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THE
MARYLAND GAZETTE,
Containing the freshest Advices, Foreign and Domestic.

TUESDAY, April 14, 1747.

The SPEECH of the Honourable Sir William Gooch, Baronet, his Majesty's Lieutenant-Governor and Commander in chief, of the Colony and Dominion of Virginia, to the General Assembly; at the Opening of a Session at the City of Williamsburg, on Monday the 30th Day of March, in the 20th Year of the Reign of his Majesty King GEORGE II. Annoque Domini 1747.

to the repair recommended, to proceed therein with unanimity and dispatch; and I hope nothing will intervene to retard the execution of that most necessary and important work.

To the Hon. Sir William Gooch, Bart. his Majesty's Lieutenant-Governor, and Commander in chief, of the Colony and Dominion of Virginia, the humble ADDRESS of the Council.

Gentlemen of the Council, Mr. Speaker, and Gentlemen of the House of Burgesses,

THE astonishing fate of the Capitol occasions this meeting, and proves a loss the more to be deplored, as being apparently the effect of malice and design. I must indeed own it is difficult to comprehend, how so flagitious a crime could be committed, or even imagined, by any rational creature. But when you have considered that the first emission of the smoke through the chimneys was from an upper retired room, without chimney or wain-scot; that the persons who on its first appearance hastened thither to discover the cause, found all the indice of the roof in one blaze, impossible to be extinguished; and that a fire kindled by accident could not have made so rapid a progress; you will be forced to ascribe it to the horrid machinations of desperate villains, instigated by infernal Madnets.

WE his Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Council of this Dominion, are very deeply affected with the unhappy occasion of our meeting at this time together in your Honour, a great instrument, under Divine Providence, of conveying many benefits to the community, over which you so deservedly preside.

The raging fire, which consumed the Capitol, is an awful incitement to a reformation of manners; the best expedient for averting the wrathful indignation of an incensed God; the noblest expression of gratitude for his justice tempered with mercy, displayed in the preservation of the Records, like brands, plucked out of the devouring flames.

God forbid I should accuse or excuse unjustly! Yet I may venture to assert, such superlative wickedness could never get admittance into the heart of a Virginian.

Secure of your favour, to whatever is connected with the public good, and sensible of our particular obligations, we will endeavour, with united care, to restrain ungodliness and vice, the bane of society; and to cherish true religion and virtue, the surest means of human happiness.

The clerks belonging to the secretary, conscious of their innocence, but apprehensive their early and late attendance in his office might subject them to undeserved reflections, have, at their own request, been examined by the Mayor's court, and judicially acquitted from any breach of duty, or umbrage of neglect: And, as they did not presume thereby to preclude your enquiry, are ready, if it shall be your pleasure, to vindicate their conduct before the face of the country. I must also do them the justice to add, that the consolation we enjoy, in having the authentic registers of every man's property, with all papers of any consequence, preserved, is owing, under Divine Providence, to their diligence, activity, and resolution; efforts that would have been vain, had not the wind, at the bursting out of the flames, changed from the East to the North West.

It is with hearts full of the most unfeigned concern, that we see a spirit of Enthusiasm introduced among the people by itinerant preachers; a spirit more dangerous to the common welfare, than the furious element which laid the Royal edifice in ashes; a spirit, "productive not only of confusion, but of blasphemy, prophaneness, and the most wicked and destructive doctrines and practices," which, in the days of their forefathers, utterly subverted our excellent constitution in church and state. The prevention of these shocking and prodigious mistakes, the maintenance of Ecclesiastical as well as Civil peace and order, and the best support of both, the doctrine of the Church of England, demand our most hearty and unanimous concurrence with your honour, in discouraging such teachers, by what name soever known and distinguished, from settling, or even preaching in this Colony.

The circumstances of the treasury, and my own infirmities, would have induced me to have continued your prorogation until the revival of the Law had been completed, if no incident had happened, or this misfortune had not befallen the Capitol; and it's instauration required your immediate assistance.

An active discharge of this important trust reposed in us, is the wisest project for insuring the public safety from the hellish attempts of malicious incendiaries; for advancing the honour and interest of our king and country; and engaging the protection of Heaven.

To press you with any arguments, in a point of such manifest and general usefulness, would shew a diffidence of that sincere and zealous regard to the real interest of the community, for which I have so often applauded you, and shall ever vye with you in demonstrating.

We take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, upon your promotion to the dignity of a Baronet; a fresh instance of our gracious sovereign's just regard to your long and faithful services.

The same public spirit you constantly exerted, as fathers of your country, within those walls, will determine you to apply the most effectual means for restoring the Royal fabric to it's former beauty and magnificence, with the like elegant and capacious apartments, so well adapted to all the weighty purposes of government.

To which Address his Honour was pleased to make the following ANSWER.

In the mean time we shall be indulged with the use of the College, for holding Assemblies; and, by a kind offer from the Mayor and corporation of this city, with their new court of Hustings, for the sittings of the General court.

Gentlemen of the Council,
The just sense you express of our misfortune in the loss of the Capitol, your affectionate concern for my ill state of health, and your kind congratulations upon the distinction his Majesty has been pleased to honour me with, lay claim to my sincerest acknowledgements of gratitude and thankfulness; for this obliging Address. You may depend on my endeavours, with your concurrence, to oppose the progress of Heterodoxy and Immorality, and to promote to the utmost of my Power, true Religion and Virtue, the solid foundation of our present happiness, and the only hope of your future reward.

But as these places can only be accepted and esteemed as temporary conveniences, I must intreat you to turn your thoughts

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