

the intention of the Assembly to remove the seat of government to Anne Arundel, and the Mayor and Council of St. Maries earnestly protested against a measure which implied the ruin of that ancient city, but their protest was rejected with mockery and coarse insult, showing the bitter animosity of the Assembly. In the following Session, Feby.–Mar. 1694/5, the Assembly met at Anne Arundel Town (afterwards called Annapolis) to which the Provincial Court and public records were removed.

It was, no doubt, a wise move. The desirability of a more central seat of government, after the spread of population into the middle and northern counties, had been for some time apparent, and in 1683 there had been a temporary and tentative removal to Anne Arundel county, but no permanent change made, on account of insufficient accommodations. It is plain, however, that other considerations beside that of public convenience, entered into the motives for removal. St. Maries was distinctively Catholic, and intimately associated with the Proprietary Government, while Anne Arundel and the settlement on the Severn had been from the first distinctively and aggressively Protestant. The removal of the capital emphasized the fact that Maryland was no longer proprietary and Catholic, but royal and Protestant.

Nicholson was a man of great ability and integrity, of liberal views and of firm purposes. As a matter of course he made enemies in Virginia, and their calumnies have been accepted even by some recent writers without examination. In Maryland he seems to have made a highly favorable impression, and the Burgesses, even when contending with him, took care to express their respect and confidence. Their words on one such occasion are worth repeating:—

“We have not the least doubt of our rights or liberties being infringed by our gracious Sovereign or our noble and worthy Governor; and we do sincerely acknowledge that his Excellency governs by the fairest measures and freest administration of the laws we are capable of understanding, and therefore have not the least apprehension of his invading our rights and privileges” (p. 415. See also pp. 97–8, and 467).

One thing Nicholson had much at heart, in Virginia as in Maryland, and that was the cause of public education. It was by his exertions that William and Mary College in Virginia was founded in 1693; and one of his first acts in Maryland was to urge upon the Assembly the establishment of a system of free schools. The subject was considered at the session of Sept.–Oct., 1694, and subscriptions were raised, the Gov-