

amount, exceeding five hundred dollars. The Act of 1868, Chapter 259, repealed this provision, and required the payment into the Treasury by Notaries in the counties, of one-half the amount of fees exceeding three hundred and fifty dollars. As nothing was said in the Act about the Notaries in the City of Baltimore, the opinion prevailed among them, that they were still entitled to retain five hundred dollars per annum, before accounting for the one-half the fees to the State. The same opinion prevailed in the department, and settlements were made with the Notaries upon this basis.— Upon the matter coming to my attention, however, the error in the mode of settlement was pointed out, and the Notaries were informed that they still owed the State the amounts thus retained, since the passage of the last mentioned Act. The payment of so large a sum, which had been by them supposed to have been rightfully retained, will be to each of them so owing, a serious matter, and I therefore promised, before charging these amounts up to them, respectively, or proceeding by law to recover them, to submit the matter to the wisdom of the General Assembly. The effect of prosecuting these Notaries for these amounts will be disastrous to some, if not all of them, and I therefore recommend that these amounts be remitted by Act of Assembly. I further recommend, that the fees of Notaries Public be reduced upon protests, to an amount sufficient to compensate them for the work, and that the tax on protests be discontinued. When the finances of the State were severely straitened, and her officers were looking about for extraordinary resources of revenue, it may have been well enough to lay a tax of this sort, but I hardly think it desirable for a State in as comfortable a condition, financially, as Maryland is, to continue to raise revenue by levying a tax on the poor debtor who is so unfortunate as not to be able to meet his note at maturity, or upon the endorsers of such debtor.

FINES AND FORFEITURES.

The amount of Fines and Forfeitures, and interest thereon, paid into the Treasury by different sheriffs, during the fiscal year, is detailed in table "No. 12," amounting in the aggregate to the sum of \$6,935.44.