

King Cannot be Molested nor Sued for his informaçon be it right or wrong". The court not deeming the answer sufficient, overruled the demurrer and postponed further action until the next court to give Staplefort an opportunity to prove his charges, and ordered him to be placed in the custody of the sheriff until he could give security for his appearance at that time. At the June court, however, Staplefort openly acknowledged that he had falsely and maliciously scandalized the plaintiff and declared "that he was sorry for the same and asked forgiveness" of the plaintiff, and the court "thereupon thought fitt to binde the def^t to his good behaviour, for that the pl^t is one of his löps Cömm^{rs} of Calvert County" (pp. 65-67, 110, 111). Sprigg was awarded 4,500 pounds of tobacco as damages (pp. 113, 114).

Cases in which Staplefort figured seemed destined to lead to trouble. At the June, 1668, court Henry Coursey, a justice of that body, represented to the court that when a suit between Cuthbert Witham of London and Jonathan Sibrey of Wye River, Talbot County, was being heard, Witham had mendaciously and basely circulated reports that he had heard Coursey had taken 10,000 pounds of tobacco from Sibrey to look out for his business against Witham. Coursey asked an inquiry by the court, not only because his own honor, but that of the court, was at stake, and hoped that if he were found guilty the severest punishments that the law allowed would be meted out to him, but if not guilty, he might have such reparations as the law afforded. In open court Witham then "nominated" Raymond Staplefort as the author of the accusation. When Staplefort denied the authorship, but refused to divulge the author, the court ordered that unless he disclosed his authority, he himself would be adjudged the inventor of it, and committed him to the custody of the sheriff until he revealed the author. Two days after the court adjourned Staplefort filed a deposition to the effect that he had heard a certain Anthony Calloway say that he did suppose Mr. Henry Coursey had 10,000 pounds of tobacco for assisting Sibrey in his business against Witham (pp. 318-319). Here the matter seems to have been dropped. Why Jonathan Sibrey should have been brought before the June, 1668, court by "a writ of Contempt of Obedience" is not disclosed by the record, although this may well have been in connection with the preceding case; but "after much debate" he was adjudged not guilty and ordered to swear to the truth of his answer in open court (p. 298).

The attorneys of the Provincial Court were as jealous of their honor and dignity as the justices themselves. John Morecroft, who had but recently been sworn in as an attorney, sued his former indentured servant William Champ for defamation at the October, 1666, court. Champ, now a freeman, had been employed by Morecroft, who practiced both as a physician and a lawyer, "in the Art & Mistery of Physick as his servant by Indenture". Champ, it appeared, had called his former master "a Cheating old Knave", and, represented by William Calvert and Daniel Jenifer, his attorneys, did not retract what he had said, but denied that the words were actionable, as they were spoken before Morecroft had been sworn as attorney, and the court so held (pp. 119, 122, 126). That Jenifer also had to defend his honor at the same