

side of the bar in their own court. Attorney General Lowe appeared almost fifty times, and the clerks, Robert Ridgely and John Blomfeild represented clients, and, even more, plead their own cases before the court. Although persons accused of crime generally did not have counsel, those involved in civil suits not only could have attorneys, but must have them. When Francis Gill appeared in Court in his proper person, he "was by the Co<sup>rt</sup> ordered to Retaine an Attorney" (*post*, p. 81).

John Morecroft, attorney and chirurgion, came into Maryland from Virginia in 1665. He continued to practice law, and, almost at once, he became involved in a defamation action against his former indented servant, William Champe. Champe called him a "Cheating old Knaue" (*Archives*, LVII, 122), but when, in October 1666, Morecroft sued on a writ of privilege, Champe plead that the words had been uttered before his former master was sworn in as an attorney, and that they were thus not actionable. Morecroft was sworn in on June 12, 1666 (*ibid.*, p. 108) and the Court upheld the contention of the defendant (*ibid.*, p. 122). In 1669, Morecroft was elected to the Lower House, to the first session of the Assembly since 1666. Almost at the beginning of the session, he was impeached, largely at the instance of Captain Robert Morris of Talbot County. Morris charged that Morecroft "took fees on both sides in one & the same Cause" (*Archives*, II, pp. 166-167). The Upper House investigated the charges and decided that "the said Morecroft hath done nothing but what he might lawfully do and therefore he be dismissed with Costs and Charges by him sustained by reason of this pretended Impeachment

"Ordered that Robert Morris pay to the Clerk of the Upper House for Fees the sum of fourteen hundred twenty two pounds of Tob<sup>o</sup>" (*Archives*, II, pp. 166-173). So John Morecroft was acquitted on the impeachment, restored to his place as an attorney, and to his seat in the Lower House. He remained in the Lower House until his death.

It was this same John Morecroft who was described by Governor Charles Calvert in a letter to his father Cecilius, the Proprietary, in 1672 as "the best Lawyer in the Country, and has always been (vpon other Assemblies) A great Asserter of yo<sup>r</sup> Lo<sup>pps</sup> Charter and the Rights and privilidges thereof" (Calvert Paper 1064 in *The Calvert Papers*. number one, Fund Pub. 28, p. 264).

Attorneys of the Provincial Court had special rights and privileges, and plead them, when they themselves appeared in Court. Suits to which they were a party were always brought according to the liberties and privileges of attornies. In October 1674, Mathew Warde, attorney, brought into Court John Scott of Talbot County, carpenter, by a writ of privilege, to answer "according to the libertyes and privelegdes of the Same Court for Attornyes and other ministers" (*post*, pp. 362-363).

But the Court which protected the attornies from abuse from without, was never unmindful of its own dignity, and it held the attornies and anyone else who appeared before it strictly to account for their behavior. Although the word is not used, contempt of court was as intolerable in 1671 as it is today, or as it was in the twelfth century. Did the attornies fail to be in court when they should have been there? "Upon the Petition of Kenelm Cheseldyn Robert