

be known for what it is—a caricature. * * * Look where we may, we shall hardly find any other political entity which has had so eventful and yet so perfectly continuous a life. And then it is so purely English, perhaps the most distinctively English part of all our governmental organization.²¹

The commission which was issued in the appointment of justices, the “commission of the peace,” as it was called, was in itself an enduring institution, settled in form in 1590, carrying historical encrustations, but occasionally reformed and refined. It was always a joint commission for the justices of each county, and recited that the persons named had been appointed, and that of these some one of a selected and specified few, originally men with legal training, should be present taking part, in order to constitute an acting body: *quorum aliquem vestrum, A, B, C, D, etc., unum esse volumus*.²² From this latter clause originated the modern parliamentary word “quorum”. When lawyers were no longer appointed, it became merely a distinction among the laymen; and to be one of the specified justices “of the quorum”, as they were known, was a considerable honor in older England. To give Sir Roger de Coverley an impressive funeral, Addison set it down that:²³ “The coffin was carried by six of his tenants, and the pall held up by six of the quorum.”

In provincial Maryland the justices had a like relative position, and the commission of the peace was issued in substantially the English form, but

21. Maitland, Collected Papers, I, 468, 470.

22. Holdsworth, I, 290, and, for the full form, 670. Somewhat the same form, used in commissioning a Court of Delegates, is described in 1 Harris & McHenry, 411.

23. Spectator, No. 21.