

42.39/1

Transcript of Henry Griffith's letter

Address:

These For his very honor'd Friend, Mr Henry Griffith at Benthall Present.
Leave this letter at Mr Seth Biggs' house, a Draper in Shrewsbury Salop to be speedily conveyed.

Deare Sir,

Yesterday I received yours of the 6th present. It being left for mee. I hope long before this time you received one from mee, dated about the same time, wherein I gave you in short the sad relacion of our late misfortunes. I suppose you have had itt att large before this time; had not my beinge out of town prevented mee I should have given itt you myselfe. Therefore, in fine, be pleased to take notice that I have viewed this sad desolacion, and find the fire, as I then told you, began in Pudding Lane, not far from Billingsgate, in a baker's house, about one or two in the morninge, on Sunday 2nd instant, and the winde full east being very strong. And by such time it had consumed 15 or 16 houses raged soe high that there was no hopes of quenching itt, insoemuch that the only remedy was conceav'd to pull downe severall houses far before the fire, thinking thereby to stop itt, but all in vaine, and then 'twas too late, for in raging soe much and burning soe many ways and wonderfully against the winde, that before one house could be pull'd down 10 would be burnt, for that that very fire that sett St. paul's church a burning flew thence into Salisbury Court, in Fleet Street, over the heads of those that were at worke on the Houses at Fleetbridge. This caused people to give itt cleerly over, and they began to secure their best goods.

Some went to stealing, others to looke on, but all stood to the mercy of an enraged fire, which did in 3 dayes time almost destroy the metropholist of this our Isle, had not God of his infinite mercy stayed the fury thereof, which was done by His Majesty's and the Duke of York's singular care and paines, handing the water in bucketts when they stood up to the ancles in water, and playing the engines for many houres together, as they did at the Temple and

Cripplegate, which people seeing fell to work with effect, having soe good fellow labourers.

It has burnt all from the Towre to the Temple, and part of that too along the Thames side, carrying before itt the Custome House, Billingsgate, London Bridge, Coleharbour, Queenehith, Baynard's Castle, Black and White Fryers, from east to west. Northwards itt burnt to Cripple and Mooregate, and something further to Moor Fields, carrying before itt Cannon and Lumbart Street, Cornehill, Exchange, Bartholomew Lane, Lothbury and most of the buildings towards Moor Fields, Guildhall, Aldermanbury, Basinghall and Colman-Street. North-west-ward it burnt the Poultry, Cheapside, Bread and Friday Streets, Fishstreet, Doctors' Commons, Paul's Church-yard, Newgate Market, Catteaton Street, Wood and Milk Streets, Frost [Foster] Lane, St. Martens to and from Aldersgate, Pye Corner to Smithfield, Holborn to the bridge, Ludgate Hill, Old Bailey, the Fleet and Fleet Street to the Church, all Shooe and part of Fetter Lanes. Northeastward, Threadneedle Street, Augustine Fryers, part of Bishopsgate Streete, Gratia [Gracechurch] Street, Eastcheape, Fenchurch street, almost to Marke Lane End a good way past the Church, part of Lime Street, Minsing Lane, Tower Street and most of Marke Lane, together with all the lanes, alleys, streets and parish churches within this compasse, being in all burnt 89: besides St. Paul's church. And thus I have given you an account of the sad devastacions, which to relate, much more to behold, cannot be done without great pity and sorrow for the losse thereof and the ruine of its late inhabitants.

And now that wee cry out a plott, a plott, and 'twas treachery has done this unto us, when alasse 'twas for those personal and national sinns that this kingdome is guilty of, for their unthankfullness for all his mercies in preserving them during some years under a tyrannical government, restoreing the King, and their just liberties, giving them victory over the enemies at home and abroad, whereby every man sate peaceably under his own vine, but this wrought noe good reformacion, wherefore He stirred up an enemy to warr with us, and brought the plague upon us, both which I may say have swept away in a short time hundreds of thousands, yett did He deliver us from both,

but was noe better rewarded; wherefore He has brought this evill upon us, yett cannot many of us be perswaded itt to be His severe hand upon us. When, indeed, if all our enemies at home and abroad had had free liberty and other assistance to have done itt, they could not have destroyed soe vast a thing in soe short a time without Almightye's licence. Foolish then are the vain thoughts for men to think that God's mercies are not greater than our enemies' mallice. But I confess several Dutch and French have dureing this time been apprehended, and still are in custody, for being assisting or instrumentall hereunto, by laying traines of powder and casting balls and other fireworks, and some have confessed great things, and many will undoubtedly suffer but are not yett tryed. But I have done with this, and I pray that God have done punishing, and then our losse will be gaine. God save the King, and then the city wholly shortly shall be famously rebuilt.

On Sunday sevensnight, I dined with cousin John Jones, where I found couzin Edwards and Mr Stringe, who are both there, but have lost all; and he hemselve has extremely suffredd; he was saying that if you had not disposed of your interest to a house in Gratia Street 'twas lost. Somethings of yours that were at Mr Strings are saved, viz. a little red trunke and some satten, and some other things I saw there. But for your trunke at our name sakes at Lothbury, it was there lost, being carried into the fields, whence it was stole, but was in hopes making great enquiry after itt to find itt out, and since I have been once to see after itt but could not finde him, and this day I have sent againe, but feare the party will not return till 'twil be too late to send you word, and hoping they have writt to you before now. There is noe news att all nor a Word of Account but on Sunday came Notice that wee were in sight of the french fleet & some say that they heard ye Gunns plea yesterday but of that theres not certainty therefore I must inform you so the next opportunity which I will not passe if any thing worth happen. The Winds are high & tis feared that will prevent an engagement: It did the last time After our fleet came up with the Dutch. The General [Monck] is here, but shortly to goe aboard againe. I have sent you the Gazett, with which I conclude, as thinking I have already been too tedious, for which I humbly beg your pardon, and shall be glad to

heare from you, but noe oftener than opportunity and your occations will
permitt.

I am, Sir,

Your true Friend, humble Servant

and poor Kinsman, Hen. Griffith. 1

18th Sept. 1666.

Little of the city remaynes, save part of Broad and Bishopsgate streete, all
Leadenhall street, and some of the adjacent lanes about Aldgate and
Cretchett Fryers.