

VIRGINIA

GAZETTE.



With the freshest Advices,

Foreign and Domestic.

Hanover, May 10, 1751.

Mr. HUNTER,

WE had a violent Storm of Rain, Thunder, and Lightning here Yesterday: And as this Climate is expos'd to frequent Alarms from the Artillery of Heaven; and as the Grandeur and Solemnity of the Scene have rendered such Descriptions, when vivid and just, peculiarly agreeable to me; I took particular Notice of its Rise and Progress, and the various majestic *Phænomena* attending it, to furnish Materials for the Muse. Immediately after, I digested them into the following Poem; interspersed with a few serious Reflections, which the solemn Scene seem'd naturally to suggest.—If you think it will afford any Entertaiment to the more thoughtful of your Readers, or excite some happier Genius to do Justice to the magnificent Theme, and rescue it from the Abuse of a languid Muse, you may insert it in the *Gazette*.—I am, Sir,

Your constant and approving Reader, &c.

I.

NOW when the War of Elements is o'er,
And Heav'n's Artillery cease to flash and roar;
Calm'd by His sovereign Nod, who bids
Th' ethereal Forces rage or fall;
Who in dread Majesty serenely rides
On wild unruly Hurricanes and Storms;
While all their most outrageous Forms
Gently obey His mighty Call,
To purge the Air, or shake this guilty Ball,
To scathe the sturdy Oak, or blast audacious Worms:
Now recollect, my Muse, the solemn Scene,
And call the gloomy Tempest up again.

II.

The solemn Scene appears! My Eyes
Behold the glomerating Deluge rise,
And heavy Oceans floating up the Skies.
First, distant Murm'ring from the West
With rumbling Sound break thro' the Air,
And bid the World prepare:
Strait shudd'ring Expectation heaves the Breast;
Presaging Horror stares intense,
And thro' the Window looks, from whence
The vap'ry Magazines advance:
When lo! th' aerial Oceans roll,
Lour deeper still, and gain upon the Sky,
And on the West-Wind's Wings, above Controll,
Draw nearer still and nearer, as they fly.
Now Fear begins to palpitate,
And often darts a doubtful Eye,
If haply the approaching Terrors yet
May dissipate, or pass obliquely by.

III.

But faster still the thickening Clouds advance,
And cast a darker Frown;
With fiercer Glare the livid Light'nings glance;
And Winds approach with hollow, solemn Sound:
Now thro' the bending Groves they sweep,
And rock the trem'bling Dome,
Here blend the Forest in a shatter'd Heap,
Whirl Clouds of Dust on high, and wrap
All Æther in a dark tremendous Gloom.
A dismal Twilight lours; the Sun
Thro' the thick Dusk in vain emits his Ray,
Absorb'd in sullen Clouds, the Day
Sickens and faints at Noon.

IV.

And now above and all around
Majestic Thunders roll with murm'ring Sound;
Convulse the Air, and rock the Ground.
Now rumbling in the dark aerial Hall,
Till scatt'ring far away
The horrid Murmurings decay
And die away and fall.
Now quick as Thought, to the keen Flash
Sudden succeeds the horrid Crash
Crush'd terrible, and shocks the Heart;
Amaz'd, aghast, and stunn'd we start,
Entranc'd, and doubtful if we live,
And the oppressive Shock survive.

V.

Still the dire Lightnings with malignant Glare
In flaming Curves wheel thro' the Air;
Here a fierce Streak of angry Fire
In various Windings cuts the Cloud;
Another here, another there
Darts on the winking Eye, till all the Hemisphere
One wide-expanded Sheet of vengeful Flame appear;
While Peals on Peals still undistinguish'd crowd,
And Heav'n's eternal Cannons roar aloud.

VI.

Now conscious Guilt the ling'ring Bolt awaits;
And hardly hopes Escape;
Struck with dire-boding Horror, palpitates,
And shrinks at each impending Clap.
The Sword of Justice brandish'd high
Draws fiery Circles thro' the Air;
And as the curving Light'nings fly,
And threatening Thunder murmurs thro' the Sky;
The guilty Bosom pants with conscious Fear.
Ye hardy Sinners, yield and bow:
Nor dare Omnipotence to strike the Blow,
And blast your guilty Breath.
Say, Are you able to withstand
Th' almighty Vengeance of that Hand
Which whirls the Bolt, and guides it where
The flaming Embassy to bear,
To rive the stately Pine, or tear
Th' aspiring Dome, or blast th' audacious Wretch with Dea
With cheerful Mind obey His sacred Laws;
Or Heaven and Earth will join t'avenge His Cause.

VII.

Happy the guiltless Conscience now!
Serene he hears his Father's thund'ring Voice;
Amid the Terrors calm, he dares rejoice,
When loudest Thunders roar, and fiercest Tempests blow:
His smiling Eyes with solemn Joy survey
The harmless Light'nings flash along and play,
And to the World his Guardian's Pow'r display.
Should angry Fire and Thunder rend
Heav'n's Convex, and in one Confusion blend
Heav'n, Earth, and Sea and Air;
Should all the Wheels of Nature break,
Smiling he'd view the universal Wreck,
Still safe and happy in the Thund'rer's Care.

VIII.

Now toward the South the pregnant Clouds
Retire, and leave the middle Sky;
Discharging still prolific Floods,
On Hills and Valleys, Fields and Woods,
And drop down Fatness as they fly.
Serpentine Curves of Fire worm thro' the Cloud,
And Sheets of Flame expand abroad;
Now shut and open, open still and shut,
And an immense Effulgence dart about.

IX.

Now safe from Harm, Prophaneness hears
The distant Thunder roar;
Pale Guilt renounces all her Fears,
And palpitates no more.
Mistaken Guilt! t' erect thy Crest,
And proudly boast the Danger o'er:
Behold a fiercer Tempest gathering fast!
And more tremendous Thunders roar!
Behold the Judge! He comes! He comes
In vengeful Flames and stormy Glooms!
The Clouds His Chariot, and the Winds His Wheels;
See! how before Him Light'nings flash and play;
And Thunders loud proclaim, PREPARE THE WAY!
As down He rides from the eternal Hills.

X.

Supreme, Almighty, venerable Name!
Proprietor of Earth, and Sea, and Sky,
Commander of the Magazines of Flame,
That in th' aerial Regions lie;
With Awe profound Thy Greatness I adore,
Who wings the Storm, and bids the Thunder roar,
And keeps the outrageous Elements subject to Thy Pow'r.