

every manual trade and profession. They were afterwards much considered by the civil law ^a, in which they were called *universitates*, as forming one whole out of many individuals; or *collegia*, from being gathered together: they were adopted also by the canon law, for the maintenance of ecclesiastical discipline; and from them our spiritual corporations are derived. But our laws have considerably refined and improved upon the invention, according to the usual genius of the English nation: particularly with regard to sole corporations, consisting of one person only, of which the Roman lawyers had no notion; their maxim being that "*tres faciunt collegium*" ^b. Though they held, that if a corporation, originally consisting of three persons, be reduced to one, "*si universitas ad unum redit*," it may still subsist as a corporation, "*et stet nomen universitatis*" ^c.

BEFORE we proceed to treat of the several incidents of corporations, as regarded by the laws of England, let us first take a view of the several sorts of them; and then we shall be better enabled to apprehend their respective qualities.

THE first division of corporations is into *aggregate* and *sole*. Corporations aggregate consist of many persons united together into one society, and are kept up by a perpetual succession of members, so as to continue for ever: of which kind are the mayor and commonalty of a city, the head and fellows of a college, the dean and chapter of a cathedral church. Corporations sole consist of one person only and his successors, in some particular station, who are incorporated by law, in order to give them some legal capacities and advantages, particularly that of perpetuity, which in their natural persons they could not have had. In this sense the king is a sole corporation ^d: so is a bishop: so are some deans, and prebendaries, distinct from their several chapters: and so is every parson and vicar. And the necessity, or at least use, of this institution will be very apparent, if we

^a *Ff. l. 3. t. 4. per tot.*

^b *Ff. 50. 16. 8.*

^c *Ff. 3. 4. 7.*

^d *Co. Litt. 43.*

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