

## PREFACE.

The sessions of Assembly, held in March and October, 1698, did not pass without the usual bickerings between the Governor and the Lower House. Both sides were suspicious, captious about punctilios, and ready to see offence where none was intended. However, the news that Nicholson was about to be removed to the government of Virginia begat a more amicable feeling, and they parted with expressions of mutual good will.

In 1697 an epidemic of some sort prevailed in Charles county. It having been found that the sick were benefited by drinking the waters of the Cool Springs in St. Mary's county, in 1698 an act was passed for purchasing these springs and the adjoining land at the public expense. Here cottages were to be erected and furnished with fuel and other necessaries for the free use of the sick poor. A trace of the bigotry of the time appears in a complaint of the Delegates to the Governor that the Roman Catholic priests had a habit of going among the sick and dying, administering the sacraments, which "extravagant and presumptuous behaviour" they ask him to prohibit by proclamation.

A somewhat humorous incident of the October session was this;—Nicholson, desirous, before his departure from Maryland, to heap coals of fire upon the heads of the perverse Delegates, applied to the English Committee of Trade to procure from the King an Act of pardon for the Province. The Committee (in some wonder, we may surmise) did so, and the Act was signed and transmitted. The Delegates, far from being overjoyed at the royal clemency, drily remarked that they were not conscious that the Province labored under any guilt, and therefore humbly conceived that no pardon was needed. Nicholson, in high dudgeon, told them that they were the first people he had ever heard of that refused their King's mercy, and since they had so little grace, he would at once put into execution all the judgments on navigation bonds, which he had not intended to do. The Delegates, however, were firm in declining to accept pardon where they were conscious of no offence, and the King's peace returned to him again.