To return to the previous inquisition just spoken of, although a sworn jury, in making it, must necessarily have had in their view some law or rule governing escheats, in order to determine whether the land under their examination was escheatable or not, it cannot be supposed that they considered in a critical manner the application of the feudal or the common law doctrines on that subject to the particular case in hand. The term escheat had originally a pretty broad signification, as it comprehended all acquisitions of land by means of any kind of chance or accident. In England its import was restricted and bounded by the legal descriptions of other methods of acquiring title *by purchase*, and it is stated by Blackstone to denote "an obstruction of the course of descent and a consequent determination of the tenure by some unforeseen contingency." This obstruction and consequent determination of the tenure might arise in two, and but in two, general ways; to wit, by the tenants dying without heirs, and by the *attainder* of his blood. In Maryland the term escheat seems occasionally to have embraced all methods in which lands might result back to the lord of the fee either through want of other legal owners; through forfeiture by treason or suicide, or by means of failure in the performance of conditions relative to rent, &c. It would seem that the proprietary gave his own interpretation to this ancient term, and that he was countenanced in it by the juries and courts. There were so many ways for lands to *fall back* or *escheat* to the proprietary, that there was little danger of a failure whenever the government thought a case worthy of enquiry. Besides the several proclamations subjecting lands to forfeiture for non-compliance with the conditions of plantation, there were acts of assembly denouncing the same consequence upon the *desertion of lands* by not seating, inhabiting, and paying rent for them agreeably to the terms of purchase. If land was not found escheat in one way it was in another, and the court, in rendering a judgment upon an inquisition returned, or OFFICE FOUND, merely affirmed the validity of the particular cause of escheat or forfeiture under which the jury had deemed the case to fall; but supposing the want of heirs to be, as it certainly was, the most general cause of escheat, the rules in that particular appear to have been very favourable to the proprietary.—What they were can be judged only by inference from particular cases, for no precise instructions from the proprietary on that subject are to be found on record, and the laws of the province are silent about it. To judge summarily of the matter, I should suppose that if a man died without leaving heirs of the whole blood in the direct descending line his lands were held liable to escheat.—Instances occur of a father's praying for the preemptio of