

MARYLAND AS A PALATINATE

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Maryland as a palatinate by Constance Lippincott

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CONSTANCE LIPPINCOTT

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BY
CONSTANCE LIPPINCOTT



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Introduction

(1) Definition of a Palatinate :

ACCORDING to the Century Dictionary, a palatinate is the dominion of a count palatine.¹ In England, an earl or count palatine had royal jurisdiction in his province; all tenants-in-chief held of him; he had his own courts, took proceeds of jurisdiction, and appointed his own sheriff.²

(2) Historical Instances of the Palatinate :

THOUGH the word palatinate is of Latin origin, and was first used in France, it is to the Teutonic peoples that we must look for the fullest development of this form of government.

(a) In Europe, we find the Rhenish palatinates, and the counties palatine of both England and Ireland, the best known of which are Durham, Chester,

¹ Century Dictionary, vol. v., under "palatinate" and "palatine."

² Larned's History of Ready Reference, vol. iv. p. 2411.

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and Lancaster. In England, Durham alone retained its ancient privileges and government for any length of time, owing perhaps to the fact that its ruler, being a bishop, could not found a feudal family, and therefore was less apt to excite the king's jealousy. That the Bishops of Durham had quasi-regal powers in their palatinate is without doubt, but the king found many ways in which he could encroach on and limit their privileges.¹

(b) Durham: There are many theories as to the origin of the Durham palatinate, three of which are well worth noticing: two of them trace its origin to the deliberate act of one of the English kings, probably Alfred or William the Conqueror; the third looks on it as a growth not complete until the thirteenth century, but a survival of local independence in the ancient kingdom of Northumbria.² The latter theory is the one accepted by Lapsley in his work on Durham. Fiske inclines to the theory that Durham was founded by William I. to defend the border. This last theory is the one generally accepted. The bishop was at the height of his power between the years 1300 and 1400.³

The bishop, as the head of the civil government, had the appointment of all the civil officers, and the

¹ Fiske's *Old Virginia and her Neighbors*, vol. i. p. 276.

² *Harvard Historical Studies*, vol. viii.

³ Lapsley's *County Palatine of Durham*.