

T H E No. 231  
**M A R Y L A N D G A Z E T T E,**

*Containing the freshest Advices; Foreign and Domestic;*

WEDNESDAY, September 27, 1749.

From the *New York WEEKLY POST-BOY.*

NEW-YORK, August 29.

**T**hursday and Friday last the famous infamous vagrant TOM BELL made his appearance in this city, but being discovered a little sooner than he could wish, he left the place before Friday noon, otherwise would have been secured:— 'Tis somewhat surprizing that this fellow should continue rambling here in *America*, playing dishonest pranks; for as he is now pretty well known throughout the country, his impositions pass only upon innocent and unwary people; tho' several honest persons have suffered at times, because they have been suspected to be like him. He must certainly now be a pain to himself, as well as an injury to society; and as he seems almost incurable in that sort of life, it is not unlikely but his craft may one day fail him, and he have the just reward of his demerits on a triple tree.

*The above Paragraph gave Occasion to the following Letter in the New-York EVENING-POST.*

S I R,

North-America; August 30, 1749.

It is impossible that I should be the derision of all the discerning world, for my impieties and absurdities:— I should have thought: that you, Sir, and some other certain gentlemen in this city (above all other persons), would not only inwardly detest and abhor malicious cowardly reflections and accusations, but have used all possible endeavours to hinder their influence. But to my great surprize, I find that the compiler and printer of the *Weekly Post Boy* is authoritatively and arbitrarily enjoyn'd to accept of such materials, as my implacable and ungenerous, enemies have intellects to frame; compose, and force upon the public, in order (*rem, rem quæcumque modo rem*) any how to render me as contemptible and impious in the eyes of the public, as they have by former and very late paragraphs made themselves appear impotent, inveterate, and ridiculous. The news-writer, at first sight, appears to be an entire stranger to truth and good manners, or he would not have been so barefaced as to have declared, that I was lately discover'd in this city before I could wish; whereas 'tis notoriously known; that I had made the most public appearance in town for upwards of ten days before the pretended discovery was made. The case is plain, there's no intricacy in it:—The hand of *Jael* is in all this; but there's no fence against a scilicet, therefore the author of the paragraph may lay about him in as wild a manner as he pleases, 'tis hardly possible to ward off the blow; he acts in obedience to authority; and his assertions and general charges of errors, crimes, and enormities (according as their malice and inveteracy dictate), are like false dice, he has run them as high and low as he thought might be pleasing and acceptable to his masters: I'll only remind the public of a former paragraph of his publishing, in *April*, 1746; it runs thus: 'Yesterday the famous and notorious cheat and impostor, *Tom Bell*, was committed to prison for selling a horse, which he had hired of a man on *Long-Island*: 'Tis said the man has sworn expressly to his person, notwithstanding which, he asserts his innocence with an undaunted front of matchless impudence.' When at the same time the substance of the oath only describ'd me, as having an eye like the man to whom the *Dutchman* had hired his horse: And by the printed and written advertisements dispers'd up and down by the owner of the beast, the person, manner of expression, and composure of the real stranger was thus describ'd; *viz.* 'A stout, sturdy, well set man, very much roak broken, wearing very long strait sandy colour'd hair, a bottle of Rum in his

to be a privateer's man.' Agreeable to this description, I have the testimony of above fifty persons, the neighbouring inhabitants on *Long-Island*; and of my being in the province of *New Jersey*, in the town of *Whippany*, on *March* the 19th, 1746, being the day that the horse was hired, &c. 'Tis no wonder that innocent persons are taken to be like me, and have suffered, when this News-monger and his accomplices metamorphosize and transform me (*Proteus* like) into all shapes and appearances.

But I would be glad if this News-writer would inform me, who ever was confin'd three several times in two different goals; or put to great charge and expence, for being taken for me; as I have been for resembling the stranger who hired the horse, as just now related. I hope the eyes of the world are by this time opened, to see what strange relations this same Printer imposes on the Public, for their information and amusement; and what's worse, he still continues to entertain his customers with glaring ridiculous fables and scurrilities; larded with hard names and opprobrious language, with big sounding words, without any truth or signification, fit only to swell the throat of a bully, and keep up the buzz's of a bear garden quarrel.

However, I am entirely at a loss to know what the *M*—tes of this *C*—ty intend, wherein I never actually offended, and in which I have bought and paid for some score pounds worth of goods and merchandize for the space of twelve years; have sail'd as a foremast man out of this port; enlisted as a soldier in the neighbouring province; taught school in almost every government in *America*; survey'd land, &c. &c. notwithstanding I am treated here as if I was: justly deem'd either *Bel* or the *Dragon*, the destroyer or devourer of the lives and properties of mankind: Or, were I some hideous monster, horrible to behold, of a prodigious size, motly mixture, and of præternatural or diabolical production and offspring, I should not wonder that there appears in the countenances and behaviour of the inhabitants of this city, &c. so great a consternation as there does; for no sooner than I make my appearance in this city, but the alarm's given, *TOM BELL's* in *Town!* Great is the company of them that publish it; millers, informers, and busy bodies, trudge space, and they that tarry at home protect and defend their mammon from falling a prey into the jaws of so voracious an animal: *To arms! To arms! To arms!* has been the loud and repeated cries of some, for the *troubler of our Israel is again come amongst us!* What shall be done to this incorrigible villain? Forthwith all their artillery is levell'd against me. *Woe is me, that I forsake in Melech, and dwell in the tents of Kedar; Behold, when I am for peace, they are for war.*

Thus I am hastily and closely pursued and chased from street to street, and from ward to ward, with the eyes of *Argus*, light as air, swift as an eagle, and innocent as a dove:—Yet, perhaps it may be objected, Why so much vigilancy and velocity; where there's so much innocency? The wicked flee, when only the sting of corporal punishments, which attends the perpetration of their wicked principles; pursues; when men of honour and conscience abide the strictest scrutiny and enquiry: Yet I rely upon't, it very often happens, that the innocent and righteous are obliged to flee, when every body pursues.

As to the generality of the inhabitants of this city, how they are inclin'd to treat me, I won't say; yet I cannot be persuaded but that I appear to the gentry and clergy, as an object of pity, and subject of prayer. However, in the main I am strangely oppress'd on every side, when ever I reside a day or an hour in this city. As to what may be expected from me by way of defence and reply, to the almost innumerable charges laid against me, by slanderers and haters of truth, 'twill be no manner of purpose for me to answer. The world is no more satisfied, when I have a word to say in my own defence.