

the approaching danger. The Government was put into a condition to disperse, to fly, and to reassemble in a place of safety. The payment of all drafts upon the Treasury was prohibited, that the public finances might be husbanded for the occasion. It was resolved, that a request be sent to the General Court to adjourn; the expected interruptions of the usual and periodical movements of judicial proceedings were provided against; and the Executive was armed, for the season, with a vigor far beyond the temperate restrictions of the newly adopted Constitution. But, fortunately, this awfully threatening cloud broke before it reached us; and we suffered nothing from the bursting of that storm, the terrifying advances of which, had stimulated every nerve in the State. The capture of the British Army at Yorktown relieved our apprehensions, without, however, allowing any immediate relaxation of our efforts. Better times were approaching, but their tardy development was accompanied with such alterations of hope, doubt, and fear, as to forbid those retrenchments, which would certainly have * been made on a strong assurance of peace. The signature of the preliminary treaty of peace was not formally announced to the Legislature until the 8th day of May, 1783. (n) **630**

The independence and freedom of Maryland were thus finally recognized and established; but the State was left in debt, and in poverty. We commenced a new era, with a new set of political institutions, founded on principles original in themselves, or never before so connected and tried. The several public functionaries were called to their respective stations; and the constitutional principles and restrictions, applicable to each, began to operate. Maryland, with her confederates, then, but not until then, set out upon that career of prosperity to which there is no parallel among the nations of the earth.

Hence it appears, that our Government was not brought forth at once, complete in all its parts; that it was not the work of one election, of one, or of two sessions; of one or two years; but, that it was created and established by parts, as times, means, and circumstances would allow. But, the matter, now under consideration, does not involve an inquiry into the manner in which all the several parts, and provisions of our Constitution were put into

(n) The battle of Camden was fought on the 16th of August, 1780; and the British army was captured at Yorktown on the 19th of October, 1781. (2 *Ram. His. U. S.* 349 & 454; See the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Delegates of the 3d of January, the 2d February, and the 25th, 29th, and 30th of May, and the 9th of June of the year 1781; the 15th of May, 1782; and the 8th of May, 1783; with the Acts of May, 1781, ch. 1, 5, 12 and 13, and November, 1781, ch. 5.) The necessity of immediately reinforcing the army and filling its ranks seems to have been deemed so urgent, that the acceptance of able bodied slaves as recruits was authorized with the consent of the owner.—(*October, 1780, ch. 43, s. 4; 2 Life J. Jay, 31.*)