

23d day of APRIL, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six;

The Presentments of the Grand Jury for the said District :

I. Fully sensible and thoroughly convinced that to live in a society without laws, or a proper execution of them, to restrain the licentious nature of mankind, is the greatest misery that can befall a People, and must render any body of men, in such a situation, but little superior to a herd of brutes; and being no less sensible that it was the scheme of a corrupt, nefarious Administration in *Great Britain*, to reduce the good people of this Colony to that wretched situation, from a want of officers to execute the laws, (those whom they had appointed having refused to act in their respective stations,) that, through the evil effects of anarchy and confusion, the people might become an easy prey to the cruel designs of their insidious enemies: While we lament the necessity which has obliged the people to resume into their hands those powers of Government which were originally derived from themselves for the protection of those rights which *God* alone has given them, as essential to their happiness, we cannot but express our most unfeigned joy in the happy constitution of Government now established in this Colony, which promises every blessing to its inhabitants, which a people, endued with virtue and a just regard to the rights of mankind, could desire. With gratitude to the Divine Ruler of human events, and with the most pleasing expectations of happiness from a Constitution so wise in its nature, and virtuous in its ends, (being founded on the strictest principles of justice and humanity, and consistent with every privilege incident to the dignity of a rational being,) we cannot but declare we think every opposition to its operations, or disregard to its authority, the foulest criminality a mortal can be guilty of; highly offensive in the eyes of *God*, and of all just men, and deserving the most exemplary punishment.

We cannot but deplore the unhappy situation of any few amongst the people of this Colony, who, through an ignorance of their true interests and just rights, and from a want of proper information of the real truth, may be misled, by the artifice and cunning of their false and designing enemies, from a real sense of those benefits which our present Constitution has so amply provided for; benefits which are not confined or limited to any ranks or degrees of men in particular, but generally, equally, and indiscriminately, extending to all, from the richest to the poorest, and which time and a little patient experience must soon evince.

Every good citizen must be happy in the consideration of the choice of those officers, appointed in the administration of our present Government, as well in the impartial mode of an appointment arising from the people themselves, and the limited duration of their power, as in their personal characters as men, justly beloved and revered by their country, and whose merits and virtues entitle them to every pre-eminence.

Filled with these sentiments, arising from mature deliberation and the most impartial inquiry, we must further declare that blessings such as these we have before enumerated, are too inestimable to be lost, and that nothing in nature can repay the least violation of them; and although an accommodation with the power which attempts to destroy them may be highly worthy of attention, and, upon principles truly honourable, of obtaining, yet we think it a sacred duty, incumbent upon every citizen, to maintain and defend, with his life and fortune, what is given and intrusted to him by the hand of Providence, not for his own good only, but for the lasting happiness of posterity; a trust which no law can ever annul, which is the grand principle of existence, and the source of every social virtue.

II. We present, as a grievance intolerable to the spirit of a people born and nurtured in the arms of freedom, and (though ever submissive to the just mandates of legal authority) holding every oppression as detestable,—the unjust, cruel, and diabolical acts of the *British* Parliament, not only declaring the good people of the United Colonies of *North-America* Rebels, for defending those invaluable rights which no human power can lawfully divest them of, but making all murders, rapines, thefts, robberies, and other inhuman oppressions, done before the passing of those acts without authority, and which were, after the passing the said acts, to be done by the *British* forces in these Colonies,

legal and warrantable, to the eternal disgrace and indelible infamy of a kingdom once renowned for her justice, honour, and humanity, but now meanly descending to that wanton profligacy which even Savages abhor.

III. We present, as a very great grievance, the indulgence allowed to all those who are inimical to the liberties of *America*, and the operations of the United Colonies, amongst us, in suffering them to reside here, and be admitted to intercourses dangerous to the peace and welfare of this Colony.

IV. We present, that the publick oaths, directed by an act of the General Assembly (passed since the forming of our present Constitution) to be administered to those exercising publick offices, trusts, and professions, are not administered to such of the Clergy as are included in the same.

V. We present, that the times at which the several Parochial Committees meet, or are appointed for their meeting, are not made publick; and we do recommend that they do publish the same in the publick papers, that all persons who are desirous of obtaining leave to sue for debts, may know when to apply.

VI. We present, as a great grievance, more particularly at this time, the want of due attention to the roads and ferries in this Colony; many of the roads not being sufficiently wide and worked upon, agreeable to law, and the ferries, in general, not having boats sufficient to forward passengers upon any emergent occasion.

VII. We present, as a grievance, the too frequent forestalling out of the wagons, coming from the back parts of the country, the many necessities of life, by which the good inhabitants of this town are obliged to pay most exorbitant prices for the same; and, with submission, would recommend a place to be appointed for the sale of bacon, flour, butter, and other such necessities, brought to town in carriages, to be regulated by the market act.

VIII. We present the want of a proper person, by law, to oblige the sellers of blades and hay to weigh the same at a publick scale.

JONATHAN SCOTT, Foreman,	[L. s.]
GEORGE COOKE,	[L. s.]
JOHN SMYTH,	[L. s.]
THOMAS JONES,	[L. s.]
JOSEPH JENKINS,	[L. s.]
JOHN LIGHTWOOD,	[L. s.]
JOSEPH COX,	[L. s.]
PETER LEGER,	[L. s.]
DANIEL LESSESNE,	[L. s.]
PHILIP MEYER,	[L. s.]
LEWIS DUTARQUE,	[L. s.]
ISAAC MAZYCK,	[L. s.]
JOHN SINGLETARY,	[L. s.]
JOHN OWEN,	[L. s.]

INSTRUCTIONS TO DELEGATES FOR CHARLOTTE COUNTY, VIRGINIA.

At a meeting of the Committee of *Charlotte* County, April 23, 1776, present the Chairman and fifteen Members:

Resolved, That in this truly alarming and important crisis of our publick affairs, it is expedient that the Delegates lately chosen for this County should know the sentiments of their constituents, and be instructed what part it is desired and expected they will act in the ensuing Convention.

“To PAUL CARRINGTON, and THOMAS READ, Esq's :

“GENTLEMEN: When we consider the despotick plan adopted by the King, Ministry, and Parliament of *Great Britain*, insidiously pursued for these twelve years past, to enslave *America*; when we consider that they have turned a deaf ear to the repeated petitions and remonstrances of this and our sister Colonies, and that they have been equally inattentive to the rights of freemen and the *British* Constitution; and when we consider that they have for some time been endeavouring to enforce their arbitrary mandates by fire and sword, and likewise encouraging, by every means in their power, our savage neighbours, and our more savage domesticks, to spill the blood of our wives and children; and to crown the whole, they have added insult to their injustice and cruelty, by repeatedly pretending to hold out the olive-branch of peace in such a way as teacheth us that they are determined to persist in their hellish designs, and that nothing is intended for us but the most abject slavery; of this we can no longer doubt, since we have been made acquainted with a late letter from the Secretary of State to Governor *Eden*, and the late act of Parliament for seizing and confiscating all our ships and property that may fall into their hands:

“Therefore, despairing of any redress of our grievances

from the King and Parliament of *Great Britain*, and all hopes of a reconciliation between her and the United Colonies being now at an end, and being conscious that their treatment has been such as loyal subjects did not deserve, and to which, as freemen, we are determined not to submit; by the unanimous approbation and direction of the whole freeholders, and all the other inhabitants of this County, we advise and instruct you cheerfully to concur and give your best assistance in our Convention, to push to the utmost a war offensive and defensive, until you are certified that such proposals of peace are made to our General Congress as shall by them be judged just and friendly. And because the advantages of a trade will better enable us to pay the taxes, and procure the necessaries for carrying on a war, and in our present circumstances this cannot be had without a Declaration of Independence; therefore, if no such proposals of peace shall be made, we judge it to be a dictate of the first law of nature, to continue to oppose every attempt on our lives and properties; and we give it you in charge, to use your best endeavours that the Delegates which are sent to the General Congress be instructed immediately to cast off the *British* yoke, and to enter into a commercial alliance with any nation or nations friendly to our cause. And as King George the Third, of *Great Britain*, &c., has manifested deliberate enmity towards us, and, under the character of a parent, persists in behaving as a tyrant, that they, in our behalf, renounce allegiance to him forever; and that, taking the *God* of Heaven to be our King, and depending upon His protection and assistance, they plan out that form of Government which may the most effectually secure to us the enjoyment of our civil and religious rights and privileges, to the latest posterity.

"In all other things, gentlemen, that may come before you in Convention, we rely upon your known fidelity and zeal; resolving and giving you our faith, that we will, at the risk of our lives and fortunes, to the utmost of our abilities, support and defend you, our country, and our sister Colonies, in the glorious cause in which we are now engaged."

Ordered, That the above Resolves be published in the *Virginia Gazette*.

By order:

WILLIAM JAMISON, Clerk.

GEORGE LUX TO MARYLAND COUNCIL OF SAFETY.

Baltimore, April 23, 1776.

HONOURABLE SIR: I have been unwell for ten days past, nay, have been most of the time confined to my bed with a fever, of which I am not yet well enough recruited to venture upon a ride to *Annapolis*. I hope the honourable Council of Safety will excuse my non-attendance for the above reasons. I was confined to my bed at the time our Committee received the letters referred to in my citation, and heard nothing of it until *Sunday* morning. I have, agreeable to the order of your honourable Board, copied the papers referred to in your summons; your honourable Board will excuse the incorrectness with which they are copied, as it is caused solely by my sickness, for I am at this moment hardly able to hold my pen.

I am, with respect, honourable sir, your most obedient servant,

GEORGE LUX.

To the Honourable *Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer*, Esq.,
President of the Council of Safety, at *Annapolis*.

BALTIMORE COMMITTEE TO MARYLAND COUNCIL OF SAFETY.

In Committee of Observation, Baltimore County, }
April 23, 1776. }

GENTLEMEN: This Committee, on the late alarm, appointed Mr. *Robert Purviance*, Mr. *David Stewart*, and Captain *George Woolsey*, to superintend the fitting out of the Schooner *Resolution* as a tender, or armed vessel, for Captain *Nicholson*. As they have nearly completed her, and are in advance a considerable sum, you will please to furnish them with six or eight hundred pounds, as is convenient.

We are, gentlemen, your most humble servants,

WILLIAM LUX, V. Chairman. JOHN SMITH,

ANDREW BUCHANAN, JAMES CALHOUN,

JOHN BOYD, WALTER TOLLEY, JR.,

DARBY LUX, THOMAS HARRISON,

JAMES GITTINGS, WILLIAM BUCHANAN.

To the Honourable the Council of Safety of *Maryland*.

THOMAS JOHNSON, JUN., TO MARYLAND COUNCIL OF SAFETY.
Philadelphia, April 23, 1776.

DEAR SIR: Mr. *Wallace* and Mr. *Green* set off to-morrow morning. By one of them we intend to write you fully; but as the post may possibly be in before these gentlemen, we think it necessary to advise you that all your Deputies here from *Maryland* approve the conduct of the Council of Safety and resolve to support it. The letter to the President gave high offence to some of the very hot gentlemen. No resolution is yet formed on it—but probably will to-day. *R. Alexander* and *Thomas Stone* join in respects to you and your brethren.

I am, dear sir, your very affectionate servant,

THOMAS JOHNSON, JUN.

To *Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer*, Esq.

PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS TO GENERAL WASHINGTON.

Philadelphia, April 23, 1776.

SIR: I am to acknowledge the receipt of your favour of the 19th of *April*, enclosing several papers, all which were immediately laid before Congress.

The important intelligence they contain makes it necessary that the most vigorous measures should be adopted, as well to defend our troops against the *Canadians* themselves, as to insure success to the expedition. The Congress being determined on the reduction of *Quebeck*, and the security of that country, for reasons too obvious to be mentioned, have left nothing undone which can in any way contribute to that end. Whatever may be the causes of the late insurrection, good policy requires that, while we endeavour to prevent everything of the kind for the future, we should also make provision in case it should happen. Accordingly, Congress has come into sundry resolves, calculated to quiet the minds of the *Canadians*, and to remove the sources of their uneasiness and discontent. They have likewise ordered that six more battalions be sent into *Canada* from the Army at *New-York*, as you will see by the enclosed resolve. Whether any further additional troops will be wanted in that country, is a matter of some uncertainty with Congress. Should you, from your knowledge of facts, state of *Canada*, the possibility that General *Howe* will attempt to relieve General *Carleton*, and, comparing all circumstances together, be of opinion that an additional force is necessary, you will please to signify it to Congress; and at the same time inform them whether, in that case, such additional force can be spared from the Army now in *New-York*.

I transmit herewith sundry resolves of Congress for your direction; and have the honour to be, with every sentiment of esteem, sir, your most obedient and very humble servant,

JOHN HANCOCK, President.

To His Excellency General *Washington*, at *New-York*.

P. S. The enclosed letter for Commodore *Hopkins*, I leave unsealed for your perusal only; after which I beg the favour of you to seal and forward it by *Fessenden*, or a fresh express.

I have paid Mr. *Fessenden* twelve dollars, which you will please to note on settlement with him. J. H.

ON THE PRESENT STATE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

Having attentively perused the various political publications which have been lately printed, I confess I have been astonished at the strange and extraordinary doctrines which some of them contain; and it naturally led me to consider whether I am to swallow in the gross, and pay an implicit obedience to their novel sentiments, or whether it is not my duty as a man, and as a friend to my native country, to judge for myself how they will affect me and my countrymen in general. I shall, therefore, in a brief manner, (if it is possible to be brief on so interesting a subject,) give some of my sentiments on the present unhappy situation of public affairs.

Much pains have been taken by some writers to make us believe that nothing but the vilest intentions that ever entered into the hearts of the worst of men are to be expected from the people of *Great Britain*; that if Commissioners are coming, they are coming to bribe, to deceive, and betray us; that the very thought of reconciliation