

L. H. J.  
Liber No. 48  
April 24

To begin then with the Affair of the Criminal in St. Mary's County, which, according to your minute Detail, was thus: He had, by repeated Acts of Villainy, rendered himself so obnoxious to the People among whom he lived, that when he fled from Justice, a Contribution was made, and a Reward offered, by the Gentlemen of the Neighbourhood for apprehending him: Upon his Conviction, the Principal of these Gentlemen were in vain applied to, and desired to solicit his Pardon: Afterward the Criminal changed his Religion, and then those, or some of those very Gentlemen, who had before declined soliciting his Pardon, petitioned me to grant a Reprieve, without acquainting me with the Circumstance of his being a Convert to the Church of Rome, and that he was thereby become Guilty of High-Treason; which, it should seem, in your Opinion, clearly shews, that the unhappy Wretch did, upon the Merit of becoming a Proselyte to the Popish Religion, obtain the Reprieve the Benefit of which he now enjoys; and that therefore, I suppose, I ought to suspect the Loyalty of those who recommended him for Mercy, tho' they had, on all Occasions before, shewn the firmest Attachment to his Majesty, and Zeal for the Protestant Religion.

That the Gentlemen you allude to should offer a Reward for apprehending a Felon, whom they desired to have brought to Justice, does not seem at all strange; and perhaps you would have thought, that, from their making Application afterwards in the same Person's Favour, no Conclusion ought to be drawn to their Prejudice, if you had recollected or heard, that in 1739 the Honourable the Speaker, and most of the House of Delegates, waited on his Excellency the late Governor, to solicit and obtain a Pardon for a most notorious Offender, then under Condemnation, for apprehending whom a very large Reward had been offered and given by Virtue of an Act of Assembly specially made for that Purpose: From the Circumstance, then, abovementioned, I conceive, it cannot be fairly deduced; and as you have not thought proper by other Arguments to prove, that the Gentlemen who made Application to me in Favour of the Criminal in St. Mary's County, did, when they made such Application, really know that he had changed his Religion, and on that Account make it, I am afraid you have been a little too hasty in resolving that the Motives you were pleased to suggest, and no other, did or could induce those Gentlemen to make such Application. I have had an Opportunity of speaking to the worthy Person, whom you, I presume, distinguish by the Title of Lawyer and Judge, and am convinced, that at the Time of signing the Petition he was a Stranger to what you do not say, but would insinuate, he was acquainted with: And tho' all the other Gentlemen may not have been ignorant of that Matter, yet, I am satisfied, that it was not one of the Motives that induced them to subscribe the Petition. I have already assured you, and indeed you do me the Justice to believe, that I was not