

C H A P. XVII.

AN ACT concerning the admission and qualification of solicitors and attorneys.

WHEREAS it is of the highest consequence, not only to the suitors, Preamble. but to the public, that no persons should be permitted to practise as attorneys or solicitors, in the courts of law or equity, or in the court of admiralty or orphans courts, except gentlemen of integrity, ability, and known attachment to our present government, and principles of liberty and independence, as happily established by the late glorious revolution :

II. Be it enacted, by the general assembly of Maryland, That no person shall hereafter be permitted to act as an attorney or solicitor in this state, or to sue out, Qualification of attorneys, &c. as attorney or solicitor, any writ or process, or to commence, carry on or defend, any action or suit, or any other proceedings, either before or after judgment obtained, in the name or names of any person or persons, in any court of law or equity, or in the court of admiralty or orphans courts, unless he shall be a person of integrity, ability, and known and unquestionable attachment to our present government, and the principles of liberty and independence, and hath been, or shall hereafter be, admitted and enrolled, in the said respective courts, as an attorney or solicitor of the same; and that the chancellor, and the judges and justices respectively, shall have full power, at all times, to suspend, remove, or strike out of the roll of attorneys or solicitors, any such who have been, or may hereafter be, admitted as attorneys or solicitors, and who by them respectively may be considered improper persons to act as such, by reason of ignorance, want of integrity, or disaffection to the government of this state, on consideration of all circumstances, and the whole conduct and behaviour of such persons; and taking the oath of fidelity and support to this state, since the preliminary articles of peace, by any person who was heretofore a nonjuror, shall not be considered in itself as sufficient evidence of attachment to the government of this state; or affection to the independence of America.

III. And be it enacted, That the chancellor, before he admits any person as a solicitor of the court of chancery, and the respective judges and justices of the courts of common law, admiralty and orphans courts, before they admit any person as an attorney of their respective courts, are hereby authorized and required to examine, by such ways and means as to them respectively shall seem proper, whether such person is suitable and fit, with respect to his knowledge, abilities and integrity, and whether, on consideration of all circumstances, and the whole conduct and behaviour of such person, he is well affected to the present government of this state, and the principles of liberty and independence, as established by the late revolution; and if the chancellor, or such judges or justices respectively, shall be thereby satisfied that such person is duly qualified to be admitted to act as a solicitor of the court of chancery, or as an attorney of the respective courts of common law, admiralty and orphans courts, then, and not otherwise, the chancellor, or such judges or justices, as the case may be, are authorized to administer to such person the oaths directed by law to be taken by an attorney or solicitor, and to cause him to be admitted an attorney or solicitor of such court respectively. Chancellor to examine persons, &c.

IV. And be it enacted, That no person shall hereafter be permitted to practise the law in this state, or admitted as an attorney or solicitor in any court of law or equity, or in the court of admiralty or orphans court, unless he has been an inhabitant and subject of this or some one of the United States, for two whole years next preceding his application to be admitted, nor unless, if he hath been an inhabitant and subject of some other of the United States, he shall have been regularly admitted an attorney or solicitor of some court of record in the state of which he was a subject, and shall produce from the judges or justices of the said court a certificate of his having been so admitted, and also a certificate from the judges of the said court, or of the supreme court, or from the governor of such state, of his attachment to the principles of the late revolution. Persons to reside two years before admittance, &c.

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