

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE FORMAL AND DISTINCT ESTABLISHMENT OF THE
LAND OFFICE.

DURING the life of the original proprietary, which embraced a space of forty-three years from the date of the charter, *land affairs* were under the direction of his lieutenant or governor, with an irregular kind of participation in the secretary, the surveyor general and the council, to say nothing, at present, of an occasional legislative interference. Throughout this period it is not perceived that the management of those affairs had been regulated by any prescribed rules or instructions, further than may be gathered from the conditions of plantation, proclamations and special directions which have already been noticed. It cannot indeed be positively asserted that no set of rules had ever been prescribed, for there was in existence in the year 1680 a record termed the "Book of instructions" which is not now to be found; but the contents of that book may very well have been those instructions which directed particular things to be done, such as the making reserves, laying out manors, &c. which are numerous, and some of them very lengthy. Supposing, what I conceive most probable, that distinct instructions for the proceedings of the land office, and for that purpose only, had not been prescribed, it may be accounted for by the circumstance of the government's having been generally in the hands of the proprietary's near relations, and for many years in those of his son and heir Charles Calvert, in whom it is reasonable to suppose that a discretion was vested that would not have been accorded to a stranger; and it may be still more clearly accounted for by the circumstance that there was no office and no tribunal absolutely set apart for affairs of land, to which instructions confined to that object, might have been addressed. About ten years after the death of Cecilius lord Baltimore, which took place in 1675, his successor, just mentioned, who had since his accession made a visit to England, and was about to go a second time, determined, previous to his departure, to commit the sole management of land affairs to a select council consisting of four members, and termed "the land council" or more formally "his lordship's council for lands specially appointed." Four years before this he had for the first time erected a *land office* by that name, and given the charge of it to John Llewellyn, by the denomination