

that Point, hoping it will lead you to enquire after the Rights and Privileges of that House, as well as those of your own, and that it will make your Constituents less forward, for the future, to subscribe any such Petitions as were, some Time ago, put into the Hands of many of them, by several Gentlemen who were Members of the late Lower House of Assembly.

If you will only recur to the Charter that was granted by his Majesty King *Charles* the First, to the Noble Ancestor of our present Right Honourable Proprietary, you may find, that among many others, that King was pleased to vest his Lordship with a Power of making Laws, with the Assent of the Freeholders of this Province, or of their Representatives; and, moreover, left it entirely to his Lordship to Convene the said Freeholders, or their Representatives, after such Manner, Sort or Form, as he should, in his Discretion, judge proper.

The first Settlement that was made in this Province, after the Lord *Baltimore* had obtained his Patent, was made by his Lordship's Brother, and between Two and Three Hundred other Persons, in *February* 1637. As the Lord Proprietary spared no Trouble or Expence to procure Adventurers, the Number of Inhabitants increased apace. His Lordship after a while, thinking it necessary, for their better Government, that Laws should be Enacted, by certain Instructions dated the 15th of *April*, 1637, impowered his Brother, who had, from his Arrival here, acted as Captain General or Governor, to call a General Assembly of the People for that Purpose. In Pursuance of these Instructions, Summonses were issued through the Hands of the Sheriff, requiring the Freemen to attend in Person, or appoint their Proxies to appear, at *St. Mary's* the 25th of *January*, 1637; but, the Secretary, and other Members of his Lordship's Council, were called by a particular Summons, directed to each of them. At the Opening of the Session, there appeared, from the several Hundreds of *St. Mary's* County and *Kent-Island*, Twenty-four Persons, besides the Members of the Council, and the Governor, who, during this, and several other Sessions, sat as President, and directed all Things that concerned Form and Order. Some Bills, which had been already prepared, were produced in the House; but they not being agreed to, a Committee was appointed to frame others, and the Assembly adjourned. On the 24th of *March* following, they agreed to several Drafts or Bills, which the Governor was desired to send to *England*, for his Lordship's Approbation; among these, was One, or Part of One, touching General Assemblies, contained in the following Words: "The Lieutenant-General, and Secretary (or his Deputy), and Gentlemen summoned by special Writ, and One or Two Burgesses out of every Hundred (at the Choice of the Freemen) at any Time hereafter assembled, shall be judged a General Assembly." Whether these Drafts or Bills were ever approved of by his Lordship, does not, I believe, appear upon Record; but, on the 25th of *February*, 1637, another General Assembly being then called, after the same Manner as the former, and the Governor being then impowered to Assent, in his Lordship's Name, to any Bill or Act that should be by the General Assembly agreed to, an Act was formally passed by the Governor, on the 12th of *March* following, *For Establishing the House of Assembly, and the Laws to be made therein*, viz.

"Whereas the King's Majesty, by his Letters Patent, hath given and granted full, free, and absolute Power and Authority, to the Lord Proprietary of this Province, to make and ordain any Laws, appertaining to the State of this Province, by and with the Advice, Assent, and Approbation of the Freemen of the same, or of the greater Part of them, or of their Delegates, or Deputies, and to that End, to assemble the said Freemen, or their Delegates, or Deputies, in such Sort, and Form, as to the said Lord Proprietary should seem best; by Virtue hereof several Writs, or Summons, have been directed to certain Gentlemen, to appear personally at this Assembly, and to the Rest of the Freemen, inhabiting within the several Hundreds of this Colony, and the Isle of *Kent*, to Elect their Delegates, or Deputies, in their Names and Stead, to be present at the same; and, accordingly, all the Freemen of the said several Hundreds, and of the Isle of *Kent* (some few excepted) have Elected certain Persons to that End; and the same, their Election have subscribed and returned upon Record, and their said Delegates, and Deputies, are now assembled accordingly: Be it therefore Enacted and Ordained, by the said Lord Proprietary, and with the Advice, Assent, and Approbation of the Freemen, and of the Delegates, and Deputies, assembled at this present Assembly, that the said several Persons, so Elected and Returned as aforesaid, shall be, and be called, Burgesses, and shall supply the Places of all the Freemen, consenting or subscribing to such their Election, in the same Manner, and to all the same Intents and Purposes, as the Burgesses of any Borough in *England*, in the Parliament of *England*, useth to supply the Place of the Inhabitants of the Borough whereof he is Elected Burgess; and that the said Gentlemen, and Burgesses, and such other Freemen not having consented to any the Elections as aforesaid) as now are or shall be at any Time assembled, or any Twelve or more of them, whereof the Lieutenant-General, and Secretary of the Province, to be always Two, shall be called the House of Assembly, and that all Acts, or Ordinances,

" assented