

evidence of their titles, when brought into question, those persons would then be tenants at will of the proprietary, and not fee simple owners of their lands. The idea of a reliance on the moderation and justice with which this power would be used was exploded by the delegates in the following admirable sentence, contained in one of its addresses to the governor :—“ *for, who are a free people? not those over whom government is reasonably and equitably exercised, but those who live under a government so constitutionally checked and controuled that proper provision is made against its being otherwise exercised.*” —I have touched here upon this well known incident in order to shew that the very nature of the land office of Maryland has been as equivocal as its rules have been obscure ; and that it was therefore high time, since the proceedings in that office must long continue to be an object of interest and research, that some memorials, however imperfect, should have been collected relative to its history and practice.

I have said that the proprietary had always a chief agent and receiver in the province : to state, with precision, the successive commissions of this kind which are found on record, with the different authorities from time to time conveyed to those officers, would swell this article beyond the space that can be afforded to it. I shall therefore only observe generally that, in the early periods of the province, the place of general receipt was at the seat of government, *St. Marys*, where, it will be perceived by reference to old patents, the proprietary's rents were payable half yearly, at Lady-day and Michaelmas : the persons entrusted with the receipt were not, for several years, officers appointed for that sole purpose : the power appears by the first commission of the kind on record to have been vested jointly in the governor and secretary ; but the governor alone seems to have been more commonly the sole general or ultimate receiver during the life of the first proprietary ; and, as in the case of the probate of rights, when the colony became in a considerable degree extended, subordinate officers were, for the ease of the people, charged with the immediate receipt of rents in the several counties, and made accountable to the general office at *St. Marys*.

Precisely at the time when Charles lord Baltimore, the second proprietary, established the land council, already noticed, he commissioned Henry Darnall, Esq. to be receiver and collector of all his “rents, port duties, impositions, profits, perquisites, debts, and dues whatsoever,” with power to appoint deputies, and with a general superintendance of the sheriffs, and all persons in any manner concerned in the