

pretensions they exceeded the mark—and by asking for too much, laid a very natural foundation for the fate which his cause afterwards met with.

The people, since the peace, although struggling with many difficulties, have undoubtedly consoled themselves with the reflection, that they were the subjects of a free and independent State—What then must be their feelings when they are told that they were deceived?—That they are still tributary to Mr. Harford,—and that the payment of quit-rents to him as formerly, is an obligation from which they cannot be freed, and a necessary condition on which they are to hold their lands.

That lawyers (acting merely as lawyers) should in the exercise of their profession, deliver such an opinion, is not to be wondered at; but it must excite our surprise and concern to find that several members of the House of Delegates, and some of them of the greatest abilities and integrity, entertained the same sentiments.

Our concern on this occasion, can only be lessened by reflecting on the very different opinion which prevailed in the Senate, the members of which unanimously rejected the proposed conference, for reasons which were strongly and satisfactorily expressed in their message.

It would be injustice not to relate, that it is probable, their unanimity on this subject was, in a great measure, occasioned by the clear and convincing manner in which Mr. T. Stone (a member of the Senate) stated the real situation of Mr. Harford, and refuted the artful reasoning which had been displayed by his counsel, before the House of Delegates.

I flatter myself I shall not be singular in observing that the decision of the Senate on this subject reflected the highest honor on them.—With respect to the conduct of the House of Delegates, the people at large will be the properest judges;—I shall only remark, that his business was conducted with infinitely more willingness and attention, than was afterwards shewn to subjects more deserving of it.

The attention of the Assembly was about this time, taken up with petitions from sundry inhabitants of the State, praying an immediate, or gradual abolition of slavery, which, on a division of the House of Delegates, were rejected by 32 against 22.