

## PREFACE.

The administration of Gov. Blakiston ran its course much more smoothly than that of the masterful Nicholson. Blakiston was an amiable man, and very desirous to keep on good terms with the Assembly, while they in turn liked, trusted, and respected him; and, in consequence, halcyon weather prevailed in the Province during his term of office.

The Act for the Establishment of Religion which made the Church of England the Established Church of the Province, was the most important act of Blakiston's administration. It was not the first act of the kind: the first Assembly convened under the royal government in 1692 passed an act establishing the Church of England and providing for the division of the counties into parishes and the election of vestrymen, and also for a tax of forty pounds of tobacco per poll for the support of the clergy. This act was modified by a supplementary act in 1693, and in 1694 both were superseded by a third. This was disapproved by the crown, and a fourth was passed in 1696. This, however, contained a clause providing that the people of the Province should have the benefit of the laws of England in all cases where the provincial laws were silent. This clause was held not germane to the title of the act, which spoke of religion only, and it was therefore disallowed by the crown in 1699. Under the influence of Dr. Thomas Bray, commissary of the Bishop of London, an act was passed in 1700 [p. 91] which it was hoped would be satisfactory. It, however, contained a clause requiring the use of the Prayer-Book "in every church or other place of public worship;" and this deprived the Quakers and other dissenters of the measure of toleration they had enjoyed. It was seen that this act would not be approved by the crown; so Dr. Bray had a new bill drawn according to the instructions of the Board of Trade and Plantations, and this was passed by the Assembly in 1702 [p. 265] and substantially remained the law until the Revolution.

It preserved the tax of forty pounds per poll for the support of the clergy, gave a certain amount of toleration to the Quakers and other Protestant Dissenters, but left the Roman Catholics to the penal laws of England.