



*View here the Shadow whose Ingenious Hand
Hath drawne exact the Province Mary Land
Display'd her Glory in such Scenes of Witt
That those that read must fall in Love with it
For which his Labour hee deserves the praise
As well as Poets doe the wreath of Bays .
Anno Dō: 1666. Aetatis Suae 28. H.W.*

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GEORGE ALSOP

A CHARACTER OF THE PROVINCE OF MARY-LAND

1666 _____ EXCERPTS

Chap. IV. *Upon Trafique, and what Merchandizing Commodities this Province affords, also how Tobacco is planted and made fit for Commerce.*

Trafique, Commerce, and Trade, are those great wheels that by their circular and continued motion turn into most Kingdoms of the Earth the plenty of abundant Riches that they are commonly fed withall: For Trafique in his right description is the very soul of a Kingdom; and should but Fate ordain a removal of it for some years, from the richest and most populous Monarchy that dwells in the most fertile clime of the whole Universe, he would soon find by a woeful experiment, the miss and loss of so reviving a supporter. And I am certainly confident that England would as soon feel her feebleness by withdrawalment of so great an upholder; as well

in reference to the internal and healthful preservative of her Inhabitants, for want of those Medicinal Drugs that are landed upon her Coast every year, as the external profits, Glory and beneficial Graces that accrue by her. . . .

Should Commerce once cease, there is no Country in the habitable world but would undoubtedly miss that flourishing, splendid and rich gallantry of Equipage, that Trafique maintained and drest her up in before she received that fatal Eclipse: England, France, Germany and Spain, together with all the Kingdoms. . . .

Tobacco is the only solid Staple Commodity of this Province: The use of it was first found out by the Indians many ages ago and transferr'd into Christendom by that great Discoverer of America, Columbus. It's generally made by all the inhabitants of this Province, and between the months of March and April



Tobacco (May, or large-leaved petum), in Crispijn II de Passe, *Hortus Floridus [The Flower Garden]*, Netherlands, 1614

they sow the seed (which is much smaller than Mustard-seed) in small beds and patches digged up and made so by art, and about May the Plants commonly appear green in those beds: . . .

Between November and January there arrives in this Province Shipping to the number of twenty sail and upwards, all Merchant-men loaden with Commodities to Trafique and dispose of, trucking [trading] with the Planter for Silks, Hollands, Serges, and Broad-cloths, with other necessary Goods, priz'd at such and such rates as shall be judg'd on is fair and legal, for Tobacco at so much the pound, and advantage on both sides considered; the Planter for his work, and the Merchant for adventuring himself and his Commodity into so far a Country: Thus is the Trade on both sides drove on with a fair and honest Decorum. . . .

Our Shops and Exchanges of Mary-Land are the Merchants' Storehouses where with few words and protestations Goods are bought and delivered: not like those Shopkeepers' Boys in London that continually cry, What do ye lack, Sir? What d'ye buy? yelping with so wide a mouth, as if some Apothecary had hired their mouths to stand open to catch Gnats and Vagabond Flies in.

Tobacco is the current Coin of Mary-Land, and will sooner purchase Commodities from the Merchant than money. I must confess the New-England men that trade into this Province had rather have fat Pork for

their Goods than Tobacco or Furs, which I conceive is because their bodies being fast bound up with the cords of restringent Zeal, they are fain to make us of the lineaments of this Non-Canaanite creature physically to loosen them; for a bit of a pound upon a two-penny Rye loaf, according to the original Receipt [recipe], will bring the costivist [constipated] red-eared Zealot in some three hours time to a fine stool, if methodically observed.

Madeira-Wines, Sugars, Salt, Wicker-Chairs, and Tin Candlesticks, is the most of the Commodities they bring in. They arrive in Mary-Land about September, being most of them Ketches and Barks and such small Vessels, and those dispersing themselves into several small Creeks of this Province, to sell and dispose of their Commodities, where they know the Market is most fit for their small Adventures.

Trafique is Earth's great Atlas, that supports
 The pay of Armies, and the height of Courts,
 And makes Mechanics live, that else would die
 Mere starving Martyrs to their penury:
 None but the Merchant of this thing can boast,
 He, like the Bee, comes loaden from each Coast,
 And to all Kingdoms, as within a Hive,
 Stows up those Riches that doth make them thrive:
 Be thrifty, Mary-Land, keep what thou hast in store,
 And each year's Trafique to thy self get more.