

# THE COUNTIES OF MARYLAND, THEIR ORIGIN, BOUNDARIES, AND ELECTION DISTRICTS

BY

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## INTRODUCTORY.

The counties in Maryland occupy a far more important position than do similar political divisions in many other states of the Union. This prominence of the county is due primarily to the fact that in Maryland it serves as the unit of division of the territory of the State and is not formed by the combination of smaller integral units, as is the case in the North and West, where townships with their own local political organization are the units of political division. Where townships exist they are united to form a county and the county organization is accordingly more general and less complete than is the case in this State. Maryland possesses incorporated towns and villages analogous to those of other parts of the United States but the nearest analogue to a township—the election district—is not a political unit with its own individual government, but is rather a precinct serving for election and other purposes within the county. In Virginia the counties are often composed of several Hundreds or Parishes which become the local units in popular consideration if not in political government.

A second reason why the county is of unusual importance in Maryland and one or two other states arises from the agricultural occupations of the people and the widely scattered settlement of individuals of culture and cosmopolitan interests. These are wont to refer to their residences as in a given county rather than near some insignificant town or cross-roads which serves as a post office address. Large towns, as a rule, are unavailable for such close location of residence.