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UNIVERSITY  
OF  
CALIFORNIA





A

# MEMOIR

OF THE

## Hon. WILLIAM HINDMAN:



A Paper read before the Maryland Historical Society,

March 10th, 1879.

BY

SAMUEL A. HARRISON, M. D.

Paulum sepultæ distat inertie  
Celata virtus. Non ego te meis  
Chartis inornatum silebo,  
Totve tuos patiar labores

Impune, Lolli, carpere lividas  
Obliviones. Est animus tibi  
Rerumque prudens, et secundis  
Temporibus dubiisque rectus.

HORACE.

Baltimore, 1880.



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HON. WILLIAM HINDMAN.

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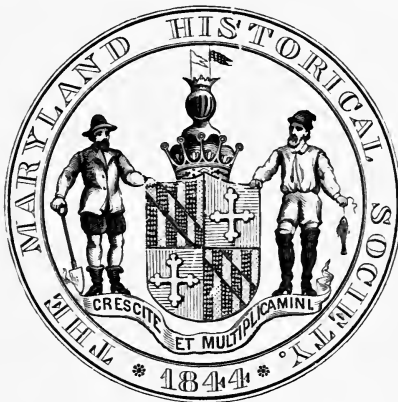
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PEABODY PUBLICATION FUND.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION.

1879-80.

HENRY STOCKBRIDGE.

JOHN W. M. LEE,

REV. E. A. DALRYMPLE, S. T. D.

PRINTED BY JOHN MURPHY,  
PRINTER TO THE MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY,  
BALTIMORE, 1880.

A  
M E M O I R  
O F T H E  
H O N . W I L L I A M H I N D M A N .

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*Gentlemen of the  
Maryland Historical Society:*

A FEW prefatory words, respecting the time and circumstances of the preparation of the paper about to be read, will not be out of place, as they will serve to explain certain expressions. In the year 1876 I was invited by the "Committee for the historical Centennial commemoration of our independency," through one of your own body, Dr. Morris, whom I am pleased to see present—*serus in cælum redeat*—to prepare a brief biographical memoir of some Maryland member of the Continental Congress, to be presented and read in Philadelphia upon the 4th of July of that

year. As my own historical investigations and researches had been limited to my own county of Talbot, I very naturally selected the Hon. Matthew Tilghman, one of the most conspicuous, active and earnest supporters of the patriot cause in Maryland, of whom I had already prepared and printed a memoir, the first ever published of that eminent and useful citizen. But as the duty of writing his biography had been assigned to more capable hands, I was requested to undertake that of a much more obscure personage, one almost "to fame unknown," the Hon. William Hindman, also of Talbot. Although I was engaged in collecting materials for the annals of that county, I confess, that at that time I knew little of this personage, beyond what tradition had handed down of a celebrated political contest between him and another Eastern shore worthy. I undertook the task with an apprehension that I should hardly be able to fill even the two foolscap pages, which were assigned as the limits of these centennial biographies, with matters of historic interest. I, however, set about my task industriously, but found that he had almost passed from the minds of men; that no record of his life had been made, that no letter of his, nor any other piece of writing, had escaped destruction; that no descendant or kinsman had preserved reminiscences of his career; that, in short, his very

memory was "interred with his bones," and covered with the debris of half a century. But upon delving into those shell-heaps, those kitchen middens, the church registers, the court records and the local newspapers of the county, what was my astonishment, when I unearthed the remains of a man—not prehistoric, to be sure, but subhistoric—of large proportions and marked characters. I immediately tasked myself with placing these bones in their natural relations, and had the pleasure of presenting to the Centennial Committee a biographical skeleton of William Hindman, comprised within the narrow limits prescribed. But this did not satisfy me. I then undertook to restore the intellectual form and features of this departed worthy, and from his "footprints on the sands of time," to trace his career in life. The result of this undertaking I now propose to present to this Society.

## M E M O I R .

That character of real life and of romance, who is represented as going through the lowlands of his native Scotland, erecting here and there memorial stones of humble kind to the almost forgotten dead of his religious faith, and recarving the inscriptions, well nigh effaced by time, upon the tombs which piety or affection had erected to the departed worthies of his church and country, has had his many imitators in this centennial year. To build some slight literary monument, perchance no more than a rude heap of words, to those revolutionary fathers who have hitherto reposed in their undistinguished graves, with nought to perpetuate their dying memories, or to revive in the minds of men those recollections of the great and good, which, in the hundred years that have elapsed, have grown faint and dim, is the self-allotted task of many an Old Mortality in the present day. For the religious enthusiasm which impelled Robert Paterson to the performance of his pious work, has been substituted a patriotic zeal for the recovery and preservation from oblivion of the memories of those, who, by wise thought, inspiring word or serviceable deed, wrought for their country in the fearful hour of her birth. This brief memoir of one who, during

those perilous times, and for many years after, held a conspicuous place in the councils of the infant State and nation, and frequently received the plaudits of his countrymen for distinguished services well performed, but who, for want of a biographer, has fallen into almost absolute forgetfulness, must be regarded as an attempt to erect again the fallen stone, that marked a grave now hidden by the vagrant vines or rank weeds of neglect, and to retrace the epitaph of public praise, which once a grateful people inscribed upon its face, but which has now become well nigh obliterated by corroding time.

William Hindman, of whose life and career it is now proposed to give a short account, belonged to an ancient family of the highest respectability of the Eastern shore of Maryland. His grandfather, the Reverend James Hindman, emigrated from England in or about the year 1710, and was presented to the parish of Saint Paul, which, as originally defined, lay wholly within the bounds of Talbot, but which subsequently, by a division of that county made without regard to parish lines, lay partly in Talbot and partly in Queen Anne's. This gentleman was, of course, of the Church of England, then the established church of the Province, and was sent out by the Bishop of London, under whose ecclesiastical control the colony of Maryland had been placed. The Rev.

James Hindman lived but a very few years after his arrival in America, dying in 1713, leaving two children, a son and a daughter, the former of whom bore the name of Jacob. The son, by the testamentary direction of his father, was placed, at the age of eight years, under the care of the Rev. Jacob Henderson, for whom he was named, the Commissary of the Bishop of London for this Province. After the death of the Rev. James Hindman, his widow removed to Dorchester county, of which, it is believed, she was a native, where her children were trained up, and where she died. Upon his coming to man's estate, Mr. Jacob Hindman married a Miss Trippe, the daughter of Henry Trippe, Esq., of Dorchester county, a gentleman of consideration and good social position. In or about the year 1744, he removed to Talbot county, and there having become possessed, by purchase, in 1748, of a large landed estate upon Saint Michael's river, then called by the original name of "Kirkham," but subsequently "Perry Hall," he settled himself as planter and farmer. Immediately upon his becoming a resident of Talbot, he seems to have assumed a position of prominence, both political and social. He became one of the Lord Proprietary's commissioners and justices of the peace, an officer possessing a dignity and importance corresponding with those of a judge of a county



court of the present day. He was elected High Sheriff of the county, a position then more considerable than now, and a vestryman of St. Michael's parish, a post which at that time had civil as well as religious duties attached. He died in 1766, leaving a large family of children as heirs to his very handsome estate; and a will which is curious, because of the scrupulous care with which he provided for the payment of large debts which were not legally obligatory—that is to say, “debts of honor”—to a conspicuous and wealthy citizen of Talbot. His surviving children were five sons and three daughters: James, William, Jacob Henderson, Edward, John, Mary, Elizabeth and Sarah. Of these, some were born in Dorchester, while others were born after his arrival in Talbot. James became a man of some distinction. He raised and commanded an independent company, for military service, in 1774–5.<sup>1</sup> He subsequently was made Treasurer of the Eastern shore. He was a member of the Third Executive Council, under Governor Johnson, and of the House of

<sup>1</sup> This company, or another under the command of Capt. James Hindman, participated in the battle of Long Island, where Maryland troops so well distinguished themselves, and won the plaudits of Washington. The company lost three men in action. The captain has left on record, (*American Archives*, 5th series, vol. II,) a defence of his command, in a long letter, in which he says, replying to some aspersions of a Capt. Stone: “I have the vanity to think the company I have had the honor to command, have behaved themselves as well as any in the service, notwithstanding the dark insinuations that have been thrown out to their prejudice.”

Delegates. After the war of the Revolution, he removed to Baltimore, where he engaged in mercantile business, and died in 1830. Jacob Henderson Hindman, though educated a physician, followed the calling of his grandfather and of him for whom he was named, the Bishop of London's commissary, and became a clergyman. He was Rector at one time of Saint Peter's parish in Talbot county, and then of Great Choptank parish in Dorchester, where he died in 1781 and is buried. John Hindman was an officer in the Maryland line under General Smallwood, having been appointed Lieutenant-Colonel of the 5th Battalion of regulars, commanded by Colonel William Richardson, of Caroline. From him descended Colonel Jacob Hindman of the United States Army, of whom it is said, that "during the campaigns of 1813-14, he discharged the duties of a brave soldier and skilful officer in nearly all the battles on the Niagara frontier," and especially at Chippewa and Bridgewater, where he contributed essentially to the success of the American arms. He died in 1827, leaving one child, the wife of General Gilmor Meredith, of Baltimore. From Colonel John Hindman also descended, through a daughter, James Hindman Barney, Esq., of the same city. Other descendants of Jacob Hindman, the elder, held respectable if not distinguished positions in society. No apology need be offered

for this long account of the family of the subject of this memoir, for the doctrines of heredity have of late assumed an importance that justifies attention to genealogy, as being something more than the mere minister of ancestral pride.

William Hindman was born in Dorchester county, Maryland, April 1st, 1743. Of his early education absolutely nothing is known. As his father was a man of wealth and education, and destined his son for the profession of law, there is little doubt that William Hindman received the very best instruction this country afforded. At a proper age he was sent abroad, as was the custom of the day in Maryland, to acquire a knowledge of the law, and was entered at the Inns of Court in London. After completing his course of study, he returned to America, and was admitted to the bar of Talbot county in the year 1765, the memorable year of the protests against the Stamp Act.<sup>1</sup> His father dying in 1766, he came into the pos-

<sup>1</sup> It may be well to perpetuate every incident that bears upon the Revolution of 1776, however trivial. Mr. Jacob Hindman was one of the justices of Talbot county in 1765, when it was declared by the court and entered among the proceedings that it was "impossible to comply with the said Act," meaning the Stamp Act. Whereupon the court adjourned to a certain day. When it again met, according to adjournment, the justices declared they "would not open nor hold any court," \* \* \* "having since the adjournment of the former court taken into consideration the mischievous consequences that might arise from proceeding to business in the manner prescribed by the above-mentioned Act of Parliament, and it would be highly penal to do anything contrary to the directions of the Act."

session, by will, of the handsome estates of "Rich Range" and "Delf," lying in Oxford neck of Talbot county; and finding the emoluments of the legal profession, followed with whatever industry and ability, in the small and by no means wealthy community in which his lot was cast, to be but meagre, and its duties not sufficient to engross his whole attention, he united the pursuit of law with that of agriculture, as the latter was then promising very ample returns under the change of culture from tobacco to grain, which the county at this time was just making. Mr. Hindman subsequently, by purchase of his eldest brother, Mr. James Hindman, became the owner of the family homestead "Kirkham," which he in turn sold, in 1790, to his brother-in-law, the Honorable Judge William Perry, who had married his sister Elizabeth, and who then called this well-known property "Perry Hall," according to the fashion of the day. He seems to have abandoned the practice of law, after his entry into politics. In 1794, he purchased large estates at the head of Wye, at the place then called "Emerson's" but now "Wye Landing;" and here he settled and made his home for the remainder of his long life; though it is proper to say, in his declining years he spent much of his time, particularly in winter, in the city of Baltimore, with his brothers and their children, and there he died. These are

trivial details, interesting perhaps only to the local antiquary or annalist; but they are such as seem necessary to be mentioned for the sake of completeness, if nothing more.

From the time of his admission to the bar in 1765, as has already been indicated, American politics began to acquire a broader scope, and to call for the exercise of abilities of a higher order than before the colonies, through a clearer perception of their community of interests, had experienced the advantage and necessity of a common policy. The questions relating to local government, all important and absorbing in the earlier days of the Province, had been pretty much settled, by custom or by legislation, and affairs moved on with the ease and regularity of established order. But new questions, originating with the relations of the colonies one to the other and of each or all to the mother country, were arising: and these for their solution required a statesmanship capable of looking beyond the limits of a single member of the family of commonwealths, and of comprehending in its vision all the deversified interests of an incipient confederation of states, or of a consolidated nation. At the time of his arrival at his majority and of his entry upon the active duties of life, the colonies were agitated by the fundamental question, which some years later had a bloody solution, of the rights of the British

Parliament to tax without representation. The Stamp tax was the immediate grievance, in resistance to which there seems to have been an almost perfect unanimity of sentiment in Maryland. In Talbot county, the "worshipful the commissioners and justices of the peace," of which body the father of William Hindman was one, as has just been noticed, refused to proceed with the business of the court, as they were unwilling to give even a semblance of sanction to the act, and were reluctant to render themselves liable to penalties if they violated it. Public meetings were held to protest against the enforcement of the act for the collection of the tax, spirited resolutions were passed in opposition to its provisions and the effigy of a stamp agent was hung upon a gibbet erected before the court-house door in the county town. Hindman's first lessons in practical politics after his return to America from the very precincts of loyal obedience were, therefore, in the direction of colonial independence—lessons which doubtless prepared him for a participation in that great protest which was presented about ten years later. When the crisis in the long dispute with the royal authorities, as to the constitutionality or right of taxing Americans, had arrived, and Maryland, after much delay and hesitancy, in the hope of an accommodation with the mother country, had at last, when longer pause seemed like recreancy

to the principles and cause of liberty, given her adherence to the great declaration of independence, William Hindman was found among the most ardent and earnest advocates and defenders of the position that had been taken by the united colonies. He was one of those who stood beside the venerable patriarch of Maryland, Matthew Tilghman, of Talbot, to sustain that patriot in his labors for the promotion of the cause in this province and State. He was, in 1775, chosen to be one of the "committee of observation," in Talbot, a body composed of sixteen discreet and sensible citizens elected by the people, for the purpose of executing the resolves of the Continental Congress, and of the provincial conventions; and also for the suppression of any movements "tending to disunite the inhabitants of the province in their opposition, or to destroy the liberties of America," by arresting the parties instigating or participating in them, and carrying them before the central "council of safety," then the supreme authority in Maryland. When this body, or a section of it, sat upon the Eastern shore, as it frequently did at several convenient places, Mr. William Hindman acted as its secretary, at least, when it sat in Talbot county. His brother James was placed in command of a military company to overawe loyalists and to enforce obedience to the orders of the council of safety

and of the committee of observation for that county.

The provincial convention of delegates from the several counties of Maryland, assumed legislative as well as executive power within the commonwealth. Of one of those early conventions, which were held during the virtual interregnum between the lapse of the proprietary and the institution of the state government, Mr. Hindman was chosen a member from his county of Talbot. Among the measures authorized by this convention was one with regard to the issuing bills of credit, to defray the expense of defending the province, encouraging the manufacture of saltpetre, erecting a powder mill and other purposes. It appointed for the Eastern shore these gentlemen, to sign the bills as they should be issued: Messrs. Robert Lloyd Nicols, Samuel Sharpe, Richard Tilghman, Jr., James Hindman, Peregrine Tilghman, William Perry, Jeremiah Banning and Joseph Bruff, all of Talbot county; and they were instructed to pay over the bills to Thomas Harwood, who was chosen Treasurer for the Western shore, and to William Hindman, who was chosen to fill the same office for the Eastern shore. These officers were ordered to honor all drafts which should be made upon them by the convention, the council of safety, or either branch thereof. Here is seen the incipency of that almost completely duplicate government which



long subsisted in Maryland, and of which there remain traces to this day. The office of Treasurer for the Eastern shore was abolished in 1841-2, there being now but one Treasurer for the whole State. Mr. Hindman's appointment was renewed or confirmed, in 1777, by the first Legislature that assembled after the adoption of the State constitution, and he continued to hold this position until he was chosen one of the State senators, when he was succeeded by his brother, Mr. James Hindman.

In conformity with the sixty-first section of the constitution of Maryland, which was framed with so much wisdom in 1776, an election of the electors of the Senate of the new State was held on the 25th of November of that year. These electors assembled on the 9th of the following month, and chose fifteen senators, nine for the Western and six for the Eastern shore. Of these, Mr. James Tilghman, of Kent, was one. He declined serving in that capacity, and on the 7th of February, 1777, Mr. Edward Tilghman, of the same county, was chosen. He also declined, when, on the 15th of February, Thomas Beddingfield Hands, also of Kent, was elected. He, too, refused to serve, and on the 12th of April Mr. William Hindman, of Talbot, was chosen, and consented to accept the post, which seems to have had few attractions in that time of danger. He held this honorable

position during the constitutional term of five years, and was reëlected September 17th, 1781. He did not, however, serve through this second term, having been elected a delegate to Congress in December, 1784, having for his colleagues the Honorable John Henry and Luther Martin, who were chosen in the place of the Honorable William Smallwood, Thomas Johnson and Richard Ridgley. While serving in the State Senate, namely, in 1779, a bill came before that body for the confiscation of all British property which might be found within the State. Mr. Hindman had the independence to oppose this measure, as one calculated to work injury both to innocent persons and the patriot cause, which last he conceived required no such violent and questionable measures for its promotion and support. The bill nevertheless passed the Assembly. This temperateness amidst the passions of the hour, it is not unlikely, gave rise, or at least countenance, to the imputation of toryism, which at a subsequent time in an election campaign, was laid upon him—an imputation he was as far as any man in the State from deserving. He thus presented another instance of what has been so often observed, of moderation in times of popular ferment and revolution being taken for disaffection or open treason. In the election of the State Senate in 1786, being then in Congress, he was not chosen; but in 1791

he again took his seat in that body, though for only a brief season, for in 1792 he was elected to fill out the unexpired term of the Hon. Joshua Seney, in the Second Federal Congress. To his place in the State Senate, Mr. Nicholas Hammond, a native of the Isle of Jersey, but of American parentage, and a citizen of Talbot, was elected. This gentleman, of fine abilities and admirable character, declined serving; and Mr. William Winder, of Somerset, was chosen in his stead, November 24th, 1793. This did not, however, terminate Mr. Hindman's services in the Senate of Maryland. After he had lost his seat in Congress by the election of 1798, of which an account will presently be given, he was chosen in 1779 one of the State Senators for the Eastern shore, in the place of his brother-in-law, the Hon. William Perry, who had then just died.

Before concluding this relation of his services to the State of Maryland, it must be stated that, on the 19th of November, 1788, Mr. Hindman was chosen by the General Assembly a member of the thirteenth executive council, under Gov. William Smallwood. In this honorable position he remained three successive years, having been elected again on November 17th, 1789, the Hon. John Eager Howard being Governor, and again on the 9th of November, 1790, the same gentleman occupying the gubernatorial chair. It is very safe to

say, that in all these places of trust and responsibility, Mr. Hindman performed his duties with ability and acceptance. His frequent election evinces the confidence that was reposed in him, and must be taken as an evidence of merit; and though popularity is not to be regarded as the best test of excellence, it is proper to say that tradition relates that no man in Mr. Hindman's county or district was thought to be able to compete with him successfully, when the decision was left to the voice of the people; and history reports that their political leaders, as embodied in the legislative assemblies, had as high an estimate of his worth as the people themselves.

It has already been mentioned that in the year 1784, soon after the close of the war of independence, Mr. Hindman was called by the Legislature, from his place of State senator, to occupy a seat in the Continental Congress. This honor was renewed in 1785, and again in 1786. He continued to serve in this body until its extinction in 1787-8. He therefore witnessed the expiring of the imperfect government under the Articles of Confederation, when the new form of government, under the present Constitution of the United States, was adopted in 1788. By a provision of that instrument, the lower house of Congress was made elective by the people of the several States, and the number of representatives assigned to Mary-

land was six. The first election was held before the State had been laid off into districts; but in 1790, by an act of the Legislature, it was determined that Kent, Cecil, Queen Anne's and Talbot should constitute the second congressional district, the first being made up of all the counties below upon the peninsula. The Hon. Joshua Seney, an eminent citizen of Queen Anne's, who had, at one period, held a seat in the Continental Congress, was elected to a seat to the lower house of the First Federal Congress, which met March 4th, 1789. This gentleman was chosen for the Second Congress also, which met October 24th, 1791. He did not complete his full term of service in this Congress, having been appointed by the Governor of Maryland Chief Justice of the third judicial district, composed of Baltimore, Harford and Cecil counties. Upon his resignation, Mr. Hindman was elected to fill out his unexpired time, and he took his seat at the second session of the Second Congress under the Constitution, having been sworn in on the 30th January, 1793. Before the time for the election of the Third Congress had arrived, the enumeration of the people, as provided for in the Constitution, had been made, and under the new apportionment Maryland became entitled to eight members. In the division of the State into districts, Queen Anne's, Talbot and Caroline constituted the seventh, and the counties lower down

upon the peninsula, the eighth. At the election in 1792, Mr. William Hindman was chosen a member of the Third Congress. Apparently Mr. Hindman had no competitor for the place, and was elected without opposition or contest.<sup>1</sup> Again in 1794, he offered himself for the same position, and was honored with reëlection. A third time he was chosen, in 1796. That he had a competitor is certain, but who he was has not been certainly discovered from any extant record, though there is ground for believing it was Mr. Robert Wright, of Queen Anne's. His elections were always carried by handsome majorities, in the last instance, by upwards of five hundred. It is plain from certain communications in the newspapers that there was but little interest manifested in the elections of 1792 and 1794, but in 1796, there is evidence of the growth of that political ardor, which blazed out with so much intensity in 1798. If time would permit, it would be interesting to the political antiquarian, who is fond of the bric-a-brac of history, to present the objections which were offered by his opponents, in 1796, to Mr. Hindman's election. They would serve this use, at least, to show that the party politicians of to-day are no worse, though it is hard to believe it, than they were in that year. It is to be regretted that they cannot be said to be

<sup>1</sup> It is said, *apparently*, for no evidence has as yet been discovered by the writer of this memoir of any opposition to his election.

any better. Thus Mr. Hindman served three full terms and part of a fourth in the House of Representatives, having been a member of the Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Congresses, from 1793 to 1799.

It will be perceived, from this recital, that Mr. Hindman was honored with positions, in both the State and General governments, of trust and responsibility, and those requiring abilities of no common order. The office of Treasurer, at all times one of great importance, in times of war is second to none, for upon its proper administration depends the strength and efficiency of the military arm; and it should be recollected that during the time of Mr. Hindman's occupancy the States assumed the providing for their forces in the field, as well as for their militia retained at home. This place for the Eastern shore, in the kind of duplicate government which existed in Maryland, to which reference has been made more than once, Mr. Hindman filled during a period of great embarrassment and difficulty; and it is not too much to say, that from him this executive department has derived much of its efficiency. When he took his seat in the Senate of Maryland, a body then chosen not directly by the people as now, but by a college of electors, and not from each county and city, as under the present arrangement, but from the state at large, a certain number being

taken from the Western and a certain number from the Eastern shore, it was his privilege to assist in organizing and perfecting the measures which were so effectual in carrying into successful execution the provisions of that admirable constitution which, framed in 1776, for more than half a century, with but slight modifications, gave prosperity to the State. The early legislation of Maryland, in its independent condition, was not only the most difficult, but, as experience has proved, it was the most earnest and intelligent. It was that which moulded as well as inspired much of the legislation that followed. Where there has been a deviation from the line it suggested, most frequently, there has been a lapse into error. It was in such legislation that Mr. Hindman was aiding, and by such was he educating, the people in the political art of self-government.

His services in Congress, both Continental and Federal, were rendered during the most important period in our civil history. Entering the former soon after the Revolution, then happily closed, when the dangers from a foreign foe had been succeeded by those of domestic discontent, when apprehensions for the independence of the country were followed by fears of disintegration through the inherent weakness of the bonds of the Union; before the vigor of an established government had taken the place of that patriotic zeal which, though



it had been sufficient to carry the States through the contest, was found to be inadequate to meet the requirements of peace; in short, before order had taken the place of chaos, Mr. Hindman gave his support to all measures which were calculated to sustain authority, quiet discontent, and promote harmony among the members of the confederation whose pride of independence and supposed diversity of interest, coupled with the inherent weakness of the central government, jeopardized the very existence of the youthful nation. He was called upon, while serving in this body, to witness the failure, happily without serious disaster to our liberties and unity, of the government under the Articles of Confederation, and the adoption of that Constitution and form of government which are still our pride and our blessing:

—— “Nostrarum  
Grande decus columenque rerum.”

Soon after this great charter became operative, it was his privilege to be chosen to a seat in some of those early Congresses, upon which devolved the important duty of carrying into practical effect its provisions. During the terms of the Third, Fourth and Fifth Congresses, that is to say, from 1793 to 1799, the new government was upon its trial. Its success, as much dependent upon the legislation made in pursuance of the Constitution,

as upon the wisdom of that fundamental law itself, or more dependent, was not yet so perfectly assured as to deprive its friends of all solicitude. Patriotic men watched and waited with the utmost anxiety, feeling that

“Humanity with all its fears,  
With all its hopes of future years,  
Was hanging breathless on its fate.”

Errors, it was felt, at this stage of national existence, would prove fatal, not only to the Union, which even then was considered our palladium, and which the Constitution was made more effectually to accomplish and more surely to perpetuate, but perhaps to free institutions in America. While Mr. Hindman held his seat, dangers of the most threatening kind were warded off or shunned, and measures of the utmost importance effected. In these high duties he participated with the earnestness of the patriot and the wisdom of the statesman. It was his privilege to uphold the hands of Washington, when foreign emissaries and domestic intriguers sought to weaken them; and to defend him from the aspersions and disparagements of secret and open enemies, who, during the second term of his administration, were not ashamed to speak and plot against him. It was to Mr. Hindman, acting in his legislative capacity, that was owing, in some measure, the

preservation of peace, so necessary for the young nation, which was threatened by the complication of our affairs brought about by the French Revolution. He was one of those who withstood the popular clamor, which had its origin in an unwise but generous impulse, for an alliance with the former friend and against the former enemy of America; and who, with a foresight which is the best mark of the true statesman, insisted upon a strict neutrality between the great contending parties in those European wars that long desolated the continent. When negotiations failed to arrest the spoliations of the French upon American commerce, kindly as he might feel towards a people who had aided his country in its time of trouble, he was not willing that gratitude for past favors should lapse into present servility, nor the desire of peace into pusillanimity: so he was not slow to counsel his constituents to assert by their actions what he expressed by his votes in congress, a determination to resist to the utmost the encroachments, and resent *a l'outrance* the arrogant pretensions of the French Directory. He shared the opprobrium, without seeking to avoid it by any evasion, which so unjustly, as we now see, followed those who advocated the ratification of Jay's treaty, and the still greater reproach which, with almost equal injustice, was heaped upon those who gave their support to the

so-called infamous Alien and Sedition laws—a support which in the end cost him his place in Congress and his party the loss of the control of the government.

In the year 1798, Mr. Hindman again offered himself for Congress. Mr. Joshua Seney, having resigned his seat upon the bench of the Western shore and returned to his former residence in Queen Anne's, felt a desire again to enter political life, from which he had withdrawn upon his appointment to a judicial station. This amiable and able gentleman was thought to be the only person likely to compete successfully with Mr. Hindman, who was regarded as the most popular man in his district, and as holding his position almost impreguably. Mr. Seney was accordingly brought forward by his political friends, or rather offered himself, in a handsomely expressed card, for the suffrages of the people. The contestants were both men of experience in legislation, both of conceded abilities, of education, wealth and high social position. Mr. Seney was Mr. Hindman's superior as speaker, and this, at a time when the people were as dependent upon the hustings for their political instruction as they are now upon the press, gave to the former candidate an advantage for which the latter had no compensation or equivalent. Mr. Hindman, however, did not shrink from meeting his eloquent competitor in joint discussion, as was the very

laudable custom of the day; and there are still stories told of effects produced by their rhetorical efforts similar to those that are witnessed or experienced under the fervid preaching of the great pulpit orators and evangelists. The campaign which followed the presentation of the candidates was the most earnest that had been fought upon the political field in Maryland; and in the seventh district it was conducted with a bitterness, which was then not only unexampled, but which for its intensity was remembered by the very oldest people, who have just passed away as not having been equalled in any succeeding contest. Traditions of its character and of the incidents that marked its progress are still preserved by those who delight in the folk-lore of politics. Those who are sometimes alarmed for the safety of the country, by the angry contests of these later times, are reassured by the accounts which have been transmitted of this canvass of 1798, which passed over without any permanent harm: while those who see in the acrimonious disputes of the present an evidence of a degeneracy in our politics and public men, are prompted to soften their censures by a contemplation of the manner in which the campaign fought by Hindman and Seney was conducted by those, who are called the very fathers of the republic, in days which are thought to have been those of high motive and noble action.

To trace the political parties of this country to their origin is not permitted by the limitations of this memoir, even if it were within the ability of the writer. The lines which divide them now were visible from the very foundation of the government. Indeed they are discernible in times anterior to that epoch. The historic spectroscope reveals in the social ray of our colonial period those elements which, when released from their old and unstable combinations by the decomposing forces of the Revolution, assumed new forms, according to their affinities and their new conditions, and thus they gave origin to the parties which under one or another name have existed to the present day. During the comparatively quiet period of the administration of Washington these elements began to crystallize; in the contest between Adams and Jefferson, in 1796, they assumed well marked and distinctive forms; and before the close of the term of the second President, the parties of the country were as sharply and regularly defined as at any other time in our history. The designations *Federal* and *Republican*, or as this last, in political synonymy, was beginning to be called, *Democratic*, as the names of parties were well understood, and were significant of distinctive principles. At the date of the contest between Hindman and Seney, the Federal party, which may be said to have owed its existence, and

certainly its power, to the advocacy of the adoption of the Constitution, had not been sufficiently long in control of the administration of affairs to have its principles confirmed by universal approbation and embodied as the established policy of the nation; but it had been sufficiently long to have committed errors which afforded to a watchful and able opposition ground for criticism and objection. It was already staggering under the well directed blows of the Republicans; and not even the great name and hardly concealed patronage of Washington himself was sufficient to protect it from the damaging effects of its own honest but sometimes mistaken policy. Its advocacy of a strong central government, upon the failure of the government under the Articles of Confederation, which was nothing more than a loosely formed league of independent states, had given it a claim, and a very just one, upon the public confidence; but this advocacy, grown into an assertion of power in the government, was thought to savor of monarchy and aristocracy. The Republicans adroitly availed themselves of the universal enthusiasm for democracy, begotten of the French Revolution, which the Federalists thought it incumbent upon them to oppose. While, therefore, one party was accused of an unworthy subservience to British influence and of an undue admiration of British institutions, the other was in turn accused of a partiality for

French political ideas and an obsequiousness to French demands. While the conservatism of the one party was regarded by its opponents as savoring of royalty and privilege, the liberalism of the other was said, by its antagonists, to be a levelling and destructive radicalism, or, as it would now be called, communism. The very distortions of opinions, and the perversions of motives, which opponents made of those of each other, indicate the lines of divergence of the two parties. Thus, while the Federalist was thought to desire a church establishment, the Republican was thought to wish the overthrow of all religion. If the Federalist would frame laws to restrain by summary process the machinations of foreign emissaries, or to deprive alien enemies of the right of domicile, the Republican accused him of violating the Constitution, limiting the rights of the States, and abridging the privilege of trial by jury; while he himself in turn was suspected of conspiring with the agents of a distant government to subvert the independence of his own, or, at least, to make it tributary to a foreign power. If the Federalist, who had not yet learned sufficiently of political dynamics to know that explosives, whether in politics or physics, are least dangerous when unconfined, would restrain the licentiousness of the press, which seemed to him an intolerable and dangerous grievance, to be eradicated only by re-



pression, the Republican, on the other hand, was accused of attempts to rise to power by villifying, and dragging down to his own level, the most respectable characters, and by bringing the government into contempt through libels and calumnies circulated against those who were administering its affairs. Even the epithets, which were applied by each party to the other, serve to indicate the opinions, or the attributed opinions, entertained by them. Thus, where the Federalist contemptuously called the Republican a Jacobin, as embodying all that was detestable in politics or morals, the Republican retorted by reviling him with the name of Tory, which at that period was equally hateful, and far more intelligible, to the common mind. If the Federalist branded his opponent with the name of democrat, a name which was meant to be one of reproach, the Republican affixed the stigma of aristocrat, an appellation then more feared than now.

During the political conflict between Mr. Hindman, as the candidate of the Federal or administration party, and Mr. Seney, who was adopted by the Republican or Democratic party, to each was attributed the merit and each shared the opprobrium of his political allies. The last mentioned of these gentlemen, soliciting the suffrages of the electors of a district strongly Federal in sentiment, or supposed to be, was, as a matter of

policy, persuaded to resort to the common expedient of politicians in similar positions, of claiming to be independent of party, that he might attract to his support the wavering and discontented. When both organizations are in a measure wrong, and in another measure right, as they were at this time, a political eclecticism seemed to be the part of honesty and wisdom; yet it is not the part that is held in the highest popular esteem. Mr. Seney, however, seems to have found his advantage in adopting it. Thorough-going partisanship is thought by the people to possess the elements of heroism. It is admired even by those who do not approve. Men in general are apt to think that to be either cowardice or cunning—and cunning is the expedient of weakness—which prompts a political aspirant to claim for himself a course of independence. But these rules appear to have been thought inapplicable to Mr. Seney, when his constituents came to estimate his declarations of freedom from party control and obligations. Politicians never forget that, in unsettled times particularly, there is a large number of men, to whom the travail of deciding between conflicting parties is more painful than even the discomforting restlessness of doubt. Such men find a satisfaction in following a leadership which professes to pursue a medium course. To these Mr. Seney commended himself by his position of independence. His op-

ponents were not slow to charge him with the offence of trimming. That, however, is an offence against political honor, not against political morals, and is easily condoned by the popular mind. But the charge, which seems to have been most effective against him in the campaign, was that of his having on some occasion spoken in a derogatory manner of General Washington, who had gained his apotheosis even before his death, and acquired a kind of cult, with its ritual and priesthood, before he had ascended our political Olympus. To speak evil of Washington had already, in 1798, become an unpardonable profanity. The opponents of Mr. Seney endeavored to prove this allegation, by the testimony of witnesses; his friends, however, brought other and better testimony in rebuttal. The truth of the matter seems to have been this: the charge rested not upon evidence, but upon logic. By a course of *à priori* reasoning the Federalists had convinced themselves that Mr. Seney was guilty. It was thought that what had been done by the founder and head of the Republican party, might be done, and what might be, had been done, by every member of that party; and as the notorious Mazzei letters of Mr. Jefferson had been published the year before, in which he was thought to have used disrespectful or irreverent language of General Washington, all of his followers were supposed to employ

similar terms when speaking of this great man. Some very innocent words of Mr. Seney were seized upon and distorted by the hearer into something he wished his opponent should say. Mr. Seney was as devout a worshipper at the shrine of Washington, as any Federalist of his day. The charge had not the slightest effect upon the campaign, unless indeed its disapproval increased the handsome majority of the accused.

For the same reason that Mr. Seney professed independency, namely, his candidacy in a Federal district, Mr. Hindman is thought to have avowed himself a strict adherent to the principles and a firm defender of the practice of the administration and the Federal party. Without doubt both of these gentlemen were entirely honest in their convictions; the difference of their conduct was only the difference of their conditions. Mr. Hindman would probably have declared himself an independent candidate in a Republican district. To be politic is not necessarily to be dishonest. Mr. Seney had this decided advantage, among other advantages, of Mr. Hindman. The longer and more recent service of the latter in Congress afforded opportunity and materials to his political opponents for cavil and objection; and these were not neglected. The archers of that early day were not less apt to discover the defective joints in the armor of their antagonists than the party bowmen

of the present. Mr. Hindman did not escape their well directed arrows, and these were not only the yard long bolts of honorable political warfare, but the poisoned arrows of personal detraction, as will presently be shown.

As reasons why the people should not elect him to Congress, it was said: that he was of Tory descent; that during the war he was not a sincere whig but a trimmer; that in the year 1776 he publicly read in the streets of Easton "Howe's Proclamation"; that he was an aristocrat in principles, manners and associations; that in 1795 he voted in Congress for a stamp tax, and then against its repeal; that he sustained measures calculated to produce war with France; that in distrust of the people he opposed a motion requesting the President to furnish Congress with the instructions that had been given to the American ministers at Paris; that in 1796 he had voted "to borrow five millions of money, the interest of which would be paid into the pockets of Englishmen, Hollanders and speculators," and to pay which "the people must be taxed unto the end of time not known;" that he cast a "cruel, unprincipled and unconstitutional vote respecting aliens, by delegating to the President of the United States a power that the king of England has not, and a power equal to that of any despot in Europe, to drive a man from this country without giving him a trial by jury,

or letting him know what he is charged with," (this was the Alien law); that he attempted "to violate the great charter of our rights, the Constitution of the United States, by voting in favor of a bill abridging the liberty of speech and the liberty of the press," (the Sedition law); that he cast a "cringing, creeping and oppressive vote, respecting foreign intercourse, by giving some of our unnecessary ministers large sums of money as outfits upon their embassies, after getting to Europe;" that he "was a mere silent voter, on few or no committees, and, in a word, a man of little or no weight in or out of the House of Representatives;" and finally, that while serving in Congress he had been very inattentive to the business before the House, so much so, that his colleague, Mr. Vans Murray, had to arouse him from sleep when questions were to be taken.<sup>1</sup> Most of these objections were of a very vague character, or were such as attached to the party with which Mr. Hindman was accustomed to act, or they were such as were open to argument. They received their answers through the press, by Mr. Hindman's own friends, or upon the hustings, in speeches by himself; but the two charges last mentioned, which emanated from the Hon. Gabriel Christie, a colleague of Mr. Hindman in Congress from the sixth district of

<sup>1</sup> The materials of this arraignment of Mr. Hindman were drawn from the files of the *Maryland Herald*.

Maryland—a man who had not escaped aspersion from his connection with certain Yazoo land speculations—were the more dangerous to the candidate, from these circumstances: that they were of a personal character; that they possessed an element of ludicrousness, and were calculated to place Mr. Hindman in a ridiculous light; that they were of a kind to be appreciated by minds unable to understand questions of public policy, or the arguments by which such policy is defended. It became necessary, therefore, for the friends of this gentleman to correct, if possible, impressions which the people were so ready to receive, of his negligence of duty and reprehensible somnolency. Appeal was made to the Hon. Vans Murray, who was said, by the Republicans, to have confirmed Mr. Christie's declarations as to Mr. Hindman's inattention and drowsiness, for a denial or substantiation of the charges. This gentleman, a moderate Federalist, was a resident of Dorchester county, Maryland, and member of Congress from the eighth district. At a subsequent date he was minister of the United States to the Hague, and then one of the plenipotentiaries to France to negotiate a settlement of those difficulties with the French Republic which at one time seriously threatened the peaceful relations of the two countries. By the successful performance of this high duty, he added the distinction of a skilful diplo-

matist to that, he had already acquired, of an able and patriotic statesman. Besides representing his district in Congress and his country as a foreign minister in Europe, he had, from 1788 to 1790, been a delegate of his native county of Dorchester in the General Assembly of Maryland. He died at his home December 11th, 1803. No one of his day was more respected in political and social life. In reply to a letter addressed to him by a citizen of Talbot county, he handsomely parried the question by writing as follows: "Sir:—I request you will consider my answering the strange question, which you have thought fit to put to me, as a mark of my respect for you personally. It is possible that I may have *jocosely* made use of the expressions which have been so mistakingly reported, but when called upon sincerely to assert that I have seen Mr. Hindman asleep in Congress, is what I cannot say. No man is more awake to the good of the Union than he is in that House." Another defender of Mr. Hindman said: "That Mr. Hindman or any other gentleman should now and then take a nap in Congress, I should myself have supposed extremely probable. It is scarcely in the power of human nature, on a warm summer day, to hear long-winded, time-killing speeches upon subjects previously exhausted by twenty speakers, without impatience or fatigue; and if the speech is half French and half English, like



one of Gallatin's, it operates like-drawling music upon the ear, and unavoidably lulls one to sleep." But Mr. Hindman's ablest defender was the Hon. Samuel Sitgreaves, a member of Congress from Pennsylvania, who served in the House with him. This gentleman, who at that time held a conspicuous position in the public view, addressed a long letter to Mr. Richard Tilghman, of Queen Anne's, which not only served as an exculpation of the member from the seventh district of Maryland, but fortunately for his biographer gives an estimate of the character, the standing and the abilities of him in whose behalf it was written. Mr. Sitgreaves says: "I understand it to be said, 'that he is a mere silent voter, on a few or no committees, and in a word, a man of little or no weight in or out of the House of Representatives.' \* \* \* Nothing can be more incorrect or unjust than this assertion. That he has declined a very active part in the debates of the House, and has given way to those gentlemen who have been more emulous of this sort of reputation, is certainly true; and it is equally true of very many of the best and most useful members of the House. This circumstance, however, instead of being imputed to them as a fault, is their greatest praise. \* \* \* I know no member who has engaged, in a greater degree, the confidence and respect of the Federal members. The unquestionable integrity of his character, the

emphatic uniformity and singleness of his principles, the urbanity of his manners, and the amiable frankness of his temper, have attracted to him, in more than a common measure, the esteem and good opinion of gentlemen of all parties; while his zeal, his intelligence and assiduity have peculiarly riveted the confidence and affection of his political friends and associates. He has always been most confidentially consulted, by the Federal members of the House of Representatives, on all occasions of great magnitude which have occurred during the stormy period of our foreign relations, and he has assisted in devising and maturing all their essential operations. And his weight has been sensibly felt and acknowledged in the influence, which his experience has given him, with new members, and his integrity, good sense and politeness with the hesitating and doubtful. \* \* \*

You may assure yourself that in the last session of Congress particularly, our great labor was to prevent gentlemen from indulging their insatiable propensity to speaking; that very much valuable time and many precious opportunities were lost by the length of debate; that, with few eminent exceptions, the great weight of talents and influence lay with those gentlemen who seldom or never occupied the floor; that many members who were most loquacious possessed in reality no importance at all in the deliberations; and that

speeches composed in the closet, repeated disgustingly from the manuscript, or fabricated for the press, have given a sort of factitious celebrity to men of both sides, who can hold no comparison with my friend Mr. Hindman in any of the qualifications of a dignified and useful representative. His merits are of a much higher grade. His attendance on the duties of the House was punctual and unremitting, \* \* \* and his name will be found in every division during his whole term of service, with a single exception, occasioned by an unexpected call of the question. He is a liberal and an honest politician. \* \* \* He has ever been a faithful, an uniform, and a zealous friend and supporter of the government and its administration. \* \* \* But it is this, also, added to his most amiable private character, which has obtained him the marked friendship of the best men of the country—of the late (Washington) and present (Adams) Presidents, of all the heads of Departments, and of all men who have distinguished themselves in the councils of the United States since the new Constitution. I know that he is not only esteemed, but beloved by Mr. Hamilton, Mr. King, Mr. Smith, of South Carolina, Mr. Murray, Mr. Sedgwick, Mr. Ames, and by most of the eminent characters with whom he has served in Congress; and that he has been considered by them universally a good and firm man, and an

intelligent and *very useful* representative. From *my* attachment or good opinion his character can derive no additional weight or respectability; but I am the witness of the estimation in which he has been held by men whose friendship is the highest praise. Indeed he does honor to your State and district, and you will make many experiments before you find a more faithful servant of the public. I never was acquainted with a man who more generally possessed the regard of those who knew him best, or whose loss would be more sensibly regretted by those who have witnessed his integrity and usefulness in Congress. I am persuaded that the good sense of his constituents will secure his reëlection; and that the opposition that is made to him will be only one more proof of the impotency of Jacobinism in this country.”

Notwithstanding the personal popularity of Mr. Hindman, his able defence of his career in Congress, the support of the first political characters of his district, and the strength of the Federal party in the same, when the election had passed, it was found Mr. Seney had been chosen by a majority of four hundred and sixteen voters—a result as unexpected as it was decisive. Giving all proper weight to the successful candidate’s merits, and his popularity founded thereon, and to the hostility which had been provoked by certain measures of the administration, in accounting

for the revolution of sentiment in the district due estimate must be given to the general progress of democratic doctrines, to which recent events in Europe had given very decided impulse. The success of the French over their kingly enemies, improbable as it may seem, aided materially in the success of the Republican party, which claimed to be the party of the people; and Bonaparte's splendid military campaign in Italy was in effect a successful political campaign in behalf of Mr. Jefferson, his party and its principles in America. The rising tide of democratic ideas which poured over the nation, swept Mr. Hindman from a place in which he felt so secure, and one which he never after made any effort to regain. Indeed, a survey of his whole career gives the impression that the conflicts of partisanship were not in accordance with his taste, and that he looked for political preferment rather to a recognition of his merits by the few in power, than to his ability to win the approval of the many, who are the source of power. Mr. Seney, his honorable and most worthy opponent, did not live to take the seat he had won. He died much regretted, on the 20th October, 1798, from an affection that was attributed to his labors during the campaign.<sup>1</sup> A new election was or-

<sup>1</sup> This very respectable gentleman was a native of Queen Anne's, Maryland. He was the son of John Seney, Esq., who for many years was a member of the Lower House of Assembly from his county, also a mem-

dered, which resulted in the choosing of Joseph H. Nicholson, Esq., of Queen Anne's county, over John Goldsborough, Esq., of Talbot county, by a majority of seventy-four votes only. The smallness of this majority was claimed by the Federal-

ber of the Convention that ratified the Federal Constitution in 1787, and of that electoral college which chose unanimously General Washington for a second term of the Presidency in 1792. Mr. Joshua Seney, beside serving in Congress and upon the judicial bench (having Will. Russell and Will. Owings, Esquires, as his associates), was also, at one time, a member of the House of Delegates of Maryland, having his father as one of his coadjutors. He was buried at the residence of his family near Church Hill, Queen Anne's county, where a stone is erected to his memory, bearing this inscription:

Beneath this Stone  
are interred  
the remains of  
**JOSHUA SENEY,**  
Who was born  
near the spot which now contains his ashes,  
March 4th, 1756,  
and died Oct. 20, 1798.  
From the commencement of the American Revolution,  
at various periods of his life,  
he filled with ability  
some of the highest stations,  
and discharged with integrity  
some of the most important duties  
to which his native State could appoint him;  
Preserving through the whole  
a character,  
both private and public,  
unstained by a single vice.  
In 1776, a Whig,  
a Democrat in 1798,  
he zealously and unceasingly maintained  
the liberties of his country,  
and died as he had lived  
**An Honest Man**  
and  
**A Christian.**

ists, very illogically, as an evidence of reaction in their favor, while it was attributed by the Republicans, with more reason, to an indifference of the voters, arising from a confidence of being able to elect their candidate without effort.

This narrative of an election campaign, conducted in a secluded district of Maryland, and in the interest of two candidates who, however respectable, possessed no national reputation nor special representative importance, has been given with a minuteness of detail and an elaboration, out of proportion to the scope and extent of this memoir, and is therefore subject to adverse criticism. If it have served the purposes of its writing, an apology will be found in this; that it affords an illustration of the character of our early political contests. These are shown to have been conducted with as small attention to the proprieties of political discussion, and with as little regard to personal feeling, as those of the present; and it may be added, that they were decided with as little reason and quite as much passion as the elections of these times, that are called by pessimists times of degeneracy. But this recital has served another purpose, and one more pertinent to this memoir: it has afforded an opportunity of presenting an estimate of the character and services of Mr. Hindman, drawn from cotemporary opinion. The detractions of prejudice are as likely to have an

element of truth in them as the encomiums of partiality. With the biographer, whose materials may be scanty, as they are lamentably so in this case, they both possess a value; they each serve, in its turn, to assist in the formation of a proper estimate of him whose life is to be written.

Mr. James Lloyd, of Kent county, who had represented the State in the United States Senate from 1797, resigned his position. On the 12th of December, 1800, Mr. William Hindman was elected by the Legislature to fill his place until March 3d, 1801, when he was appointed by the Governor, in the recess of the Legislature, to serve until November 19th, 1801. After this short time of service, he was succeeded by the Hon. Robert Wright, of Queen Anne's. His district and State falling under Democratic control, there was no longer opportunity for him to secure political position. Indeed his ambition seems to have been fully satisfied with the civic honors he had already enjoyed; for there is no evidence that he ever again sought place after his retirement from the Senate. He withdrew to his estate at the head of Wye, which he purchased in 1794, and, for the remainder of his days, he devoted himself to agricultural pursuits, which, while they afforded occupation sufficiently engrossing, gave opportunity for indulgence in those social pleasures for the enjoyment of which his cultivated mind and genial



disposition so well fitted him. During the latter part of his life he spent much of his time, in the winter season, at the house of his brother, Mr. James Hindman, a merchant of the city of Baltimore, and here his long, successful and happy life ended, January 19th, 1822. His body was interred at St. Paul's burial ground, of that city, and the place has been marked by a memorial stone, with the simple inscription of his name and the dates of his birth and death

Mr. Hindman lived and died a bachelor. He has left no children, therefore, to cherish his memory and perpetuate his excellent abilities and amiable qualities. His name had almost perished from the minds of men, and it has been left to a stranger's hand to attempt the recovery from oblivion of some recollections of his services to his State and country, and the weaving of an humble chaplet for his tomb. His large landed estates he bequeathed to his nephew, Mr. Henry Hindman, shackled, however, with conditions and embarrassed by provisions, presently to be mentioned, that deprived them almost wholly of their value. He possessed, also, a large number of negro slaves. These he emancipated by will, the older immediately, and the younger as they should arrive at certain specified ages. Of many he made provisions for the support upon his plantation, giving them houses with lots of ground attached, and the privi-

lege of cutting wood from the forests, besides other rights and immunities. Moralists and statesmen, whose social environments were those of universal freedom and equality, have always found it difficult to reconcile the collateral existence of two such diverse, or antagonistic sentiments, as a hostility to slavery and a repugnance to emancipation, such as prevailed in the border states. The result in the case of the freeing of the slaves of Mr. Hindman, and the same was experienced in innumerable other cases, will explain this ethical and political paradox—that the people should be unwilling to redress a conceded wrong, and to abolish an acknowledged evil. The condition of the free negro in Maryland and other border states, before the general emancipation of slaves, as a part of that great subject of slavery in America, is a study of great interest to the historian and social philosopher. That he should have become degraded by the acquisition of freedom, and should have sunk to a rank even beneath that of the slave himself, is a matter for curious inquiry. His position was one of the most difficult and painful imaginable, and one, which, so far from favoring the development in him of habits of industry and morality, habits upon which all progress depends, compelled those of idleness and vice. It was one, therefore, most unfavorable to his individual and social amelioration. Liberty itself is not so unmixed a good that it is indepen-

dent of the circumstances under which it is possessed. It would seem that freedom is only a blessing where all are free. The liberty of the free negro in a slave state was more depressing to the energies, and more repressing of the aspirations, than slavery itself. Without the compulsion which drove the slave, and without the inducements that persuaded the poor white man to regular labor, he lapsed into vagrancy. Without the apprehension of quick and inevitable punishment which deterred the slave from crime, and without the fear of a loss of character which restrains the white man, even of the lowest ranks of life, from wrong-doing, he fell headlong into habits of vice. Besides, in his mind regular labor was associated with all that was painful in his servile condition, and therefore avoided; while his moral instincts, having received their only development from the stimulus of fear, shrunk and withered when that stimulus was removed. Further, if the freedman would work, his labor was brought into competition with the so called cheap labor of the bondsman, and he starved; and if he would lead a correct life, it won for him no consideration, not even the pecuniary value that was attached to the slave because of his honesty. Society, as it was organized in Maryland, compelled him to idleness, and then blamed him for being idle; it invited him to

viciousness, and then it did worse than punish, which might have deterred or reformed, it suspected him, which confirmed him in his courses. If there be one condition more depressing than another to the moral sense it is that of living in an atmosphere of suspicion, from which there is no emergence. It produces the very asphyxiation of conscience. As a consequence of these circumstances, the free negro, a very different character from the freedman of the present day, sunk lower and lower in the social scale, until he became the most degraded of human beings, despised as much by the enslaved black as by the freeborn white. He became a veritable pariah, suspected and shunned by all; and what is worse, his character became such as to merit all the evil that was thought of him or done to him. Now the slaves of Mr. Hindman, from his frequent and long absences from home, and from his habitual leniency and indulgence, had not derived even the advantages which flow from a rigid plantation discipline; and they had fallen into the habits and vices of the free negro, even before the death of their master. When, however, his will had set them free, and more, had made some provision for their shelter at least, if not for their entire support, those habits and vices had their full development—they flowered out into idleness and dishonesty. These negroes, long after known as Hindman's negroes,

and as the worst of their class, became a pest to the neighborhood in which they were settled. So much was this the case, that the value of the property in their vicinity was seriously impaired. Mr. Henry Hindman, after attempting to conduct the plantation bequeathed to him by his uncle, burthened with the charge and hindered by the presence of a crowd of idlers and thieves which were quartered upon him, finally gave up in despair and sold the estate, which then as now comprised some of the most productive land in Talbot county. The philosophy of society must be studied as well in its morbid growths as in its healthy and normal developments. This narration, which scarcely belongs to this memoir, is given in illustration of one phase of that social excrescence, which has happily been excised by the heroic surgery of war. The wound thus caused is now rapidly and healthfully healing. Whether the colored man, receiving freedom under other and better conditions, shall be able better to use it for his own advancement and the advantage of society, is the great problem which is now in process of solution. It is yet, even after a lapse of more than a decade of years, too early to pronounce upon these questions, namely, whether a race, which in the past was not degraded but elevated by slavery and which was not benefited but debased by liberty, has not been prema-

turely endowed with emancipation; and whether political enfranchisement shall be sufficient to compensate for unpreparedness for personal freedom. Of the injurious influence of ownership in man upon the master race, there can longer be no question; and this, perhaps not this alone, will justify, what else might need defence, the noblest legislative act in all our history. That Mr. Hindman had imbibed sentiments hostile to the continuance of slavery, sentiments so prevalent in his county in the early part of this century, his setting free his own people sufficiently attests. That they were not profited, and that the community in which they lived was harmed, detract nothing from the generosity of his motives, though these circumstances may, in the minds of some persons, in some degree impeach his judgment. He erred, if he erred at all, where to err is rarest and safest. If humanity suffered, justice was vindicated.

Of the mental characteristics of Mr. Hindman much has already been indirectly indicated. He is represented, by those who have a personal recollection of him, as a man of active and sprightly mind; as well informed upon all matters of public interest; as being of cheerful and happy disposition; as being fond of society, particularly of that of persons of his own political school; as being by no means religiously inclined, and though as far as possible from irreverence or scepticism,

which he would have thought savored of French politics, he was equally far from the sanctimony which some in his county and state affected for mere party ends. In very fact, his interpretation of some points in the moral code, as that interpretation was given by his actions, was more than liberal. He was nevertheless for some years, when strictness in the observance of the injunctions of religion were not thought to be one of the necessary qualifications for such a functionary, a vestryman of St. Michael's parish. In a well written defence of his political course, published in 1796, some of his traits of character are thus incidentally mentioned: "Justice prompts me to observe that the character of Mr. Hindman for goodness of heart, mildness of manners, kindness to his neighbors, and charity to the poor, would naturally prevent an opinion that, in any part of his public department, he had been governed by unworthy motives." Of his personal characteristics, it may be said that he was not above the medium height, but of full habit and late in life verging upon obesity. His complexion was fresh and florid. In appearance he realized the American ideal of the English country squire—a character which the Eastern-shore gentleman of that day in more than one point resembled. He was neat in his dress, and active in his habits, riding habitually on horseback, instead of indulging himself with the ease of his

chaise or his gig. In accordance with the custom of his time, when proposing to spend the night abroad, or to take a long journey, he was followed by his mounted servant carrying his portmanteau *en croupe*.

As the task of preparing this memoir of Mr. Hindman was voluntarily assumed, it is not meant, on the ground of the difficulties encountered in its compilation, to claim any merit for its discharge. But as a matter of simple truth, it may be mentioned that no one has hitherto attempted the compilation of the briefest biographical notice of this Maryland worthy, except the author of a compendium of the lives of all the members of Congress, from the foundation of the government; and in this book of Lanman, the notice of Mr. Hindman is most meagre and defective. No aid either has been derived from those private memoranda which children, through pride of ancestry, & pride by no means to be discommended, are apt to preserve when the careers of their fathers cast reflected rays of honor upon their humble lives; for of such memoranda none exist, not even a letter or other scrap of writing. So little, that it may be called nothing, has been done to preserve the memory of this distinguished man, so nearly has he been forgotten, that most of the best informed citizens of the State which he served, and of the county in which he spent his life, acknow-



ledge entire ignorance of the fact that any such man ever existed. The foregoing sketch has been compiled with labor and care from church, county, state and national records, from chance allusions in works of history, from the earliest newspaper published on the Eastern shore of Maryland, from personal recollections of some of the oldest people of Queen Anne's and Talbot counties, and from the dim and uncertain traditions of his family. It is believed nothing has been stated incorrectly. It is certain, nothing with a purpose of misleading. Whatever were his infirmities of character and conduct, and doubtless he had his fullest share of these, the oblivion which for so long a time has obscured his name has well nigh kindly hidden them from the curious view, and no attempt has been made to "draw his frailties from their dread abode." Whatever goodness he possessed, or whatever acts of usefulness he performed, and these, we have seen, were neither small nor few, have had their memory perpetuated for his lasting honor and the benefit of posterity.







