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THE HISTORY

OF

MASON AND DIXON'S LINE;

CONTAINED IN

AN ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BY

JOHN H. B. LATROBE,
OF MARYLAND,

BEFORE

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA,

November 8, 1854.

PHILADELPHIA:
LIPPINCOTT, GRAMBO, AND CO.
1855.

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T. K. AND P. G. COLLINS, PRINTERS.

CORRESPONDENCE.

PHILADELPHIA, November 16, 1854.

DEAR SIR:—

At a meeting of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, held on the 13th instant, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:—

Resolved, That the thanks of this Society be presented to John H. B. Latrobe, Esq., for his very able and instructive Anniversary Address, delivered on the 8th instant; and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

The undersigned were appointed a committee to carry this resolution into effect; and we concur in the hope that you will comply with the wish of the Society to render your interesting discourse permanently and generally accessible to our fellow-citizens.

We are, very respectfully,

Your obedient servants,

JOB R. TYSON,
WM. PARKER FOULKE,
W. B. REED,
A. L. ELWYN,
J. FRANCIS FISHER.

TO JOHN H. B. LATROBE, ESQ.

BALTIMORE.

BALTIMORE, November 29, 1854.

GENTLEMEN:—

I have your letter of the 16th instant, asking for a copy of my address delivered before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania on the 8th instant. I inclose it; and take the occasion to thank you for the kindness of the terms in which the request has been conveyed.

Remaining, gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

JNO. H. B. LATROBE.

To Messrs. J. R. TYSON,
W. PARKER FOULKE,
WILLIAM B. REED,
A. L. ELWYN, and
J. FRANCIS FISHER.

ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF PENNSYLVANIA:—

I AM here, to-night, a citizen of Maryland, honored by your invitation to address you on the occasion of your anniversary; and the topic I have chosen is the boundary between our respective States.

Adjacent land-owners rarely take much interest in the title, quality, or culture of their neighbors' fields; but they are generally sufficiently sensitive to the true location and maintenance of the division fences. I have, therefore, thought that I might count upon your patience, while I occupied my allotted hour with the history and description of Mason and Dixon's line.

There is, perhaps, no line, real or imaginary, on the surface of the earth—not excepting even the equator and the equinoctial—whose name has been oftener in men's mouths during the last fifty years. In the halls of legislation, in the courts of justice, in the assemblages of the people, it has been as familiar

as a household word. Not that any particular interest was taken in the line itself; but the mention of it was always expressive of the fact, that the States of the Union were divided into slaveholding and non-slaveholding—into Northern and Southern;[1] and that those, who lived on opposite sides of the line of

[1] See Bancroft, vol. ii. p. 396, who says: "That that line (referring to Mason and Dixon's) forms the present division between the States resting on free labor, and the States that tolerate slavery, is due, not to the philanthropy of Quakers alone, but to climate." Perhaps less to climate than to interest. Slavery, south of Mason and Dixon's line, will cease to exist so soon as it ceases to be the interest of land-owners to hold, and work their fields with, slaves. Bancroft's mistake is in attributing slavery to *climate*, which is unchanging, and which would make the institution lasting, instead of to interest, which is changeable, and which may cause slavery to cease to exist. And although climate certainly is connected with the interest which now maintains slavery, yet interest may readily become paramount to the effects of climate. Thus, there are very many, indeed, who believe, that if the "abolition excitement" had not made slavery in Maryland and Kentucky, and in many parts of Virginia, a matter of State pride, laws for prospective emancipation would long ago have been passed; and for the simple reason that, while slave-labor is profitable in the culture, just now, of cotton, and sugar, and rice, it is not so profitable—in many instances, it is a losing business—in the culture of wheat. The slavery question of the United States is a question of interest; and its solution will be found in the increasing white population of the country, the consequent reduction of wages, and the great ultimate result—the production, by free labor, of the chief staples of the country cheaper than they can be produced by slave-labor. Voluntary manumissions will then free the slaves, because it will be to the interest of the masters to get rid of an expensive labor, that they may substitute a cheaper one; and colonization in Africa, which has already built up a Republic there, will, by that time, have established a commerce with that country, which will afford the same means for the emigration of the colored race that commerce with Europe now affords for bringing a free white population to our shores.

separation, were antagonistic in opinion upon an all-engrossing question, whose solution, and its consequences, involved the gravest considerations, and had been supposed to threaten the integrity of the Republic. Its geographical, thus became lost in its political, significance; and men cared little, when they referred to it, where it ran, or what was its history—or whether it was limited to Pennsylvania, or extended, as has, perhaps, most generally been supposed, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It suggested the idea of negro slavery; and that, alone, was enough to give it importance and notoriety, though only as a name.

A consequence of this state of things has been to perpetuate the memory of the old surveyors who established it. A rare good fortune as regards their fame; for, while the engineers who located the road across the Simplon have been forgotten in the all-absorbing renown of the master whom they served—while, of the thousands who sail past the Eddystone, not one, perhaps, knows who it was that erected, on a crag in the midst of the sea, the wondrous light-house that has now defied the tempests of a century—while oblivion has been the lot of other benefactors of mankind, whose works, of every-day utility, should have been their enduring monuments—Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon, who, eighty-six years ago, ran a line through the forest, until the Indians forbade the further progress of chain and compass,

and whose greatest merit seems to have been that of accurate surveyors,[1] have obtained a notoriety for their names as lasting as the history of our country.

An inspection of the map of the United States shows the boundaries, in most cases, to be, either rivers, the crests of mountain ranges, parallels of latitude, or meridians of longitude. In but a single instance has the circle, with its geometrical accuracy, been employed to indicate a dividing line of contiguous States; and the inquiry at once suggests itself, why the southern frontier of Pennsylvania was not prolonged to the New Jersey shore, why the eastern one of Maryland was not made to strike it, and why a circle should be the northern boundary of Delaware—the odd result of which has been to leave so narrow a strip of Pennsylvania between Delaware and Maryland, that the ball of one's foot may be in the former, the heel in the latter, while the instep forms an arch over a portion of the "Keystone State" itself. The explanation of this is closely connected with our history, and will be given as we progress with it.

On the 20th June, 1632, Charles the Second, then in the eighth year of his reign, granted to Cecilius Calvert, Lord Baron of Baltimore—

[1] Mason and Dixon were, at different times, elected members of the American Philosophical Society—Mason on the 27th March, 1767, and Dixon on the 1st April, 1768; and, in the notice of their election, they are styled, each, "Surveyor, of London."—*Proceedings of Amer. Phil. Soc.*

"All that part of the Peninsula, or chersonese, lying in the parts of America between the ocean on the east, and the Bay of Chesapeake on the west, divided from the residue thereof by a right line, drawn from the promontory or headland called Watkin's Point, situate upon the bay aforesaid, and near the river of Wighco on the west, unto the main ocean on the east, and between that boundary on the south, and that part of the Bay of Delaware on the north, which lieth under the fortieth degree of latitude, where New England terminates."[1]

At this early day, the great States of Pennsylvania and New York had no existence in any shape, and the northern boundary of Maryland was the southern boundary of New England. Within the latter, New Plymouth had been planted in 1620, and Massachusetts Bay in 1629. In Maryland, the only settlements were those made by William Claiborne, in 1631, on Kent Island, in the Chesapeake. The name of Claiborne, in connection with Maryland, suggests at once an episode of romantic interest. The great living historian of our country, who first mentions him as "a man of resolute and enterprising spirit,"[2] introduces him into the narrative of events with dramatic power, when he describes the landing of Leonard Calvert at St. Mary's, in 1634, and adds, that

[1] Kilty's Laws of Maryland.

[2] Bancroft's History of the United States, vol. i. p. 236.

"Claiborne also appeared, though as a prophet of ill omen, to terrify the company by predicting the fixed hostility of the natives." Afterwards, when dwelling on the "auspices under which the province of Maryland started into being," the same historian says: "Everything breathed peace but Claiborne." Again, he calls him "the malignant Claiborne;" again, "the restless Claiborne;" and even when mentioning his favorable reception by Charles the Second, on his visit to England, attributes it, in part, to "his false representations."[1] Chalmers, largely quoted by Bancroft, styles Claiborne "the evil genius of Maryland," and speaks of him as one who seemed "to have been born to be the bane of the province;"[2] and other historians, taking their cue from Chalmers, place him in the category of unscrupulous men, the exhalations of unsettled periods. McMahon alone speaks not unkindly of him; and yet, even McMahon calls him "the notorious William Claiborne."[3] But, twenty-four years is a long while for mere bravado and intrigue, in a bad cause, to maintain possession of the public mind; and it is difficult to believe that Claiborne, who, unquestionably, occupied it for this length of time, had not a better claim, and was not a better and truer man, than historians, thus far, have

[1] Bancroft's History of the United States, vol. i. pp. 246, 248.

[2] Chalmers's Political Annals, pp. 210, 221.

[3] McMahon's History of Maryland, p. 6.

been willing to admit. The accounts that we possess of him, unfortunately for his memory, have been transmitted by his political opponents. The untiring adversary of Lord Baltimore, his reputation has been made to suffer, that the other's praise might be exaggerated. But the time will arrive, it is hoped, when his memory will be relieved from the imputations of contemporary partisans, and when the truth will be known in regard to him;[1] and when he will be recognized as the brave soldier, the gallant gentleman, acute in council, whom danger could not turn aside nor defeat dishearten—the statesman of the wilderness, the attainted of the proprietary government, only to become, in turn, the commissioner of the Commonwealth of England, to subjugate the province, from which he had been driven as a rebel; and who, for a quarter of a century, whether in power or out of power, exercised an influence, or inspired a dread, due alone to "his unceasing efforts to main-

[1] Mr. S. F. Streeter, of Baltimore, Secretary of the Maryland Historical Society, has devoted himself to the preparation of a History of "Claiborne and his Times," and has collected an amount of rare, and curious, and authentic information, to which I have had the privilege of referring, that fully justifies all that is said of Claiborne in the text. For nearly fifty years, he was in active life; one-half of that time in Maryland, the rest of it in Virginia, where he died at an advanced age, honored and lamented. His lineal descendants are numerous, and many of them have been prominent in the affairs of the country, as Governors of States, Senators and Representatives in Congress, &c. &c. The publication of Mr. Streeter's work will furnish a valuable contribution to the colonial history of Maryland and Virginia.

tain, by courage and address, the territory which his enterprise had discovered and planted."[1]

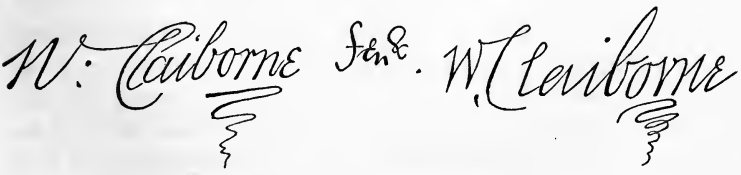
But Claiborne's claims had no ultimate effect upon the boundaries of Maryland; nor would they now be alluded to, save that no sketch, however rapid, of Maryland affairs, during his lifetime, would be complete, wherein his name chanced to be omitted.[2]

Trouble, however, was brewing for Lord Baltimore, in regard to boundary, in another quarter. Godyn, a Hollander, had purchased from the natives a body of land, extending for thirty miles northwardly from Cape Henlopen. This was in 1629;[3] and in 1631,[4] De Vries, another Hollander, planted a colony

[1] McMahon, p. 7.

[2] In all the histories I have seen, wherein Claiborne's name is mentioned, it is spelt with *y*, not *i*. But Claiborne's own spelling was with an *i*, not a *y*, in the first syllable—as is proved by the two fac-similes of autographs, for which I am indebted to Mr. Streeter: one from a petition to Charles the Second, which dates back to the early part of his Maryland troubles; and one, dated in 1676, when he was an aged man.

From a Petition to Charles the Second. *March* 13, 1676–7.



The curious in such matters may be interested in knowing that Claiborne's coat of arms was thus blazoned: Argent—three chevrons interlaced, at the base, sable, with a chief of the last.

[3] Brodhead's History of New York, p. 200.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 206.

and built a fort within the territory, calling it Swaanendael, not far from the present site of Lewistown. Not long afterwards, the Indians destroyed the settlement, put the inhabitants to death, and repossessed themselves of the land. They only covered up, however, they did not eradicate, a seed that was one day to germinate and grow, until it bore bitter fruit for the Lord Proprietary of Maryland.

When, therefore, Leonard Calvert arrived at St. Mary's, in 1634, the soil within the limits of the charter[1] was in the possession of the natives,[2] Claiborne's plantations alone excepted; and, had he made a settlement on the eastern shore of the Peninsula, there would, in all probability, never have been a State of Delaware. But in 1638,[3] a company of Swedes and Fins, under the auspices of Chancellor Oxenstiern, repurchased from the natives the land formerly sold to the Dutch, and built a fort at the mouth of Christina Creek, which they occupied until 1655, when an invading force from New Amsterdam,

[1] The Dutch had possession of the left, or east bank of the Delaware, prior to this time. This possession, however, as was always contended, gave them no claim to the west shore, which was not affected in any way, by purchase or possession, until the purchase by Godyn. The first settlement of the Dutch in the Delaware was on the present Jersey shore, about four miles below Philadelphia, where Fort Nassau was built in 1623.—Brodhead's *History of New York*, p. 153.

[2] Swaanendael was abandoned by De Vries on the 14th April, 1633.—Brodhead's *History of New York*, p. 228.

[3] Brodhead, p. 282.

under Peter Stuyvesant, established the Dutch rule, and carried back the Dutch title, by relation, to the purchase by Godyn,[1] and the settlement by De Vries at Swaanendael.

In 1659, Lord Baltimore seems to have become uneasy about the increase of the Dutch power in Delaware, and he sent instructions to Maryland to have the matter looked to.[2] Fendall was then governor.[3] An embassy was resolved on, as a preliminary to the severer measures recommended by the Proprietary; and Colonel Nathaniel Utie,[4] whose name is still preserved in the Island of Spes-Utiæ, at the mouth of the Susquehanna, headed a deputation to "the pretended people" across the Peninsula, informing them that "they were seated within his lordship's province

[1] In the histories of Maryland, this is called "Hore Kill," "Hoar Kill," "The Whore Kilns;" but the settlement's name was "Swaanendael," on a stream called the Horekill; and as I refer to the settlement, and not the stream, I use the name of the former.—See Brodhead's *History of New York*, p. 206.

[2] MS. Proceedings in the possession of the Maryland Historical Society.

[3] Brodhead's History of New York, p. 666, where the Dutch ambassadors tell Fendall, the Maryland governor, that, until Utie's unwarrantable proceedings, there never had been any difficulty between New Netherlands and Virginia or Maryland.

[4] For an interesting and graphic account of Utie's visit to "the pretended people," see Brodhead's *History of New York*, pp. 664, 665, 667, wherein Utie is made to appear to be a man of courage and action; and, certainly, from what Stuyvesant is reported to have said to the officers who received Utie, he may be fairly said to have bullied the Dutch, for they were censured for "want of prudence and courage" in their whole treatment of the Marylander.

without notice." But these "people" were in possession of the land by conquest; they held the Swedish forts, and the fair fields around them, as victors; and Utie's whole force consisted but of six followers: so that, although the ambassador delivered his message "in a pretty harsh and bitter manner,"[1] they took no heed of it, but disregarded wholly what they termed his "frivolous demands and bloody threatenings." Nor did the college of the Dutch West India Company, in Europe, to whom Lord Baltimore then appealed, lend a more attentive ear,[2] and especially was it regardless of the plea that the Dutch claim, based on purchase and possession, was no better than Claiborne's, which had been disallowed. As the world went, however, in those days—whether it has mended since is questionable—there was a great difference in the two cases. Claiborne was a single individual, with little but his talent, energy, and the justice of his claims to rely on. The Dutch West India Company were rich and powerful; and their reliance was in forts, and cannon, and soldiers: and that this was a most important difference, the Marylanders seem to have admitted; for their efforts to save the Peninsula rarely went beyond embassies and remonstrances; and no change was effected in the relations of the parties, on the debatable ground, until

[1] Brodhead, p. 664.

[2] McMahon, p. 25; Brodhead's History, p. 685.

the Duke of York took possession of New Amsterdam and its dependencies, the Dutch settlements on the Peninsula, under a grant from Charles the Second, in 1664. This gave Lord Baltimore an English ruler on the Delaware for a neighbor, with whom there seems to have been peaceable intercourse for some years. But in July, 1673, the Dutch repossessed themselves of the New Netherlands,[1] and held them for fifteen months, during which time the Marylanders marched to Swaanendael with an armed force.[2] This expedition, however, though more formidable than Colonel Utie's embassy, does not appear to have had better ultimate results; for, in 1674, we find the king confirming his previous grants to the Duke of York,[3] and learn that the west bank of the Delaware,

[1] Bancroft, vol. ii. p. 322.

[2] Bancroft, who mentions this expedition, refers to Bacon's *Laws of Maryland*, 1676, chap. 21; turning to which, we find an act of assembly curious enough to be cited as printed:—

"An act for punishment of a certain abuse, committed by Henry Ward, of Cecil County, gentleman, against the Right Honorable the Lord Proprietary, and the public.

"Viz: Being a member of the Lower House, in 1674, and informing the House that he had lost a very good horse in the country's service, in the *late expedition* to the Whore Kills, the assembly allowed him 1800 lbs. tobacco in the public levy. But, it being now made evidently appear that he lost no such horse, and that his allegation was egregiously false, &c., he was, by this act, fined 4000 lbs. tobacco," &c.

The title of the act is from the law itself; the rest is the compiler's note.

The *late* expedition to Whore Kills, spoken of as such, in 1674, warrants us in supposing it to have taken place during the fifteen months of Dutch rule, from July, 1673, to October, 1674.

[3] The Case of the Proprietors, &c. Hazard's Register, vol. ii. p. 202.

on the Peninsula, was looked upon as his property by everybody, except Lord Baltimore and the Marylanders.

And now, after a few years, a new actor appeared upon the stage; and we find William Penn obtaining a grant of land, westward of the Delaware, and northward of Maryland, on the 4th March, 1681. A part of his southern boundary was to be "a circle drawn at twelve miles distant from Newcastle northward, and westwards unto the beginning of the 40th degree of northern latitude;" and to the difficulty of tracing this circle do we owe Mason and Dixon's presence in America.

In August, 1681, Penn received, through his agent and kinsman, Markham, from the Governor of Newcastle, "that extensive forest," quoting the language of Chalmers, "lying twelve miles northward of Newcastle on the western side of the Delaware;"[1] and, early in the following year, Markham met Lord Baltimore at Upland, now Chester, to settle the boundaries of the two provinces. Upland was believed to be north of the Maryland line; but an observation having shown that it was twelve miles to the south of it, Penn's agent refused to act further, and returned to England to report to his principal.[2]

Now Penn, from the beginning, had been dissatis-

[1] Chalmers's Hist. An's, p. 640.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 641.

fied with his province, inasmuch "as he found it lying backwards," and the passage up Delaware Bay "a place of difficult and dangerous navigation, especially in the winter season;" and he had accordingly "continually solicited the Duke of York, though in vain, for a grant of the Delaware colony." "But, at length"—I use the words of Chalmers[1]—"wearied with solicitation, or hoping for benefit from a possession which had hitherto yielded him none, the prince conveyed, in August, 1682, as well the town of Newcastle, with a territory of twelve miles around it, as the tract of land extending southward from it, upon the river Delaware to Cape Henlopen."[2] The discovery of the true latitude at Upland made this grant more than ever important to Penn; and with the title it conferred, such as it was, he came to America, and took possession of the territory on the 28th October, 1682.

And so, the seed sown at Swaanendael, and

[1] Chalmers, p. 643, and authorities there referred to, which seem to make out a plain case to the effect of the text.

[2] "The Case of the Proprietors and Province of Pennsylvania, and the three lower counties of Newcastle, Kent, and Sussex on Delaware, to be heard before the Right Honorable the Lords of the Committee of his Majesty's most Honorable Privy Council for Plantation Affairs, at the Cockpit at White Hall, on Thursday, 23d February, 1737. By W. Murray"—(Lord Mansfield, afterwards.) The printed paper, prepared for the committee, is in the collection of the Maryland Historical Society, and is copied into *Hazard's Register*, vol. ii. p. 200. It is a setting forth of Penn's case by his counsel, and is a useful document, both as regards facts and dates; the latter being copiously given.

covered up and trodden upon by the Indians, and watered with blood, had germinated; and a fair tree, with spreading branches, which neither Utie, nor the foray of 1673, had been able to uproot, had arisen from it, and Penn was reposing in its shade, on the banks of the broad river that flowed past it.[1] And so, Delaware was lost to Maryland.

But this, though the ultimate result, was not accomplished without resistance on the part of Lord Baltimore. The king, in council, was appealed to. The matter was referred to the Committee of Trade

[1] It is, of course, idle to renew now, except for argument's sake, the questions mooted and settled near two hundred years ago. But it may be said, that if the grant of Charles I. to Lord Baltimore failed to carry, in effect, the entire territory conveyed in terms, because of the adverse possession of the Dutch at Hoarkill, or Swaanendael, at the date of Lord Baltimore's charter, yet that, when Charles the Second obtained the title to the whole by conquest, through the Duke of York, in 1664, the acquisition ought to have enured to the benefit of the first grantee; because, notwithstanding the stress laid by Penn upon the words "*hactenus inculta*," in Lord Baltimore's grant, it can, really, hardly be supposed that the king, claiming the whole territory in virtue of Cabot's discovery, could have intended to recognize and protect the Dutch at Swaanendael, whom he could only have regarded as "squatters"—to apply an expressive modern term—upon his property. But, even were it otherwise, and "*hactenus inculta*" excluded the Swaanendael settlement, yet it was surely only to the extent of the possession and actual cultivation—a single brick house and some fields adjacent, such as might have been cleared in a year or two. And it is difficult to see how this brick house and fields came to spread themselves out until they covered the present State of Delaware. As already said, the questions involved have long since been settled, and against the views here taken; but the right of Penn, under the grant of the Duke of York, to Delaware, as against Lord Baltimore, might not, perhaps, be quite as clear were it to be litigated now as it was in 1685.

and Plantations. The two proprietors appeared before it. There was an eager controversy, in which Lord Baltimore relied on his original grant, and Penn on the fact that such grant expressly reserved cultivated lands, and consequently the settlement of Swaanendael and its results.[1] Finally, the Committee, following a common practice in arbitrations, split the difference,[2] directing the Peninsula, north of a line west from Cape Henlopen, to be divided between the parties; and so Penn obtained a road to his too-backward-lying province just as wide and as long as the present State of Delaware, with a title dating back to Godyn and De Vries.

This was on the 13th of November, 1685, when the Duke of York, under whom Penn claimed, was king. Charters were of small consideration, and there was a *quo warranto* out against that of Maryland.[3] Lord Baltimore's policy was submission. The tide was against him. At last it turned. But it placed a

[1] "The Case of the Proprietors," already referred to.

[2] This division of the peninsula was, perhaps, not an original idea with the Committee of Trade and Plantations; for, in the discussion which took place between Governor Fendall, Heermans, and Waldron, at Patuxent, on the 16th October 1659, the Dutch ambassadors, while denying Lord Baltimore's claim *in toto*, yet, "to prevent further mischief," proposed that "three rational persons" might be chosen from each province, "to meet at a certain day and time, *about the middle* of between the Bay of Chesapeake and the aforesaid south river (Delaware), or Delaware Bay, at a hill lying at the head of Sassafras River," with full power to settle the boundary between New Netherlands and Maryland.—Brodhead's *History of New York*, p. 667.

[3] McMahon, p. 33; Bancroft, ii. p. 243.

Protestant upon the throne, and was followed by a sectarian tempest in Maryland that prostrated the proprietary government, and threw the province into the hands of the crown, by which its affairs were administered until 1716.[1] Penn was not much better off in these times than Lord Baltimore. Pennsylvania, like Maryland, was taken from the proprietor, and although soon restored to him, yet he, as well as his neighbors, had cogent reasons for postponing the controversies about boundary.[2]

On the accession of Queen Anne, Penn was able to obtain an order in council on the 23d of June, 1708, for the enforcement of the decision of 1685,[3] but nothing was done under it, and in 1718 he died; and in February, 1723, we find Mistress Penn making an agreement with Lord Baltimore to preserve peace upon the borders for eighteen months, in the expectation that during this time the boundaries could be settled.[4] But border feuds are not to be stayed by parchments; and things seemed to have reached a pass that made it necessary for the proprietors to address themselves in earnest to the adjustment of their differences; and accordingly, on the 10th of May, 1732, a deed was executed between the children and devisees of Penn and the great grandson of

[1] McMahon, p. 35.

[2] 1 Proud., pp. 347, 377.

[3] The Case of the Proprietors, &c.; Hazard, p. 200; 1 Proud., p. 294.

[4] *Ibid.*

the first Lord Baltimore, stipulating, in effect, for a line due west from Cape Henlopen,[1] across the Peninsula, from whose centre another line should be drawn tangent to a circle twelve miles from Newcastle, while a meridian from the tangent point should be continued to within fifteen miles from Philadelphia, whence should be traced the parallel of latitude westward that was to divide the provinces. Should the meridian cut a segment from the circle, the segment was to be a part of Newcastle County. This parallel of latitude is the Mason and Dixon's line of history.

Attached to this agreement was a small map, well known as Lord Baltimore's map. It represented the general features of the country in relation to the boundary; and the outline of the State of Delaware is marked on it in red lines, supposed to have been drawn by Lord Baltimore himself. One looks with some interest on these red lines, and recollects their potency. A king, remarkable in history mainly through the circumstances of his death upon the scaffold, had granted to a subject what it cost the monarch nothing to acquire—the homes, across the

[1] The Cape Henlopen here referred to is not the point now known as such, opposite to Cape May, and which is called Cape Cornelius on Lord Baltimore's map, but the point where the States of Maryland and Delaware now abut together upon the ocean, marked Fenwick's Island on the latest map of Maryland, about fifteen miles to the southward of the present Cape Henlopen.

sea, of a free and brave people, whose hospitality and unsuspecting confidence alone made the grant available; and, with royal magnificence, had bounded his gift by parallels of latitude, the courses of mighty rivers, and the headlands of ocean; and the subject, with scale and compasses,[1] apportioned his territory with his neighbors, settled the lines of what were to become adjacent sovereignties, and thus accelerated the progress of those events which, at length, extinguished the council-fires at which his ancestors had warmed themselves when they were strangers in the land, and whose last faint blaze was fed with the unstrung bows and blunted arrows of the forest princes of the Peninsula. One looks with interest, we say, on handiwork so trifling, when it becomes so potent for results; and the map, in reality, subsequently became of great significance.

But it was one thing to execute the deed of 1732 on parchment, and another thing to execute it on the disputed territory.

[1] "Instructions" MS. at Annapolis, quoting the testimony of Mr. Paris, describing Lord Baltimore, in the presence of the Penns, looking at the maps, "when the defendant, Lord Baltimore, measured with a pair of compasses one of said written maps, and took his scale or measure from the distance between Newcastle and the circle, or part of the circle there drawn, and from such measure set off a larger distance for fifteen miles south of Philadelphia, at which distance he wanted his head or northern boundary should be marked on one of the written maps accordingly."

"Lord Baltimore's map" was engraved on copper, and impressed, or printed, upon all the deeds, commissions, &c. relating to the boundary question.

In the first place, there was a difficulty in fixing the point in Newcastle that was to be the centre of the circle. In the next place, it was questioned whether the twelve miles were to be a radius or the periphery; and lastly, there was a doubt about the true Cape Henlopen. The result was to suspend proceedings under the deed.[1]

And now, Lord Baltimore did what neither improved his cause nor bettered his reputation. Treating his own deed as a nullity, he asked George the Second for a confirmatory grant according to the terms of the charter of 1632.[2] It was very properly refused, and the parties were referred to the Court of Chancery; and here Lord Hardwicke decided, in effect,[3] that the true Henlopen was the point insisted on by the Penns; that the centre of the circle was the middle of Newcastle, as near as it could be ascertained; and that the twelve miles were a radius and not the periphery. This was in 1750. Other difficulties now arose. It was important to Lord Baltimore to shorten, if possible, the statute mile; and

[1] The difficulties made by the Maryland commissioners, and the arguments thereupon—which are able and copious—on both sides, are to be found in a paper in the archives at Annapolis, indorsed: "Instructions on several doubts arising among the commissioners touching the execution of the decree in the case of Penns *vs.* Lord Baltimore." The paper is without date, but is evidently a law paper issuing from the Court of Chancery in the case referred to.

[2] Case of the Proprietors, &c.

[3] 1 Vesey, Sen., 444.

the mode his friends adopted was to measure it on the surface of the ground, and not horizontally. So Lord Hardwicke was again applied to, and horizontal measurements were adopted. This was in March, 1751. Still, things were not clear. The shorter the line across the Peninsula—its beginning on the Delaware side being fixed—the better for Lord Baltimore, for the nearer would the centre of it be to the river. And so here, again, his friends came to his aid, and insisted that Slaughter's Creek, a channel separating Taylor's Island from the Chesapeake, gave the western terminus.[1] But the Penns demanded that the line should be continued to the bay shore itself, from which the broad waters of the great estuary stretched, unbroken by headland or island, to the remote and dim horizon. And again was Lord Hardwicke referred to. But, in the meantime, Lord Baltimore died, and the suit abated, and the whole proceedings fell to the ground. When they were revived, and the heir of Lord Baltimore was made a

[1] From the east side of Slaughter's Creek to the west shore of Taylor's Island was about three miles; so that the advantage to Lord Baltimore, had the line stopped at the creek, would have been a wedge of land a mile and a half, or thereabouts, wide at the southern end, running out to nothing at the tangent point, some eighty odd miles distant. The exact difference in the length of the lines was 3 miles 273½ perches, and the exact distance to the tangent point 81 miles, 73 chains, 30 links. Could the pretence that the twelve miles were a periphery, and not a radius, have been sustained, there would have been taken from Delaware the above length by a width of one and a half miles at the southern, and about eight miles at the northern end.

party to them, new difficulties were presented in his refusal to be bound by the acts of his ancestor. If, however, there was anything that could equal the faculty of the Marylanders in making trouble in this long lawsuit, it was the untiring perseverance with which the Penns devoted themselves to the contest, and followed their opponents in all their doublings. And they had their reward; for, on the 4th of July, 1760, another deed was executed, under which the controversy was finally closed.[1]

It is not intended here to discuss the quantum of blame proper to be attached to the parties respectively, who, from time to time, figured in these transactions. The inquiry is not germain to the matter in hand, and would be otherwise unprofitable. When the actions of the dead are made a shibboleth of party, their examples become practically useless as historical teachings. The attempt to exhume the details of buried periods of religious or high political excitement, creates too often, as experience has shown, a cloud of human passions above the living laborers, which obscures the truth to the eyes of the present generation. If the title of the elder Penn, derived from the Duke of York, which rested on the

[1] The deed of 1760 has been printed by Mr. Edward D. Ingraham, a lawyer of standing at the bar of Philadelphia. It is a treatise in itself; and, whether for technical accuracy, as a rare piece of conveyancing, legal learning, or historical interest, is not surpassed by any paper of its kind. The duplicate original is preserved in the archives of Maryland at Annapolis.

conquest of Peter Stuyvesant, which, in its turn, went back to the purchase by Godyn and the obliterated settlement of De Vries—if this title was an indifferent one, inconsistent as it was with the terms of the grant to Lord Baltimore; and if the bisection of the Peninsula, at Penn's instance, by the Committee of Trade and Plantations, had more in it of convenience than justice, yet the successive lords proprietary of Maryland, as this rapid sketch has shown, were, perhaps, quite as loose in their attempts to preserve their territory as their opponents had been in the proceedings that gave them foothold upon it. The truth probably is, that the Penns and Lord Baltimore had not less land-greed, because their possessions were estimated in square miles, than is common to those who count by square feet only. With them, the affair was a business one, and they treated it so throughout.[1] The elder Penn and the first Lord Pro-

[1] There is, in the collection of the Maryland Historical Society, a manuscript map made by Col. Thomas Cresap, showing the country about the western confines of Maryland, on which there is the following indorsement in a handwriting of a much later date:—

"The Lords Baltimore, in their disputes with the Penns on one border, and Lord Fairfax on the other, had long and deep heads to contend with, and did not get their full rights. If Lord Frederick (who signed the deed of 1760) had come over to Maryland, and lived among his tenants, instead of running about the continent of Europe, from Paris to Constantinople, and threading the labyrinth of the Grecian Archipelago, having pictures drawn of the Greek females of the different islands, it would have been better for himself and his province; and he would have escaped the censure of Sterne,

prietary of Maryland owe their prominence in American history to considerations remote from the merits of the minor questions here discussed. The principles upon which governments are founded, and not the extent of territory they affect, or the mode of its acquisition, mainly attract to them the attention of mankind.

The temptation is strong to fill up the meagre outline here given of the boundary controversy, between Pennsylvania and Maryland, with some details of the border life of the period in question. But time does not permit. The prose and poetry of Scott have made the borders of Scotland immortal. The same great novelist would have found in the feuds of the Peninsula, and along the northern confines of Maryland, as ample materials for his genius to combine, as much diversity of character and as thrilling incident, as magnificent scenery, and as wild adventure, as were furnished him by the history of his native land. The Catholic gentleman of Maryland, gallant, brave, and impetuous—his battle-cry "Hey for Saint Marie's!"—the stern uncompromising Puritan, shouting

who, in his *Sentimental Journey*, has given him, under the name of Mundungus, to the world, in no enviable light."

The writer of the above had, doubtless, in his mind, "A Tour to the East, in the years 1763 and 1764, with Remarks on the City of Constantinople and the Turks. Also, Select Pieces of Oriental Wit, Poetry, and Wisdom. By F. Lord Baltimore. London: Printed by W. Richardson and S. Clark. MDCCLXVII." A copy of this, in the collection of the Historical Society of Maryland, certainly does not put Lord Baltimore on a level with the author of Anacharsis.

as he fought, "In the name of God, fall on."[1] The Swedes and the Hollanders,—and, among the Indians, the Susquehannas, and the Minquaas, and the Delawares, were all active in the strife that prevailed for a long series of years. Nor was it confined to individuals. Cresap's quarrel involved the provinces in what was almost open war;[2] and, in "the Case stated," that has more than once been resorted to in the preparation of this address, it is charged that, on the death of Gordon, the Governor of Pennsylvania, in 1736, "the invasions from Maryland became more terrible and more frequent."[3] The troubles at the manor of

[1] Bozman, vol. ii. p. 525; where an account is furnished of the battle of the Severn, March 26, 1654.

"Then the word was given, *In the name of God, fall on; God is our strength;* that was the word for *Providence* (the then name of Annapolis). The Marylander's word was, *Hey for Saint Marie's.* The charge was fierce and sharp for a time; but, through the glorious presence of the Lord of Hosts, manifested in and towards his poor oppressed people, the enemy could not endure, but gave back," &c. &c.—*Babylon's Fall, by Leonard Strong.*

[2] Day, in his *Historical Collections*, p. 693, calls Cresap "a blustering and desperate bully, who had volunteered his services to the Governor of Maryland to raise a party of marauders to drive off the Pennsylvania settlers." This is a very different character from that given to him by Mr. Brantz Mayer, in a very admirable discourse pronounced by him before the Maryland Historical Society, called "Logan and Captain Michael Cresap," May 9, 1851.

A small volume, *The Life of Michael Cresap*, was published at Fredericktown, Maryland, in 1826. It is without arrangement, and has neither beginning nor ending; but is valuable, nevertheless, as connected with border troubles. There is a copy in the collection of the Maryland Historical Society.

[3] Hazard's Register, vol. ii. p. 212.

Nottingham, near Chester, brought Hart, the Governor of Maryland, and Keith, the Governor of Pennsylvania, with their respective retinues of armed men, together upon the scene;[1] and, indeed, there was hardly a settlement upon the boundary, or near to it, that had not its attendant narrative of romantic interest. Then, again, there were the time-servers of those days,[2] the men who "carried water on both shoulders," to use the phrase that has come down to us, and, with a patent from Lord Baltimore, and a grant from Penn, obtained exemption from all service, by being Marylanders when called upon from Pennsylvania, and Pennsylvanians when Maryland had need of them.

These are themes for the future novelist, however, rather than the historian. They had but small influence, if any, on the general current of public affairs; and they are referred to only for the purpose of showing that too much importance was not attached to the settlement of the boundary between the provinces. To this we will now return.

The commissioners appointed under the deed of 1760 addressed themselves, at once, to the comple-

[1] McMahon, p. 36.

[2] The deed of 1732. The original is not to be found in the archives of Maryland, where a duplicate original ought to be; but there is a printed copy, with the following imprint to the pamphlet: "Philadelphia: Printed by B. Franklin, at the new printing-office near the market. MDCCXXXIII." A rough copy (wood-cut) of Lord Baltimore's map is appended to the deed.

tion of the peninsular east and west line, and to tracing the twelve mile circle—appointing to this end the best surveyors they could obtain. The mode of proceeding was to measure with the common chain, holding it as nearly horizontal as they could, the direction being kept by sighting along poles, set up in what they called *vistos*, cut by them through the forest. The original field-notes of these surveys are preserved in the Maryland archives, and do credit to the parties.[1]

But the progress made was very slow; and, at the end of three years, little more was accomplished than the peninsular line and the measurement of a radius. This seems to have disappointed the expectations of the proprietors, for we find that, on the 4th of August, 1763, the Penns, Thomas and Richard, and Lord Baltimore, then being together in London, agreed with Charles Mason[2] and Jeremiah Dixon, "two ma-

[1] The surveyors of 1761 were, John F. A. Priggs, John Lukens, Archibald McClean, Archibald Emory, Jonathan Hall, John Watson, John Stapler, Thomas Garnett, and William Shankland; of these, Garnett, Hall, Lukens, and McClean seem to have been the most active.—See *Archives at Annapolis, and Proceedings of the Commissioners.*

In 1763, David Rittenhouse had been employed by the Penn family "in making some geographical arrangements preparatory to the final establishment of the boundaries."—*Memoirs of Rittenhouse,* p. 146.

[2] The facts and dates, regarding the doings of Messrs. Mason and Dixon in running their lines, are all obtained from their original field-notes preserved in the State Department at Annapolis.

Bancroft speaks of Mason and Dixon as having run the line in 1761. It

thematicians or surveyors," "to mark, run out, settle, fix, and determine all such parts of the circle, marks, lines, and boundaries, as were mentioned in the several articles or commissions, and were not yet completed." And, thus, Mason and Dixon appear upon the scene, leaving England towards the close of August, and landing at Philadelphia on the 15th of November, 1763. They began their work at once. They adopted the peninsular east and west line of their predecessors, the radius and the tangent point. This left them the tangent, from the middle point of the peninsular line, to "the tangent point," the meridian from thence to a point fifteen miles south of the most southern part of the city of Philadelphia, with the arc of the circle to the west of it, the fifteen mile distance, and the parallel of latitude westward from its termination, to ascertain and establish.

was not commenced till 1764, and not completed by them until 1767, and not finally marked till 1768.—See *Bancroft*, vol. ii. p. 396.

Mason was an assistant of Dr. Bradley at the Royal Observatory at Greenwich.—*Encyclopedia Americana.*

After their employment in America, they were employed, under the direction of the Royal Society, to observe the transit of Venus across the sun at the Cape of Good Hope, in 1769.—*Philosophical Transactions*, vol. lviii. p. 270. London.

When Mayer's Lunar Tables were sent to London to compete for the prize offered by the Board of Longitude, Mason made improvements and corrections in them, and they were published as "Mayer's Lunar Tables, improved by Mr. Charles Mason," in 1787. Lalande says, in his *Bib. Astron.*, p. 601: "Mason fut desespéré de n'avoir pas les 250,000 livres qu'il croyait lui être dues pour les tables de la lune; mais il avait mal interprété l'acte du parlement: ses tables n'etaient pas faites d'après la théorie."—Delambre, *Biographie Universelle.*

They brought to their task, we may suppose, more perfect instruments, and more accurate mathematical knowledge, than the previous surveyors.[1] But, so far as the work of these last went, Mason and Dixon do not seem to have mended it; for they record, in their proceedings of November 13, 1764, that the true tangent line, ascertained by themselves, "would not pass one inch to the westward or eastward" of the post marking the tangent-point set in the ground by those whom they superseded; so that, after all, the sighting along poles, and the rude chain-measurements of 1761 and 1762, would have answered every purpose, had the proprietors only thought so.[2]

Having verified the tangent point, they proceeded

[1] "The astronomical observations were made with an excellent sector of six feet radius, constructed by Mr. Bird, the first which ever had the plumb-line passing over and bisecting a point at the centre of the instrument."—*Maskelyne's Introduction to Mason's Observations: Philosophical Transactions*, vol. lviii. p. 271, 1768.

The sector would seem to have belonged to Mr. Penn.

[2] The volume of the *Philosophical Transactions*, above referred to, contains a very minute description of Mason and Dixon's mode of continuing a right line, which they begin by saying "was done by setting up marks with the assistance of an equal altitude or transit instrument (for it was contrived so as to serve either purpose at pleasure), made by Mr. John Bird, of the same construction with that described by Le Monnier, in the preface to the single volume of the French *Histoire Celeste*." "The telescope magnified 25 times." *Ibid.*, p. 274.

"The measurements were made with a chain, established from a brass statute-yard which was proved and corrected, in the course of the work, by another statute-chain (kept only for that purpose) made from the said brass yard."—*Ibid.*, p. 277.

to measure, on its meridian, fifteen miles from the parallel of the most southern part of Philadelphia, the north wall of a house on Cedar Street occupied by Thomas Plumstead and Joseph Huddle. They thus ascertained the north-eastern corner of Maryland, which was, of course, the beginning of the parallel of latitude that had been agreed upon as the boundary between the provinces.

On the 17th of June, 1765, they had carried the parallel of latitude to the Susquehanna, and thereupon received instructions to continue it "as far as the provinces of Maryland and Pennsylvania were settled and inhabited."

On the 27th of October, they had reached the North Mountain, and they record in their journal that they got Captain Shelby to go with them to its summit, "to show them the course of the Potomac," when they found that they could see the Allegheny Mountain for many miles, and judged it, "by its appearance, to be about fifty miles distance, in the direction of the line."

On the 4th of June, in the following year, 1766, we find them on the summit of the Little Allegheny, and at the end of that summer's work. The Indians were now troublesome, and they were masters in the woods.[1]

[1] One of the few remarks contained in the field-notes of Mason and Dixon is made under date of September 25th of this year, 1766, as they

In 1767, the surveyors began operations on the parallel of latitude, late. A negotiation with the Six Nations was necessary, which Sir William Johnson had promised to conduct, and this was not concluded before May; so that it was not until the 8th of June that the surveyors reached their halting-place of the preceding year, on the summit of the Little Allegheny. On the 14th of June they had advanced as far as the summit of the Great Allegheny, where they were joined by an escort of fourteen Indians, with an interpreter, deputed by the Chiefs of the Six Nations to accompany them. And so the Indian becomes their protector against the Indian, as they mark the boundary of the sovereignties that, before long, are to obliterate the very memory of their aboriginal possessors. And the escort seem to have had some vague apprehension in regard to the results of all this gazing into the heavens, and measuring

were reviewing the line on their return. The entry is in Mason's handwriting:—

"*Nota Bene:* From any eminence in the line, where fifteen or twenty miles of the visto can be seen (of which there are many), the said line, or visto, very apparently shows itself to form a parallel of latitude.

"The line is measured horizontal; the hills and mountains, with a 16½-foot level; and besides the mile posts, we have set posts in the true line marked *W*, on the west side, all along the line opposite the stationary points, where the sector and transit instrument stood. The said posts stand in the middle of the visto, which is about eight yards wide."

See also *Philosophical Transactions*, already referred to, where it is said that this visto of eight yards wide was "seen about two miles, beautifully terminating to the eye in a point."

upon the earth, and to have become restless and dissatisfied; and, on the 25th of August, the surveyors note that "Mr. John Green, one of the chiefs of the Mohawk nation, and his nephew, leave them, in order to return to their own country." The roving Indians of the wilderness, regardless of the escort, begin also to give the party of white men uneasiness; and on the 29th of September, twenty-six of the assistants quit the work for fear of the Shawnees and Delawares. Mason and Dixon have now but fifteen axemen left with them; but, nothing disheartened, they send back to Fort Cumberland for aid, and push forward with the line. At length, they reach a point, two hundred and forty-four miles from the river Delaware,[1] and within thirty-six miles[2] of the whole distance to be run. And here, in the bottom of a valley, on the borders of a stream, marked Dunkard Creek on their map, they come to an Indian war-path, winding its way through the forest. And here, their Indian escort tell them, that it is the will of the Six

[1] The exact distance, as given in the MS. return of the commissioners, preserved at Annapolis, and dated Nov. 9, 1768, is 244 miles, 38 chains, and 36 links from the Delaware, or 230 miles, 18 chains, and 21 links from the place of beginning, at the north-east corner of Maryland.

[2] By Col. Graham's report, the five degrees of longitude in the latitude of the boundary line would make the southern boundary of Pennsylvania 266 miles, 24 chains, and 80 links, from which, deducting the distance run—viz: 230 miles, 18 chains, and 21 links—and we have 36 miles, 6 chains, and 59 links as the exact distance remaining to be run from the war-path, west.—*Graham*, p. 35.

Nations that the surveys shall be stayed. There is no alternative but obedience; and, retracing their steps, they return to Philadelphia, and, reporting all these facts to the commissioners under the deed of 1760, receive an honorable discharge on the 26th of December, 1767. Subsequently, and by other hands, the line was run out to its termination; and a cairn of stones, some five feet high, in the dense forest, now marks the termination of Mason and Dixon's line, calling by that name the southern boundary of Pennsylvania; and, standing on the cairn, and looking to the east and north, a fresher growth of trees in these directions indicates the ranges of the vistas, so often mentioned.[1] But mount the highest tree adjacent to the cairn, that you may note the highest mountain within the range of vision, and then, ascending its summit, take in the whole horizon at a glance, and seek for a single home of a single descendant of the sylvan monarchs, whose war-path limited the surveys, and you will seek in vain. But go back to the cairn, and listen there, in the quiet of the woods, and a roll, as of distant thunder, will come unto the ear, and a shrill shriek will pierce it, as the monster and the miracle of modern ingenuity —excluded from Pennsylvania as effectually, by the line we have described, as the surveyors of old were

[1] From the verbal statement of B. H. Latrobe, Civil Engineer. The corner is not far from the Board Tree Tunnel, on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

stayed by the Indian war-path—rushes around the south-western angle of the State, on its way from the city which perpetuates the title of the Lord Proprietary of Maryland, to find a breathing-place on the Ohio, in the "Pan-handle" of Virginia.[1]

The lines, whose history has thus been given, were directed to be marked in a particular manner, both by the agreements of the parties, and the decree of Lord Hardwicke; and the surveyors accordingly planted, at the end of every fifth mile, a stone, graven with the arms of the Penns on the one side, and of the Baltimore family on the other, marking the intermediate miles with smaller stones, having a *P* on one side, and an *M* on the other. The stones with the arms were all sent from England. This was done on the parallel of latitude as far as Sideling Hill: but here, all wheel transportation ceasing in 1766, the further marking of the line was the vista of eight yards wide, with piles of stone on the crests of all the mountain ranges, built some eight feet high, as far as the summit of the Allegheny,

[1] The southern boundary of Pennsylvania, five degrees of longitude, was not long enough to take the line to the Ohio, and its western boundary being a meridian, and the course of the Ohio, upwards, being first, gently, and afterwards abruptly, inclining to the east, the consequence was, that a narrow strip was left between the river and the meridian, belonging to Virginia, and which is as well known in Virginia as "the Pan-handle," as the capital of the State is known as Richmond—there being a fancied resemblance in this projection, north of the Pennsylvania line, to the handle of a frying-pan, looking upon the body of the State as the basin, or bowl.

beyond which the line was marked with posts, around which, stones and earth were thrown, the better to preserve them.[1]

The map of the line was not completed for some time after the field work terminated. It was then engraved, and copies were distributed among the parties interested. The Maryland copy I have seen. It represents the line, with the country on either side—the width of the engraving being about an inch and a half—beginning at Cape Henlopen and extending to the Indian war-path. The crossings of streams, mountain-ranges, and roads are carefully marked. The road-crossings are quite numerous on the Peninsula: beyond the Allegheny, there are but two, one of which is lettered "Braddock's Road." Houses, where they occur, are designated, with their distances from the line, and are not unfrequent as far as the Susquehanna. But the topographical, conventional sign for forest, and thick woods, is,

[1] Proceedings of Commissioners, MS. in Archives at Annapolis: In 1768, the Commissioners had the stones, that had been planted, examined, and sundry others planted, where Mason and Dixon had omitted to do so—and there is an autograph memorandum of S. B. Bordley, Esq., dated Sept. 10, 1768, at Annapolis, in regard to the stone at "the middle point" on the peninsular east and west line, stating, that it had been dug up by persons engaged in *money-digging!* the belief being strong that the buccaneers, Kidd and others, had landed and buried treasures on the shores of the Chesapeake. No doubt, ignorant persons, knowing nothing of the survey, had supposed the stone, with its armorial bearings, to be a mark left by the freebooters to indicate the locality of their treasure.

after all, that which gives character to the general appearance of the map.

The history of Mason and Dixon's line has thus been brought to a close; and before parting with those whose names have become so familiar, it would be pleasant to add some information in regard to their individual character and personal appearance. But the most careful search has furnished no data on these points. Their letters are the merest business letters. Their journal is the most naked of records. The only thing for fancy, even, to draw inferences from, is their handwriting, and I confess to having studied all their autographs, in the hope of voicing them. But they are almost as silent as the stars, whose positions they were employed, night after night, in noting. Still, they are not wholly dumb. Mason's signature is a remarkably good one—written slowly and carefully, and with very great uniformity in its size, which is that of common, full, running hand. The Christian name is abbreviated to Cha: with a colon to indicate the abbreviation; and in writing the surname, a dot has always been patiently made, from which to start the first hair-stroke of the M. The remaining letters are written in couples. In no signature, of many hundred, has the entire surname been written without taking the pen twice from the paper. It is the same, whether recording the arrival in Philadelphia from England,

FAC-SIMILES OF MASON AND DIXON'S SIGNATURES.

♀ Jan 13. Arrived at Thos Worth's Esqr and lodg'd there that Night

Early Signatures

Chas: Mason
Jere: Dixon

Chas: Mason

Jere Dixon

Signatures 26th Aug 1767 near Maddocks road

Chas: Mason
Jere Dixon

Fellow signatures in the book.

Jere Dixon

Signatures on the survey in the woods west of the Susquehanna

Jere Dixon

or noting the desertion of a majority of the assistants for fear of the Indians. I infer, from these small hints, that Mason was a cool, deliberate, pains-taking man, never in a hurry; a man of quiet courage, who crossed the Monongahela with fifteen men, because it was his duty to do so, though he would have much preferred thrice the number at his heels. Dixon's signature tells a different story somewhat. He began by making it as goodly, nearly, as Mason's, and of about the same size. But this was evidently an effort. All he seems to have cared to do was to put something on paper that would indicate his presence. At times, his *x* is two *c's* placed back to back; again, it is the roughest cross. Occasionally, his signature is very small; again, it is as large and sprawling as a schoolboy's; from all which, I infer that he was a younger man, a more active man, a man of an impatient spirit and a nervous temperament, just such a man as worked best with a sober-sided colleague.

It is cheerfully admitted that all this is very idle speculation; and the only excuse for its introduction is a desire to vary, in some small degree, the dulness of a narrative, affording so few events of striking interest as that we are engaged in.[1]

[1] Besides the boundary line, run as described in the text, Mason and Dixon, under instructions from the Royal Society, availed themselves of the occasion to determine the length of a degree of latitude in the Provinces of Pennsyl-

There is another chapter, however, in the history of this celebrated line. In the course of time, the stone which marked the north-east corner of Maryland was undermined by a brook, and, falling down, was removed and built into the chimney of a neighboring farm-house.[1] When it was missed, the Legislatures of the States of Pennsylvania, Maryland,[2] and Delaware, took the matter in hand, and a joint commission was appointed, which, obtaining the services of Lieutenant-Colonel James D. Graham, a distinguished officer of Topographical Engineers of the United States, caused the work of Mason and Dixon to be reviewed as far as was necessary.

To this end, the twelve mile radius was once more measured; the tangent point and point of intersection were re-located; the meridian and parallel of latitude were run, in part, so as to find their intersection; and the corner-stone was again satisfactorily and permanently set.[3]

vania and Maryland. Their proceedings in doing which are reported at great length, and in the minutest detail, in the *Philosophical Transactions*, and for which purpose the line, from the middle point on the peninsular line, was made use of.

Mason died in Pennsylvania in February, 1787.—*Encyclopedia Americana.* "Mason."

Dixon died at Durham, England, in 1777.—Lalande, *Bibliographie Astronomique*, p. 50; quoted in *Biographie Universelle*, "Mason," where it is said, on the same authority, "que Dixon était né dans un mine de charbon."

[1] Graham's Report, p. 44.

[2] Resolution of December Session, 1845. No. 18.

[3] Graham's Report, p. 79, *et seq.*

Colonel Graham's work corroborated, in all important particulars, the work of his predecessors. Some errors were discovered, however. The tangent point had been placed 157.6 feet too far to the north, and the point of intersection 143.7 feet too far to the south. There was an error, also, in tracing the curve between the two points, the correction of which made the State of Maryland one acre and eighty-seven hundredth parts of an acre larger than Mason and Dixon left the province of the same name.[1] The

[1] Among errors, indicated by Colonel Graham, is one in the latitude of the Observatory on Cedar Street; though this can hardly be called an error, because the correction is due, not to any mistake made by Mason and Dixon, but to a truer appreciation of the exact form of the earth, than was had in their day. The true latitude is 39° 56′ 37″.4 N., or 8″.3 more than the latitude of Mason and Dixon. *See* Graham's Report, p. 21, *in notis.*

One of the results of Colonel Graham's survey was to change the reputed citizenship of several of the border inhabitants. "Mr. W. Smith," says Colonel Graham, "a gentleman who has once served as a member of the Legislature of Delaware, resided a full half mile within the State of Pennsylvania, measured in the shortest direction from his dwelling-house to the circular boundary."—*Graham's Report*, p. 86.

Christiana Church, too, was found to be in Pennsylvania.—*Ibid.*

The history of that portion of the curve east of the due north line, is not within the design of this address. Col. Graham states that it was unmarked, and that he ran about 3¾ miles of it for the convenience of the neighboring residents. In the Journal of the Franklin Institute, vol. iv. 3d series, p. 11 (1842), is a paper entitled, "Mode of tracing a curve of a very large radius, &c.," in which reference is made to field-notes of a survey completed in 1701, under a warrant from William Penn to Isaac Tailer, of Chester County, and Thomas Pierson, of Newcastle County; who, in the presence of Justices of each county, began "at the end of the Horse-Dike next the town of Newcastle," and ran due north twelve miles to a white oak marked with

very able report of Colonel Graham, in which all these matters are stated, was made in 1850, and has been referred to, frequently, in the preparation of this address. And now, the Mason and Dixon's line, of common parlance, begins at a "triangular prismatic post of granite," with the letters *M D* and *P* on the sides, respectively, facing the States to which these letters refer, with the names of the late commissioners, Key, Eyre, and Riddle, and the date, 1849, cut deep on the north side under the letter *P*.[1] This stone is upon land belonging to William Johnson, in a deep ravine, on the margin of a small brook and near its source; and, from this beginning, the line stretches far westward, over mountain and valley, flood and fell, to its western end, the cairn of stones in the forest.

And thus, having brought our narrative down from 1629, when the purchase by Godyn furnished the remote cause of Mason and Dixon's appointment, to 1850, when Colonel Graham made his report, we have arrived, in truth, at the end of our history: but we cannot leave the subject without a few words, suggested by one of the earliest entries in Mason and Dixon's journal.

It is there recorded that, in November, 1763, they

twelve notches; and thence traced the curve eastward to the river Delaware, and westward far enough to complete, in the whole, $\frac{2}{3}$ of a semicircle. This line is stated to have been "well marked with three notches."

[1] Graham's Report, p. 84.

employed a carpenter to build an observatory at the southern part of the city of Philadelphia.[1] It did not take long to erect it, for we soon find them at work there; and on the 6th of January, 1764, they determined its latitude to be 39° 56′ 29″.1 north; and this was their first astronomical calculation in America; and humble and temporary as the building may

[1] The Observatory is mentioned in the following letter, which affords a fair specimen of the style of the correspondence:—

"Sir: According to your desire mentioned to Mr. Dixon, at Chestertown, we have compared the sums of money paid by the Right Hon^ble Lord Baltimore, and the Honorable Thos: and Rich'd Penn, Esq^rs (toward dividing the Provinces), to us and Mr. McLane since our arrival in America; and find on the whole that we have received 615 £ more of the Proprietors of Pensilvania than of Lord Baltimore.

We expect you will please to send 6 or 700 £ that Mr. McLane may receive it at Frederick Town (as you proposed) the 24th of this month, we having no cash to proceed with.

We are S^r
Your most obedient
humble servants,
CHA: MASON.
JER. DIXON.

The North Mountain,
April 14, 1766.

P. S. Besides the above balance, the Pennsylvania Proprietors have paid for erecting the Observatory at Philadelphia & carriage to Brandiwine, &c. &c.

To T. Ridout, Esq^r
Secretary to His Excellency
Horatio Sharpe, Esq. Governor
of Maryland at
Annapolis."

have been in which it was made, it was the first[1] on the continent devoted exclusively, on its erection, to the purposes of astronomical science. From the latitude, thus determined, they found the commencement of the parallel to which they were to give their names; and in 1764, they began, as we have seen, their slow march along it, just ninety years ago, not longer than a man may live; and in 1765, they climbed the summit of the North Mountain, that they might judge of the course of the Potomac. To the eastward, stretching far to the right and left, were the densely wooded slopes of the Blue Ridge, scarred in their midst by the naked rocks that marked the outlet of the vast lake that once covered what is now the valley of Virginia, and which had shrunk, as its waters rushed to the ocean through the gap, into the rivers Potomac and Shenandoah.[2] To the westward, parallel ranges of mountains extended as far as the eye could reach, the depressions on whose crests suggested the places where the Potomac intersected them, and so furnished to the surveyors some rude notion of the topography of the region. Indications of civilized man were rare around, and the most

[1] Rittenhouse's Observatory at Norriton was commenced Nov. 1768, but not completed till April, 1769.—*Memoirs of Rittenhouse*, p. 165.

Lalande, in his *Bibliographie Astronomique*, treating of the numerous observatories in different parts of the world, in 1792, says: "In America, I know of no observatory but that of Mr. Rittenhouse, at Philadelphia."

[2] See Jefferson's Notes on Virginia, in which he speculates on the geology of the State at Harper's Ferry, p. 7.

striking of these was the fortress among the hills, whose gray walls of solid masonry are still visible on the banks of the river, in the ruins of Fort Frederick.[1] In 1767, the surveyors had reached the war-path; and, as at the Indian bidding, they retraced their steps, and looked back from the western slope of the first mountain they ascended on their homeward journey, they recognized no sign of civilization, and knew of none towards which their labors would have led them, had they been permitted to proceed. They, probably, were not imaginative men, and it is not likely that they indulged in many reflections as to the future of the world of mountain and forest and boundless plains, on which they thus turned their backs, on their way to their observatory in Philadelphia. But, had they been as poetical as Darwin, who anticipated the advent of steam to

"Drag the slow barge, or drive the rapid car;"

or, as prophetic as Bishop Berkeley, in the vision, in which he exclaims,

"Westward the course of empire takes its way—"

it is not probable they would have foreseen that, when, eighty-two years later, their work came to be

[1] Erected in 1756 by Governor Sharpe, and garrisoned in that year by Colonel Dagworthy. It is not far from the present town of Hancock, and a prominent object to the traveller on the railroad, on the opposite side of the Potomac, after passing the North Mountain in Virginia, going west. It was a frontier fort, to protect the country round about from the Indians.—McSherry's *History of Maryland*, p. 139.

reviewed, it would be by an officer of the army of a Republic of twenty-three millions of inhabitants—a Republic whose rapid development, in all that constituted the true greatness of a people, would be the wonder of the world—a Republic whose capital, with its stately edifices, would be reflected in the waters of the river, whose devious way they had just sought to trace; and which would number among its marble piles, an observatory, adding new planets to our system, while its astronomers and mathematicians taught man the order of the winds, that they might bear him more certainly across the sea. Would they have foreseen that, not here alone, in the capital, would the skies find readers, but that an observatory, one only of many like it in the Republic, would crown the summit of a hill, looking down on a great city[1] near three hundred miles westward of the war-path so frequently referred to; an observatory, whose corner-stone would be laid by one who had been the President of the Republic, of which his father had been the President before him, and whose walls would arise in comeliness and strength, to inclose all the costly appliances which science and art might place within man's reach to enable him to explore the recesses of the heavens. As poets and dreamers even, such imaginings as these were, in all likelihood, beyond their extremest vision. And sup-

[1] The Cincinnati Observatory is here referred to, whose contributions to astronomical knowledge are so highly appreciated in the scientific world.

pose they had been told that the lightning, which Franklin had then but recently rendered innocuous, was to become man's active, daily, and domestic friend, transmitting his thoughts, visibly, faster than his mind could think, so as to require him to prepare, beforehand, the work his agent was to do; and that, among others of its wondrous performances, it would make the clock, as it beat its seconds in the western observatory, impart isochronism to other clocks beyond the mountains, enabling, at the same time, the watchers of the stars to whisper, in the silence of the night, their discoveries to comrade gazers a thousand miles away. Had such things as these been told to Mason and his colleague, they might well have supposed themselves in a madman's company, or listening to the thousand and second tale of Scheherezade. And yet, the incredible of 1767 is the schoolboy's learning of to-day. Equally startled would they have been, could the story of the Revolution, then so near at hand, have been foretold to these servants of the Lord Proprietary of Maryland and the Proprietors of Pennsylvania, who never spoke of their immediate superiors in office except as "the gentlemen commissioners," and in the deferential and obsequious spirit that was so soon to disappear.[1] But more astonished

[1] The following is from the field-notes of Mason and Dixon, 1766:—

"Mar. 15: C. Mason left Annapolis, and proceeded for the North Mountain, to continue the line. J. Dixon left Philadelphia to attend the gentlemen commissioners at Chester Town."

still can we imagine them, could they have been told, that the results of this revolution having been power, and might, and majesty, and boundless prosperity, of which every individual in the land was a participant, the line they ran would grow into consequence, and be regarded with dread, as fierce intemperate men, with small pride in the past, and less care for the future, spoke of it as a line to be studded with fortresses from end to end, on opposite sides of which hostile nations would be arrayed in arms. But if, with the license of the occasion, we may suppose such things to have been suggested to them, we can, at the same time, imagine their reply, and we can almost hear them saying: "These uses, to which you put the lightning; this erection of cities on river shores, in Indian lands; this tale of battle, and bloodshed, and victory; this dethroning of monarchs and uplifting of their subjects, are astounding results that we cannot appreciate, for we see no elements to produce them, and they shock all the prejudices of our education. To time we leave their development. But, that a people blessed beyond all others, in their realization, if realized they *are* to be, and occupying the proudest place among the nations, because of their wondrous unity, under a government that extent of dominion enfeebles not—should willingly permit their Union to be dissolved, we cannot believe; because, here, we are dealing, not with the future of science or politics, but with the principles of hu-

manity common to all ages; and, depend upon it, whatever the few may wish, the many will be true; and this, our line of survey, will, after all, owe its notoriety to ephemeral oratory, in which it figures as a mere phrase of cant, or to addresses, which will bring to light the few brief records we have left of our transactions." And these, the words which we have put into the mouths of Mason and Dixon, for the sake of the unity of our discourse, we doubt not, will be words of prophecy, as regards the destiny of our country; and that time, which has developed the excitement that has given prominence to the line in question, will furnish, in due season, the solution of present difficulties; and that, while the Mason and Dixon's line of geography will continue to be that whose heraldic insignia are still to be found in field and forest, the Mason and Dixon's line of politics will gradually change its position until, as cloud-shadows pass, leaving earth in sunlight, we shall be seen, of all, to be a united and homogeneous people,[1]

[1] For the causes, and their operation, to which this result will be attributable, see the note to page 6. They are more particularly described in the following extract from a speech of the author on another occasion, and which is quoted here, not for the purpose of invoking the official capacity in which it was delivered as authority, but that the suggestion of the text may be more fully understood, without introducing matter not germain to the scope of the address into the text itself:—

"African colonization offers, in its settlements on the coast of Africa, the only solution of the difficult question presented by the existence, in the same land, of two free races between whom amalgamation by intermarriage is im-

not in this generation, or the next, or the next, but still, at an early day, looking to what we believe, under God, will be the duration of the Republic.

practicable; and it opens an outlet, better than any other, through which the weaker of the two may escape from the pressure of that vast European immigration, which threatens to crush it in a strife for bread—an immigration withheld in mercy until new homes in another continent could be prepared for those who were to disappear before it.

"There are some who believe that this immigration, together with the natural increase of our population, may, one day, so affect wages as to make it questionable, whether free white labor, becoming by that time acclimated to the toil of every part of our country, may not be cheaper, under all circumstances, than slave labor; in which event, it is supposed that a voluntary emancipation, prompted by interest alone, may make our whole colored population free. Should such anticipations ever be realized, the importance of the outlet which colonization has opened in the direction of Liberia, will be all the more highly appreciated; and should slavery, from mere lack of other topics for that party excitement which is a necessity, it would seem, of our condition, still continue to be discussed, eagerly and angrily, in high places, the discussion will, at all events, be made harmless, by the gradual withdrawal of the colored race, of their own accord, from the theatre of the strife."—*Thirty-Seventh Annual Report of the American Colonization Society*, p. 26. January 7, 1854.