

the constitutional right of the General Assembly to reduce, or to withhold, at pleasure, the salary of the Chancellor, should have been so postponed, so crowded into the very last day, and thrown in among the fragments and leavings of a long and laborious session, does not very clearly appear. But such was the fact. The special continuing act; the civil list bill; the general continuing act; the separate act and separate resolution for reducing the Chancellor's salary; in short, every act in any way touching upon, or exclusively embracing the subject was, by some unlucky mischance, huddled together at the close of the session, in a manner exceedingly unfriendly to claim deliberation and sound constitutional legislation upon a matter so vitally important.

These considerations, and the deep interest which the Chancellor has in having this great constitutional question fully determined, after the most mature deliberation, have induced him to embrace the earliest opportunity of laying before the General Assembly all those circumstances and arguments which might, in any manner, be likely to aid them in coming to a correct conclusion. The Chancellor is perfectly confident, that his case, so far as it respects himself only, will be heard and investigated with as much care, and as impartial a disposition to do him justice, as would be bestowed upon that of any other of the citizens of Maryland. But upon this occasion, from the peculiar and important nature of his case, he respectfully asks and hopes for more. He flatters himself, that every member of the General Assembly will bestow upon it that close attention which its important bearing upon the independence of the judiciary, upon the separation of the departments of government, and the great interests of the people so very strongly require.(b)

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(b) The injustice done to an individual is sometimes of service to the public. Facts are apt to alarm us more than the most dangerous principles, (*Junius, Let. 41.*) The oppression of an obscure individual gave birth to the famous *habeas corpus act*, 31 Car. 2, c. 2, which is frequently considered as another *magna charta*, (3 *Blac. Com.* 136.) In speaking of constitutional law, we, in this country, always refer to our written constitutions, or fundamental laws paramount to legislative acts. This is a distinction which, as it has been truly said, is not likely to last long in States where the power of the legislature, like that of the British parliament, is omnipotent, (*Coop. Just.* 404.) In Maryland the great facility with which the constitution may be altered gives to the General Assembly almost unlimited power in all respects; and particularly over the executive and judicial departments of the government; and produces too general an indifference to the existing provisions of the constitution.

In the Virginia convention of 1829 it was moved, that a clause should be inserted