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MARYLAND, INDEPENDENCE, AND THE
CONFEDERATION: A PAPER READ
BEFORE THE MARYLAND HISTORICAL
SOCIETY, DECEMBER 8TH, 1890, PP. 5-59**

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Before the Maryland historical society, december 8th, 1890, pp. 5-59 by William J. Hull

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A Paper read before the Maryland Historical Society,

December 8th, 1890.

BY WILLIAM J. HULL.
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Baltimore, 1891.

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MARYLAND, INDEPENDENCE, AND THE CONFEDERATION.

THE three topics that occupied the most prominent place in the deliberations of the Continental Congress before the Declaration of Independence, and the three that were of the most vital importance to the colonies as a whole, were those of political independence from the mother country, of foreign alliances, and of armed resistance to the arbitrary measures enacted by the British Parliament and backed up by British arms.

A brief portrayal of Maryland's share in the execution of these three great objects may serve a useful purpose in enabling one the better to appreciate Maryland's influence in the formation of the Confederation and the Union.

I.

MARYLAND AND INDEPENDENCE.

In attempting to trace the continuity of history it is not well, especially in so limited a paper as

this, to penetrate too far into the mists of antiquity ; for the task of searching out the "first causes" of human conduct, as well as of the phenomena of nature, lies within the domain of speculative philosophy, and not of philosophic history. I shall, therefore, begin this relation of Maryland's influence upon American independence with an account of her attitude toward the first *immediate* cause of the Revolution—the Stamp Act of 1765.

In 1762, before the close of the French and Indian War, in consequence of the bold stand taken by the Maryland Assembly against the arbitrary demand of the proprietary, governor, minister, parliament, and general, to furnish supplies for the conduct of that war, the king expressed his stern displeasure at the "obstinate disobedience" of the Assembly of Maryland, and censured its members as not "animated by a sense of their duty to their king and country." This reproof was administered, Egremont wrote, "not to change their opinion," but "that they may not deceive themselves by supposing that their behavior is not seen here in its *true light*." Thus when Maryland entered upon her energetic resistance to the Stamp Act, it was not the first time she had braved the British Lion and heard him growl; nor could she plead for her rebellious acts the immunity of a first offence. But when news reached the colony that the duties on stamped paper had been extended to America, there

was no hesitation as to the manner in which the odious act should be received. Meetings were held in every part of the province, and the people expressed their detestation of the act and their unalterable determination that it should never be carried into effect, not only by bold and decided resolutions against it, but also by acts of violence against the persons and property of its supporters. The freemen of Talbot county erected a gibbet before the door of the court house, twenty feet high, and hanged on it the effigy of a stamp informer in chains, "in terrorem," until the Stamp Act should be repealed; and they resolved unanimously to hold in utter contempt and abhorrence every stamp officer and every favorer of the Stamp Act, and "to have no communication with any such, not even to speak to him, unless to upbraid him with his baseness." The effigy of Zachariah Hood, the officer appointed for the distribution of the stamps in Maryland, was paraded, whipped, burned, hung, tarred and feathered, buried, and treated with every sort of contumely in Baltimore, Frederick, Annapolis, Elk Ridge, and other towns of the province. Nor did this unhappy stamp distributor escape with mere punishment by proxy; his house at Annapolis was torn down, and he himself was forced to flee for protection from the irate Maryland populace to General Gage in the city of New York. But here also he felt the power of
