



INTRODUCTION

By Lawrence C. Wroth

THIS record by Mr. Wheeler of the life of a community as displayed in its printed production is a book that has been needed and hoped for these many years. With the beginning of the Revolution, Maryland, and especially the commercial town of Baltimore, entered upon a flourishing economic and intellectual life, swifter in pace and more intense in purpose than had previously existed in a province that was chiefly agricultural in its interests. This condition found itself reflected in the output of the press during the years of the Revolution and those of the decade following. Maryland's part in the formation of the Confederation, her importance as one of the chief granaries of the American armies, her vigorous, interesting life throughout these years of the war and the later period of nationalization, are parts of her history which her citizens take pleasure in recalling. Mr. Wheeler has done a valuable service in recording the books, pamphlets, newspapers, broadsides, and even the theatre posters in which this varied life is reflected. Perhaps I should say "especially the theatre posters," for rarely has such abundance of material for the history of the drama in an American city been set forth in a general bibliography.

In his own Preface Mr. Wheeler has told of the aid he received from the bibliography begun several years ago by the late Kenneth Rede and at his lamented death deposited in manuscript in the Enoch Pratt Free Library. Mr. Wheeler's annotation of Mr. Rede's titles, his location of copies not seen by Mr. Rede, and his addition of a great many titles not in the manuscript have resulted in a bibliography that will be a work of enduring usefulness to students of Maryland life and letters. The historical narrative with which his work begins is an addition of distinct worth to Maryland biography and cultural history. One hardly knows which to praise more highly, the success with which he has brought together data about figures hitherto little known, bringing to life and actuality such men as Eleazer Oswald, James Angell, James Hayes, Jr., and Matthias Bartgis; or