

C H A P.
XV.

oath of twelve men of his county, to inquire what damage it would be to his lordship, or others, to have such builders or undertakers invested with an absolute estate of inheritance in one hundred acres of such land, proper for the setting up such forging-mill, and other conveniencies for the carrying on such iron-works as aforesaid; the form of which writ followeth, viz. "CHARLES, absolute lord and proprietary of the provinces of Maryland and Avalon, lord baron of Baltimore, &c. To the sheriff of — county, Greeting. We command you, that by the oath of twelve honest and lawful men of the county, by whom the truth of the matter may be better known, you diligently inquire if it be to the damage of us, or others, if we grant unto N. N. of N. county, one hundred acres of land, lying at —, in the county aforesaid, as may be most convenient for the building and setting up a forge-mill, and other conveniencies, as shall be necessary for the carrying on an iron-work; and if it be to the damage and prejudice of us, or others, then to what damage and prejudice of us, and to what damage and prejudice of others, and of whom, and in what manner, and how, and of what value the same land is now, before any other improvement of the said one hundred acres of land, and who are the present possessors of the said one hundred acres of land, and who have the fee-simple thereof, and what lands and tenements remain to the present possessor, over and above the said one hundred acres of land, and if the said land remaining to the present possessors, over and above the said one hundred acres, will suffice to uphold their manor, viz. the sixth part of their manor, allotted them by the conditions of plantations, for the demesne, as before the alienation, so as the county, by the alienation aforesaid, in default of the present possession, more than was wont not to be charged and grieved; and the inquisition thereupon openly and distinctly made to us in our high court of chancery, under the seal and the seals of them by whom it was made, without delay lend, &c." Upon return of which writ, in case the person or persons who by the said inquest shall be found to be the true owners and possessors of the land fit to build a forge-mill, and other conveniencies necessary for carrying on an iron-work, shall refuse to build such forge-mill, and other conveniencies for such iron-work thereon, within six months from that date to be computed and reckoned, and give security the same building to prosecute and finish within four years after the beginning and laying the foundation of such forge-mill, it shall and may be lawful for his said lordship, his heirs and successors, or for the governor here for the time being, from time to time, to grant any such one hundred acres of land fit to build a forge-mill, and conveniencies for an iron-work as aforesaid, together with free egress and regress to the said mill, through any man's land next adjoining, by the virtue of the writ aforesaid returned, to be paid to the owner of the said land so found and returned as aforesaid; which said grant to be made as aforesaid, shall be good and available in law to the grantee or grantees as aforesaid, against all persons whatsoever, any law, custom or usage to the contrary notwithstanding.

Provido.

III. PROVIDED ALWAYS, That before any person or persons whatsoever shall have such grant to build a forge-mill, and other conveniencies for an iron-work as aforesaid, he or they shall enter into bond to his said lordship, with two sufficient sureties, in the sum of one hundred pounds sterling, with condition to begin to build the said forge-mill, and conveniencies for the iron-work as aforesaid, within six months then next to come, and the same building to prosecute and finish within four years after such beginning.

Workmen to
be levy free.

IV. AND, forasmuch as for the carrying on so considerable a work, it will be absolutely necessary for the undertakers to import, or otherwise retain in their service, great numbers of experienced workmen, and that they must unavoidably be at vast expences before they can bring such work to any tolerable perfection, so as to reap any benefit therefrom; for their better encouragement, BE IT ENACTED, That all such workmen or labourers as shall be by such undertakers constantly employed in the carrying on such useful and beneficial works, shall be exempt from the paying of levies for the first four years after their being employed in such work as aforesaid, provided that the number of such workmen as shall be levy free exceed not eighty for any one iron-work.

Provido.

V. PROVIDED NEVERTHELESS, That in case such undertakers shall not prosecute such iron-work to the running of pigs fit for transportation, within seven years next after their being seized of such lands, by virtue of such writ, in manner aforesaid, that then it shall and may be lawful for the person or persons that were disseized of such land by virtue of such writ, to re-enter upon and be reinstated in the same, to all intents and purposes, as if such writ had never been obtained, without being obliged to return any part of the purchase money for the same.