



The  
Maryland Gazette

*John Thomas*



From Tuesday March 11, to Tuesday March 18, 1728-9. (Numb. LXXIX.)

# DECLARATION

Concerning the Conduct of the London Merchants.

By Mr. Nicholas Ridgely, lately arrived from London.

**I** Do declare that I was in London last October, and present at a Meeting of the London Merchants in that Month, or the Beginning of November: When a Letter subscribed by several of the Inhabitants of Maryland, and directed to the Merchants, was read. That the Chair-man, Mr. Perry, propos'd that the said Letter should be answered, and a Committee appointed for that Purpose; which Committee was accordingly appointed, consisting of Twelve Persons. That it was afterwards propos'd (to the best of my Remembrance) by Capt. Randolph, or Mr. John Falconer, that the Chair-man should enquire who had sold any Tobacco for a less Price than had been agreed on; that such might be distinguished from Others; which was agreed to: And the Chair-man put the Question to every one present, What they had sold their Tobacco for since the Agreement. That Jonathan Scarth was tax'd with having sold about twenty or thirty Hogsheads under the Rates agreed upon; which he denied, and it was not much insisted on. Mr. James Bradley, when the Question was ask'd him; answered, That he sold from or between three Pence, and one Penny per Pound; which the Chair-man declared was no Answer: But the said Bradley refusing to give any other, the Chair-man ask'd the same Question, (*viz.* How Tobacco had been sold by him) of Mr. Philip Smith, who answered that he had not come into their Agreement; and therefore did not look on himself to be obliged to answer the Question; yet that he had kept to the Price agreed on, as well or better than some that had entered into the Agreement. That Mr. Samuel Hyde was ask'd the same Question; who declared, That some Persons present had wrote Letters into Maryland to his Prejudice, and therefore he would not answer the Question: Upon which Mr. Hyatt a Virginia Merchant, said that such an Allegation was only a Surmise; for that there was no Opportunity of Writing to Maryland from the Time the Tobacco was sold till then: And that he (Mr. Hyde) knew he deserv'd to be wrote against; and that what he then said was only a Pretence to evade answering the Question: Mr. John Handbury, being ask'd the Question, declared, That he had not sold contrary to the Agreement, and Mr. Bradley tax'd him with having sold a Parcel of about twenty Hogsheads, under the Price agreed on; to which Mr. Handbury reply'd, That what he had sold would come out at an Average to the stated Price; which, as he said, was conformable to the Agreement: But the Majority of the Merchants were of a contrary Opinion. That

Mr. Perry, after he had put the Question round, declared, That he had sold a thousand Hogsheads, six hundred Hogsheads whereof at Two-Pence half-penny and upwards, and four Hundred under: And that the Reason why he had so done; was, that Mr. Hyde, and some Others, had sold large Quantities: since the Agreement, at less Rates than was agreed upon; and I understood afterwards, that Mr. Bradley was one of the Persons that Mr. Perry meant.

That Mr. Randolph stood up and declared, that he had offered Mr. Hyde, more Money for a Parcel of Tobacco, than he (Hyde) had sold to the French Man, than he (Randolph) understood Mr. Hyde sold it for, and that his (Mr. Randolph's) Motive was, that he knew that the Sale of that Tobacco at an under Rate, would certainly sink the Market; which he was desirous to keep up. That several of the Merchants present, publicly charged and upbraided Mr. Hyde, with breaking through the Agreement, and being an Enemy to the Trade. That Mr. Randolph in particular resented Mr. Hyde's Conduct, so far as to call him Rascal, and said that he deserved to be kicked thro' London; and that tho' he (Mr. Randolph) was not acquainted in Maryland, he would take care to disperse Letters in Maryland, to inform the People how much they had been abused by Mr. Hyde. That Mr. Hyde sat silently by all the Time, after he had given his answer to the Chairman, in my Apprehension, in a great deal of Confusion. The other Merchants generally declared, that they had not sold contrary to the Agreement, but rather chose to keep the Tobacco by them, than break thro' the Agreement. This I declare to be true in substance, and can prove it; should my own Veracity be questioned, by the Testimony of other reputable People who were also present, and are now in Maryland.

Annapolis, March 5th, 1728 9.

Nicholas Ridgely,

Mr. Parks,

I Acquainted you in my last, that the Agreement entered in to by the Merchants was broke, and that all the Hopes we had of reaping some Advantage from it were vanished. I was not able to tell you, who had the principal Hand in that Breach; but that, I think is now no Secret.

I am in hopes we shall have Resolution enough to distinguish those that have betrayed us, from them that have served us honestly, and endeavour'd to relieve us from the Burthen under which we groan. If we act as we ought at this critical Time, our Friends will be encouraged: If we act inconsistent with our own Interest, and the Laws of Self-Preservation we deserve no Friends, nor ought we to expect any.

For my own Part, I frankly confess, that I cannot consider any Man whose Conduct has brought the Society, whereof I am a Member; under the calamitous Circumstances