

leading to that state of things in which it became expedient for the original owners of the soil to receive new titles to small portions of their territory from those who had so recently been, themselves, either purchasers or intruders, they cannot fail to become, shortly, an object of enquiry in something like a regular history of the state. I shall, therefore, not attempt to trace those circumstances, but shall only observe that after various contentions and accommodations, resulting generally in new disadvantages to the natives, and the gradual decrease of their numbers within, or adjoining to the English settlements, the indian inhabitants on the Choptank and Nanticoke rivers on the eastern shore became desirous of being secured in the possession of lands by grant from the proprietary; that, in consequence, a grant was made to the Choptank indians in the year 1669, and one to the Nanticoke indians in the year 1704, in respect to which grants a variety of provisions and modifications took place by subsequent acts of assembly, the most important of which I shall here examine, confining myself altogether to what has been done by law; for, as to the incidents and proceedings of an intermediate and preparatory nature, they are entirely too numerous to admit of any recital within the limits of this work.

In respect to the grant to the Choptank indians, I cannot give a better account of it than by transcribing the reverend Mr. Bacon's note on the law making that grant. The title only is given in his edition, being "an act for the continuation of peace with, and protection of, our neighbors and confederates, *Indians* on Choptank river," and the following is extracted from his remarks.

"This act, on account of the fidelity of the Choptank indians in delivering up some murderers, &c. settles upon them, and their heirs forever, all that land on the south side of Choptank river, bounded westerly by the freehold now in possession of William Dorrington, and easterly with secretary *Sewall's* creek, for breadth;—and, for length, three miles into the woods: to be held of his lordship under the yearly rent of six beaver skins; and is confirmed among the perpetual laws by 1676 ch. 2."

By an (a) act of 1704, ch. 58, the bounds of a certain tract of land were ascertained, to the use of the Nanticoke indians in Dorchester county, so long as they should occupy and live upon the same. This act after stating it, in the preamble, to be "most just" that the indians, the ancient inhabitants of the province, should have a convenient dwelling place, &c.

(a) These lands had been originally ascertained and bounded by an act of 1698, ch. 15, which falling under the general repeal of 1704, ch. 77, was in a manner reenacted by this act, it being the same in all respects except the enacting style which as this was passed during the suspension of the proprietary's government was necessarily different.