

Saturday, February 4, 1826.

The house met. Present the same members as on yesterday. The proceedings of yesterday were read.

The bill to ascertain and settle the law relative to writs of forcible entry and detainer, was sent to the senate.

Mr. Gantt presents a petition from Mary Wesley, of Anne-Arundel county, praying support; referred to the standing committee.

Mr. Chapman delivers the following report:

The committee to whom was referred the order to inquire into the expediency of passing an act to provide for the revision of the acts of the general assembly of Maryland, have had the subject under consideration, and ask leave to report—That in the opinion of your committee, the situation of our local law is deeply interesting and important to the people of the state, and the time has arrived, when the aid of the legislature is necessary to reduce the various and conflicting acts of assembly into order and system. The statute law of Maryland, consists of British statutes, enacted before the settlement of the colony, parliamentary enactments, during our colonial existence, statutes passed under the sanction of the provincial government, and the numerous acts of assembly passed since our independence. If it has been a subject of doubt which of the British statutes are in force here, it is equally so, with regard to our acts of assembly, so many supplementary acts, and alterations, and amendments, have been enacted, that it is now difficult, and in many cases impossible to say which is in force; nor is it always in the power of experienced professional men, from this mass of confusion, to extract the principle which was sought to be established, or to trace it through the labyrinth of accumulated supplements and amendments, but they are left to grope their way, without any clue to guide them to the intention of the legislature, or the object of the act, save that the necessities of the people are sometimes expressed in a preamble, or known to have existed by some other means than what has been afforded by the multiplied legislative provisions upon the subject. It is of deep importance to the people, that the fundamental principles of our government, and the doctrines by which our estates are in a measure held, our rights protected, and our liberties regulated, which control not only our property, but our social intercourse, and the morals of society, should be so simplified as to be accessible to, and understood by, those who are interested in their effect and operation, and should be as widely and generally diffused as it is in the power of the legislature to extend them. The committee think, that the acts of assembly have grown to such a size, that they imperiously call for the interference of the legislature. It is not sufficient that legal men should be enabled to arrive at a knowledge of the local law, but the facilities to its acquirement, should be increased and extended to as great a degree as the powers of the legislature will admit. This the committee think can best be done by reducing the confused mass of statutory law into some order and system. The committee are well aware, that it is a task not easily performed; that it will require the labour of experienced men, and that much time must be devoted to the undertaking; but the benefits to be derived from it, will be felt by every class of society, and will repay all the labour and expense necessary to its completion. The committee, therefore, respectfully recommend the adoption of the resolutions accompanying this report: