

P R E F A C E .

ON receiving the appointment of Chancellor, I determined to make every effort to acquire a competent knowledge of the peculiar principles and practice of the Court of Chancery of Maryland, to which my attention had been so rarely drawn, and for which I had had, for many years in the judicial stations I previously held, so little use. Upon inquiry I soon found, that any thing like an accurate knowledge of those peculiarities was only to be gathered from the records themselves; to which I therefore resorted, and after a careful perusal noted the course of proceeding, and occasionally made short digests of such cases as appeared most likely to be useful thereafter. In this way I collected a considerable mass of information, which has greatly facilitated my official labours.

It is of no less importance to the people than to the profession, that the peculiar principles and practice of the Court, as well as the general rules of law, should be clearly made known to all; which it is obvious can in no way be so well done as by the usual mode of publishing reports of cases as they have actually occurred and been disposed of. For a time I had reason to hope, that some member of the bar would report the cases as they were decided subsequent to my appointment; but when that hope failed I determined to undertake the work myself. The task, I was aware, would be attended with many difficulties and much labour; and the more so to me, because of the manifold interruptions occasioned by the heavy current of business continually pressing through the Court.

On reflecting upon the nature of the undertaking I deemed it proper to begin with the earliest of my own decisions, taking them up in chronological order according to the date of the last material adjudication in each case, and to make such a selection from them as would give to the profession the greatest amount and variety of information within the smallest compass. I have rarely or never preserved my notes of the arguments of