

INTRODUCTION.

This forty-fifth volume of the Archives of Maryland is the sixth volume in the sub-series of state documents relating to the period of the Revolutionary War. The Council Proceedings were copied from Liber C. B. No. 24, and the correspondence of the Council from Liber No. 78; both of these are contemporary copies of which the original rough minutes and drafts are in the keeping of the Maryland Historical Society. The letters and reports to the Council are from two sources in the possession of the Society; namely, the three series of bound volumes of manuscripts known familiarly as the Black, Brown and Red Books from the color of their bindings, and a mass of bundles of manuscripts arranged in chronological order by Charles Fickus some five years ago. These sources are more fully described in the introduction to Volume 43. Material drawn from the bound volumes is identified in the margin of the present volume by name of series and number of document, while papers taken from the second source are located by a date reference only. The marginal references showing the date and source of each document are an innovation in the editing of the series, begun with this volume. As in other recent volumes of the Archives, much space has been saved and, we believe, no interest lost by the excision of formal headings and conclusions of letters. The preparation of the copy was begun and carried out by the late editor of the Archives of Maryland, Bernard Christian Steiner, from copies made by Miss Lucy Harwood Harrison, and the publication of the volume has been effected by J. Hall Pleasants, with the help of Charles Fickus and Miss Carolina Virginia Davidson.

It is not the purpose of this introduction to increase the size of a volume already one of the largest in the series by detailed reference to matters of especial interest in the collection. It is enough to say that the volume carries on the proceedings and correspondence of the Council for the years 1780 and 1781, a period in the War of Independence when men's hearts and minds were strained as they had not been at any time earlier in the struggle, because now they could begin to feel a fearful hope for its successful outcome. We are having historians lately who by the practice of insidious literary gifts attempt to weaken our inherited reverence for the men and ideals of the Revolution. Most of us are quick to admit that these writers have done good in correctly labelling much that was unworthy in motive and action, but that they have ignored or failed to understand the vitality of the spirit of opposition that finally gained the victory is obvious to one who reads ever so hastily such a collection of contemporary papers as is found in this new volume of the