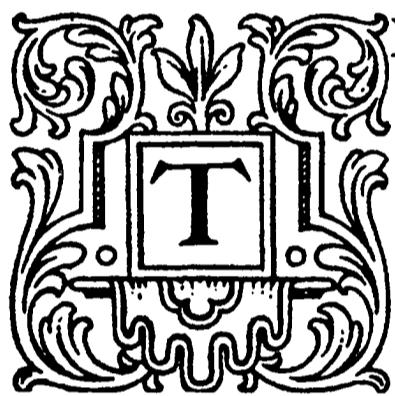




CHAPTER SIX

William Parks Becomes Printer to His Lordship and the Province— The Collected Laws of 1727—The First Maryland News- paper—The Early Belles Lettres of Maryland



HE expression of gratitude by the Assembly for his editorial work, performed in 1725 in connection with the volume of "Debates and Proceedings," did not close the account between Thomas Bordley and the Province, for very soon after he had been publicly thanked for this service, he put the people of Maryland under an even greater obligation by his initiative and diligence in procuring for them a permanent resident printer. One month after the incident which has been referred to, the delegates, begging concurrence in their expressed approval of his action,¹ informed the Upper House that Mr. Bordley had sent for a printer on the encouragement given by the resolutions of 1722 and 1723. The Upper House sent down its note of agreement immediately, and one assumes that Bordley now gave the word to his printer to transport himself and his equipment to the Province. In the next session of the Assembly there appeared before the delegates Mr. William Parks, an English printer whose intelligence and enterprise gave impetus to the literary progress which occurred in the colonies of Maryland and Virginia during the ensuing decade.

Isaiah Thomas is authority for the statement that William Parks was born in England and bred to the composing stick before leaving his native land.² Where was his initial employment in America, whether he worked first in Pennsylvania or in one of the northern colonies, or whether he came directly to Maryland are questions concerning him which have not been answered. It is possible that he was a journeyman in the shop of Andrew Bradford, where Bordley may well have become acquainted with him during the printing in that establishment of the "Debates and Proceedings" of 1725, but in truth this conjecture is based upon no real evidence. Indeed,

¹U. H. J., November 6, 1725, *Archives of Maryland*, 35: 289.

²Thomas, 1st ed., 2: 143. See also note 2, on page 73 of this narrative.