COMMENCEMENT ECHOES.

MORE ABOUT THE GRADUATION AT EASTON HIGH SCHOOL.

An Excellent and Instructive Historical Address by Professor Geo. A. Steele, of Elkton High School.

THE Commencement of the Easton High School last week was a decided success. It was no no more than was expected by the public with Dr. Hardcastle at the helm of the Ship of Learning, and with his very able corps of assistants, but then there are successes and successes, and this was a complete one.

The exercises were held in the large and handsome Assembly Hall, and it was crowded to the doors with the well-wishers of the school and those also who knew a good thing when it came along.

The Te Deum (Stephens) was well sung by a class of fine voices, led by the Christ Church Choir, the latter statement being sufficient proof of the excellence of its rendition.

The music throughout was thoroughly good, the recitations excellent and the salutatory and valedictory were really fine papers and gave indication of much study and thought in the two young ladies who were selected for the honor, yet trying ordeal.

Miss Eleanor Chaplain was graceful, easy of manner, spoke in a clear, well modulated voice, and was thoroughly in sympathy with her subject.

Miss Heste S. Kemp read her address well and showed that she was well selected as the valedictorian.

We should rather have heard both Mr. Hughlett Henry and Mr. Henry Turner in original papers than in Solomon's exceedingly long Prayer and Burns's "Epistle to a Young Friend," but the young gentlemen acquitted themselves well in reading this "ancient literature."

There was one part of the program not fulfilled. Mr. M. B. Nichols did not make the address in awarding the gold medal to Miss Kemp. Did the worthy President of the School Board have "heart failure" in the midst of the bevy of beauty surrounding him, that the old veteran of many scholastic wars, Prof. Chaplain, had to bestow the honors in his stead?

There were some "heart aches" when the "honorable mention of pupils" left some out who had struggled hard to place their names on this roll and failed.

Dr. Hardcastle certainly needed no further proof of his great personal and deserved popularity with all than the long-continued waves of applause that swept through the hall when he arose to make his farewell address, for he goes to the Nautical Academy next year, yet what is the High School's loss is the Nautical Academy's gain.

Introducing an old classmate, Professor George Alexander Steele, Dr. Hardcastle said that the audience would hear a most entertaining address. He was right, for all who heard the address were delighted with it, and the graceful delivery of the speaker, whose manners are pleasing and voice well modulated, having none of those high, rasping tones so often heard in pedagogues.

Prof. Steele is the Principal of the Elkton High School and is a native of Elkton, having been born there in 1861. He was educated in the public schools, and after graduation he went to St. John's College, where his record in his classes was a brilliant one. Graduating at this college, he entered upon the career of a teacher, in which he has been emihently successful.

With a most thorough appreciation of Elkton from every standpoint, he married Miss Bessie Miller, a fair daughter of that city.

Urged by Dr. Hardcastle to make the address at the Easton High School Commencement, Prof. Steele accepted, and his theme was well chosen, being "My Maryland." The address follows in full:

My Maryland.

We have arrived at that point in the program where a part of the audience is tempted to sink into attitudes most comfortable and restful; whilst others, recognizing the golden opportunities for self-discipline, or through consideration for the feelings of the speaker, maintain their appearance of interest, and preserve their steadiness of feature, but lapse into intellectual repose, and sigh within, and mentally exclaim with Hiawatha, "Give us of thy balm, O Fir Tree!"

To all my fellow-sufferers from commencement eloquence, I offer condolence, and solemnly promise to be merciful as I am strong. This is a season of congratulation, and rightly so. The end of the year of toil and application is crowned with the smiles and plaudits of those to whose hearts our success is dear. The anxiety of student and teacher is now over past, and only the sweet sorrow of parting remains to round out old '97. And so, upon this occasion of felicitation, instead of multiplying the codes of admonition that are generally considered a sine qua non to those on the threshold of life, for

"Of all the good things in this good world around us,
The one most abundantly furnished ahd found us,
And which, for that reason, we can best do without,
And can best spare our friends, is good counsel, no doubt."

we will cordially congratulate these young people upon the distinction they have attained in graduation from an institution so excellent as this High School, in so beautiful a town as this Easton, the metropolis of the Eastern Shore, in so glorious a commonwealth as our own Maryland, convinced the while, that in a brief resume of our history we shall find much to interest and instruct, and considering that the subject is peculiarly apropos to the event, the closing exercises of a free school, in that the first school of this character in the continent was established within our borders. Although it is notorious that Cecil, Lord Baltimore, contributed not a farthing to the establishment of a church or school, and that at the Restoration and accession of Charles II, there was little intelligence in the province, the initiative was soon taken, and we find provision for the founding of King William's School," for propagation of the Gospel, and the education of youth in good letters and manners." The masters were required to be communicants of the Church, and able to teach "well the grammar, good writing and the mathematics, if such can be conveniently got," the combination indicating that they believed on need.

"Heed not the sceptic's puny hands,
While near the school the Church spire stands;
Nor fear the blinded bigot's rule,
While near the Church spire stands the school."

A building being the next necessity, the Governor stipulated with one Antony Workman, that a house be built, to be used by Workman as an inn on condition that at his death it should be for the use of the free school. Workman, however had a prolonged lease on life, and ignorance flourished, while the prospective temble of learning became a shrine of Bacchus. But at length the landlord was gathered to his fathers, and the school reaped the benefit of the edifice. In her formation Maryland differed from the other colonies in having her boundaries clearly defined. Her limits were, on the north the fortieth paralell of latitude; on the west and south west, a line run from this paralell to the farthest source of the Potomac River; thence by the western bank to the Chesapeake Bay, south by a line run across the Bay and peninsula to the Atlantic, and east by Delaware Bay and River. This included, as will be seen, all the present State of Delaware, a large tract of what is now Pennsylvania, and much that is now occupied and claimed by West Virginia. The charter of Maryland contained the most ample rights and privileges ever conferred by a sovereign of England. The Proprietary was made absolute lord of the land and water within his boundaries, could erect towns, cities and ports, make war or peace, levy tolls and duties, execute laws and pardon offenders. He could confer titles and dignities so long as they differed from those of England. He could found churches and chapels, and have them consecrated according to the ecclesiastical laws of England, and appoint the incumbents. All this territory, with all these royal rights, was to be held of the crown in free socage, by the delivery of two Indian arrows yearly at the palace of Windsor, and the fifth of all the gold or silver mined. This Charter, by which Maryland was virtually an independent and self-governed community, placed the destinies of the colonists in their own hands. The powers granted the Proprietary might have been oppressive in the hands of a man less wise, just and humane than Cecilius Calvert, who knew when to yield and when to stand firm.

Immediately upon the grant of his charter, Calvert proceeded to fit out his fleet, consisting of the Ark, of three hundred and fifty tons, which had already carried his father's colonists to Avalon, and the Dove, of about fifty tons, himself bearing the cost of the first emigration. After a violent storm at starting, the ships reached Barbadoes on the 3rd of January, 1634, arrived at Old Point Comfort on the twenty-seventh of February, and finally on the feast of the Annunciation, the twenty-fifth of March, which was also New Year's Day according to the reckoning then in use, on an island which they named Saint Clement's, they celebrated their first mass in the New World, and planted a cross, in token that this was to be henceforth a Christian land.

It was, indeed, a goodly land that they had reached: a land of broad streams, fertile plains, of gentle hills and green woodlands, and the colonists were charmed with the strange and beautiful trees, the vines loaded with grapes, the flocks of wild turkeys, the countless multitudes of water-fowl, the bright new birds, the blue jay, the tanager glancing like a scarlet flame, and the oriole, dressed in thhe Maryland colors of sable and orange and henceforth dear to Maryland eyes. They found also the natives kindly disposed and with them friendly intercourse was soon established, and in one of their huts Father White erected an altar and consecrated the first chapel of Maryland. He mentions their kind, cheerful disposition, their moderation in eating, "living chiefly upon preparations of Indian corn—quem *pone* et *omini*," appellant, words still familiar to Maryland ears. While the Baltimore colony met with no hostilities at the hands of the natives, they encountered serious dangers from their neighbors, the Virginians, who cherished three causes of irritation—two sentimental and one commercial. They were exasperated that the Maryland charter covered land that had once been their own, albeit they had neglected it. They disliked and distrusted what they deemed a popish settlement, and they were aggrieved that the new colony had the privilege of trade in foreign markets, which was denied to them. Inspired by these three influences, they lost no opportunity to attack the charter of the Calverts, and turning upon the phrase "hactemus inculta," they adroitly advanced the claims of Claiborne to Kent Island. A crisis soon came A pinnace belonging to the Kent Island station was captured by the Marylanders for trading in Maryland waters without license. In reprisal Claiborne armed a shallop, the Cockatrice, and sent it out under command of Lieutenant Ratcliffe Warren, commissioned to seize any vessels belonging to the government at St. Mary's. They were met and captured by Calvert's pinnaces, the Saint Helen and the Saint Margaret. This, however, was but the beginning of actions and aggressions which were carried on with varying menace to the Maryland cause, and defeat to the Claiborne party, until that leader, deserted by his supporters, seems to have grown thoroughly disgusted with the turn affairs had taken, and after the reduction of Palmer's Island, he shook the dust of Maryland from his feet, and in the following summer obtained a grant of Rich Island in the Bahamas. From these experiences the Proprietary learned that his colonists were capable of governing themselves, and, with his characteristic far-sighted wisdom, sent over his brother, with full authority to assent, in his name, to laws made by the freemen, reserving to himself only the veto-power; while, to avoid the inconvenience and danger of leaving the Province without laws, they were to be operative until his final assent or dissent was received. Thus was the principle of free self-government firmly established in Maryland, four years from the settlement of the colony. While thus far there was no spot in Christendom where religious belief was free, and when even the Commons of England declared against toleration, he founded a community wherein no man might be molested for his faith. At a time when absolutism had struck down representative government in England, and it was doubtful if a Parliament of freemen would ever meet again, he founded a community in which no laws might be made without the consent of the freemen. The Ark and the Dove bore names of happy omen: the one saved from general wreck the germs of political liberty, and the other bore the olive-branch of religious peace. Hitherto we have, with proverbial masculine selfishness, recounted the deeds and recalled the names of men exclusively in Maryland's early days, not even pausing to pay tribute to the gentle queen in whose honor our fair state bears its proud name. We are now confronted by a Maryland woman whose strong position must make glad the hearts of Miss Susan B. Anthony and other enthusiastic ladies who believe that the millennium would be hastened by their political enfranchisement.

Upon the death of Leonard Calvert, in June, 1647, it was found that he had appointed Thomas Green his successor, and his kinswoman Margaret Brent was named his executrix, with the brief instructions, "take all, pay all," attesting at once his well-placed confidence in the ability and integrity of woman. Subsequent occurrences would even seem to justify a reversion of Calvert's testamentary provisions, and to indicate that a better arrangement would have been secured if Mistress Brent had assumed the gubernatorial mantle as well. This Mrs. Brent is the only woman whose figure stands out clearly in our colonial history. She had come to the Province in 1638 with her sister, bringing over nine colonists, five men and four women. They took up manors, imported more settlers and managed their affairs with masculine vigor. On the strength of

(Continued on eighth page.)

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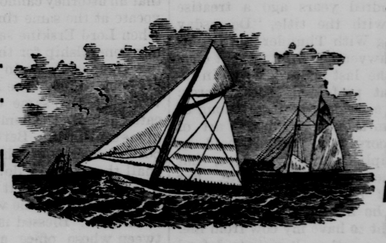
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