

applicable seems to be that which is applied to wills, and to ordinary legislative acts, viz: to give that construction which will best carry into effect the will of the testator or of the legislature.

The question, then, occurs, what was the will of the Legislature of Virginia in regard to the lower terminus of the canal.

Did they mean to fix the precise spot at which the water of the canal should be mingled with the tide-water of the Potomac? Or, did they mean to leave it to the discretion of the Company, under any and what limits;

The word 'from' is not always, and, indeed, in common conversation, is seldom exclusive of the place named.— Thus, if I should say, I had just come from Philadelphia, no one would suppose that I spoke the truth, if I had never been in Philadelphia—and, if I had sworn to the fact, I could hardly be saved from the penalty of perjury by proving that I came from the utmost boundary of the city, without having been either within or upon the boundary. From a town, or a district, generally means from some indefinite place within that town, or district, and the expression is justified if the person came from any part of the town, or the district. So the word 'at' in ordinary speech, more generally means within, than without. Thus, at a town, or at a county, means at some place within the town, or within the county, rather than a place without, or even at the utmost verge of, but not in, the town or county. So in indictments, where the utmost legal precision is necessary, the fact is generally stated to have been done at the place—and, if it were not done in the place, the venue would be wrong. And in indictments in this District, where we have no hamlets or parishes, the act is generally averred to have been committed at the county; and if that did not mean within the county, the court would not have jurisdiction of the cause.

The words 'from,' and 'at,' therefore, have not, in general, an exclusive signification; nor are they, in the charter, connected with any other words which render it necessary that they should be so construed. The words in the preamble are, 'a navigable canal from the tide water of the River Potomac, in the District of Columbia.'— This description would be fully justified by a canal from any part of the tide water of the river Potomac, in the District. In the 20th section the words are, 'the first or Eastern section, shall begin at the District of Colum-