, before payment by the Orphans' Court, to be endorsed by a commissioner, and attested by the claimant; yet even these precautions were not always sufficient to insure its correctness, in evidence of which, many of these accounts now in my possession, show an attendance of the *same* children credited to *two* different schools at the same *time*; such errors might readily escape the notice of the Orphans' Court—engrossed as it generally was at the time of auditing these accounts with its ordinary legal duties.

### THIRD PERIOD.

We have now reached a period when the fragmentary elements. ('*rari nantes in gurgite vasto*,') that had been accumulating for more than seventy-five years, were to be given shape and be embodied into some degree of system. In 1854 an act was passed "for the establishment of Primary Schools in Calvert County, and the consolidation of its Primary and