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Pilgrims of Maryland.

An Oration

By John W. Caffrey.

1842.

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ORATION

DELIVERED AT THE

COMMEMORATION OF THE LANDING

OF THE

Pilgrims of Maryland,

CELEBRATED MAY 16, 1842, AT MT. ST. MARY'S, MD.

BY REV. JOHN M'CAFFREY,
President of Mt. St. Mary's College.



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Mt. St. Mary's College, May 17th, 1842.

REV'D AND RESPECTED PRESIDENT,

We have been appointed by the students of the College, to solicit a copy of the very elegant Address delivered by you on the 16th inst., and to beg that you will gratify them by allowing its publication. Hoping that you will find it suitable to grant this request, we remain,

Rev'd and Dear Sir,

Yours, most respectfully,

H. H. M. WILLIAMS,
WM. H. ELDER,
JOS. J. O'DONNELL,
J. V. M. HARDING,
WM. C. SAPPINGTON,
G. A. MILES.

REV'D JOHN M'CAFFREY,
President of Mt. St. Mary's College.

Mt. St. Mary's College, May 17th, 1842.

GENTLEMEN,

In a few days I will be able to give you a copy of the discourse, which, at the request of those, whom you represent, I delivered yesterday before the students of the College and a numerous concourse of our neighbours. I sincerely thank you and your fellow-students for that kind partiality, which has dictated your course towards me on this and every other occasion.

I am, Gentlemen, with sincere regard and affection, your friend and servant,
JOHN M'CAFFREY.

TO MESSRS. H. H. M. WILLIAMS,
WM. H. ELDER, JOS. J. O'DONNELL,
J. V. M. HARDING, WM. C. SAPPINGTON, G. A. MILES,
Committee, etc.

ORATION

DELIVERED AT THE

COMMEMORATION OF THE PILGRIMS OF MARYLAND,

AT MT. ST. MARY'S, MAY 16, 1842.

WE have come together, to honour the illustrious founders of our State, and to dwell with pride and pleasure on the glory of its early history. We offer no apology for this public celebration. We do not pause to show, that it is both natural and useful to commemorate the birth of free and glorious States, as well as of distinguished individuals. If any are disposed to find fault with our proceedings, whether they argue as sophists or declaim as fanatics, they will meet with no sympathy in the heart of this great assemblage. We rather take blame to ourselves, that we have so long neglected and so late begun to pay proper honours to the fathers of our State. Marylanders are not ashamed of their origin, though they have suffered it to be almost buried in oblivion. They blush only for their past apathy on this subject; and they have resolved to expiate this "sin of omission," by their future zeal and pious care to venerate the ashes and proclaim to the world the unrivalled glory of their fathers. During the two hundred and eight years, which have elapsed since the *Ark* and *Dove* entered our noble bay, much has been done to shed lustre on the name of our State; but what achievement after all can be justly compared with the magnanimous conduct of "the Pilgrims of Maryland!" In her day of existence the dawn is the most beautiful part. The sun, which shone on her origin, enlightened the birth-day of equal rights and genuine liberty. The names of the ships which bore the Pilgrims across the Atlantic were truthful symbols. The *Ark* contained the sacred deposit of religious freedom: the *Dove* conveyed the olive-branch of peace. The first cross, which was reared within our

borders, was indeed the sign of universal love, — the memorial of HIM, who died for all mankind. Our celebration therefore is identified with a great principle — a principle of wisdom and of benevolence: It is the festival of religious liberty.

We hail with delight every auspicious omen of a better era,— when persecution for conscience' sake will cease. And what else is betokened by the movement, in which we now participate? What spirit has brought you here to-day? What spirit impelled the numerous throng, who so lately repaired as pilgrims to the place, where once stood "the ancient city of St. Mary's," to do homage to the memory of the most enlightened and benevolent colonists, that ever landed on the virgin shores of America and to venerate the very ground, on which they imprinted the first traces of civilization? What sign of the times do you read in the august spectacle of the primate of the Catholic Church in the United States, offering up the divine sacrifice and rearing the symbol of redemption on the spot, on which that same sacrifice was offered, and that same symbol reared two hundred and eight years ago, by the men, who first in this new world broke the chains of conscience and substituted for them the golden ties of universal charity? What augury is that of the gifted orator proclaiming in tones, which find a thousand echoes in as many hearts, the triumph of religious liberty on the very place of its birth and over the cradle of its infancy. *The triumph of religious liberty* — for this great principle now covers almost the entire union with its aegis. Once down-trodden even in Maryland, the land of its birth, it has Anteus-like arisen with renewed vigour and has ultimately driven the dark spirit of religious intolerance from the Statute-book and the high places of the land, to take shelter in the demoniac hearts, that prompted the burning at Charlestown of the home of women and children and in the calculating consciences, which find it just and equitable to leave Mount Benedict strewed with black ruins by the side of Bunker's hill.

You expect me to-day to tell you why, and how, and by what manner of men was first settled this State, which we are proud to call our own. To satisfy you, I must allude to things, which it is not pleasant to dwell on. But we cannot shut our eyes to facts inscribed in bloody rubrics on that page of history, which shows us the origin of our State. Religion is not answerable for the crimes, which have been committed in her name. Every creed has numbered bigots among its professors. It is the cruelty, not the creed of the tyrant, that we condemn. Religious persecution “a spouse of blood” to our country, two centuries ago was fast peopling with civilized men the savage shores of North America. It drove the Puritans to New England, the Quakers to Pennsylvania, Roger Williams and the Baptists to Rhode Island, and the Catholics to Maryland. English writers are seldom so eloquent and never so *poetical*, as when they denounce the cruelties, which in France or Spain or Italy, have been practised in the name of the God of charity and under pretext of zeal for his honour. You would little imagine, that the modern history of their own country, when truly written, is a recital of persecutions equalled only by those of Nero and Dioclesian. When England by act of Parliament renounced the supremacy of the Pope to acknowledge the supremacy of a cruel and libidinous tyrant, the unhallowed union of Church and State was cemented by the blood of Fisher and Moore. The base and selfish portion of the aristocracy and the needy miscreants, who pandered to the lusts of Henry the Eighth, were attached to the royal head of the Church by the golden ties of self-interest, and spirited on by the hope of rich booty from violated shrines, despoiled monasteries and plundered churches and abbeys. They, who have done a great and crying wrong, never forgive their victims. The Catholics of England were oppressed and robbed: they were therefore suspected and calumniated. Children have been taught from the primer and the horn-book to lisp the cruelties of Mary, — “the bloody Queen Mary.” Let no man attempt

to justify them. But Mary was merely an imitator of her father, and in persevering and systematic persecution falls far below her much admired sister, the self-styled Virgin Queen. Under Elizabeth and her successors was enacted a code of laws, which shock every sentiment of religion and humanity — laws written in characters of blood, and framed and executed with the bloody purpose of banishing the old religion by ruining, if not exterminating, all who preferred the faith of their fathers to the faith prescribed by act of Parliament and sanctioned by the authority of the royal head of the church. If the atrocious policy of “reformed” England bore hard on the Puritans, it blighted every earthly hope of the Catholic and steeped his life in continual misery. That you may have clear proof of this; that you may know why your fathers, at least many of them, fled from the land, which they loved and of whose ancient happiness and glory they were justly proud, — from “*Merry Old England*” to the wild forests of Maryland. I will mention a very few provisions of that sanguinary code. For a Catholic priest to enter England was high treason: it was high treason for him to stay three days in England without conforming to the law-established Church;—and the punishment of the offence was hanging, disembowelling and quartering. It was a crime for a Catholic to educate his child at home, unless he educated him in the Church of England: it was a still greater crime to send him abroad for the purpose of education. Twenty pounds a month was the forfeiture by “the Act of Uniformity” passed in the first year of Elizabeth’s reign, for non-attendance on Sundays at the worship of the Church by-law-established. Fines, confiscations, imprisonment, the rack and the gallows, with every species of torture, which ingenuity whetted by bigotry could devise, were employed in succession to outweary suffering nature and overcome the divine energies of faith. If the Stuarts were inclined to be less intolerant than the Tudors, yet they had not the manliness to stem the torrent of popular fury; and the Catholics, loyal and pa-

... they want to ...
 ... Protestant ...

triotic as they ever proved themselves in the day of trial, were still the victims of bigotry stimulated to blood-thirstiness by the arts of unscrupulous politicians, their fabricated plots, their atrocious prostitution of the forms of justice, their systematic slanders and the damning perjuries, by which they laboured to uphold them.—Such, my friends, was the character of the persecutions, from which your Catholic forefathers sought a refuge here.

To George Calvert, the first Baron of Baltimore, and his son, Cecilius Calvert, belongs the glory of providing a shelter from Anglican intolerance, not only for their brethren in faith, but for the oppressed of every christian denomination. The one projected and was prevented only by death from executing the plan, which the other accomplished, of opening an asylum for conscience. Of these great and good men I will say what is due to their fame and necessary to the elucidation of my subject. All his cotemporaries and all unprejudiced historians agree in ascribing to Sir George Calvert extensive learning, great ability as a statesman, the most enlarged and just views respecting colonization, a bold and chivalrous spirit of adventure, and a character of such dazzling purity, that even bigotry despairs of finding a blemish on it. While high in favour at the Court of James the First, holding the station of Secretary of State and respected and trusted above all others, he forfeited all his offices, except that of privy Counsellor, with all their emoluments, which were immense, and all his brilliant hopes of higher distinction in the service of his King and Country. Do you ask, for what crime? For the crime of obeying God rather than man: for the crime of judging for himself in the concern of religion, and in obedience to the dictates of his reason and conscience declaring himself a Roman Catholic. For, not forgetting, even in the ardent pursuit of honour, wealth and power, the momentous question of eternal weal or woe, he was compelled by the endless dissensions on all theological subjects of those to whose ranks he belonged, to investigate and decide for himself; and he

was not the man to enquire, "What is truth?" and turn his back upon the answer. "*Quæsitæ celo lucem, ingemuitque reperta*"—could not be said of him. He would follow the light, which God had given his mind, though the Red Sea's billows were before him and Pharaoh's chariots thundered in his rear. Living in an age, when men of lofty aims and sanguine spirit naturally looked on the new world as their proper theatre of enterprise, he had already engaged conspicuously in schemes of colonization; and now, wishing to enjoy the free exercise of his religion, he came to Virginia in 1628, with the intention of settling there. But the spirit of intolerance had preceded him; and on his arrival he was summoned to take the oath of Supremacy. He departed refusing to swear, that the English King was the head of the Church.—Had he proceeded to Massachusetts, the Puritans, self-exiled from England, because they could not conform to the worship of the established Church, would have banished him at once, for not conforming to their peculiar notions of Religion. He returned therefore to England and procured from the favour of his Sovereign, Charles the First, a grant of the province of Maryland. Now then the man, who has been compelled for conscience to sacrifice his dignities, curtail his fortunes and forego his hopes in England; the man, whom the intolerance of the established Church has driven from Virginia and who could not have signed himself with the sign of the cross without treason in the neighbourhood of Boston, becomes himself the Lord Proprietary of an extensive State, a sovereign almost absolute and an unrestricted lawgiver. Does he retaliate? Does he oppose intolerance to intolerance. No, fellow-citizens: he knows the spirit of his religion: he is governed by that golden rule, which came down to us from Heaven: "As you would that men should do to you, do you also to them in like manner."* He respects the honest convictions of his fellow men: he neither proscribes nor persecutes any man for difference of be-

* St. Luke c. 6. v. 31.

lief: He opens a safe and peaceful asylum for persecuted conscience. It is admitted, that the first Lord Baltimore drew the charter of Maryland and traced the plan of government. To him therefore we justly ascribe the honor of being the first legislator, who, rising above the spirit of his country and the bigotry of his age, incorporated into a system of government the great principle of religious freedom. To his son, the Second Lord Baltimore and the first actual proprietary is due the equal honor of carrying into practical effect the liberal views of his father. The dying statesman bequeathed with his titles and possessions the infinitely better inheritance of his principles and example to a son in every respect worthy of such a sire.

Cecilus Calvert pursued with ardour the design of planting a colony in Maryland and commenced the undertaking with the surest auguries of success. The charter, unlike any patent, which had hitherto passed the great seal of England, was most liberal in all its provisions. No one, who reads it, can ever question the profound sagacity and far-seeing wisdom, the benevolence and magnanimity of its author. It was such an instrument, as none but a favourite could have obtained from any of the absolute and arbitrary monarchs, who sat upon the throne of England since the apostacy of Henry the Eighth. It rendered Maryland less dependent on the King and Parliament than any other colony. It made the Monarch's sanction unnecessary to the appointments or legislation of the province, and left him without even a right to take cognizance of what transpired within its limits. It foresaw and guarded against the odious and oppressive claim of the mother country to tax America and gave to Maryland, more favoured in this than any of her sister colonies, an explicit covenanted right to exemption from such a stretch of parliamentary jurisdiction as the tea-tax and Stamp-act, which caused the revolution. It invested the Lord Proprietary with few powers beyond those, which even at this day we regard as essential to the executive branch of a free govern-

ment, and it especially declared, that his authority should not extend to "the life, member, freehold, goods or chattles" of any colonist. It provided for a representative system, as soon as the body of freemen should become too numerous for all to meet in council; and it secured to the people an independent share in the legislation of the province, by requiring that the laws made for their government should be enacted "of and with the advice, assent and approbation of the freemen," or a majority of them or of their deputies. The world then saw a great example and a glorious spectacle—the founder and chief of a State spontaneously divesting himself of every power, which could be readily abused and placing in the hands of the people such effectual control, as would necessarily make him in a great degree dependent on their will. Surely this is not least of the titles of George and Cecilius Calvert to the admiration of mankind, that in framing a government according to their pleasure for a province, in which they and their descendants were to exercise the supreme executive authority, they kept steadily in view, above all other interests, the rights and happiness of the people; they voluntarily renounced every attribute of arbitrary power and omitted none of the safeguards of popular liberty.

"The conditions of Plantation" published by the first proprietary, or, in other words, the terms, on which he offered lands to emigrants, denote the same practical good sense and wise generosity. He steered clear of all the rocks, on which similar undertakings had been wrecked, and in his whole course of policy avoided even the less fatal errors, which impeded the growth or diminished the prosperity and happiness of every colony before and after him. He permitted and even invited all British subjects, without distinction of religion to settle in his province; and the very first emigration, conducted at his own expense, under the direction of his brother, comprised at least a few, who were not Catholics. But it is not true, as has been hastily and carelessly asserted, that the char-

ter itself secured to all liege people of the English King, without distinction of sect or party, free leave to transport themselves to Maryland. The ninth article, which has been supposed to justify the assertion, merely gives to British subjects, as its own provisions clearly import, the license of expatriating themselves, notwithstanding the statutes to the contrary. This error has already found a place in the elegant and interesting history of Bancroft; and past experience teaches us, that unless the proper mark be stamped upon it now, it will infallibly be pressed into the service of bigotry, for the purpose of dimming the glory which can never be totally darkened,—of the unvarying liberality of the Catholic proprietaries and settlers of the province.

We have seen what powerful motives the English Catholic had to tear himself away from a country, endeared to him by the ties of birth and home, venerable by her glorious monuments of ancient faith and piety, ennobled by the high achievements of his Catholic ancestors and consecrated by the illustrious virtues of Catholic heroes, patriots, sages, and martyrs. Two hundred persons, mostly gentlemen of birth and quality sailed from the Isle of Wight, in the *Ark* and the *Dove*, on the feast of Saint Cecilia or the 22d of November, 1633, with Leonard Calvert, brother of Cecilus, at their head, as Lieutenant General or Governor of the future province. The blessed ministrations of religion went with them, to cheer and support their sometimes drooping spirits.—They were accompanied by four members of the society of Jesus; one of whom, Father Andrew White, “a man of transcendent talents,” had left the professorships of Scripture, of Hebrew, and of Divinity, which he had honorably held in the Colleges of Louvain and Liege, to labor for the salvation of souls and to court the martyr’s recompense in England, and now though burthened with the weight of five and fifty years, was panting to become the apostle of the savages dwelling by the waters of the Chesapeake.—“We placed our ship,” says this venerable missionary, in a letter

preserved in the Jesuit College at Rome, "We placed our ship under the protection of God, the blessed Virgin Mother, Saint Ignatius and all the guardian Angels of Maryland." True to the old, hereditary faith of Christendom, these good men were conscious that they were at that moment "a spectacle to Angels" as well as to men. Bidding adieu to all familiar objects and wonted comforts and enjoyments, and breaking the sweet ties of many beautiful affections, they were committing themselves to the mercies of a stormy ocean, in the hope of winning for themselves a home amid savage forests and more savage men,—a home, where they might in quiet worship their Creator, as their fathers had done for a thousand years before. They felt, that they needed protection. Could they put their trust in the counsels of human prudence or lean for safety on the arm of human strength? No, their confidence was in God. To him first, to Him supremely they committed themselves and the issue of their undertaking. But could they forget Her, whom the Church had taught them to invoke, whether wandering by land or "going down into the deep," as the auspicious guide of the voyage of life and to hail as the beautiful "Star of the Sea?" Oh, how naturally in their circumstances leaps forth from the Catholic heart that charming invocation!

"Ave maris stella,
 Dei mater alma—
 Vitam præsta puram;
 Iter para tutum!"

They are about to take up their abode, if God shall grant them a safe passage, in a strange land,—a wilderness inhabited by the heathen. But the sons of Saint Ignatius are with them,—often the first and always the foremost to explore the savage wild,—not for filthy lucre, not to seek an earthly settlement, not, as men blind to the truth fondly imagine, to establish their power, to gain extended sway, (how ridiculous the supposition!) but to carry for-

ward the light of the gospel and win souls to Jesus Christ;—men of heroic mould, who at the risk of their lives had supplied the faithful with spiritual blessings in England and kept alive the fire, which for a thousand years had burned on the altars of their fathers. Accustomed “to hope against hope” and patiently abide the time marked out in the eternal councils, these holy men recommend “the missions of Maryland” to the intercession of their sainted founder, with even more of confidence, than they would do, were he yet on earth directing the energies of the great and glorious body, which he had called into being. For now that he is translated to the place of his reward and that his charity is “made perfect” in Heaven, they know that his zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls is not lessened nor his prayers deprived of their efficacy. Taught by sacred Writ and their “Holy Mother, the Church,” that nations are under the special guardianship of heavenly spirits, whom the scriptures designate by the names of the countries, over which they watch, our pilgrim fathers salute at a distance the guardian angels of Maryland and invoke their protection on their good ships,—the well-built Ark,—the light and fragile Dove, now wafting them towards a barbarous land, which they hope, by the divine blessing and through the intercession of saints and angels, to add to the conquests of the cross.

They experience the usual incidents of a voyage in those days. But these incidents are ennobled and even hallowed in our eyes, by the great object, towards which they tend; as the wanderings and adventures of the Trojan band are dignified by the lofty purpose, which the genius of Virgil keeps constantly before our view,—of founding an empire and erecting the altars of religion.

“dum conderet urbem,
Inferretque Deos Latio.”

Free from superstition and without a particle of fanaticism, they still betray that consciousness of their noble mission, which Heaven gives to its chosen instruments, though often but in dim

and twilight glimpses of imperfect revelation. When a storm arises and separates the ships,—a storm so dreadful, that the most fearless tremble for the issue; while prayers are redoubled and vows offered to Heaven in honour of the saints; while purified and strengthened by the sacraments of penance, with pious supplications they prepare themselves for death; even then Father White bowing himself down in prayer, calls the Lord Jesus, and his Holy mother and the protecting angels of Maryland to witness, that “the purpose of this voyage is to pay honour to the blood of our Redeemer by the conversion of Barbarians,”—and arises “with a firm confidence, that through the mercy and goodness of God, they will escape the threatened destruction.” And is it illusive fancy or just and natural feeling,—the enthusiasm of a distempered mind or the sound piety of a grateful heart, which prompts him to exclaim: “Let the true God be glorified! Scarcely was my prayer ended, when the storm was ceasing. Blessed forever be the merciful charities of our dear Redeemer!” Having escaped the dangers of the storm, they take the route of the Azores, touch at Barbadoes and spend the greater part of the winter among the West India islands, stopping at different places, among others at Montserrat in Guadaloupe, where they find a colony of Irishmen, fellow-sufferers for the Catholic faith, for they have been driven from Virginia on account of its profession. On the 27th of February, 1634, they land in Virginia and are kindly treated by the Governor and people, to whom they bring letters from the King of England and who, though jealous of a colony destined to narrow the limits of their jurisdiction, exhibit that warm hospitality and refined courtesy, which are yet prominent traits in the character of Virginians. Sailing up the Chesapeake Bay, they enter the Potomac, lost in admiration at the grandeur and beauty of this noble river and the magnificent forests, which shaded its verdant banks. They effected their first landing within the boundaries of Maryland, on an island, which they called Saint Clements’. Here they

terminated with epic dignity their wanderings, more worthy of the religious muse than those of the exiles, who bore their Penates from the flames of Troy and found "a home and country" on the shores of Italy. For having entered "the land of Mary," their first solicitude was to celebrate in a becoming manner "our blessed Ladies' day," the twenty-fifth of March and to mark by a significant act of religion their solemn entry into the province. The sublime doctrines and beautiful usages of the Church regulated the expression of their feelings and furnished the appropriate ceremonial. "On the day of the Annunciation," says Father White, "we first offered the sacrifice of the mass, never before done in this region of the world: after which, having raised on our shoulders an immense cross, which we had fashioned from a tree and going in procession to the designated spot, assisted by the commissary and other Catholics, we erected the trophy of Christ, the Saviour, and humbly bent the knee in reverence, during the devout recitation of the Litanies of the Holy Cross." Thus the religion, which has always venerated and cherished the symbol of Redemption, was first introduced into an Anglo-American colony.

Guided by the spirit of this religion, the colonists conciliated the friendship of the native Indians and, in all their dealings with them, were governed by the strictest rules of equity and the purest sentiments of humanity. They did not usurp possession of the soil. They obtained as much as they wanted by honest purchase, giving in exchange, neither worthless trinkets, nor destructive weapons, nor more destructive alcohol, but the most useful instruments of tillage and other articles of value. They waged no bloody and exterminating wars. Had the great Chief of Piscataway sent a bundle of arrows wrapped in the skin of a rattle-snake to Governor Calvert, the rattle-snake's skin stuffed with powder and shot would not have been the answer to this bold defiance.* Oh, no! the Jesuit Father, with no weapon but his crucifix, would

*Bancroft Vol. I, chap. 8.

have gone in the name of the God of peace, to win back the friendship of the savage, which the white men never lost except by their crimes.

"Integer vitæ scelerisque purus
Non eget Mauri jaculis, neque arcu."

But in truth, so long as the province was governed by its Catholic settlers, notwithstanding the base deceits and wicked instigations of Clayborne and a few others eager "to root out popery and prela-cy," the infant's slumbers were never broken,—the mother's ear was never startled by the savage war-whoop. The early history of the province harmonizes in this with the history of every coun-try colonized by Roman Catholics. Canada under the dominion of France saw numerous tribes brought into the pale of the Church, dwelling in amity with their pale faced brethren, erecting common altars and setting examples of every christian virtue. The Jesuit missionaries were the preservers of the Indians. Mexico and the South American republics, invaded rather than colonized by lawless soldiers of fortune and mercenary adventurers from Spain and Portugal, still reckon twelve millions of men descended from their aboriginal inhabitants; and these men however low in the scale of civilization, have still been reclaimed from savage life, converted to the Christian faith and elevated to the practice of a morality, at least as pure and holy as the virtue of those, who now propose to improve their condition by robbing them of their prop-erty and desecrating their churches.

Having obtained a right to a portion of the soil, the first care of our colonists was to select a convenient site for a city. This they found on the bank of St. Mary's river, not far from the Indian vil-lage of Yaoconico. They called their town Saint Mary's in hon-our of the blessed Virgin and afterwards loved to designate it by that sacred and endearing name. The blessing of Heaven pros-pered all their labours. The little colony immediately took root and thrived and flourished beyond all former examples. The In-

dians, who were preparing at the time of their arrival to leave that part of the country, gave up to them their cultivated grounds. It was the proper season to begin the labours of husbandry. The soil was rich: the streams abounded with fish: the magnificent forests were alive with game. Intermingling as brothers and sisters with the children of nature around them,—the wives and daughters of the colonists learned from the squaws the various modes of preparing indian corn and their young men were accompanied by tawney warriors to the chase. They could purchase all needful supplies from Virginia, and the Lord Proprietary, with princely munificence provided for the wants and increased the comforts and advantages of his people.

The first settlers of Maryland, as all historians inform us, were persons of a superior class to most of the other colonists. They were evidently men of more enlarged and liberal views, of kinder and more christian feelings. They brought to the new world the grace of polished manners, the refined courtesies and the warm yet elegant hospitality of the best European society. Unlike the peaceful fathers of Pennsylvania, they did not expose their benevolent policy to ridicule by singular fancies and odd peculiarities.—They did not abase the majesty and weaken the moral force of law, by turning its penalties against harmless customs or incurable follies. Unlike the Puritans,—they did not make the State subservient to the Church, and exhibit their piety by blind submission to their preachers,—their faith by incessant wranglings about the purest form of doctrine and discipline. Unlike the New England colonists generally,—they never weakly imagined, that modern society was to be fashioned according to the details of the Mosaic legislation. They did not confide the government to those, who were longest and loudest in praying and whom the ministers selected for their gifts of godliness to be the props of Zion, “the pillars of the house of wisdom.” Had Father White or father Altham addressed the legislators of the infant colony in the usual

manner of the Puritan ministers, concluding with the significant words of Moses to the judges: "The cause, which is too hard for you, bring it to me, and I will hear it,"—they certainly would have concluded, that the good Jesuit had lost his wits and with them all the meekness and humility of a christian pastor. They differed from New England too in this,—that they never provoked the Indians to war and then enacted those frightful tragedies, which chill the blood and sicken the heart, when we read the history of the Eastern colonies. They have no claims to the glory of surpassing the savages in ferocity and thirst of blood. They burnt no villages: they never strewed a battle field with the bones of an entire nation.* They had not even enough of Puritanical religion to believe old women witches and to hang them for it.—But the government of the province passed too soon into the hands of a very different class of persons, for the good seed committed to the ground to grow up to maturity and yield its promised fruit.—We see the thriving plant: we admire its soft green foliage and its beautiful blossoms: the air is perfumed with the fragrance of its flowers; but the frosts of bigotry shall blast these vernal hopes.—The first colonists of Maryland were too far in advance of the other colonies and of those, with whom they generously shared their privileges, to be allowed to work out peaceably and happily their admirable experiment. They were on "the ways of pleasantness" and "all their paths, were paths of peace," and all the auspices were bright and beautiful. Religion was there—the old, unchanged religion of their fathers;—ruling with gentle sway the mind and heart, enslaving neither;—star-like, revolving in its proper orbit and shedding alike on civilized and savage its sweet benignant rays. Education was there, and there it was destined to flourish; for the Jesuits were there, its best promoters. One fact, which cannot be denied, speaks trumpet-tongued on this subject. The first printing press ever worked in any British colony was establish-

*Bancroft Vol. I. chap. 9.

ed at St. Mary's. The "Pilgrims of Maryland" were the first within the limits of these United States to employ that powerful engine for the diffusion of knowledge. That they knew how to maintain their rights as freemen and to advance the cause of liberty is also proved by the stand, which they took, at the outset of their history, against their beloved proprietary. They esteemed his noble character; they were grateful for his kindness and gave him substantial proofs of thankfulness; but when he sent them a code of laws, requesting their consideration and adoption, they rejected them at once, in order to establish, beyond dispute, forever, the right of the freemen of Maryland to originate their own laws for their own government.

The Jesuit Fathers had come to Maryland, not only to do good among their countrymen; but more expressly to carry the Gospel to the Heathen. Our historians, who are inaccurate on several points in the early history of the colony, are profoundly silent about the labours of these missionaries, and some writers boldly assert, that no efforts were made to convert the savages. Yet existing records show, that, until the unhappy revolution, which trampled down the power of the Catholics and banished the priests and religious liberty with them, they prosecuted their great object with ardour and success. They found in these wild children of the forest the dispositions, which they deemed most desirable. They describe them as exceedingly generous, kind-hearted and grateful; models of sobriety and charity; never acting from sudden impulse; but grave, deliberate and inflexibly firm. In Canada or in Japan, in the Moluccas, in China or in Paraguay; wherever in a word heathens were to be converted, the Jesuits approached the semicivilized or savage man with perfect confidence, though they were often rewarded with the crown of martyrdom. In Maryland, as elsewhere, fearing nothing they hastened to the Indian settlement: they followed the warrior in his hunting expedition: they launched the light skiff on the bosom of streams before unknown; they

pitched their tent in the shade of some giant oak on a natural floor of green inlaid with flowers, or slept sweetly, after reciting matins and lauds, under the starry canopy of Heaven. Hardships and privations of every kind they had to endure; but when did a Jesuit missionary shrink from hardships and privations? To acquire the barbarous language, to instruct the untutored savage, to win his affections, to raise his grovelling mind to the height of Christian faith and bow down his stubborn will to obedience to the Christian law—required consummate address, unquenchable zeal and patience inexhaustible; but when were such qualities wanting in these heroic heralds of the cross? Death itself might stare them in the face—death from cold, from hunger, from neglected sickness,—death by the tomahawk and scalping knife or by the red hot iron and burning faggot; “But when,” says the Protestant Bancroft, “did a Jesuit missionary seek to save his own life at what he believed to be the risk of a soul?” In the history of this heroic order cases occur of an entire band of missionaries cut off by the cruel ferocity of the savages. Did not such massacres quench the enthusiasm of their associates? “I answer,” says the same historian, “that the Jesuits never receded one foot; but as in a brave army, new troops press forward to fill the places of the fallen, there were never wanting heroism and enterprize in behalf of the cross.” I have digressed for a moment; but could I say less of that society, which has kept the lamp of faith burning in Maryland ever since the landing of the pilgrims; which has conferred so many benefits on mankind and been so well calumniated for it?

For several years nothing occurred to disturb the harmony or check the growth of the colony, except the ineffectual efforts of Clayborne and a few other restless spirits from Virginia to dispute the authority of its government and rouse the Indians to hostility. Father White and his companions laboured at first among the tribes, which dwelt on the banks of the Patuxent. Soon after they established a mission on the Isle of Kent and carried the Gos-

pel to the southern boundary of the present District of Columbia. In 1639 they had the happiness of converting Chilomaccon, the powerful king of the Piscataways and of administering the holy sacrament of baptism to him, his wife and child and his principal counsellor Mosorcoques, in a chapel erected for the occasion by these pious proselytes, at an Indian town about fifteen miles south of the present city of Washington. Several members of the ruling families at Patuxent and also at Potopaco, (the modern Port Tobacco,) with others in that vicinity to the number of one hundred and thirty were added to the Church before the year 1642.— The Chief and principal inhabitants of the town of Potomac and four neighbouring Chiefs with some members of their respective tribes were in like manner brought into the christian fold about this period. We cannot accurately estimate the entire number of converts; but hope and gratitude now swelled the missionary's heart, for the prospect of ultimate success was unclouded. Several fathers had arrived successively from Europe to aid the venerable White and take the place of father Altham, who had gone from the scene of his earthly toils, to intercede in Heaven for those, in whose behalf he had laboured on earth. Some of them, particularly Father White had become familiar with the language of the Indians. Catechisms in their various dialects had been composed. Some of the Indians in turn began to understand English. The young Queen of the Piscataways, the daughter of Chilomaccon, (who had departed this life in sentiments of the most edifying piety,) was receiving a liberal and christian education at St. Mary's. The converted Indians exhibited the ardour of proselytes and the purity of morals, which distinguished the primitive Christians. The privations, fatigues and dangers of these missions invested them with peculiar charms in the eyes of the Jesuits. How different would be now the history of the aboriginal occupants of our country, had all the States been founded under the same auspices as our own!

But now began those troubles, which ended in the total over-

throw of Catholic influence and civil and religious liberty in the province. During Clayborne and Ingle's rebellion Father White and two other missionaries were seized, put in irons and sent to England to be tried as priests and Jesuits. The others concealed themselves chiefly in Virginia. Their Indian flocks were dispersed, as sheep without a shepherd. The good fathers returned to them and again were chased away; nor were they ever after allowed to continue their missionary labours without molestation. The tribes, which seemed destined to become christian and civilized have disappeared forever. But the poor Indians were not the only sufferers. The hydra of revolt derived a sort of immortality from Anti-Catholic rancour; and though at first repeatedly struck down, it ever rose with redoubled vigour and showed its gratitude for the mercy, which had failed to sear its mutilated trunk, by a new and more ruthless onset. Clayborne, "the evil genius of the colony," and others like him, were always ready to head the insurrection, and the banks of the Severn, where the Puritans lately banished from Virginia had been allowed to settle, became the hot-bed of sedition. "To root out the abominations of Popery and prelacy," to foster a "thorough godly reformation," and to vindicate their rights and liberties brought into awful danger by the Jesuits and the Pope were the ever-ready pretexts of each treasonable outbreak, and especially of that successful conspiracy, which on the accession of William and Mary took the name of "The Protestant Association" and completely revolutionized the government of Maryland. The Catholic governors from first to last had sworn to molest no man in the exercise of his religion and to make no distinctions on account of creed. A Catholic legislature in 1649 had passed a glorious statute in favour of religious liberty and equality. The first act of the Association, on the success of their treason, was to stipulate, that Roman Catholics should be excluded from all offices civil and military. The first enactment of the Assembly convened under these auspices, after the formal recognition of William and Mary's

sovereignty, was an act to disfranchise the Catholics and “*establish the Protestant religion*” within the province. It was followed up by penal laws forbidding Catholic priests to say mass or exercise the spiritual functions of their office, prohibiting Catholics from engaging in the instruction of youth and empowering their children, if they became Protestants, to compel their parents to furnish them a maintenance adequate to their condition in life.— At the instance of the crown, as it appears, priests were allowed by an alteration of the law to exercise their spiritual ministry privately in families of the Catholic persuasion. The Quakers too for a time were sufferers by the change of Government.

In the overthrow of Maryland’s religious freedom, the pillars of her civil liberty were also shaken. “Her charter was exalted above all others by its commercial privileges and exemptions.”— The English Parliament never viewed with a favourable eye the immunities of the colonies: but the Lord Proprietary had, in a long-continued struggle with both King and Parliament, contended manfully and not unsuccessfully for the integrity of his charter and the freedom of his province. The men, who overturned his government in 1689 in their perfect hatred of every thing of Roman Catholic origin yielded to England’s tyranny the whole point at issue, accused him as of a crime, of his defence of their commercial privileges and firmly rivetted the restrictive system on the colony. In the course of their legislation “to prevent the growth of Popery within the province,” they fully admitted what the charter had carefully guarded against, what their Catholic predecessors had ever denied and what in 1776 the thirteen united colonies repudiated and repelled by an appeal to arms and the god of battles,— the supreme legislative power of parliament over the internal government of the province.* Thus for a time the rights of Maryland were placed at the mercy of a King and his servile parliament. The colony, once so erect and noble in her bearing, crouch-

*Vide Note 13, chap. 3, page 245, of M’Mahon’s Maryland.

ed at the feet of the English Lion. It was bigotry, the hand-maid of oppression, that brought her down to this humiliating attitude: but it was not natural to her; nor could her free, elastic spirit long continue to bend in ignoble subjection. The acknowledgement of the supremacy of parliament in the act of 1718 was a solitary admission, never repeated, as it was unprecedented. But liberty of conscience had perished. By civil conflicts, by blood-shed, by the bigot's ordinary weapons,—slander and treachery; amid scenes of violence, rapacity and general distress, the Catholics were robbed of their right to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience in that colony, which they in their day of power had made an asylum for conscience,—a refuge for the persecuted of every Christian denomination. It was a base return for their magnanimous liberality. It must have aggravated their sense of wrong to know, that their own generosity had warmed into life and nerved the power which aimed the ungrateful blow.

“So the struck eagle, stretched upon the plain,
No more through rolling clouds to soar again,
Viewed his own feather on the fatal dart,
And winged the shaft, that quivered in his heart.
Keen were his pangs, but keener far to feel,—
He nursed the pinion, which impelled the steel.”

Let history extend the charity of her silence to those, who opened the gate of this Western paradise to the demon of persecution.— We feel no resentment towards the man who burned the temple of Ephesian Diana, that he might hand down his detested name to posterity. We would throw a veil over the memory of those, who darkened the soil of Maryland with the melancholy ruins of that beautiful temple, which the Catholic Pilgrims had reared to civil and religious liberty.

Thus the fathers of Maryland, like many other benefactors of mankind, were martyrs in the cause, of which they were the first practical advocates and the most honest and consistent friends.—

Attempts have been made to rob them of their peculiar and unrivalled honour. But a glance at well known dates and indisputable facts decides the question. Sixteen hundred and thirty-four is the era of the establishment of religious freedom on the soil of our parent State. There it stood in solitary glory beside the cross, which was erected on Saint Clement's island: there it was presiding over the foundations of "Our Lady's City." For in the words of McMahon "it was coeval with the colony itself." The oath of office prescribed to the governor of Catholic Maryland bound him, "neither by himself or another, directly or indirectly, to trouble molest or discountenance any person professing to believe in Jesus Christ, for or in respect of religion; to make no difference of persons in conferring offices, favours or rewards for or in respect of religion, but merely as they should be found faithful and well deserving and indued with moral virtues and abilities; to aim at public unity, and if any person or officer should molest any person professing to believe in Jesus Christ on account of his religion, to protect the person molested and punish the offender." What law-giver ever showed more solicitude than Calvert to guard the religious liberty of his subjects?

William Penn obtained the charter of Pennsylvania in 1681, nearly fifty years later and copied all its liberal provisions from the charter of Maryland. He established religious freedom; but he gave no such evidence of his anxiety to extend to all denominations of Christians the full enjoyment of it. Even his meek and benevolent mind was infected with a pious hatred of the Mother Church of christendom, and he has left on record a lamentable proof of his inconsistency.

In 1638 Roger Williams flying from the persecutions of Massachusetts, founded the colony of Rhode Island. He obtained his charter from Charles II, in 1663. This instrument proclaims the principle of religious equality in the strongest and most comprehensive language: and happy would it be for the honour of

Rhode Island and the memory of Williams, if the practice of the colony had accorded with the spirit of its charter. His character has won the loftiest eulogy and enlisted in his defence some of the best talent of our country. Yet rejecting the testimony brought against him and admitting all that his panegyrists have asserted, we must still say, that he comes into the field but as a gleaner of that honour and glory, the full harvest of which was gathered by the Calverts and the Pilgrims of Maryland.

The freemen of the province, as long as power remained in Catholic hands, were not behind the proprietary in liberality of spirit. To their eternal honour be it said, they most heartily concurred in every measure, which extended to their Protestant brethren all the benefits of their own condition. In order that the uniform practice of the government from the beginning might have the solemn sanction and security of a legislative enactment, they passed the law of 1649 in favour of religious freedom and thus placed on the statute book an enduring record of their enlightened views and equitable disposition. "Whereas," such was the sublime tenor of the statute, "Whereas the enforcing of conscience in matters of religion hath frequently fallen out to be of dangerous consequence to those commonwealths, where it hath been practised; for the more quiet and peaceable government of this province, and the better to preserve mutual love and unity among the inhabitants, no person or persons whatsoever within this province professing to believe in Jesus Christ, shall from henceforth be any-wise troubled, molested or discountenanced for or in respect of his or her religion, nor in the free exercise thereof within this province, nor any way compelled to the belief or exercise of any other religion against his or her consent, so that they be not unfaithful to the Lord Proprietary, or molest or conspire against the civil government, established or to be established in this province, under him or his heirs. And any person presuming contrary to this act and the true intent and meaning thereof, directly or indirectly, either

in person or estate wilfully to disturb, wrong, trouble or molest any person whatever within this province, shall pay treble damages to the party so wronged and molested and also forfeit twenty shillings for every such offence." There in its beautiful simplicity is the everlasting proof of the enlightened benevolence, the glorious magnanimity of the Catholic freemen of Maryland.

I know that this was an imperfect measure of religious liberty. The Jew, and perhaps a few others, were not covered by the protecting mantle of the law. But he who studies well the history of the times, will find more reason to eulogize the Maryland colonists, because they went so far, than to blame them, because they went no farther. It is hardly seven years, since the enlightened State of North Carolina reached the point, at which they stopped. Even the convincing eloquence of Gaston could not urge her beyond it. And New Jersey still lags behind her sister States, holding fetters for conscience in her hand and wearing the tattered badge of ancient prejudice and perpetuated infamy. Certainly the Pilgrims of Maryland were in advance of their times. Certainly they soared far above the spirit, which animated the governments both of the mother country and the sister colonies. It was the age of Laud and of the Star Chamber's ascendancy. The learning and genius of Grotius were employed in defending the principle, which Cranmer, Whitgift and Hooker had identified with the Ecclesiastical polity of England,—the principle of regal supremacy or of the magistrate's authority to regulate the religion of the people. It was at this very time, that the Legislature of Virginia was passing acts to prevent dissenting ministers from preaching in that province, and the pious government of Massachusetts was proscribing Baptists and whipping and hanging Quakers. It was, as we have seen, a time, when, beyond the boundaries of Maryland, there was not in all the Anglo-American colonies one spot, on which the Catholic might hope in peace and safety to practice his religion. The bigots, who sicken at the sight

of Maryland's unrivalled glory, have with keen-eyed malignity sought and fancied that they found another reason for hawking at her in her lofty flight. They say, "The Catholic colonists had not the power to persecute, even if they had the will." We know, that they had not the will; and that's sufficient. But is it true, that they, who had the power to do good and used it nobly, were so powerless for evil, had they been evil-minded? Could they not have hung the inoffensive and unprotected Quakers, had they taken a fancy to that vocation, just as well as the Puritans of Boston. Could they not have excluded Dissenters from the province, as Virginia did, and would not Charles I, have supported them in doing so? Yet it is on record, that in the very infancy of the colony, in 1634, Leonard Calvert sent the Dove to Massachusetts Bay, with an invitation to the people there to come and settle in Maryland, promising them the free exercise of their religion.* Can any proposition then be more satisfactorily established, than that to the Pilgrims of Maryland belongs the honour of first incorporating into a system of Government and practising the doctrine of religious liberty? Individuals may have taught it before as a speculative truth. Whatever may have been his notions in regard to persecution, no Catholic Divine from Tertullian to Thomas Aquinas or from him to Fenelon and Bossuet could regard the enslavement of the Church to the State in any other light, than as an odious and abominable tyranny, which heresy alone could vindicate. Nor was the great principle, with which our celebration is identified and which throws around it a halo of peculiar glory, without distinguished and fearless advocates among the legal and theological writers of our Church, during those ages, when she exercised her spiritual sway over the civilized world, without a rival. The "divine right of Kings" to rule their subjects as they list and fetter even conscience, is a much more modern invention than they imagine, who take their notions of the

*Winthrop's Journal.

middle ages, "dark ages" indeed for them, from the libels on them, with which our English Literature abounds. The political dogma, that the people have no rights,—a government absolute in theory as well as in practice, are things almost unknown to the olden Catholic times. Do you wonder then, that the Calverts were the first to plant the standard of religious liberty on the shores of this new world? True civil Freedom—a freedom both from the tyranny of Kings and the tyranny of a Church, such freedom as we now enjoy and would die to defend, was brought to America by the charter of Maryland:—religious liberty was her companion. God alone knows how much of our present happiness should be referred to the influence of this great example of your fathers. It was the first blow for freedom of conscience; and

"Freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeathed from bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft is ever won."

The revolution found conscience fettered in every one of the colonies. Even in Maryland, Charles Carroll of Carrollton, when he was sent to Congress to sign the Declaration of Independence, was not qualified by the existing laws to hold the pettiest civil office.—Intolerant legislators had everywhere trampled on the rights of their fellow-men under the miserable pretext of maintaining and protecting religion; as if bloody hands and burning faggots were the proper and necessary support of the citadel of divine truth.—But when the Protestant of almost every denomination and the Catholic of Maryland, with the Catholic of Ireland, the Catholic of Poland and the Catholic of France stood shoulder to shoulder and mingled their blood in the battle for Independence, even bigotry stood abashed and silent at the moral grandeur of the spectacle. Nor was her hoarse, discordant voice heard amid the national shout of jubilee for our country's final deliverance. Then the Angel of Freedom struck off the chains of captive religion and led her forth, (for the iron gate of her prison opened before her,)

*1776 in the month of Sept. the
first constitution*



and girded and sandalled for a journey, she thenceforth went about among us, not protected but protecting and blessing all that walk in her train, moving as a Queen on earth, though her kingdom is not of this world and her look is always towards Heaven.

Fellow-Citizens, there is no lesson more important to the happiness of men, than that, which is taught by the earliest history of our State. It is the lesson of charity;—it is the precept of our divine Redeemer, that we should love one another and do good to all men, even those who hate and persecute us. Your pilgrim fathers never paused to ask: will our generosity be requited well or ill? They did their duty: They acted their part faithfully, nobly in the history of the world. They set a rising nation the example of universal benevolence. In God they trusted for their recompense, and they have received it. The world is now resounding their praise. Looking down from a higher sphere of charity they behold the principles, which they professed and acted on triumphant throughout our vast republic and destined yet to triumph throughout the entire world. Marylanders emulate the glory of your fathers: Men of every State, of every Country and of every Creed, learn, that true religion, as angel's sung, when they announced our Saviour's birth, gives glory to God in the highest and brings PEACE AND GOOD WILL TO MEN.



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