

A TRUE
ACCOUNT
OF THE
PROCEEDINGS
AT THE
Common - Hall,
FOR

Chusing Sheriffs, and other Officers at *Guild-Hall, London,*
On *Thursday* the 24th of *June, 1680.*

With a Copy of the *PETITION* there Offered and Own'd by the
General Acclamation of the Hall for the Sitting of the *PARLIAMENT.*

In a LETTER to a Friend in the Countrey.

S I R !

WHEN last I had the happiness to see you in Town, you were pleas'd to intimate how much divers *Protestants* in the Countrey were concern'd about the present *Complexion* of the City, as being apprehensive, left in this time of eminent danger (from the restless and still-growing Designs of the *Papists*) that pernicious *Roman Faction* should even here have gain'd too great an Ascendant. In answer to which, I then freely told you, That I did not doubt but these Fears were needless ; for though those *Sons of Confusion* had indefatigably made it their business to raise *Divisions*, and foment Hatred amongst us upon imaginary pretences ; and though *Hobbian-Divinity*, and the too powerful and much-to-be-lamented Torrent of *Profaneness* had invaded many unthinking people, and disposed some particular men of *weak heads* and *worse hearts* to favour or meet half way any thing that so much gratifies their Lusts ; yet I was very certain, That the *Body* of the City, men of Estates and Sense, were unalterably Loyal and Zealous Maintainers, as well as Professors of the Protestant Religion ; and that they were *Unanimous* too ; For let designing *Knaves*, or debauched sputtering *Fools* suggest what they will, it must be an union of Protestants, both moderate Sons of the Church, and modest Dissenters, that must keep up the Ballance, and prevent the Inroad of Popery, which despairs to Cope with them united, and therefore would gladly divide them ; and then what can the Church of *England* expect from the bloody Tyranny of *Rome*, which Butcher'd her first Reformers, but *Polyphemus's* kindness to be devoured last ? These things are apparent to all that wear Eyes in their heads (for you know where *Solomon*

tells some folks carry theirs), and therefore 'tis high time to Cement in Moderation, and lay by Animosities and heats about Indifferencies.

This in effect was what I then discourst, and I am now abundantly confirm'd in such my Sentiments of the Cities Constancy and true Affection to the Protestant Religion, and of their *Unanimity*, by the Transactions yesterday at our Common Hall met (according to custom) to Elect Sheriffs, and other Officers for the year ensuing. A brief, but true Account whereof I here send you, to prevent your being abused with false Reports, which possibly at such a distance may be spread concerning it.

The *Livery-men* began to Assemble at *Guild-Hall* about Ten of the Clock, and a very numerous Appearance there was, being modestly computed between two and three Thousand. About Eleven of the Clock the Mayor and Aldermen being come, and sat upon their Court of *Hustings*, Sir *George Jefferyes*, Recorder of this Honourable City, and the Two present Sheriffs having also taken their places, the said Recorder made a Speech relating to the occasion and work of the day, and shewing what an Happiness the people enjoy, by having such Libertis of Chusing their own Officers, &c. which was succeeded by another Speech from Mr. Common Serjeant to the same purpose ; then the Mayor, Aldermen, and Recorder withdrew to the Council-Chamber ; and the Cryer made Proclamation, and said, *Gentlemen, attend to your Election.*

But here you are to note, that it hath been customary for the Lord Mayor of *London*, for the time being on a certain day sometime before *Midsummer-day* solemnly to drink to some certain Person, who he thinks is fit to serve as Sheriff, and thereby that person was sure to be put in *Nomination* at the Election

and frequently hath been chosen: now the Right Honourable Sir Robert Clayton our present Mayor (to whom this City and indeed the whole Nation is highly obliged for his prudence, and zealous regards for the Protestant Religion), pursuing this custom, had amongst others drank to one Mr. Hockenhall, a worthy Citizen, and so he was first put up alone; but the Common Hall opposed it, desiring that they might hear the Names of all that were to be in Nomination read before they went to Election. This dispute continued some time, the whole Hall crying out *Read the Names, Read the Names*: The Common Cryer told them, that if they went this Course, they would be Four hours about it; to which it was briskly answered that they were resolved to assert their Rights and have things in due method, and cared not if they were Fourteen hours in doing it, though the weather was excessive hot, and what with the crowd and hurry, very uneasy: but at last it was consented unto, and the Names were read, being,

- John Hockenhall,
- Slingsby Bethel,
- Henry Cornish,
- Richard Hawkings,
- Sir William Dodson, Knight, &c.

} Esquires.

Then they went to Voting; and it was most apparent, that Bethel and Cornish had the Majority of hands; but then Mr. Common Serjeant told them, they must confirm Mr. Hockenhall, because the Lord Mayor had drank to him, and so they would have made that Ceremony a positive Choice, which the Common Hall might not decline but were bound to accept and Corroborate: this the Livery-men would by no means admit, but insisted it was their undoubted Right to chuse: the whole Hall standing as one man for their Priviledges, Rights and Liberties; as Citizens and English men; many debates passing between the Common Serjeant and Sheriffs on the one side, and the Common Hall on the other, touching this matter, the former often attempted to put up Mr. Hockenhall again, which was as vigorously contradicted by the latter, affirming they had made a fair Choice, and crying out, *Declare! Declare!* After an hours Tug, the Sheriffs and Common Serjeant went up to the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen; which the Common Hall taking notice of, Three worthy and eminent Citizens, with the consent of the rest, went thither after them, where they Debated the Priviledge for above an Hour; asserting, that the Choice lay in the Commons; After they were return'd, the Sheriffs would have put all the Three up again, but it was unanimously refused; so after half an hours dispute more, with several shouts—*Declare, Declare the two we have Chosen*; seeing their Resolution, they did declare, That Mr. Bethel and Mr. Cornish were duly Elected.

Then they proceeded to Chuse the Chamberlain, (for all such Offices in the City depend on an Annual Choice) and with one voice Elected and Continued the worthy Sir Thomas Player, who for several years with unblemisht integrity and the Citys general satisfaction, hath executed the same.

Then they came to Bridgmaisters, wherein one Mr. Sheperd even beyond his own expectation was preferred; for his name being accidentally put up together with Captain Brackley's and Mr. Sextons, it was very plain on the view that Sexton and Sheperd had the most hands; however Captain Brackleys party prayed

a Poll, which was granted. Next, Auditors for taking the Accounts of the Bridghouse were chosen, viz. the worthy Mr. Papilion and Mr. Peter Holland, &c. And after that the Ale Conners were Elected. Then the Petition herein after recited fairly ingrossed, was delivered into Mr. Sheriff Raymonds hand by a Member of the Common Hall, in their names desiring the same might be Read, which was Seconded by the General Voyce, Crying, *Read the Petition, Read the Petition*. The Sheriffs having a little Consulted together, said, They were for the work of the day, and nothing else; upon which a worthy Member said to them aloud, Deny the Reading of it at your Peril. Several other worthy Citizens likewise pressed them to the same purpose, upon which the Hall for several times Cryed out, *Petition, Petition, Parliament, Parliament*; in which they were so unanimous, that by the best observation it is supposed there were not Forty men in the whole Hall that appeared against it.

After this, they went to the Poll, between Sheperd and Brackley, and though contrary to known Custom Sheperds party were put to go out of the little door, which always used to be for those that demand the Poll; yet he Carried it by about a hundred hands or upwards.

Then the Lord Mayor and Aldermen with the Records, came down and declared the Elections, and the Assembly broke up, having performed the work of the day to the great satisfaction of the City in General.

The before-mentioned Petition follows in these words.

I have only this to add, That the Grand-Jury for Middlesex have likewise prepared and delivered a Petition to the very same effect, in the name of that County, under their hands, to be presented to His Majesty.

To the Kings most Excellent Majesty.

The humble Petition of the Citizens of the City of London in Common Hall assembled this 24th of June, in the 32d. year of your Majestys Reign, in behalf of themselves and the rest of the Citizens of the said City.

Most humbly sheweth,

THAT We your Majesty's most loyal and obedient Subjects, being deeply sensible of the many and great dangers your Majesties sacred person, the Protestant Religion, and your Protestant Subjects are now in by reason of the late horrid and hellish Popish Plots and Conspiracies; do in a most humble, loyal and dutiful affection unto your Majesties sacred Person and Government, and in a due sense and regard to our Religion, lives, liberties and properties, Most humbly beseech your Majesty,

That the Parliament summoned by your Majesty's gracious Writ to assemble and meet the 17th. day of October last past, and which now stands Prorogue unto the first day of July next, may then be permitted to sit and act until Justice shall effectually take place upon all the said Popish Conspirators, and provision made for the securing your Royal person, with the Religion, lives and liberties of your Protestant Subjects.

And your Petitioners (as in duty bound) shall ever pray for your Majesties long and prosperous Reign.