

P R E F A C E.

AT Length, thro' a great Variety of Difficulties and unforeseen Delays, the following Collection emerges into public View, in such Form as it is hoped will render its Appearance both useful and agreeable.

THE Want of a Body of *MARYLAND LAWS* hath been, for many Years felt and complained of : And the Uncertainty occasioned thereby hath often perplexed Magistrates, Officers, and others, in the Exercise of their respective Duties to the Public and themselves.

THE first Edition contains the Laws from 1704 to 1707, both inclusive, to which are added *several Acts of Assembly formerly made, declared to be in Force*, viz. 1692, *ch.* 16; 1694, *ch.* 8; 1696, *ch.* 10, 17, and 24; and 1702, *ch.* 4. The Copy in my Possession (the only One I have ever seen) has lost its Title Page, so that I cannot ascertain when or where it was Printed.

THE next Edition, Printed by *A. Bradford* in *Philadelphia*, contains the Laws supposed to be in Force to the End of the Year 1718; with a short Index comprized in Seven Pages.

THE last Edition is that of *William Parks*, Printer to the Province in the Year 1726; well known among us by the Name of the Old Body of Laws.

FROM which Period, the Laws of each Session have been separately Published; but no compleat Collection of them can possibly now be made; most of them being long ago out of Print, and the few remaining in private Hands being chiefly torn and defaced, the common Fate of stitched Papers. And hence the Difficulties under which many Gentlemen laboured, of knowing what Laws were actually in Force, or what Alterations might have been made in such as did really exist, by Explanatory, Supplementary, or other subsequent Acts.

THE Superiority of the present Edition will best appear from a Comparison of it with the last mentioned; which, tho' Published (as set forth in the Title Page) *by Authority*, is in Fact very imperfect, and replete with Errors: The Printer having used no other Copy of the Laws, made before the Year 1719, than that of *Bradford's* Edition, which was Published without any Authority; and consequently hath adopted, as may appear in several Instances, the Blunders of that Edition: Which, together with its own Mistakes, make up a considerable Number. The present Edition cannot, by any Means, pretend to a Freedom from Errors; but as these are chiefly Literal, the Readers, where they meet with such may with Ease correct them, and ought in good Nature to attribute them to the Distance between the Press and the Editor's Place of Residence. The distinguishing the whole into Chapters and Sections for the more easy Quotation of any particular Act; the References to any subsequent Laws by which any Paragraph may have received Alteration or Explanation; the Goodness of the Paper and Type, with ample Margins for the Convenience of inserting Manuscript Observations, are too obvious to have needed Mention here, were it not to point out a Demonstration, that the Editor hath spared neither Pains nor Cost to serve the Public, as it always ought to be, with Fidelity and Respect.

^a Mr. *Bradford* also Printed a Translation of the *Charter*, together with some Debates and Proceedings of the Upper and Lower Houses of Assembly, in the Years 1722, 1723, 1724, and 1725; collected from the Journals, and published by Order of the Lower House.

^b I have seen (some Time before I left *England* in the Year 1745) an Edition printed at *London*, at Lord *Baltimore's* Expence, as I have been informed, for the Use of the *Board of Trade*, with the Latin *Charter* prefixed: But could never meet with a Copy of it in this Province; nor can I recollect the Date it bears.