

MARYLAND GAZETTE.

Containing the freshest Advices Foreign and Domestic.

FRIDAY, October 11, 1745.

From the GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE for May, 1745.

Old England Journal, May 11.

Admirals and Sea-Officers not promoted according to Merit.

WE have been so unfortunate in almost all our Enterprizes at Sea, and such flagrant Misconduct has appeared in the late Engagement in the Mediterranean, that we should now seriously enquire into the Merits of Men appointed to command Fleets in chief. It is now become a national Concern, nor are the Distinctions of Whig or Tory, of the Country or Court Party, sufficient Reasons for the Promotion of Officers, but Abilities and Experience alone; and indeed would Ministers really consider their own Interest, they would place Men of great Abilities in the important Commands at least, whenever was done with regard to the lesser and more inconsiderable Employments. Nor are Ministers to wait for Recommendations of particular Men, but to know the Characters of all the Officers of Rank and Standing; to have Lists of such by them, and never to disuse an old Officer without the greatest Reason. Nothing is so popular a Consideration as long Services and Seniority; People are naturally, and with great Reason, prepossessioned in favour of Experience. Besides, an Emulation and Spirit of excelling is raised in all subalter Officers; they take the Pains to know the Varieties of Service, and to behave well, when they are not to be injured in their Promotion either by Men of Interest in a Borough, by Brothers or Relations of Members of Parliament, by Members of Parliament themselves, by Noblemens Sons or Relations or Acquaintance, or even by Noblemen themselves. The preferring Men out of their Turns for some of these Reasons, and the not punishing them afterwards for Misconduct, have been the Means of spreading this general Dispiritèdness and Cowardice in our Fleet; this Disregard to all Character and Reputation; which have been the Cause of such national Losses in every Respects. When Men are not rewarded for Courage, Experience, Knowledge, Disinterestedness; nor punished for Cowardice, Neglect, Ignorance, and Mercenariness; we must expect to see Poverty, Prostitution, and Timidity, the most abject and selfish Qualities, the general Characteristics of our Nation. There must be Incentives to noble Actions, and Discouragements to those that are base; triumphal Arches erected for the one, Pillories and Gibbets for the other: A Corruption in all the Branches of Government, a slow Jobbing about Places, Votes and Interest at Elections, and a Necessity of providing for Tools, with an intire Disregard of every Thing but Money, must be the inevitable Ruin of any People, of both a King and his Country.

Who, that has not the most exalted Notions of Honour and Love of his Country, would fight in Lines of Battle with a certainty of Danger, from whence he could expect no Profit, and knew that whatever Bravery or Judgment he might shew in Action, it would not add to his Pretensions for rising in the Service? But every Man knows that by the raising of Merchantmen, and getting a Fortune, he has the infallible Means of rising in his own Hands. Are we not then to expect that Officers will leave their Stations and their Convoys, in order to cruise after Merchantmen, and to get Riches sufficient for buying a Borough; especially when there is no Probability of being punished, even if they are called before a Court Martial.

Have not, undeniably, the most-knowing and able Commanders been frequently laid aside of late? This has been the Case even in this War, with Lieutenants, Captains, and Admirals; who have become at once, and against their Will, an useless Burthen to their Country, and subject to Dishonour in their own Persons. They have been put upon Half-pay, and new Officers made in their Room with adequate Salaries. Is not this properly multiplying Officers, and increasing Expences to our own Disadvantage; paying more to be worse serv'd?

How little has been done at Sea during this War, how very trifling in Comparison of the Fleets equip'd, and the Supplies given! This may, with Reason, be attributed chiefly to the nominating Officers unequal to, and unfit for the Commands to which they have been appointed. Men should never be made Admirals of Fleets, in chief at least, who had never been Commandores and Commanders of Squadrons, or not for 20 Years perhaps at Sea. Did we ever want experienced Officers so much as now, and yet have great Numbers of them been laid aside, and others created in their Room, unexperienced in Command?

After a few more Reflections the Writer gives the following List.

Sea Officers employed.

Sir Chaloner Ogle,
Admiral Davers,
Admiral Rowley,
Admiral Martin,
Admiral Medley,
Commodore Lee,
Commodore Ambrose.

Not employed.

Sir John Norris,
Admiral Vernon,
Earl of Granard,
Admiral Lestock,
Commodore Graves,
Admiral Anson,
Commodore Gascoigne.

(Thus far the Gentleman's Magazine.)