

An ACT for founding a college at Chester-town.

Preamble.

WHEREAS institutions for the liberal education of youth in the principles of virtue, knowledge, and useful literature, are of the highest benefit to society, in order to raise up and perpetuate a succession of able and honest men, for discharging the various offices and duties of the community, both civil and religious, with usefulness and reputation, and such institutions of learning have accordingly merited and received the attention and encouragement of the wisest and best regulated states: And whereas former legislatures of this state have, according to their best abilities, laid a considerable foundation in this good work, in sundry laws for the establishment and encouragement of county schools, for the study of Latin, Greek, writing, and the like, intending, as their future circumstances might permit, to engraft or raise, on the foundation of said schools, more extensive seminaries of learning, by erecting one or more colleges, or places of universal study, not only in the learned languages, but in philosophy, divinity, law, physic, and other useful and ornamental arts and sciences: And whereas this great and laudable undertaking hath been retarded by sundry incidents of a public nature, but chiefly by the great difficulty of fixing a situation on either shore of this state for a seminary of universal learning, which might be of equal benefit and convenience to the youth of both shores; and it having been represented to this general assembly, that it would probably tend most to the immediate advancement of literature in this state, if the inhabitants of each shore should be left to consult their own convenience, in founding and freely endowing a college or seminary of general learning each for themselves, under the sanction of law; which two colleges or seminaries, if thought most conducive to the advancement of learning, religion and good government, may afterwards, by common consent, when duly founded and endowed, be united under one supreme legislature and visitatorial jurisdiction, as distinct branches or members of the same state university, notwithstanding their distance of situation: And whereas Joseph Nicholson, James Anderson, John Scot, William Boardly, and Peregrine Lethrbury, Esquires, William Smith, doctor of divinity, and Benjamin Chambers, Esquire, the present visitors of Kent county school in the town of Chester, have represented to this general assembly, that the said school hath of late increased greatly, by an accession of students and scholars from various parts of the eastern shore of this state, and the neighbouring Delaware state, there being now about one hundred and forty students and scholars in the said school, and the number expected soon to increase to at least two hundred; and that the Latin and Greek languages, English, French, writing, merchants accounts, and the different branches of the mathematics, are taught in the same, under a sufficient number of able and approved masters; that sundry of the students are preparing and desirous to enter upon a course of philosophy, and must repair to some other state, at a very grievous and inconvenient expence, to finish their education, unless they, the said visitors, are enabled to enlarge the plan of the said school, by engrafting thereon a system of liberal education in the arts and sciences, and providing necessary books and apparatus, with an additional number of masters and professors; and the said visitors have further expressed their assurance, that if they were made capable in law of erecting the said school into a college or general seminary of learning for the eastern shore, or peninsula between the bays of Chesapeake and Delaware (maintaining the original design of the said school as a foundation not to be violated) very considerable sums could be raised in a few years, within the said peninsula, by free and voluntary contributions, for the establishment and support of such seminary, and have accordingly prayed, that a law may be passed to enable them, the said visitors, to enlarge and improve the said school into a college, or place of universal learning, with the usual privileges: Now this general assembly, taking the said petition into their serious consideration, and being desirous to encourage and promote knowledge within this state, have agreed to enact,

Visitors to erect the school into a college, &c.

II. And be it enacted, by the general assembly of Maryland, That the said Joseph Nicholson, James Anderson, John Scot, William Boardly, Peregrine Lethrbury, William