

T H E

Earl of ESSEX'S
S P E E C H

At the Delivery of the

P E T I T I O N

To the KING, Jan. 25. 1680.

May it please Your Majesty,

THE Lords here present; together with divers other Peers of the Realm, taking notice that by Your late Proclamation Your Majesty has declared an Intention of Calling a Parliament at Oxford; and observing from Histories and Records, how unfortunate many such Assemblies have been, when Called at Places Remote from Your Capital City; as particularly the Congress in Henry the Second's Time, at Clarendon, three several Parliaments at Oxford in Henry the Third's Time; and that at Coventry in Henry the Sixth's Time; with divers others which have proved fatal to those Kings, and have been followed with great Mischiefs on the Kingdom; and considering the present Posture of Affairs, the many Jealousies and Discontents which are amongst the People, we have great Cause to apprehend that the Consequences of the Sitting of a Parliament now at Oxford, may be as fatal to Your Majesty, and the Nation, as those others mentioned have been to the then Reigning Kings; And therefore we do conceive that we cannot answer it to God, to Your Majesty, or to the People; if we being Peers of the Realm, should not on so important an Occasion, humbly offer our Advice to Your Majesty, that, if possible, Your Majesty may be Prevailed with to alter this (as we apprehend) unseasonable Resolution. The Grounds and Reasons of our Opinion are contained in this our Petition, which we humbly present to Your Majesty.

To the KING'S Most Excellent Majesty. The
Humble PETITION and Advice of the Lords
undernamed; PEERS of the Realm.

Humbly sheweth,

That whereas Your Majesty hath been pleased, by divers Speeches and Messages, to Your Houses of Parliament, rightly to represent to them the dangers that threatened Your Majesty's Person, and the whole Kingdom, from the mischievous and wicked Plots of the Papists, and the too suddain growth of a Forjegn Power, unto which no stop or remedy could be provided, unless it were by Parliament, and an Union of all Your Majesty's Protestant Subjects in one Mind and Interest.

And the Lord Chancellor, in pursuance of Your Majesty's Command, having more at large demonstrated the said Dangers to be as great as we, in the midst of our fears, could imagine them; and so pressing, that our Liberties, Religion, Lives, and the whole Kingdom, would be certainly lost, if a speedy Provision were not made against them.

And Your Majesty on the 21st of April, 1679. having call'd unto Your Council many honourable and worthy persons, and declar'd



clar'd unto them and Your whole Kingdom, that being sensible of the Evil Effects of a single Ministry, or private Advices, or Foreign Committees, for the general Direction of Your Affairs, Your Majesty would for the future refer all things unto that Council. And by the Constant Advice of them, together with the frequent Use of Your Great Council the Parliament, Your Majesty was resolv'd hereafter to Govern Your Kingdoms, we began to hope we should see an end of our Miseries.

But to our unspeakable Grief and Sorrow, we soon found our Expectations frustrat'd; the Parliament then subsisting, was Prorogued and Dissolv'd, before it could perfect what was intended for our Relief and Security. And though another was thereupon call'd, yet by many Prorogations, it was put off to the 21st of *October* last: And notwithstanding Your Majesty was then again pleas'd to acknowledge, that neither Your Person nor the Kingdom could be safe until the Matter of the Plot was gone through, it was unexpectedly Prorogued on the tenth day of this Month, before any sufficient Order could be taken therein. All their Just and Pious Endeavours to save the Nation were overthrown; the good Bills they had been industriously preparing to unite all Your Protestant Subjects, brought to naught. The Discovery of the Irish Plot stifled. The Witnesses that came in frequently more fully to declare, that both of *England* and *Ireland*, discourag'd. Those Foreign Kingdoms and States, who by a happy Conjunction with us, might give a check to the French Power dishearten'd; even to such a Despair of their own Security against the growing Greatness of that Monarch, as we fear may induce them to take new Resolutions, and perhaps such as may be fatal to us. The Strength and Courage of our Enemies, both at home and abroad increased; and our selves left in the utmost Danger of seeing our Country brought into utter Desolation.

In these great Extremities we had nothing under God to comfort us, but the hopes that Your Majesty being touched with the Groans of Your perishing People, would have suffered the Parliament to meet at the day unto which it was Prorogued, and that no farther Interruptions should have been given to their Proceedings, in order to the saving of the Nation: But that failed us too, when we heard that Your Majesty, by the private suggestions of some wicked persons, Favourers of

Popery, Promoters of French Designs, and Enemies to Your Majesty and the Kingdom (without the Advice, and as we have good Reason to believe, against the Opinion of Your Privy Council) had been prevail'd with to Dissolve it, and to call another to meet at *Oxford*, where neither Lords nor Commons can be in safety, but will be daily expos'd to the Swords of the Papists and their adherents, of whom too many have crept into Your Majesties Guards. The Liberty of speaking, according to their Consciences, will be thereby destroyed, and the Validity of all their Acts and Proceedings consisting in it, left disputable. The straitness of the place no ways admits of such a Concourse of persons as now follows every Parliament. The Witnesses which are necessary to give Evidence against the Popish Lords, such Judges, or others whom the Commons have Impeach'd, or had resolv'd to Impeach, can neither bear the Charge of going thither, nor trust themselves under the Protection of a Parliament, that is it self evidently under the power of Guards and Souldiers.

The Premises considered, We Your Majesties Petitioners out of a just Abhorrence of such a dangerous and pernicious Counsel (which the Authors have not dard to avow) and the direful apprehensions of the Calamities and Miseries that may ensue thereupon, do make it our most humble Prayer and Advice, that the Parliament may not Sit at a place where it will not be able to act with that Freedom, which is necessary and essential to give unto their Acts and Proceedings, that Authority which they ought to have amongst the People, and have ever had, unless impaired by some awe upon them (of which there wants not Presidents.) And that Your Majesty will be graciously pleas'd to order it to Sit at *Westminster*, it being the usual Place, and where they may Consult and Act with Safety and Freedom.

And Your Petitioners shall ever Pray, &c.

<i>Monmouth.</i>	<i>Shaftesbury.</i>
<i>Kent.</i>	<i>Mordant.</i>
<i>Huntington.</i>	<i>Eure.</i>
<i>Bedford.</i>	<i>Gray.</i>
<i>Salisbury.</i>	<i>Pagitt.</i>
<i>Clare.</i>	<i>Howard.</i>
<i>Stamford.</i>	<i>Herbert.</i>
<i>Essex.</i>	<i>De-la-mere.</i>