The Publisher *to the* Reader.

AS this Volumn only contains the Publick Acts of Aſſembly of the Province of *Maryland*, now in Force, (which are not expected to ſpeak, but where the General Statutes of *England* are ſilent) 'tis preſumed the Inhabitants of that Province, for whoſe Uſe they were at firſt made, and are now Publiſhed, will be principally concerned in the Peruſal of them; nothing of Curioſity to an indifferent Reader being to be Expected in a Collection of this Nature.

To theſe Inhabitants, therefore, I Recommend this Work, by which they may be acquainted with the particular Laws of their Country, with much more Facility, than when the only Recourſe they could have was to a few Ill-Written Manuſcripts, Lodged in the Hands of particular Officers, and not more than Twelve or Fourteen of them in the whole Province.

It was then Difficult to come at the Body of thoſe Laws, and when the Body was come at, it was no leſs Difficult (for want of an Index and Marginal Notes) to find the particular Law or Paragraph required; So that without any Reflection, it may be juſtly Remarked, *The Laws of the Province lay ſo obſcure, that they were ſcarcely known to thoſe that were Immediately concerned in the Judging of or Pleading by them.* And as to the Common People, who were to direct their Actions by thoſe Laws, they might almoſt be ſaid *To Labour under an Involuntary Ignorance of them;* and yet that Ignorance could not excuſe their Puniſhment for an Offence againſt the Law they knew not. A Caſe, indeed, that wanted Remedy.

The Neceſſity therefore and Uſefulneſs of the Work can do no leſs then juſtify the Encouragers of it, as I hope it will Encourage the Undertaker.

The Laws themſelves are ſuch as have been either carefully Reviſed, during the Adminiſtration of his Excellency *John Hart*, Eſq; preſent Governour, whilſt he acted by an immediate Commiſſion from the Crown, or Enacted in that Time, or ſince, during the ſaid Governour's Adminiſtration by Commiſſion from the Right Honourable, the Lord Proprietor; *From whence*, 'tis hoped, they are ſo well adapted to