

to each of these departments for the papers obtained from them, and a duplicate retained by the Committee.

The Papers as they came to us had no mark of ownership on them, nor do we believe the State has ever placed a stamp on any of its archives: had this been the case, much of the valuable material rescued by Mr. Ridgely would doubtless still have formed part of the records of the State. The Committee, recognizing the fact that the Society is responsible for the safekeeping and return of these papers, have had each item plainly stamped in blue ink with the following device:

Archives
of the State of
Maryland.

so that further loss might be guarded against.

The Society is probably aware that the General Assembly of 1846, by their 27th Resolution, deposited a number of the early records with us. They were briefly described in the Catalogue made by Mr. Lewis Mayer in 1854, and are still in our possession. In addition to these the Society received from the family of the late Rev. Dr. Allen two volumes he had used in the preparation of Alexander's Calendar, and they purchased from a dealer in second-hand books two volumes that had been sent from Annapolis with a large collection of waste paper; a Council Journal of 1692-3 given to the Mercantile Library Association is also among the Archives. All these, with the collection recently received, have been systematically arranged, and a description more or less minute as the volume seemed to demand has been made of each. This has been absolutely necessary both for this report and so as to mark out definitely a line of procedure in the first volume of the Archives. When the volumes had been thoroughly analyzed, the Committee after a careful examination of them decided that as the Proceedings and Acts of the early Assemblies presented an almost unbroken record from the beginning, this should constitute the first volume; for of the Proceedings only those of 1637/8 had been printed, and of the three hundred or more laws passed up to 1664 the full text of only six was given by Bacon in his compilation of 1765.

It was desirable, before any transcribing was done, that the Committee should have the service of a competent person to edit and have continuous supervision of the work; for no member of the Committee could give his entire time to the preparation of the volume. They recognized the fact that but few men have the knowledge, inclination, accuracy and time for such work, and they could suggest but one gentleman who possessed that familiarity with the early history of the State and who combined the requisites necessary for carrying out the Committee's plan. They therefore invited Dr. William Hand Browne to edit the series. Dr. Browne cheerfully accepted the Committee's invitation, and with the aid of copyists began work in February, 1883.