

Your Excellency will find, by the Papers hereunto annexed, which we beg Leave to refer you to, that this House did early in their Session, as they thought it their indispensible Duty, take such Steps as were in their Power, to gain the fullest and clearest Information concerning the Facts complained of in the Petitions of John Doncastle and William Wright. And though our Enquiry has been in Part eluded, by the Disobedience of the said Richard Lee jun to the Order and Process of this House, we are of Opinion, that the principal Facts charged in the said Petitions are supported by the Evidence we have been able to obtain.

L. H. J.
Liber No. 54
Dec. 18

The Condition and Size of the Room, in which the said Sheriff confines his Prisoners for Debt, the Want of Fire in the severe Weather of the last Winter, and the effects thereof on the Health of the Prisoners, appear from the Report of our Committee of Grievances, and the Deposition of William Wyatt Fentham, taken before the said Committee.

The Fact of tying up and whipping the Petitioner, William Wright as set forth in his Petition, we conceive is sufficiently evinced by the Record of the said Lee's Conviction, and the Fine imposed upon him for that Offence, in Charles County Court. Further Evidence it was in the Power of the Sheriff to have enabled us to obtain, for the more clear elucidating, or refuting, the Complaints contained in the said Petitions; and his refusing to do so, and declining to appear and abide the Enquiry, give us just Grounds to infer his Consciousness of the Truth of the whole.

When we reflect how much in the Power of a Sheriff his Prisoners are, and what Opportunities he has, from the very nature of his Office, to oppress and maletreat them: When we find our fellow Creatures, reduced by their Misfortunes to the Anguish of a Jail, exposed to all the Miseries of Cold and Wet, in the most inclement Season of the Year; and one of them, over whom the Sheriff had no lawful Power but that of confining his Person; illegally, cruelly, and ignominiously scourged by his Order, by the Hand of a Slave; and when upon Complaint made to the Delegates of the People, whose Right and Duty it is to enquire into, and present all Grievances of a public Nature, we find the Sheriff, refusing to pay Obedience to our Process, and to avoid an enquiry, not only absenting himself from his County, where, by the Duty of his Station, he ought at all Times to be found and amenable to Complaints, but even from the Province; we hope your Excellency will think us excusable, if we feel and express some Warmth of Resentment towards M.^r Lee; and under these Circumstances we cannot but think it a Justice due to the Public that the said Richard Lee jun.^r should be removed from his Office of Sheriff of Charles County, as being unworthy of, and unfit for, so important a Trust; and we do earnestly request that your Excellency will be pleased to remove him

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