

Capt. Campbell again. When Dr. Michael Wallace of Annapolis saw her on April 14, he said none were very ill, and all the sick people needed was a change of clothing and removal to shore. He added that the ship was clean and well-provisioned and supplied. She cleared for Falmouth the last of August (*Maryland Gazette*, March 10, September 1, 1774).

This time as usual there was a great flood of petitions from languishing prisoners. Whenever languishing prisoners were spoken of, it meant prisoners for debt: they were always so described, and only they. By an act of 1732 (*Archives*, XXXIX, 130-138), men—and women—in jail for debt were allowed to petition for release therefrom. And petition they did. In these sessions, almost a hundred prisoners, more than half of them from Baltimore County and seven of the lot women, asked their freedom. The petition all said the persons had already been in jail for long periods, that they would willingly give up all their possessions if they could get out, but their creditors refused to consent. Most of the petitions were granted and the petitioners released in an act of Assembly of April 18, 1774. Two or three were dropped because their creditors offered counter petitions or because they were suspected of fraud against their creditors. All were required to deliver up to the sheriff everything they had, and to take oath that they had nothing left, and no claim to anything. All they retained was their working tools and the clothing of the family. In connexion with these people imprisoned for debt, there should be kept in mind the description of the Anne Arundel County jail only a few years earlier. In 1766 a special petition from the prisoners there had led the Lower House committee of grievances to investigate whether things were as bad as the petition claimed they were. The report of the committee was eloquent beyond possibility of improvement: "Your committee in pursuance of the Special Order of your Hoñble House . . . beg leave to Inform your Hoñble House That they have Visited the said Goal and find that the same is kept so filthy and Nasty that it is excessively Nauseous In so much that Your Committee are Apprehensive that the Prisoners are in Great danger from its offensive Stench" (*Archives*, LXI, 27-28). The sheriff of Anne Arundel in 1766 was Joseph Galloway.

For several years now, attempts had been made to relieve the Assembly of the pressure of these petitions and to permit the languishing prisoners to go instead to the courts. In 1765 Parker Selby, then a delegate from Worcester County, later sheriff of that county, introduced a general act for the relief of insolvent debtors, but nothing came of it then. It dragged along for two or three sessions and was defeated in December 1766. Now in October and November 1773 a movement began in the Upper and Lower Houses simultaneously without a petition (pp. 10, 32, 86), and, after much manoeuvring between the houses, a bill was passed, and sealed by the Governor. In the last stages of its passage the Lower House rejected amendments proposed by the Upper House (p. 350), and there is nothing in the record to show that it was sent back to the Upper House, or that the Lower House later changed its mind and accepted the Amendments. But undoubtedly that was done, for the bill entitled "An Act for the Relief of insolvent Debtors" was engrossed and