
William Parks, Public Printer of Maryland and Virginia

extension of the English statutes, was treated in a notable plea by Daniel Dulany the Elder.¹ Although he was able to keep on good terms with its representatives, Parks was not subservient to the government of the Proprietary. He considered himself to be the servant of the Lower House of Assembly in its constitutional struggles, and all that he did was done boldly and apparently without regard for the Proprietary influence. The author of the *Sotweed Redivivus*, published in Annapolis in 1730, commented on the activity and zeal of the Parks establishment in the lines,

“. . . the Press with Schemes does swell,
To make us Thrive at home the better,”

and for once the rough-tongued satirist was guiltless of exaggeration. The bibliography attached to this narrative, containing, it is believed, by no means all of the publications issued by Parks during his twelve years of residence in Maryland, indicates none the less the scope of his service to the Province. His newspaper, his almanacs, his issues of works of politics, economics and religion, of satiric verse and *vers de société* bespeak him a man of public spirit, and a printer in whom literary appreciation was joined to business enterprise.

The beginnings of the Maryland literary tradition, fostered by the press of the new printer, rest upon the work of Richard Lewis and Ebenezer Cooke, two writers whose names are almost unknown in other connections. On March 18th of the year 1728/29, Governor Benedict Leonard Calvert wrote in these words to his friend Thomas Hearne, the antiquary, who was somewhat disgruntled, it may be observed incidentally, at having to pay 3s. 6d. postage on the letter and the parcel which accompanied it:

“Wee have had here of late a Printing house set up, which I have encouraged with as much Countenance from the Government as possible. Wee have printed our Body of Laws, and I herewith send you one of our first issue of the press, a translation of the Muscipula by one Lewis, a schoolmaster here who formerly belonged to Eaton, a man realy of Ingenuity, and to My Judgment well versed in poetry.”²

The work here referred to was a satire on the Welsh people, written in Latin in the mock-heroic style by Edward Holdsworth. Its translation by Richard Lewis,³ probably a successor of Michael Piper in King William's

¹ *The Right of the Inhabitants of Maryland to the Benefit of the English Laws*. Annapolis, 1728. See bibliographical appendix.

² See appendix for title and description. This reference to it is found in Hearne's *Collections*, 10: 109, from which it is quoted in the *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 11: 282.

³ Richard Lewis, who according to Gov. Calvert, was an old Etonian, was in Maryland as early as October 1725. He remained there certainly until October 27, 1732, at which time he wrote a letter to England describing various natural wonders of Maryland. (See *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, 37: 69 and 38: 119). He was a frequent contributor to the *Maryland Gazette*, from the columns of which several of his pieces were reprinted. See *Maryland Historical Society Fund Pub. No. 36* and *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 5: 71.