

C H A P. VIII.

An ACT to declare and ascertain the privileges of the subjects of France residing within this state.

Preamble.

WHEREAS, in and by the thirteenth article of the treaty of amity and commerce between his Most Christian Majesty and the United States of America, it is provided that the subjects and inhabitants of the said United States, or any of them, shall not be reputed *aubains* in France, and consequently shall be exempted from the *droit d'aubain*, or other similar duty, under what name soever they may by testament, donation, or otherwise, dispose of their goods, moveable and immoveable; and their heirs, subjects of the said United States, residing whether in France or elsewhere, may succeed them *ab intestat*, without being obliged to obtain letters of naturalization, and without having the effect of this concession contested or impeded, under pretext of any rights or prerogatives of provinces, cities, or private persons, and the said heirs, whether such by particular title, or *ab intestat*, should be exempt from the *droit d'atraction*, or other duty of the same kind, saving, nevertheless, the local rights or duties, as much and as long as similar ones are not established by the United States or any of them: And whereas the exemptions aforesaid have been confirmed by a declaration of the Most Christian King, bearing date the twenty-sixth day of July, *anno domini* seventeen hundred and seventy-eight, by which it is also established, that the subjects of the United States of America shall enjoy within his dominions the privileges of nations the most favoured: And whereas, as well upon the ground of equality and reciprocity, as because of the generous and important aid afforded to the United States by the Most Christian King, their great and illustrious ally, in the present war with Great-Britain, suitable returns are due from the said states in general, and from this in particular, by granting and establishing, on our part, like and special privileges and advantages in favour of the subjects of France:

Subjects of France to enjoy the same rights as citizens of this state, &c.

II. Be it therefore enacted, by the general assembly of Maryland, That the subjects of France within this state, who have come or may come to sojourn or reside within the same, for the purposes of commerce or otherwise, shall have and enjoy all and every the rights, privileges and exemptions, of the full and free citizens of the state, without taking any oath, or giving any promise of allegiance or fidelity to this state.

Provido.

III. Provided always, That nothing herein contained shall be construed to grant to the subjects of France, or the other dominions of his Most Christian Majesty, who shall continue subjects of his said Majesty, and not qualify themselves as citizens of this state, any right to purchase or hold lands or real estate, but for their respective lives or for years, or to invest them with the privilege of voting in any election, or the capacity of enjoying any civil office, or of being eligible as governor, member of the council, or general assembly, or as a delegate to congress.

Subjects of France who qualify, may devise lands, &c.

IV. And be it enacted, That in case any subject of France, or other dominion of his Most Christian Majesty, who hath qualified or shall qualify himself as a citizen of this state, by settling therein, and by giving those assurances of allegiance and attachment to the same, which are or shall be required of the citizens of the same, shall die seized in fee of any real estate, the last will or testament of such decedent, in favour of the subjects of his Most Christian Majesty, or any of them, whether residing in France or elsewhere, shall be good and available in the law, and the devisee or devisees appointed in and by such will or testament shall be deemed to be citizens of this state, for the purpose of taking and recovering such devise or devises; or if such decedent hath died or shall die intestate, the natural kindred of such decedent, whether residing in France or elsewhere, shall inherit his or her real estate, in like manner as if such decedent and his kindred were the citizens of this state.

Provido.

V. Provided nevertheless, That whenever any subject of France shall become seized in fee of any real estate within this state, by virtue of any such last will or testament,