

the thought of thousands upon thousands of men, women and children cowering in hiding places, deprived of their God-given rights, suffering hunger, thirst and even death, with no more disturbance to our mental systems than is expressed in a fervent "Thank God" that we live in free, liberty-loving America, rather than in one of the war-torn or dictator-ridden countries that lie so comfortably distant from us.

An unpleasant thought for such a pleasant occasion as this? Possibly so, but it is fitting, I believe, for us to give more than a passing thought to such unpleasant happening on this, the anniversary of the landing in our own State of Maryland of a band of intrepid adventurers whose safe arrival in the country of their hearts' desire lent a new and wonderful meaning to the word "freedom" throughout all the length and breadth of the universe. And it is good, too, to dwell for a few moments tonight upon the type of men and women they were, who were content to leave far behind them the homes of their childhood, the relatives and friends they loved so well, to adventure into an unknown wilderness, armed only with a will to find somewhere upon this earth the measure of liberty and toleration, the escape from intolerance and bigotry, that had been denied them so completely in the land of their forefathers.

It is entirely fitting to dwell upon such considerations, I maintain, because through their contemplation, we come to a better understanding of the true values of some of the things in life that we, here in this favored Country, sometimes may not have evaluated properly because we have taken them so entirely for granted. It is by reviewing the dangers our early Maryland colonists were ready to live and act and believe as they wished, that we may better appreciate the hard-won advantages we now enjoy, to the end that, threaten what may in these unpredictable times, come what may to possibly embroil us in the troubles that so many misguided groups here in our own Country even now are seeking to bring down upon us, we may be strengthened in our resolve to do whatever dangers and sacrifices may be required, to hold aloft and untrampled the banner of freedom-for-all that those bold adventurers planted so firmly upon the soil of our beloved Maryland that memorable morning in March more than three hundred years ago.

We Marylanders, gather here this evening to celebrate the establishment of the world's first really free political subdivision, may well take pride not so much in what was done by these hardy freemen, but rather in the traditions of freedom by them established, and by them and their descendants ever cherished as they have been cherished in no other State in even this liberty-loving land of America. From the time they left behind them the shores of Europe, up until and beyond the troubled days of the Revolution, the freemen of Maryland were ever in the forefront of the struggle to achieve for this new land of their adoption so staunch a sense of liberty that nothing thereafter ever could wrest it out of the law of the country, or out of the hearts of its people.

They arrived in St. Mary's County in March, 1634, mind you, and by 1638—a span of only four years—they had wrung from their Governor, Cecil Calvert, surrender of that provision in his royal charter that reserved to him alone, as proprietor of the colony, the right of calling an assembly of the freemen or their delegates when and as he should choose. The King, steeped in his royal prerogatives, had felt that to the proprietor of the colony alone should belong the right of initiating legislation for the government of his colonists,