THE
UNIVERSITY
OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY

POEMS OF PHILIP FRENEAU

VOLUME I

THE

POEMS OF PHILIP FRENEAU

POET OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

EDITED FOR

THE PRINCETON HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

BY

FRED LEWIS PATTEE

OF THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE COLLEGE, AUTHOR OF "A HISTORY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE" "THE FOUNDATIONS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE" ETC.

VOLUME I

PRINCETON N. J.
THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
1902

Copyright 1902 by
The Princeton University Library

C. S. Robinson & Co. University Press
Princeton N. J.

PREFACE

The present edition of the poetical works of Philip Freneau was begun at the advice of the late lamented Moses Coit Tyler. In his opinion there were few fields in American history that needed exploring more, and few that would require on the part of the explorer more of the Columbus spirit.

It would be almost impossible for a poet to pass more completely into the shadow than has Freneau during the century since his activities closed. His poems are, almost all of them in their earliest editions, exceedingly rare and costly and only to be read by those who can have access to the largest libraries, his letters and papers have almost entirely disappeared, and his biography in almost every book of reference has been so distorted by misstatement and omission as to be really grotesque.

This neglect has resulted not from lack of real worth in the man, but from prejudices born during one of the most bitter and stormy eras of partisan politics that America has ever known. What Sidney Smith said of Scotland at this period was true here: "The principles of the French Revolution were fully afloat and it is impossible to conceive a more violent and agitated state of society." Freneau was a victim of this intense era. New England rejected him with scorn and all admirers of Washington echoed his epithet, "that rascal Freneau." Thus it has become the tradition to belittle his work, to vilify his character, and to sum up his whole career, as a prominent New Englander has

recently done, by alluding to him as a "creature of the opposition."

Unprejudiced criticism, however, has always exalted Freneau's work. The great Scotch dictator Jeffrey, with all his scorn for American literature, could say that "the time would arrive when his poetry, like that of Hudibras, would command a commentator like Gray;" and Sir Walter Scott once declared that "Eutaw Springs [was] as fine a thing as there is of the kind in the language." E. A. Duyckinck did not hesitate to group him as one of "four of the most original writers whom the country has produced," and S. G. W. Benjamin could say in 1887: "In all the history of American letters, or of the United States press, there is no figure more interesting or remarkable, no career more versatile and varied than that of Philip Freneau." Such testimony might be multiplied. Surely had the poet been an ordinary man, Jefferson would never have said "his paper has saved our Constitution," Madison would not have pronounced him a man of genius, and Adams would hardly have admitted that he was a leading element in his defeat.

I have endeavored not only to rescue the most significant of Freneau's poems, but to arrange them as far as possible in their order of composition, or at least in the order in which they first appeared in print. It has seemed to me highly important to do this since such an arrangement, especially with a poet like Freneau, who drew his themes almost wholly from the range of his own observation, would be virtually an autobiography, and since it would also furnish a running commentary upon the history of a stirring period in our annals. The task has been no slight one. It has necessitated a search through the files of a large proportion of the early newspapers and periodicals and a minute investigation of every other source of possible information.

Much material has been rescued that, as far as the public was concerned, had practically become extinct. I have introduced the unique fragment of an unpublished drama, "The Spy," which I was the first to explore. I have taken pains to reproduce the poet's early poetical pamphlets dealing with the first year of the Revolution, not one of which has ever been republished. The revisions of many of these used by Freneau in his later collections were so thoroughgoing as to be in reality entirely new poems. "The Voyage to Boston," for instance, published during the siege of Boston, was cut down for the 1786 edition from six hundred and five lines to three hundred and six lines, and of these more than half were entirely changed. From the standpoint of the historian, at least, the orginal version is much more valuable than that made several years after the war was over. This is true of all the earlier pamphlet poems. Aside from their value as specimens of Freneau's earlier muse they are valuable commentaries on the history of the stormy times that called them forth, and I have not hesitated to reprint them verbatim in connection with the revised versions. The pamphlet poems "American Liberty" and "General Gage's Confession," (until recently supposed to have been lost) exist only in unique copies. Freneau never attempted to revise them. Some of the other early poems, notably "The House of Night," I have annotated with care, showing the evolution of the poem from its first nucleus to its final fragmentary form. In the case of a few of the more important poems, especially those dealing with the Revolution, I have given variorum readings.

Aside from this early material, which has a real historical value, I have introduced very few poems not included in Freneau's collected editions of 1786, 1788, 1795, 1809 and 1815. Previous to 1795 the poet reprinted

with miserly care almost all the verses which he had contributed to the press. In his later years he was more prodigal of his creations. I have, however, reprinted from newspapers very few poems not found elsewhere, and these few only on the best evidence that they were genuine, for it has been my experience that when a poem is not to be found in the collected editions of the poet it is almost certain that it is not genuine. In justice to Freneau, who had the welfare of his writings much at heart, and who cut and pruned and remodeled with tireless hand, I have usually given the latest version.

I wish to acknowledge here my great indebtedness to the descendants of Philip Freneau, especially Miss Adele M. Sweeney, Mr. Weymer J. Mills, Mrs. Helen K. Vreeland, and Mrs. Eleanor F. Noël, who have allowed me to consult freely all the papers and literary remains of the poet and have supplied me with all possible information. I would also express my great obligation to many librarians, collectors, and scholars, who have cheerfully aided me, especially to Mr. Wilberforce Eames, of the New York Public Library, the late Paul Leicester Ford, Mr. Robert H. Kelby, of the New York Historical Society, Mr. John W. Jordan, of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, Mr. A. S. Salley, Jr., of Charleston, S. C., Mr. E. M. Barton, of the American Antiquarian Society, and Dr. E. C. Richardson, of Princeton University, who with their courteous helpfulness have made possible the work. I wish also to express my thanks to Professor A. Howry Espenshade, and Mr. John Rogers Williams, to whose careful and patient work upon the proofs the accuracy of the text depends.

F. L. P.

STATE COLLEGE, Pa., Sept. 19, 1902.

CONTENTS

VOLUME I

PAGE

PREFACE - - - - - - - - - - - - v

LIFE OF PHILIP FRENEAU - - - - - - - - - xiii

PART I

Early Poems. 1768–1775

HISTORY OF THE PROPHET JONAH . - - - - - - 3

ADVENTURES OF SIMON SWAUGUM - - - - - - 14

THE PYRAMIDS OF EGYPT - - - - - - - - - 25

THE MONUMENT OF PHAON - - - - - . - - 30

THE POWER OF FANCY - - - - - - - - . - 34

THE PRAYER OF ORPHEUS - - - - - - - - 39

THE DESERTED FARM-HOUSE - - - - - - - - 40

THE CITIZEN'S RESOLVE - - - - - - - - 42

THE DYING ELM - - - - - - - - - - - 45

COLUMBUS TO FERDINAND - - - - - - - - 46

THE RISING GLORY OF AMERICA - - - - - - 49

ON RETIREMENT - - - - - - - - - - - 84

DISCOVERY - - - - - - - - - - - - - 85

THE PICTURES OF COLUMBUS - - - - - - - 89

EXPEDITION OF TIMOTHY TAURUS, ASTROLOGER - - - 123

PART II

The First Poetic Period. 1775–1781

PAGE

A Political Litany - - - - - - - - - - 139

American Liberty, a Poem - - - - - - - - 142

General Gage's Soliloquy - - - - - - - - - 152

The Midnight Consultations, or, A Trip to Boston - 158

The Silent Academy - - - - - - - - - - 182

Lines to a Coasting Captain - - - - - - - 184

To the Americans - - - - - - - - - - - 185

The Vernal Ague - - - - - - - - - - 188

General Gage's Confession - - - - - - - - 189

The Distrest Shepherdess - - - - - - - 195

Mars and Hymen - - - - - - - - - - - 197

MacSwiggen, A Satire - - - - - - - - - 206

The House of Night - - - - - - - - - - 212

The Jamaica Funeral - - - - - - - - - 239

The Beauties of Santa Cruz - - - - - - - 249

On a Hessian Debarkation, 1776 - - - - - - 269

The Jewish Lamentation at Euphrates - - - - 270

America Independent - - - - - - - - - 271

On Amanda's Singing Bird - - - - - - - - 283

On the New American Frigate Alliance - - - 285

On the Death of Captain Nicholas Biddle - - - 288

Captain Jones's Invitation - - - - - - - - 290

The Sea Voyage - - - - - - - - - - - 293

LIFE OF PHILIP FRENEAU

1752—1832

LIFE OF PHILIP FRENEAU

I.

In the possession of the Freneau descendants there is an old French Bible, printed in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1587, which preserves an unbroken roll of the heads of the family back to the original owner of the book, Philip Fresneau, who on his death-bed in La Chapelle, France, in 1590, gave it into the hands of his eldest son. For five generations the book remained in the little suburban village, its possessors sturdy, industrious tradesmen, who stood high in the esteem of their community and yet who on account of their Protestant faith were often imposed upon and at times even persecuted. It was doubtless this feeling of insecurity, if not positive persecution, which compelled André Fresneau, like so many of his fellow Huguenots, to leave his native village and to seek a home in a more tolerant land.

He landed in New York in 1707. He was in his thirty-sixth year, an active, handsome man, almost brilliant in certain directions, of pleasing address, and skilled from his youth in the handling of affairs. He became at once a leader in the little Huguenot Colony whose center was the quaint old church "du St. Esprit" on Pine street. He was soon in the midst of a thriving shipping business, dealing largely in imported wines, and in 1710, three years after his arrival, he was able

to furnish a beautiful home on Pearl street, near Hanover Square, for his young bride, Mary Morin, a daughter of Pierre Morin, of the French Congregation. Of the comfort and hospitality of this home there are many contemporary references. John Fontaine, the French traveller, was entertained here in 1716 and he speaks highly of his host and his entertainment.[1]

In 1721 Mrs. Fresneau died at the early age of twenty-seven, leaving behind a family of five children, the oldest only nine years of age. Four years later the father followed. But the young family was far from destitute. The business house in New York had grown to be very profitable and there was a large landed estate in eastern New Jersey, a part of which was sold in 1740. Soon the two eldest sons, Andrew, born 1712, and Pierre, born January 22, 1718, were able to continue their father's business. For years their firm name was familiar in New York.

Pierre Freneau (the family seem to have dropped the "s" about 1725) was married in 1748 to Agnes Watson, daughter of Richard Watson, of Freehold, whose property bordered upon the Freneau estate. They made their home in Frankfort street, New York, and here on January 2 (O. S.), 1752, was born their eldest child, Philip Morin Freneau, the subject of our sketch. Four other children came from their union, of whom only one, Peter, born April 5, 1757, who in later years became a prominent figure in Charleston, S. C., need be mentioned.

The home of the Freneau's was one of comfort and even refinement. There was a large and well selected library, the pride of its owner. "There," he would

[1] Ann Maury's *Memoirs of a Huguenot.*

say to his visitors, pointing to his books, "use them freely, for among them you will find your truest friends." He delighted in men of refinement, and his home became a social center for the lovers of books and of culture. He looked carefully after the education of his children; and all of them early became omnivorous readers. In such an environment the young poet passed his first ten years.

In 1762 the family decided to leave New York and to make their home permanently on their estate, "Mount Pleasant," near Middletown Point, N. J. The estate at this time contained nearly a thousand acres, and with its large buildings, its slaves and its broad area under cultivation, was in many respects like a southern plantation. Heretofore the elder Freneau had made it of secondary importance. He had used it as a summer resort, and as a pleasant relief to the monotony of his city business, but now, perhaps on account of failing health, he determined to devote to it all of his energies. Philip was left behind in New York. For the next three years he lived at a boarding school in the city, going home only during the long vacations. At the age of thirteen he was sent to the Latin school at Penolopen, then presided over by the Rev. Alexander Mitchell, to prepare for college.

The father of the family died Oct. 17, 1767. This, however, did not disturb the plans of the eldest son, and on Nov. 7, 1768, he entered the sophomore class at Princeton so well prepared that President Witherspoon is said to have sent a letter of congratulation to his mother.

II.

Of the college life of Philip Freneau we have only fragmentary records. He was in his sixteenth year when he entered, a somewhat dreamy youth who had read very widely, especially in the English poets and the Latin classics, and who already commanded a facile pen, especially in the field of heroic verse. During the year in which he entered Princeton he composed two long poems, "The History of the Prophet Jonah," and "The Village Merchant,"—surely notable work for the pen of a college sophomore. During the following year he wrote "The Pyramids of Egypt," and before his graduation he had completed several other pieces, some of them full of real poetic inspiration.

The period during which Freneau resided at Princeton was a most significant one. In the same class with him were James Madison, H. H. Brackenridge, the author of "Modern Chivalry" and a conspicuous figure in later Pennsylvania history, and Samuel Spring, who was to become widely influential in religious circles. In the class below him were the refined and scholarly William Bradford and the brilliant Aaron Burr. The shadow of the coming struggle with Great Britain was already lengthening over the Colonies and nowhere was its presence more manifest than in the colleges, always the most sensitive areas in times of tyranny and oppression. On August 6, 1770, the senior class at Princeton voted unanimously to appear at commencement dressed in American manufactures.

Another circumstance made the period a notable one. On June 24, 1769, a little band of students, headed by Madison, Brackenridge, Bradford and Freneau, organized an undergraduate fraternity to be

called the American Whig Society. One year later The Well Meaning Club, a rival literary organization founded in 1765, became the Cliosophic Society. The act was the signal for a war, the echoes of which have even yet not died away at Princeton. There exists a manuscript book,[1] rescued from the papers of William Bradford, in which are preserved the poetic tirades, called forth in this first onset. Its title page is as follows:

"Satires | against the Tories. | Written in the last War between the Whigs & Cliosophians | in which | the former obtained a compleat Victory.

—Arm'd for virtue now we point the pen
Brand the bold front of shameless, guilty men
Dash the proud Tory in his gilded Car
Bare the mean heart that hides beneath a star."

It opens with ten "pastorals" by Brackenridge, of which the ninth begins thus:

"Spring's Soliloquy that morning before he hung himself.

O World adieu! the doleful time draws nigh
I cannot live and yet I fear to die
Warford is dead! and in his turn Freneau
Will send me headlong to the shades below.
What raging fury or what baleful Star
Did find—ingulph me in the whiggish war
The deeds of darkness which my soul hath done
Are now apparent as the noon-day sun
A Thousand things as yet remain untold
My secret practice and my sins of old."

Then follow several satires by Freneau, full of fire and invective, but like the work of all the others, not always refined or quotable in print. His satire, "Mc-

[1] In the possession of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Swiggen," printed in 1775, contains nearly half of the poems,—the only lines indeed which are of any real merit. The three concluding poems of the collection, and these by all means the worst of the lot, are from no less a pen than Madison's. No patriotic citizen will ever venture to resurrect them.

There is a tradition very widely current that Freneau was for a time the room-mate of Madison. However this may be, there is no question as to who was his most intimate friend. With Brackenridge he had much in common. Both had dreams of a literary life, both had read largely in polite literature, both scribbled constantly in prose and verse. In the same manuscript volume with the Clio–Whig satires there is an extensive fragment of a novel written alternately by Brackenridge and Freneau, between September 20th and October 22d, 1770. Its manuscript title page is as follows:

"Father Bombo's | Pilgrimage to Mecca in Arabia. | Vol. II. | Wherein is given a true account of the innumerable and | surprizing adventures which befell him in the course of that | long and tedious Journey, | Till he once more returned safe to his native Land, as related | by his own mouth. | Written By B. H. and P. F.—1770.

Mutato nomine
Fabula de te narratur—*Hor.*
Change but the name
The story's told of you.
MDVIILXX."

The adventures of the hero read like chapters from the "Arabian Nights." He has been for seven days a close captive on a French man-of-war, but he is rescued by an Irish privateer, only to be taken for a wizard and thrown overboard in a cask which is finally washed ashore on the north coast of Ireland. It would be useless to recount all of his adventures both afloat and

ashore. He finally succeeds in reaching Mecca, and in returning safely home to America. The final chapter recounts the details of his death and moralizes on his life and character.

The work is crude and hasty. Whole chapters of it were evidently written at one sitting. The part signed H. B. is unquestionably the best; the prose is vigorous and the movement rapid. The only merit in Freneau's section lies in its lyric lament at the close of one of the chapters. The hero suddenly bursts into minor song, the opening stanzas of which are:

Sweet are the flow'rs that crown the Vale
And sweet the spicy breathing Gale
That murmurs o'er the hills:
See how the distant lowing throng
Thro' verdant pastures move along,
Or drink the Limpid Streams and crystal rills.

Ah see in yonder gloomy Grove
The Shepherd tells his tale of Love
And clasps the wanton fair:
While winds and trees and shades conspire
To fann with Love the Gentle Fire,
And banish every black and boding care.

But what has Love to do with me
Unknown ashore, distress'd by sea,
Now hast'ning to the Tomb:
Whilst here I rove, and pine and weep,
Sav'd from the fury of the deep
To find alas on shore a harder doom.

The nature of the undergraduate work done by Princeton in Freneau's time was thus summed up by President Witherspoon in his "Address to the Inhabitants of Jamaica," published in Philadelphia in 1772:

"In the first year they read Latin and Greek, with the Roman and Grecian antiquities, and Rhetoric. In

the second, continuing the study of the languages, they learn a compleat system of Geography, with the use of the globes, the first principles of Philosophy, and the elements of mathematical knowledge. The third, though the languages are not wholly omitted, is chiefly employed in Mathematics and Natural Philosophy. And the senior year is employed in reading the higher classics, proceeding in the Mathematics and Natural Philosophy and going through a course of Moral Philosophy. In addition to these, the President gives lectures to the juniors and seniors, which consequently every Student hears twice over in his course, first, upon Chronology and History, and afterwards upon Composition and Criticism. He has also taught the French language last winter, and it will continue to be taught to all who desire to learn it. * * *

"As we have never yet been obliged to omit or alter it for want of scholars, there is a fixed Annual Commencement on the last Wednesday of September, when, after a variety of public exercises, always attended by a vast concourse of the politest company, from the different parts of this province and the cities of New York and Philadelphia, * * *"

Of Freneau's proficiency as a student we have no record. Of the details of the Commencement of September 25, 1771, when he received his degree, we have but a brief account. Brackenridge opened the exercises with a salutatory, and following came four other exercises which completed the morning's programme.

The audience assembled again at three, and after singing by the students there came:

"6. An English forensic dispute on this question, 'Does ancient poetry excel the modern?' Mr. Freneau, the respondent, his arguments in favor of the ancients

were read. Mr. Williamson answered him and Mr. McKnight replied."

"7. A poem on 'The Rising Glory of America,' by Mr. Brackenridge, was received with great applause by the audience."

Madison on account of ill health did not appear.

The "Rising Glory" had been written conjointly by Brackenridge and Freneau. Although the former was given on the Commencement programme full credit for the exercise, it was surely Freneau who conceived the work and who gave it its strength and high literary value. Brackenridge in later years confessed to his son that "on his part it was a task of labor, while the verse of his associate flowed spontaneously." The poem was printed in Philadelphia the following year, and in 1786 Freneau isolated his own portion for publication in the first edition of his works.

This detaching of Freneau's portion from the complete work destroyed at the outset the original unity of the piece. The changes and omissions made necessary by the process of separating the part from the whole, the deliberate readjustment of perspective to bring the poem up to the historical conditions of the later date, and the careful editing which strove to remove blemishes and weaknesses due to inexperience, combine to make the 1786 version practically a new poem.

The first glimpse of Freneau after his graduation from Princeton is furnished by a letter to Madison, dated Somerset County, in Maryland, November 22, 1772:[1]

"If I am not wrongly informed by my memory, I have not seen you since last April, you may recollect I was then undertaking a School at Flatbush on Long Island. I did not enter upon the business it is certain and continued in it thirteen days—but—'Long Island I have bid

[1] Madison Papers, Vol. XIII, p. 9.

adieu, With all its bruitish, brainless crew. The youth of that detested place, Are void of reason and of grace. From Flushing hills to Flatbush plains, Deep ignorance unrivalld reigns.' I'm very poetical, but excuse it. 'Si fama non venit ad aures,'—if you have not heard the rumour of this story (which, by the by is told in various taverns and eating houses) you must allow me to be a little prolix with it. Those who employed me were some gentlemen of New York, some of them are bullies, some merchants, and others Scoundrels: They sent me eight children, the eldest of whom was 10 years. Some could read, others spell and a few stammer over a chapter of the Bible—these were my pupils and over these was I to preside. My salary moreover was £40,—there is something else relating to that I shall not at present mention—after I forsook them they proscribed me for four days and swore that if I was caught in New York they would either Trounce or Maim me: but I luckily escaped with my goods to Princetown—where I remained till commencement—so much for this affair.

"I have printed a poem in New York called the American Village, containing about 450 Lines, also a few short pieces added; I would send you one if I had a proper opportunity — the additional poems are—A Poem to the Nymph I never saw—The miserable Life of a Pedagogue — and Stanzas on an ancient Dutch house on Long Island—As to the main poem it is damned by all good and judicious judges—my name is in the title page, this is called vanity by some—but 'who so fond as youthful bards of fame?'

"I arrived at this Somerset Academy the 18th of October, and intend to remain here till next October. I am assistant to Mr. Brakenridge. This is the last time I shall enter into such a business; it worries me to death and by no means suits my 'giddy, wandring brain.' I would go over for the gown this time two years, but the old hag Necessity has got such a prodigious gripe of me that I fear I shall never be able to accomplish it. I believe if I cannot make this out I must turn quack, and indeed I am now reading Physic at my leisure hours, that is, when I am neither sleeping, hearing classes, or writing Poetry—for these three take up all my time.

"It is now late at night, not an hour ago I finished a little poem of about 400 lines, entitled a Journey to Maryland — being the Sum of my adventures—it begins 'From that fam'd town where Hudson's flood—unites with Stream perhaps as good; Muse has your bard begun to roam—& I intend to write a terrible Satire upon certain vicious persons of quality in New York—who have also used me ill—

and print it next fall it shall contain 5 or 600 lines. Sometimes I write pastorals to shew my Wit.

'Deep to the woods I sing a Shepherd's care,
Deep to the woods, Cyllenus calls me there,
The last retreat of Love and Verse I go,
Verse made me mad at first and —— will keep me so.'

"I should have been glad to have heard from you before now; while I was in college I had but a short participation of your agreeable friendship, and the few persons I converse with and yet fewer, whose conversation I delight in, make me regret the Loss of it. I have met with a variety of rebuffs this year, which I forbear to mention, I look like an unmeaning Teague just turn'd out of the hold of an irish Ship coming down hither I met with a rare adventure at Annapolis. I was destitute even of a brass farthing. I got clear very handsomely.

"Could one expect ever to see you again, if I travel through Virginia I shall stop and talk with you a day or two. I should be very glad to receive a letter from you if it can be conveniently forwarded—in short 'Non sum qualis eram' as Partridge says in Tom Jones—My hair is grown like a mop, and I have a huge tuft of beard directly upon my chin—I want but five weeks of twenty-one years of age and already feel stiff with age—We have about 30 Students in this academy, who prey upon me like Leaches—'When shall I quit this whimpering pack, and hide my head in Acomack?'—Shall I leave them and go 'Where Pokomokes long stream meandering flows—

"Excuse this prodigious scrawl without stile or sense—I send this by Mr. Luther Martin who will forward it to Col. Lee—and he to you I hope. Mr. Martin lives in Acomack in Virginia this side the bay. Farewell and be persuaded I remain your

truly humble Serv't and friend

PH. F-R-E-N-E-A-U-"

The scene of Freneau's new labors was the famous old school near Princess Anne, Md., which in 1779 was incorporated as Washington Academy. Brackenridge became Master here shortly after his graduation, and in the words of his son and biographer, received "a handsome salary." "He continued here," says his

biographer, "during several years until the breaking out of the American Revolution, in the midst of a wealthy and highly polished society, greatly respected as a man of genius and scholarship. He used to speak with the pride of a Porson, of the Winders, the Murrays, the Parnells and others who afterward became distintinguished."[1] For many years the academy drew to it the sons of the best families of Northern Virginia, Maryland and Delaware.

The length of Freneau's stay in Maryland is uncertain. There is evidence that he remained as Second Master of the school for several years. There is a tradition in the family that it was the wish of Freneau's father that he study divinity and that for a time he joined with Brackenridge in preparing for this profession; and there is another, which is very persistent, that he left Maryland to study the law in Philadelphia, but I can find no positive evidence. The period between 1772 and 1775 is at best a vague one in our life of the poet.

III.

In the early summer of 1775, Freneau suddenly appeared in New York as a publicist of remarkable fluency. Before November he had issued no less than eight long poems as separate publications, nearly all of them called forth by the new crisis in American affairs. Beginning with "American Liberty," issued by Anderson, the editor of the new patriotic weekly, *The Constitutional Gazette*, he published pamphlet after pamphlet in rapid succession, all of them throwing upon Gage and the British cause in Boston all the satire and invective

[1] Introduction to the 1846 edition of "Modern Chivalry."

which he had used so mercilessly in the old society war at Princeton. Two of these were published by Hugh Gaine, and another, "The Voyage to Boston," first issued by Anderson, was reprinted at once in Philadelphia. All of them have fared hardly during the years. Several, like "General Gage's Soliloquy," and "Timothy Taurus," which recounts the story of a journey made by Freneau to Passaic Falls, near Paterson, New Jersey, in August, have disappeared entirely, one of them, the "General Gage's Confession," has never been republished in any form, and all the others were cut down and altered by the author for later editions until they were almost in every respect entirely new poems.

That these voluminous and vigorous tirades, which their author evidently poured forth with perfect ease, were criticised and condemned by the fastidious we have no evidence. Certain it is that judging by the contemporary newspaper press they were exceedingly popular. Yet, in November we find Freneau in a sad state of discouragement, ready to give up forever all association with the muses. Some one, envious of his rising fame, has criticised him unmercifully. He seeks out the old Clio–Whig satires and after adapting and reshaping them he hurls them at the head of his enemy whom he designates as McSwiggen.

> Great Jove in wrath a spark of genius gave
> And bade me drink the mad Pierian wave,
> Hence came those rhymes with truth ascribed to me,
> That urge your little soul to jealousy.
>
> * * * *
>
> Devoted mad man what inspired your rage,
> Who bade your foolish muse with us engage?
> Against a windmill would you try your might,
> Against a castle would a pigmy fight?

The young poet had begun to realize how barren was the new world in poetic appreciation; how impossible it was for even a true poet to practice his art where few could appreciate, and none really cared:

> Alone I stand to meet the foul-mouthed train
> Assisted by no poets of the plain.

He looked longingly across the water where poets were appreciated:

> Long have I sat on this disastrous shore,
> And sighing sought to gain a passage o'er
> To Europe's towns, where as our travellers say
> Poets may flourish, or perhaps they may.

The poem was a valedictory.

> I to the sea with weary steps descend,
> Quit the mean conquest, that such swine must yield
> And leave McSwiggen to enjoy the field.
> In distant isles some happier scene I'll choose
> And court in softer shades the unwilling muse.

Freneau had determined to spend the winter in the West Indies. He had become acquainted during the autumn with a West Indian gentleman by the name of Hanson, who owned large estates in the islands, and who sailed master of his own vessel. Upon his invitation Freneau became a passenger late in November for the Island of Santa Cruz. Early in the voyage the mate died, and the young poet, his education outweighing his inexperience in nautical matters, was chosen to fill his place. The study of navigation, made necessary by this step, doubtless turned the direction of his whole life.

For the next two years Freneau made his home on Captain Hanson's estate on the Island of Santa Cruz.

A selection from one of his letters charmingly describes the spot.

"The town at the west end is but mean and ordinary, consisting of a fort and perhaps 80 or 90 wooden houses. The harbor is nothing but an open road, where, however, ships lie in the utmost security at their moorings, the bottom being good for anchorage and the wind always off shore. About two miles to the eastward of this town, along the seashore, is the estate of Capt. Hanson, into which the sea has formed a beautiful little bay, called Buttler's Bay, about 100 yards across; it has a sandy shore and an excellent landing, though all the rest of the shore is sharp craggy rocks. My agreeable residence at this place for above two years, off and on during the wars in America, renders the idea of it all too pleasing, and makes me feel much the same anxiety at a distance from it as Adam did after he was banished from the bowers of Eden."[1]

He seems to have been employed at intervals by Captain Hanson in voyages about the islands. Thus he records of the Island of St. James, that "I went over July 13, 1777, and remained there eight days. We loaded our vessel with coral rock, which is used in these islands for burning lime of a very excellent quality."

It was while at the ideal retreat at Butler's Bay that Freneau wrote three of his most significant poems, "Santa Cruz," "The House of Night," and "The Jamaica Funeral," the first two of which were contributed to the *United States Magazine* in 1779. Of these the "House of Night" is the most significant, containing as it does evidence of a high creative power and a romantic imagination, rare indeed in English poetry in 1776. There are evidences that Freneau composed the first draught of the poem before leaving for the West Indies, but the point is not an important one. For the edition of 1786 he nearly doubled the

[1] The *United States Magazine*, February number.

original version, but in 1795 he cut it down to a few stanzas, taking from it nearly everything which had made it a notable creation.

On April 1, 1778, Freneau sailed from Santa Cruz for the Bermuda Islands, where for a time he was the guest of the English Governor. In an elaborate letter to Brackenridge, dated Bermuda, May 10, afterward published in the *United States Magazine*, he describes at length the islands. "These," he says in conclusion, "are a few particulars concerning this little country where I resided upwards of five weeks, and if this slight description gives you any satisfaction, it will amply repay me for the fatigues I underwent in sailing thither."

On June 6th he was again in Santa Cruz; on the 15th he set out on his homeward voyage, after an absence of nearly three years. The run home was destined to be eventful. Off the Delaware capes the vessel was taken by the British, but Freneau, being a passenger, was landed on July 9th and allowed to go his way.

The young poet now retired to Mount Pleasant, where doubtless he quietly remained until the autumn of the following year. In August, 1778, he published with Bell in Philadelphia the pamphlet poem "America Independent." On January 1, 1779, Brackenridge issued in Philadelphia the first number of the *United States Magazine*,[1] and Freneau at once became an important contributor. His work in prose and verse may be found in nearly every number. There are prose papers on the West Indies, purporting to be extracts from the letters of "a young philosopher

[1] A perfectly preserved copy is in the possession of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

and *bel esprit* just returned from several small voyages amongst these islands." There are several early poems for the first time put into print, like "Columbus to Ferdinand" and "The Dying Elm," and there are several notable long poems, like "Santa Cruz" and "The House of Night." At least three of the poetical contributions were written expressly for the magazine: "George the Third's Soliloquy," "Psalm cxxxvii Imitated," — signed "Monmouth, Sept. 10," — and the "Dialogue between George and Fox." It is evident, however, that Freneau, though his work very greatly strengthened the periodical, was only a "valued contributor." The psalm in the September issue, the first of the poems to bear his name, had a foot-note explaining that the author was "a young gentleman to whom in the course of this work we are greatly indebted."

The *United States Magazine* is a notable landmark in American literary history. Its methods, as we view them to-day, seem singularly modern, and its materials and arrangement are indeed remarkable when we view them against the background of their times. It was a spirited, intensely patriotic, and highly literary periodical; the single fact that "The House of Night" first appeared in its columns is enough to stamp it as no ordinary work. It died with its twelfth issue, owing to the troubled state of the country and the unsettled nature of the currency. Then, too, the audience to which it appealed was found to be a small one. In his valedictory the editor complains bitterly of the unliterary atmosphere in America. A large class, he declares, "inhabit the region of stupidity, and cannot bear to have the tranquility of their repose disturbed by the villanous shock of a book. Reading is to them the worst of all torments, and I remember very well

that at the commencement of the work it was their language, 'Art thou come to torment us before the time?' We will now say to them, 'Sleep on and take your rest.'"

Late in September, 1779, Freneau shipped as supercargo on the brig *Rebecca*, Captain Chatham, bound for the Azores. After an exciting voyage, during which they were several times chased by British ships, they arrived at Santa Cruz, in the island of Teneriffe, where they remained two months. A part of Freneau's notebook during this voyage has been preserved. It shows him to have been a careful and conscientious student of navigation, making each day an observation of his own and minutely tabulating his results. His cash account with the crew during the stay in the islands is interesting and suggestive.

The early spring of 1780 was spent by the poet at the old home, but his mind was evidently tossing upon the ocean. He longed to visit again his beloved West Indies, and accordingly on the 25th of May he took passage at Philadelphia, in the ship *Aurora*, for St. Eustatia. Freneau's account of this voyage and its after results is still extant.[1] A few quotations will tell the story.

"On the 25th of May, in beating down the Delaware Bay, we unfortunately retook a small sloop from the refugees loaded with corn, which hindered us from standing out to sea that night, whereby in all probability we should have avoided the enemy which afterwards captured us.

"Friday morning, May 26. The air very smoky and the wind somewhat faintish, though it afterward freshened up. The wind was so that we stood off E.S.E., after putting the pilot on board the small sloop, handcuffing the prisoners, and sending the prize to Cape May.

[1] In the possession of Miss Adele M. Sweeney, Jersey City.

About three o'clock in the afternoon we discovered three sail bearing from us about E.N.E.; they were not more than five leagues from us when we discovered them from the foretop; at the same time we could see them from the quarter-deck. One appeared to be a pretty large ship, the other two brigs. We soon found they were in chase of us; we therefore tacked immediately, set all sail we could crowd, and stood back from the bay. My advice to the officers was to stand for Egg Harbor or any part of the Jersey shore, and run the ship on the flats, rather than be taken; but this was disregarded. We continued to stand in till we saw Cape Henlopen; the frigate, in the meantime, gaining on us apace; sun about half an hour high. We were abreast of the Cape, close in, when the wind took us aback, and immediately after we were becalmed; the ebb of the tide at the same time setting very strong out of the bay, so that we rather drifted out. Our design was, if possible, to get within the road around the point, and then run the ship on shore; but want of wind and the tide being against us, hindered from putting this into execution. We were now within three hundred yards of the shore. The frigate in the meantime ran in the bay to leeward of us about one-quarter of a mile (her distance from the Cape hindering it from becalming her as it did us) and began to bring her cannon to bear on us. Her two prizes hove to; one we knew to be the brig *Active*, Captain Mesnard; the other, as we afterward learned, was a Salem brig from the West Indies. The frigate was the *Iris*, returning from Charleston to New York, with the express of the former's being taken. We now began to fire upon each other at the distance of about three hundred yards. The frigate hulled us several times. One shot went betwixt wind and water, which made the ship leak amazingly, making twenty-four inches in thirty minutes. We found our four-pounders were but trifles against the frigate, so we got our nine-pounder, the only one we had, pointed from the cabin windows, with which we played upon the frigate for about half an hour. At last a twelve-pound shot came from the frigate, and, striking a parcel of oars lashed upon the starboard quarter, broke them all in two, and continuing its destructive course, struck Captain Laboyteaut in the right thigh, which it smashed to atoms, tearing part of his belly open at the same time with the splinters from the oars; he fell from the quarter-deck close by me, and for some time seemed very busily engaged in setting his legs to rights. He died about eleven the same night, and next day was sewed up in his hammock and sunk. Every shot seemed now to bring ruin with it. A lad named Steel had his arm broken and some others complained of slight

wounds; whereupon, finding the frigate ready and in a position to give us a broadside, we struck, after having held a very unequal contest with her for about an hour. . . . . As soon as we struck, one Squires with some midshipmen came on board and took possession of the vessel."

Freneau at first supposed that, being a passenger, he would be taken with the prize to New York and there released; but despite his protests, he was driven into the barge with the other prisoners and taken to the *Iris*. All his baggage was left behind, and he was destined never to see it again. Arriving on board, the prisoners were driven between decks, where the air was hot and stifling.

"There were about one hundred prisoners forward, the stench of whom was almost intolerable. So many melancholy sights and dismal countenances made it a pretty just representation of the infernal region. I marched through a torrent of cursing and blasphemy to my station, viz., at the blacksmith's vice, where the miserable prisoners were handcuffed two and two. At last it came my turn. 'Pray,' said I, 'is it your custom to handcuff passengers? The Americans, I am confident, never used the English so.'

"'Are you a passenger?' said the blacksmith. At the same time happening to look up, I saw Hugh Ray looking steadily at me, who immediately seized my hand, and asked me how I did. 'Do you know him?' said Holmes, the master-at-arms. 'Then you are free from irons; come over among the gentlemen.'

"This was an unexpected deliverance from a cursed disgrace which I hardly knew how I should get clear of. After this I was used well by everybody."

On the 29th the *Iris* reached New York and the common prisoners were sent to the prison ships in the harbor. Freneau, however, was retained with the officers. He had been promised his liberty at the first possible moment, but on Thursday, June 1st, at the Commissioner's office, the charge was brought by the second mate that Freneau had been among those sta-

tioned at the guns during the fight. He was refused parole, though he promised security in any amount up to ten thousand pounds, and the same day was placed on board the *Scorpion* prison ship, "lying off the college in the North River."

Freneau's experiences during his stay upon the *Scorpion* have been described by him in graphic style in his poem, "The Prison Ship."

"On the night of June 4th, thirty-five of the prisoners formed a design of making their escape, in which they were favored by a large schooner accidentally alongside of us. She was one that was destined for the expedition to Elizabeth Town, and anchored just astern of us. We were then suffered to continue upon deck, if we chose, till nine o'clock. We were all below at that time except the insurgents, who rushed upon the sentries and disarmed them in a moment; one they tied by his neck-stock to the quarter rails, and carried off his musquet with them (they were all Hessians); the rest they drove down with their arms into the cabin and rammed the sentry box down the companion in such a manner that no one could get it up or down. One, Murphy, possessed himself of Gauzoo's silver-hilted sword, and carried it off with him. When the sentries were all silent, they manned the ship's boat and boarded the schooner, though the people on board attempted to keep them off with handspikes. The wind blowing fresh at south and the flood of tide being made, they hoisted sail and were out of sight in a few minutes. Those particulars we learned from some who were on duty, but were unsuccessful in getting into the boat. As soon as the sentries got possession of the vessel again, which they had no difficulty in doing, as there was no resistance made, they posted themselves at each hatchway and most basely and cowardly fired fore and aft among us, pistols and musquets, for a full quarter of an hour without intermission. By the mercy of God they touched but four, one mortally. . . . . After this no usage seemed severe enough for us."

On June 22d, Freneau, who was weak with fever, was taken to the *Hunter* hospital ship, lying in the East River. Here he languished with an intermittent fever, that threatened constantly to become "putrid" and fatal, until July 12th, when:

"The flag came alongside and cleared the hospital ship. But the miseries we endured in getting to Elizabeth Town were many. Those that were very bad, of which the proportion was great, naturally took possession of the hold. No prisoner was allowed to go to the cabin, so that I, with twenty or thirty others, were obliged to sleep out all night, which was uncommonly cold for the season. About ten next morning we arrived at Elizabeth Town Point, where we were kept in the burning sun several hours, till the Commissary came to discharge us.

"I was afflicted with such pains in my joints, I could scarcely walk, and besides was weakened with a raging fever; nevertheless I walked two miles to Elizabeth Town; here I got a passage in a wagon to within a mile of Crow's Ferry, which I walked; got a passage over the ferry and walked on as far as Molly Budleigh's, where I stayed all night. Next morning, having breakfasted on some bread and milk, I set homeward; when I came to Obadiah Budleigh's corner I turned to the right and came home round about through the woods, for fear of terrifying the neighbors with my ghastly looks had I gone through Mount Pleasant."

Some days later he despatched the following note to his friend at Santa Cruz:

"SIR:—I take this opportunity to inform you that instead of arriving, as I fondly promised myself, at the fragrant groves and delectable plains of Santa Cruz, to enjoy the fruits and flowers of that happy clime, I was unfortunately taken and confined on board a prison ship at New York, and afterwards in a Hospital Ship, where the damnable draughts of a German doctor afforded far different feelings to my stomach than the juice of the orange or more nourishing milk of the cocoa."

IV.

On April 25, 1781, there was established in Philadelphia a new weekly newspaper, the *Freeman's Journal or North American Intelligencer*, which was to be "open to all parties but influenced by none," and which had for its object "To encourage genius, to deter vice, and disrobe tyranny and misrule of every plumage." The proprietor and printer of this paper was Mr. Francis

Bailey, who not long before had removed his office from Lancaster, Pa. The editor and ruling spirit, although his name during three years did not once appear in its columns, was Philip Freneau. The mark of the young poet is upon every page. Its opening editorial, which was from his pen, sounded a note that was not once lowered or weakened while he was in control.

"At no period of time, in no era of important events from the first establishment of social government, have the liberties of man, have the rights even of human nature, been more deeply interested than at the time in which we presume to address you. While Liberty, the noblest ornament of society, and without which no community can be well organized, seemed to pine and sicken under the trammels of despotic restraint in every one of the ancient nations of the earth, it fairly promises to resume its pristine majesty here, and the new world begins to emerge from the fangs and tyranny of the old. . . . . One of the first sources of her decline in those countries where she last resided spring from the wanton and unhallowed restraints which the jealous arm of despotism hath imposed on the freedom of the press. . . .

"That freemen may be made acquainted with the real state of their affairs, and that the characters of their public servants, both individually and collectively, be made manifest, is our object. With this patriotic view, and under the tutelage of law and the constitution, has the subscriber opened a Free Press, universally free to every citizen indiscriminately, whose principles coincide with those of the Revolution, and whose object is confessedly known to point at public or private good."

From this time until June, 1784, Freneau resided principally in Philadelphia, and edited the journal. During all of this time his muse was exceedingly active. He followed carefully the last years of the war, and put into satiric verse every movement of the "insolent foe." He sang the victory of Jones, and mourned in plaintive numbers the dead at Eutaw Springs. He voiced his indignation over the destructive career of

Cornwallis, and burst into a *Laus Deo* at his fall. The ludicrous plight of Rivington and Gaine, the distress of the Tories, and the final departure of the British filled him with glee, which he poured out in song after song. It was his most prolific and spontaneous period.

He wrote, too, an abundance of prose. The series of graceful papers entitled "The Pilgrim" is from his pen, besides many a political study and literary sketch signed with a sounding name. Everywhere are manifest his love of true literature and his desire to lead a merely literary life, but here and there are notes of discouragement. "Barbers cannot possibly exist as such," he writes, "among a people who have neither hair nor beards. How, then, can a poet hope for success in a city where there are not three persons possessed of elegant ideas?"

During the year 1783 Freneau's pen was very busy in various lines of work. It is probable that he assisted Bailey in many ways,—writing introductions to publications issued by the office and performing the various other duties incumbent upon the literary editor of a publishing house. During this year he translated the "New Travels through North America," which had just been issued by the Abbé Robin, one of the chaplains of the French Army in America, and the translation was issued first by Bailey and later by Powers and Willis of Boston. Freneau's introduction is characteristic:

"Most of those accounts of North-America, given to the public by British explorators and others, previous to the Revolution, are generally taken up, with the recitals of wonderful adventures, in the woods beyond the Lakes, or with the Histories and records of the wild Indian nations, so that by the time the reader gets through one of those performances, he never fails to be better acquainted with the *Ottagnies*, *Chereokees*, *Miamees*, *Nadouwessians*, and a hundred others, with their various cus-

toms of *paw-wawing*, or methods of making *wampum*, than with the most interesting particulars relative to the *inhabitants* of the then colonies *these* were but rarely thought worthy mentioning by those gentlemen, and when they are, it is mortifying enough to see them constantly considered as mere beasts of burden, calculated solely for the support of the grandeur, wealth and omnipotence of Great-Britain, than as men and Free-Men.

"Our French Author is more liberal — two years before the present peace he considered the United States as a great independent nation, advancing with hasty strides to the summit of power and sovereignty."

It was during this year that the poet, for the first time, met with positive opposition and abuse. Oswald, the editor of the newly established *Gazette*, quarrelled with Bailey, and a poetical battle was one phase of the contest. The details of this affair will be found in the proper place, and I need not recount them here, but suffice it to say that Freneau soon found his muse assailed by the meanest of all critics. His extremely sensitive nature could brook no criticism. His Celtic temperament could fight fiercely in the presence of an open foe, but it was easily depressed and discouraged by criticism and covert attack. He lost heart in his work, and at the end of the third volume he quietly withdrew from his editorship.

The three volumes of the *Journal* which bear his impress are notable for their vigor of policy, their high ideals, their unswerving patriotism, and their real literary merit. It is to be hoped that a selection from Freneau's prose writings during this critical era in our history may sometime be made. Nowhere else can we gain so distinct a picture of the man, with his sanguine, impetuous temperament, his proud spirit, and his intense hatred of every form of tyranny. He wrote vigorously not only on British oppression, but on such topics as the wrongs of negro slavery, cruelty

to animals, the wanton destruction of trees, the evils of intemperance, and the rights of woman.

The "Epistle to Sylvius" was his valedictory. In it he deplores the lack of literary taste in America, and the sad fate which has befallen his youthful poetic dreams. The age is grown mercantile, and Sejanus the mighty tradesman,—

> "Sejanus has in house declared
> 'These States, as yet, can boast no bard,
> And all the sing-song of our clime
> Is merely nonsense fringed with rhyme.'"

A bard with more Teutonic blood, if he knew within himself that he was indeed a poet, and the only real poet of his time, would have staid at his post and made himself heard, despite narrow criticism and mean abuse, but Freneau was too proud to fight for recognition. The people had crowned him, to be sure, but if the critics, those who should be the real judges, rejected him, he would strive no longer. He would leave the field.

> "Then, Sylvius, come—let you and I
> On Neptune's aid, once more rely:
> Perhaps the muse may still impart
> The balm to ease the aching heart.
> Though cold might chill and storms dismay,
> Yet Zoilus will be far away."

On June 24, 1784, Freneau sailed from Middletown Point as master of the brig *Dromilly*, bound for Jamaica. The voyage was indeed a memorable one. On the night of July 30, while off the end of the island, the ship encountered a violent hurricane. According to contemporary accounts, "No more than eight out of one hundred and fifty sail of vessels in the ports of

Kingston and Port Royal were saved." The *Dromilly* survived the storm, but it was a mere wreck when the next morning it crept into Kingston Harbor.

Freneau remained in Jamaica until September 24, when he left for Philadelphia in the brig *Mars*, arriving November 4. His experiences in trying to fit out the wrecked *Dromilly* are not recorded, but the one incident of his poetic reply to the keeper of the King's water works, who had refused him a puncheon of water, is characteristic.

From this time until 1790, Freneau's life is redolent of the ocean. A complete itinerary of this wandering era may be compiled from the shipping news of the various seaport newspapers, but it is useless to go into details. He was master for a time of the sloop *Monmouth*, plying for freight between Charleston, S. C., New York, and Savannah. His brother Peter, in Charleston, had become a man not only of influence, but of means, and together they owned the vessel and shared its profits. For several years advertisements like this appeared in the Charleston papers:

"For freight to any part of this State or Georgia; for charter in any free port in the West Indies, the sloop *Monmouth*, Philip Freneau, Master, burden about 40 tons. She is new, stanch, well-formed and draws six feet when loaded. Will carry about one hundred barrels of rice. For further particulars inquire of said master on board at Mrs. Motte's wharf or Peter Freneau."

On the 1st of June, 1786, there was issued from Bailey's press the first collected edition of Freneau's poetry. During the entire year its author was at sea almost continuously. It is evident that he had little to do with the edition. The copy furnished to Bailey consisted of the manuscript of a few early poems, revised copies of the 1775 pamphlets, and corrected and enlarged

versions of his contributions to the *United States Magazine*. The bulk of the book is made up of Freneau's contributions to the *Freeman's Journal*, printed *seriatim* and without change. The poem "Rivington's Confessions" is even divided into two parts, with another poem between, as it first appeared in the paper. An index of the poetry in the first four volumes of the *Journal* is a nearly perfect index of the 1786 edition, after the poem "The Prison Ship."

Bailey wrote for the edition the following introduction:

"The pieces now collected and printed in the following sheets, were left in my hands, by the author, above a year ago, with permission to publish them whenever I thought proper. A considerable number of the performances contained in this volume, as many will recollect, have appeared at different times in Newspapers (particularly the Freeman's Journal) and other periodical publications in the different States of America, during the late war, and since; and from the avidity and pleasure with which they generally appear to have been read by persons of the best taste, the Printer now the more readily gives them to the world in their present form, (without troubling the reader with any affected apologies for their supposed or real imperfections) in hopes they will afford a high degree of satisfaction to the lovers of poetical wit, and elegance of expression."

This edition is the most spontaneous and poetic of the poet's works. In it we see Freneau before he has lost his early poetic dream, before he has become hardened by close contact with the world of affairs and the cold, practical round of political life. This and the 1788 edition contain by far the most valuable part of his poetic work.

In those days before the invention of book reviews, the fate of a book turned largely upon its immediate reception by the reading public. Criticism was by word of mouth: the poems were discussed in polite

circles and over the morning coffee. Thus we have nothing to quote to show how America received her bard. We know, however, that the poems were successful even beyond Bailey's expectations. In less than five months he was out with proposals for "an additional collection of entertaining original performances in prose and verse by Philip Freneau." The book was to be published as soon as five hundred subscribers could be secured, and the subscribers' names were to be printed at the beginning of the volume.

"Such persons as are disposed to encourage American authors (particularly at a time when we are surfeited with stale publications retailed to us from British presses) and are not unwilling to be known as promoters of polite literature and the fine arts in these Republican States are requested to deliver in their names."

One bit of contemporary praise, however, has been preserved. On June 8th, one week after the appearance of Freneau's first volume, Col. Parke of Philadelphia composed the following, which was first published in the *Journal* of June 21st, and afterward included in his volume of "The Lyric Works of Horace, . . . to which are added a Number of Original Poems," issued later in the year:

"To Mr. PHILIP FRENEAU, on his Volume of excellent POEMS, Printed by Mr. BAILEY.

"*Difficile est Satiram non Scribere.*"—*Juv.*

"Tho' I know not your person, I well know your merit,
Your satires admire—your muse of true spirit;
Who reads them must smile at poetical story
Except the k—g's printer, or some such like tory;
Sir William, sir Harry, and would-be sir John,
Cornwallis, the devil, those bucks of the ton;
Black Dunmore and Wallace with sun-setting nose,

Who steals hogs and sheep, secure—*under the Rose.**
But a fig for the anger of such petty rogues,
To the devil we pitch them without shoes or brogues!

" Pythag'ras' choice scheme my belief now controuls,
I sign to his creed—transmigration of souls;
Euphorbas's shield he no doubt did employ,
And bravely let blood on the plains of old Troy:
The souls of great Marlbro' and warlike Eugene
Conspicuous in Washington's glory are seen:
Sage Pluto beams wisdom from Franklin's rich brain,
And sky-taught sir Isaac† is seen here again.
But Hugh when he migrates may daily be found
Cracking bones in a kitchen in form of a hound;
When his compeer shall die—while no Christian shall weep him,
Old Pluto, below, for a devil will keep him;
Unless he's sent up on some hasty dispatch,
The whigs to abuse, and more falsehoods to hatch.
Thou red-jerkin'd fops, whom your muse I've heard sing
From Hounslow's bold heroes successively spring;
From Tyburn they tumble as supple as panders,
Then migrate straightway into knights and commanders.
But you, worthy poet, whose soul-cutting pen
In gall paints the crimes of all time-serving men,
The fiend of corruption, the wretch of an hour,
The star-garter'd villain, the scoundrel in pow'r,
From souls far unlike may announce your ascension,
The patriot all-worthy, above bribe or pension,
The martyr who suffered for liberty's sake
Grim dungeons, more horrid than hell's bitter lake:
Your name to bright honor, the spirits shall lift,
That glow'd in the bosoms of Churchill and Swift.

" And when you are number'd, alas! with the dead,
Your works by true wits will forever be read,
Who, pointing the finger, shall pensively shew
The lines that were written, alas! by Freneau."

Philadelphia, June 8, 1786.

* He commanded the *Rose* sloop.

† David Rittenhouse, Esq., the ingenious inventor of the celebrated perpendicular Orrery.

The second volume of poems did not appear promptly. One year after the first proposals, Bailey advertised that the book was at last in press. "An unusual hurry of other business (of a nature not to be postponed), has unavoidably delayed the printer in its publication to so late a period." It is notable that of the four hundred and sixty-three subscribers, two hundred and fifty, or over half, were in Charleston, S. C., and one hundred and twenty-six in New York. Philadelphia subscribed for very few of the volumes.

The printer's advertisement was as follows:

"The following Essays and Poems, selected from some printed and manuscript papers of Mr. Freneau, are now presented to the public of the United States in hopes they will prove at least equally acceptable with his volume of poems published last year. Some few of the pieces in this volume have heretofore appeared in American newspapers; but through a fatality, not unusually attending publications of that kind, are now, perhaps, forgotten; and, at any time, may possibly never have been seen or attended to but by very few."

Of the forty-nine poems in the volume, one, "Slender's Journey," had been published separately by Bailey early in 1787, and nearly half of the others had first seen the light between April, 1786, and January, 1788, in the columns of the *Freeman's Journal*. The greater number of the others were doubtless printed from the poet's manuscripts. A few of the prose papers, like "The Philosopher of the Forest," were selected from the columns of the *Journal*, especially from the series entitled "The Pilgrim," but much of the rest was from the poet's manuscripts now first published.

In the meantime the poet was leading a stormy and adventurous career upon the sea. As master of the sloop *Industry*, and later of the schooner *Columbia*, plying irregularly on all kinds of coastwise voyages

between Georgia and New York, he experienced every phase of life upon the ocean. As a sample of his adventurous career during this period, note the following letter[1] to Bailey, written from Norfolk, Va., in the summer of 1788:

"*Norfolk, Virginia, August* 6, 1788.

"*Mr.* BAILEY,

"I have the mortification to inform you that, after leaving New-York on the 21st of July, I had the misfortune to have my vessel dismasted, thrown on her beam ends, shifted and ruined the bulk of her cargo, lost every sail, mast, spar, boat, and almost every article upon deck, on the Wednesday afternoon following, in one of the hardest gales that ever blew upon this coast. Capt. William Cannon, whom I think you know, who was going passenger with me to Charleston, and Mr. Joseph Stillwell, a lad of a reputable family in New-Jersey, were both washed overboard and drowned, notwithstanding every effort to save them. All my people besides, except one, an old man who stuck fast in one of the scuttles, were several times overboard, but had the fortune to regain the wreck, and with considerable difficulty save their lives.—As to myself, I found the vessel no longer under any guidance—I took refuge in the main weather shrouds, where indeed I saved myself from being washed into the sea, but was almost staved to pieces in a violent fall I had upon the main deck, the main-mast having given way six feet above the deck, and gone overboard—I was afterward knocked in the head by a violent stroke of the tiller, which entirely deprived me of sensation for (I was told) near a quarter of an hour.—Our pumps were now so choaked with corn that they would no longer work, upward of four feet of water was in the hold, fortunately our bucket was saved, and with this we went to baling, which alone prevented us from foundering in one of the most dismal nights that ever man witnessed.

"The next morning the weather had cleared away and the wind came round to the N. E. which during the gale had been E. N. E.—the land was then in sight, about 5 miles distant, latitude at noon 36–17, I then rigged out a broken boom, and set the fore top-sail, the only sail remaining, and steered for cape Henry; making however but very little way, the vessel being very much on one side and ready to sink with her heavy cargo of iron, besides other weighty articles. We were towed in

[1] Published in the *Freeman's Journal*, August 20, 1788.

next day, Friday, by the friendly assistance of capt. Archibald Bell, of the ship Betsey, from London — I have since arrived at this port by the assistance of a Potowmac pilot.—Nothing could exceed our distress—no fire, no candle, our beds soaked with sea water, the cabbin torn to pieces, a vast quantity of corn damaged and poisoning us to death, &c. &c. &c. As we entered this port, on the 29th of July, the very dogs looked at us with an eye of commiseration—the negros pitied us, and almost every one shewed a disposition to relieve us. In the midst of all this vexation the crew endeavoured to keep up their spirits with a little grog, while I have recourse to my old expedient of philosophy and reflection. I have unloaded my cargo, partly damaged, partly otherwise—This day I also begin to refit my vessel, and mean to proceed back to New-York as soon as refitted, which cannot be sooner than the 25th, perhaps the 30th of this month. It is possible, however, that I may be ordered to sell the vessel here; if so, I shall take a passage to Baltimore, and go to New-York by the way of Philadelphia, to look out for another more fortunate barque than that which I now command.

Your's &c. PHILIP FRENEAU."

I cannot forbear quoting another letter[1] written nearly a year later, since it gives us a charming glimpse of the Freneau of this period:

"Yamacraw, Savanna, March 14th, 1789.

"SIR: Amongst a number of my good natured acquaintance, who have lately sympathized with me, on account of what they term my misfortunes, during great part of last year, I know of no one more entitled to my acknowledgments, on the occasion, than yourself. When an old woman talks of witches, ghosts, or blue devils, we naturally make an allowance for bad education, or the imbicility of intellect, occasioned by age. When one man seriously supposes another unfortunate, for the sake of two or three successive disasters, which no prudence or foresight could have avoided, the same allowance ought to be made, provided the same excuses could be assigned.

"Can you be serious, then in advising me to quit all future intercourse with an element, that has for some years, with all its dangers and losses, afforded to your humble servant attractions, far more powerful than those of Apollo! Formerly, when I wrote poetry, most of those that attended to it, would not allow my verses to be good. I gave credit

[1] Published in the *Freeman's Journal*, July 8, 1789.

to what I deemed the popular opinion, and made a safe retreat in due time, to the solitary wastes of Neptune. I am not, however, inclined to believe people so readily now, when they alledge my vessel is not sound, and when several gentlemen, for reasons best known to themselves, and perhaps not over willing to risque the uncertainties of the world to come, effect to doubt of her ability to waft their carcases in safety.

But my ambition is greatly concerned in this matter: a schooner is confided to my care, humble, indeed, when compared to those lofty piles which I have seen you so much admire, but which is, nevertheless, really capable of an European, nay of an India voyage. Read all history, ransack libraries, call tradition to your aid, search all records, examine a million of manuscripts on vellum, on parchment, on paper, on marble, on what you please, and I defy you to find the most distant hint of any *poet*, in any age or country, from Hesiod down to Peter Pindar, having been trusted with the controul or possession of anything fit to be mentioned or compared with the same barque, which you say, I *have the misfortune* to *command.*

"To be serious: misfortune ought to be only the topic of such men as do not think or reason with propriety, upon the nature of things. Some writer says, it is but another name for carelessness or inattention: Though that may not at all times be the case, it is in the power of every man to place himself beyond the supposed baneful influence of this inexorable deity, by *assuming* a dignity of mind, (if it be not the gift of nature) that will, in the end, get the better of the untoward events, that may frequently cross our best purposes. Indeed, the *sea* is the *best* school for philosophy (I mean of the moral kind); in thirteen or fourteen years' acquaintance with this element, I am convinced a man ought to imbibe more of your right genuine *stoical* stuff, than could be gained in half a century on shore.—I must add that, be our occupations what they may, or our fortunes what they will, there is a certain delectable, inexpressible satisfaction in now and then encountering the rubs and disasters of life, and I am entirely of the opinion which (says Dr. Langhorne)

> "Weakness wrote in Petrarch's gentle strain,
> When once he own'd at love's unfavouring shrine
> *A thousand pleasures are not worth one pain!*"

"I must now conclude this scrawl, with telling you, that I am receiving on board my vessel a small cargo of lumber, at a place called Yamacraw, a little above Savanna. The weather is extremely warm, I am tired of my letter, and must, of course, conclude. I do not know

whether you ever mean to make a voyage to sea — if you should, thrice welcome shall you be to such accommodations as my little embarkation affords. Poets and philosophers, shall ever travel with me at a cheap rate indeed! Not only because they are not generally men of this world, but because, even supposing the barque that bears them, should make an external exit to the bottom of the ocean, the busy world, as things go, will regret the loss of most of them very little, perhaps not at all.

Your's, &c., P. FRENEAU."

On the 24th of April, 1789, when Washington arrived in New York to enter upon the duties of the presidency, in the fleet that accompanied him from Elizabethtown Point was the schooner *Columbia*, Capt. Freneau, eight days from Charleston. In June the *Columbia* again entered New York Harbor, and on December 28th she was at Sunbury, Georgia, On February 12th, 1790, Freneau arrived in New York, passenger from Middletown Point in the brig *Betsy*, Capt. Motley, to become editor of Child and Swaine's *New York Daily Advertiser*. For several months negotiations had been pending. Every appearance of the poet in New York for a year past had been marked by a small budget of poems in the *Advertiser* from the pen of "Capt. Freneau," but it was not until February, 1790, that he was induced to leave his beloved *Columbia* and settle down to a life upon shore. The poem "Neversink," written some months later, is his valedictory to the ocean.

"Proud heights: with pain so often seen
(With joy beheld once more)
On your firm base I take my stand,
Tenacious of the shore:
Let those who pant for wealth or fame
Pursue the watery road;—
Soft sleep and ease, blest days and nights,
And health, attend these favoring heights,
Retirement's blest abode."

The poem "Constantia" may record the poet's reasons for leaving the ocean, for on the 19th of May, 1790, there appeared in Peter Freneau's Charleston paper, the *City Gazette, or the Daily Advertiser*, the following:

"*Married*, on the fifteenth of April, at Middletown Point, East New Jersey, Capt. Philip Freneau to Miss Eleanor Forman, daughter of Mr. Samuel Forman, of that place."

The Forman family with which the poet allied himself was one of great respectability and even prominence in New Jersey. Its record during the Revolution had been a conspicuous one, and its connection included the Ledyards, the Seymours, and many other prominent families. Mrs. Freneau, in the words of her daughter, "was remarkable for her gentle, lady-like manners, amiable disposition and finely informed mind. She was affable and sprightly in her conversation, and there were, even when she had reached the advanced age of eighty-seven, few handsomer women." In her early years she dabbled a little in poetry herself, and there is a tradition in the family that the prenuptial correspondence was for a long time wholly in verse.

Freneau was now fairly settled in life, and for the next seven or eight years he was engaged almost continuously in newspaper work.

IV.

During the next year and more Freneau, as editor of the *Daily Advertiser*, brought to bear upon the paper all the vigor and literary skill which had so marked the *Freeman's Journal*. The tone of the editorial comment was patriotic and spirited. The note of reform, of opposition to everything that was degrading to high

ideals, or that in any way threatened personal liberty, was never absent. Despite the manifold duties incumbent upon the editor of a city daily, he found time to write finished prose sketches and to woo the muses. His poetry of this period is notable both as to quantity and quality. Some of it was drawn from the note-books of his years of wandering, but the greater part dealt with more timely topics. In June he published the advertisement:

"Mr. Freneau proposes publishing a volume of original poems, to contain about two hundred and fifty pages, 12mo, neatly printed. . . . As soon as there appears a sufficiency of subscribers to defray the expenses of paper and printing, the collection shall be put to press."

Judging from several poems of this period which were printed as from the author's new volume, "The Rising Empire," this was to be the title of the book. The advertisement was dropped in October, and "The Rising Empire" never appeared, though most of its poems were printed in the edition of 1795.

On September 20, 1791, Freneau's daughter, Eleanor, was born at Mount Pleasant. His salary as editor of the *Advertiser* was not large; the little family, it appears, was in straightened circumstances. A letter[1] from Aedanus Burke of Charleston to Madison, dated September 13, 1801, throws light upon the period.

"I remember, it was about the last fortnight that we served together in Congress, in 1791, I one day called you aside, and mentioned the name of Mr. Phillip Freneau to you, as one I knew you esteemed, and then lay strugling under difficulties, with his family. My memory brings to my recollection, that you mentioned the matter to the Secretary of State, Mr. Jefferson. Freneau was invited from N. York, and had the place of interpreter, with a mere trifle of Salary. Little did William Smith know, that you were the author or cause of bringing Freneau from New

[1] *American Historical Review*, January, 1898.

York; or he might have turned against you, his terrible battery of the slanders and invectives which he poured forth against Mr. Jefferson for three or four years afterwards."

Madison acted promptly. On the 28th of February, 1791, Jefferson wrote to Freneau as follows:

"SIR: The clerkship for foreign languages in my office is vacant the salary indeed is very low, being but two hundred & fifty dollars a year; but also it gives so little to do as not to interfere with any other calling the person may chuse, which would not absent him from the seat of government. I was told a few days ago that it might perhaps be convenient to you to accept it—if so, it is at your service. It requires no other qualification than a moderate knowledge of the French. Should anything better turn up within my department, that might suit you, I should be very happy to bestow it as well. Should you conclude to accept the present, you may consider it as engaged to you, only be so good as to drop me a line informing me of your resolution. I am with great esteem, Sir, Your very humble serv't,

TH. JEFFERSON."

Freneau's letter in reply has been lost. On May 1st, however, Madison wrote Jefferson, so that we may gather its import:

"I have seen Freneau also and given him a line to you. He sets out for Philada. today or tomorrow, though it is not improbable that he may halt in N. Jersey. He is in the habit, I find, of translating the Leyden *Gazette* and consequently must be fully equal to the task you have alloted for him. He had supposed that besides this degree of skill, it might be expected that he should be able to translate with equal propriety into French: and under this idea, his delicacy had taken an insuperable objection to the undertaking. Being now set right as to this particular and being made sensible of the advantages of Philada. over N. Jersey for his private undertaking, his mind is taking another turn; and if the scantiness of his capital should not be a bar, I think he will establish himself in the former. At all events he will give his friends there an opportunity of aiding his decision by their information & counsel. The more I learn of his character, talents and principles, the more I should regret his burying himself in the obscurity he had chosen in N. Jersey. It is certain that there is not to be

found in the whole catalogue of American Printers, a single name that can approach towards a rivalship."

Jefferson replied on May 9th:

"Your favor of the 1st came to hand on the 3d. Mr. Freneau has not followed it. I suppose therefore he has changed his mind back again, for which I am really sorry."

That Jefferson had made overtures to Freneau about the establishing of a paper at the seat of government, or at least had discussed the matter with those who had, is evident from the following letter written to his son-in-law, Randolph, six days later:

"I enclose you Bache's as well as Fenno's papers. You will have perceived that the latter is a paper of pure Toryism, disseminating the doctrines of Monarchy, aristocracy, & the exclusion of the people. We have been trying to get another *weekly* or *half weekly* set up, excluding advertisements, so that it might go through the states & furnish a *whig vehicle* of intelligence. We hoped at one time to have persuaded Freneau to set up here, but failed."

It is a testimonial to the energy and the ability of Freneau that leaders like Madison and Jefferson should have sought him so persistently. Notwithstanding Freneau's refusal, Jefferson, on July 21st, wrote to Madison:

"I am sincerely sorry that Freneau has declined coming here. Tho' the printing business be sufficiently full here, yet I think he would have set out on such advantageous ground as to have been sure of success. His own genius in the first place is so superior to that of his competitors. I should have given him the perusal of all my letters of foreign intelligence & all foreign newspapers; the publication of all proclamations & other public notices within my department, & the printing of the laws, which added to his salary would have been a considerable aid. Besides this, Fenno's being the only weekly, or half weekly paper, & under general condemnation for its toryism & its incessant efforts to overturn the government, Freneau would have found that ground as good as unoccupied."

This being brought to Freneau's attention, he determined to hold out no longer. On July 25th he wrote to Madison from Middletown Point:

"Some business detains me here a day or two longer from returning to New York. When I come, which I expect will be on Thursday, if you should not have left the City, I will give you a decisive answer relative to printing my paper at the Seat of Govt. instead of in N. York. If I can get Mr. Childs to be connected with me on a tolerable plan, I believe I shall sacrifice other considerations and transfer myself to Philadelphia."

Mr. Francis Childs, who was one of the proprietors of the *Advertiser*, as we have already seen, agreed to the enterprise, and the following document was soon signed:

"DEPARTMENT OF STATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

"Philip Freneau is hereby appointed Clerk for foreign languages in the office of Secretary of State with a salary of two hundred & fifty dollars a year, to commence from the time he shall take the requisite oaths of qualification. Given under my hand and seal this 16th day of August 1791. TH. JEFFERSON."

I have considered this episode somewhat minutely since it throws light upon what follows.

The first number of *The National Gazette* appeared on Monday, October 31st. It was issued Mondays and Thursdays. Its typography and arrangement were neat and attractive; its news columns were well filled, and its literary department was carefully attended to. Its success was all that had been predicted by Madison. On May 7, 1792, the editor announced that the subscription to the *Gazette* had succeeded beyond his most sanguine expectations.

The period covered by the two years of the *National Gazette* was one of singular unrest in America. The French Revolution was in progress; everything

seemed tottering. America believed that all Europe was soon to cast off its chains of monarchy; she believed that the torch of the Rights of Man had been lighted in America, and she looked with almost paternal interest on the progress of the Revolution. In his poetical salutatory in the first number of the *Gazette*, Freneau writes:

> "From the spark that we kindled, a flame has gone forth
> To astonish the world and enlighten mankind:
> With a code of new doctrines the universe rings,
> And Paine is addressing strange sermons to Kings."

The columns of the *Gazette* are full of ringing words on the Rights of Man, the Age of Reason, the final doom of monarchy. In poem after poem the editor pours out his sympathy for republicanism and the cause of the French insurgents. That the French had been largely instrumental in the gaining of our own independence, increased the interest. "On the Fourteenth of July," "On the French Republicans," "On the Anniversary of the Storming of the Bastile," "Ode to Liberty," and "Demolition of the French Monarchy," are a few of the poems that Freneau poured forth during this incendiary period. It is significant that he included none of these verses in his edition of 1809. That he was honest to the core in his belief cannot for a moment be doubted. His impulsive Celtic temperament threw his whole soul into his work.

> "Ah! while I write, dear France allied,
> My ardent wish I scarce restrain,
> To throw these sybil leaves aside
> And fly to join you on the main."

The frenzy among the American Republicans culminated with the arrival of Citizen Genet, in 1793.

At the Republican dinner given Genet, May 18th, Citizen Freneau was elected by acclamation to translate Pichon's ode. On June 1st, at the civic feast, Freneau's ode, "God Save the Rights of Man," was received with thunderous applause.

One must study carefully this incendiary period of Freneau's life before he can understand fully the much discussed episode of the *National Gazette*. The wine of French Republicanism was sadly intoxicating. It could make Freneau write such a stanza as this:

> "*Virtue, Order and Religion,*
> Haste, and seek some other region;
> Your plan is fixed to hunt them down,
> Destroy the mitre, rend the gown,
> And that vile b–tc–h—Philosophy—restore,
> Did ever paper plan so much before?"

And then explain it by saying that "*The National Gazette* is the vehicle of party spleen and opposition to the great principles of order, virtue and religion."

In view of all this, it is not strange that he should have been impatient with the conservative party, who not only did not grow enthusiastic over the French Revolution, but even looked upon it with actual disapprobation. From the very first, the editor of the *Gazette* criticised the leading Federalists, especially Adams and Hamilton, and he even mildly rebuked Washington, the hero of his earlier muse. The administration, in his mind, was leaning toward monarchial ideas. Washington, in his opinion, had exceeded his power in the matter of the banks, and the precedent was a dangerous one. The ceremonials with which the President had hedged himself about were greatly at variance with simple democratic ideas; and, to crown all, the ingratitude of the administration (to the

extremists it could have no other name) in its attitude toward Genet and the French people hurt him deeply. I believe that Freneau was fundamentally honest in his position. It is almost impossible to believe that a note like this, in the *Jersey Chronicle* of 1795, is not sincere:

> "The conduct of the Federal Executive of this country toward the Republic of France, so far as it may appear inimical, has given great and general disgust to the citizens of the United States. . . . It would be well if some that might be mentioned would recollect the nation that supported us in the late war when our infant Republic was on the point of annihilation. Enmity to France is treason against Republicanism."

In regard to Adams, who had danced at the King's ball in a scarlet suit, and Hamilton, the father of the Federalists, Freneau had no scruples. The attacks of the *Gazette* became more and more pointed with every issue, though much of the more incendiary matter was not from Freneau's pen. The "Probationary Odes," for instance, attributed to him by contemporary enemies, and in later years quoted by Buckingham and Duyckinck as from his pen, were written by St. George Tucker. They were published in book form by Tucker in 1796. In the sensitive state of party politics at this time, such frank criticism could not fail to raise a tempest of rebuttal and of counter abuse. It was soon noted that the *Gazette*, in its attacks upon the administration, spared the State department. Jefferson was never mentioned except for praise. The inference was obvious: either he had "muzzled" the paper by granting it certain favors, or he was making use of it as a weapon against the very administration of which he was a member.

Hamilton naturally inclined toward the latter view, and much bitterness was the result. On July 25, 1792,

he inserted this anonymous bit in *Fenno's Gazette of the United States*, the Federalist organ:

"The Editor of the *National Gazette* receives a salary from Government:

"Quere—Whether this salary is paid him for *translations;* or for *publications*, the design for which is to vilify those to whom the voice of the people has committed the administration of our public affairs—to oppose the measures of Government, and, by false insinuations, to disturb the public peace?

"In common life it is thought ungrateful for a man to bite the hand that puts bread in his mouth; but if the man is hired to do it, the case is altered. T. L."

This was the beginning of a series of anonymous attacks in the Federalist newspaper, written undoubtedly by Hamilton. A second article, still more definite, appeared on August 4th. In it the writer directly charged Jefferson with being the soul and spirit of the *National Gazette*. "Mr. Freneau was thought a fit instrument," and so was deliberately engaged; he was simply the "faithful and devoted servant of the head of a party from whose hands he received a boon." The article then proceeds at length to arraign Jefferson and to appeal to the American people, whether they will consent to see the precious legacies which are theirs "frittered away" in so shameless a manner.

This attack called forth (from Freneau) an affidavit which was printed in the *Gazette*, August 8, 1792:

"Personally appeared before me, Matthew Clarkson, Mayor of the City of Philadelphia, Philip Freneau, of the City of Philadelphia, who, being duly sworn, doth depose and say, That no negociation was ever opened with him by Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of State, for the establishment or institution of the *National Gazette:* that the deponent's coming to the City of Philadelphia, as publisher of a Newspaper, was at no time urged, advised, or influenced by the above officer, but that it was his own voluntary act; and that the said Gazette, nor the Editor

whether you ever mean to make a voyage to sea — if you should, thrice welcome shall you be to such accommodations as my little embarkation affords. Poets and philosophers, shall ever travel with me at a cheap rate indeed! Not only because they are not generally men of this world, but because, even supposing the barque that bears them, should make an external exit to the bottom of the ocean, the busy world, as things go, will regret the loss of most of them very little, perhaps not at all.

Your's, &c., P. FRENEAU."

On the 24th of April, 1789, when Washington arrived in New York to enter upon the duties of the presidency, in the fleet that accompanied him from Elizabethtown Point was the schooner *Columbia*, Capt. Freneau, eight days from Charleston. In June the *Columbia* again entered New York Harbor, and on December 28th she was at Sunbury, Georgia, On February 12th, 1790, Freneau arrived in New York, passenger from Middletown Point in the brig *Betsy*, Capt. Motley, to become editor of Child and Swaine's *New York Daily Advertiser*. For several months negotiations had been pending. Every appearance of the poet in New York for a year past had been marked by a small budget of poems in the *Advertiser* from the pen of "Capt. Freneau," but it was not until February, 1790, that he was induced to leave his beloved *Columbia* and settle down to a life upon shore. The poem "Neversink," written some months later, is his valedictory to the ocean.

"Proud heights: with pain so often seen
(With joy beheld once more)
On your firm base I take my stand,
Tenacious of the shore:
Let those who pant for wealth or fame
Pursue the watery road;—
Soft sleep and ease, blest days and nights,
And health, attend these favoring heights,
Retirement's blest abode."

The poem "Constantia" may record the poet's reasons for leaving the ocean, for on the 19th of May, 1790, there appeared in Peter Freneau's Charleston paper, the *City Gazette, or the Daily Advertiser*, the following:

"*Married*, on the fifteenth of April, at Middletown Point, East New Jersey, Capt. Philip Freneau to Miss Eleanor Forman, daughter of Mr. Samuel Forman, of that place."

The Forman family with which the poet allied himself was one of great respectability and even prominence in New Jersey. Its record during the Revolution had been a conspicuous one, and its connection included the Ledyards, the Seymours, and many other prominent families. Mrs. Freneau, in the words of her daughter, "was remarkable for her gentle, lady-like manners, amiable disposition and finely informed mind. She was affable and sprightly in her conversation, and there were, even when she had reached the advanced age of eighty-seven, few handsomer women." In her early years she dabbled a little in poetry herself, and there is a tradition in the family that the prenuptial correspondence was for a long time wholly in verse.

Freneau was now fairly settled in life, and for the next seven or eight years he was engaged almost continuously in newspaper work.

IV.

During the next year and more Freneau, as editor of the *Daily Advertiser*, brought to bear upon the paper all the vigor and literary skill which had so marked the *Freeman's Journal*. The tone of the editorial comment was patriotic and spirited. The note of reform, of opposition to everything that was degrading to high

ideals, or that in any way threatened personal liberty, was never absent. Despite the manifold duties incumbent upon the editor of a city daily, he found time to write finished prose sketches and to woo the muses. His poetry of this period is notable both as to quantity and quality. Some of it was drawn from the note-books of his years of wandering, but the greater part dealt with more timely topics. In June he published the advertisement:

"Mr. Freneau proposes publishing a volume of original poems, to contain about two hundred and fifty pages, 12mo, neatly printed. . . . As soon as there appears a sufficiency of subscribers to defray the expenses of paper and printing, the collection shall be put to press."

Judging from several poems of this period which were printed as from the author's new volume, "The Rising Empire," this was to be the title of the book. The advertisement was dropped in October, and "The Rising Empire" never appeared, though most of its poems were printed in the edition of 1795.

On September 20, 1791, Freneau's daughter, Eleanor, was born at Mount Pleasant. His salary as editor of the *Advertiser* was not large; the little family, it appears, was in straightened circumstances. A letter[1] from Aedanus Burke of Charleston to Madison, dated September 13, 1801, throws light upon the period.

"I remember, it was about the last fortnight that we served together in Congress, in 1791, I one day called you aside, and mentioned the name of Mr. Phillip Freneau to you, as one I knew you esteemed, and then lay strugling under difficulties, with his family. My memory brings to my recollection, that you mentioned the matter to the Secretary of State, Mr. Jefferson. Freneau was invited from N. York, and had the place of interpreter, with a mere trifle of Salary. Little did William Smith know, that you were the author or cause of bringing Freneau from New

[1] *American Historical Review*, January, 1898.

York; or he might have turned against you, his terrible battery of the slanders and invectives which he poured forth against Mr. Jefferson for three or four years afterwards."

Madison acted promptly. On the 28th of February, 1791, Jefferson wrote to Freneau as follows:

"SIR: The clerkship for foreign languages in my office is vacant the salary indeed is very low, being but two hundred & fifty dollars a year; but also it gives so little to do as not to interfere with any other calling the person may chuse, which would not absent him from the seat of government. I was told a few days ago that it might perhaps be convenient to you to accept it—if so, it is at your service. It requires no other qualification than a moderate knowledge of the French. Should anything better turn up within my department, that might suit you, I should be very happy to bestow it as well. Should you conclude to accept the present, you may consider it as engaged to you, only be so good as to drop me a line informing me of your resolution. I am with great esteem, Sir, Your very humble serv't,

TH. JEFFERSON."

Freneau's letter in reply has been lost. On May 1st, however, Madison wrote Jefferson, so that we may gather its import:

"I have seen Freneau also and given him a line to you. He sets out for Philada. today or tomorrow, though it is not improbable that he may halt in N. Jersey. He is in the habit, I find, of translating the Leyden *Gazette* and consequently must be fully equal to the task you have alloted for him. He had supposed that besides this degree of skill, it might be expected that he should be able to translate with equal propriety into French: and under this idea, his delicacy had taken an insuperable objection to the undertaking. Being now set right as to this particular and being made sensible of the advantages of Philada. over N. Jersey for his private undertaking, his mind is taking another turn; and if the scantiness of his capital should not be a bar, I think he will establish himself in the former. At all events he will give his friends there an opportunity of aiding his decision by their information & counsel. The more I learn of his character, talents and principles, the more I should regret his burying himself in the obscurity he had chosen in N. Jersey. It is certain that there is not to be

found in the whole catalogue of American Printers, a single name that can approach towards a rivalship."

Jefferson replied on May 9th:

"Your favor of the 1st came to hand on the 3d. Mr. Freneau has not followed it. I suppose therefore he has changed his mind back again, for which I am really sorry."

That Jefferson had made overtures to Freneau about the establishing of a paper at the seat of government, or at least had discussed the matter with those who had, is evident from the following letter written to his son-in-law, Randolph, six days later:

"I enclose you Bache's as well as Fenno's papers. You will have perceived that the latter is a paper of pure Toryism, disseminating the doctrines of Monarchy, aristocracy, & the exclusion of the people. We have been trying to get another *weekly* or *half weekly* set up, excluding advertisements, so that it might go through the states & furnish a *whig vehicle* of intelligence. We hoped at one time to have persuaded Freneau to set up here, but failed."

It is a testimonial to the energy and the ability of Freneau that leaders like Madison and Jefferson should have sought him so persistently. Notwithstanding Freneau's refusal, Jefferson, on July 21st, wrote to Madison:

"I am sincerely sorry that Freneau has declined coming here. Tho' the printing business be sufficiently full here, yet I think he would have set out on such advantageous ground as to have been sure of success. His own genius in the first place is so superior to that of his competitors. I should have given him the perusal of all my letters of foreign intelligence & all foreign newspapers; the publication of all proclamations & other public notices within my department, & the printing of the laws, which added to his salary would have been a considerable aid. Besides this, Fenno's being the only weekly, or half weekly paper, & under general condemnation for its toryism & its incessant efforts to overturn the government, Freneau would have found that ground as good as unoccupied."

This being brought to Freneau's attention, he determined to hold out no longer. On July 25th he wrote to Madison from Middletown Point:

"Some business detains me here a day or two longer from returning to New York. When I come, which I expect will be on Thursday, if you should not have left the City, I will give you a decisive answer relative to printing my paper at the Seat of Govt. instead of in N. York. If I can get Mr. Childs to be connected with me on a tolerable plan, I believe I shall sacrifice other considerations and transfer myself to Philadelphia."

Mr. Francis Childs, who was one of the proprietors of the *Advertiser*, as we have already seen, agreed to the enterprise, and the following document was soon signed:

"DEPARTMENT OF STATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

"Philip Freneau is hereby appointed Clerk for foreign languages in the office of Secretary of State with a salary of two hundred & fifty dollars a year, to commence from the time he shall take the requisite oaths of qualification. Given under my hand and seal this 16th day of August 1791. TH. JEFFERSON."

I have considered this episode somewhat minutely since it throws light upon what follows.

The first number of *The National Gazette* appeared on Monday, October 31st. It was issued Mondays and Thursdays. Its typography and arrangement were neat and attractive; its news columns were well filled, and its literary department was carefully attended to. Its success was all that had been predicted by Madison. On May 7, 1792, the editor announced that the subscription to the *Gazette* had succeeded beyond his most sanguine expectations.

The period covered by the two years of the *National Gazette* was one of singular unrest in America. The French Revolution was in progress; everything

seemed tottering. America believed that all Europe was soon to cast off its chains of monarchy; she believed that the torch of the Rights of Man had been lighted in America, and she looked with almost paternal interest on the progress of the Revolution. In his poetical salutatory in the first number of the *Gazette*, Freneau writes:

> "From the spark that we kindled, a flame has gone forth
> To astonish the world and enlighten mankind:
> With a code of new doctrines the universe rings,
> And Paine is addressing strange sermons to Kings."

The columns of the *Gazette* are full of ringing words on the Rights of Man, the Age of Reason, the final doom of monarchy. In poem after poem the editor pours out his sympathy for republicanism and the cause of the French insurgents. That the French had been largely instrumental in the gaining of our own independence, increased the interest. "On the Fourteenth of July," "On the French Republicans," "On the Anniversary of the Storming of the Bastile," "Ode to Liberty," and "Demolition of the French Monarchy," are a few of the poems that Freneau poured forth during this incendiary period. It is significant that he included none of these verses in his edition of 1809. That he was honest to the core in his belief cannot for a moment be doubted. His impulsive Celtic temperament threw his whole soul into his work.

> "Ah! while I write, dear France allied,
> My ardent wish I scarce restrain,
> To throw these sybil leaves aside
> And fly to join you on the main."

The frenzy among the American Republicans culminated with the arrival of Citizen Genet, in 1793.

At the Republican dinner given Genet, May 18th, Citizen Freneau was elected by acclamation to translate Pichon's ode. On June 1st, at the civic feast, Freneau's ode, "God Save the Rights of Man," was received with thunderous applause.

One must study carefully this incendiary period of Freneau's life before he can understand fully the much discussed episode of the *National Gazette*. The wine of French Republicanism was sadly intoxicating. It could make Freneau write such a stanza as this:

> "*Virtue, Order and Religion,*
> Haste, and seek some other region;
> Your plan is fixed to hunt them down,
> Destroy the mitre, rend the gown,
> And that vile b–tc–h—Philosophy—restore,
> Did ever paper plan so much before?"

And then explain it by saying that "*The National Gazette* is the vehicle of party spleen and opposition to the great principles of order, virtue and religion."

In view of all this, it is not strange that he should have been impatient with the conservative party, who not only did not grow enthusiastic over the French Revolution, but even looked upon it with actual disapprobation. From the very first, the editor of the *Gazette* criticised the leading Federalists, especially Adams and Hamilton, and he even mildly rebuked Washington, the hero of his earlier muse. The administration, in his mind, was leaning toward monarchial ideas. Washington, in his opinion, had exceeded his power in the matter of the banks, and the precedent was a dangerous one. The ceremonials with which the President had hedged himself about were greatly at variance with simple democratic ideas; and, to crown all, the ingratitude of the administration (to the

extremists it could have no other name) in its attitude toward Genet and the French people hurt him deeply. I believe that Freneau was fundamentally honest in his position. It is almost impossible to believe that a note like this, in the *Jersey Chronicle* of 1795, is not sincere:

> "The conduct of the Federal Executive of this country toward the Republic of France, so far as it may appear inimical, has given great and general disgust to the citizens of the United States. . . . It would be well if some that might be mentioned would recollect the nation that supported us in the late war when our infant Republic was on the point of annihilation. Enmity to France is treason against Republicanism."

In regard to Adams, who had danced at the King's ball in a scarlet suit, and Hamilton, the father of the Federalists, Freneau had no scruples. The attacks of the *Gazette* became more and more pointed with every issue, though much of the more incendiary matter was not from Freneau's pen. The "Probationary Odes," for instance, attributed to him by contemporary enemies, and in later years quoted by Buckingham and Duyckinck as from his pen, were written by St. George Tucker. They were published in book form by Tucker in 1796. In the sensitive state of party politics at this time, such frank criticism could not fail to raise a tempest of rebuttal and of counter abuse. It was soon noted that the *Gazette*, in its attacks upon the administration, spared the State department. Jefferson was never mentioned except for praise. The inference was obvious: either he had "muzzled" the paper by granting it certain favors, or he was making use of it as a weapon against the very administration of which he was a member.

Hamilton naturally inclined toward the latter view, and much bitterness was the result. On July 25, 1792,

he inserted this anonymous bit in *Fenno's Gazette of the United States*, the Federalist organ:

"The Editor of the *National Gazette* receives a salary from Government:

"Quere—Whether this salary is paid him for *translations;* or for *publications*, the design for which is to vilify those to whom the voice of the people has committed the administration of our public affairs—to oppose the measures of Government, and, by false insinuations, to disturb the public peace?

"In common life it is thought ungrateful for a man to bite the hand that puts bread in his mouth; but if the man is hired to do it, the case is altered. T. L."

This was the beginning of a series of anonymous attacks in the Federalist newspaper, written undoubtedly by Hamilton. A second article, still more definite, appeared on August 4th. In it the writer directly charged Jefferson with being the soul and spirit of the *National Gazette*. "Mr. Freneau was thought a fit instrument," and so was deliberately engaged; he was simply the "faithful and devoted servant of the head of a party from whose hands he received a boon." The article then proceeds at length to arraign Jefferson and to appeal to the American people, whether they will consent to see the precious legacies which are theirs "frittered away" in so shameless a manner.

This attack called forth (from Freneau) an affidavit which was printed in the *Gazette*, August 8, 1792:

"Personally appeared before me, Matthew Clarkson, Mayor of the City of Philadelphia, Philip Freneau, of the City of Philadelphia, who, being duly sworn, doth depose and say, That no negociation was ever opened with him by Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of State, for the establishment or institution of the *National Gazette:* that the deponent's coming to the City of Philadelphia, as publisher of a Newspaper, was at no time urged, advised, or influenced by the above officer, but that it was his own voluntary act; and that the said Gazette, nor the Editor

thereof, was ever directed, controuled, or attempted to be influenced, in any manner, either by the Secretary of State, or any of his friends; nor was a line ever, directly or indirectly, written, dictated, or composed for it by that officer, but that the Editor has consulted his own judgment alone in the conducting of it—free—unfettered—and uninfluenced.

"PHILIP FRENEAU.

"Sworn the 6th August, 1772, before

"MATTHEW CLARKSON, Mayor."

Hamilton followed, August 11th, with another article. He emphatically discredited Freneau's oath, declaring that "facts spoke louder than words, and under certain circumstances louder than oaths;" that "the editor of the *National Gazette* must not think to swear away their efficacy;" that "if he was truly, as they announced, the pensioned tool of the public character who had been named, no violation of truth in any shape ought to astonish; equivocations and mental reservations were the too common refuge of minds struggling to escape from disgraceful imputations." The article then proceeded to show that Jefferson did really establish the *Gazette* through a particular friend.

Freneau at once declined to answer further the attacks, on the ground that they were mere "personal charges," and Hamilton promptly branded this as "a mere subterfuge." Thus Freneau found himself in the midst of a perfect hornet's nest of partisan strife that involved the country from end to end. The Federal organ continued its attacks, and Freneau, always restive under criticism, increased in bitterness.

On September 9, 1792, Jefferson put himself on record in a letter to Washington.[1] The letter is extremely long, since it covers the entire contest with Hamilton from the beginning. In it he declared:

[1] Randall's *Life of Jefferson*, vol. ii, 78.

"While the Government was at New York I was applied to on behalf of Freneau to know if there was any place within my department to which he could be appointed. I answered there were but four clerkships, all of which I found full, and continued without any change. When we removed to Philadelphia, Mr. Pintard, the translating clerk, did not choose to remove with us. His office then became vacant. I was again applied to there for Freneau, and had no hesitation to promise the clerkship for him. I cannot recollect whether it was at the same time, or afterwards, that I was told he had a thought of setting up a newspaper there. But whether then, or afterwards, I considered it a circumstance of some value, as it might enable me to do, what I had long wished to have done, that is, to have the material parts of the Leyden Gazette brought under your eye, and that of the public, in order to possess yourself and them of a juster view of the affairs of Europe than could be obtained from any other public source. This I had ineffectually attempted through the press of Mr. Fenno, while in New York, selecting and translating passages myself at first, then having it done by Mr. Pintard, the translating clerk, but they found their way too slowly into Mr. Fenno's papers. Mr. Bache esssayed it for me in Philadelphia, but his being a daily paper, did not circulate sufficiently in the other States. He even tried, at my request, the plan of a weekly paper of recapitulation from his daily paper, in hopes, that that might go into the other States, but in this too we failed. Freneau, as translating clerk, and the printer of a periodical paper likely to circulate through the States (uniting in one person the parts of Pintard and Fenno) revived my hopes that the thing could at length be effected. On the establishment of his paper, therefore, I furnished him with the Leyden Gazettes, with an expression of my wish that he could always translate and publish the material intelligence they contained, and have continued to furnish them from time to to time, as regularly as I received them. But as to any other direction or indication of my wish how his press should be conducted, what sort of intelligence he should give, what essays encourage, I can protest, in the presence of Heaven that I never did by myself, or any other, or indirectly, say a syllable, nor attempt any kind of influence. I can further protest, in the same awful presence, that I never did, by myself, or any other, directly or indirectly, write, dictate or procure any one sentence or sentiment to be inserted *in his, or any other gazette*, to which my name was not affixed, or that of my office. . . . Freneau's proposition to publish a paper, having been about the time that the writings of Publicola, and the discourses on Davila, had a good deal excited the public attention,

I took for granted from Freneau's character, which had been marked as that of a good Whig, that he would give free place to pieces written against the aristocratical and monarchial principles these papers had inculcated. This having been in my mind, it is likely enough I may have expressed it in conversation with others, though I do not recollect that I did. To Freneau I think I could not, because I had still seen him but once, and that at a public table, at breakfast, at Mrs. Elsworth's, as I passed through New York the last year. And I can safely declare that my expectations looked only to the chastisement of the aristocratical and monarchial writers, and not to any criticisms on the proceedings of Government. Colonel Hamilton can see no motive for any appointment, but that of making a convenient partisan. But you, sir, who have received from me recommendations of a Rittenhouse, Barlow, Paine, will believe that talents and science are sufficient motives with me in appointments to which they are fitted; and that Freneau, as a man of genius, might find a preference in my eye to be a translating clerk, and make good title to the little aids I could give him as the editor of a gazette, by procuring subscriptions to his paper, as I did some before it appeared, and as I have with pleasure done for the labors of other men of genius. I hold it to be one of the distinguishing excellences of elective over hereditary successions, that the talents which nature has provided in sufficient proportion, should be selected by the society for the government of their affairs, rather than this should be transmitted through the loins of knaves and fools, passing from the debauches of the table to those of the bed. Colonel Hamilton, alias 'Plain Facts,' says, that Freneau's salary began before he resided in Philadelphia. I do not know what quibble he may have in reserve on the word 'residence.' He may mean to include under that idea the removal of his family; for I believe he removed himself before his family did, to Philadelphia. But no act of mine gave commencement to his salary before he so far took up his abode in Philadelphia, as to be sufficiently in readiness for the duties of the office. As to the merits or demerits of his paper, they certainly concern me not. He and Fenno are rivals for the public favor. The one courts them by flattery, the other by censure, and I believe it will be admitted that the one has been as servile, as the other severe. But is not the dignity, and even decency of Government committed, when one of its principal ministers enlists himself as an anonymous writer or paragraphist for either the one or the other of them? No government ought to be without censors; and where the press is free, no one ever will. If virtuous, it need not fear the fair operation of attack and

defence. Nature has given to man no other means of sifting out the truth either in religion, law, or politics. I think it as honorable to the Government neither to know, nor notice, its sycophants or censors, as it would be undignified and criminal to pamper the former and persecute the latter."[1]

But if the *National Gazette* concerned Jefferson not at all, as he alleged, it certainly did exasperate Washington. Later on, when the Genet affair had urged Freneau into still greater excesses, Washington, on the 23d of May, 1793, had a conversation with Jefferson, which the latter recorded in his *Ana:*

"He [the President] adverted to a piece in Freneau's paper of yesterday, he said he despised all their attacks on him personally, but that there never had been an act of the government, not meaning in the Executive line only, but in any line, which that paper had not abused. He had also marked the word republic thus——where it was applied to the French republic [see the original paper]. He was evidently sore & warm, and I took his intention to be that I should interpose in some way with Freneau; perhaps withdraw his appointment of translating clerk to my office. But I will not do it. His paper has saved our constitution, which was galloping fast into monarchy, & has been checked by no one means so powerfully as by that paper. It is well and universally known, that it has been that paper which has checked the career of the monocrats, & the President, not sensible of the designs of the party, has not with his usual good sense and *sang froid*, looked on the efforts and effects of this free press and seen that, though some bad things have passed through it to the public, yet the good have preponderated immensely."[2]

Washington even brought the affair into a meeting of the Cabinet, declaring, according to Jefferson's *Ana*, that,

"That rascal, Freneau, sent him three copies of his paper every day as if he thought he (Washington) would become the distributor of

[1] Randall's *Life of Thomas Jefferson*, ii, 81,

[2] *Writings of Jefferson*, i, 231.

them; that he could see in this nothing but an impudent design to insult him; he ended in a high tone."[1]

The *National Gazette* published its last issue, October 23, 1793. The collapse of the Genet bubble—the revulsion of feeling after the Frenchman had threatened to appeal from Washington to the people, brought on a tidal wave which swept away all the idols of French Republicanism in America, and the *National Gazette* could not withstand the tide. Subscribers withdrew their subscriptions at a ruinous rate, the notes of the proprietors were protested, and the paper was abandoned. Freneau had no idea, however, of final surrender. His last word was a promise which, however, was never fulfilled.

"With the present number concludes the second volume and second year's publication of the *National Gazette*. Having just imported on his own account a considerable quantity of new and elegant printing types from Europe, it is the editor's intention to resume the publication of this paper in a short time and previous to the meeting of Congress in December next."

It is upon this episode that the reputation of Freneau among the generality of people chiefly rests. "That rascal Freneau" is the epithet that has clung to his name through all the intervening century. It is this one affair, more than anything else, that has kept him from the recognition he deserves, both as a patriot and a poet. The attitude of New England may be expressed in the words of President Dwight, written during the summer of 1793:

"Freneau, your printer, linguist, &c., is regarded here as a mere ncendiary, or rather as a despicable tool of bigger incendiaries, and his)aper as a public nuisance."

[1] *Writings of Jefferson*, i, 251.

Letters might be multiplied in showing the same spirit in all of the Federalists.

It must not be forgotten, however, that Freneau acted from pure and honest motives; that the excitement and bitter partisanship of the period were extraordinary, and that the air was heavily charged with the subtle magnetism that in France had created a reign of terror. It cannot be denied that Freneau went to excess in his denunciations; but so did Hamilton, who in reality began the conflict; so did Jefferson; so did many others. As to the extent to which Jefferson went in subsidizing the *Gazette* for his own use, the reader may judge for himself. Neither side is free from blame; Freneau is certainly no more culpable than the others who held far higher positions than he. It is but justice to say of Freneau, in the words of Jefferson's biographer, Randall—

"He was always a warm, and after the period of which we write, became a violent partisan. It is but justice to his memory, however, to say that his honor and his veracity as a man were never questioned by those who knew him, and that his reputation in these particulars is now as free from all taint of suspicion as is that of any of the distinguished gentlemen whose names were associated with his in the controversy."

The following words of Madison, taken from Mr. Trist's memoranda of a conversation, May 25, 1827, and published in Tucker's Life of Jefferson, probably presents the affair in its true light:

"Mr. Madison said: 'Freneau's paper was another cause of soreness in General Washington. Among its different contributors, some were actuated by over-heated zeal, and some, perhaps, by malignity. Every effort was made in Fenno's paper, and by those immediately around him (Washington) to impress on his mind a belief that this paper had been got up by Mr. Jefferson to injure him and oppose the measures of his administration. Freneau himself was an old College mate of mine, a poet and man of literary and refined tastes, knowing

nothing of the world. He was a French scholar, and employed at first as translator. Henry Lee, who was also his College mate, and had also a friendly feeling for him, was the more immediate cause of his establishing a paper. Our main object in encouraging it, was to provide an antidote against Fenno's paper, which was devoted to monarchy, and had begun to publish extracts from Mr. Adams's book. I used occasionally to throw in an article, all of which I have marked, and some of which I have shown you, with a view chiefly to counteract the monarchial spirit and partisanship of the British government which characterized Fenno's paper. I never engaged in the party criminations.'"

It deserves mention that Freneau stuck to his post during the yellow fever epidemic of 1793, and that for weeks he was the only active editor in the city. On October 1st he resigned his position as translator, and soon after removed to his old home at Mount Pleasant. For a time he was without employment. He contemplated several newspaper enterprises. He evidently took steps toward the publication of a paper in Monmouth County, New Jersey, as the following advertisement, published in the *Jersey Chronicle*, May 30, 1795, would show:

"A number of persons in Freehold and other parts of Monmouth subscribed last year to a paper the editor then proposed to set on foot. As various causes delayed him prosecuting his intended purpose until the present spring, and as he supposes, many of them might in the meantime have engaged with other printers, he hopes they will if possible transfer their subscription to the *Chronicle*."

On November 2, 1794, he writes Madison, recommending his old friend Bailey for the office of public printer, and on May 6th following, he received a reply:

"I delayed acknowledging your favour long ago received, until I could inform you of the prospects of Mr. Bailey in whose favor it was written. I have now the pleasure to tell you that although his wishes are not to be immediately fulfilled he is looking to obtain under the

auspices of Mr Beckley and Mr. Randolph a share of employment hereafter which may be very valuable to him. I congratulate you on the public intelligence just received from Holland which gives joy to all true Republicans, and wish you all the private happiness which an exchange of your former travelled scenes for the shade and tranquility of your present life can afford. Remember, however, as you have not chosen any longer to labor in the field of politics it will be expected by your friends that you cultivate with the more industry your inheritance on Parnassus."

On May the 20th following, Freneau continued the correspondence:

"My respected friend: By some accident your kind letter of April 6th was a long time in finding its way hither, having not come to hand till the 17th inst. I sincerely thank you for the interest you have taken in Mr. Bailey. He is a good Republican and a worthy honest man, which qualifications, I have thought, entitled him to some notice from the Government, in his line of business—I was heartily laughed at, however, a few weeks ago in N. York, by some Aristocrats, for having in my Letter to you or Mr. Beckley, I forget which, extolled his Military services in the late War—I am sensible he never cut off the heads of Giants or drove hosts before him, as some have done; at the same time it ought to be remembered that he was an officer in the Pennsylvania Militia in the season that tried men's souls (as Paine says) and I believe never acted otherwise than became the character in which he acted.—

I meet you at least half way in your congratulations on the public intelligence received from Holland. It is but another step toward the advancement and completion of that great and philanthropic System which I have been anticipating for many years, and which you as well as myself, I hope, will live to see realized—When I first went to reside in Philada. in 1791 I wished to be one of those who would have the honour and happiness of announcing these great events to the public through the medium of a newspaper: A variety of circumstances however, needless to trouble you with, urged my departure from that city after completing a two years publication—As I mean to pass the remainder of my days on a couple of hundred of acres of an old sandy patrimony, I have, by way of filling up the vacuities of time set on foot a small weekly Newspaper calculated for the part of the country in which I am. Should you have any curiosity to see it I will forward it to you free of all expence except that of postage. I will not make high promi-

ses in regard to what it may contain. It will scarcely be expected that in a rude barbarous part of the country I could calculate it for the polite taste of Philadelphia.—Should your fixed residence be in Philada. I can transmit the papers to you once a week by the Public Post, who stops every Wednesday at my door. A Letter put into the Post Office at Philadelphia on Saturday morning, will be sure to reach me on Wednesday.—The public papers some time ago announced your Marriage.—I wish you all possible happiness with the lady whom you have chosen for your Companion through life—Mrs. Freneau joins me in the same, and desires me to present her best respects to your lady and yourself—and should you ever take an excursion to these parts of Jersey, we will endeavour to give Mrs. Madison and yourself—'if not a costly welcome, yet a kind.'"

The *Jersey Chronicle*, an eight-paged paper of the size of a sheet of letter paper, issued its initial number from the editor's little office at Mount Pleasant, Saturday, May 2, 1795. It bore the motto, "*Inter Sylvas Academi quaerere verum.* — Hor.;" and its object, in the words of its editor, was "to present . . . a complete history of the foreign and domestic events of the Times, together with such essays, remarks, and observations as shall tend to illustrate the politics, or mark the general character of the age and country in which we live." The editor's salutatory is characteristic of its author:

"Never was there a more interesting period than the present, nor ever was there a time within the reach of history when mankind have been so generally united in attending to the cultivation of the mind, examining into the natural and political rights of nations, and emancipating themselves from those shackles of despotism which have so long impeded the happiness of the human species, and rendered the rights of the many subservient to the interests of the few.

"At this time, when new Republics are forming and new Empires bursting into birth; when the great family of mankind are evidently making their egress from the dark shadows of despotism which have so long enveloped them, & are assuming a character suitable to the dignity of their species, the Editor seizes the opportunity to renew his

efforts for contributing, in some small degree, to the general information of his fellow citizens in the present history and politics of the world. No pains shall be spared, on his part, to procure the best, the most authentic, and earliest intelligence from every quarter, and circulating it by every method and means in his power; and to whatever parts his subscription will enable him to do it.

"When it is considered that few Advertisements are reasonably to be expected in these more eastern parts of New-Jersey, the terms of snbscription will appear low, and, it may be added, are within the power of almost every man who has the will and inclination to encourage literature, promote the interests, or enlarge the ideas of the rising generation, and contribute to the general diffusion of knowledge among his fellow citizens.

"Should the publication of The Jersey Chronicle be suitably encouraged, the Editor will in due time enlarge the size of the sheet; but that now published on is, in his opinion, every way adequate to an experiment whether the attempt be practicable or not."

Freneau's essays contributed to the *Chronicle* are among the most notable prose productions from his pen. He began a series of studies "On Monarchial and Mixed Forms of Government;" he wrote "Observations on Monarchy," and discussed at length the leading arguments for and against Jay's Treaty with England. On May 23d he began to publish a series of papers entitled "Tomo Cheeki, the Creek Indian in Philadelphia," in which the manners and absurdities of the Americans are described from the standpoint of an observant savage. In nearly every issue of the paper there was an elaborate essay on some political subject. Of poetry there was very little. The *National Gazette* had contained little poetry from the editor's pen, save earlier verses reprinted, and a few political satires and republican lyrics. The influence of Peter Pindar was becoming more and more manifest in the poet's style. Politics and party strife had for a time displaced the muse. This is nowhere more evident than

in the collected edition of his poems printed on his own press and issued in June, 1795.

In many respects this is the most interesting of Freneau's collections: it brings us into the very presence of the poet. The earlier editions had been published without his supervision, the material for this one passed all of it under the author's critical eye. Scarcely a poem escaped revision. After noting the scrupulous care with which he changed adjectives, improved rhymes, added new stanzas, or cut out old ones, repunctuated sentences, and rearranged material, one cannot join the somewhat large band of hasty and superficial critics who allude flippantly to the poet as a hasty and careless improviser of ephemeral trash. As a matter of fact, Freneau was a miser with his verses. When a newspaper poem suspected to be his, especially in the period previous to 1795, cannot be found in any of his collections, grave doubts at once arise as to whether the poem is his. He was never tired of revising, and cutting, and pruning. The poems so carefully edited in 1795 were again carefully revised in 1809. As an instance of his concern for the fate of his poems let me quote a letter, written August 29, 1781, to Matthew Carey:

"I see by this day's paper that my verses on General Washington's arrival, etc., are to appear in your next *Museum*. If it is not too late, I would request the favour of you to rectify an error (which was entirely of the press) in the fifth line of the thirteenth stanza, as it materially affects the sense. Instead of 'whom' please to read 'who.'"

The 1795 edition is interesting from another standpoint. The resources of the little country office were taxed to the utmost in the production of the book. At best it is a crude piece of printing. There is manifest everywhere an effort to keep the work within bounds,

to economize space. Titles are abbreviated, mottoes dropped, foot notes cut out, and many earlier poems reduced, or omitted entirely. The list of omissions is very suggestive: scenes one and two were cut from the "Pictures of Columbus," the long song of Ismenius was dropped from "The Monument of Phaon," "The Jamaica Funeral," and "The House of Night" were reduced to mere fragments, "Female Frailty" was dropped save for the opening lyric, and there were other notable changes. In every case it will be found that the poet threw overboard the light and imaginative element, the purely poetic.

The reason for these omissions has been often sought. Prof. C. F. Richardson in particular has wondered at the dropping of the intensely original and weirdly strong poem "The House of Night,"—in his opinion the best thing Freneau ever did. It is not difficult to answer the question after a careful study of the evolution of Freneau's poetic ideals. He began to write poetry after a thorough course of reading in the Latin and English classics. His early work is redolent of Virgil's "Eclogues," of Horace, of Shakespeare, of Milton's minor poems, of Gray's "Elegy." If ever there was a sensitive, beauty-loving, poetic soul, the young Freneau was one. In his early inexperience he even dreamed of a poetic career in which he might perhaps win a place beside the great masters of song. His early work like the "Ode to Fancy," and similar pieces, and the strong and original "House of Night" and "Santa Cruz" show what he might have done in another environment.

But Revolutionary America had little encouragement for an imaginative poet. There was something in the air that seemed to put into men the Franklin

spirit. It was the era of common-sense, of stern reality, of practical affairs. Madison voiced the age when in 1774 he advised Bradford, the cultured and imaginative young lover of poetry and all art, to turn to sterner things:

"I was afraid you would not easily have loosened your affections from the Belles Lettres. A Delicate Taste and warm imagination like yours must find it hard to give up such refined & exquisite enjoyments for the coarse and dry study of the Law: It is like leaving a pleasant flourishing field for a barren desert; perhaps I should not say barren either because the Law does bear fruit but it is sour fruit that must be gathered and pressed and distilled before it can bring pleasure or profit. . . . I myself use to have too great a hankering after those amusing studies. Poetry wit and Criticism Romances Plays &c captivated me much: but I begin to discover that they deserve but a moderrate portion of a *mortal's* Time and that something more substantial more durable more profitable befits our riper age. it would be exceeding improper for a labouring man to have nothing but flowers in his Garden or to determine to eat nothing but sweet-meats and confections. Equally absurd would it be for a Scholar and man of Business to make up his whole Library with Books of Fancy and feed his mind with nothing but such Luscious performances."[1]

The first half of Freneau's life, as we have seen, was one of disillusion. It took twenty-five years to kill the spark in his breast, but the process though slow was sure. After the fierce period of the *National Gazette* he thought of himself only as a worker in the tide of practical affairs, a champion of the rights of man, a protestor against tyranny and wrong, and his muse had become a mere drudge, aiding by satire and song what he now conceived to be his life work. He had taken a deliberate though sorrowful leave of his early muse in 1787, one year after the appearance of his first volume of poems:

[1] Wallace Papers, vol. i. Pa. Hist. Soc.

"On these bleak climes by fortune thrown
Where rigid Reason reigns alone,
Where flowery Fancy holds no sway
Nor golden forms around her play,
Nor Nature takes her magic hue,
Alas what has the muse to do!
An age employed in painting steel
Can no poetic raptures feel;
No fabled Love's enchanting power
No tale of Flora's shady bower.
Nor wood-land haunt, or murmuring grove
Can its prosaic bosom move.
The muse of love in no request,
I'll try my fortune with the rest;
Which of the nine shall I engage
To suit the humor of the age?
On one, alas, my choice must fall,
The least engaging of them all!
Her visage stern, severe her style,
A clouded brow, a cruel smile,
A mind on murdered victims placed,
She, only she, can please the taste."

One cannot read long the columns of the *Jersey Chronicle* without realizing forcibly the change that had come over Freneau. The poet who emerged from the crucible of the *National Gazette* was not at all like the poet of "The House of Night" period. He could look upon this product of his early imagination much as Madison would have done, and he could in cold blood cut it down to a mere fragment which would voice his new French Deistic ideas, that he might have room for his Republican songs. The poem "To the Americans of the United States," written in 1797, gives us a true picture of this later Freneau. He would be no courtly singer "beneath some great man's ceiling placed," no solitary dreamer. He would be a man of action travel-

ling over lands and seas, a poet who caught his subjects from the varying scene of human things.

> "To seize some *features* from the faithless past;
> Be this our care—before the century close:
> The colours strong! for, if we deem aright,
> The *coming age will be an age of prose:*
> When *sordid cares* will break the muses' dream,
> And COMMON SENSE be ranked in seat supreme."

With the fifty-second number of the *Chronicle*, published April 30, 1796, the paper came to an end. Freneau's final editorial stated that:

"In number one of the Jersey Chronicle the editor announced his intention of extending the publication beyond the first year, provided the attempt should in the meantime be suitably encouraged and found practicable. But the necessary number of subscribers having not yet appeared, scarcely to defray the expenses of the undertaking, notwithstanding the very low rate at which it has been offered, the editor with some regret declines a further prosecution of his plan at this time. He embraces the present opportunity to return his sincere thanks to such persons in this and the neighboring counties as have favored him with their subscriptions; and have also by their punctuality in complying with the terms originally proposed, thus far enabled him to issue a free, independent, and republican paper."

A letter[1] written by Freneau from New York, to Madison, dated December 1, 1796, reveals what was in the poet's mind during the months following the abandonment of the *Chronicle:*

"Having three or four months since formed a resolution to bid adieu for a few years to some old Trees in Jersey under the shade of which I edited, amongst ditching and grubbing, a small weekly Paper entitled the Jersey Chronicle, I did not know how to employ that interval better than in striking out here with some printer, if such could be found, already engaged in supporting the good old Republican cause. After experiencing one or two disappointments in accomplishing this object, I

[1] Madison Papers, vol. xxi, p. 70.

am now through the kind aid of some friends here nearly completing the project of a copartnership with Thomas Greenleaf in his two Papers, *The Argus*, a daily publication, and the New York Journal, twice a week; both on a pretty respectable footing, and noted for a steady attachment to Republican principles, though open to all decent speculations from any party if they choose to transmit them. In short, I would wish to revive something in the spirit of the National Gazette, if time and circumstances allow, and with proper assistance hope to succeed —Thus,

> A Raven once an acorn took
> From Bashan's strongest stoutest tree ;
> He hid it near a murmuring brook,
> And liv'd another oak to see.

As I consider the bargain the same as concluded, my next object is to make all the friends here that I decently can among men of eminence and ability. This I have in some small degree attempted and gained, but for want of certain insinuating qualities, natural enough I suppose to some men, I feel myself sadly at a loss to get acquainted with some characters here to whom I could wish to be known upon motives of public as well as private utility.

"Among these is the chancellor of this State, Robert R. Livingston, with whom, if I recollect right, you are upon terms of intimacy. If I am not mistaken in this point, and you can with propriety accede to my request, you would confer a favor upon me by mentioning me to him in your next Letter, in such manner as you may think best, so that this new connexion may attract some share of his attention, and thereby the countenance of the Livingston family in general, which would operate greatly, through this State at least, in advancing our Subscription and printing Interest in general."

The partnership with Greenleaf, mentioned to Madison, for some reason was never consummated. On March 13, 1797, however, Freneau issued in New York the first number of a new journal, *The Time Piece and Literary Companion*, to be devoted to "literary amusement and an abridgement of the most interesting intelligence foreign and domestic." He "associated himself," as he expressed it, "as a partner in the typographical line of business with Mr. Alexander Menut of that

profession, sometime since from Canada," though, during the first year at least, Freneau had entire control of the editing of the paper. His address to the public is of considerable interest:

"Several months having elapsed since the publication of a periodical paper in this city was first contemplated by the subscriber, he now informs his friends and the public in general that he has at length so far matured his plan as to attempt a paper of this kind to be published three times a week and transmitted to city subscribers early on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings.

"The *Time Piece and Literary Companion* will on all occasions be open to political, moral, or other interesting discussion from any quarter whatever provided such communications are written with candor, decency, and liberality, their object such as to promote the general good of our great Confederate Commonwealth, or the common interest of man, and conceived in that disinterested spirit which while it carefully avoids as far as possible irritating the feelings of individuals, holds itself obligated under any circumstances whatever to consider truth, the moral and political happiness of our species, social harmony, and good order, the basis of all its exertions, the end of all its aims, views and endeavors."

The paper is a tastily arranged and neatly printed sheet, and its contents show constantly its editor's rare ability to cater to the public needs. Refinement and a fastidious taste are evidenced everywhere in its columns. Duyckinck comments on "the skill of the selection and the general elegance of the material," which were certainly unusual in those early days of American journalism. The paper had a large number of feminine contributors, who gave freely of their sentimental lyrics and sprightly letters. The poet himself contributed many poems, the most of them, as usual, concerned with contemporary affairs. He republished his translation from the Abbé Robin made in 1783 since, as he declared, only a small edition was then printed, and the work was in the hands of a very few.

He republished also his "Tomo Cheeki" letters, introducing them thus:

"A number of eccentric writings under the subsequent title and to the amount of a considerable volume are in the hands of the editor of the Time Piece said to be translated from one of the Indian languages of this country. They were transmitted to him more than two years ago and a few numbers published in a gazette edited by him in a neighboring State, but discontinued with that paper. If the contributions of a rude aboriginal of America shall appear to afford any gratification to the generality of our readers the whole will be occasionally offered to the public through the medium of the Time Piece."

His pen was constantly active. He wrote vigorous editorials on all passing political measures, and on September 1, 1897, proposed to edit Ledyard's Journals:

"The subscriber having procured from the hands of his relatives the original MSS. of Mr. Ledyard now offers to the public of the United States an opportunity of gratifying their curiosity and at the same time paying a token of respect to the memory of Ledyard. Ledyard's travels will be compiled by P. Freneau from the original MSS. of the author, consisting of letters, journals, notes, etc., etc., and such documents as have appeared in print, both in America and Europe, particularly a work published by the British African Society, in whose service, with a view of exploring the interior of Africa, his last expedition was undertaken and terminated in his death at Cairo, in Egypt.

"One vol. at least 250 pages.

"A life of the author collected from authentic materials will be prefixed to the work, with some other preliminary matter."

Freneau evidently made some progress with the work, for on August 30, 1798, the following advertisement appeared in the *Time Piece*, as well as in the Charleston *City Gazette:*

"The interesting travels of John Ledyard, with a summary of his life, are now in the hands of the printer.

"It shall be printed on fine paper with new type ornamented with a full length portrait of the author in the attitude of taking leave on his departure for Africa. Page octavo, handsomely bound and lettered. Calculated to contain between 400 and 500 pages. $2 per volume."

The volume, whether from a failure to secure subscribers or other reasons, was never published.

The partnership of Freneau and Menut was dissolved September 13, 1797, and shortly after, the imprint of the paper was changed to read "Published by P. Freneau and M. L. Davis, No. 26 Moore Street, near Whitehall." On January 3, 1798, Freneau made a visit to Charleston, taking passage in the sloop *Katy*, and arriving after a rough voyage of thirty-one days. During the following month he was the guest of his brother, Peter, and in the words of his daughter, of "his many friends there, among whom were Charles Pinckney, Governor of South Carolina, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, General Bull, Edge, and many others where he was as much at home as at his brother's." He embarked from Charleston March 7th and arrived in New York after a week's voyage.

The affairs of the *Time Piece* were in a critical condition. A part of the subscribers lived at a distance from New York and the expenses were large. Freneau was unwilling to run further risks, and a few days after his return from the South, he withdrew from the firm, having been editor of the paper just one year. He thereupon retired with his family to the little estate at Mount Pleasant, where he made his home for the rest of his life.

VI.

The quiet period after the anxiety and stress of editorship in a great city was for a time grateful to the poet. He managed the farm in a desultory way, but his main occupation was composing verses under his favorite locust tree which had been planted by his father and which had increased in size and numbers until in the

words of his daughter, "it was a complete grove of locust trees surrounding a house grown old with its time worn owner, his venerable mother and maiden sister beloved and respected for her many virtues. Her decease, which took place a few years previous to his own, he says in an obituary, he can say no more nor less than that 'she was as good and innocent as an angel.'" This sister, Mary Freneau, a beautiful woman, had been wooed at one time by Madison, but for some reason she had refused him.

Freneau's family consisted of four daughters: Eleanor, born in 1791; Agnes W., born June 22, 1794; Catherine L., born February 25, 1798; and Margaret Alaire, born June 10, 1801. Eleanor married a Mr. Hammill, and the four daughters of this union died unmarried; Agnes married Dr. Edward Leadbeater, and the eldest son of this union, at the earnest request of the poet, was christened Philip Leadbeater Freneau, his grandfather putting into his infant hands the ancestral Bible, which was the family treasure. The descendants of Agnes Freneau and Dr. Leadbeater are very numerous. The two younger daughters of the poet never married.

The active pen of Freneau, so long practiced in discussing the affairs of the day, could not rest idle during his period of retirement. He began a series of letters to the Philadelphia *Aurora* and other papers, and on December 30, 1799, issued them in a volume entitled "Letters on Various Interesting and Important Subjects, many of which have appeared in the Aurora." It bore his old pen name, Robert Slender, with the added title, O. S. M., interpreted later to mean "One of the Swinish Multitude." The book has surprising merit. The letters are written in a breezy, colloquial style, and

the simple-minded old cobbler is well characterized. Freneau has actually succeeded in making him a living creature, and his opinions and "whim whams" are full of hard sense and practical wisdom. The book is by all means the best prose that Freneau ever wrote. So easy is the style and so natural is the characterization that I cannot forbear quoting at some length from a chapter chosen almost at random:

LETTER XXII

MR. EDITOR,

Having heard that there was a tavern at about the distance of a mile or so from my favourite country spot, where now and then a few neighbours meet to spit, smoke segars, drink apple whiskey, cider or cider-royal, and read the news—a few evenings ago, I put on my best coat, combed out my wig, put my spectacles in my pocket, and a quarter dollar—This I thought was right; for although Mrs. Slender told me eleven-pence was enough, says I, I'll e'en take the quarter dollar, for a man always feels himself of more consequence when he has got good money in his pocket—so out I walks with a good stout stick in my hand, which I always make a point to carry with me, lest the dogs should make rather freer with my legs than I could wish. But I had not gone more than half the way, when, by making a false step, I splash'd my stocking from the knee to the ancle. Odds my heart, said I, see what a hand I have made of my stocking; I'll be bail, added I, I'll hear of this in both sides of my head—but it can't now be helped—this, and a thousand worse accidents, which daily happen, are all occasioned by public neglect, and the misapplication of the public's money—Had I, said I, (talking to myself all the while) the disposal of but half the income of the United States, I could at least so order matters, that a man might walk to his next neighbour's without splashing his stockings or being in danger of breaking his legs in ruts, holes, gutts, and gullies. I do not know, says I to myself, as I moralized on my splash'd stocking, but money might with more profit be laid out in repairing the roads, than in marine establishments, supporting a standing army, useless embassies, exorbitant salaries, given to many flashy fellows that are no honour to us, or to themselves, and chartering whole ships to carry a single man to another nation—Odds my life, continued I, what a number of difficulties a man labours under, who has never read further than

Lilly's grammar, and has but a poor brain—had I been favoured with a good education, I could no doubt readily see the *great usefulness* of all these measures of government, that now appear to me so unaccountable—I could then, said I, still talking to myself, see the reason why the old patriots, whose blood flowed so freely in purchasing our independence, are cast aside, like a broken pitcher, (as the scripture says) and why the old tories and active refugees are advanced to places of power, honour and trust—I could then be able to explain why Robbins, an American citizen, for killing an Englishman who held him a slave, and so gaining his liberty, was delivered to the English to be hanged—and Sterret, who killed a veteran sailor, who had formerly fought and bled in the cause of his country, and then was bravely doing his duty, yet, remains unpunished. . . . As I said this, by accident I looked up, and perceived to my surprise, that if I had gone but one step further, I would have actually knocked my nose against the sign-post—I declare, said I, here I am, this is a tavern indeed. I then felt in my pocket, if I had my quarter dollar, which to my joy I found—I then unbuttoned my coat, to shew my silk waistcoat, pulled my watch chain a good piece longer out of my pocket, fixed my hat a little better on my head—and then advanced boldly into the tavern—But I see I am got to the end of my page, and therefore must defer the remainder of my adventure to another opportunity."

In the advertisement of the book, the author made the half promise of more letters in the same vein:

"Should these letters meet with a favourable reception in their present form, a second volume will shortly be published, containing besides those that have since appeared separately a variety of original ones upon such interesting subjects as may hereafter claim the public attention."

The volume was never published. The little family at Mount Pleasant could not subsist alone on letters and poems, however brilliant. The outlook was not a bright one, as the following letter[1] to his brother Peter, in Charleston, dated March 1, 1801, would indicate:

[1] In the possession of Adele M. Sweeney.

"Having been here [New York] a day or two and finding the brig Echo, Capt. Webb, to sail for Charleston, I take the opportunity of dropping you a line by him.

"I left all well at home last Thursday, and the place, etc., as well as could be expected after my poor mother's absence. I have been and shall be for some time busy in repairing old fences and making new ones, and some other small improvements, as far as I personally can with the money you let me have. Helen goes to school here, the other two girls are at home, but Agnes is to come here next month for the same purpose for awhile. There are more cares and vexations coming on, but still they must be got through with at some rate. Probably I shall have to embark on some new expedition or plan before long wherever or to whatever the devil, etc., shall see fit to drive me. But I shall attempt nothing if I can before I see you here, in April or May, as you promised.

"I return this morning to Jersey. Mr. Hunn, Peggy, Mamma and Polly all desire their love to you. My love and respects to Mrs. Freneau and Miss Dora with her mother and family. Remembrances, love, etc., to Mr. Davis, and may I expect to have a line from you by Capt. Peter."

Freneau was at best a half-hearted farmer. A little anecdote told by the family is eloquent. One day the poet and his wife, who had walked together into the field to inspect the work, found a slave asleep in the young corn. Mrs. Freneau seizing his hoe declared that she would show him how to work. At the very first attempt, however, she cut down a hill of corn, whereupon the slave remarked gleefully: "Ho, ho, Missie Freneau, if that's the way you hoe, the corn'll never grow." She threw down the hoe in disgust, declaring that "No wonder the farm doesn't pay when even the slaves talk in rhymes."

The affairs of the poet were soon such as to give real concern to his friends. In a letter dated September 13, 1801, a part of which we have already quoted, Aedanus Burke wrote Madison:

"I am sorry to have it to say that Freneau, with his wife and two children, is still in embarrassed circumstances. He is a virtuous, honest

man, and an undeviating Republican; yet utterly incapable of soliciting anything for himself. The best apology I can offer for mentioning it, is that I know you have great regard for him. You were at College together, as I heard you often say."

However this letter may have been received, Freneau obtained no appointment either from Madison or Jefferson, though there is a persistent tradition among his descendants that he was offered a good position under President Jefferson but refused it on the ground that the latter had deserted him in the *National Gazette* affair. On October 23, 1803, his old-time friend, Francis Bailey, addressed Madison:

"My dear sir: The death of Col. Bauman of New York has left the Post Office without a Master. I know of no man in the United States who would fill the office with more ability, or greater integrity, than Philip Freneau."

As far as we know, there was no response, though the family declare that Madison sent for him and that the poet proudly said, "James Madison knows where I live, let him come to see me."

The "expedition" to mend his fortunes, which he had mentioned to his brother as a disagreeable possibility, became at length inevitable. On Saturday, November 27th, he embarked at New York as Master of the schooner *John*, bound for Fredericksburg, Virginia, with a cargo of salt. A minute log book of this voyage is still to be seen.[1] After an exceedingly hard experience he returned to New York, January 12, 1803, and the last entry in the log reads "Finished discharging the wheat — 1264 bushels at 17 cents a bushel freight — 214 dollars and 88 cents."

[1] In the possession of Mrs. Helen K. Vreeland.

This was the opening voyage of his last period at sea. His brother Peter had fitted out at Charleston a new brig for the Madeira trade, and until 1807 Freneau was busy plying between Charleston and the Azores. In one of his books of navigation is inscribed the following:

"Sailed from Charleston for Maderia with brig Washington, May 12, 1803. Got there June 23. Arrived back at Charleston Aug. 16.

"Sailed in ditto from Charleston Jan. 25, 1804. Arrived in Maderia March 7th following. A hurricane of wind the whole way. April 12, sailed from Funchal Road for Teneriff. Arrived at Santa Cruz the 15th; at Arasava, 22nd. Sailed May 11th. Arrived in Charleston, June 10."

On June 30, 1806, he was in Savannah, Georgia, as Master of the sloop *Industry*. He made his last voyage to the Azores in the *Washington* in 1807. During this last period of sea life we find evidences everywhere that this old enthusiasm for nautical adventure had greatly waned. He was a sailor now from sheer necessity; he was approaching old age and he longed for the quiet of his home and his family. In one of his books of navigation of this period is penned a verse made in mid Atlantic:

"In dreams condemned to roam
He left his native home
O'er land and ocean vast and wide
With oar and sail, with wind and tide,
Proceeding an imaginary way."

In 1809, Freneau now in retirement at Mount Pleasant, began a new edition of his poems. On April 8, he wrote Madison:[2]

"SIR,— I do myself the pleasure to enclose to you a copy of Proposals for the publication of a couple of Volumes of Poems shortly to be

[2] Madison Papers, xxxiv, p. 77.

put to the Press in this city. Perhaps some of your particular friends in Virginia may be induced from a view of the Proposals in your hands to subscribe their names. If so, please to have them forwarded to this place by Post, addressed to the Publisher at No. 10 North Alley, Philadelphia. "Accept my congratulations on your late Election to the Presidency of the United States, and my hopes that your weight of State Affairs may receive every alleviation in the gratitude and esteem of the Public whom you serve in your truly honourable and exalted Station."

Madison's reply has been lost, but on May 12th, Freneau answered from Philadelphia:[1]

"SIR,—After a month's ramble through the States of New Jersey and New York, I returned to this place on Saturday last, and found your friendly Letter on Mr. Bailey's table, with the contents. There was no occasion of enclosing any Money, as your name was all I wanted to have placed at the head of the Subscription list.—I hope you will credit me when I say that the republication of these Poems, such as they are, was not a business of my own seeking or forwarding. I found last Winter an Edition would soon be going on at all events, and in contradiction to my wishes, as I had left these old scribblings, to float quietly down the stream of oblivion to their destined element the ocean of forgetfulness. However, I have concluded to remain here this Summer, and have them published in a respectable manner, and free as possible from the blemishes imputable to the two former Editions, over which I had no controul, having given my manuscripts away, and left them to the mercy of chance.—I am endeavouring to make the whole work as worthy of the public eye as circumstances will allow. 1500 copies are to be printed, only; but I have a certainty, from the present popular frenzy, that three times that number might soon be disposed of.—I will attend to what you direct on the subject, and will forward the ten you mention by the middle of July or sooner.—I will consider of what you say relative to the insertion of a piece or two in prose, but suspect that anything I have written in that way is so inferior to the Poetry, that the contrast will be injurious to the credit of the Publication.—I feel much in the humour of remaining here about two years, to amuse myself, as well as the Public, with such matter as that of the fat man you refer to, and if the public are in the same humour they shall be gratified.—But I am intruding on your time and will add no more at present.—I had almost said—

[1] Madison Papers, vol. xxxv, p. 17.

" 'Cum tot sustineas et tanta negotia solus
Res Italas armis tuteris, moribus ornes
Legibus emendes, in publica commoda peccem
Si longo sermone mores[1] tua tempora, Caesar—'

" My best wishes, Sir, will ever await you, and in particular that your Presidential Career may be equally honourable though less stormy than that of your predecessor."

It is evident that Freneau wrote also to Jefferson, for on May 22, 1809, the latter wrote from Monticello.[2]

" DEAR SIR,—I subscribe with pleasure to the publication of your volumes of poems. I anticipate the same pleasure from them which the perusal of those heretofore published has given me. I have not been able to circulate the paper because I have not been from home above once or twice since my return, and because in a country situation like mine, little can be done in that way. The inhabitants of the country are mostly industrious farmers employed in active life and reading little. They rarely buy a book of whose merit they can judge by having it in their hand, and are less disposed to engage for those yet unknown to them. I am becoming like them myself in a preference of the healthy and cheerful employment without doors, to the being immured within four brick walls. But under the shade of a tree one of your volumes will be a pleasant pocket companion.

" Wishing you all possible success and happiness, I salute you with constant esteem and respect."

The reply to Freneau's second letter to Jefferson has also been lost, but Freneau's letter dated Philadelphia, May 27th, has escaped destruction:[3]

" SIR,—Yesterday your Letter, dated May 22d came to hand.—Perhaps you a little misunderstood me, when I wrote to you from this place in April last, inclosing the Proposal Paper, respecting the Poems.—I only wished your name to be placed at the head of the list, and did not wish you to be at the pains of collecting Subscriptions, further than as any of your neighbours might choose to put down their names—Indeed, the

[1] Morer. Horace, *Epistles*, Lib. ii, lines 1–4.

[2] Jefferson Papers, series 2, vol. 34, p. 135.

[3] Jefferson Papers, series 2, vol. 34, p. 134.

whole Subscription plan was Set a going without my knowledge or approbation, last Winter. But as I found the matter had gone too far to be recalled, I thought it best to submit, in the present Edition, to the course and order of things as they are and must be.—Sir, if there be anything like happiness in this our State of existence, it will be such to me, when these two little Volumes reach you in August ensuing, if the sentiments in them under the poetical Veil, amuse you but for a single hour.—This is the first Edition that I have in reality attended to, the other two having been published, in a strange way, while I was wandering over gloomy Seas, until *embargoed* by the necessity of the times, and now again, I fear, I am reverting to the folly of scribbling Verses.

"That your shades of Monticello may afford you complete happiness is the wish and hope of all the worthy part of Mankind, and my own in particular. In such the philosophers of antiquity preferred to pass life, or if that was not allowed, their declining days.

"Will you be so good as to read the inclosed Verses? They were published early in March last in the Trenton True American Newspaper, and in the Public Advertiser, of New York."

On August 7, 1809, Freneau wrote finally to Madison:[1]

"SIR,—The two Volumes of Poems that in April last I engaged to have published, are finished, and will be ready for delivery in two or three days. The ten Setts you subscribed for I am rather at a loss how to have safely transmitted to you at your residence in Virginia, where I find by the Newspapers, you mean to Continue until the end of September. Will you on receipt of this, send me a line or two, informing me whether you would prefer having the Books put into the hands of some Confidential person here, to be sent or; that they be sent to the Post Office at Washington; or that they be forwarded directly to yourself in Orange County. The precise direction is not in my power."

The 1809 collection is the most elaborate of all the earlier editions of Freneau's works. His statement that it was the only one which received his personal supervision is certainly wrong, for he had carefully

[1] Madison Papers, vol. liv, p. 49.

supervised the 1795 edition. On the title page he announced that the poems were "now republished from the original manuscripts," and that he had added several "translations from the ancients and other pieces not heretofore in print," but the new poems that had not previously appeared in the *Time Piece* were very few. On the title page also he placed the stanza:

> "Justly to record the deeds of fame,
> A muse from heaven should touch the soul with flame;
> Some powerful spirit in superior lays
> Should tell the conflicts of the stormy days."

The poet's advertisement is as follows:

"The Poems, included in these two volumes, were originally written between the years 1768 and 1793; and were partly published in the transient prints of the times, and afterwards collected into two editions of 1786 and 1795. The present is a revision of the whole, and now published agreeable to the terms of the subscription issued in this city, in April last. Such, perhaps, as are not attracted by mere novelty or amusement, will attend more particularly to the Poems originating from the temporary events of the American war. These Poems were intended, in part to expose to vice and treason, their own hideous deformity; to depict virtue, honour and patriotism in their native beauty. Such (says a most distinguished foreign author) was the intention of poetry from the beginning, and here her purpose should end. Whether the following verses have any real claim to the attention of the citizens of the American United States, who may honour them with a reading, is left for the Public to decide.

"To his Countrymen, the real *Patriotic Americans*, the *Revolutionary Republicans*, and the rising generation who are attached to their sentiments and principles, the writer hopes this collection will not prove unacceptable. A more complete edition might have been published, so as to include a great number of miscellaneous Poems and animadversions on public events down to the present year, 1809; but it has been judged most proper, to restrict what is now printed to the date of 1793; with the exception of only a very few pieces of later composition which have been retained, and inserted in the body of the work, but not so as to materially interrupt the general tenor of the Poems that arose from the incidents of the American revolutionary contest.

"The Author will only add, that to this Edition are prefixed two copper-plate engravings: the one representing ST. TAMMANY, observing a hostile fleet approaching his shores; the other a nocturnal view of Captain Jones's engagement with the Seraphis.—These, it is hoped will be considered not inelegant embellishments of the edition now presented to the public.

"*Philadelphia, August 2d*, 1809."

The work is divided into four parts:

"Book I. Containing translations from the ancients; and other pieces on various subjects, written in America.

"Book II. Containing original pieces, with some relative to the more early events of the American Revolutionary War.

"Book III, Containing original poems, written and published at different periods, during the Revolutionary War.

"Book IV. Consisting of Miscellaneous pieces, on the events of the times, interspersed with others on moral, satirical, and political subjects."

The author made almost no attempt to arrange the material chronologically as to the dates of composition. He resurrected none of the material dropped from the 1795 collection, but cut from the edition some fifty-five other poems, among them nearly all of the material relating to the French Revolution, the greater number of the New Year Odes, and such fine pieces as "Neversink," "The Country Printer," "Slender's Journey," and "The Wintry Prospect."

The text was taken largely from the 1795 version, and a few minor amendments and changes made, but in no case were they so frequent or so careful as those made for the second edition. The poet's editorial work consisted mainly in elaborated titles with Latin quotations, in foot-notes, and in division of the material into books.

The next few years of Freneau's life were spent quietly at Mount Pleasant. He passed his time, as his

daughter describes, "in writing poetry, and in answering and receiving letters." Her picture of the man at this period is full of interest. "Although no farmer, he loved to see the work going on. He was very fond of feeding poultry and all the dumb animals, and when the season came for slaughtering the porkers, he generally managed it so as to have some business in New York, and he was usually absent when poultry was wanted for dinner. Mrs. Freneau had to give orders to the blacks to do it privately. He confessed it a weakness and tried to conceal it."

His interest in politics was still keen. He watched carefully all the premonitory signs of the approaching storm of 1812, and when war was found to be inevitable, his harp was in full tune to satirize the foe, which he had never ceased to hate, and to celebrate the heroes and the victories of his country.

On January 12, 1815, we find him again in correspondence with his old friend Madison:[1]

"SIR,—Since my last return from the Canary Islands in 1807 to Charleston and from thence to New York; with my Brigantine Washington, quitting the bustle and distraction of active life, my walks have been confined, with now and then a short excursion, to the neighbourhood of the Never Sink hills, and under some old hereditary trees, and on some fields, which I well recollect for sixty years. During the last Seven Years my pen could not be entirely idle, and for amusement only now and then I had recourse to my old habit of scribbling verses. A Bookseller in New York, Mr. Longworth, by some means discovered this, and has prevailed on me to put my papers into his hands for publication. With some reluctance I consented to gratify his wish, altho' I think after the age of fifty, or thereabouts, the vanity of authorship ought to cease, at least it has been the case with myself. Mr. Longworth informs me the work will be published early in February in two duodecimo volumes. I have directed him, when done, to forward a copy to yourself, of which I beg your acceptance. I do not know that the Verses are of any supe-

[1] Madison Papers, vol. liv, p. 49.

rior or very unusual merit; but he tells me the Town will have them: and of course, have them they will, and must, it seems. The Work cannot be very tedious, for in two small Volumes there will be upwards of one hundred and thirty Poems on different subjects, moral, political, or merely amusing, and not a few upon the events of the times since May 1812. However, you know a short production may sometimes be tedious, and a long one very lively and captivating. None of my effusions in these Volumes much exceed two hundred lines, and several do not reach more than the fourth part of that number of lines.

"When I left Philadelphia, about the middle of September 1809, the ten copies of the Revolutionary Poems, which you subscribed for, were put into a box well secured, and forwarded according to your direction, under the care of General Steele, then Collector of the Port of Philadelphia: I have not since heard whether they reached you or not.

"That Edition was published by *Subscription* merely for the benefit of, and to assist Mrs. Bailey, an unfortunate but deserving widowed female, niece to General Steele, and this consideration alone induced me to pay some attention to that third Edition.

"But, in mentioning these matters I fear I am intruding both on your time and patience, constantly, or always perpetually engaged, as you undoubtedly are, in the duties of your station at a stormy period, a tempestuous Presidency indeed: May you weather all the conflicts of these mighty times, and return safe at the proper period to your Virginian Groves, fields and streams: sure I am, different very different indeed from your long intercourse with political Life and the affairs of a 'grumbling Hive.' My best wishes attend Yourself, and Mrs. Madison, to whom, tho' I never had the pleasure of her acquaintance, I beg you to present my best compliments and regards."

On March 3d following, he writes again to Madison:[1]

"SIR,—When I mentioned in my few lines to you, dated from my residence in New Jersey on the 22d of January last, the two Volumes of Poems publishing in this city by Mr. Longworth, I did really think to have had a small box of them at Washington by the middle of February at farthest, with a particular direction of a couple of copies to Yourself bound in an elegant manner. Finding, however, that the business went on slowly here, and a little vexed to be under the necessity of leaving

[1] Madison Papers, vol. lv, p. 5.

my Solitude and the wild Scenes of nature in New Jersey for the ever execrated streets and company of this Capital, I embarked near Sandy Hook in a snow storm, about the last of January, and shortly after arrived here, fortunately unnoticed and almost unknown—At my time of life, 63!!! abounding however in all the powers of health and vigour, though I consider my poetry and poems as mere trifles, I was seriously out of humour on my arrival here to see my work delayed, as well from the severity of the cold, which has been unremitting for more than a month past, and perhaps to some other causes it would not be prudent *here* to explain. By my incessant exertions in spurring on the indolence of typography, the work, such as it is, is now finished, in two small Volumes of about 180 pages each.—The moment they are out of the bookbinder's hands, Mr. Longworth will forward you a Copy, and by the first Vessel to Alexandria, Georgetown, or Washington a Box of them to his correspondents in these places. A Copy or two of the Revolutionary poems will be forwarded to your direction—I am sorry the Copies you had were doomed to the flames, but the author had nearly suffered the same fate in the year 1780.—Yesterday I received from New Jersey a Copy of your friendly Letter of the 1st February: a Copy, I say, for my wife, or some one of my four Girls, daughters, would not forward me the original, but keep it until my return for fear of accidents.

"To-morrow morning I embark again for Monmouth, and among other cares, when I arrive at my magical grove, I shall hasten to exert all the poetical energy I possess, on the grand Subject of the Repulse of the British Army from New Orleans. There is a subject indeed! far above my power, I fear. If there be anything in inspiration, it will be needful on such a theme. Eight hundred lines in Heroic Measure I mean to devote to this animating subject.—In due time you shall hear more from me on this business, if I am not anticipated by some one more muse beloved than myself.—Hoping that all health and happiness may attend you, and that your libraries in future may escape the ravages and flames of Goths and Barbarians—I remain, etc."

Madison's reply has been lost. On May 10, 1815, Freneau wrote his last letter, as far as we know, to Madison:[1]

"Sir,—Mrs. Anna Smyth, the Lady of Charles Smyth Esquire, a respectable Citizen of this place, being to set out in a few days on a

[1] Madison Papers, vol. lv, p. 77.

tour to Virginia, and expecting to be in your neighbourhood, either at Washington, or at Montpelier, does me the favour to take under her particular care, to put, or transmit into your hands, the two little Volumes I mentioned to you in my letter last Winter, and to which I received your friendly and obliging Answer.

"Be pleased to accept them as a mark of my attention, respect, and esteem, in regard to your private as well as public character.

"I have written to Mr. Carey, in Philadelphia, Book-seller there, to forward on to you, if he has them, the two Volumes of the Revolutionary Poems, published in Philadelphia in the Summer of 1809, and which you wished to regain, since the loss of your Copies in the conflagration at Washington last year. I flatter myself, the arrangement I have made with him will replace them in your hands.—I will only add, that any attention paid by you to Mrs. Smyth, I will consider as conferred on myself."

The 1815 edition contains no poems previously published in the poet's earlier collections. The work shows no falling off in vigor from the earlier martial standard set by the poet in his more vigorous years. Some critics have declared that the poet's best work is in this collection. Certain it is that a few of the lyrics of battle have a spirit and swing that make them notable productions.

Freneau placed upon the title-page the ringing challenge:

> "Then England come!—a sense of wrong requires
> To meet with thirteen stars your thousand fires:
> Through these stern times the conflict to maintain,
> Or drown them, with your commerce, in the main."

He introduced the work as follows:

"The poetical pieces contained in these volumes were composed at different periods, and on a variety of occasions, between the years 1797 and 1815, and are now presented to the public, printed from the author's original and corrected manuscripts, and, it is hoped, in such a style of typography, as will not be unacceptable to the reader.—Several of the performances, comprised in this collection, and chiefly those on

political subjects, and other events of the times, have heretofore appeared in several periodical publications of *this* and other STATES of the union. It is presumed, however, that the poems of this description will not be the less acceptable to the friends of the muses, now they are collected in these volumes; with the advantage of having at one view what were before scattered in those bulky vehicles of information, whose principal object can be little more than to record the common events and business of the day, and soon descend into comparative oblivion.—Whatever may be the fate of the work, they are respectfully offered to the world, in hopes it may obtain a share of their attention, and particularly, from the friends of poetical composition; and in a country where it may be expected, the fine arts in general will, with the return of peace, find that share of encouragement, which they seem entitled to demand, in every nation that makes any pretensions to refinement and civilization.—It is only necessary to add, that care has been taken to execute the typographical part as *correctly* as possible."

The poems were reviewed for the *Analectic Magazine* by Mr. Gulian C. Verplanck, who said in part:

"He depicts land battles and naval fights with much animation and gay coloring; and being himself a son of old Neptune, he is never at a loss . . . when the scene lies at sea. His martial and political ballads are free from bombast and affectation, and often have an arch simplicity in their manner that renders them very poignant and striking. If the ballads and songs of Dibdin have cheered the spirits and incited the valor of the British tars, the strains of Freneau, in like manner, are calculated to impart patriotic impulses to the hearts of his countrymen, and their effect in this way should be taken as the test of their merit, without entering into a very nice examination of the rhyme or the reason. For our own part, we have no inclination to dwell on his defects; we had much rather—

> "'With full applause, in honor to his age,
> Dismiss the veteran poet from the stage,
> Crown his last exit with distinguished praise,
> And kindly hide his baldness with the bays.'"

The last lines used by Verplanck are from "American Bards," a poem published in Philadelphia in 1820. The reference to Freneau is not without interest:

"Let Freneau live, though Flattery's baleful tongue,
Too early tuned his youthful lyre to song,
And ripe old age, in ill directed zeal,
Has made an enervated last appeal;
His song could fire the sailor on the wave,
Raise up the coward,—animate the brave,
While wit and satire cast their darts around,
And fools and cowards tremble at the sound.
Although ambition never soared to claim
The meed of polished verse, or classic fame,
And caustic critics honor but condemn,
A strain of feeling, but a style too tame.
Let the old bard whose patient voice has fanned
The fire of freedom that redeemed our land,
Live on the scroll with kindred names that swell
The page of history, where their honors dwell;
With full applause, in honor to his age,
Dismiss the veteran poet from the stage,
Crown his last exit with distinguished praise,
And kindly hide his baldness with the bays."

The last years of Freneau's life were eventless, passed quietly at Mount Pleasant, and varied only with frequent visits to New York. Shortly after the issue of the 1815 edition of his poems, the ancestral home was completely destroyed by fire, together with most of the poet's papers, manuscript poems, valuable letters and books—the collection of a lifetime. During his last years he contemplated a complete and final edition of his poetical works. He wrote Dr. Mease of Philadelphia whether there was "enough of the old spirit of patriotism abroad to insure the safety of such an adventure;" and it was the testimony of Alexander Anderson, the once celebrated engraver on wood, that Freneau once consulted with him as to the cost of an illustrated volume of his poems, and departed sadly remarking that his purse was not equal to the venture.

The best picture of the poet in his old age is from the pen of the genial Dr. John W. Francis of New York, who knew him well during his last years:[1]

"I had, when very young, read the poetry of Freneau, and as we instinctively become attached to the writers who first captivate our imaginations, it was with much zest that I formed a personal acquaintance with the revolutionary bard. He was at that time about seventy-six years old, when he first introduced himself to me in my library. I gave him an earnest welcome. He was somewhat below the ordinary height; in person thin yet muscular, with a firm step, though a little inclined to stoop; his countenance wore traces of care, yet lightened with intelligence as he spoke; he was mild in enunciation, neither rapid nor slow, but clear, distinct, and emphatic. His forehead was rather beyond the medium elevation, his eyes a dark grey, occupying a socket deeper than common; his hair must have once been beautiful, it was now thinned and of an iron grey. He was free of all ambitious displays; his habitual expression was pensive. His dress might have passed for that of a farmer. New York, the city of his birth, was his most interesting theme; his collegiate career with Madison, next. His story of many of his occasional poems was quite romantic. As he had at command types and a printing press, when an incident of moment in the Revolution occurred, he would retire for composition, or find shelter under the shade of some tree, indite his lyrics, repair to the press, set up his types, and issue his productions. There was no difficulty in versification with him. I told him what I had heard Jeffrey, the Scotch Reviewer, say of his writings, that the time would arrive when his poetry, like that of Hudibras, would command a commentator like Gray. On some of the occasions when Freneau honored me with a visit, we had within our circle one of my earliest friends, that rare Knickerbocker, Gulian C. Verplanck. I need not add that the charm of my interview with the bard was heightened by the rich funds of antiquarian lore possessed by the latter.

"It is remarkable how tenaciously Freneau preserved the acquisitions of his early classical studies, notwithstanding he had for many years, in the after portion of his life, been occupied in pursuits so entirely alien to books. There is no portrait of the patriot Freneau; he always firmly declined the painter's art, and would brook no 'counterfeit presentiment.'"

[1] Contributed to Duyckinck's *Cyclopædia of American Literature*.

Freneau's frequent visits to New York were the chief solace of his last years. Says Dr. Francis:

"Freneau was widely known to a large circle of our most prominent and patriotic New Yorkers. His native city, with all his wanderings, was ever uppermost in his mind and in his affections. While in the employment of Jefferson, as a translator in the department of state, upon the organization of Congress, with Washington at its head, he had the gratification of witnessing the progress of improvement, and might have enjoyed increased facilities had he not enlisted with an indiscreet zeal as an advocate of the radical doctrines of the day. Freneau was, nevertheless, esteemed a true patriot; and his private worth, his courteous manner, and his general bearing won admiration with all parties. His pen was more acrimonious than his heart. He was tolerant, frank in expression, and not deficient in geniality. He was highly cultivated in classical knowledge, abounding in anecdotes of the revolutionary crisis, and extensively acquainted with prominent characters.

"It were easy to record a long list of eminent citizens who ever gave him a cordial welcome. He was received with the warmest greetings by the old soldier, Governor George Clinton. He, also, in the intimacy of kindred feeling, found an agreeable pastime with the learned Provoost, the first regularly consecrated Bishop of the American Protestant Episcopate, who himself had shouldered a musket in the Revolution, and hence was sometimes called the fighting bishop. They were allied by classical tastes, a love of natural science, and ardor in the cause of liberty. With Gates he compared the achievements of Monmouth with those at Saratoga. With Col. Fish he reviewed the capture of Yorktown; with Dr. Mitchell he rehearsed, from his own sad experience, the physical sufferings and various diseases of the incarcerated patriots of the Jersey prison-ship; and descanted on Italian poetry and the piscatory eclogues of Sannazarius. He, doubtless, furnished Dr. Benjamin Dewitt with data for his funeral discourse on the remains of the 11,500 American martyrs. With Pintard he could laud Horace and talk largely of Paul Jones. With Major Fairlie he discussed the tactics and chivalry of Baron Steuben. With Sylvanus Miller he compared notes on the political clubs of 1795–1810. With Dewitt Clinton and Cadwallader D. Colden he debated the projects of internal improvement and artificial navigation, based on the famous precedent of the Languedoc canal."

The death of Freneau was a sad one. On the evening of the 18th of December, 1832, he had gone on an errand to Freehold, some two miles distant. When he set out to return, late in the evening, a fierce and blinding storm was in progress. His friends sought to dissuade him, but he insisted on returning. Instead of taking the long way round by the road, he took the usual short way through the fields, and was soon lost in the roaring "blizzard." He circled into a swamp, and doubtless, after hours of wandering, sank down benumbed and hopeless, to be found by his friends a few hours later, still breathing but nearly lifeless. For the whispered tradition that he was intoxicated when he left the town, there is no foundation.

The next issue of the *Monmouth Press* contained a notice of his death:

"Mr. Freneau was in the village and started, towards evening, to go home, about two miles. In attempting to go across he appears to have got lost and mired in a bog where his lifeless corpse was discovered yesterday morning. Captain Freneau was a stanch Whig in the time of the Revolution, a good soldier, and a warm patriot. The productions of his pen animated his countrymen in the darkest days of '76 and the effusions of his muse cheered the desponding soldier as he fought the battles of freedom."

His old friend, John Pintard, wrote a biographical notice of the poet in the *New York Mirror* for January 12, 1833, in which he dwelt largely upon his mental endowments and accomplishments:

"He was a man of great reading and extensive acquirements; few were more thoroughly versed in classical literature, and fewer still who knew as much about the early history of our country, the organization of the government, and the use and progress of parties."

The house which Freneau occupied during his last years is still standing. His remains rest in the little

cemetery at Mount Pleasant, which recently, in honor of the poet, has been rechristened Freneau.

VII.

The personality of Philip Freneau, if we judge from contemporary testimony and the effect which his personal presence invariably exerted, was a singularly winning one. The bluff, hearty old sailor breathed out good-will and honesty with every breath. He was the soul of honor, and, despite his caustic pen, the kindest hearted creature in the world. All that one of his grand-daughters can remember of him is that once he took her upon his knee and chided her for having killed a fly. "Surely," he said, "it was not made without some wise end, and its little life was as dear to him as is yours to you." It reminds one of "My Uncle Toby." There is a cheery optimism in many of his poems. A stanza like this might have been written by Browning:

> "All nature must decay, 'tis true,
> But nature shall her face renew,
> Her travels in a circle make,
> Freeze but to thaw, sleep but to wake,
> Die but to live and live to die."

His temperament was Celtic. He inherited with his French blood a passionate love for beauty, a sensuous, dreamy delight in the merely poetic, in the wierd and romantic. He had not the Teutonic stability; he was easily exalted, easily depressed; he went often to extremes; he was sensitive to a degree that made criticism a torture, and he was proud beyond all reason. He had been deeply touched by the principles of the Revolution; he had suffered personally at the hands of

the enemy; he had followed Paine in his democratic doctrines even to the extremes, and he tried to live consistently with these exalted ideals. His honesty and his ignorance of the world prevented him from seeing how greatly these principles must be modified to become of really practical value.

His kindly heart made him a fierce foe to all kinds of tyranny and oppression. He saw sights in the West Indies that made him a bitter opponent of human slavery. Again and again in his poems and prose sketches does he condemn the evil. His message is almost as intense as Whittier's:

> "O come the time and haste the day
> When man shall man no longer crush,
> When reason shall enforce her sway,
> Nor these fair regions raise the blush
> Where still the African complains
> And mourns his yet unbroken chains."

Not only slavery, but every other form of oppression and wrong received his condemnation. He wrote boldly against intemperance in a day when the use of intoxicating liquors was well-nigh universal and wholly uncriticised; he spoke eloquently on cruelty to animals; and he was one of the earliest to demand equal rights for man and woman.

Freneau's religious inclinations have been sometimes harshly criticised by those of puritanic creed. The school of Dr. Dwight could speak of him only in contempt, yet it is true that the poet was a deeply religious man. His love of freedom and his perfect sincerity affected his creed. He had an intense dislike for hollow formalism. In his "Jamaica Funeral" he has pictured a hypocritical priest in colors as vivid almost as Chaucer's. He detested

> "The holy man by Bishops holy made."

He loved sincerity, and the creed that came not from dry formalism, but from reason and from an honest heart.

It has often been overlooked by his critics that Freneau was a widely read and thoroughly cultured man; that he was a linguist of more than ordinary powers; and that he knew intimately the chief writings in Latin, Italian, French, and English. He was no ignorant, careless scribbler, tossing into the ephemeral columns of the press hasty rhymes of which he never thought again. He revised and corrected with patient care, and he took a deep interest in the children of his pen, rescuing at one time or another almost every one of them from the oblivion of the newspaper.

VIII.

As to the absolute literary value of Freneau's literary remains, there is room for honest difference of opinion. He is certainly not, if we judge him from what he actually produced, a great poet. But he must in fairness be viewed against the background of his age and his environment. Nature had equipped him as she has equipped few other men. He had the poet's creative imagination; he had an exquisite sense of the beautiful; and he had a realization of his own poetic endowments that kept him during a long life constantly true to the muse. Scarcely a month went by in all his life, from his early boyhood, that was not marked by poetic composition. Few poets, even in later and more auspicious days, have devoted their lives more assiduously to song.

Freneau was the first to catch what may be called the new poetic impulse in America—the new epic note. Previous to the Revolutionary era, America was desti-

tute even of the germs of an original literature. Before she could produce anything really strong and individual, there was necessary some great primal impulse that should stir mightily the whole people; that should strike from their hands the old books and the old models; that should arouse them to a true realization of themselves; and that should clear the atmosphere for a new and broader view of human life. Such new forces are always needed by society, but they stalk with long strides over the centuries.

In pre-Revolutionary America such an upheaval was near at hand. It came with appalling suddenness. The colonists had had no gradual preparation for the idea of separation from England. As late as 1775, Franklin declared before the House of Commons that in all of his journeyings up and down the colonies he had not heard expressed one single wish for complete independence. Even after Concord and Bunker Hill, Freneau, the radical, could write:

> "Long may Britannia rule our hearts again,
> Rule as she ruled in George the Second's reign."

The idea of independence came all in a moment; but once it had come, it went with leaps and bounds to its extreme. Never in all history has a whole people been lifted by such rapid stages into a region of such vast outlook. We can trace the growth of the new spirit, not decade by decade, but month by month: Justice, Freedom, Independence, and then the radiant vision of perfect Liberty and the Rights of Man, and then like a torrent the sense of boundless possibilities and glorious destiny:

> "No pent-up Utica contracts our powers,
> But the whole boundless continent is ours."

The soul of man stirred by such ideals, and successful in realizing them beyond all dreams, struggled for utterance. It is such upheavals in human society that make poets and bring outbursts of song and periods in the history of literature. But there was no burst of song in America; instead there followed one of the most pathetic spectacles in all literary history—a people with a vision that transported them into the clouds, yet powerless through environment and early education to transmute that vision into song. The South, thrilled by the new spirit, turned it at once into action, and took the leadership in war and statesmanship. New England lifted up her voice, but she could speak only through the medium of old spiritual conceptions and worn-out poetic forms. A young Connecticut parson, thrilled through and through, pours his enthusiasm into an epic of the wars of Joshua done in the heroics of Pope; a brilliant Boston lad would sing of "War and Washington," but he must set it to the tune of Dryden; and a gifted Connecticut satirist, overflowing with the true poetic spirit, is content simply to add new American stanzas to "Hudibras." With all her rhymers and all her inspiration, New England gave forth not a single original note. It was the repeating of the old spectacle of a heavenly anthem sung unto shepherds,—unto those utterly unable to give it utterance.

We see them, however, struggling heroically with the burden. From 1774, when Dwight completed his "Conquest of Canaan," "the first piece of this kind ever attempted in this country," as he observed in his preface, until 1808, which ends the period with Barlow's "Columbiad"—the "Polyolbion" of American poetry—the years are strewn thick with the wrecks of

epics. Every poet of the era felt his soul burn with the epic fire. Charles Brockden Brown, when only sixteen, had started no less than three of these Homeric efforts: one on the discovery of America, and one each on the conquests of Mexico and Peru. It was our heroic era, but it yielded almost nothing of value. Mere exaltation availeth little unless it be grounded either upon genius or long-continued culture.

America, however, was not without her genius. Before Dwight and Barlow and Trumbull had written a line, Freneau at Princeton was planning epics American in scene and spirit. He had dreamed, over his Virgil, of a greater Aeneas who had sailed into the pathless West to discover a new world, and to plant there the seeds of a greater than Rome; he had translated with beating heart the words of Seneca:

> "The time shall come, when numerous years are past,
> When ocean shall unloose the bands of things,
> And an extended region rise at last;
>
> "And Typhis shall disclose the mighty land
> Far, far away, where none have rov'd before;
> Nor shall the world's remotest region be
> Gibraltar's rock, or Thule's savage shore."

"Fired at the theme," he had mapped out the epic of a new world; but his work of this era, like all schoolboy epics, had resulted only in fragments which were to strew his earlier volumes. How strong and original was this youthful dream one can judge from the ringing lines of "Columbus to Ferdinand," "Discovery," and the "Pictures of Columbus," which are mere epic fragments. There is an originality and a fire in them utterly new in American poetry. There is poetry of a high order in such a climax as that recording the soliloquy of the dying Columbus, beginning:

"The winds blow high; one other world remains,
Once more without a guide I find the way."

But Commencement was at hand. Here was a chance, indeed; here was a theme commensurate with the occasion. The two young dreamers would outline an epic poem; they would essay "Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme":

"Now shall the adventurous Muse attempt a theme
More new, more noble, and more flush of fame
Than all that went before."

Never was graduating exercise based on broader foundations. The young graduates bewail at every step their limitations of space. The plan they suggest is the plan of a "Columbiad." They would begin with all the tale of Columbus; they would rehearse the story of Cortez and Pizarro; they would discuss at learned length the origin and the characteristics of the Indians; they would tell the story of the early colonies; and would trace the course of settlement and review the progress and the promise of agriculture and commerce; they would peer into the future and mark the time

"When we shall spread
Dominion from the North and South and West,
Far from the Atlantic to Pacific shores,
And shackle half the convex of the main."

But, alas, the time! An epic cannot be condensed into a graduation exercise. Suddenly the poet bursts into true prophetic rapture:

"I see, I see
A thousand kingdoms rais'd, cities, and men
Num'rous as sand upon the ocean shore;
Th' Ohio then shall glide by many a town

Of note: and where the Mississippi stream,
By forests shaded now runs weeping on,
Nations shall grow and States not less in fame
Than Greece and Rome of old: we too shall boast
Our Alexanders, Pompeys, heroes, kings
That in the womb of time yet dormant lye
Waiting the joyful hour of life and light.
O snatch us hence, ye muses! to those days
When, through the veil of dark antiquity,
Our sons shall hear of us as things remote,
That blossom'd in the morn of days, alas!
How could I weep that we were born so soon,
In the beginning of more happy times!

It is not a great poem when we measure it by absolute standards, but "The Rising Glory of America" is a very great poem if we view it in connection with the conditions and the environment that produced it. Full as it is of Latin influence and Commencement day zeal, it is the first real poem that America ever made—the first poem that was impelled hot from a man's soul. It is more than this, it is the first real fruit of a new influence in the world of letters—the first literary product of that mighty force that was to set in motion the American and French Revolutions, with all that they mean in human history.

America should have recognized this new and original voice, and should have encouraged it to sing the new message which it had to proclaim to the world, but she was not yet ready.

How the young dreamer, who had seen life from his earliest years only through the medium of his books, was gradually disillusioned, we have endeavored to show. His first book, put forth in the enthusiasm of inexperience, with his name on the title-page, was "damned by all good and judicious judges." So

was Wordsworth's; so have been the earliest ventures of every innovator in the field of song. Gradually the young poet awoke to a realization of his position: America was unprepared for her prophet; she would not listen. The discovery disheartened him; his Celtic temperament would not patiently wait for recognition, as did Wordsworth; he was too proud to force his poetry upon an unwilling public. He would leave the scene, for three years to dwell in the dreamy seclusion of the tropic islands.

This was his period of pure invention, where he showed the possibilities of his genius. With the "House of Night" he became one of the earliest pioneers in that dimly-lighted region which was soon to be exploited by Coleridge and Poe. The poem is the first distinctly romantic note heard in America. Moreover, one may search in vain in the English poetry of the early romantic movement for anything that can equal it in strength of conception, in mastery of weird epithet, and in sustained command over the vaguely terrible. The page that recounts the poet's departure from the house of night, quaking with fear,—

> "Beneath my feet substantial darkness lay,
> And screams were heard from the distempered ground,"

his timid look behind him to find the windows of the infernal dome a "flaming hell-red," the fearful shrieks of the dying monster within the walls, the "hell-red wandering light" that led him to the graves, the sudden peal of the iron bell above him in the darkness, and then the troop of spectres galloping fiercely on Death's horses, while "their busy eyes shot terror to my soul,"—all this is worthy of Poe. As a product of pure imagination, the poem is most remarkable, especially when we view it in connection with the

English literature of its day. In its weird supernaturalism it anticipated Scott, and in its unearthly atmosphere it clearly anticipated Coleridge.

In the "Jamaica Funeral" the poet outlined his early philosophy of life. He was fast breaking from the influence of Gray, his early master. It is a Gallic philosophy that he outlines; he is becoming infected with Deism; he is a true bacchanalian. Is there not a ring of the "Rubaiyat" in a stanza like this:

> "Count all the trees that crown Jamaica's hills,
> Count all the stars that through the heavens you see,
> Count every drop that the wide ocean fills,
> Then count the pleasures Bacchus yields to me?"

Freneau's early dream of a purely poetic career was rudely broken by the sudden clash of war and by the sternly practical nature of the American people. Circumstances decided for him his career. There was needed a poetic voice to arouse the common people to action. There was no demand for an imaginative creator, for a sensuous singer of love and wine,— America needed a popular voice, one that could be understood by the unlettered, one that with satire and patriotic appeal could arouse and fire the land. Freneau laid aside for a time the harp and the lyre and took up the trumpet and the bagpipes, and of his influence on the stormy period of the Revolution there can be no two opinions. His ballads and satires were scattered far and wide; they were sold in broadsides in every port and city and camp. Even in the war of 1812 his poems flew like leaves everywhere that men were gathered together. To be the lyrist of a righteous revolution, and above all to be the people's poet, is in itself no small distinction.

His poems of the war are in themselves a running history of the struggle, especially of its last years. His heart was in his work; the prison ship had blotted for a time all memories of the old criticisms of his early work, all his early dreams, everything save "the insulting foe" who was making desolate his dear mother land. He lampooned without mercy Clinton, Cornwallis, Carleton, and the royalist printers, Rivington and Gaine. He sang tender lyrics of the patriot dead at Eutaw Springs, who

> "Saw their injured Country's woe;
> The flaming town, the wasted field;
> Then rushed to meet the insulting foe;
> They took the spear,—but left the shield."

He sang peans of victory over the downfall at Yorktown; he exalted the fame of Washington; he called down maledictions on the ship that bore the "worthless Arnold" from American shores. These are more than the fleeting voices of a newspaper muse; they are true poems, and they are American to the core. Scott declared that "Eutaw Springs [was] as fine a thing as there is of the kind in the language."

With a few fiery songs he placed himself at the head of the small group of naval lyrists, a position which even to-day he has not wholly lost. In dash and fire, in ability to catch and reproduce the odors and the atmosphere of the ocean, in enthusiasm and excitement that is contagious and that plunges the reader at once into the heart of the action, and in glowing patriotism that makes the poems national hymns, no American poet has excelled this earliest singer of the American ocean. No true patriot can read without a thrill of pride such songs as "Captain Jones's Invitation" and "The Death of Captain Biddle," a song of the intrepid

seaman who from the *Randolph* poured death into the British ship:

> "Tremendous flash! and hark, the ball
> Drives through old Yarmouth, flames and all,"

and then in a fatal moment was blown up by his own magazine, and "Stanzas on the New Frigate Alliance," the gallant ship "who walks the ocean like its queen," and "Barney's Victory over the General Monk," that rollicking song of battle and of triumph, and best of all, perhaps, "The Sailor's Invitation," which is full of the very salt and vigor of the western seas. "The Memorable Victory of Paul Jones," written when America was ringing with the first news of the battle, is one of the glories of American literature. Longfellow or Whittier never wrote a more stirring ballad. It moves with leaps and bounds; it is full of the very spirit of battle.

> "She felt the fury of her ball,
> Down, prostrate down, the Britons fall;
> The decks are strew'd with slain:
> Jones to the foe his vessel lash'd;
> And while the black artillery flash'd
> Loud thunders shook the main."

It is not impertinent to observe that Thomas Campbell was but four years of age when this appeared. It was not Scott or Cooper who added the domain of the ocean to literature; it was Freneau. His books are full of the roar and the sweep of the open sea, which he knew as the farmer knows his ancestral acres. There is no more true and vigorous picture of an ocean voyage and a naval combat than that contained in Canto I of "The British Prison Ship." The episode

of the boatswain's fiery prayer, just before the conflict, is unique in literature.

The war over, Freneau would return to his dream; he would pour forth the poetic message that was in him; but his countrymen, delighting in his hard blows and biting sarcasm, refused to listen to the merely poetic. They demanded jingles and clever hits. The poet turned fiercely upon them. "For men I keep a pen," he cried, "for dogs a cane." The time for using the cane was past; he would use it no more. But who would listen to anything that was not rant and bombast? Fate had thrown him into a "bard-baiting clime." A wave of the old bitterness swept over him:

> "Expect not in these times of rude renown
> That verse like yours will have the chance to please:
> No taste for plaintive elegy is known,
> Nor lyric ode,—none care for things like these."

How he at length deliberately turned from the muse of his choice, and how after a long experience with the world of actual affairs he exchanged his old poetic ideals for those of mere reason and common sense, we have attempted to show.

Here was a man equipped by nature for a true poet, a man with a message, yet dwarfed and transformed by his environment. America was not ready for her singer. It took half a century more to make way in the wilderness for the new message that had been whispered to Freneau in his young manhood. Had he been a great world-poet, he would have been heard despite all difficulties; he would have trampled down the barriers about him and have compelled his age to listen, but the task was beyond him. America,

to this day, has produced no poet who single-handed and alone could have performed such a labor of Hercules. Sadly Freneau turned to other things.

He has never been adequately recognized. Had the first edition of his poems, published the same year as the Kilmarnock edition of Burns, been an English book, it long ago would have figured largely in the histories of the romantic and naturalistic movement which made possible the great outburst of the nineteenth century. That Freneau was the most conspicuous pioneer in the dim romantic world that was to be explored by Coleridge and Poe, we have already shown; that he was a pioneer in the movement that succeeded in throwing off the chain forged by Pope is evident to any one who will examine his early work. "The Wild Honey Suckle," for instance, which was written in 1786, twelve years before the "Lyrical Ballads," is as spontaneous and as free from Pope as anything written by Wordsworth. It is a nature lyric written with the eye upon the object, without recollection of other poetry, and it draws from the humble flower a lesson for humanity in the true Wordsworthian manner. Before Freneau, American poetry had been full of the eglantine, the yew, the Babylonian willow, the lark—the flora and fauna of the Hebrew and British bards. In our poet we find, for the first time, the actual life of the American forest and field—the wild pink, the elm, the wild honeysuckle, the pumpkin, the blackbird, the squirrel, the partridge, "the loquacious whip-poor-will," and in addition to this the varied life of the American tropic islands. We find for the first time examples of that true poetic spirit that can find inspiration in humble and even vulgar things; that, furthermore, can draw from lowly nature and her

commonplaces deep lessons for human life. Freneau sees the reflection of the stars in the bosom of the river,

> "But when the tide had ebbed away
> The scene fantastic with it fled,
> A bank of mud around me lay
> And sea-weed on the river's bed,"

and from this he draws the obvious moral for human life. Consider what Pope would have said of mud. Indeed, to appreciate Freneau, one must come to him after a careful reading of the classic poets who preceded him. What a shock to this school would have been the vividly realistic poem on "Logtown." Just how much Freneau influenced the school of poets who in England broke away from the trammels of the eighteenth century, we can never know; yet no one can read long in the American poet and not be convinced that his influence was considerable. His poems were known and read freely in England at the very dawn of the critical period in British poetry, and their echoes can be detected more than once.

In his use of his native land and his familiar surroundings as a background for art, Freneau discovered the poetical side of the Indian, and thus became the literary father of Brockden Brown, Cooper, and the little school of poets which in the early years of the century fondly believed that the aboriginal American was to be the central figure in the poetry of the new world. To the little real poetry that there is in the Indian, Freneau did full justice, but he went to no such absurd lengths as did Eastburn and Whittier. The "Indian Death Song," if it indeed be his, is full of the wild, stoical heroism of the brave who is dying beneath the torture of his enemies. In "The Indian Student" he has covered fully the Indian's love for

the pathless forest, and to the untamable wildness of his nature. "The Dying Indian" and "The Indian Burying-Ground" sum up what is essentially poetic in Indian legend and all that is pathetic in the fate of the vanishing race. Poetry, if it is to confine itself to the truth, can do little more for the Indian.

Such was Philip Freneau, a man in every respect worthy to bear the title of "the father of American poetry." He was the first true poet born upon our continent; he realized in his early youth his vocation; he gave himself with vigor and enthusiasm to his calling; he fitted himself by wide reading and classic culture; he received the full inspiration of a great movement in human society; he lifted up his voice to sing, but he was smothered and silenced by his contemporaries. He was all alone; he had about him no circle of "Pleiades" to encourage and assist; he had no traditions, religious or otherwise, that would compel silence. He was out of step with the theology of his generation; he was out of tune with the music of his day; he was beating time a half century ahead of the chorus about him. The people have to be educated to revolution, and America had not yet learned to take the initiative in things intellectual and æsthetic. She must follow the literary fashions beyond the sea. Freneau was for breaking violently away from England and for setting up a new standard of culture and literary art on this side the water.

> "Can we never be thought
> To have learning or grace
> Unless it be brought
> From that damnable place?"

he cried. But he reckoned without his countrymen. Not until Emerson's day did it dawn upon America

that it was possible for her to think for herself and make poetry that did not echo the English bards. Thus did America reject her earliest prophet; thus did she stop her ears and compel him to lay aside his seven-stringed lyre for the horn and the bagpipes.

Freneau lived to see his discarded harp in full tune in other hands, first in England and then in his own land. There is something truly pathetic in the figure of the old minstrel, who had realized almost nothing of his early dreams, and yet who had been told by the great Jeffries that the time would surely come when his poems would command a commentator like Gray, who had been extravagantly praised by such masters as Scott and Campbell, who had written to Madison as late as 1815, "my publisher tells me the town will have them [his verses] and of course have them they will," it is pathetic to see this poet, in his hoary old age, for he lived until 1832, realizing that he had been utterly forgotten, witnessing the triumph of the very songs that had haunted his youth, and seeing those who had not half his native ability crowned by those who had rejected and forgotten him. Such ever is the penalty of being born out of due time.

The present age has also been unjust to Freneau. It has left his poems in their first editions, which are now extremely rare and costly; it has scattered his letters and papers to the winds; it has garbled and distorted his life in every book of reference; it has left untold the true story of his career; it has judged him from generalizations that have floated from no one knows where. But time works slowly with her verdicts; true merit in the end is sure to receive its deserts; and Freneau may even yet be given the place that is his.

PART I

EARLY POEMS

1768—1775

THE

POEMS OF PHILIP FRENEAU

THE HISTORY OF THE PROPHET JONAH[1]

Versified (or rather paraphrased) from the sacred writings.

CANTO I.

In ages past, when smit with warmth sublime,
Their bards foretold the dark events of time,
And piercing forward through the mystic shade,
Kings yet to come, and chiefs unborn survey'd,
Amittai's son perceiv'd, among the rest,
The mighty flame usurp his labouring breast:—
For this, in dreams, the voice unerring came
Of Him, who lives through every age the same:
"Arise! and o'er the intervening waste,
"To Nineveh's imperial turrets haste;
"That mighty town to ruin I decree,
"Proclaim destruction, and proclaim from me:
"Too long it stands, to God and man a foe,
"Without one virtue left to shield the blow;

[1] Found only in the 1786, 1795, and 1809 editions of the poet. The 1786 edition has the note: "This is rather to be considered as a paraphrase upon than a mere versification of the story of the Bible. Done in the year 1768."

"Guilt, black as night, their speedy ruin brings,
"And hottest vengeance from the King of Kings."
The prophet heard—but dared to disobey,
(Weak as he was) and fled a different way;
In Joppa's port a trading ship he found
Far o'er the main to distant Tarshish bound:
The price of passage to her chief he paid,
And there conceal'd with wandering sailors stay'd,
His purpose fixt, at once perverse and blind,
To leave his country, and his God behind.
But He who spread the ocean's vast expanse,
And views all nature with a single glance,
Forth from its prison bade the tempest fly—
The tempest swell'd the ocean to the sky;
The trembling barque, as the fierce billow knocks,
Scarce bears the fury of repeated shocks;
Her crew distrest, astonish'd and afraid,
Each to his various god in anguish pray'd,
Nor trust alone to penitence and prayer,
They clear the decks, and for the worst prepare,
The costly lading to the deep they throw,
That lighter o'er the billows she may go,
Nor with regret the wealthy cargo spared,
For wealth is nothing when with life compared.
But to the ship's remotest chambers fled
There pensive Jonah droop'd his languid head,
And, new to all the dangers of the deep,
Had sunk, dejected, in the arms of sleep—
'Twas then the master broke the prophet's rest,
And thus exclaim'd, and smote his frantic breast—
"O sleeper, from thy stupid slumbers rise,
"At such an hour can sleep invade thine eyes?—
"If ever thou to heaven didst send a prayer,
"Now send thy warmest supplications there,

"Perhaps thy God may pity our distress,
"And save us, foundering in this dark abyss."
Thus warn'd, the seer his vows repentant paid—
Meantime, the seamen to their fellows said:
"No common waves our shatter'd vessel rend,
"There must be one for whom these storms impend,
"Some wretch we bear, for whom these billows rise,
"Foe to the gods, and hated by the skies;
"Come, since the billows all our arts defy,
"Come, let the lot decide for whom we die."
Instant the lots amidst the vase they threw,
And the markt lot dejected Jonah drew!
Then thus their chief the guilty man address'd,
"Say, for what crime of thine are we distrest?
"What is thy country, what thy calling, say,
"Whence dost thou come, what potentate obey?
"Unfold it all, nor be the truth deny'd."—
The master spoke, and Jonah thus reply'd:
"A Hebrew I, from neighbouring regions came,
"A Jewish prophet, of no vulgar fame:
"That God I fear who spread this raging sea,
"Who fixt the shores by his supreme decree,
"And reigns throughout immeasurable space,
"His footstool earth, the heaven his dwelling place.
"But I, regardless of his high command,
"His mandate slighting, fled my native land,
"Fool that I was, from Joppa's port to fly,
"Who thought to shun his all-pervading eye!
"For this the tempest rends each tatter'd sail,
"For this your vessel scarce supports the gale!"
The seamen heard, distracted and dismay'd;
When thus again their trembling pilot said:
"How couldst thou thus, ungenerous as thou art,
"Affront thy patron, and with us depart?—

"Lo! for thy crimes, and not our own, we die;
"Mark, how the wild waves threaten from on high,
"Our sails in fragments flit before the blast,
"Scarce to its station we confine the mast;
"What shall we do, unhappy man, declare,
"How shall we act, or how direct our prayer,
"That angry Neptune may his rage restrain,
"And hush once more these tumults of the main?"
The seer reply'd, "The means are in your power
"To still the tempest in this dreadful hour: —
"High on the sea-beat prow will I ascend,
"And let the boldest of your crew attend
"To plunge me headlong from that giddy steep
"Down to the bosom of the unfathom'd deep;
"So shall the ocean from its raging cease,
"And the fierce tempest soon be hush'd to peace: —
"'Tis for my crimes this angry ocean raves,
"'Tis for my sin we plough these fearful waves;
"Dislodge me soon—the storm shall then decay,
"Which still grows louder while on board I stay."
Thus he—but they, to save their vagrant guest,
Refus'd as yet to grant his strange request,
And though aloft on mountain waves they ride,
And the tost galley reels from side to side,
Yet to their breasts they drew the sweepy oar,
And vainly strove to gain the distant shore:
The ruffian winds refuse that wish'd retreat,
And fiercer o'er the decks the billows beat.
Then to the skies the chief his prayer addrest,
"Thou Jove supreme, the greatest and the best!
"Because thy sovereign pleasure doth require
"That death alone must satisfy thine ire,
"O spare us for thy dying prophet's sake,
"Nor let us perish for the life we take;

" If we are wrong, his lot was thy decree,
" And thou hast done as it seem'd best to thee."
Then from the summit of the washy prow,
They plunged the prophet to the depths below,
And straight the winds, and straight the billows cease,
And every threatening surge lay hush'd in peace;
The trembling crew adore the Power Supreme
Who kindly thus from ruin rescued them;
Their vows they send to his imperial throne,
And victims offer to this God unknown.

Canto II.

When from the prow's intimidating height
They plung'd the prophet to the realms of night,
Not long he languished in the briny deep,
In death's cold arms not yet decreed to sleep.—
Jehovah saw him, from the abodes of bliss,
Sunk to the bottom of the vast abyss,
And bade a whale, the mightiest of the kind,
His prophet in these dismal mansions find—
The hostile form, approaching through the wave,
Receiv'd him living to a living grave,
Where three long days in dark distress he lay,
And oft repenting, to his God did pray—
The power benign, propitious to his prayer,
Bade the huge fish to neighbouring shores repair—
Instant the whale obey'd the high command,
And cast him safe on Palestina's strand.
The prophet then his past transgressions mourn'd,
And grateful, thus to heaven his thanks return'd:
" Afflicted from the depths of hell I pray'd,
" The dark abyss of everlasting shade:
" My God in mercy heard the earnest prayer,
" And dying Jonah felt thy presence there.

"Because I dared thy mandate disobey,
"Far didst thou plunge me from the face of day:
"In the vast ocean, where no land is found,
"The mighty waters closed thy prophet round:
"On me the waves their utmost fury spent,
"And all thy billows o'er my body went,
"Yet then, surrounded by the dismal shade,
"Thus to my Maker from the depths I said:
"Though hid beneath the caverns of the main,
"To thy blest temple will I look again,
"Though from thy sight to utter darkness thrown,
"Still will I trust, and trust on thee alone—
"With anguish deep I felt the billows roll,
"Scarce in her mansion stay'd my frighted soul;
"About my head were wrapt the weeds of night,
"And darkness, mingled with no ray of light;
"I reached the caves the briny ocean fills,
"I reached the bases of the infernal hills,
"Earth, with her bars, encompass'd me around,
"Yet, from the bottom of that dark profound
"Where life no more the swelling vein supplies,
"And death reposes, didst thou bid me rise.
"When fainting nature bow'd to thy decree,
"And the lone spirit had prepar'd to flee,
"Then from my prison I remember'd thee.
"My prayer towards thy heavenly temple came,
"The temple sacred to Jehovah's name.—
"Unhappy they, who vanities pursue,
"And lies believing, their own souls undo—
"But to thine ear my grateful song shall rise,
"For thee shall smoke the atoning sacrifice,
"My vows I'll pay at thy imperial throne,
"Since my salvation was from thee alone."

Canto III.

Once more the voice to humbled Jonah came
Of Him, who lives through every age the same:
"Arise! and o'er the intervening waste
"To Nineveh's exalted turrets haste,
"And what to thee my Spirit shall reveal,
"That preach—nor dare the sacred truth conceal—
"To desolation I that town decree;
"Proclaim destruction, and proclaim from me."
Obedient to Jehovah's high command,
The prophet rose, and left Judea's land,
And now he near the spiry city drew,
(Euphrates pass'd, and rapid Tigris too:)
So vast the bulk of this prodigious place,
Three days were scant its lengthy streets to trace;
But as he enter'd, on the first sad day,
Thus he began his tidings of dismay:
"O Nineveh! to heaven's decree attend!
"Yet forty days, and all thy glories end;
"Yet forty days, the skies protract thy fall,
"And desolation then shall bury all,
"Thy proudest towers their utter ruin mourn,
"And domes and temples unextinguished burn!
"O Nineveh! the God of armies dooms
"Thy thousand streets to never-ending glooms:
"Through mouldering fanes the hollow winds shall roar,
"And vultures scream where monarchs lodg'd before!
"Thy guilty sons shall bow beneath the sword,
"Thy captive matrons own a foreign lord.—
"Such is the vengeance that the heavens decree,
"Such is the ruin that must bury thee!"
The people heard, and smit with instant fear,
Believ'd the fatal warnings of the seer:

This sudden ruin so their souls distrest,
That each with sackcloth did his limbs invest,
From him that glitter'd on the regal throne,
To him that did beneath the burden groan.—
Soon to their monarch came this voice of fate,
Who left his throne and costly robes of state,
And o'er his limbs a vest of sackcloth drew,
And sate in ashes, sorrowful to view—
His lords and nobles, now repentant grown,
With equal grief their various sins bemoan,
And through the city sent this loud decree,
With threatening back'd, and dreadful penalty:
"Ye Ninevites! your wonted food refrain,
"Nor touch, ye beasts, the herbage of the plain,
"Let all that live be humbled to the dust,
"Nor taste the waters, though ye die of thirst;
"Let men and beasts the garb of sorrow wear,
"And beg yon' skies these guilty walls to spare:
"Let all repent the evil they pursue,
"And curse the mischief that their hands would do—
"Perhaps that God, who leans to mercy still,
"And sent a prophet to declare his will,
"May yet the vengeance he designs, adjourn,
"And, ere we perish, from his anger turn."
Jehovah heard, and pleas'd beheld at last
Their deep repentance for transgressions past,
With pity moved, he heard the earnest prayer
Of this vast city, humbled in despair;
Though justly due, his anger dies away,
He bids the angel of destruction stay: —
The obedient angel hears the high command,
And sheathes the sword, he drew to smite the land.

Canto IV.

But anger swell'd the haughty prophet's breast,
Rage burn'd within, and robb'd his soul of rest;
Such was his pride, he wish'd they all in flame
Might rather perish than belie his fame,
And God's own bolts the tottering towers assail,
And millions perish, than his word should fail.
Then to the heavens he sent this peevish prayer—
(Vain, impious man, to send such pinings there):

"While yet within my native land, I stay'd,
"This would at last reward my toil, I said,
"Destruction through the Assyrian streets to cry,
"And then the event my mission falsify;
"For this I strove to shun thy sight before,
"And sought repose upon a foreign shore;
"I knew thou wert so gracious and so kind,
"Such mercy sways thy all creating mind,
"Averse thy bolts of vengeance to employ,
"And still relenting when you should'st destroy,
"That when I had declar'd thy sacred will,
"Thou would'st not what I prophesy'd fulfil,
"But leave me thus to scorn, contempt, and shame,
"A lying prophet, blasted in my fame—
"And now, I pray thee, grant my last request,
"O take my life, so wretched and unblest!
"If here I stay, 'tis but to grieve and sigh;
"Then take my life—'tis better far to die!"

"Is it thy place to swell with rage and pride,
"(Thus to his pining prophet, God reply'd)
"Say is it just thy heart should burn with ire
"Because yon' city is not wrapt in fire?
"What if I choose its ruin to delay,
"And send destruction on some future day,

"Must thou, for that, with wasting anguish sigh,
"And, hostile to my pleasure, wish to die?"
Then Jonah parted from the mourning town,
And near its eastern limits sate him down,
A booth he builded with assiduous care,
(Form'd of the cypress boughs that flourish'd there)
And anxious now beneath their shadow lay,
Waiting the issue of the fortieth day—
As yet uncertain if the Power Divine
Or would to mercy, or to wrath incline—
Meantime the leaves that roof'd his arbour o'er,
Shrunk up and faded, sheltered him no more;
But God ordain'd a thrifty gourd to rise,
To screen his prophet from the scorching skies;
High o'er his head aspired the spreading leaf,
Too fondly meant to mitigate his grief,
So close a foliage o'er his head was made,
That not a beam could pierce the happy shade:
The wondering seer perceiv'd the branches grow
And bless'd the shadow that reliev'd his woe;
But when the next bright morn began to shine
(So God ordain'd) a worm attack'd the vine,
Beneath his bite its goodly leaves decay,
And wasting, withering, die before the day!
Then as the lamp of heaven still higher rose
From eastern skies a sultry tempest blows,
The vertic sun as fiercely pour'd his ray,
And beam'd around insufferable day.
How beat those beams on Jonah's fainting head!
How oft he wish'd a place among the dead!
All he could do, was now to grieve and sigh,
His life detest, and beg of God to die.
Again, Jehovah to his prophet said,
"Art thou so angry for thy vanish'd shade—

"For a mere shadow dost thou well to grieve,
"For this poor loss would'st thou thy being leave?"—
"My rage is just, (the frantic prophet cry'd),
"My last, my only comfort is deny'd—
"The spreading vine that form'd my leafy bower;
"Behold it vanish'd in the needful hour!
"To beating winds and sultry suns a prey,
"My fainting spirit droops and dies away—
"Give me a mansion in my native dust,
"For though I die with rage, my rage is just."
Once more the Almighty deign'd to make reply—
"Does this lost *gourd* thy sorrow swell so high,
"*Whose* friendly shade not to thy toil was due,
"Alone it sprouted and alone it grew;
"A night beheld its branches waving high,
"And the next sun beheld those branches die;
"And should not pity move the Lord of all
"To spare the vast Assyrian capital,
"Within whose walls uncounted myriads stray,
"Their Father I, my sinful offspring they?—
"Should they not move the creating mind
"With six score thousand of the infant kind,
"And herds untold that graze the spacious field,
"For whom yon' meads their stores of fragrance yield;
"Should I this royal city wrap in flame,
"And slaughter millions to support thy fame,
"When now repentant to their God they turn,
"And their past follies, low in ashes, mourn?—
"Vain, thoughtless wretch, recall thy weak request,
"Death never came to man a welcome guest;—
"Why wish to die—what madness prompts thy mind?
"Too long the days of darkness thou shalt find;
"Life was a blessing by thy Maker meant,
"Dost thou despise the blessings he has lent—

"Enjoy my gifts while yet the seasons run
"True to their months, and social with the sun;
"When to the dust my mandate bids thee fall,
"All these are lost, for death conceals them all—
"No more the sun illumes the sprightly day,
"The seasons vanish, and the stars decay:
"The trees, the flowers, no more thy sense delight,
"Death shades them all in ever-during night.
"Then think not long the little space I lent—
"Of thy own sins, like Nineveh, repent;
"Rejoice at last the mighty change to see,
"And bear with them as I have borne with thee."

THE ADVENTURES OF SIMON SWAUGUM, A VILLAGE MERCHANT[1]

Written in 1768.

Preliminary Particulars

Sprung from a race that had long till'd the soil,
And first disrobed it of its native trees,
He wish'd to heir their lands, but not their toil,
And thought the ploughman's life no life of ease;—
"'Tis wrong (said he) these pretty hands to wound
"With felling oaks, or delving in the ground:

[1] From the 1809 edition of Freneau's poems. This piece does not appear in the editions of 1786 and 1788. It ran as a serial for several weeks in the *National Gazette*, beginning May 17, 1792, and it was immediately reprinted by Bache in his *Aurora*. I can find no earlier trace of it. It was printed, together with "The Country Printer," in 1794 by Hoff and Derrick, Philadelphia, as a 16-page pamphlet, under the title, "The Village Merchant," and it was given a place in the 1795 edition, dated "Anno 1768." In the 1809 edition it was first divided into sections with sub-titles.

"I, who at least have forty pounds in cash
"And in a country store might cut a dash,
"Why should I till these barren fields (he said)
"I who have learnt to cypher, write and read,
"These fields that shrubs, and weeds, and brambles bear,
"That pay me not, and only bring me care!"
Some thoughts had he, long while, to quit the sod,
In sea-port towns to try his luck in trade,
But, then, their ways of living seem'd most odd—
For dusty streets to leave his native shade,
From grassy plats to pebbled walks removed—
The more he thought of them, the less he loved:
The city springs he could not drink, and still
Preferr'd the fountain near some bushy hill:
And yet no splendid objects there were seen,
No distant hills, in gaudy colours clad,
Look where you would, the prospect was but mean,
Scrub oaks, and scatter'd pines, and willows sad—
Banks of a shallow river, stain'd with mud;
A stream, where never swell'd the tide of flood,
Nor lofty ship her topsails did unlose,
Nor sailor sail'd, except in long canoes.
It would have puzzled Faustus, to have told,
What did attach him to this paltry spot;
Where even the house he heir'd was very old,
And all its outworks hardly worth a groat:
Yet so it was, the fancy took his brain
A country shop might here some custom gain:
Whiskey, he knew, would always be in vogue,
While there are country squires to take a cogue,
Laces and lawns would draw each rural maid,
And one must have her shawl, and one her shade.—

The Shop Described and the Merchant's Outset

Hard by the road a pigmy building stood,
Thatch'd was its roof, and earthen were its floors;
So small its size, that, in a jesting mood,
It might be call'd a house turn'd out of doors—
Yet here, adjacent to an aged oak,
Full fifty years old dad his hams did smoke,
Nor ceas'd the trade, 'till worn with years and spent,
To Pluto's smoke-house he, himself, was sent.
Hither our merchant turn'd his curious eye,
And mused awhile upon this sable shell;
"Here father smoked his hogs (he said) and why
"In truth, may not our garret do as well?"
So, down he took his hams and bacon flitches,
Resolv'd to fill the place with other riches;
From every hole and cranny brush'd the soot,
And fixt up shelves throughout the crazy hut;
A counter, too, most cunningly was plann'd,
Behind whose breast-work none but he might stand,
Excepting now and then, by special grace,
Some brother merchant from some other place.
Now, muster'd up his cash, and said his prayers,
In Sunday suit he rigs himself for town,
Two raw-boned steeds (design'd for great affairs)
Are to the waggon hitch'd, old Bay and Brown;
Who ne'er had been before a league from home,
But now are doom'd full many a mile to roam,
Like merchant-ships, a various freight to bring
Of ribbons, lawns, and many a tawdry thing.
Molasses too, blest sweet, was not forgot,
And island Rum, that every taste delights,

And teas, for maid and matron must be bought,
Rosin and catgut strings for fiddling wights—
But why should I his invoice here repeat?
'Twould be like counting grains in pecks of wheat.
Half Europe's goods were on his invoice found,
And all was to be bought with forty pound!
Soon as the early dawn proclaim'd the day,
He cock'd his hat with pins, and comb'd his hair:
Curious it was, and laughable to see
The village-merchant, mounted in his chair:
Shelves, piled with lawns and linens, in his head,
Coatings and stuffs, and cloths, and scarlets red—
All that would suit man, woman, girl, or boy;
Muslins and muslinets, jeans, grograms, corduroy.
Alack! said I, he little, little dreams
That all the cash he guards with studious care—
His cash! the mother of a thousand schemes,
Will hardly buy a load of earthen ware!
But why should I excite the hidden tear
By whispering truths ungrateful to his ear;
Still let him travel on, with scheming pate,
As disappointment never comes too late.—

His Journey to the Metropolis; and Mercantile Transactions

Through woods obscure and rough perplexing ways,
Slow and alone, he urged the clumsy wheel;
Now stopping short, to let his horses graze,
Now treating them with straw and Indian meal:
At length a lofty steeple caught his eye,
"Higher (thought he) than ever kite did fly:—
But so it is, these churchmen are so proud
They ever will be climbing to a cloud;

Bound on a sky-blue cruise, they always rig
The longest steeple, and the largest wig."
Now safe arrived upon the pebbled way,
Where well-born steeds the rattling coaches trail,
Where shops on shops are seen—and ladies gay
Walk with their curtains some, and some their veil;
Where sons of art their various labors shew
And one cries fish! and one cries muffins ho!
Amaz'd, alike, the merchant, and his pair
Of scare-crow steeds, did nothing else but stare;
So new was all the scene, that, smit with awe,
They grinn'd, and gaz'd, and gap'd at all they saw,
And often stopp'd, to ask at every door,
"Sirs, can you tell us where's the cheapest store!"
"The cheapest store (a sly retailer said)
"Cheaper than cheap, guid faith, I have to sell;
"Here are some colour'd cloths that never fade:
"No other shop can serve you half so well;
"Wanting some money now, to pay my rent,
"I'll sell them at a loss of ten per cent.—
"Hum-hums are here—and muslins—what you please—
"Bandanas, baftas, pullcats, India teas;
"Improv'd by age, and now grown very old,
"And given away, you may depend—not sold!"
Lured by the bait the wily shopman laid,
He gave his steeds their mess of straw and meal,
Then gazing round the shop, thus, cautious said,
"Well, if you sell so cheap, I think we'll deal;
"But pray remember, 'tis for goods I'm come,
"For, as to polecats, we've enough at home—
"Full forty pounds I have, and that in gold
"(Enough to make a trading man look bold)
"Unrig your shelves, and let me take a peep;
"'Tis odds I leave them bare, you sell so cheap."

The city merchant stood, with lengthen'd jaws;
And stared awhile, then made this short reply—
"You clear my shelves! (he said)—this trunk of gauze
"Is more than all your forty pounds can buy:—
"On yonder board, whose burthen seems so small
"That one man's pocket might contain it all,
"More value lies, than you and all your race
"From Adam down, could purchase or possess."
Convinced, he turn'd him to another street,
Where humbler shopmen from the crowd retreat;
Here caught his eye coarse callicoes and crape,
Pipes and tobacco, ticklenburghs and tape.
Pitchers and pots, of value not so high
But he might sell, and forty pounds would buy.
Some jugs, some pots, some fifty ells of tape,
A keg of wine, a cask of low proof rum,
Bung'd close—for fear the spirit should escape
That many a sot was waiting for at home;
A gross of pipes, a case of home-made gin,
Tea, powder, shot—small parcels he laid in;
Molasses, too, for swichell*-loving wights,
(Swichell, that wings Sangrado's boldest flights,
When bursting forth the wild ideas roll,
Flash'd from that farthing-candle, call'd his soul:)
All these he bought, and would have purchased more,
To furnish out his Lilliputian store;
But cash fell short—and they who smiled while yet
The cash remain'd, now took a serious fit:—
No more the shop-girl could his talk endure,
But, like her cat, sat sullen and demure.—

* Molasses and water: A beverage much used in the eastern states.—*Freneau's note.*

The dull retailer found no more to say,
But shook his head, and wish'd to sneak away,
Leaving his house-dog, now, to make reply,
And watch the counter with a lynx's eye.—
Our merchant took the hint, and off he went,
Resolv'd to sell at twenty-five per cent.

The Merchant's Return

Returning far o'er many a hill and stone
And much in dread his earthen ware would break,
Thoughtful he rode, and uttering many a groan
Lest at some worm-hole vent his cask should leak—
His cask, that held the joys of rural squire
Which even, 'twas said, the parson did admire,
And valued more than all the dusty pages
That Calvin penn'd, and fifty other sages—
Once high in fame—beprais'd in verse and prose,
But now unthumb'd, enjoy a sweet repose.
At dusk of eve he reach'd his old abode,
Around him quick his anxious townsmen came,
One ask'd what luck had happ'd him on the road,
And one ungear'd the mud-bespatter'd team.
While on his cask each glanced a loving eye,
Patient, to all he gave a brisk reply—
Told all that had befallen him on his way,
What wonders in the town detain'd his stay—
"Houses as high as yonder white-oak tree
"And boats of monstrous size that go to sea,
"Streets throng'd with busy folk, like swarming hive;
"The Lord knows how they all contrive to live—
"No ploughs I saw, no hoes, no care, no charge,
"In fact, they all are gentlemen at large,
"And goods so thick on every window lie,
"They all seem born to sell—and none to buy."

The Catastrophe, or the Broken Merchant

Alack-a-day! on life's uncertain road
How many plagues, what evils must befal;—
Jove has on none unmingled bliss bestow'd,
But disappointment is the lot of all:
Thieves rob our stores, in spite of locks and keys,
Cats steal our cream, and rats infest our cheese,
The gayest coat a grease-spot may assail,
Or Susan pin a dish-clout to its tail.—
Our village-merchant (trust me) had his share
Of vile mis-haps—for now, the goods unpackt,
Discover'd, what might make a deacon swear,
Jugs, cream-pots, pipes, and grog-bowls sadly crackt—
A general groan throughout the crowd was heard;
Most pitied him, and some his ruin fear'd;
Poor wight! 'twas sad to see him fret and chafe,
While each enquir'd, "Sir, is the rum-cask safe?"
Alas! even that some mischief had endured;—
One rascal hoop had started near the chine!—
Then curiously the bung-hole they explored,
With stem of pipe, the leakage to define—
Five gallons must be charged to loss and gain!—
"—Five gallons! (cry'd the merchant, writh'd with pain)
"Now may the cooper never see full flask,
"But still be driving at an empty cask—
"Five gallons might have mellowed down the 'squire
"And made the captain strut a full inch higher;
"Five gallons might have prompted many a song,
"And made a frolic more than five days long:
"Five gallons now are lost, and—sad to think,
"That when they leak'd—no soul was there to drink!"

Now, slightly treated with a proof-glass dram,
Each neighbour took his leave, and went to bed,
All but our merchant: he, with grief o'ercome,
Revolv'd strange notions in his scheming head—
"For losses such as these, (thought he) 'tis meant,
"That goods are sold at twenty-five per cent:
"No doubt these trading men know what is just,
"'Tis twenty-five times what they cost at first!"
So rigging off his shelves by light of candle,
The dismal smoke-house walls began to shine:
Here, stood his tea-pots—some without a handle—
A broken jar—and there his keg of wine;
Pipes, many a dozen, ordered in a row;
Jugs, mugs, and grog-bowls—less for sale than show:
The leaky cask, replenish'd from the well,
Roll'd to its birth—but we no tales will tell.—
Catching the eye in elegant display,
All was arranged and snug, by break of day:
The blue dram-bottle, on the counter plac'd,
Stood, all prepared for him that buys to taste;—
Sure bait! by which the man of cash is taken,
As rats are caught by cheese or scraps of bacon.
Now from all parts the rural people ran,
With ready cash, to buy what might be bought:
One went to choose a pot, and one a pan,
And they that had no pence their produce brought,
A hog, a calf, safe halter'd by the neck;
Potatoes (Ireland's glory) many a peck;
Bacon and cheese, of real value more
Than India's gems, or all Potosi's ore.
Some questions ask'd, the folks began to stare—
No soul would purchase, pipe, or pot, or pan:
Each shook his head—hung back—"Your goods so dear!

"In fact (said they) the devil's in the man!
"Rum ne'er shall meet my lips (cry'd honest Sam)
"In shape of toddy, punch, grog, sling, or dram;
"No cash of mine you'll get (said pouting Kate)
"While gauze is valued at so dear a rate."
Thus things dragg'd on for many a tedious day;
No custom came; and nought but discontent
Gloom'd through the shop.—"Well, let them have their way,
(The merchant said) I'll sell at cent per cent,
"By which, 'tis plain, I scarce myself can save,
"For cent per cent is just the price I gave."
"Now! (cry'd the squire who still had kept his pence)
"Now, Sir, you reason like a man of sense!
"Custom will now from every quarter come;
"In joyous streams shall flow the inspiring rum,
"'Till every soul in pleasing dreams be sunk,
"And even our Socrates himself—is drunk!"
Soon were the shelves disburthen'd of their load;
In three short hours the kegs of wine ran dry—
Swift from its tap even dull molasses flow'd;
Each saw the rum cask wasting, with a sigh—
The farce concluded, as it was foreseen—
With empty shelves—long trust—and law suits keen—
The woods resounding with a curse on trade,—
An empty purse—sour looks—and hanging head.—

The Puncheon's Eulogy

"Here lies a worthy corpse (Sangrado said)
"Its debt to Commerce now, no doubt, is paid.—
"Well—'twas a vile disease that kill'd it, sure,
"A quick consumption, that no art could cure!

"Thus shall we all, when life's vain dream is out,
"Be lodg'd in corners dark, or kick'd about!
"Time is the tapster of our race below,
"That turns the key, and bids the juices flow:
"Quitting my books, henceforth be mine the task
"To moralize upon this empty cask—
"Thank heaven we've had the taste—so far 'twas well;
"And still, thro' mercy, may enjoy the smell!"

EPILOGUE[1]

Well!—strange it is, that men will still apply
  Things to themselves, that authors never meant:
Each country merchant asks me, "Is it I
  On whom your rhyming ridicule is spent?"
Friends, hold your tongues—such myriads of your race
  Adorn Columbia's fertile, favour'd climes,
A man might rove seven years from place to place
  Ere he would know the subject of my rhymes.—
Perhaps in Jersey is this creature known,
Perhaps New-England claims him for her own:
And if from Fancy's world this wight I drew,
What is the imagin'd character to you?"

[1] The epilogue was first added in 1795.

Debemur morti nos nostraque!

THE PYRAMIDS OF EGYPT[1]

A Dialogue. Written in 1770.

Scene.—Egypt. *Persons.*—Traveller, Genius, Time.

Traveller

Where are those famed piles of human grandeur,
Those sphinxes, pyramids, and Pompey's pillar,
That bid defiance to the arm of Time—
Tell me, dear Genius: for I long to see them.

Genius

At Alexandria rises Pompey's pillar,
Whose birth is but of yesterday, compar'd
With those prodigious fabricks that you see
O'er yonder distant plain—upon whose breast
Old Nile hath never roll'd his swelling streams,
The only plain so privileg'd in Egypt.
These pyramids may well excite your wonder,
They are of most remote antiquity,
Almost co-eval with those cloud-crown'd hills
That westward from them rise—'twas the same age
That saw old Babel's tower aspiring high,
When first the sage Egyptian architects
These ancient turrets to the heavens rais'd;—
But Babel's tower is gone, and these remain!

Traveller

Old Rome I thought unrivall'd in her years,
At least the remnants that we find of Rome,
But these, you tell me, are of older date.

[1] The text is from the edition of 1786. The 1795 edition has the note "anno 1769."

Genius

Talk not of Rome!—before they lopt a bush
From the seven hills where Rome, earth's empress, stood,
These pyramids were old—their birth day is
Beyond tradition's reach, or history.

Traveller

Then let us haste toward those piles of wonder
That scorn to bend beneath this weight of years—
Lo! to my view, the aweful mansions rise
The pride of art, the sleeping place of death!
Are these the four prodigious monuments
That so astonish every generation—
Let us examine this, the first and greatest—
A secret horror chills my breast, dear Genius,
To touch these monuments that are so ancient,
The fearful property of ghosts and death!—
Yet of such mighty bulk that I presume
A race of giants were the architects.—
Since these proud fabricks to the heavens were rais'd
How many generations have decay'd,
How many monarchies to ruin pass'd!
How many empires had their rise and fall!
While these remain—and promise to remain
As long as yonder sun shall gild their summits,
Or moon or stars their wonted circles run.

Genius

The time will come
When these stupendous piles you deem immortal,
Worn out with age, shall moulder on their bases,
And down, down, low to endless ruin verging,

O'erwhelm'd by dust, be seen and known no more!—
Ages ago, in dark oblivion's lap
Had they been shrouded, but the atmosphere
In these parch'd climates, hostile to decay,
Is pregnant with no rain, that by its moisture
Might waste their bulk in such excess of time,
And prove them merely mortal.
'Twas on this plain the ancient Memphis stood,
Her walls encircled these tall pyramids—
But where is Pharoah's palace, where the domes
Of Egypt's haughty lords?—all, all are gone,
And like the phantom snows of a May morning
Left not a vestige to discover them!

Traveller

How shall I reach the vortex of this pile—
How shall I clamber up its shelving sides?
I scarce endure to glance toward the summit,
It seems among the clouds—When was't thou rais'd,
O work of more than mortal majesty—
Was this produc'd by persevering man,
Or did the gods erect this pyramid?

Genius

Nor gods, nor giants rais'd this pyramid—
It was the toil of mortals like yourself
That swell'd it to the skies—
See'st thou yon' little door? Through that they pass'd,
Who rais'd so high this aggregate of wonders!
What cannot tyrants do,
When they have subject nations at their will,
And the world's wealth to gratify ambition!
Millions of slaves beneath their labours fainted
Who here were doom'd to toil incessantly,

And years elaps'd while groaning myriads strove
To raise this mighty tomb—and but to hide
The worthless bones of an Egyptian king.—
O wretch, could not a humbler tomb have done,
Could nothing but a pyramid inter thee!

Traveller

Perhaps old Jacob's race, when here oppress'd,
Rais'd, in their years of bondage this dread pile.

Genius

Before the Jewish patriarchs saw the light,
While yet the globe was in its infancy
These were erected to the pride of man—
Four thousand years have run their tedious round
Since these smooth stones were on each other laid,
Four thousand more may run as dull a round
Ere Egypt sees her pyramids decay'd.

Traveller

But suffer me to enter, and behold
The interior wonders of this edifice.

Genius

'Tis darkness all, with hateful silence join'd—
Here drowsy bats enjoy a dull repose,
And marble coffins, vacant of their bones,
Show where the royal dead in ruin lay!
By every pyramid a temple rose
Where oft in concert those of ancient time
Sung to their goddess Isis hymns of praise;
But these are fallen!—their columns too superb
Are levell'd with the dust—nor these alone—
Where is thy vocal statue, Memnon, now,

That once, responsive to the morning beams,
Harmoniously to father Phœbus sung!
Where is the image that in past time stood
High on the summit of yon' pyramid ?—
Still may you see its polish'd pedestal—
Where art thou ancient Thebes ?——all bury'd low,
All vanish'd! crumbled into mother dust,
And nothing of antiquity remains
But these huge pyramids, and yonder hills.

Time

Old Babel's tower hath felt my potent arm
I ruin'd Ecbatan and Babylon,
Thy huge Colossus, Rhodes, I tumbled down,
And on these pyramids I smote my scythe;
But they resist its edge—then let them stand.
But I can boast a greater feat than this,
I long ago have shrouded those in death
Who made those structures rebels to my power—
But, O return!—These piles are not immortal!
This earth, with all its balls of hills and mountains,
Shall perish by my hand—then how can these,
These hoary headed pyramids of Egypt,
That are but dwindled warts upon her body,
That on a little, little spot of ground
Extinguish the dull radiance of the sun,
Be proof to Death and me ?——Traveller return—
There' s nought but God immortal——He alone
Exists secure, when Man, and Death, and Time,
(Time not immortal, but a fancied point
In the vast circle of eternity)
Are swallow'd up, and, like the pyramids,
Leave not an atom for their monument!

THE MONUMENT OF PHAON[1]

Written 1770.

Phaon, the admirer of Sappho, both of the isle of Lesbos, privately forsook this first object of his affections, and set out to visit foreign countries. Sappho, after having long mourned his absence (which is the subject of one of Ovid's finest epistles), is here supposed to fall into the company of Ismenius a traveller, who informs her that he saw the tomb of a certain Phaon in Sicily, erected to his memory by a lady of the island, and gives her the inscriptions, hinting to her that, in all probability, it belonged to the same person she bemoans. She thereupon, in a fit of rage and despair, throws herself from the famous Leucadian rock, and perishes in the gulph below.

Sappho

No more I sing by yonder shaded stream,
  Where once intranc'd I fondly pass'd the day,
Supremely blest, when Phaon was my theme,
  But wretched now, when Phaon is away!

Of all the youths that grac'd our Lesbian isle
  He, only he, my heart propitious found,
So soft his language, and so sweet his smile,
  Heaven was my own when Phaon clasp'd me round!

But soon, too soon, the faithless lover fled
  To wander on some distant barbarous shore—
Who knows if Phaon is alive or dead,
  Or wretched Sappho shall behold him more.

Ismenius

As late in fair Sicilia's groves I stray'd,
  Charm'd with the beauties of the vernal scene
I sate me down amid the yew tree's shade,
  Flowers blooming round, with herbage fresh and green.

[1] Text from the edition of 1786. For the edition of 1795 Freneau cut out the song of Ismenius, beginning "Thou swain that lov'st the morning air," and extending to the speech of Sappho, "Ah, faithless Phaon."

Not distant far a monument arose
Among the trees and form'd of Parian stone,
And, as if there some stranger did repose,
It stood neglected, and it stood alone.

Along its sides dependent ivy crept,
The cypress bough, Plutonian green, was near,
A sculptur'd Venus on the summit wept,
A pensive Cupid dropt the parting tear.

Strains deep engrav'd on every side I read,
How Phaon died upon that foreign shore—
Sappho, I think your Phaon must be dead,
Then hear the strains that do his fate deplore:

Thou swain that lov'st the morning air,
To those embowering trees repair,
Forsake thy sleep at early dawn,
And of this landscape to grow fonder,
Still, O still persist to wander
Up and down the flowery lawn;
And as you there enraptur'd rove
From hill to hill, from grove to grove,
Pensive now and quite alone,
Cast thine eye upon this stone,
Read its melancholy moan;
And if you can refuse a tear
To the youth that slumbers here,
Whom the Lesbians held so dear,
Nature calls thee not her own.
Echo, hasten to my aid!
Tell the woods and tell the waves,
Tell the far off mountain caves
(Wrapt in solitary shade);
Tell them in high tragic numbers,

That beneath this marble tomb,
Shrouded in unceasing gloom
Phaon, youthful Phaon, slumbers,
By Sicilian swains deplor'd—
That a narrow urn restrains
Him who charm'd our pleasing plains,
Him, whom every nymph ador'd.
Tell the woods and tell the waves,
Tell the mossy mountain caves,
Tell them, if none will hear beside,
How our lovely Phaon died.
In that season when the sun
Bids his glowing charioteer
Phœbus, native of the sphere,
High the burning zenith run;
Then our much lamented swain,
O'er the sunny, scorched plain,
Hunting with a chosen train,
Slew the monsters of the waste
From those gloomy caverns chac'd
Round stupendous Etna plac'd.—
Conquer'd by the solar beam
At last he came to yonder stream;
Panting, thirsting there he lay
On this fatal summer's day,
While his locks of raven jett
Were on his temples dripping wet;
The gentle stream ran purling by
O'er the pebbles, pleasantly,
Tempting him to drink and die—
He drank indeed—but never thought
Death was in the gelid draught!—
Soon it chill'd his boiling veins,
Soon this glory of the plains

Left the nymphs and left the swains,
And has fled with all his charms
Where the Stygian monarch reigns,
Where no sun the climate warms!—
Dread Pluto then, as once before,
Pass'd Avernus' waters o'er;
Left the dark and dismal shore,
And strait enamour'd, as he gloomy stood,
Seiz'd Phaon by the waters of the wood.
Now o'er the silent plain
We for our much lov'd Phaon call again,
And Phaon! Phaon! ring the woods amain—
From beneath this myrtle tree,
Musidora, wretched maid,
How shall Phaon answer thee,
Deep in vaulted caverns laid!—
Thrice the myrtle tree hath bloom'd
Since our Phaon was entomb'd,
I, who had his heart, below,
I have rais'd this turret high,
A monument of love and woe
That Phaon's name may never die.—
With deepest grief, O muse divine,
Around his tomb thy laurels twine
And shed thy sorrow, for to morrow
Thou, perhaps, shalt cease to glow—
My hopes are crost, my lover lost,
And I must weeping o'er the mountains go!

Sappho

Ah, faithless Phaon, thus from me to rove,
And bless my rival in a foreign grove!
Could Sicily more charming forests show
Than those that in thy native Lesbos grow—

Did fairer fruits adorn the bending tree
Than those that Lesbos did present to thee!
Or didst thou find through all the changing fair
One beauty that with Sappho could compare!
So soft, so sweet, so charming and so kind,
A face so fair, such beauties of the mind—
Not Musidora can be rank'd with me
Who sings so well thy funeral song for thee!—[1]
I'll go!—and from the high Leucadian steep
Take my last farewell in the lover's leap,
I charge thee, Phaon, by this deed of woe
To meet me in the Elysian shades below,
No rival beauty shall pretend a share,
Sappho alone shall walk with Phaon there.
She spoke, and downward from the mountain's height
Plung'd in the plashy wave to everlasting night.

THE POWER OF FANCY[2]

Written 1770.

Wakeful, vagrant, restless thing,
Ever wandering on the wing,
Who thy wondrous source can find,
Fancy, regent of the mind;
A spark from Jove's resplendent throne,
But thy nature all unknown.

[1] This and the preceding line omitted from the later versions.

[2] From the edition of 1786. The later editions omitted all but the first twenty and the last fourteen lines of the poem, and gave to this fragment the title "Ode to Fancy." The omitted lines, much changed, were then made a separate poem, under the title "Fancy's Ramble."

This spark of bright, celestial flame,
From Jove's seraphic altar came,
And hence alone in man we trace,
Resemblance to the immortal race.
Ah! what is all this mighty whole,
These suns and stars that round us roll!
What are they all, where'er they shine,
But Fancies of the Power Divine!
What is this globe, these lands, and seas,
And heat, and cold, and flowers, and trees,
And life, and death, and beast, and man,
And time—that with the sun began—
But thoughts on reason's scale combin'd,
Ideas of the Almighty mind!
On the surface of the brain
Night after night she walks unseen,
Noble fabrics doth she raise
In the woods or on the seas,
On some high, steep, pointed rock,
Where the billows loudly knock
And the dreary tempests sweep
Clouds along the uncivil deep.
Lo! she walks upon the moon,
Listens to the chimy tune
Of the bright, harmonious spheres,
And the song of angels hears;
Sees this earth a distant star,*
Pendant, floating in the air;
Leads me to some lonely dome,
Where Religion loves to come,
Where the bride of Jesus dwells,
And the deep ton'd organ swells

* Milton's Paradise Lost, B. II, V. 1052.—*Freneau's note.*

In notes with lofty anthems join'd,
Notes that half distract the mind.
Now like lightning she descends
To the prison of the fiends,
Hears the rattling of their chains,
Feels their never ceasing pains—
But, O never may she tell
Half the frightfulness of hell.
Now she views Arcadian rocks,
Where the shepherds guard their flocks,
And, while yet her wings she spreads,
Sees chrystal streams and coral beds,
Wanders to some desert deep,
Or some dark, enchanted steep,
By the full moonlight doth shew
Forests of a dusky blue,
Where, upon some mossy bed,
Innocence reclines her head.
Swift, she stretches o'er the seas
To the far off Hebrides,
Canvas on the lofty mast
Could not travel half so fast—
Swifter than the eagle's flight
Or instantaneous rays of light!
Lo! contemplative she stands
On Norwegia's rocky lands—
Fickle Goddess, set me down
Where the rugged winters frown
Upon Orca's howling steep,
Nodding o'er the northern deep,
Where the winds tumultuous roar,
Vext that Ossian sings no more.
Fancy, to that land repair,
Sweetest Ossian slumbers there;

Waft me far to southern isles
Where the soften'd winter smiles,
To Bermuda's orange shades,
Or Demarara's lovely glades;
Bear me o'er the sounding cape,
Painting death in every shape,
Where daring Anson spread the sail
Shatter'd by the stormy gale—
Lo! she leads me wide and far,
Sense can never follow her—
Shape thy course o'er land and sea,
Help me to keep pace with thee,
Lead me to yon' chalky cliff,
Over rock and over reef,
Into Britain's fertile land,
Stretching far her proud command.
Look back and view, thro' many a year,
Cæsar, Julius Cæsar, there.
Now to Tempe's verdant wood,
Over the mid-ocean flood
Lo! the islands of the sea—
Sappho, Lesbos mourns for thee:
Greece, arouse thy humbled head,
Where are all thy mighty dead,
Who states to endless ruin hurl'd
And carried vengeance through the world?—
Troy, thy vanish'd pomp resume,
Or, weeping at thy Hector's tomb,
Yet those faded scenes renew,
Whose memory is to Homer due.
Fancy, lead me wandering still
Up to Ida's cloud-topt hill;
Not a laurel there doth grow
But in vision thou shalt show,—

Every sprig on Virgil's tomb
Shall in livelier colours bloom,
And every triumph Rome has seen
Flourish on the years between.
Now she bears me far away
In the east to meet the day,
Leads me over Ganges' streams,
Mother of the morning beams—
O'er the ocean hath she ran,
Places me on Tinian;
Farther, farther in the east,
Till it almost meets the west,
Let us wandering both be lost
On Taitis sea-beat coast,
Bear me from that distant strand,
Over ocean, over land,
To California's golden shore—
Fancy, stop, and rove no more.
Now, tho' late, returning home,
Lead me to Belinda's tomb;
Let me glide as well as you
Through the shroud and coffin too,
And behold, a moment, there,
All that once was good and fair—
Who doth here so soundly sleep?
Shall we break this prison deep?—
Thunders cannot wake the maid,
Lightnings cannot pierce the shade,
And tho' wintry tempests roar,
Tempests shall disturb no more.
Yet must those eyes in darkness stay,
That once were rivals to the day?—
Like heaven's bright lamp beneath the main
They are but set to rise again.

Fancy, thou the muses' pride,
In thy painted realms reside
Endless images of things,
Fluttering each on golden wings,
Ideal objects, such a store,
The universe could hold no more:
Fancy, to thy power I owe
Half my happiness below;
By thee Elysian groves were made,
Thine were the notes that Orpheus play'd;
By thee was Pluto charm'd so well
While rapture seiz'd the sons of hell—
Come, O come—perceiv'd by none,
You and I will walk alone.

THE PRAYER OF ORPHEUS

Sad monarch of the world below,
Stern guardian of this drowsy shade,
Through these unlovely realms I go
To seek a captive thou hast made.
O'er Stygian waters have I pass'd,
Contemning Jove's severe decree,
And reached thy sable court at last
To find my lost Eurydicè.

Of all the nymphs so deckt and drest
Like Venus of the starry train,
She was the loveliest and the best,
The pride and glory of the plain.
O free from thy despotic sway
This nymph of heaven-descended charms,
Too soon she came this dusky way—
Restore thy captive to my arms!

As by a stream's fair verdant side
In myrtle shades she roved along,
A serpent stung my blooming bride,
This brightest of the female throng—
The venom hastening thro' her veins
Forbade the freezing blood to flow.
And thus she left the Thracian plains
For these dejected groves below.

Even thou may'st pity my sad pain,
Since Love, as ancient stories say,
Forced thee to leave thy native reign,
And in Sicilian meadows stray:
Bright Proserpine thy bosom fired,
For her you sought unwelcome light,
Madness and love in you conspired
To seize her to the shades of night.

But if, averse to my request,
The banished nymph, for whom I mourn,
Must in Plutonian chambers rest,
And never to my arms return ——
Take Orpheus too—his warm desire
Can ne'er be quench'd by your decree:
In life or death he must admire,
He must adore Eurydicè!

THE DESERTED FARM-HOUSE[1]

This antique dome the insatiate tooth of time
Now level with the dust has almost laid;—
Yet ere 'tis gone, I seize my humble theme
From these low ruins, that his years have made.

[1] The first trace that I can find of this poem is in the *Freeman's Journal* of May 18, 1785. I have little doubt that it is the "Stanzas on an Ancient

Behold the unsocial hearth!—where once the fires
Blazed high, and soothed the storm-stay'd traveller's woes;
See! the weak roof, that abler props requires,
Admits the winds, and swift descending snows.

Here, to forget the labours of the day,
No more the swains at evening hours repair,
But wandering flocks assume the well known way
To shun the rigours of the midnight air.

In yonder chamber, half to ruin gone,
Once stood the ancient housewife's curtained bed—
Timely the prudent matron has withdrawn,
And each domestic comfort with her fled.

The trees, the flowers that her own hands had reared,
The plants, the vines, that were so verdant seen,—
The trees, the flowers, the vines have disappear'd,
And every plant has vanish'd from the green.

So sits in tears on wide Campania's plain
Rome, once the mistress of a world enslaved;
That triumph'd o'er the land, subdued the main,
And Time himself, in her wild transports, braved.

So sits in tears on Palestina's shore
The Hebrew town, of splendour once divine—
Her kings, her lords, her triumphs are no more;
Slain are her priests, and ruin'd every shrine.

Dutch House on Long Island," mentioned in 1772 in a letter to Madison as forming a part of Freneau's publication, "*The American Village*," now lost. After its appearance in the *Freeman's Journal*, it was widely copied. The *Independent Gazetteer* printed it in 1787, introduced as follows: "The following is copied from Perryman's *London Morning Herald* of July 22, 1787: 'The Deserted Farm House,' written in America by Mr. Freneau, whose political productions tended considerably to keep alive the spirit of independence during

Once, in the bounds of this deserted room,
Perhaps some swain nocturnal courtship made,
Perhaps some Sherlock mused amidst the gloom;
Since Love and Death forever seek the shade.

Perhaps some miser, doom'd to discontent,
Here counted o'er the heaps acquired with pain;
He to the dust—his gold, on traffick sent,
Shall ne'er disgrace these mouldering walls again.

Nor shall the glow-worm fopling, sunshine bred,
Seek, at the evening hour this wonted dome—
Time has reduced the fabrick to a shed,
Scarce fit to be the wandering beggar's home.

And none but I its dismal case lament—
None, none but I o'er its cold relics mourn,
Sent by the muse—(the time perhaps misspent)—
To write dull stanzas on this dome forlorn.

THE CITIZEN'S RESOLVE[1]

"Far be the dull and heavy day
"And toil, and restless care, from me—
"Sorrow attends on loads of gold,
"And kings are wretched, I am told.
"Soon from the noisy town removed
"To such wild scenes as Plato[2] lov'd,

the late civil war." I have followed the text of 1809. The poet constantly emended this poem; he seldom reprinted it without minor changes, usually for the better.

[1] From the edition of 1809. The 1786 edition has the note, "Written 1770."

[2] Shenstone.—*Ed. 1786.*

"Where, placed the leafless oaks between,
"Less haughty grows the wintergreen,
"There, Night, will I (lock'd in thy arms,
"Sweet goddess of the sable charms)
"Enjoy the dear, delightful dreams
"That fancy prompts by shallow[1] streams,
"Where wood nymphs walk their evening round,
"And fairies haunt the moonlight ground.
"Beneath some mountain's towering height
"In cottage low I hail the night,
"Where jovial swains with heart sincere
"Welcome the new returning year;—
"Each tells a tale or chaunts a song
"Of her, for whom he sigh'd so long,
"Of Cynthia[2] fair, or Delia coy,
"Neglecting still her love-sick boy—
"While, near, the hoary headed sage
"Recalls the feats of youth's gay age,
"All that in past time e'er was seen,
"And many a frolic on the green,
"How champion he with champions met,
"And fiercely they did combat it—
"Or how, full oft, with horn and hound
"They chaced the deer the forest round—
"The panting deer as swiftly flies,
"Yet by the well-aimed musquet dies!
"Thus pass the evening hours away,
"Unnoticed dies the parting day;
"Unmeasured flows that happy juice,
"Which mild October did produce,
"No surly sage, too frugal found,
"No niggard housewife deals it round:

[1] Sylvan.—*Ed. 1786.* [2] Dolly.—*Ed. 1786.*

"And deep they quaff the inspiring bowl
"That kindles gladness in the soul.—[1]
"But now the moon, exalted high,
"Adds lustre to the earth and sky,
"And in the mighty ocean's glass
"Admires the beauties of her face—
"About her orb you may behold
"The circling stars that freeze with cold—
"But they in brighter seasons please,
"Winter can find no charms in these,
"While less ambitious, we admire,
"And more esteem domestic fire.
"O could I there a mansion find
"Suited exactly to my mind
"Near that industrious, heavenly train
"Of rustics honest, neat, and plain;
"The days, the weeks, the years to pass
"With some good-natured, longing lass,
"With her the cooling spring to sip,
"And seize, at will, her damask lip;
"The groves, the springs, the shades divine,
"And all Arcadia should be mine!
"Steep me, steep me, some poppies deep
"In beechen bowl, to bring on sleep;
"Love hath my soul in fetters bound,
"Through the dull night no sleep I found;—
"O gentle sleep! bestow thy dreams
"Of fields, and woods, and murmuring streams,
"Dark, tufted groves, and grottoes rare,
"And Flora, charming Flora, there.
"Dull Commerce, hence, with all thy train
"Of debts, and dues, and loss, and gain;

[1] "But swift as changing goblets pass,
They bless the virtues of the glass."—*Ed. 1786.*

"To hills, and groves, and purling streams,
"To nights of ease, and heaven-born dreams,
"While wiser Damon hastes away,
"Should I in this dull city stay,
"Condemn'd to death by slow decays
"And care that clouds my brightest days?
"No—by Silenus' self I swear,
"In rustic shades I'll kill that care."
So spoke Lysander, and in haste
His clerks discharg'd, his goods re-cased,
And to the western forests flew
With fifty airy schemes in view;
His ships were set to public sale—
But what did all this change avail?—
In three short months, sick of the heavenly train,
In three short months—he moved to town again.

THE DYING ELM[1]

Sweet, lovely Elm, who here dost grow
Companion of unsocial care,
Lo! thy dejected branches die
Amidst this torrid air—
Smit by the sun or blasting moon,
Like fainting flowers, their verdure gone.

[1] First published in the June number of the *United States Magazine*, 1779, under the title, "The Dying Elm: An Irregular Ode." This earliest version was much changed in its later editions; the third stanza was added for the edition of 1786. It may be doubted if Freneau much improved the poem from its first draft, save by the additional stanza. Following are some of the lines as they stood originally: "Companion of my musing care;" "Like fainting flowers that die at noon;" "O gentle tree, no more decline;" "And flourish'd for a day;" "Come, then, revive, sweet shady elm, lest I." With two minor exceptions the text was unvaried for the later editions.

Thy withering leaves, that drooping hang,
Presage thine end approaching nigh;
And lo! thy amber tears distill,
Attended with that parting sigh—
O charming tree! no more decline,
But be thy shades and love-sick whispers mine.

Forbear to die—this weeping eve
Shall shed her little drops on you,
Shall o'er thy sad disaster grieve,
And wash thy wounds with pearly dew,
Shall pity you, and pity me,
And heal the languor of my tree!

Short is thy life, if thou so soon must fade,
Like angry Jonah's gourd at Nineveh,
That, in a night, its bloomy branches spread,
And perish'd with the day.—
Come, then, revive, sweet lovely Elm, lest I,
Thro' vehemence of heat, like Jonah, wish to die.

COLUMBUS TO FERDINAND[1]

Columbus was a considerable number of years engaged in soliciting the Court of Spain to fit him out, in order to discover a new continent, which he imagined existed somewhere in the western parts of the ocean. During his negotiations, he is here supposed to address king Ferdinand in the following Stanzas.

Illustrious monarch of Iberia's soil,
Too long I wait permission to depart;
Sick of delays, I beg thy list'ning ear—
Shine forth the patron and the prince of art.

[1] According to the edition of 1786, this poem was "written 1770." The first trace that I find of it is in the June number of the *United States Magazine*, 1779. The 1786 text, which I have followed, was changed but little in the later editions.

While yet Columbus breathes the vital air,
Grant his request to pass the western main:
Reserve this glory for thy native soil,
And what must please thee more—for thy own reign.

Of this huge globe, how small a part we know—
Does heaven their worlds to western suns deny?—
How disproportion'd to the mighty deep
The lands that yet in human prospect lie!

Does Cynthia, when to western skies arriv'd,
Spend her sweet beam upon the barren main,
And ne'er illume with midnight splendor, she,
The natives dancing on the lightsome green?—

Should the vast circuit of the world contain
Such wastes of ocean, and such scanty land?—
'Tis reason's voice that bids me think not so,
I think more nobly of the Almighty hand.

Does yon' fair lamp trace half the circle round
To light the waves and monsters of the seas?—
No—be there must beyond the billowy waste
Islands, and men, and animals, and trees.

An unremitting flame my breast inspires
To seek new lands amidst the barren waves,
Where falling low, the source of day descends,
And the blue sea his evening visage laves.

Hear, in his tragic lay, Cordova's sage:*
"*The time shall come, when numerous years are past,*
"*The ocean shall dissolve the bands of things,*
"*And an extended region rise at last;*

* Seneca the poet, native of Cordova in Spain.—*Freneau's note* (*1786*). *Venient annis secula seris, quibus oceanus vincula rerum laxet, et ingens pateat tellus, Typhisque novos detegat orbes; nec sit terris Ultima Thule.*—Seneca, Med., Act. III, V. 375. (*Ibid. Ed. 1795 et seq.*)

"And Typhis shall disclose the mighty land
"Far, far away, where none have rov'd before;
"Nor shall the world's remotest region be
" Gibraltar's rock, or Thule's savage shore."*[1]

Fir'd at the theme, I languish to depart,
Supply the barque, and bid Columbus sail,
He fears no storms upon the untravell'd deep;
Reason shall steer, and skill disarm the gale.

Nor does he dread to lose the intended course,
Though far from land the reeling galley stray,
And skies above, and gulphy seas below
Be the sole objects seen for many a day.

Think not that Nature has unveil'd in vain
The mystic magnet to the mortal eye:
So late have we the guiding needle plann'd
Only to sail beneath our native sky?

Ere this was found, the ruling power of all
Found for our use an ocean in the land,
Its breadth so small we could not wander long,
Nor long be absent from the neighbouring strand.

Short was the course, and guided by the stars,
But stars no more shall point our daring way;
The Bear shall sink, and every guard be drown'd,
And great Arcturus scarce escape the sea,

When southward we shall steer—O grant my wish,
Supply the barque, and bid Columbus sail,
He dreads no tempests on the untravell'd deep,
Reason shall steer, and shall disarm the gale.

* Supposed by many to be the Orkney or Shetland Isles.—*Freneau's note.*

[1] This is a translation of the passage from Seneca used on the title page of *The Rising Glory of America.*

THE RISING GLORY OF AMERICA[1]

Being part of a Dialogue pronounced on a public occasion.

ARGUMENT

The subject proposed.—The discovery of America by Columbus.—A philosophical enquiry into the origin of the savages of America.—The first planters from Europe.—Causes of their migration to America.—The difficulties they encountered from the jealousy of the natives.—Agriculture descanted on.—Commerce and navigation.—Science.—Future prospects of British usurpation, tyranny, and devastation on this side the Atlantic.—The more comfortable one of Independence, Liberty and Peace.—Conclusion.

Acasto

Now shall the adventurous muse attempt a theme
More new, more noble and more flush of fame
Than all that went before—
Now through the veil of ancient days renew
The period famed when first Columbus touched
These shores so long unknown—through various toils,
Famine, and death, the hero forced his way,
Through oceans pregnant with perpetual storms,
And climates hostile to adventurous man.
But why, to prompt your tears, should we resume,

[1] The text is from the edition of 1809. The poem, given originally as the graduating address of Freneau and Brackenridge at Princeton, Brackenridge delivering it, was first published in 1772 at Philadelphia, by Joseph Crukshank, for R. Aitken, bookseller. This pamphlet edition is the only one extant of the original poem. Freneau reprinted his own part, with many modifications and additions, in the first edition of his poems, 1786, explaining it with the following note: "This poem is a little altered from the original (published in Philadelphia in 1772), such parts being only inserted here as were written by the author of this volume. A few more modern lines towards

The tale of Cortez, furious chief, ordained
With Indian blood to dye the sands, and choak,
Famed Mexico, thy streams with dead? or why
Once more revive the tale so oft rehearsed
Of Atabilipa, by thirst of gold,
(Too conquering motive in the human breast,)
Deprived of life, which not Peru's rich ore
Nor Mexico's vast mines could then redeem?
Better these northern realms demand our song,
Designed by nature for the rural reign,
For agriculture's toil.—No blood we shed
For metals buried in a rocky waste.—

the conclusion are incorporated with the rest, being a supposed prophetical anticipation of subsequent events." The text of the edition of 1772, which is now exceedingly rare, is as follows:

A POEM ON THE RISING GLORY OF AMERICA

Being an Exercise delivered at the Public Commencement at Nassau-Hall, September 25, 1771.

Argument

The subject proposed.—The discovery of America by Columbus and others.—A philosophical enquiry into the origin of the savages of America.—Their uncultivated state.—The first planters of America.—The cause of their migration from Europe.—The difficulties they encountered from the resentment of the natives and other circumstances.—The French war in North America.—The most distinguished heroes who fell in it; Wolf, Braddock, &c.—General Johnson,—his character.—North America, why superior to South.—On Agriculture.—On commerce.—On science.—Whitefield,—his character.—The present glory of America.—A prospect of its future glory, in science,—in liberty,—and the gospel.—The conclusion of the whole.

Leander

No more of Memphis and her mighty kings,
Or Alexandria, where the Ptolomies
Taught golden commerce to unfurl her sails,
And bid fair science smile: No more of Greece

Cursed be that ore, which brutal makes our race
And prompts mankind to shed their kindred blood.

Eugenio

But whence arose
That vagrant race who love the shady vale,
And choose the forest for their dark abode ? —
For long has this perplext the sages' skill
To investigate.—Tradition lends no aid
To unveil this secret to the human eye,
When first these various nations, north and south,
Possest these shores, or from what countries came;

Where learning next her early visit paid,
And spread her glories to illume the world ;
No more of Athens, where she flourished,
And saw her sons of mighty genius rise,
Smooth flowing Plato, Socrates and him
Who with resistless eloquence reviv'd
The spirit of Liberty, and shook the thrones
Of Macedon and Persia's haughty king.
No more of Rome, enlighten'd by her beams,
Fresh kindling there the fire of eloquence,
And poesy divine ; imperial Rome !
Whose wide dominion reach'd o'er half the globe ;
Whose eagle flew o'er Ganges to the East,
And in the West far to the British isles.
No more of Britain and her kings renown'd,
Edward's and Henry's thunderbolts of war ;
Her chiefs victorious o'er the Gallic foe ;
Illustrious senators, immortal bards,
And wise philosophers, of these no more.
A Theme more new, tho' not less noble, claims
Our ev'ry thought on this auspicious day ;
The rising glory of this western world,
Where now the dawning light of science spreads
Her orient ray, and wakes the muse's song ;
Where freedom holds her sacred standard high,
And commerce rolls her golden tides profuse
Of elegance and ev'ry joy of life.

Whether they sprang from some primæval head
In their own lands, like Adam in the east,—
Yet this the sacred oracles deny,
And reason, too, reclaims against the thought:
For when the general deluge drowned the world
Where could their tribes have found security,
Where find their fate, but in the ghastly deep?—
Unless, as others dream, some chosen few
High on the Andes 'scaped the general death,
High on the Andes, wrapt in endless snow,
Where winter in his wildest fury reigns,
And subtile æther scarce our life maintains.
But here philosophers oppose the scheme:
This earth, say they, nor hills nor mountains knew

ACASTO

Since then, Leander, you attempt a strain
So new, so noble and so full of fame;
And since a friendly concourse centers here,
America's own sons, begin O muse!
Now thro' the veil of ancient days review
The period fam'd when first Columbus touch'd
The shore so long unknown, thro' various toils,
Famine and death, the hero made his way,
Thro' oceans bellowing with eternal storms.
But why, thus hap'ly found, should we resume
The tale of Cortez, furious chief, ordain'd
With Indian blood to dye the sands, and choak
Fam'd Amazonia's stream with dead! Or why
Once more revive the story old in fame,
Of Atabilipa, by thirst of gold
Depriv'd of life: which not Peru's rich ore,
Nor Mexico's vast mines cou'd then redeem.
Better these northern realms deserve our song,
Discover'd by Britannia for her sons;
Undeluged with seas of Indian blood,
Which cruel Spain on southern regions spilt;
To gain by terrors what the gen'rous breast
Wins by fair treaty, conquers without blood.

Ere yet the universal flood prevailed;
But when the mighty waters rose aloft,
Roused by the winds, they shook their solid base,
And, in convulsions, tore the deluged world,
'Till by the winds assuaged, again they fell,
And all their ragged bed exposed to view.
Perhaps far wandering toward the northern pole
The streights of Zembla, and the frozen zone,
And where the eastern Greenland almost joins
America's north point, the hardy tribes
Of banished Jews, Siberians, Tartars wild
Came over icy mountains, or on floats,
First reached these coasts, hid from the world beside.—

EUGENIO

High in renown th' intrepid hero stands,
From Europe's shores advent'ring first to try
New seas, new oceans, unexplor'd by man.
Fam'd Cabot too may claim our noblest song,
Who from th' Atlantic surge decry'd these shores,
As on he coasted from the Mexic bay
To Acady and piny Labradore.
Nor less than him the muse would celebrate
Bold Hudson stemming to the pole, thro' seas
Vex'd with continual storms, thro' the cold straits,
Where Europe and America oppose
Their shores contiguous, and the northern sea
Confin'd, indignant, swells and roars between.
With these be number'd in the list of fame
Illustrious Raleigh, hapless in his fate:
Forgive me, Raleigh, if an infant muse
Borrows thy name to grace her humble strain;
By many nobler are thy virtues sung;
Envy no more shall throw them in the shade;
They pour new lustre on Britannia's isle.
Thou too, advent'rous on th' Atlantic main,
Burst thro' its storms and fair Virginia hail'd.
The simple natives saw thy canvas flow,

And yet another argument more strange,
Reserved for men of deeper thought, and late,
Presents itself to view:—In Peleg's days,
(So says the Hebrew seer's unerring pen)
This mighty mass of earth, this solid globe,
Was cleft in twain,—"divided" east and west,
While then perhaps the deep Atlantic roll'd,—
Through the vast chasm, and laved the solid world;
And traces indisputable remain
Of this primæval land now sunk and lost.—
The islands rising in our eastern main
Are but small fragments of this continent,
Whose two extremities were Newfoundland
And St. Helena.—One far in the north,

And gaz'd aloof upon the shady shore:
For in her woods America contain'd,
From times remote, a savage race of men.
How shall we know their origin, how tell,
From whence or where the Indian tribes arose?

ACASTO

And long has this defy'd the sages skill
T' investigate: Tradition seems to hide
The mighty secret from each mortal eye,
How first these various nations South and North
Possest these shores, or from what countries came;
Whether they sprang from some premœval head
In their own lands, like Adam in the East;
Yet this the sacred oracles deny,
And reason too reclaims against the thought.
For when the gen'ral deluge drown'd the world,
Where could their tribes have found security?
Where find their fate but in the ghastly deep?
Unless, as others dream, some chosen few
High on the Andes 'scap'd the gen'ral death,
High on the Andes, wrapt in endless snow,
Where winter in his wildest fury reigns.
But here Philosophers oppose the scheme,
The earth, say they, nor hills nor mountains knew

Where shivering seamen view with strange surprize
The guiding pole-star glittering o'er their heads;
The other near the southern tropic rears
Its head above the waves—Bermuda's isles,
Cape Verd, Canary, Britain, and the Azores,
With fam'd Hibernia, are but broken parts
Of some prodigious waste, which once sustain'd
Nations and tribes, of vanished memory,
Forests and towns, and beasts of every class,
Where navies now explore their briny way.

Leander

Your sophistry, Eugenio, makes me smile;
The roving mind of man delights to dwell

E'er yet the universal flood prevail'd:
But when the mighty waters rose aloft,
Rous'd by the winds, they shook their solid case
And in convulsions tore the drowned world!
'Till by the winds assuag'd they quickly fell
And all their ragged bed exposed to view.
Perhaps far wand'ring towards the northern pole,
The straits of Zembla and the Frozen Zone,
And where the eastern Greenland almost joins
America's north point, the hardy tribes
Of banish'd Jews, Siberians, Tartars wild
Came over icy mountains, or on floats
First reach'd these coasts hid from the world beside.
And yet another argument more strange
Reserv'd for men of deeper thought and late
Presents itself to view: In Peleg's days,
So says the Hebrew seer's inspired pen,
This mighty mass of earth, this solid globe
Was cleft in twain—cleft east and west apart
While strait between the deep Atlantic roll'd.
And traces indisputable remain
Of this unhappy land now sunk and lost;
The islands rising in the eastern main
Are but small fragments of this continent,
Whose two extremities were Newfoundland

On hidden things, merely because they're hid:
He thinks his knowledge far beyond all limit,
And boldly fathoms Nature's darkest haunts;—
But for uncertainties, your broken isles,
Your northern Tartars, and your wandering Jews,
(The flimsy cobwebs of a sophist's brain)
Hear what the voice of history proclaims:—
The Carthagenians, ere the Roman yoke
Broke their proud spirits, and enslaved them too,
For navigation were renowned as much
As haughty Tyre with all her hundred fleets.
Full many a league their venturous seamen sailed
Through streight Gibraltar, down the western shore

And St. Helena.—One far in the north
Where British seamen now with strange surprise
Behold the pole star glitt'ring o'er their heads;
The other in the southern tropic rears
Its head above the waves; Bermudas and
Canary isles, Britannia and th' Azores,
With fam'd Hibernia are but broken parts
Of some prodigious waste which once sustain'd
Armies by lands, where now but ships can range.

LEANDER

Your sophistry, Acasto, makes me smile;
The roving mind of man delights to dwell
On hidden things, merely because they're hid;
He thinks his knowledge ne'er can reach too high
And boldly pierces nature's inmost haunts
But for uncertainties; your broken isles,
Your northern Tartars, and your wand'ring Jews,
Hear what the voice of history proclaims.
The Carthaginians, e'er the Roman yoke
Broke their proud spirits and enslav'd them too,
For navigation were renown'd as much
As haughty Tyre with all her hundred fleets;
Full many a league their vent'rous seamen sail'd
Thro' strait Gibralter down the western shore

Of Africa, to the Canary isles:
By them called Fortunate; so Flaccus sings.
Because eternal spring there clothes the fields
And fruits delicious bloom throughout the year.—
From voyaging here, this inference I draw,
Perhaps some barque with all her numerous crew
Falling to leeward of her destined port,
Caught by the eastern Trade, was hurried on
Before the unceasing blast to Indian isles,
Brazil, La Plata, or the coasts more south—
There stranded, and unable to return,
Forever from their native skies estranged.
Doubtless they made these virgin climes their own,

Of Africa, and to Canary isles
By them call'd fortunate, so Flaccus sings,
Because eternal spring there crowns the fields,
And fruits delicious bloom throughout the year.
From voyaging here this inference I draw,
Perhaps some barque with all her num'rous crew
Caught by the eastern trade wind hurry'd on
Before th' steady blast to Brazil's shore,
New Amazonia and the coasts more south.
Here standing and unable to return,
For ever from their native skies estrang'd,
Doubtless they made the unknown land their own.
And in the course of many rolling years
A num'rous progeny from these arose,
And spread throughout the coasts; those whom we call
Brazilians, Mexicans, Peruvians rich,
Th' tribes of Chili, Patagon and those
Who till the shores of Amazon's long stream.
When first the pow'rs of Europe here attain'd,
Vast empires, kingdoms, cities, palaces
And polish'd nations stock'd the fertile land;
Who has not heard of Cusco, Lima and
The town of Mexico; huge cities form'd
From Europe's architecture, e'er the arms
Of haughty Spain disturb'd the peaceful soil.

And in the course of long revolving years
A numerous progeny from these arose,
And spread throughout the coasts—those whom we call
Brazilians, Mexicans, Peruvians rich,
The tribes of Chili, Patagon, and those
Who till the shores of Amazon's long stream.—
When first the power of Europe here attained,
Vast empires, kingdoms, cities, palaces
And polished nations stock'd the fertile land.
Who has not heard of Cusco, Lima, and
The town of Mexico—huge cities form'd
From Indian architecture; ere the arms
Of haughty Spain disturb'd the peaceful soil?—

EUGENIO

Such disquisition leads the puzzled mind
From maze ~~to~~ maze by queries still perplex'd.
But this we know, if from the east they came,
Where science first and revelation beam'd,
Long since they've lost all memory, all trace
Of this their origin: Tradition tells
Of some great forefather beyond the lakes
Oswego, Huron, Mechigan, Champlaine
Or by the stream of Amazon which rolls
Thro' many a clime; while others simply dream
That from the Andes or the mountains north,
Some hoary fabled ancestor came down
To people this their world.

LEANDER

How fallen, Oh!
How much obscur'd is human nature here!
Shut from the light of science and of truth
They wander'd blindfold down the steep of time;
Dim superstition with her ghastly train
Of dæmons, spectres and foreboding signs
Still urging them to horrid rites and forms
Of human sacrifice, to sooth the pow'rs

But here, amid this northern dark domain,
No towns were seen to rise.—No arts were here;
The tribes unskill'd to raise the lofty mast,
Or force the daring prow thro' adverse waves,
Gazed on the pregnant soil, and craved alone
Life from the unaided genius of the ground,—
This indicates they were a different race;
From whom descended, 'tis not ours to say—
That power, no doubt, who furnish'd trees, and plants,
And animals to this vast continent,
Spoke into being man among the rest,—
But what a change is here!—what arts arise!
What towns and capitals! how commerce waves
Her gaudy flags, where silence reign'd before!

Malignant, and the dark infernal king.
Once on this spot perhaps a wigwam stood
With all its rude inhabitants, or round
Some mighty fire an hundred savage sons
Gambol'd by day, and filled the night with cries;
In what superior to the brutal race
That fled before them thro' the howling wilds,
Were all those num'rous tawny tribes which swarm'd
From Baffin's bay to Del Fuego south,
From California to the Oronoque?
Far from the reach of fame they liv'd unknown
In listless slumber and inglorious ease;
To them fair science never op'd her stores,
Nor sacred truth sublim'd the soul to God;
No fix'd abode their wand'ring genius knew;
No golden harvest crown'd the fertile glebe;
No city then adorn'd the river's bank,
Nor rising turret overlook'd the stream.

ACASTO

Now view the prospect chang'd; far off at sea
The mariner descry's our spacious towns,
He hails the prospect of the land and views

Acasto

Speak, learned Eugenio, for I've heard you tell
The dismal story, and the cause that brought
The first adventurers to these western shores!
The glorious cause that urged our fathers first
To visit climes unknown, and wilder woods
Than e'er Tartarian or Norwegian saw,
And with fair culture to adorn a soil
That never felt the industrious swain before.

Eugenio

All this long story to rehearse, would tire;
Besides, the sun towards the west retreats,

A new, a fair, a fertile world arise;
Onward from India's isles far east, to us
Now fair-ey'd commerce stretches her white sails,
Learning exalts her head, the graces smile
And peace establish'd after horrid war
Improves the splendor of these early times.
But come, my friends, and let us trace the steps
By which this recent happy world arose,
To this fair eminence of high renown
This height of wealth, of liberty and fame.

LEANDER

Speak then, Eugenio, for I've heard you tell
The pleasing hist'ry, and the cause that brought
The first advent'rers to these happy shores;
The glorious cause that urg'd our fathers first
To visit climes unknown and wilder woods
Than e'er Tartarian or Norwegian saw,
And with fair culture to adorn that soil
Which never knew th' industrious swain before.

EUGENIO

All this long story to rehearse would tire;
Besides, the sun toward the west retreats,
Nor can the noblest tale retard his speed,

Nor can the noblest theme retard his speed,
Nor loftiest verse—not that which sang the fall
Of Troy divine, and fierce Achilles' ire.—
Yet hear a part:—By persecution wronged
And sacerdotal rage, our fathers came
From Europe's hostile shores to these abodes,
Here to enjoy a liberty in faith,
Secure from tyranny and base controul.
For this they left their country and their friends,
And plough'd the Atlantic wave in quest of peace;
And found new shores, and sylvan settlements,
And men, alike unknowing and unknown.
Hence, by the care of each adventurous chief
New governments (their wealth unenvied yet)

Nor loftiest verse; not that which sung the fall
Of Troy divine and smooth Scamander's stream.
Yet hear a part.—By persecution wrong'd
And popish cruelty, our fathers came
From Europe's shores to find this blest abode,
Secure from tyranny and hateful man,
And plough'd th' Atlantic wave in quest of peace;
And found new shores and sylvan settlements
Form'd by the care of each advent'rous chief,
Who, warm in liberty and freedom's cause,
Sought out uncultivated tracts and wilds,
And fram'd new plans of cities, governments
And spacious provinces: Why should I name
Thee, Penn, the Solon of our western lands;
Sagacious legislator, whom the world
Admires tho' dead: an infant colony,
Nurs'd by thy care, now rises o'er the rest
Like that tall Pyramid on Memphis' stand
O'er all the lesser piles, they also great.
Why should I name those heroes so well known
Who peopled all the rest from Canada
To Georgia's farthest coasts, West Florida
Or Apalachian mountains; yet what streams
Of blood were shed! What Indian hosts were slain
Before the days of peace were quite restor'd.

Were form'd on liberty and virtue's plan.
These searching out uncultivated tracts
Conceived new plans of towns, and capitals,
And spacious provinces.—Why should I name
Thee, Penn, the Solon of our western lands;
Sagacious legislator, whom the world
Admires, long dead: an infant colony,
Nursed by thy care, now rises o'er the rest
Like that tall pyramid in Egypt's waste
O'er all the neighbouring piles, they also great.
Why should I name those heroes so well known,
Who peopled all the rest from Canada
To Georgia's farthest coasts, West Florida,
Or Apalachian mountains?—Yet what streams

LEANDER

Yes, while they overturn'd the soil untill'd,
And swept the forests from the shaded plain
'Midst dangers, foes and death, fierce Indian tribes
With deadly malice arm'd and black design,
Oft murder'd half the hapless colonies.
Encourag'd too by that inglorious race
False Gallia's sons, who once their arms display'd
At Quebec, Montreal and farthest coasts
Of Labrador and Esquimaux where now
The British standard awes the coward host.
Here those brave chiefs, who lavish of their blood
Fought in Britannia's cause, most nobly fell.
What Heart but mourns the untimely fate of Wolf,
Who dying conquer'd, or what breast but beats
To share a fate like his, and die like him?

ACASTO

And he demands our lay who bravely fell
By Monangahela and the Ohio's stream;
By wiles o'ercome the hapless hero fell,
His soul too gen'rous for that dastard crew
Who kill unseen and shun the face of day.
Ambush'd in wood, and swamp and thick grown hill,
The bellowing tribes brought on the savage war.

Of blood were shed! what Indian hosts were slain,
Before the days of peace were quite restored!

Leander

Yes, while they overturn'd the rugged soil
And swept the forests from the shaded plain
'Midst dangers, foes, and death, fierce Indian tribes
With vengeful malice arm'd, and black design,
Oft murdered, or dispersed, these colonies—
Encouraged, too, by Gallia's hostile sons,
A warlike race, who late their arms display'd,
At Quebec, Montreal, and farthest coasts
Of Labrador, or Cape Breton, where now

What could avail, O Braddock, then the flame,
The gen'rous flame which fir'd thy martial soul!
What could avail Britannia's warlike troops,
Choice spirits of her isle? What could avail
America's own sons? The skulking foe,
Hid in the forest lay and fought secure,
What could the brave Virginians do, o'erpower'd
By such vast numbers and their leader dead?
'Midst fire and death they bore him from the field,
Where in his blood full many a hero lay.
'Twas there, O Halkut! thou so nobly fell,
Thrice valiant Halkut, early son of fame!
We still deplore a fate so immature,
Fair Albion mourns thy unsuccessful end,
And Caledonia sheds a tear for him
Who led the bravest of her sons to war.

EUGENIO

But why alas commemorate the dead?
And pass those glorious heroes by, who yet
Breathe the same air and see the light with us?
The dead, Acasto, are but empty names
And he who dy'd to day the same to us
As he who dy'd a thousand years ago.
A Johnson lives, among the sons of fame
Well known, conspicuous as the morning star

The British standard awes the subject host.
Here, those brave chiefs, who, lavish of their blood,
Fought in Britannia's cause, in battle fell!—
What heart but mourns the untimely fate of Wolfe,
Who, dying, conquered!—or what breast but beats
To share a fate like his, and die like him!

Acasto

But why alone commemorate the dead,
And pass those glorious heroes by, who yet
Breathe the same air, and see the light with us?—
The dead, Leander, are but empty names,
And they who fall to-day the same to us

Among the lesser lights: A patriot skill'd
In all the glorious arts of peace or war.
He for Britannia gains the savage race,
Unstable as the sea, wild as the winds,
Cruel as death, and treacherous as hell,
Whom none but he by kindness yet could win,
None by humanity could gain their souls,
Or bring from woods and subteranean dens
The skulking crew, before a Johnson rose,
Pitying their num'rous tribes: ah how unlike
The Cortez' and Acosta's, pride of Spain
Whom blood and murder only satisfy'd.
Behold their doleful regions overflow'd
With gore, and blacken'd with ten thousand deaths
From Mexico to Patagonia far,
Where howling winds sweep round the southern cape,
And other suns and other stars arise!

ACASTO

Such is the curse, Eugenio, where the soul
Humane is wanting, but we boast no feats
Of cruelty like Spain's unfeeling sons.
The British Epithet is merciful:
And we the sons of Britain learn like them

As they who fell ten centuries ago!—
Lost are they all that shined on earth before;
Rome's boldest champions in the dust are laid,
Ajax and great Achilles are no more,
And Philip's warlike son, an empty shade!—
A Washington among our sons of fame
Will rise conspicuous as the morning star
Among the inferior lights:—
To distant wilds Virginia sent him forth—
With her brave sons he gallantly opposed
The bold invaders of his country's rights,
Where wild Ohio pours the mazy flood,
And mighty meadows skirt his subject streams.—

To conquer and to spare; for coward souls
Seek their revenge but on a vanquish'd foe.
Gold, fatal gold was the alluring bait
To Spain's rapacious mind, hence rose the wars
From Chili to the Caribbean sea,
O'er Terra-Firma and La Plata wide.
Peru then sunk in ruins, great before
With pompous cities, monuments superb
Whose tops reach'd heav'n. But we more happy boast
No golden metals in our peaceful land,
No flaming diamond, precious emerald,
Or blushing saphire, ruby, chrysolite
Or jasper red; more noble riches flow
From agriculture and th' industrious swain,
Who tills the fertile vale or mountain's brow,
Content to lead a safe, a humble life
'Midst his own native hills; romantic scenes,
Such as the muse of Greece did feign so well,
Envying their lovely bow'rs to mortal race.

LEANDER

Long has the rural life been justly fam'd;
And poets old their pleasing pictures drew
Of flow'ry meads, and groves and gliding streams.
Hence, old Arcadia, woodnymphs, satyrs, fauns,
And hence Elysium, fancy'd heav'n below.

But now delighting in his elm tree's shade,
Where deep Potowmac laves the enchanting shore,
He prunes the tender vine, or bids the soil
Luxuriant harvests to the sun display.—
Behold a different scene—not thus employed
Were Cortez, and Pizarro, pride of Spain,
Whom blood and murder only satisfied,
And all to glut their avarice and ambition!—

Eugenio

Such is the curse, Acasto, where the soul
Humane is wanting—but we boast no feats
Of cruelty like Europe's murdering breed:—
Our milder epithet is merciful,

Fair agriculture, not unworthy kings,
Once exercis'd the royal hand, or those
Whose virtue rais'd them to the rank of gods.
See old Laertes in his shepherd weeds,
Far from his pompous throne and court august,
Digging the grateful soil, where peaceful blows
The west wind murm'ring thro' the aged trees
Loaded with apples red, sweet scented peach
And each luxurious fruit the world affords,
While o'er the fields the harmless oxen draw
Th' industrious plough. The Roman heroes too,
Fabricius and Camillus, lov'd a life
Of sweet simplicity and rustic joy;
And from the busy Forum hast'ning far,
'Midst woods and fields spent the remains of age.
How grateful to behold the harvests rise
And mighty crops adorn the golden plains!
Fair plenty smiles throughout, while lowing herds
Stalk o'er the grassy hill or level mead,
Or at some winding river slake their thirst.
Thus fares the rustic swain; and when the winds
Blow with a keener breath, and from the North
Pour all their tempests thro' a sunless sky,
Ice, sleet and rattling hail, secure he sits
In some thatch'd cottage fearless of the storm;

And each American, true hearted, learns
To conquer, and to spare; for coward souls
Alone seek vengeance on a vanquished foe.
Gold, fatal gold, was the alluring bait
To Spain's rapacious tribes—hence rose the wars
From Chili to the Caribbean sea,
And Montezuma's Mexican domains:
More blest are we, with whose unenvied soil
Nature decreed no mingling gold to shine,
No flaming diamond, precious emerald,
No blushing sapphire, ruby, chrysolite,
Or jasper red—more noble riches flow
From agriculture, and the industrious swain,
Who tills the fertile vale, or mountain's brow,

While on the hearth a fire still blazing high
Chears ev'ry mind, and nature sits serene
On ev'ry countenance, such the joys
And such the fate of those whom heav'n hath bless'd
With souls enamour'd of a country life.

EUGENIO

Much wealth and pleasure agriculture brings;
Far in the woods she raises palaces,
Puisant states and crowded realms where late
A desart plain or frowning wilderness
Deform'd the view; or where with moving tents
The scatter'd nations seeking pasturage,
Wander'd from clime to clime incultivate;
Or where a race more savage yet than these,
In search of prey o'er hill and mountain rang'd,
Fierce as the tygers and the wolves they slew.
Thus lives th' Arabian and the Tartar wild
In woody wastes which never felt the plough;
But agriculture crowns our happy land,
And plants our colonies from north to south,
From Cape Breton far as the Mexic bay,
From th' Eastern shores to Mississippi's stream.
Famine to us unknown, rich plenty reigns
And pours her blessings with a lavish hand.

Content to lead a safe, a humble life,
Among his native hills, romantic shades
Such as the muse of Greece of old did feign,
Allured the Olympian gods from chrystal skies,
Envying such lovely scenes to mortal man.

Leander

Long has the rural life been justly fam'd,
And bards of old their pleasing pictures drew
Of flowery meads, and groves, and gliding streams:
Hence, old Arcadia—wood-nymphs, satyrs, fauns;
And hence Elysium, fancied heaven below!—
Fair agriculture, not unworthy kings,
Once exercised the royal hand, or those

LEANDER

Nor less from golden commerce flow the streams
Of richest plenty on our smiling land.
Now fierce Bellona must'ring all her rage,
To other climes and other seas withdraws,
To rouse the Russian on the desp'rate Turk
There to conflict by Danube and the straits
Which join the Euxine to th' Egean Sea.
Britannia holds the empire of the waves,
And welcomes ev'ry bold adventurer
To view the wonders of old Ocean's reign.
Far to the east our fleets on traffic sail,
And to the west thro' boundless seas which not
Old Rome nor Tyre nor mightier Carthage knew.
Daughter of commerce, from the hoary deep
New-York emerging rears her lofty domes,
And hails from far her num'rous ships of trade,
Like shady forests rising on the waves.
From Europe's shores or from the Caribbees,
Homeward returning annually they bring
The richest produce of the various climes.
And Philadelphia, mistress of our world,
The seat of arts, of science, and of fame,
Derives her grandeur from the pow'r of trade.

Whose virtues raised them to the rank of gods.
See old Laertes in his shepherd weeds
Far from his pompous throne and court august,
Digging the grateful soil, where round him rise,
Sons of the earth, the tall aspiring oaks,
Or orchards, boasting of more fertile boughs,
Laden with apples red, sweet scented peach,
Pear, cherry, apricot, or spungy plumb;
While through the glebe the industrious oxen draw
The earth-inverting plough.—Those Romans too,
Fabricius and Camillus, loved a life
Of neat simplicity and rustic bliss,
And from the noisy Forum hastening far,
From busy camps, and sycophants, and crowns,

Hail, happy city, where the muses stray,
Where deep philosophy convenes her sons
And opens all her secrets to their view!
Bids them ascend with Newton to the skies,
And trace the orbits of the rolling spheres,
Survey the glories of the universe,
Its suns and moons and ever blazing stars!
Hail, city, blest with liberty's fair beams,
And with the rays of mild religion blest!

ACASTO

Nor these alone, America, thy sons
In the short circle of a hundred years
Have rais'd with toil along thy shady shores.
On lake and bay and navigable stream,
From Cape Breton to Pensacola south,
Unnumber'd towns and villages arise.
By commerce nurs'd these embrio marts of trade
May yet awake the envy and obscure
The noblest cities of the eastern world;
For commerce is the mighty reservoir
From whence all nations draw the streams of gain.
'Tis commerce joins dissever'd worlds in one,
Confines old Ocean to more narrow bounds;
Outbraves his storms and peoples half his world.

'Midst woods and fields spent the remains of life,
Where full enjoyment still awaits the wise.
How grateful, to behold the harvests rise,
And mighty crops adorn the extended plains!—
Fair plenty smiles throughout, while lowing herds
Stalk o'er the shrubby hill or grassy mead,
Or at some shallow river slake their thirst.—
The inclosure, now, succeeds the shepherd's care,
Yet milk-white flocks adorn the well stock'd farm,
And court the attention of the industrious swain.—
Their fleece rewards him well, and when the winds
Blow with a keener blast, and from the north
Pour mingled tempests through a sunless sky
(Ice, sleet, and rattling hail) secure he sits

. EUGENIO

And from the earliest times advent'rous man
On foreign traffic stretch'd the nimble sail ;
Or sent the slow pac'd caravan afar
O'er barren wastes, eternal sands where not
The blissful haunt of human form is seen
Nor tree, not ev'n funeral cypress sad
Nor bubbling fountain. Thus arriv'd of old
Golconda's golden ore, and thus the wealth
Of Ophir to the wisest of mankind.

LEANDER

Great is the praise of commerce, and the men
Deserve our praise who spread from shore to shore
The flowing sail ; great are their dangers too ;
Death ever present to the fearless eye
And ev'ry billow but a gaping grave ;
Yet all these mighty feats to science owe
Their rise and glory.—Hail fair science ! thou,
Transplanted from the eastern climes, dost bloom
In these fair regions, Greece and Rome no more
Detain the muses on Cithæron's brow,
Or old Olympus crown'd with waving woods ;
Or Hæmus' top where once was heard the harp,
Sweet Orpheus' harp that ravish'd hell below

Warm in his cottage, fearless of the storm,
Enjoying now the toils of milder moons,
Yet hoping for the spring.—Such are the joys,
And such the toils of those whom heaven hath bless'd
With souls enamoured of a country life.

Acasto

Such are the visions of the rustic reign—
But this alone, the fountain of support,
Would scarce employ the varying mind of man;
Each seeks employ, and each a different way:
Strip Commerce of her sail, and men once more
Would be converted into savages;— .

And pierc'd the soul of Orcus and his bride,
That hush'd to silence by the song divine
Thy melancholy waters, and the gales
O Hebrus! which o'er thy sad surface blow.
No more the maids round Alpheus' waters stray
Where he with Arethusa's stream doth mix,
Or where swift Tiber disembogues his waves
Into th' Italian sea so long unsung.
Hither they've wing'd their way, the last, the best
Of countries where the arts shall rise and grow
Luxuriant, graceful; and ev'n now we boast
A Franklin skill'd in deep philosophy,
A genius piercing as th' electric fire,
Bright as the light'ning's flash, explain'd so well
By him, the rival of Britannia's sage.
This is a land of ev'ry joyous sound
Of liberty and life; sweet liberty!
Without whose aid the noblest genius fails,
And science irretrievably must die.

ACASTO

This is a land where the more noble light
Of holy revelation beams, the star
Which rose from Judah lights our skies, we feel
Its influence as once did Palestine

No nation e'er grew social and refined
'Till Commerce first had wing'd the adventurous prow,
Or sent the slow-paced caravan, afar,
To waft their produce to some other clime,
And bring the wished exchange—thus came, of old,
Golconda's golden ore, and thus the wealth
Of Ophir, to the wisest of mankind.

Eugenio

Great is the praise of Commerce, and the men
Deserve our praise, who spread the undaunted sail,
And traverse every sea—their dangers great,
Death still to combat in the unfeeling gale,
And every billow but a gaping grave:—
There, skies and waters, wearying on the eye,

And Gentile lands, where now the ruthless Turk
Wrapt up in darkness sleeps dull life away.
Here many holy messengers of peace
As burning lamps have given light to men.
To thee, O Whitefield; favourite of Heav'n,
The muse would pay the tribute of a tear.
Laid in the dust thy eloquence no more
Shall charm the list'ning soul, no more
Thy bold imagination paint the scenes
Of woe and horror in the shades below;
Of glory radiant in the fields above;
No more thy charity relieve the poor;
Let Georgia mourn, let all her orphans weep.

LEANDER

Yet tho' we wish'd him longer from the skies,
And wept to see the ev'ning of his days,
He long'd himself to reach his final hope,
The crown of glory for the just prepar'd.
From life's high verge he hail'd th' eternal shore
And, freed at last from his confinement, rose
An infant seraph to the worlds on high.

For weeks and months no other prospect yield
But barren wastes, unfathomed depths, where not
The blissful haunt of human form is seen
To cheer the unsocial horrors of the way.—
Yet all these bold designs to Science owe
Their rise and glory.—Hail, fair Science! thou,
Transplanted from the eastern skies, dost bloom
In these blest regions.—Greece and Rome no more
Detain the Muses on Citheron's brow,
Or old Olympus, crowned with waving woods,
Or Hæmus' top, where once was heard the harp,
Sweet Orpheus' harp, that gained his cause below,
And pierced the souls of Orcus and his bride;
That hush'd to silence by its voice divine
Thy melancholy waters, and the gales
O Hebrus! that o'er thy sad surface blow.—

EUGENIO

For him we found the melancholy lyre,
The lyre responsive to each distant sigh;
No grief like that which mourns departing souls
Of holy, just and venerable men,
Whom pitying Heav'n sends from their native skies
To light our way and bring us nearer God.
But come, Leander, since we know the past
And present glory of this empire wide,
What hinders to pervade with searching eye
The mystic scenes of dark futurity?
Say, shall we ask what empires yet must rise,
What kingdoms, pow'rs and states where now are seen
But dreary wastes and awful solitude,
Where melancholy sits with eye forlorn
And hopes the day when Britain's sons shall spread
Dominion to the north and south and west
Far from th' Atlantic to Pacific shores?
A glorious theme, but how shall mortals dare
To pierce the mysteries of future days,
And scenes unravel only known to fate.

No more the maids round Alpheus' waters stray,
Where he with Arethusa's stream doth mix,
Or where swift Tiber disembogues his waves
Into the Italian sea, so long unsung;
Hither they wing their way, the last, the best
Of countries, where the arts shall rise and grow,
And arms shall have their day;—even now we boast
A Franklin, prince of all philosophy,
A genius piercing as the electric fire,
Bright as the lightning's flash, explained so well,
By him, the rival of Britannia's sage.—
This is the land of every joyous sound,
Of liberty and life, sweet liberty!
Without whose aid the noblest genius fails,
And Science irretrievably must die.

ACASTO

This might we do if warm'd by that bright coal
Snatch'd from the altar of seraphic fire,
Which touch'd Isaiah's lips, or if the spirit
Of Jeremy and Amos, prophets old,
Should fire the breast; but yet I call the muse
And what we can will do. I see, I see
A thousand kingdoms rais'd, cities and men
Num'rous as sand upon the ocean shore;
Th' Ohio then shall glide by many a town
Of note: and where the Mississippi stream
By forests shaded now runs weeping on,
Nations shall grow and states not less in fame
Than Greece and Rome of old: we too shall boast
Our Alexanders, Pompeys, heroes, kings
That in the womb of time yet dormant lye
Waiting the joyful hour for life and light.
O snatch us hence, ye muses! to those days
When, through the veil of dark antiquity,
Our sons shall hear of us as things remote,
That blossom'd in the morn of days, alas!
How could I weep that we were born so soon,

Leander

But come, Eugenio, since we know the past—
What hinders to pervade with searching eye
The mystic scenes of dark futurity?
Say, shall we ask what empires yet must rise,
What kingdoms, powers and states, where now are seen
Mere dreary wastes and awful solitude,
Where Melancholy sits, with eye forlorn,
And time anticipates, when we shall spread
Dominion from the north, and south, and west,
Far from the Atlantic to Pacific shores,
And people half the convex of the main!—
A glorious theme!—but how shall mortals dare
To pierce the dark events of future years
And scenes unravel, only known to fate?

In the beginning of more happy times!
But yet perhaps our fame shall last unhurt.
The sons of science nobly scorn to die;
Immortal virtue this denies, the muse
Forbids the men to slumber in the grave
Who well deserve the praise that virtue gives.

EUGENIO

'Tis true no human eye can penetrate
The veil obscure, and in fair light disclos'd
Behold the scenes of dark futurity;
Yet if we reason from the course of things,
And downward trace the vestiges of time,
The mind prophetic grows and pierces far
Thro' ages yet unborn. We saw the states
And mighty empires of the East arise
In swift succession from the Assyrian
To Macedon and Rome; to Britain thence
Dominion drove her car, she stretch'd her reign
O'er many isles, wide seas, and peopled lands.
Now in the west a continent appears;
A newer world now opens to her view,

Acasto

This might we do, if warmed by that bright coal
Snatch'd from the altar of cherubic fire
Which touched Isaiah's lips—or if the spirit
Of Jeremy and Amos, prophets old,
Might swell the heaving breast—I see, I see
Freedom's established reign; cities, and men,
Numerous as sands upon the ocean shore,
And empires rising where the sun descends! —
The Ohio soon shall glide by many a town
Of note; and where the Mississippi stream,
By forests shaded, now runs weeping on,
Nations shall grow, and states not less in fame
Than Greece and Rome of old!—we too shall boast
Our Scipios, Solons, Catos, sages, chiefs
That in the lap of time yet dormant lie,

She hastens onward to th' Americ shores
And bids a scene of recent wonders rise.
New states, new empires and a line of kings,
High rais'd in glory, cities, palaces,
Fair domes on each long bay, sea, shore or stream,
Circling the hills now rear their lofty heads.
Far in the Arctic skies a Petersburgh,
A Bergen, or Archangel lifts its spires
Glitt'ring with Ice, far in the West appears
A new Palmyra or an Ecbatan
And sees the slow pac'd caravan return
O'er many a realm from the Pacific shore,
Where fleets shall then convey rich Persia's silks,
Arabia's perfumes, and spices rare
Of Philippine, Cœlebe and Marian isles,
Or from the Acapulco coast our India then,
Laden with pearl and burning gems and gold.
Far in the south I see a Babylon,
As once by Tigris or Euphrates stream,
With blazing watch tow'rs and observatories
Rising to heav'n ; from thence astronomers
With optic glass take nobler views of God

Waiting the joyous hour of life and light.—
O snatch me hence, ye muses, to those days
When, through the veil of dark antiquity,
A race shall hear of us as things remote,
That blossomed in the morn of days.—Indeed,
How could I weep that we exist so soon,
Just in the dawning of these mighty times,
Whose scenes are painting for eternity!
Dissentions that shall swell the trump of fame,
And ruin hovering o'er all monarchy!

Eugenio

Nor shall these angry tumults here subside
Nor murder cease, through all these provinces,
Till foreign crowns have vanished from our view
And dazzle here no more—no more presume

In golden suns and shining worlds display'd
Than the poor Chaldean with the naked eye.
A Nineveh where Oronoque descends
With waves discolour'd from the Andes high,
Winding himself around a hundred isles
Where golden buildings glitter o'er his tide.
To mighty nations shall the people grow
Which cultivate the banks of many a flood,
In chrystal currents poured from the hills
Apalachia nam'd, to lave the sands
Of Carolina, Georgia, and the plains
Stretch'd out from thence far to the burning Line,
St. Johns or Clarendon or Albemarle.
And thou Patowmack, navigable stream,
Rolling thy waters thro' Virginia's groves,
Shall vie with Thames, the Tiber or the Rhine,
For on thy banks I see an hundred towns
And the tall vessels wafted down thy tide.
Hoarse Niagara's stream now roaring on
Thro' woods and rocks and broken mountains torn,
In days remote far from their antient beds,
By some great monarch taught a better course,

To awe the spirit of fair Liberty;—
Vengeance must cut the thread,—and Britain, sure
Will curse her fatal obstinacy for it!
Bent on the ruin of this injured country,
She will not listen to our humble prayers,
Though offered with submission:
Like vagabonds and objects of destruction,
Like those whom all mankind are sworn to hate,
She casts us off from her protection,
And will invite the nations round about,
Russians and Germans, slaves and savages,
To come and have a share in our perdition.—
O cruel race, O unrelenting Britain,

Or cleared of cataracts shall flow beneath
Unnumbr'd boats and merchandize and men;
And from the coasts of piny Labradore,
A thousand navies crowd before the gale,
And spread their commerce to remotest lands,
Or bear their thunder round the conquered world.

LEANDER

And here fair freedom shall forever reign.
I see a train, a glorious train appear,
Of Patriots plac'd in equal fame with those
Who nobly fell for Athens or for Rome.
The sons of Boston, resolute and brave,
The firm supporters of our injur'd rights,
Shall lose their splendours in the brighter beams
Of patriots fam'd and heroes yet unborn.

ACASTO

'Tis but the morning of the world with us
And Science yet but sheds her orient rays.
I see the age, the happy age, roll on
Bright with the splendours of her mid-day beams,
I see a Homer and a Milton rise
In all the pomp and majesty of song,
Which gives immortal vigour to the deeds
Atchiev'd by Heroes in the fields of fame.

Who bloody beasts will hire to cut our throats,
Who war will wage with prattling innocence,
And basely murder unoffending women!—
Will stab their prisoners when they cry for quarter,
Will burn our towns, and from his lodging turn
The poor inhabitant to sleep in tempests!—
These will be wrongs, indeed, and all sufficient
To kindle up our souls to deeds of horror,
And give to every arm the nerves of Samson—
These are the men that fill the world with ruin,
And every region mourns their greedy sway,—
Not only for ambition——
But what are this world's goods, that they for them

A second Pope, like that Arabian bird
Of which no age can boast but one, may yet
Awake the muse by Schuylkill's silent stream,
And bid new forests bloom along her tide.
And Susquehanna's rocky stream unsung,
In bright meanders winding round the hills,
Where first the mountain nymph, sweet echo, heard
The uncouth musick of my rural lay,
Shall yet remurmur to the magic sound
Of song heroic, when in future days
Some noble Hambden rises into fame.

LEANDER

Or Roanoke's and James's limpid waves
The sound of musick murmurs in the gale;
Another Denham celebrates their flow,
In gliding numbers and harmonious lays.

EUGENIO

Now in the bow'rs of Tuscororah hills,
As once on Pindus all the muses stray,
New Theban bards high soaring reach the skies
And swim along thro' azure deeps of air.

LEANDER

From Alleghany in thick groves imbrown'd,
Sweet music breathing thro' the shades of night

Should exercise perpetual butchery ?
What are these mighty riches we possess,
That they should send so far to plunder them ?—
Already have we felt their potent arm—
And ever since that inauspicious day,
When first Sir Francis Bernard
His ruffians planted at the council door,
And made the assembly room a home for vagrants,
And soldiers, rank and file—e'er since that day
This wretched land, that drinks its children's gore,
Has been a scene of tumult and confusion!—
Are there not evils in the world enough ?
Are we so happy that they envy us ?
Have we not toiled to satisfy their harpies,
Kings' deputies, that are insatiable;
Whose practice is to incense the royal mind

Steals on my ear, they sing the origin
Of those fair lights which gild the firmament ;
From whence the gale that murmurs in the pines ;
Why flows the stream down from the mountains brow
And rolls the ocean lower than the land.
They sing the final destiny of things,
The great result of all our labours here,
The last day's glory, and the world renew'd.
Such are their themes, for in these happier days
The bard enraptur'd scorns ignoble strains,
Fair science smiling and full truth revealed,
The world at peace, and all her tumults o'er,
The blissful prelude to Emanuel's reign.

EUGENIO

And when a train of rolling years are past,
(So sang the exil'd seer in Patmos isle,)
A new Jerusalem sent down from heav'n
Shall grace our happy earth, perhaps this land,
Whose virgin bosom shall then receive, tho' late,
Myriads of saints with their almighty king,
To live and reign on earth a thousand years

And make us despicable in his view ?—
Have we not all the evils to contend with
That, in this life, mankind are subject to,
Pain, sickness, poverty, and natural death—
But into every wound that nature gave
They will a dagger plunge, and make them mortal!

Leander

Enough, enough!—such dismal scenes you paint,
I almost shudder at the recollection.—
What! are they dogs that they would mangle us ?—
Are these the men that come with base design
To rob the hive, and kill the industrious bee!—
To brighter skies I turn my ravished view,
And fairer prospects from the future draw:—
Here independent power shall hold her sway,

Thence call'd Millennium. Paradise anew
Shall flourish, by no second Adam lost.
No dang'rous tree or deathful fruit shall grow,
No tempting serpent to allure the soul,
From native innocence; a Canaan here
Another Canaan shall excel the old,
And from fairer Pisgah's top be seen.
No thistle here or briar or thorn shall spring,
Earth's curse before: the lion and the lamb
In mutual friendship link'd shall browse the shrub,
And tim'rous deer with rabid tygers stray
O'er mead or lofty hill or grassy plain.
Another Jordan's stream shall glide along
And Siloah's brook in circling eddies flow,
Groves shall adorn their verdant banks, on which
The happy people free from second death
Shall find secure repose; no fierce disease
No fevers, slow consumption, direful plague
Death's ancient ministers, again renew
Perpetual war with man: Fair fruits shall bloom
Fair to the eye, sweet to the taste, if such
Divine inhabitants could need the taste

And public virtue warm the patriot breast:
No traces shall remain of tyranny,
And laws, a pattern to the world beside,
Be here enacted first.——

Acasto

And when a train of rolling years are past,
(So sung the exiled seer in Patmos isle)
A new Jerusalem, sent down from heaven,
Shall grace our happy earth,—perhaps this land,
Whose ample bosom shall receive, though late,
Myriads of saints, with their immortal king,
To live and reign on earth a thousand years,
Thence called Millennium. Paradise anew
Shall flourish, by no second Adam lost,
No dangerous tree with deadly fruit shall grow,
No tempting serpent to allure the soul
From native innocence.—A Canaan here,
Another Canaan shall excel the old,

Of elemental food, amid the joys
Fit for a heav'nly nature. Music's charms
Shall swell the lofty soul and harmony
Triumphant reign ; thro' ev'ry grove shall sound
The cymbal and the lyre, joys too divine
For fallen man to know. Such days the world
And such, America, thou first shall have
When ages yet to come have run their round
And future years of bliss alone remain.

ACASTO

This is thy praise, America, thy pow'r,
Thou best of climes, by science visited,
By freedom blest and richly stor'd with all
The luxuries of life. Hail, happy land,
The seat of empire, the abode of kings,
The final stage where time shall introduce
Renowned characters, and glorious works
Of high invention and of wond'rous art

And from a fairer Pisgah's top be seen.
No thistle here, nor thorn, nor briar shall spring,
Earth's curse before: the lion and the lamb
In mutual friendship linked, shall browse the shrub,
And timorous deer with softened tygers stray
O'er mead, or lofty hill, or grassy plain;
Another Jordan's stream shall glide along,
And Siloah's brook in circling eddies flow:
Groves shall adorn their verdant banks, on which
The happy people, free from toils and death,
Shall find secure repose. No fierce disease,
No fevers, slow consumption, ghastly plague,
(Fate's ancient ministers) again proclaim
Perpetual war with man: fair fruits shall bloom,
Fair to the eye, and sweeter to the taste;
Nature's loud storms be hushed, and seas no more
Rage hostile to mankind—and, worse than all,
The fiercer passions of the human breast
Shall kindle up to deeds of death no more,
But all subside in universal peace.——

Which not the ravages of time shall waste
Till he himself has run his long career;
Till all those glorious orbs of light on high,
The rolling wonders that surround the ball,
Drop from their spheres extinguish'd and consum'd;
When final ruin with her fiery car
Rides o'er creation, and all nature's works
Are lost in chaos and the womb of night.

The 1786 edition, which was evolved with such great changes from the original version, furnished the text of the 1795 edition. There were some twenty variations and three added lines, viz., lines 354, 427, 428. Line 265 was changed from "Which full enjoyment only finds for fools," to its final form; line 352 was changed from "A thousand kingdoms rais'd;" line 360, from "Our Alexanders, Pompeys, heroes, kings;" line 371, from "One monarchy;" and 461, from "Death's ancient." The other changes were largely verbal, nearly all being for the better. For the edition of 1809, Freneau used the 1795 text, with some twenty-one variations and one added

Such days the world,
And such America at last shall have
When ages, yet to come, have run their round,
And future years of bliss alone remain.

ON RETIREMENT[1]

(By Hezekiah Salem)

A hermit's house beside a stream,
With forests planted round,
Whatever it to you may seem
More real happiness I deem
Than if I were a monarch crown'd.

A cottage I could call my own,
Remote from domes of care;
A little garden walled with stone,
The wall with ivy overgrown,
A limpid fountain near,

Would more substantial joys afford,
More real bliss impart
Than all the wealth that misers hoard,
Than vanquish'd worlds, or worlds restored—
Mere cankers of the heart!

line, viz., line 67. These variations, which nearly all concern single words, are generally not at all for the better: for instance, "Shackle," in line 343, is changed to "people;" "our sons," in line 365, is changed to "a race;" "were born," in 367, to "we exist;" and "strumpets," in 409, to "vagrants." Freneau's notes in the various editions were as follows:

62. Genesis x, 25.
100. Hor. Epod. 16.
207. 1755.
251. Hom. Odyss. B. 24.
328. Newton.
373. The Massacre at Boston, March 5th, 1770, is here more particularly glanced at.

[1] The title in the edition of 1786 was "Retirement." In 1795 it was changed to "The Wish of Diogenes."

Vain, foolish man! how vast thy pride,
How little can your wants supply!—
'Tis surely wrong to grasp so wide—
You act as if you only had
To vanquish—not to die!

DISCOVERY[1]

Six thousand years in these dull regions pass'd,
'Tis time, you'll say, we knew their bounds at last,
Knew to what skies our setting stars retire,
And where the wintry suns expend their fire;
What land to land protracts the varied scene,
And what extended oceans roll between;
What worlds exist beneath antarctic skies,
And from Pacific waves what verdant islands rise.
In vain did Nature shore from shore divide:
Art formed a passage and her waves defied:
When his bold plan the master pilot drew
Dissevered worlds stept forward at the view,
And lessening still the intervening space,
Disclosed new millions of the human race.
Proud even of toil, succeeding ages joined
New seas to vanquish, and new worlds to find;
Age following age still farther from the shore,
Found some new wonder that was hid before,
'Till launched at length, with avarice doubly bold,
Their hearts expanding as the world grew old,
Some to be rich, and some to be renowned,
The earth they rifled, and explored it round.

[1] The edition of 1786 has the date 1772 for this poem. Very little change was made in the text for the later editions.

Ambitious Europe! polished in thy pride,
Thine was the art that toil to toil allied,
Thine was the gift, to trace each heavenly sphere,
And seize its beams, to serve ambition here:
Hence, fierce Pizarro stock'd a world with graves,
Hence Montezuma left a race of slaves.—
Which project suited best with heaven's decree,
To force new doctrines, or to leave them free? —
Religion only feigned to claim a share,
Their riches, not their souls, employed your care.—
Alas! how few of all that daring train
That seek new worlds embosomed in the main,
How few have sailed on virtue's nobler plan,
How few with motives worthy of a man!—
While through the deep-sea waves we saw them go
Where'er they found a man they made a foe;
Superior only by superior art,
Forgot the social virtues of the heart,
Forgetting still, where'er they madly ran,
That sacred friendship binds mankind to man,
Fond of exerting power untimely shewn,
The momentary triumph all their own!
Met on the wrecks and ravages of time,
They left no native master of his clime,
His trees, his towns, with hardened front they claimed,
Seized every region that a despot named
And forced the oath that bound him to obey
Some prince unknown, ten thousand miles away.
Slaves to their passions, man's imperious race,
Born for contention, find no resting place,
And the vain mind, bewildered and perplext,
Makes this world wretched to enjoy the next.
Tired of the scenes that Nature made their own,
They rove to conquer what remains unknown:

Avarice, undaunted, claims whate'er she sees,
Surmounts earth's circle, and foregoes all ease;
Religion, bolder, sends some sacred chief
To bend the nations to her own belief.
To their vain standard Europe's sons invite,
Who hold no other world can think aright.
Behold their varied tribes, with self applause,
First in religion, liberty, and laws,
And while they bow to cruelty and blood,
Condemn the Indian with his milder god.—
Ah, race to justice, truth, and honour blind,
Are thy convictions to convert mankind! —
Vain pride—convince them that your own are just,
Or leave them happy, as you found them first.

What charm is seen through Europe's realms of strife
That adds new blessings to the savage life ?—
On them warm suns with equal splendor shine,
Their each domestic pleasure equals thine,
Their native groves as soft a bloom display,
As self-contented roll their lives away,
And the gay soul, in fancy's visions blest,
Leaves to the care of chance her heaven of rest.

What are the arts that rise on Europe's plan
But arts destructive to the bliss of man ?
What are all wars, where'er the marks you trace,
But the sad records of our world's disgrace ?
Reason degraded from her tottering throne,
And precepts, called divine, observed by none.

Blest in their distance from that bloody scene,
Why spread the sail to pass the gulphs between ?—
If winds can waft to ocean's utmost verge,
And there new islands and new worlds emerge—
If wealth, or war, or science bid thee roam,
Ah, leave religion and thy laws at home,

Leave the free native to enjoy his store,
Nor teach destructive arts, unknown before—
Woes of their own those new found worlds invade,
There, too, fierce passions the weak soul degrade,
Invention there has winged the unerring dart,
There the swift arrow vibrates to the heart,
Revenge and death contending bosoms share,
And pining envy claims her subjects there.
Are these too few ?—then see despotic power
Spends on a throne of logs her busy hour.
Hard by, and half ambitious to ascend,
Priests, interceding with the gods, attend—
Atoning victims at their shrines they lay,
Their crimson knives tremendous rites display,
Or the proud despot's gore remorseless shed,
Through life detested, or adored when dead.

Born to be wretched, search this globe around,
Dupes to a few the race of man is found!
Seek some new world in some new climate plac'd,
Some gay Ta-ia* on the watery waste,
Though Nature clothes in all her bright array,
Some proud tormentor steals her charms away:
Howe'er she smiles beneath those milder skies,
Though men decay the monarch never dies!
Howe'er the groves, howe'er the gardens bloom,
A monarch and a priest is still their doom!

* Commonly called Otaheite, an island in the Southern Pacific Ocean, noted for the natural civilization of its inhabitants.—*Freneau's note.*

THE PICTURES OF COLUMBUS, THE GENOESE[1]

PICTURE I.

Columbus making Maps*

As o'er his charts Columbus ran,
  Such disproportion he survey'd,
He thought he saw in art's mean plan
  Blunders that Nature never made;
The land in one poor corner placed,
And all beside, a swelling waste!—
"It can't be so," Columbus said;

"This world on paper idly drawn,[2]
"O'er one small tract so often gone
"The pencil tires; in this void space
"Allow'd to find no resting place.

* History informs us this was his original profession: and from the disproportionate vacancy observable in the drafts of that time between Europe and Asia to the west, it is most probable he first took the idea of another continent, lying in a parallel direction to, and existing between both.—*Freneau's note.*

[1] First published in the edition of 1788, the text of which I have reproduced. Aside from several significant changes in Picture I., and the total omission of Pictures II. and III., the later editions contain but few variations. The edition of 1795 is signed "Anno 1774."

[2] The four stanzas beginning "This world on paper idly drawn," are omitted from later editions, and the stanza beginning "But westward plac'd" is made to read:

"Far to the west what lengthen'd seas!
"Are no gay islands found in these,
"No sylvan worlds, by Nature meant
"To balance Asia's vast extent?"

"But copying Nature's bold design,
"If true to her, no fault is mine;
"Perhaps in these moist regions dwell
"Forms wrought like man, and lov'd as well.

"Yet to the west what lengthen'd seas!
"Are no gay islands found in these,
"No sylvan worlds that Nature meant
"To balance Asia's vast extent?

"As late a mimic globe I made
"(Imploring Fancy to my aid)
"O'er these wild seas a shade I threw,
"And a new world my pencil drew.

"But westward plac'd, and far away
"In the deep seas this country lay
"Beyond all climes already known,
"In Neptune's bosom plac'd alone.

"Who knows but he that hung this ball
"In the clear void, and governs all,
"On those dread scenes, remote from view,
"Has trac'd his great idea too.

"What can these idle charts avail—
"O'er real seas I mean to sail;
"If fortune aids the grand design,
"Worlds yet unthought of shall be mine.

"But how shall I this country find!
"Gay, painted picture of the mind!
"Religion * holds my project vain,
"And owns no worlds beyond the main.

* The Inquisition made it criminal to assert the existence of the Antipodes. —*Freneau's note.*

"'Midst yonder hills long time has stay'd[1]
"In sylvan cells a wondrous maid,
"Who things to come can truly tell,
"Dread mistress of the magic spell.

"Whate'er the depths of time can shew
"All pass before her in review,
"And all events her eyes survey,
"'Till time and nature both decay.

"I'll to her cave, enquiring there
"What mighty things the fates prepare;
"Whether my hopes and plans are vain,
"Or I must give new worlds to Spain."

[1] In later editions the last three stanzas are omitted, and in their place is added the following, taken partly from the words of the Inchantress in the next picture:

"If Neptune on my prowess smiles,
And I detect his hidden isles,
I hear some warning spirit say:
'*No monarch will your toils repay:*
'*For this the ungrateful shall combine,*
'*And hard misfortune must be thine;*
'*For this the base reward remains*
'*Of cold neglect and galling chains!*
'*In a poor solitude forgot,*
'*Reproach and want shall be the lot*
'*Of him that gives new worlds to Spain*
'*And westward spreads her golden reign.*
'*On thy design what woes attend!*
'*The nations at the ocean's end*
'*No longer destined to be free*
'*Shall owe distress and death to thee!*
'*The seats of innocence and love*
'*Shall soon the scenes of horror prove;*
'*But why disturb these Indian climes,*
'*The pictures of more happy times!*
'*Has avarice, with unfeeling breast,*
'*Has cruelty thy soul possess'd?*
'*May ruin on thy boldness wait!—*
'*And sorrow crown thy toils too late!*'"

PICTURE II.[1]

The Cell of an Inchantress

Inchantress

Who dares attempt this gloomy grove
Where never shepherd dream'd of love,
And birds of night are only found,
And poisonous weeds bestrew the ground:
Hence, stranger, take some other road,
Nor dare prophane my dark abode;
The winds are high, the moon is low—
Would you enter?—no, no, no:—

Columbus

Sorceress of mighty power! *
Hither at the midnight hour
Over hill and dale I've come,
Leaving ease and sleep at home:
With daring aims my bosom glows;
Long a stranger to repose,
I have come to learn from you
Whether phantoms I pursue,
Or if, as reason would persuade,
New worlds are on the ocean laid—
Tell me, wonder-working maid,
Tell me, dire inchantress, tell,
Mistress of the magic spell!

* The fifteenth century was, like many of the preceding, an age of superstition, cruelty, and ignorance. When this circumstance, therefore, is brought into view, the mixture of truth and fiction will not appear altogether absurd or unnatural. At any rate, it has ever been tolerated in this species of poetry.—*Freneau's note.*

[1] Pictures II. and III. are omitted from later editions.

Inchantress

The staring owl her note has sung;
With gaping snakes my cave is hung;
Of maiden hair my bed is made,
Two winding sheets above it laid;
With bones of men my shelves are pil'd,
And toads are for my supper boil'd;
Three ghosts attend to fill my cup,
And four to serve my pottage up;
The crow is waiting to say grace:—
Wouldst thou in such a dismal place
The secrets of thy fortune trace?

Columbus

Though death and all his dreary crew
Were to be open'd on my view,
I would not from this threshold fly
'Till you had made a full reply.
Open wide this iron gate,
I must read the book of fate:
Tell me, if beyond the main
Islands are reserv'd for Spain;
Tell me, if beyond the sea
Worlds are to be found by me:
Bid your spirits disappear,
Phantoms of delusive fear,
These are visions I despise,
Shadows and uncertainties.

Inchantress

Must I, then, yield to your request!
Columbus, why disturb my rest!—
For this the ungrateful shall combine,
And hard misfortune shall be thine;—

For this the base reward remains
Of cold neglect and galling chains! *
In a poor solitude forgot,
Reproach and want shall be the lot
Of him that gives new worlds to Spain,
And westward spreads her golden reign.
Before you came to vex my bower
I slept away the evening hour,
Or watch'd the rising of the moon,
With hissing vipers keeping tune,
Or galloping along the glade
Took pleasure in the lunar shade,
And gather'd herbs, or made a prize
Of horses' tails and adders' eyes:
Now open flies the iron gate,
Advance, and read the book of fate!
On thy design what woes attend!
The nations at the ocean's end,
No longer destin'd to be free,
Shall owe distress and death to thee!
The seats of innocence and love
Shall soon the scenes of horror prove:
But why disturb these Indian climes,
The pictures of more happy times!
Has avarice, with unfeeling breast,
Has cruelty thy soul possess'd ?
May ruin on thy boldness wait!—
Advance, and read the book of fate.
When vulture, fed but once a week,
And ravens three together shriek,

* In 1498 he was superseded in his command at Hispaniola and sent home in irons. Soon after finishing his fourth voyage, finding himself neglected by the Court of Spain after all his services, he retired to Valladolid, in Old Castile, where he died on the 20th of May, A. D. 1506.—*Freneau's note.*

And skeleton for vengeance cries,
Then shall the fatal curtain rise!
Two lamps in yonder vaulted room,
Suspended o'er a brazen tomb,
Shall lend their glimmerings, as you pass,
To find your fortune in that glass
Whose wondrous virtue is, to show
Whate'er the inquirer wants to know.

PICTURE III.

The Mirror

Columbus

Strange things I see, bright mirror, in thy breast:—
There Perseverance stands, and nobly scorns
The gabbling tongue of busy calumny;
Proud Erudition in a scholar's garb
Derides my plans and grins a jeering smile.
Hypocrisy, clad in a doctor's gown,
A western continent deems heresy:
The princes, kings, and nobles of the land
Smile at my projects, and report me mad:
One royal woman only stands my friend,
Bright Isabell, the lady of our hearts,
Whom avarice prompts to aid my purposes,
And love of toys—weak female vanity!—
She gains her point!—three slender barques I see
(Or else the witch's glass deceives mine eye)
Rigg'd trim, and furnish'd out with stores and men,
Fitted for tedious journeys o'er the main:
Columbus—ha!—their motions he directs;
Their captains come, and ask advice from him,
Holding him for the soul of resolution.
Now, now we launch from Palos! prosperous gales

Impel the canvas: now the far fam'd streight
Is pass'd, the pillars of the son of Jove,
Long held the limits of the paths of men:
Ah! what a waste of ocean here begins,
And lonely waves, so black and comfortless!
Light flies each bounding galley o'er the main;
Now Lancerota gathers on our view,
And Teneriffe her clouded summit rears:
Awhile we linger at these islands fair
That seem the utmost boundaries of the world,
Then westward aiming on the unfathom'd deep
Sorrowing, with heavy hearts we urge our way.
Now all is discontent—such oceans pass'd,
No land appearing yet, dejects the most;
Yet, fertile in expedients, I alone
The mask of mild content am forc'd to wear:
A thousand signs I see, or feign to see,
Of shores at hand, and bottoms underneath,
And not a bird that wanders o'er the main,
And not a cloud that traverses the sky
But brings me something to support their hopes:
All fails at last!—so frequently deceiv'd
They growl with anger—mad to look at death
They gnash their teeth, and will be led no more;
On me their vengeance turns: they look at me
As their conductor to the realms of ruin:
Plot after plot discover'd, not reveng'd,
They join against their chief in mutiny:
They urge to plunge him in the boiling deep
As one, the only one that would pursue
Imaginary worlds through boundless seas:—
The scene is chang'd—Fine islands greet mine eye,
Cover'd with trees, and beasts, and yellow men;
Eternal summer through the vallies smiles

And fragrant gales o'er golden meadows play!—
Inchantress, 'tis enough!—now veil your glass—
The curtain falls—and I must homeward pass.

PICTURE IV.

Columbus addresses King Ferdinand

Prince and the pride of Spain! while meaner crowns,
Pleas'd with the shadow of monarchial sway,
Exact obedience from some paltry tract
Scarce worth the pain and toil of governing,
Be thine the generous care to send thy fame
Beyond the knowledge, or the guess of man.
This gulphy deep (that bounds our western reign
So long by civil feuds and wars disgrac'd)
Must be the passage to some other shore
Where nations dwell, children of early time,
Basking in the warm sunshine of the south,
Who some false deity, no doubt, adore,
Owning no virtue in the potent cross:
What honour, sire, to plant your standards there,*
And souls recover to our holy faith
That now in paths of dark perdition stray
Warp'd to his worship by the evil one!
Think not that Europe and the Asian waste,
Or Africa, where barren sands abound,
Are the sole gems in Neptune's bosom laid:
Think not the world a vast extended plain:
See yond' bright orbs, that through the ether move,
All globular; this earth a globe like them
Walks her own rounds, attended by the moon,
Bright comrade, but with borrowed lustre bright.

*It is allowed by most historians, that Ferdinand was an implicit believer and one of the most superstitious bigots of his age.—*Freneau's note.*

If all the surface of this mighty round
Be one wide ocean of unfathom'd depth
Bounding the little space already known,
Nature must have forgot her wonted wit
And made a monstrous havock of proportion.
If her proud depths were not restrain'd by lands,
And broke by continents of vast extent
Existing somewhere under western skies,
Far other waves would roll before the storms
Than ever yet have burst on Europe's shores,
Driving before them deluge and confusion.
But Nature will preserve what she has plann'd:
And the whole suffrage of antiquity,
Platonic dreams, and reason's plainer page
All point at something that we ought to see
Buried behind the waters of the west,
Clouded with shadows of uncertainty.
The time is come for some sublime event
Of mighty fame:—mankind are children yet,
And hardly dream what treasures they possess
In the dark bosom of the fertile main,
Unfathom'd, unattempted, unexplor'd.
These, mighty prince, I offer to reveal,
And by the magnet's aid, if you supply
Ships and some gallant hearts, will hope to bring
From distant climes, news worthy of a king.

PICTURE V.

Ferdinand and his First Minister

Ferdinand

What would this madman have, this odd projector!
A wild address I have to-day attended,
Mingling its folly with our great affairs,

Dreaming of islands and new hemispheres
Plac'd on the ocean's verge, we know not where—
What shall I do with this petitioner?

Minister

Even send him, sire, to perish in his search:
He has so pester'd me these many years
With idle projects of discovery—
His name—I almost dread to hear it mention'd:
He is a Genoese of vulgar birth
And has been round all Europe with his plans
Presenting them to every potentate;
He lives, 'tis said, by vending maps and charts,[1]
And being us'd to sketch imagin'd islands
On that blank space that represents the seas,
His head at last grows giddy with this folly,
And fancied isles are turned to real lands
With which he puzzles me perpetually:
What pains me too, is, that our royal lady
Lends him her ear, and reads his mad addresses,
Oppos'd to reason and philosophy.

Ferdinand

He acts the devil's part in Eden's garden;
Knowing the man was proof to his temptations
He whisper'd something in the ear of Eve,
And promis'd much, but meant not to perform.

Minister

I've treated all his schemes with such contempt
That any but a rank, mad-brain'd enthusiast,
Pushing his purpose to extremities,

[1] The six lines beginning here are omitted in the later versions.

Would have forsook your empire, royal sir,
Discourag'd, and forgotten long ago.

Ferdinand

Has he so long been busy at his projects?—
I scarcely heard of him till yesterday:
A plan pursued with so much obstinacy
Looks not like madness:—wretches of that stamp
Survey a thousand objects in an hour,
In love with each, and yet attach'd to none
Beyond the moment that it meets the eye—
But him I honour, tho' in beggar's garbs,
Who has a soul of so much constancy
As to bear up against the hard rebuffs,
Sneers of great men, and insolence of power,
And through the opposition of them all
Pursues his object:—Minister, this man
Must have our notice:—Let him be commissioned
Viceroy of all the lands he shall discover,
Admiral and general in the fleets of Spain;
Let three stout ships be instantly selected,
The best and strongest ribb'd of all we own,
With men to mann them, patient of fatigue:
But stay, attend! how stands our treasury?—

Minister

Empty—even to the bottom, royal sir!
We have not coin for bare necessities,
Much less, so pardon me, to spend on madmen.

Picture VI.

Columbus addresses Queen Isabella

While Turkish queens, dejected, pine,
Compell'd sweet freedom to resign;
And taught one virtue, to obey,
Lament some eastern tyrant's sway,

Queen of our hearts, bright Isabell!
A happier lot to you has fell,
Who makes a nation's bliss your own,
And share the rich Castilian throne.

Exalted thus, beyond all fame,
Assist, fair lady, that proud aim
Which would your native reign extend
To the wide world's remotest end.

From science, fed by busy thought,
New wonders to my view are brought:
The vast abyss beyond our shore
I deem impassable no more.

Let those that love to dream or sleep
Pretend no limits to the deep:
I see beyond the rolling main
Abounding wealth reserv'd for Spain.

From Nature's earliest days conceal'd,
Men of their own these climates yield,
And scepter'd dames, no doubt, are there,
Queens like yourself, but not so fair.

But what should most provoke desire
Are the fine pearls that they admire,
And diamonds bright and coral green
More fit to grace a Spanish queen.

Their yellow shells, and virgin gold,
And silver, for our trinkets sold,
Shall well reward this toil and pain,
And bid our commerce shine again.

As men were forc'd from Eden's shade
By errors that a woman made,
Permit me at a woman's cost
To find the climates that we lost.

He that with you partakes command,
The nation's hope, great Ferdinand,
Attends, indeed, to my request,
But wants no empires in the west.

Then, queen, supply the swelling sail,
For eastward breathes the steady gale
That shall the meanest barque convey
To regions richer than Cathay.*

Arriv'd upon that flowery coast
Whole towns of golden temples boast,
While these bright objects strike our view
Their wealth shall be reserv'd for you.

Each swarthy king shall yield his crown,
And smiling lay their sceptres down,
When they, not tam'd by force of arms,
Shall hear the story of your charms.

Did I an empty dream pursue
Great honour still must wait on you,
Who sent the lads of Spain to keep
Such vigils on the untravell'd deep,

* The ancient name for China.—*Freneau's note.*

Who fix'd the bounds of land and sea,
Trac'd Nature's works through each degree,
Imagin'd some unheard of shore
But prov'd that there was nothing more.

Yet happier prospects, I maintain,
Shall open on your female reign,
While ages hence with rapture tell
How much they owe to Isabell!

PICTURE VII.

Queen Isabella's Page of Honour writing a reply to Columbus

Your yellow shells, and coral green,
And gold, and silver—not yet seen,
Have made such mischief in a woman's mind
The queen could almost pillage from the crown,
And add some costly jewels of her own,
Thus sending you that charming coast to find
Where all these heavenly things abound,
Queens in the west, and chiefs renown'd.
But then no great men take you by the hand,
Nor are the nobles busied in your aid;
The clergy have no relish for your scheme,
And deem it madness—one archbishop said
You were bewilder'd in a paltry dream
That led directly to undoubted ruin,
Your own and other men's undoing:—
And our confessor says it is not true,
And calls it heresy in you
Thus to assert the world is round,
And that Antipodes are found
Held to the earth, we can't tell how.—
But you shall sail; I heard the queen declare
That mere geography is not her care;—

And thus she bids me say,
"Columbus, haste away,
"Hasten to Palos, and if you can find
"Three barques, of structure suited to your mind,
"Strait make a purchase in the royal name;
"Equip them for the seas without delay,
"Since long the journey is (we heard you say)
"To that rich country which we wish to claim.—
"Let them be small—for know the crown is poor
"Though basking in the sunshine of renown.
"Long wars have wasted us: the pride of Spain
"Was ne'er before so high, nor purse so mean;
"Giving us ten years' war, the humbled Moor
"Has left us little else but victory:
"Time must restore past splendor to our reign."

PICTURE VIII.

Columbus at the Harbour of Palos, in Andalusia

Columbus

In three small barques to cross so vast a sea,
Held to be boundless, even in learning's eye,
And trusting only to a magic glass,
Which may have represented things untrue,
Shadows and visions for realities!—[1]
It is a bold attempt!—Yet I must go,
Travelling the surge to its great boundary;
Far, far away beyond the reach of men,
Where never galley spread her milk-white sail
Or weary pilgrim bore the Christian name!
But though I were confirm'd in my design
And saw the whole event with certainty,
How shall I so exert my eloquence,

[1] This and the two preceding lines omitted in later versions.

And hold such arguments with vulgar minds
As to convince them I am not an idiot
Chasing the visions of a shatter'd brain,
Ending in their perdition and my own ?
The world, and all its wisdom is against me;
The dreams of priests; philosophy in chains;
False learning swoln with self-sufficiency;
Men seated at the helm of royalty
Reasoning like school-boys;—what discouragements!
Experience holds herself mine enemy,
And one weak woman only hears my story!—
I'll make a speech—"Here jovial sailors, here!
"Ye that would rise beyond the rags of fortune,
"Struggling too long with hopeless poverty,
"Coasting your native shores on shallow seas,
"Vex'd by the gallies of the Ottoman;
"Now meditate with me a bolder plan,
"Catching at fortune in her plenitude!
"He that shall undertake this voyage with me
"Shall be no longer held a vulgar man:
"Princes shall wish they had been our companions,
"And Science blush she did not go along
"To learn a lesson that might humble pride
"Now grinning idly from a pedant's cap,
"Lurking behind the veil of cowardice.
"Far in the west a golden region lies
"Unknown, unvisited for many an age,
"Teeming with treasures to enrich the brave.
"Embark, embark—Columbus leads the way—
"Why, friends, existence is alike to me
"Dear and desireable with other men;
"What good could I devise in seeking ruin ?
"Embark, I say; and he that sails with me
"Shall reap a harvest of immortal honour:

"Wealthier he shall return than they that now
"Lounge in the lap of principalities,
"Hoarding the gorgeous treasures of the east."—
Alas, alas! they turn their backs upon me,
And rather choose to wallow in the mire
Of want, and torpid inactivity,
Than by one bold and masterly exertion
Themselves ennoble, and enrich their country!

PICTURE IX.

A Sailor's Hut, near the Shore

Thomas and Susan

Thomas

I wish I was over the water again!
'Tis a pity we cannot agree;
When I try to be merry 'tis labour in vain,
You always are scolding at me;
Then what shall I do
With this termagant Sue;
Tho' I hug her and squeeze her
I never can please her—
Was there ever a devil like you!

Susan

If I was a maid as I now am a wife
With a sot and a brat to maintain,
I think it should be the first care of my life,
To shun such a drunkard again:
Not one of the crew
Is so hated by Sue;
Though they always are bawling,
And pulling and hauling—
Not one is a puppy like you.[1]

[1] "Not one is so noisy as you."—*Ed. 1795.*

Thomas

Dear Susan, I'm sorry that you should complain:
  There is nothing indeed to be done;
If a war should break out, not a sailor in Spain
  Would sooner be found at his gun:
Arriving from sea
I would kneel on one knee,
  And the plunder presenting
  To Susan relenting—
Who then would be honour'd like me!

Susan

To-day as I came by the sign of the ship,
  A mighty fine captain was there,
He was asking for sailors to take a small trip,
  But I cannot remember well where:
He was hearty and free,
And if you can agree
  To leave me, dear honey,
  To bring me some money!—
How happy—indeed—I shall be!

Thomas

The man that you saw not a sailor can get,
  'Tis a captain Columbus, they say;
To fit out a ship he is running in debt,
  And our wages he never will pay:
Yes, yes, it is he,
And, Sue, do ye see,
  On a wild undertaking
  His heart he is breaking—
The devil may take him for me!

Picture X.

Bernardo, a Spanish Friar, in his canonicals

Did not our holy book most clearly say
This earth is built upon a pillar'd base;
And did not Reason add convincing proofs
That this huge world is one continued plain
Extending onward to immensity,
Bounding with oceans these abodes of men,
I should suppose this dreamer had some hopes,
Some prospects built on probability.
What says our lord the pope—he cannot err—
He says, our world is not orbicular,
And has rewarded some with chains and death
Who dar'd defend such wicked heresies.
But we are turning heretics indeed!—
A foreigner, an idiot, an impostor,
An infidel (since he dares contradict
What our most holy order holds for truth)
Is pouring poison in the royal ear;
Telling him tales of islands in the moon,
Leading the nation into dangerous errors,
Slighting instruction from our brotherhood!—
O Jesu! Jesu! what an age is this!

Picture XI.

Orosio, a Mathematician, with his scales and compasses

This persevering man succeeds at last!
The last gazette has publish'd to the world
That Ferdinand and Isabella grant
Three well rigg'd ships to Christopher Columbus;
And have bestow'd the noble titles too
Of Admiral and Vice-Roy—great indeed!—

Who will not now project, and scrawl on paper—
Pretenders now shall be advanc'd to honour;
And every pedant that can frame a problem,
And every lad that can draw parallels
Or measure the subtension of an angle,
Shall now have ships to make discoveries.
This simple man would sail he knows not where;
Building on fables, schemes of certainty;—
Visions of Plato, mix'd with idle tales
Of later date, intoxicate his brain:
Let him advance beyond a certain point
In his fantastic voyage, and I foretell
He never can return: ay, let him go!—
There is a line towards the setting sun
Drawn on an ocean of tremendous depth,
(Where nature plac'd the limits of the day)
Haunted by dragons, fond of solitude,
Red serpents, fiery forms, and yelling hags,
Fit company for mad adventurers.—
There, when the sun descends, 'tis horror all;
His angry globe through vast abysses gliding
Burns in the briny bosom of the deep
Making a havoc so detestable,
And causing such a wasteful ebullition
That never island green, or continent
Could find foundation, there to grow upon.

PICTURE XII.

Columbus and a Pilot

Columbus

To take on board the sweepings of a jail
Is inexpedient in a voyage like mine,
That will require most patient fortitude,

Strict vigilance and staid sobriety,
Contempt of death on cool reflection founded,
A sense of honour, motives of ambition,
And every sentiment that sways the brave.—
Princes should join me now!—not those I mean
Who lurk in courts, or revel in the shade
Of painted ceilings:—those I mean, more worthy,
Whose daring aims and persevering souls,
Soaring beyond the sordid views of fortune,
Bespeak the lineage of true royalty.

Pilot

A fleet arrived last month at Carthagene
From Smyrna, Cyprus, and the neighbouring isles:
Their crews, releas'd from long fatigues at sea,
Have spent their earnings in festivity,
And hunger tells them they must out again.
Yet nothing instantly presents itself
Except your new and noble expedition:
The fleet must undergo immense repairs,
And numbers will be unemploy'd awhile:
I'll take them in the hour of dissipation
(Before reflection has made cowards of them,
Suggesting questions of impertinence)
When desperate plans are most acceptable,
Impossibilities are possible,
And all the spring and vigour of the mind
Is strain'd to madness and audacity:
If you approve my scheme, our ninety men
(The number you pronounce to be sufficient)
Shall all be enter'd in a week, at most.

Columbus

Go, pilot, go—and every motive urge
That may put life into this expedition.
Early in August we must weigh our anchors.
Time wears apace—bring none but willing men,
So shall our orders be the better borne,
The people less inclin'd to mutiny.

PICTURE XIII.

Discontents at Sea

Antonio

Dreadful is death in his most gentle forms!
More horrid still on this mad element,
So far remote from land—from friends remote!
So many thousand leagues already sail'd
In quest of visions!—what remains to us
But perishing in these moist solitudes;
Where many a day our corpses on the sea
Shall float unwept, unpitied, unentomb'd!
O fate most terrible!—undone Antonio!
Why didst thou listen to a madman's dreams,
Pregnant with mischief—why not, comrades, rise!—
See, Nature's self prepares to leave us here;
The needle, once so faithful to the pole,
Now quits his object and bewilders us;
Steering at random, just as chance directs—
O fate most terrible!—undone Antonio!—

Hernando

Borne to creation's utmost verge, I saw
New stars ascending, never view'd before!
Low sinks the bear!—O land, my native land,

Clear springs and shady groves! why did I change
Your aspect fair for these infernal wastes,
Peopled by monsters of another kind;
Ah me! design'd not for the view of man!

Columbus

Cease, dastards, cease; and be inform'd that man
Is nature's lord, and wields her to his will;
If her most noble works obey our aims,
How much more so ought worthless scum, like you,
Whose whole existence is a morning dream,
Whose life is sunshine on a wintry day,
Who shake at shadows, struck with palsied fear:
Measuring the limit of your lives by distance.

Antonio

Columbus, hear! when with the land we parted
You thirty days agreed to plough the main,
Directing westward.—Thirty have elaps'd,
And thirty more have now begun their round,
No land appearing yet, nor trace of land,
But distant fogs that mimic lofty isles,
Painting gay landscapes on the vapourish air,
Inhabited by fiends that mean our ruin—
You persevere, and have no mercy on us—
Then perish by yourself—we must return—
And know, our firm resolve is fix'd for Spain;
In this resolve we are unanimous.

Juan de Villa-Real to Columbus

(A Billet)

"I heard them over night a plot contriving
"Of fatal purpose—have a care, Columbus!—
"They have resolv'd, as on the deck you stand,

"Aiding the vigils of the midnight hour,
"To plunge you headlong in the roaring deep,
"And slaughter such as favour your design
"Still to pursue this western continent."

Columbus, solus

Why, nature, hast thou treated those so ill,
Whose souls, capacious of immense designs,
Leave ease and quiet for a nation's glory,
Thus to subject them to these little things,
Insects, by heaven's decree in shapes of men!
But so it is, and so we must submit,
Bending to thee, the heaven's great chancellor!
But must I fail!—and by timidity!
Must thou to thy green waves receive me, Neptune,
Or must I basely with my ships return,
Nothing accomplish'd!—not one pearl discover'd,
One bit of gold to make our queen a bracelet,
One diamond for the crown of Ferdinand!
How will their triumph be confirm'd, who said
That I was mad!—Must I then change my course,
And quit the country that would strait appear,
If one week longer we pursued the sun!—
The witch's glass was not delusion, sure!—
All this, and more, she told me to expect!—[1]

(*To the crew*)

"Assemble, friends; attend to what I say:
"Signs unequivocal, at length, declare
"That some great continent approaches us:
"The sea no longer glooms unmeasur'd depths,[2]

[1] This and preceding line omitted in later versions.

[2] Two lines added in later editions:

"Small motes I see, from ebbing rivers borne,
And Neptune's waves a greener aspect wear."

"The setting sun discovers clouds that owe
"Their origin to fens and woodland wastes,
"Not such as breed on ocean's salt domain:—
"Vast flocks of birds attend us on our way,
"These all have haunts amidst the watry void,
"Sweet scenes of ease, and sylvan solitude,
"And springs, and streams that we shall share with them.
"Now, hear my most importunate request:
"I call you all my friends; you are my equals,
"Men of true worth and native dignity,
"Whose spirits are too mighty to return
"Most meanly home, when nothing is accomplish'd—
"Consent to sail our wonted course with me
"But one week longer, and if that be spent,
"And nought appear to recompence our toil,
"Then change our course and homeward haste away—
"Nay, homeward not!—for that would be too base—
"But to some negro coast,[1] where we may hide,
"And never think of Ferdinand again."

Hernando

One week!—too much—it shall not be, Columbus!
Already are we on the verge of ruin,
Warm'd by the sunshine of another sphere,
Fann'd by the breezes of the burning zone,
Launch'd out upon the world's extremities!—
Who knows where one week more may carry us?

Antonio

Nay, talk not to the traitor!—base Columbus,
To thee our ruin and our deaths we owe!

[1] "But to the depths below."—*Ed. 1795*.

Away, away!—friends!—men at liberty,
Now free to act as best befits our case,
Appoint another pilot to the helm,
And Andalusia be our port again!

Columbus

Friends, is it thus you treat your admiral,
Who bears the honours of great Ferdinand,
The royal standard, and the arms of Spain!
Three days allow me—and I'll show new worlds.

Hernando

Three days!—one day will pass too tediously—
But in the name of all our crew, Columbus,
Whose speaker and controuler I am own'd;
Since thou indeed art a most gallant man,
Three days we grant—but ask us not again!

PICTURE XIV.

Columbus at Cat Island

Columbus, solus

Hail, beauteous land! the first that greets mine eye
Since, bold, we left the cloud capp'd Teneriffe,
The world's last limit long suppos'd by men.—
Tir'd with dull prospects of the watry waste
And midnight dangers that around us grew,
Faint hearts and feeble hands and traitors vile,
Thee, Holy Saviour, on this foreign land
We still adore, and name this coast from thee! *
In these green groves who would not wish to stay,

* He called the island San Salvador (Holy Saviour). It lies about ninety miles S.E. from Providence; is one of the Bahama cluster, and to the eastward of the Grand Bank.—*Freneau's note.*

Where guardian nature holds her quiet reign,
Where beardless men speak other languages,
Unknown to us, ourselves unknown to them.

Antonio

In tracing o'er the isle no gold I find—
Nought else but barren trees and craggy rocks
Where screaming sea-fowl mix their odious loves,
And fields of burning marle, where devils play
And men with copper skins talk barbarously;—
What merit has our chief in sailing hither,
Discovering countries of no real worth!
Spain has enough of barren sands, no doubt,
And savages in crowds are found at home;—
Why then surmount the world's circumference
Merely to stock us with this Indian breed?

Hernando

Soft!—or Columbus will detect your murmuring—
This new found isle has re-instated him
In all our favours—see you yonder sands?—
Why, if you see them, swear that they are gold,
And gold like this shall be our homeward freight,
Gladding the heart of Ferdinand the great,
Who, when he sees it, shall say smilingly,
"Well done, advent'rous fellows, you have brought
"The treasure we expected and deserv'd!"—
Hold!—I am wrong—there goes a savage man
With gold suspended from his ragged ears:
I'll brain the monster for the sake of gold;
There, savage, try the power of Spanish steel—
'Tis of Toledo*—true and trusty stuff!

* The best steel-blades in Spain are manufactured at Toledo and Bilboa. —*Freneau's note.*

He falls! he falls! the gold, the gold is mine!
First acquisition in this golden isle!—

Columbus, solus

Sweet sylvan scenes of innocence and ease,
How calm and joyous pass the seasons here!
No splendid towns or spiry turrets rise,
No lordly palaces—no tyrant kings
Enact hard laws to crush fair freedom here;
No gloomy jails to shut up wretched men;
All, all are free!—here God and nature reign;
Their works unsullied by the hands of men.—
Ha! what is this—a murder'd wretch I see,[1]
His blood yet warm—O hapless islander,
Who could have thus so basely mangled thee,
Who never offer'd insult to our shore—
Was it for those poor trinkets in your ears
Which by the custom of your tribe you wore,—
Now seiz'd away—and which would not have weigh'd
One poor piastre!
Is this the fruit of my discovery!
If the first scene is murder, what shall follow
But havock, slaughter, chains and devastation
In every dress and form of cruelty!
O injur'd Nature, whelm me in the deep,
And let not Europe hope for my return,
Or guess at worlds upon whose threshold now
So black a deed has just been perpetrated!—
We must away—enjoy your woods in peace,
Poor, wretched, injur'd, harmless islanders;—
On Hayti's* isle you say vast stores are found

* This island is now called Hispaniola, but is of late recovering its ancient name.—*Freneau's note.*

[1] One line added in later versions :

"A Spanish ponyard thro' his entrails driven."

Of this destructive gold—which without murder
Perhaps, we may possess!—away, away!
And southward, pilots, seek another isle,
Fertile they say, and of immense extent:
There we may fortune find without a crime.

PICTURE XV.

Columbus in a Tempest, on his return to Spain

The storm hangs low; the angry lightning glares
And menaces destruction to our masts;
The Corposant* is busy on the decks,
The soul, perhaps, of some lost admiral
Taking his walks about most leisurely,
Foreboding we shall be with him to-night:
See, now he mounts the shrouds—as he ascends
The gale grows bolder! — all is violence!
Seas, mounting from the bottom of their depths,
Hang o'er our heads with all their horrid curls
Threatening perdition to our feeble barques,
Which three hours longer cannot bear their fury,
Such heavy strokes already shatter them;
Who can endure such dreadful company!—
Then, must we die with our discovery!
Must all my labours, all my pains, be lost,
And my new world in old oblivion sleep?—
My name forgot, or if it be remember'd,
Only to have it said, "He was a madman
"Who perish'd as he ought—deservedly—
"In seeking what was never to be found!"—

*A vapour common at sea in bad weather, something larger and rather paler than the light of a candle; which, seeming to rise out of the sea, first moves about the decks, and then ascends or descends the rigging in proportion to the increase or decrease of the storm. Superstition formerly imagined them to be the souls of drowned men.—*Freneau's note.*

Let's obviate what we can this horrid sentence,
And, lost ourselves, perhaps, preserve our name.
'Tis easy to contrive this painted casket,
(Caulk'd, pitch'd, secur'd with canvas round and round)
That it may float for months upon the main,
Bearing the freight within secure and dry:
In this will I an abstract of our voyage,
And islands found, in little space enclose:
The western winds in time may bear it home
To Europe's coasts: or some wide wandering ship
By accident may meet it toss'd about,
Charg'd with the story of another world.

PICTURE XVI.

Columbus visits the Court at Barcelona

Ferdinand

Let him be honour'd like a God, who brings
Tidings of islands at the ocean's end!
In royal robes let him be straight attir'd,
And seated next ourselves, the noblest peer.

Isabella

The merit of this gallant deed is mine:
Had not my jewels furnish'd out the fleet
Still had this world been latent in the main.—
Since on this project every man look'd cold,
A woman, as his patroness, shall shine;
And through the world the story shall be told,
A woman gave new continents to Spain.

Columbus

A world, great prince, bright queen and royal lady,
Discover'd now, has well repaid our toils;

We to your bounty owe all that we are;
Men of renown and to be fam'd in story.
Islands of vast extent we have discover'd
With gold abounding: see a sample here
Of those most precious metals we admire;
And Indian men, natives of other climes,
Whom we have brought to do you princely homage,
Owning they hold their diadems from you.

Ferdinand

To fifteen sail your charge shall be augmented:
Hasten to Palos, and prepare again
To sail in quest of this fine golden country,
The Ophir, never known to Solomon;
Which shall be held the brightest gem we have,
The richest diamond in the crown of Spain.

PICTURE XVII.

Columbus in Chains*

Are these the honours they reserve for me,
Chains for the man that gave new worlds to Spain!
Rest here, my swelling heart!—O kings, O queens,
Patrons of monsters, and their progeny,
Authors of wrong, and slaves to fortune merely!
Why was I seated by my prince's side,
Honour'd, caress'd like some first peer of Spain?
Was it that I might fall most suddenly
From honour's summit to the sink of scandal!
'Tis done, 'tis done!—what madness is ambition!

*During his third voyage, while in San Domingo, such unjust representations were made of his conduct to the Court of Spain, that a new admiral, Bovadilla, was appointed to supersede him, who sent Columbus home in irons. —*Freneau's note.*

What is there in that little breath of men,
Which they call Fame, that should induce the brave
To forfeit ease and that domestic bliss
Which is the lot of happy ignorance,
Less glorious aims, and dull humility?—
Whoe'er thou art that shalt aspire to honour,
And on the strength and vigour of the mind
Vainly depending, court a monarch's favour,
Pointing the way to vast extended empire;
First count your pay to be ingratitude,
Then chains and prisons, and disgrace like mine!
Each wretched pilot now shall spread his sails,
And treading in my footsteps, hail new worlds,
Which, but for me, had still been empty visions.

PICTURE XVIII.

Columbus at Valladolid *

1

How sweet is sleep, when gain'd by length of toil!
No dreams disturb the slumbers of the dead—
To snatch existence from this scanty soil,
Were these the hopes deceitful fancy bred;
And were her painted pageants nothing more
Than this life's phantoms by delusion led?

2

The winds blow high: one other world remains;
Once more without a guide I find the way;
In the dark tomb to slumber with my chains—
Prais'd by no poet on my funeral day,

* After he found himself in disgrace with the Court of Spain, he retired to Vallodolid, a town of Old Castile, where he died, it is said, more of a broken heart than any other disease, on the 20th of May, 1506.—*Freneau's note.*

Nor even allow'd one dearly purchas'd claim—
My new found world not honour'd with my name.

3

Yet, in this joyless gloom while I repose,
  Some comfort will attend my pensive shade,
When memory paints, and golden fancy shows
  My toils rewarded, and my woes repaid;
When empires rise where lonely forests grew,
Where Freedom shall her generous plans pursue.

4

To shadowy forms, and ghosts and sleepy things,
  Columbus, now with dauntless heart repair;
You liv'd to find new worlds for thankless kings,
  Write this upon my tomb—yes—tell it there—
Tell of those chains that sullied all my glory—
Not mine, but their's—ah, tell the shameful story.

THE EXPEDITION OF TIMOTHY TAURUS, ASTROLOGER

To the Falls of Passaick River, in New Jersey[1]

Written soon after an excursion to the village at that place in August, 1775, under the character of Timothy Taurus, a student in astrology; and formerly printed in New-York.

Characters of the Poem

Timothy Taurus, Astrologer, in love with Tryphena.
Slyboots, a Quaker, and his two Daughters.
Dullman, a City Broker.
Deacon Samuel.
Brigadier-General Nimrod.
Lawyer Ludwick.
Parson Pedro.
Doctor Sangrado.
Saunders, a Horse Jockey.
Gubbin, a Tavern-keeper.
Scalpella Gubbin, his Wife.
Mithollan, a Farmer.

My morning of life is beclouded with care!
I will go to Passaick, I say and I swear—
To the falls of Passaick, that elegant scene,
Where all is so pretty, and all is so green—
That river Passaick!—celestial indeed!
That river of rivers, no rivers exceed.—

[1] Freneau mentions in this poem that it was printed in New York in September, 1775. I can find no trace of it, either as a separate publication or a contribution to a newspaper. As far as I can find, the poem is unique in the edition of 1809.

Mr. William Nelson of Paterson, N. J., Secretary of the New Jersey Historical Society, believes that the local allusions in the poem cannot be verified. He writes:

"There were but two taverns at the Passaic Falls at that time; one kept by Abraham Godwin, the other by James Leslie. Godwin and three of his sons went in the American Army at the beginning of the Revolution, and he died in the service. His widow survived him and carried on the tavern for a number of years. She had an intolerant hatred of all Tories. In 1776 Leslie

Now why, I would ask, should I puzzle my brain
The nature of stars, or their use to explain—
To trace the effects they may have on our earth,
How govern our actions, or rule at our birth?
Five years have I been at these studies, and scanned
All the books on the subject that sophists have planned!
I am sorry to say (yet it ought to be said)
The stars have not sent me one rye loaf of bread!
Not a shilling to purchase a glass of good beer,—
By my soul, it's enough to make ministers swear.
Tryphena may argue, and say what she will,
I am sure all my fortune is going down hill:
Dear girl! if you wait 'till the planets are for us
Your name will scarce alter to Tryphena Taurus.
Tryphena! I love you—have courted you long—
But find all my labours will end in a song!—
"Will you play at all-fours?"—she said, very jolly;—
I answered, The play at all-fours is all folly!

was keeping a tavern at the present Passaic, a few miles below the Passaic Falls, and he continued there during the greater part of the Revolution, I think.

"The character of the tavern-keeper's wife, 'Scalpella,' is either purely fictitious or based on the character of some other person. Moreover, I do not think Passaic Falls was ever a summer resort of the character depicted in this poem. Travellers merely went there to see the Falls, occasionally staying over night, but I cannot think it possible that there could have been such a party assembled there at one time as indicated in the poem. I do not think the two taverns together could have accommodated so many people. The place was never called 'Passaic Village,' as stated in the note, but was known as Totowa Bridge until 1792, when Paterson was founded. Passaic Village was the name given about forty years ago to the present city of Passaic.

"The only allusions in the poem which have some semblance of reality are the references to 'Miss Kitty,' by whom is perhaps meant the daughter of Lord Stirling; and 'Liberty Hall,' the residence of her uncle, Gov. Livingstone, near Elizabethtown. There was no such person as 'Gubbins.' I I should think that the scene of the poem, if it has any foundation whatever in fact, was more probably laid somewhere near Philadelphia."

"Will you play, then, at whist?"—she obligingly said;—
I answered, the game is gone out of my head—
Indeed, I am weary—I feel rather sick,
So, I leave you, Tryphena, to win the odd trick.—
There's a music some talk of, that's play'd by the spheres:—
I wish him all luck who this harmony hears;
And the people who hear it, I hope they may find
It is not a music that fills them with wind.—
There's Saturn, and Venus, and Jove, and the rest;
Their music to me is not quite of the best.—
These orbs of the stars, and that globe of the moon
To me, I am certain, all play a wrong tune.
Not a creature that plods in, or ploughs up the dirt,
But from the mean clod gets a better support:
Then farewell to Mars, and the rest of the gang,
And the comets—I tell them they all may go hang;
I mean, if they only with music will treat,
It is not to me the best cooked of all meat.
They may go where they will, and return when they please,—
And I hope they'll remember to pay up my fees—
So I leave them awhile, to be cheerful below,
And away to Passaick most merrily go!
The month, it was August, and meltingly warm,
Not a cloud in the sky nor the sign of a storm;
So I jumped in the stage, with the freight of the fair,
And in less than a day at Passaick we were.—
Well, arrived at the Falls, I procured me a bed
In a box of a house—you might call it a shed;
The best of the taverns were all pre-engaged,
So I barely was lodged, or rather encaged;
Yet, cage as it was, I enjoyed a regale
Of victuals three times every day, without fail:

There was poultry, and pyes, and a dozen things more
That the damnable college had never in store:
I feasted, and lived on such fat of the place
That the college would not have remembered my face—
So long had I fed on their trash algebraic,
Indeed, it was time I went to Passaick!—
The rocks were amazing, and such was the height,
They struck me at once with surprize and delight.
The waters rushed down with a terrible roar—
What a pleasure it was to be lounging on shore!
They now were as clear as old Helicon's stream,
Or as clear as the clearest in poetry's dream.—
These falls were stupendous, the fountains so clear,
That another Narcissus might see himself here,
Nor only Narcissus—some ill-featured faces
From the springs were reflected—not made up of graces.
But now I must tell you—what people were met:
They were, on my conscience, a wonderful sett;
Some came for their health, and some came for their pleasure,
And to steal from the city a fortnight of leisure;
Some came for a day, and yet more for a week,
Some came from the college, tormented with Greek,
To continue as long as their means would afford,
That is, while the taverns would trust them their board:
(Of this last mentioned class, I confess I was one,
For why should I fib when the mischief is done?)
This age may decay, and another may rise,
Before it is fully revealed to our eyes,
That Latin, and Hebrew, Chaldaic, and Greek,
To the shades of oblivion must certainly sneak;
Too much of our time is employed on such trash
When we ought to be taught to accumulate cash.

Supposing I knew them as pat as my prayers
(And to know them completely would cost me twelve years)
Supposing, I say, I had Virgil by rote,
And could talk with old Homer—'tis not worth a groat;
If with Rabbi Bensalem I knew how to chat,
Where lies the advantage?—and what of all that?
Were this cart load of learning the whole that I knew,
I could sooner get forward by mending a shoe:
I could sooner grow rich by the axe or the spade,
Or thrive by the meanest mechanical trade,
The tinker himself would be richer than I,
For the tinker has something that people must buy,
While such as have little but Latin to vend,
On a shadow may truly be said to depend;
Old words, and old phrases that nothing bestow,
And the owners discarded ten ages ago.—
Here were people on people—I hardly know who—
There was Mammon the merchant, and Japhet the Jew:
There was Slyboots the Quaker, whose coat had no flaps,
With two of his Lambkins, as plain in their caps.
In silks of the richest I saw them array,
But nothing was cut in our mode of the day,
They hung to old habits as firm as to rocks,
And are just what they were in the days of George Fox.
They talked in a style that was wholly their own;
They shunned the vain world, and were mostly alone,
One talked in the Nay, and one talked in the Yea,
And of light in their lanthorns that no one could see:
They hated the crowd, and they hated the play,
And hoped the vain actors would soon run away;—
No follies like that would the preachers allow;
And Tabitha said thee, and Rebecca said thou.

Here was Dullman, the broker, who looked as demure
As if a false key had unlocked the shop door;
He seemed to enjoy not a moment of rest,
So unhappy to be—far away from his chest.
He was all on the fidgets to be with his gold:
Both honour and conscience he bartered, or sold—
The devil himself—excuse me, I pray—
Old Satan—oh no—take it some other way—
The God of this world had him fast by a chain,
And there let us leave him—and let him remain.—
Here was Samuel, the Deacon, who read a large book,
Though few but himself on its pages would look;
Would you know what it was?—an abridgement of Flavell,*
With Bunyan's whole war between soul and the devil;—
It seemed very old, and the worse for the wear,
And might last the next century, handled with care;
But if fashions and folly should not have a fall,
I presume it will hardly be handled at all.—
Here was Nimrod the soldier—he wore a long sword,
And, of course, all the ladies his courage adored;
Two fringed epaulettes on his shoulders displayed,
Discovered the rank of this son of the blade.
"O la!" cried Miss Kitty, "how bold he must be!
Papa! we must beg him to join us at tea!
How much like a hero he looketh—good me!
Full many a battle, no doubt, he has stood,
And waded shoe deep through a mill pond of mud!
What heads have been sliced from the place they possessed
By the sword at his side!—all, I hope, for the best!"

* An English divine of considerable note, who died about a century ago.—*Freneau's note.*

Then the soldier went out, to refresh at the inn—
Perhaps he did not—if he did it's no sin—
He made his congee, and he bowed to us all,
And said he was going to Liberty Hall:
'Tis certain he went, but certainly where
I cannot inform, and the devil may care.
But now to proceed, in describing in rhyme
The folks that came hither to pass away time:
There were more that had heads rather shallow than strong,
And more than had money to bear them out long.
In short, there were many more ladies than gents,
And the latter complained of the heavy expense!
And some I could see, with their splendour and show,
That their credit was bad, and their pockets were low;
Many females were gadding, I saw with concern,
Who had better been knitting, or weaving their yarn.
And many went into Passaick to lave
Whose hides were, indeed, a disgrace to the wave;
Who should have been home at their houses and farms,
Not here to be dabbling, to shew us their charms:
It would have been better to wash their own walls
Than here—to come here, to be washed in the falls.
A judge of the court (in the law a mere goose)
Here wasted his time with a lawyer let loose.
Their books were thrown by—so I begged of the fates
That the falls of Passaick might fall on their pates.
This lawyer was Ludwick, who scarce had a suit,
And for once in his life was disposed to be mute,
But was mostly engaged in some crazy dispute:
A cause against Smyth * he could never defend,

* William Smyth, Esq. Before the Revolution a celebrated lawyer in New York, author of the History of New Jersey, and other works. Afterwards, taking part with the British, he was made Chief Justice of Lower Canada—He is since dead.—*Freneau's note.*

As well might the Old One with Michael contend:
The road was before him, the country was spacious,
And he knew an old fellow called *fieri facias*:—
I saw him demurr, when they asked him to pay—
With a *noli-pros-equi* he scampered away.—
Though his head was profusely be-plaistered with meal,
One sorrowful secret it could not conceal,
That he drew his first breath when a two penny star
Presided, and governed this son of the bar.

Here was Pedro, the parson, who looked full as grave
As if he had lodged in Trophonius's cave.
He talked of his wine, and he talked of his beer,
And he talked of his texts, that were not very clear;
And many suspected he talked very queer.—
He talked with Scalpella, the inn-holder's wife,
Then dwelt on her beauties, and called her his life!—
He ogled Scalpella!—and spake of her charms;
And oh! how he wished to repose in her arms:
He called her his deary, and talked of their loves;
And left her at last—a pair of old gloves!

I was sorry to see him deranged and perplext
That no one would ask him to handle a text:—
All gaped when he spoke, and incessantly gazed,
And thought him no witch, but a parson be-crazed.

Fine work did he make of Millennium, I trow,
Which he told us would come (tho' it comes very slow)
When earth with the pious and just will abound
And Eden itself at Egg-Harbour be found:
No musketoes to bite us, no rats to molest,
And lawyers themselves rocked into something like rest.

But most of us judged it was rather a whim,
Or, at least, that the prospect was distant and dim.
So I saw him pack up his polemical gown,

To retreat while he could from the noise of the town.*
He said there was something in Falls he admired,
But of constantly hearing the roar—he was tired!
With their damp exhalations his fancy was dimmed,
He would come the next spring with his surplice new trimmed,
Besides there were fogs in the morning (he said)
That rose on the river and muddled his head!—
Thus he quitted Passaick!—deserted her shore,
And the taverns that knew him shall know him no more!
One farmer Milhollan—I saw him come here,
Almost at the busiest time in the year;
His intent might be good, but I never could learn
Who coaxed him away from his crib and his barn:
Each morning he tippled three glasses of gin
With as many, at least, as three devils therein.
He quarrelled with Jack, and he wrangled with Tom,
'Till scarcely a negro but wished him at home;
He talked over much of the badness of times,
And read us a list of the governor's† crimes,
From which it was clearly predicted, and plain,
That his honour would hardly be chosen again.
He fought with Tim Tearcoat, and cudgelled with Ben,
And wrestled with Sampson—all quarrelsome men;—
I was sorry to see him thus wasting his force
On fellows who kicked with the heels of a horse.
Tho' strong in my arms, and of strength to contest
With the youths of my age in the wars of the fist,
I thought it was better to let them pursue
The quarrels they had, than to be one of their crew;

*Passaick Village is at present called Patterson, noted for its unfortunate manufacturing establishments.—*Freneau's note.*

† William Franklin, Esq., then Governor of New Jersey.—*Freneau's note.*

I saw it was madness to join in the fray,
So I left them to wrangle—each dog his own way.
He spoke thrice an hour of his crop that had failed,
And losses, he feared, that would get him enjailed;
He mentioned his poultry, and mentioned his pigs,
And railed at some Tories, converted to Whigs.—
(Excuse me retailing so much in my rhymes
Of the chatt of the day and the stuff of the times;
'Tis thus in the acts of a play, we perceive
All the parts are not cast to the wise, or the brave;
Not all is discoursed by the famed or the fair,
The demons of dullness have also their share;
Statira in play-house has not all the chance,
For hags are permitted to join in the dance:
Not Catos, or Platos engross every play,
For clowns and clod-hoppers must, too, have their day;
Not the nobles of nature say all that is said,
And monarchs are frequently left in the shade;
There must be some nonsense, to step in between,
There must be some fools to enliven the scene.)
Here was Doctor Sangrado, with potion and pill,
And his price was the same, to recover or kill.
He waddled about, and was vext to the soul
To see so much health in this horrible hole;
He seemed in a fret there was nobody sick,
And enquired of the landlord, "What ails your son Dick?"
"What ails him? (said Gubbins) why nothing at all!"
"By my soul (said the quack) he's as white as the wall;
I must give him a potion to keep down his gall!
There is bile on his stomach—I clearly see that;
This night he will vomit as black as my hat:

Here's a puke and a purge—twelve doses of bark;
Let him swallow them all—just an hour before dark!"
"O dear! (said the mother) the lad is quite well!"—
Said the Doctor, "No, no! he must take calomel:
It will put him to rights, as I hope to be saved!"
"Or rather (said Gubbins) you hope him engraved!"
So, the Doctor walked off in a pitiful plight,
And he lodged in a dog-house (they told me) that night.
Here were wives, and young widows, and matrons, and maids,
Who came for their health, or to stroll in the shades;
Here were Nellies, and Nancies, and Hetties, by dozens,
With their neighbours, and nephews, and nieces, and cousins—
All these had come hither to see the famed Fall,
And you, pretty Sally, the best of them all.
Here was Saunders, the jockey, who rode a white horse,
His last, it was said, and his only resource;
And the landlord was careful to put us in mind
That hell and destruction were riding behind:
He often had told him, "Do, Saunders, take care,
This swilling of gin is a cursed affair:
Indeed—and it puts a man off from his legs,
And brings us at last to be pelted with eggs—
The wit of your noddle should carry you through,—
Break your bottle of rum—give the devil his due!
Keep the reason about you that nature designed,
And you have the respect and regard of mankind!"
This steed of poor Saunders' was woefully lean,
And he looked, as we thought, like the flying machine;
And, in short, it appeared, by the looks of his hide,
That the stables he came from were poorly supplied:

A bundle of bones—and they whispered it round,
That he came from the hole where the Mammoth was found.*
They stuff'd him with hay, and they crammed him with oats
While Saunders was gaming and drinking with sots:
(For the de'il in the shape of a bottle of rum
Deceived him with visions of fortune to come;)
His landlady had on the horse a sheep's-eye,
So Saunders had plenty of whiskey and pye:
He had gin of the best, and he treated all round,
'Till care was dismissed and solicitude drowned,
And a reckoning was brought him of more than three pound.
As he had not a groat in his lank looking purse,
The landlord made seizure of saddle and horse:—
Scalpella, the hostess, cried, "Fly from this room,
Or I'll sweep you away with my hickory broom!"
Thus Saunders sneaked off in a sorrowful way,
And the Falls were his fall—to be beggar next day.—
The lady of ladies that governed the inn
Was a sharper indeed, and she kept such a din!—
Scalpella!—and may I remember the name!—
Could scratch like a tyger, or play a tight game.
A bludgeon she constantly held in her hand,
The sign of respect, and a sign of command:
She could scream like a vulture, or wink like an owl;
Not a dog in the street like Scalpella could howl.—
She was a Scalpella!—I am yet on her books,
But, oh! may I never encounter her looks!—
I owe her five pounds—I am that in her debt,
And my dues from the stars have not cleared it off yet.

* These two lines were inserted since the first publication of this Poem in Sept., 1775.—*Freneau's note.*

If she knew where I am!—I should fare very ill;
Instead of some beer she would drench me with swill;
I should curse and reflect on the hour I was born.—
If she thought I had fixed on the pitch of Cape Horn,
She would find me!—Scalpella! set down what I owe
In the page of bad debts—due to Scalpy and Co!—

Her boarders she hated, and drove with a dash,
And nothing about them she liked but their cash;
Except they were Tories—ah, then she was kind—
And said to their honours, "You are men to my mind!
Sit down, my dear creatures—I hope you've not dined!"—

She talked of the king, and she talked of the queen,
And she talked of her floors—that were not very clean:—
She talked of the parson, and spoke of the 'squire,
She talked of her child that was singed in the fire—
The Tories, poor beings, were wishing to kiss her—oh—
If they had—all the stars would have fought against —Cicero.*
She talked, and she talked—now angry, now civil,
'Till the Tories themselves wished her gone to the devil.

How I tremble to think of her tongue and her stick,—
Tryphena, Tryphena! I've played the odd trick!

Now the soldier re-entered—the ladies were struck:
And "she that can win him will have the best luck!"

"La! father (said Kitty) observe the bold man!
I will peep at his phyz from behind my new fan!
What a lace on his beaver!—his buttons all shine!
In the cock of a hat there is something divine!
Since the days of Goliah, I'll venture to lay
There never was one that could stand in his way:

*They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. *Ancient History.—Freneau's note.*

What a nose!—what an eye!—what a gallant address!
If he's not a hero, then call me Black Bess!
What a gaite—what a strut—how noble and free!
I'm ravished!—I'm ruined!—good father!—good me!"
"Dear Kitty, (he answered) regard not his lace,
The devil I see in the mould of his face:
Cockades have been famous for crazing your sex
Since Helen played truant, and left the poor Greeks;
And while her good husband was sleeping, and snored,
Eloped with Sir Knight from his bed, and his board.—
Three things are above me, yea, four, I maintain,
Have puzzled the cunningest heads to explain!
The way of a snake on a rock—very sly—
The way of an eagle, that travels the sky,
The way of a ship in the midst of the sea,
And the way of a soldier—with maidens like thee."

At length, a dark fortnight of weather came on,
And most of us thought it high time to be gone.—
The moon was eclipsed, and she looked like a fright;
Indeed—and it was a disconsolate night!
Our purses were empty—the landlord looked sour,
I gave them leg-bail in a terrible shower:—
Scalpella!—her face was as black as the moon,
Her voice, was the screech of a harpy, or loon,—
I quitted Passaick—that elegant place,
While a hurricane hindered them giving me chace.

PART II

THE FIRST POETIC PERIOD

1775—1781

THE FIRST POETIC PERIOD

1775–1781[1]

A POLITICAL LITANY[2]

Libera Nos, Domine.— Deliver us, O Lord, not only from British dependence, but also

From a junto that labour with absolute power,
Whose schemes disappointed have made them look sour,
From the lords of the council, who fight against freedom,
Who still follow on where delusion[3] shall lead them.

From the group at St. James's, who slight our petitions,
And fools that are waiting for further submissions—
From a nation whose manners are rough and severe,
From scoundrels and rascals,—do keep us all clear.[4]

[1] In August, 1775, Freneau emerges from the obscurity which has concealed him since the year of his graduation at Princeton, and enters upon an era of marvelous productiveness. For four months, poetry must have been his one thought, his one occupation. It was during this period of his life that he did his most spontaneous and original work.

[2] The earliest trace I can find of this poem is in the 1786 edition of Freneau, where it is dated "New York, Sept. 26, 1775." In this edition, and in that of 1795, it had the title "Libera Nos, Domine." In the edition of 1809, which I have followed, it is dated "*New-York, June, 1775.*" The earlier date is probably the date of publication.

[3] "The devil."—*Ed. 1786.*

[4] "Whom gold can corrupt."—*Ed. 1786.*

From pirates sent out by command of the king
To murder and plunder, but never to swing.
From Wallace and Greaves, and Vipers and Roses,*
Whom, if heaven pleases, we'll give bloody noses.

From the valiant Dunmore, with his crew of banditti,
Who plunder Virginians at Williamsburg city,[1]
From hot-headed Montague, mighty to swear,
The little fat man with his pretty white hair.[2]

From bishops in Britain, who butchers are grown,
From slaves that would die for a smile from the throne,
From assemblies that vote against Congress proceedings,
(Who now see the fruit of their stupid misleadings.)

From Tryon[3] the mighty, who flies from our city,
And swelled with importance disdains the committee:
(But since he is pleased to proclaim us his foes,
What the devil care we where the devil he goes.)

* Captains and ships in the British navy, then employed on the American coast.—*Freneau's note.* During the summer of 1775, Capt. Wallace and his vessel, the *Rose*, kept the American coast cities in a state of constant terror. The colonial newspapers show how widespread and real was this terror.

[1] Lord Dunmore was the last Royal Governor of Virginia. In April, 1775, he had removed the public stores from Williamsburg, and with the aid of the navy and what forces he could raise, was waging open war on the colonies.

[2] George Montagu, admiral of the British fleet during the early part of the war, did much to exasperate the colonists. "He stopped and searched vessels without adequate pretext, and fired at the market boats as they entered Newport harbor. He treated the farmers on the islands much as the Saracens in the Middle Ages treated the coast population of Italy." He was mild in appearance, but testy and arbitrary to an extraordinary degree. He covered the British retreat from Boston, aided Lord Dunmore to escape from Virginia, and took part in the capture of New York City.

[3] William Tryon, the last Royal Governor of New York, informed of a resolution of the Continental Congress: "That it be recommended to the several provincial assemblies, in conventions and councils or committees of

From the caitiff,[1] lord North, who would bind us in chains,
From a royal king Log, with his tooth-full of brains,
Who dreams, and is certain (when taking a nap)
He has conquered our lands, as they lay on his map.[2]

From a kingdom that bullies, and hectors, and swears,
We send up to heaven our wishes and prayers
That we, disunited, may freemen be still,
And Britain go on—to be damned if she will.

safety, to arrest and secure every person in their respective colonies whose going at large may, in their opinion, endanger the safety of the colony or the liberties of America," discerning the signs of the times, took refuge on board the Halifax packet in the harbour, and left the city in the middle of October, 1775.—*Duyckinck.*

[1] Scoundrel.—*Ed. 1786.*

[2] "From a dunce of a king who was born without brains,
The utmost extent of whose sense is to see
That reigning and making of buttons agree."—*Ed. 1786.*

AMERICAN LIBERTY, A POEM[1]

ARGUMENT

Present Situation of Affairs in North-America.—Address to the Deity.—Unhappy Situation of New-England, in particular.—The first Emigrations of the Colonists from Europe.—Cruelties of the Indian Natives.—All our Hopes of future Safety depend secondarily on our present Resolution and Activity.—Impossible for British Soldiers to join heartily for the purpose of enslaving us.—Present happy Unanimity among the Colonies.—The Baseness of pensioned Writers against their native Country.—General Gage's late Proclamation.—The Odium consequent upon his Undertaking his present Office.—Character of a weak Monarch.—Popery established in Canada.—General Washington.—The Honourable Continental Congress.—Hancock.—Adams.—Invitation to Foreigners to retire hither from their respective Slavish Regions.—Bravery of the New-England Forces in the late Engagements.—The determined Resolution of the Colonies to be free.—The future Happiness of America if she surmounts the present Difficulties.

Once more Bellona, forc'd upon the stage,
Inspires new fury, and awakes her rage,
From North to South her thun'dring trumpet spreads
Tumults, and war and death, and daring deeds.
What breast but kindles at the martial sound?
What heart but bleeds to feel its country's wound?
For thee, blest freedom, to protect thy sway,
We rush undaunted to the bloody fray;
For thee, each province arms its vig'rous host,
Content to die, e'er freedom shall be lost.
Kind watchful power, on whose supreme command
The fate of monarchs, empires, worlds depend,

[1] This was published by Anderson in 1775. In Holt's *New York Journal* of July 6, it is advertised as just published. The advertisement observes that "This poem is humbly addressed to all true lovers of this once flourishing country, whether they shine as soldiers or statesmen. In it Ciceronian eloquence and patriotic fire are happily blended." The poet never reprinted it. The only copy of the poem extant, as far as I can discover, is that in the Library of Congress at Washington.

Grant, in a cause thy wisdom must approve,
Undaunted valour kindled from above,
Let not our souls descend to dastard fear,
Be valour, prudence both united here,
Now as of old thy mighty arm display;
Relieve the opprest, and saving power convey.
'Tis done, and see th' omnipotent befriends,
The sword of Gideon, and of God descends.
Ah, see with grief fair Massachusetts' plains,
The seat of war, and death's terrific scenes;
Where darling peace with smiling aspect stood,
Lo! the grim soldier stalks in quest of blood:
What madness, heaven, has made Britannia frown?
Who plans our schemes to pull Columbia * down?
See Boston groan beneath the strong blockade,
Her freedom vanish'd, and destroy'd her trade;
Injur'd, opprest, no tyrant could exceed
The cruel vengeance of so base a deed.
New Albion's † sons whom honest freedom moves,
(My heart admires them, and my verse approves),
Tir'd of oppression in a Stuart's reign,
A Popish faction, ministerial train;
Bravely resolv'd to leave their native shore
And some new world, they knew not where, explore,
Far in the West, beyond where Poets said,
The Sun retir'd, and Cynthia went to bed.
Few then had seen the scarce discover'd Bourne,
From whence like death yet fewer did return:
Dire truths from thence the wand'ring sailor brought,
Enlarg'd by terror, and the power of thought,

* Columbia, America sometimes so called from Columbus, the first discoverer.—*Freneau's note.*

† New Albion, properly New England, but is often applied to all British America.—*Freneau's note.*

With all the forms that pict'ring fancy gives,
With all the dread that in idea lives;
Fierce Cannibals that sought the blood of man,
Vast cruel tribes that through the desart ran,
Giants whose height transcends the tow'ring oak,
Brutes with whose screams the trembling forest shook,—
All these and more they held no cause of fear,
Since naught but slavery, dreadful could appear.
Ah, see the day, distressful to the view,
Wives, husbands, fathers, bid a long adieu.
Dear native land, how heav'd the heavy sigh,
When thy last mountains vanish'd on the eye;
Then their frail barks, just enter'd on the sea,
Pursu'd the long, uncomfortable way:
But pitying heav'n the just design surveys,
Sends prosp'rous gales, and wafts them o'er the seas.
Behold the shore; no rising cities there,
To hail them welcome from the sea appear,
In the wild woods the exil'd host were spread,
The heavens their covering, and the earth their bed:
What expectations but a life of woe?
Unnumber'd myriads of the savage foe,
Whose brutal fury rais'd, at once might sweep
The adventurers all to death's destructive sleep;
Yet 'midst this scene of horror and despair,
Stout industry began his office here,
Made forests bend beneath his sturdy stroke,
Made oxen groan beneath the sweaty yoke,
Till half the desart smil'd and look'd as gay
As northern gardens in the bloom of May.
But ah, review the sorrows interwove,
How the fierce native with the stranger strove;—
So heaven's bright lamp, the all-reviving sun,
Just as his flaming journey is begun,

Mists, fogs and vapours, sprung from damps of night,
Mount up and strive to dim the approach of light;
But he in triumph darts his piercing ray,
Scatters their forces and pursues his way.
Oft when the husband did his labour leave
To meet his little family at eve,
Stretch'd in their blood he saw each well known face,
His dear companion and his youthful race;
Perhaps the scalp with barbarous fury torn,
The visage mangled, and the babe unborn
Ripp'd from its dark abode, to view the sun,
Ere nature finish'd half she had begun.
And should we now when spread thro' ev'ry shore,
Submit to that our fathers shunn'd before?
Should we, just heaven, our blood and labour spent,
Be slaves and minions to a parliament?
Perish the thought, nor may one wretch remain,
Who dares not fight and in our cause be slain;
The cause of freedom daunts the hireling foe,
And gives each Sampson's strength toward the blow,
And each, like him whom fear nor force confines,
Destroys a thousand modern Philistines.
  Who fights to take our liberty away,
Dead-hearted fights and falls an easy prey;
The cause, the cause, most cruel to enslave,
Disheartens thousands, and unmans the brave:
Who could have thought that Britons bore a heart,
Or British troops to act so base a part?
Britons of old renown'd, can they descend
T' enslave their brethren in a foreign land?
What oath, what oath, inform us if you can,
Binds them to act below the worth of man?
Can they whom half the world admires, can they
Be advocates for vile despotic sway?

Shall they, to every shore and clime renown'd,
Enforce those acts that tyranny did found?
'Yet sure if this be their resolv'd design,
'Conquer they shall where'er the sun doth shine;
'No expedition prov'd unhappy yet,
'Can we Havanna's bloody siege forget,[1]
'Where British cannon the strong fortress tore,
'And wing'd whole legions to its infernal shore.
'Or does the voice of fame so soon forego
'Gibraltar's action, and the vanquish'd foe,
'Where art and nature both at once combin'd
'To baffle all our hardy troops design'd?—
'Yet there Britannia's arms successful sped,
'While haughty Spaniards trembled, felt and fled.'
So say the pensioned fools of slavery,
So say our traitors, but so say not I—
(Tories or traitors, call them what you choose,
Tories are rogues, and traitors imps broke loose).
But know, ye few, the scandal of our land,
On whom returns the blood that we expend,
Those troops whose fears are told on every shore,
Here lose their spirit and are brave no more;

[1] Of the siege of Havana, in July, 1762, Bancroft writes: "This siege was conducted in midsummer, against a city which lies just within the tropic. The country around the Moro Castle is rocky. To bind and carry the fascines was of itself a work of incredible labor; . . . sufficient earth to hold the fascines firm was gathered with difficulty from the crevices of the rocks. Once, after a drought of fourteen days, the grand battery took fire from the flames, and crackling and spreading where water could not follow it, nor earth stifle it, was wholly consumed. The climate spoiled a great part of the provisions. Wanting good water, many died in agonies of thirst. More fell victims of a putrid fever . . . Hundreds of carcasses floated on the ocean. And yet such was the enthusiasm of the English, such the resolute zeal of the sailors and soldiers, such the unity of action between the fleet and army, that the vertical sun of June and July, the heavy rains of August, raging fever, and strong and well defended fortresses, all the obstacles of nature and art were surmounted, and the most decisive victory of the war was gained."

When armies fight to gain some cruel cause,
Establish tyrants or destructive laws,
True courage scorns to inspire the hateful crew,
Recall past fame, or spur them on to new;
Dark boding thoughts the heavy soul possess,
And ancient valour turns to cowardice.

Dark was the prospect, gloomy was the scene,
When traitors join'd to break our union chain:
But soon, by heaven inspir'd, arose the cry,
Freedom or death, unite, unite or die.
Now far and wide a manly spirit reigns,
From Canada to Georgia's sun burnt plains;
Few now insult with falsehood's shameless pen,
Monsters from Tophet, driv'n in shapes of men:
Few pension'd scribblers left the daring head,
Some have turn'd lunatics and some have fled—
Some, late converted, scarce their pensions hold,
And from mere force disdain the charms of gold.

What deep offence has fir'd a monarch's rage,
What moonstruck madness seized the brain of Gage?
Laughs not the soul, when an imprison'd few
Affect to pardon those they can't subdue?
Tho' twice repuls'd and hemm'd up to their stations,
Yet issue pardons, oaths, and proclamations,
As if at sea some desperate madman crew
Should threat the tempest with what they could do,
And like proud Xerxes lash the angry waves,
At the same instant that they find their graves.

But not the pomps and favours of a crown,
A nation's anger, or a statesman's frown,
Could draw the virtuous man from virtue's way,
To chain by force what treach'ry can't betray.
Virtue disdains to own tyrannic laws,
Takes part with freedom, and assumes its cause;

No part had she, her fiercest forces own,
To bring so far this heavy vengeance on;
She stood with Romans while their hearts were true,
And so she shall, Americans, with you.
  Should heaven in wrath decree some nation's fall,
Whose crimes from thence for sacred vengeance call,
A monarch first of vulgar soul should rise,
A sure fore-runner of its obsequies,
Whose heart should glow with not one gen'rous thought,
Born to oppress, to propagate, and rot,
Whose lengthen'd reign no deed of worth should grace,
None trusted but a servile pensioned race;
Too dull to know what saving course to take,
That heaven in time its purpose might forsake,
Too obstinately will'd to bow his ear
To groaning thousands or petitions hear,
Dare break all oaths that bind the just like fate,
Oaths, that th' Arch-Devil would blush to violate,
And, foe to truth, both oaths and honour sell,
To establish principles, the growth of hell,—
Still those who aim to be his truest friends,
Traitors, insidious rebels, madmen, fiends,
Hoodwink'd and blind, deceived by secret foes,
Whose fathers once with exil'd tyrants rose,
Bless'd with as little sense as God e'er gave,
Slave to wrong schemes, dupe to a noble knave.
So odd a monarch heaven in wrath would plan,
And such would be the fury of a man.
  See far and wide o'er long Canadia's plains,
Old popish fraud and superstition reigns;
The scarlet whore long hath heaven withstood,
Who cries for murder and who thirsts for blood,
Establish'd there, marks down each destined name,
And plants the stake impatient for the flame,

With sanguinary soul her trade begins,
To doom her foes to hell or pardon sins;
Her crafty priests their impious rites maintain,
And crucify their Saviour once again;
Defend his rights, who, scatt'ring lies abroad,
With shameless front usurps the seat of God:
Those are, we fear, who his vile cause assert,
But half reform'd and papists at the heart.

Bear me, some power, as far as the winds can blow,
As ships can travel, or as waves can flow,
To some lone island beyond the southern pole,
Or lands round which pacific waters roll,
There should oblivion stop the heaving sigh,
There should I live at least with liberty.
But honour checks my speed and bids me stay,
To try the fortune of the well fought day.
Resentment for my country's fate I bear,
And mix with thousands for the willing war;
See Washington New Albion's freedom owns,
And moves to war with half Virginia's sons,
Bold in the fight, whose actions might have aw'd
A Roman Hero, or a Grecian God.
He, he, as first his gallant troops shall lead,
Undaunted man, a second Diomede;
As when he fought at wild Ohio's flood,
When savage thousands issu'd from the wood,
When Braddock's fall disgrac'd the mighty day,
And Death himself stood weeping o'er his prey,
When doubting vict'ry chang'd from side to side,
And Indian sod with Indian blood was dy'd,
When the last charge repuls'd th' invenom'd foe,
And lightnings lit them to the shades below.

See where from various distant climes unites
A generous council to protect our rights,

Fix'd on a base too steadfast to be mov'd,
Loving their country, by their country lov'd,
Great guardians of our freedom, we pursue
Each patriot measure as inspir'd by you,
Columbia, nor shall fame deny it owes
Past safety to the counsel you propose;
And if they do not keep Columbia free,
What will alas! become of Liberty?
Great souls grow bolder in their country's cause,
Detest enslavers, and despise their laws.
O Congress fam'd, accept this humble lay,
The little tribute that the muse can pay;
On you depends Columbia's future fate,
A free asylum or a wretched state.
Fall'n on disastrous times we push our plea,
Heard or not heard, and struggle to be free.
Born to contend, our lives we place at stake,
And grow immortal by the stand we make.
O you, who, far from liberty detain'd,
Wear out existence in some slavish land,
Fly thence from tyrants, and their flatt'ring throng,
And bring the fiery freeborn soul along.
Neptune for you shall smooth the hoary deep,
And awe the wild tumultuous waves to sleep;
Here vernal woods, and flow'ry meadows blow,
Luxuriant harvests in rich plenty grow,
Commerce extends as far as waves can roll,
And freedom, God-like freedom, crowns the whole.
And you, brave men, who scorn the dread of death,
Resolv'd to conquer to the latest breath,
Soldiers in act, and heroes in renown,
Warm in the cause of Boston's hapless town,
Still guard each pass; like ancient Romans, you
At once are soldiers, and are farmers too;

Still arm impatient for the vengeful blow,
And rush intrepid on the yielding foe;
As when of late midst clouds of fire and smoke,
Whole squadrons fell, or to the center shook,
And even the bravest to your arm gave way,
And death, exulting, ey'd the unhappy fray.
Behold, your Warren bleeds, who both inspir'd
To noble deeds, and by his actions fir'd;
What pity, heaven!—but you who yet remain
Affect his spirit as you lov'd the man:
Once more, and yet once more for freedom strive,
To be a slave what wretch would dare to live?
We too to the last drop our blood will drain,
And not till then shall hated slavery reign,
When every effort, every hope is o'er,
And lost Columbia swells our breasts no more.
O if that day, which heaven avert, must come,
And fathers, husbands, children, meet their doom,
Let one brave onset yet that doom precede,
To shew the world America can bleed,
One thund'ring raise the midnight cry,
And one last flame send Boston to the sky.
But cease, foreboding Muse, not strive to see
Dark times deriv'd by fatal destiny;
If ever heaven befriended the distrest,
If ever valour succour'd those opprest,
Let America rejoice, thy standard rear,
Let the loud trumpet animate to war:
Thy guardian Genius, haste thee on thy way,
To strike whole hosts with terror and dismay.
Happy some land, which all for freedom gave,
Happier the men whom their own virtues save;
Thrice happy we who long attacks have stood,
And swam to Liberty thro' seas of blood;

The time shall come when strangers rule no more,
Nor cruel mandates vex from Britain's shore;
When Commerce shall extend her short'ned wing,
And her free freights from every climate bring;
When mighty towns shall flourish free and great,
Vast their dominion, opulent their state;
When one vast cultivated region teems,
From ocean's edge to Mississippi's streams;
While each enjoys his vineyard's peaceful shade,
And even the meanest has no cause to dread;
Such is the life our foes with envy see,
Such is the godlike glory to be free.

GENERAL GAGE'S SOLILOQUY[1]

Scene.—Boston, besieged by the Men of Massachusetts

Written and published in New-York, 1775

> Why, let the stricken deer go weep,
> The hart, unwounded, play,
> For some must write, while some must speak;
> So runs the world away!
> —*Shakespeare.*

Destruction waits my call!—some demon say
Why does destruction linger on her way!
Charlestown is burnt, and Warren is deceased—
Heavens! shall we never be from war released?
Ten years the Greeks besieged the walls of Troy,
But when did Grecians their own towns destroy?

[1] From the edition of 1809. The original edition, which consisted of 114 lines, was first published in New York, by H. Gaine, in August, 1775. The poem was thus written and published in the early days of the siege.

General Gage, the last royal governor of Massachusetts, arrived in Boston May, 1774, and remained until October, 1775, when he was succeeded by Major

Yes, that's the point!—Let those who will, say, No;
If George and North decree—it must be so.
Doubts, black as night, disturb my loved repose—
Men that were once my friends have turned my foes—
What if we conquer this rebellious town,
Suppose we burn it, storm it, tear it down—
This land's like Hydra, cut off but one head,
And ten shall rise, and dare you in its stead.
If to subdue a league or two of coast
Requires a navy, and so large a host,
How shall a length of twice seven hundred miles
Be brought to bend to two European Isles?—
And that, when all their utmost strength unite,
When twelve * dominions swear to arm and fight,
When the same spirit darts from every eye,
One fixed resolve to gain their point or die.
As for myself—true—I was born to fight
As George commands, let him be wrong or right,
While from his hand I squeeze the golden prize,[1]
I'll ask no questions, and he'll tell no lies;—
But did I swear, I ask my heart again,
In their base projects monarchs to maintain?—[2]
Yes—when Rebellion her artillery brings
And aims her arrows at the best of kings,

General Howe. The siege of Boston began with the arrival of Washington before the city, early in July, 1775, and continued until Howe was forced to evacuate the city, the following March. Gage's incompetency was admitted even by his own countrymen. He was narrow-minded, and prejudiced, and unable to estimate justly the forces that were against him. His only argument was force and dictatorial interference.

* Georgia had not at this time acceded to the Union of the Thirteen States.—*Freneau's note.*

[1] This and the following line not in edition of 1775.

[2] To fight for Britons against Englishmen.—*Ed. 1775.*
In such damn'd service to harass my brain.—*Ed. 1786.*

I stand a champion in my monarch's cause—
The men are rebels that resist his laws.[1]
A viceroy I, like modern monarchs, stay
Safe in the town—let others guide the fray:
A life like mine is of no common worth,
'Twere wrong, by heaven, that I should sally forth![2]
A random bullet from a rifle sent
Might pierce my heart, and ruin North's intent:
Let others combat in the dusty field,
Let petty captains scorn to live or yield,
I'll send my ships to neighbouring isles, where stray[3]
Unnumb'red herds, and steal those herds away;
I'll strike the women in this town with awe,
And make them tremble at my martial law.
Should gracious heaven befriend our troops and fleet,
And throw this vast dominion at my feet,
How would Britannia echo with my fame!
What endless honours would await my name!
In every province should the traveller see
Recording marble, raised to honour me.—[4]
Hard by the lakes, my sovereign lord would grant
A rural empire to supply my want,
A manor would but poorly serve my turn,
Less than an empire from my soul I scorn![5]

[1] Four lines of the original edition omitted:

"North, take advice, thy lucky genius show,
Dismiss a legate to the world below,
Sir Belzebub, for aid like thine we sue,
Send up the damned and let them help me too."

[2] A life like mine is of such mighty worth,
I'll wrong my king if I should sally forth.

[3] This and the following line not in edition of 1775.

[4] Some trophy of my tedious victory.—*Ed. 1775.*

[5] The Lordship of a manor I would scorn.—*Ed. 1775.*

An ample kingdom round Ontario's lake,
By heaven! should be the least reward I'd take.
There might I reign, unrivalled and alone,
An ocean and an empire of my own!—
What though the scribblers and the wits might say,
He built his pile on vanquished Liberty—
Let others meanly dread the slanderous tongue,
While I obey my king, can I do wrong?
Then, to accomplish all my soul's desire,
Let red-hot bullets set their towns on fire;
May heaven, if so the righteous judgment pass,[1]
Change earth to steel, the sky to solid brass,
Let hosts combined, from Europe centering here,[2]
Strike this base offspring with alarm and fear;
Let heaven's broad concave to the center ring,
And blackest night expand her sable wing,
The infernal powers in dusky combat join,
Wing the swift ball, or spring the deadly mine;
(Since 'tis most true, tho' some may think it odd,
The foes of England are the foes of God):
Let bombs, like comets, kindle all the air,
Let cruel famine prompt the orphan's prayer,
And every ill that war or want can bring
Be shower'd on subjects that renounce their king.
What is their plea?—our sovereign only meant
This people should be taxed without consent,
Ten years the court with secret cunning tried
To gain this point—the event their hopes belied:

[1] In place of the next eight lines, the edition of 1775 has the following:

"Let heaven's broad concave to the center ring,
And imps from hell their swifter vengeance wing;
May heaven, if so the righteous judgment pass,
Change earth to steel, the sky to solid brass."

[2] Let hell-cats darting from some blackguard sphere.—*Ed. 1786.*

How should they else than sometimes miss the mark
Who sleep at helm, yet think to steer the barque?
North, take advice; thy lucky genius show,
Dispatch Sir Jeffery * to the states below.
That gloomy prince, whom mortals Satan call,[1]
Must help us quickly, if he help at all—
You strive in vain by force of bribes to tie;
They see through all your schemes with half an eye;
If open force with secret bribes I join,
The contest sickens—and the day is mine.
  But hark the trumpet's clangor—hark—ah me!
What means this march of Washington and Lee?
When men like these such distant marches make,
Fate whispers something—that we can't mistake;[2]
When men like these defy my martial rule,
Good heaven! it is no time to play the fool—
Perhaps, they for their country's freedom rise;
North has, perhaps, deceived me with his lies.—
If George at last a tyrant should be found,
A cruel tyrant, by no sanctions bound,
And I, myself, in an unrighteous cause,
Be sent to execute the worst of laws,
How will those dead whom I conjured to fight—
Who sunk in arms to everlasting night,
Whose blood the conquering foe conspired to spill
At Lexington and Bunker's fatal hill,
Whose mangled corpses scanty graves embrace—
Rise from those graves, and curse me to my face!—
  Alas! that e'er ambition bade me roam,
Or thirst of power, forsake my native home—

* Sir Jeffery Amherst, who about this time refused to act against the Colonial cause.—*Freneau's note.*

[1] This and the four following lines not found in the edition of 1775.

[2] It shows they think their freedom lies at stake.—*Ed. 1775.*

What shall I do?—there, crowd the hostile bands;
Here, waits a navy to receive commands;—
I speak the language of my heart—shall I
Steal off by night, and o'er the ocean fly,
Like a lost man to unknown regions stray,
And to oblivion leave this stormy day?—[1]
Or shall I to Britannia's shores again,
And big with lies, conceal my thousands slain?—
Yes—to some distant clime[2] my course I steer,
To any country rather than be here,
To worlds where reason scarce exerts her law,[3]
A branch-built cottage, and a bed of straw.—
Even Scotland's coast seems charming in my sight,
And frozen Zembla yields a strange delight.—
But such vexations in my bosom burn,
That to these shores I never will return,
'Till fruits and flowers on Greenland's coast be known,
And frosts are thawed in climates once their own.
Ye souls of fire, who burn for chief command,
Come! take my place in this disastrous land;
To wars like these I bid a long good-night—
Let North and George themselves such battles fight.

[1] In the original edition these two lines read as follows:

"Like Captain Cook to Southern islands stray,
And take new kings and kingdoms in my way."

[2] "Foreign clime."—*Ed. 1775.* "Negro clime."—*Ed. 1786.*

[3] This line, and the nine following, are not found in the edition of 1775.

THE MIDNIGHT CONSULTATIONS;[1]

OR, A TRIP TO BOSTON

First published in 1775

Small bliss is theirs whom Fate's too heavy hand
Confines through life to some small square of land;
More wretched they whom heaven inspires to roam,
Yet languish out their lives and die at home.
Heaven gave to man this wide extended round,
No climes confine him and no oceans bound;
Heaven gave him forest, mountain, vale, and plain,
And bade him vanquish, if he could, the main;
But sordid cares our short-lived race confine,
Some toil at trades, some labour in the mine,

[1] Text from the edition of 1809. The poem was first published in New York in 1775 by Anderson, under the title, "A Voyage to Boston, a poem," and a second edition was printed the same year in Philadelphia for William Woodhouse. The revision of the poem in the 1786 edition of Freneau's works mentions that the poem was published in September, 1775. This is evidently a mistake. In the issue of October 21, of Anderson's *Constitutional Gazette*, appears the advertisement, "This day is published & to be sold by the printer, 'A Voyage to Boston: a Poem.'" The copy of the poem in possession of the Library Company, Philadelphia, has endorsed upon it, "published in October, 1775." This earliest version, only a fragment of which was given in the various editions of the poet's works, has never before been reprinted. It is as follows:

A VOYAGE TO BOSTON, A POEM

ARGUMENT

Introductory reflections. A traveller undertakes a voyage to Boston: arrives in a river of Massachusetts: has there a sight of the native Genius of North-America, who presents him with a mantle, and acquaints him with its virtue of rendering the wearer invisible: desires him to visit the town in that state, and remark the transactions there. Accordingly he arrives at General Gage's mansion, where are several other ministerial tools

The miser hoards, and guards his shining store,
The sun still rises where he rose before—
No happier scenes his earth-born fancy fill
Than one dark valley, or one well-known hill.
To other shores his mind, untaught to stray,
Dull and inactive, slumbers life away.
But by the aid of yonder glimmering beam
The pole star, faithful to my vagrant dream,
Wild regent of my heart! in dreams convey
Where the herded Britons their bold ranks display;
So late the pride of England's fertile soil,
(Her grandeur heightened by successive toil)
See how they sicken in these hostile climes,
Themes for the stage, and subjects for our rhimes.
What modern poet have the muses led
To draw the curtain that conceals the dead?

sitting in council. The striking similarity of Gage's temper and conduct to that of Hernando Cortez. Some account of Cortez, and his horrid devastations in Mexico, &c. The traveller enters their junto, and gives an account of the chief members of it, viz., General Gage, Admiral Greaves, General Burgoyne, Lord Percy, General Howe, Capt. Wallace, and a numerous fry of dependents and needy favourites waiting for posts and estates in America, as soon as they shall have compelled us to resign our liberties: General Gage's surprize at their several defeats in New-England, and questions his leaders thereupon. Lord Percy's answer: Greaves's reply to that nobleman: Gage's raillery upon Percy for his nimble retreat on April 19, 1775. Percy's defence of his conduct on that day, and the reason of his activity; and desires them to forget Lexington for the present, and turn their eyes to the late loss at Bunker's Hill. General Howe's speech concerning that action. Burgoyne's harrangue, with his invectives against Colonel Grant, who "pledged himself for the general cowardice of all America:" Gage's brief reply; and communicates his intention of purloining cattle from the islands, and plans that right honourable exploit; but being overcome by sleep, dismisses his counsellors. The cutting down the Liberty Tree in Boston, and untimely end of one of the wretches employed in that sneaking affair. Distresses of the imprisoned citizens in Boston. Dissection of a Tory. The traveller leaves Boston, and visits the Provincial Camp; meets the Genius of

What bolder bard to Boston shall repair,
To view the peevish, half-starved spectres there?
O thou wronged country! why sustain these ills?
Why rest thy navies on their native hills?
See, endless forests shade the uncultured plain,
Descend, ye forests, and command the main:
A leafy verdure shades the mighty mast,
And the tall oak bends idly to the blast,
Earth's entrails teem with stores for your defence,
Descend and drag the stores of war from thence:

America again on the way and resigns the mantle, whereby he again becomes visible; arrives at the camp. View of the Rifle-men, Virginians, &c. Speech of an American soldier; his determined resolution, which is that of all America, to defend our rights and privileges. Grief that he must fight against our own nation. Mention of Carleton and Johnson; concludes with a melancholy recital of our present distractions, and sincere hope of reconcilation with Great Britian before a wicked ministry render it too late. Conclusion.

How curs'd the man whom fate's unhappy doom
Confines, unluckly, to his native home,
How doubly curs'd by cross-grain'd stars is he,
Whom fate ties down, tho' struggling to be free!
Heaven gave to man this vast extended round,
No climes confine him and no oceans bound;
Heaven gave him forest, mountain, vale and plain,
And bade him vanquish, if he could, the main:
Then, miser, hoard and heap thy riches still,
View the sun rise above thy well known hill,
Vile as the swine, enjoy thy gloomy den,
Sweat in the compass of a squalid pen,
'Till sick of life, on terms with death agree,
And leave thy fortune, not thy heart, to me.
So mus'd the bard who this rough verse indites,
Asserting freedom, and his country's rights:
Nor mus'd in vain; the fruitful musings brought
To practice what in theory he thought;
And gave desire, a keen desire, to roam
A hundred or two hundred leagues from home.
Where should he go? The eastern hills reply,
Come, pensive traveller, with thy tearful eye,

Your fertile soil the flowing sail supplies,
And Europe's arts in every village rise—
No want is yours—Disdain unmanly fear,
And swear no tyrant shall reign master here;
Know your own strength—in rocky desarts bred,
Shall the fierce tiger by the dog be led,
And bear all insults from that snarling race
Whose courage lies in impudence of face?—
No—rather bid the wood's wild native turn,
And from his side the unfaithful guardian spurn.

Come, and fair Boston from our summit see,
No city sits so widow-like as she ;
Her trading navies spread their sails no more,
Remotest nations cease to seek her shore,
Deep are her weeds—in darkest sable clad,
O come and view the Queen of all that's sad,
Long are her nights, that yield no chearful sound,
Like endless nights in tombs below the ground,
Low burns her lamp before th' insulting rout ;
See, the lamp dies, and every light goes out !
O Britain come, and, if you can, relent
This rage, that better might on Spain be spent.
Touch'd with the mountain's melancholy prayer
(Perhaps a mountain or Dame Fancy there)
Could I refuse, since mutual grief endears,
To seek New Albion's Lady all in tears ?
But doubts perplexing hover'd o'er my mind,
Whether to chuse the aid of horse or wind ;
That suits the best with bards of place and state,
This must us needy Rhymers compensate,
Since Jove his ancient bounty has deny'd,
And grants no modern Pegasus to ride.
Dark was the night, the winds tempestuous roar'd
From western skies, and warn'd us all aboard ;
Spread were the sails, the nimble vessel flies
O'er Neptune's bosom and reflected skies ;
Nor halt I here to tell you how she roves
O'er Tython's chambers and his coral groves.
Let some prose wand'rer long-sun journals keep,
I haste me, like the vessel, o'er the deep ;

Now, pleased I wander to the dome of state
Where Gage resides, our western potentate—
Chief of ten thousand, all a race of slaves,[1]
Sent to be shrouded in untimely graves;[2]
Sent by our angry Jove, sent sword in hand
To murder, burn, and ravage through the land.—
You dream of conquest—tell me how or whence—
Act like a man, and get you gone from hence;
A madman sent you to this hostile shore
To vanquish nations, that shall spill your gore.—
Go, fiends, and in a social league combined
Destroy, distress, and triumph o'er mankind!—

[1] "*Huns.*"—*Ed. 1786.*
[2] "Slaughter'd by our Rifle-guns."—*Ed. 1786.*

Nor tire you with descriptions of the coast,
New mountains gain'd or hills in æther lost,—
The muse can only hint at scenes like these,
Not stop to spend her poem in their praise:
Three days we cut the brine with steady prore,
The fourth beheld us on New Albion's shore.
Guard me, ye heavens, shield this defenceless head,
While travelling o'er these sanguine plains of dead;
Nor only me, may heaven defend us all
From the harsh rigour of King George's ball.

Far in the depth of an aspiring wood,
Where roll'd its waves a silver winding flood,
Our weary vessel urg'd its darksome way,
And safely anchor'd in a shady bay.
Landing, I left the weather-beaten crew,
And pensive rov'd as home-sick travellers do;
When all at once before my wand'ring eyes,
The Genius of the river seem'd to rise;
Tall and erect, untaught by years to bow,
But not a smile relax'd his clouded brow:
His swarthy features vengeful deeds forebode,
Terror march'd on before him as he trode;
His rattling quiver at his shoulder hung,
His pointed spear and glitt'ring helmet rung;

'Tis not our peace this murdering hand restrains,
The want of power is made the monster's chains;
Compassion is a stranger to his heart,
Or if it came, he bade the guest depart;
The melting tear, the sympathising groan
Were never yet to Gage or Jefferies* known;
The seas of blood his heart fore-dooms to spill
Is but a dying serpent's rage to kill.
What power shall drive these vipers from our shore,
These monsters swoln with carnage, death, and gore!
Twelve was the hour—congenial darkness reigned,
And no bright star a mimic day-light feigned—

*An inhuman, butchering English judge in the time of Charles the first. —*Freneau's note.*

The tall oaks trembled at the warlike shade,
When thus the Genius of the water said:
"O curious stranger, come from far to see
What grieves us all, but none so much as me!
The free-born Genius of the woods am I,
Who scorn to dwell in lands of slavery;
I, tho' unseen, command the heart to dare,
And spread the soul of freedom thro' the air,
That each may taste and value if he can,
This sovereign good that constitutes the man:
Here, in the center of tyrannic sway,
I spread my spirit and forbid dismay,
To every bosom dart my influence round,
Like the sun beams that fructify the ground;
But waft a timorous and ignoble breath
Where conscience, conscience bids them shrink at death.
"O stranger, led by Heaven's supreme decree,
Go, view the dire effects of tyranny,
Strait to the town direct thy fated way,
But heark attentive, listen and obey,
I to thy care commit this magic vest,
To guard thee 'midst yon' spires, a viewless guest;
Whene'er its wreathy folds thy limbs embrace,
No mortal eye thy roving step shall trace;

First, Gage we saw—a crimson chair of state
Received the honour of his Honour's weight;
This man of straw the regal purple bound,
But dullness, deepest dullness, hovered round.
Next Graves, who wields the trident of the brine,
The tall arch-captain of the embattled line,
All gloomy sate—mumbling of flame and fire,
Balls, cannon, ships, and all their damned attire;
Well pleased to live in never-ending hum,
But empty as the interior of his drum.
Hard by, Burgoyne assumes an ample space,
And seemed to meditate with studious face,
As if again he wished our world to see
Long, dull, dry letters, writ to General Lee—
Huge scrawls of words through endless circuits drawn
Unmeaning as the errand he's upon.—

Unseen as ghosts that quit the clay below,
Yet seeing all securely thou shalt go.
There watch the motions of the hostile lines,
Observe their counsels, search their deep designs;
Trace all their schemes, the lawless strength survey
Of licens'd robbers howling for their prey."

So spoke the Genius of the shaded wave,
And then the vest of wondrous virtue gave,
Which scarce my limbs enwrapt, when I began
To move as ne'er before did mortal man.
Light as the air, as free as winds I stray'd,
Pierc'd firmest rocks and walls for prisons made,
Soar'd high, nor ask'd the feeble aid of art,
And trac'd all secrets but the human heart.
Then to the town I held my hasty course,
To Boston's town subdu'd by lawless force;
Close by a centinel I took my stride,
The wretch ne'er saw me tho' I graz'd his side:
But for my vest, what pains had been my lot,
What gibes, what sneers, reproaches, and what not?

Is he to conquer—he subdue our land?—
This buckram hero, with his lady's hand?
By Cesars to be vanquished is a curse,
But by a scribbling fop—by heaven, is worse![1]
Lord Piercy seemed to snore—but may the Muse
This ill-timed snoring to the peer excuse;
Tired was the long boy of his toilsome day,
Full fifteen miles he fled—a tedious way;
How could he then the dews of Somnus shun,
Perhaps not used to walk—much less to run.
Red-faced as suns, when sinking to repose,
Reclined the infernal captain of the *Rose*,*

*Capt. Wallace.—*Freneau's note.* Sir James Wallace was a prominent naval officer during the Revolution. In 1774–5 he commanded the *Rose*, a 20-gun frigate, and greatly annoyed the people of Rhode Island by his detention of shipping and his seizure of private property. His severity and activity made him greatly detested by the colonists during the entire Revolution.

[1] "Proud of his soldiership, Burgoyne rated himself higher yet in his character as an author."—*Trevelyan.* He was a voluminous letter-writer, and his vivid and interesting letters, of which great numbers have been preserved, throw much light upon the period.

Or in their place the robbers had constrained
To turn a Tory, which my heart disdained.

Now stalk'd I on towards the dome of state,
Where Gage resides, our western Potentate,
A second Cortez,* sent by heaven's command,
To murder, rage, and ravage o'er our land;
A very Cortez—what's the difference?
He wants his courage and he wants his sense;
E'en Cortez would our tyrant's part disdain.
That murder'd strangers; this his countrymen;
In all the rest resemblance so exact,
No glass Venetian could more true reflect.
In all their rest, congenial souls combin'd,
The scourge, the curse and scandal of our kind.

* Hernando Cortez, one of the original conquerors of Spanish America, who depopulated many provinces, and slew several millions of the natives of this continent. *See Father Barthol. Du Casis's History.—Freneau's note.*

In fame's proud temple aiming for a niche,
With those who find her at the cannon's breech;
Skilled to direct the cannonading shot,
No Turkish rover half so murdering hot,
Pleased with base vengeance on defenceless towns,
His heart was malice—but his words were, Zounds!
Howe, vexed to see his starving army's doom,
In prayer, besought the skies for elbow room—[2]
Small was his stock, and theirs, of heavenly grace,
Yet just enough to ask a larger place.—
He cursed the brainless minister that planned
His bootless errand to this hostile land,

[2] This expression belongs to Burgoyne rather than Howe. "Burgoyne took no pains to hide them [his sentiments] in any company. He exclaimed to the first colonist whom he met . . . 'Let us get in and we will soon find elbow-room.' The saying caught the public ear, and the time was not far distant when its author learned to his cost that it is more easy to coin a phrase than to recall it from circulation."—*Trevelyan, Am. Rev.*

Cortez was sent by Spain's black brotherhood,
Whose faith is murder, whose religion blood;
Sent unprovok'd, with his Iberian train,
To fat the soil with millions of the slain:
Poor Mexico! arouse thy sanguine head,
Peru, disclose thy hosts of murder'd dead!
Let your vast plains all white with human bones,
That bleeding lie, and ask sepulchral stones,
Force a dumb voice and echo to the sky,
The blasting curse of papal tyranny;
And let your rocks, and let your hills proclaim,
That Gage and Cortez' errand is the same.
Say then what cause this murd'rous hand restrains?
The want of power is made the monster's chains,
The streams of blood his heart foredooms to spill,
Is but a dying serpent's rage to kill:
What power shall drive this serpent from our shore,
This scorpion, swoln with carnage, death, and gore?
Twelve was the hour,—infernal darkness reign'd,
Low hung the clouds, the stars their light restrain'd:

But, awed by Gage, his bursting wrath recoiled,
And in his inmost bosom doubly boiled.
These, chief of all the tyrant-serving train,
Exalted sate—the rest (a pensioned clan),
A sample of the multitude that wait,
Pale sons of famine, at perdition's gate,
North's friends down swarming (so our monarch wills),
Hungry as death, from Caledonian hills;
Whose endless numbers if you bid me tell,
I'll count the atoms of this globe as well,—
Knights, captains, 'squires — a wonder-working band,
Held at small wages 'till they gain the land,
Flocked pensive round—black spleen assailed their hearts,
(The sport of plough-boys, with their arms and arts)

High in the dome a dire assembly sat,
A stupid council on affairs of state;
To their dim lamps I urg'd my fearless way,
And marching 'twixt their guards without delay,
Step'd boldly in, and safely veil'd from view,
Stood in the center of the black-guard crew.
First, Gage was there—a mimic chair of state,

Here follow lines 72–131 above, with the following variations: line 75, "trident of the sea"; 76, "of artillery"; 79, "everlasting hum"; 80, "But senseless as the echo of a drum"; 81, "his ample chair supplies"; 82, "in studious guise"; 83, "to grant the world to see"; 87–90,

"His arm and pen of equal strength we call,
This kills with dullness, just like that with ball."

91, "O conscious muse"; 93, "the Hero"; 95, "How should"; 97, "as Sol descending to repose"; 98, "the furious Captain"; 100, "'mongst those who find it"; 104, "His forked tongue hiss'd nothing else but Zounds!"; 105, "his army's fatal doom"; 106, "Ceas'd to beseech"; 107–108,

"(How could the skies refuse the pious man
When half the pray'r was blood! and death! and damn!)"

110, "sleeveless errand to a distant land"; 113, "the Pandemonian crew"; 114, "a pension'd few"; 116, "In dreams of Indian gold and Indian state;"

And made them doubt (howe'er for vengeance hot)
Whether they were invincible or not.
Now Gage upstarting from his cushioned seat
Swore thrice, and cried—"'Tis nonsense to be beat!
Thus to be drubbed! pray, warriors, let me know
Which be in fault, myself, the fates, or you—
Henceforth let Britain deem her men mere toys—
Gods! to be frightened thus by country boys;
Why, if your men had had a mind to sup,
They might have eat that scare-crow[1] army up—
Three thousand to twelve hundred thus to yield,
And twice five hundred stretched upon the field!—[2]
O shame to Britain, and the British name,
Shame damps my heart, and I must die with shame—
Thus to be worsted, thus disgraced and beat!—
You have the knack, Lord Piercy,[3] to retreat,

[1] "School-boy army."—*Ed. 1786.*

[2] The first detachment of troops, which left Boston on the night of April 18th, consisted of 800 men; the reinforcements that met them just beyond Lexington consisted of 1,200 men. "On this eventful day, the British lost 273 of their number, while the Americans lost 93."—*Fiske's American Revolution.*

[3] Lord Percy was at the head of the reinforcements which rescued the British regulars on their retreat from Concord and Lexington, and it was under his leadership that the disastrous retreat was continued to Boston.

118, "hungry as hell"; 121, "a secondary band"; 123, "assail'd the crowd"; 124, "Black as the horrors of a wintry cloud"; 125, "for doubts had place to grow"; 126, "or no"; 127–131,

Gage starts, rebounding from his ample seat,
Swears thrice, and cries—"Ye furies, are we beat?
Thrice are we drubb'd?—Pray gentles let me know,
Whether it be the fault of fate or you?"
He ceas'd, the anger flash'd from both his eyes,
While Percy to his query thus replies.—
"Let gods and men attest the words I say,
Our soldiers flinch'd not from the dubious fray,
Had each a head of temper'd steel possest,
A heart of brass, and admantine breast,

The death you escaped my warmest blood congeals,
Heaven grant me, too, so swift a pair of heels—[1]
In Chevy-Chace, as, doubtless, you have read,
Lord Piercy would have sooner died than fled—
Behold the virtues of your house decay—
Ah! how unlike the Piercy of that day!"
Thus spoke the great man in disdainful tone
To the gay peer—not meant for him alone—
But ere the tumults of his bosom rise
Thus from his bench the intrepid peer replies:
"When once the soul has reached the Stygian shore,
My prayer book says, it shall return no more—

[1] "I believe the fact, stripped of all coloring," Washington wrote six weeks later on, "to be plainly this: that if the retreat had not been as precipitate as it was (and God knows it could not have been more so), the ministerial troops must have surrendered or been totally cut off."—*Trevelyan's American Revolution.*

More courage ne'er had urg'd them to the fray,
More true-born valour made them scorn dismay."
"Whoe'er," said Greaves, "their cowardice denies,
Or Lord, or Knight, or 'Squire, I say he lies:
How could the wretches help but marching on,
When at their backs your swords were ready drawn,
To pierce the man that flinch'd a single pace,
From all hell's light'ning blazing in his face?
Death on my life! My Lord, had I been there,
I'd sent New-England's army thro' the air,
Wrench'd their black hearts from this infernal brood,
And turn'd their streams to Oliverian blood.

Here follow lines 131–200 above, with the following variations: 131, "but toys"; 132, "to be conquer'd thus"; 134, "this play-thing army"; 135, "Five thousand to five hundred"; 136, "And fourteen hundred"; 139, "Indeed," cries Gage, "'tis twice we have been beat"; 141, "You 'scap'd my very blood"; 147, "So spoke the Hero"; 148, "The brilliant Peer replies"; 149, 150, not in the original version; 151, "old Styx's shore"; 153, "his sable sail"; 154, "the lazy gale"; 157, "Farewell Quadrille, that helps out life's short span"; following 158,

When once old Charon hoists his tar-blacked sail,
And his boat swims before the infernal gale,
Farewell to all that pleased the man above,
Farewell to feats of arms, and joys of love!
Farewell the trade that father Cain began,
Farewell to wine, that cheers the heart of man;
All, all farewell!—the pensive shade must go
Where cold Medusa turns to stone below,
Where Belus' maids eternal labours ply
To drench the cask that stays forever dry,
And Sysiphus, with many a weary groan,
Heaves up the mount the still recoiling stone!

" Farewell my steeds that stretch across the plain,
More swift than navies bounding o'er the main."

160, "dull Medusa"; 163, 164, not in original version; 165–168,

"Since then, this truth is by mankind confess'd,
That ev'ry Lord must yet be Pluto's guest,"

170, "And leave his coursers starting for the race"; 172, "aloof from Styx"; 174, "Than leaky vessels;" 177, "thy ghastly sight restrains;" following 178,

"May no gay flowers or vernal blooming tree
Scent thy vile air or shade the face of thee!"

180, "nodded o'er Britannia's troops"; 183, "to your breast"; 185, "has fix'd us here"; 186, "Pray query"; 189, "fluent Percy"; 194, "our conduct down"; 196, "more brave"; 199, "my bloody stand." In place of lines 201–208, the 1775 version has the following:

'Till met the strength of each opposing force,
Like blazing-stars in their etherial course
That all on fire with rapid swiftness fly,
Then clash and shake the concave of the sky.
Twice we gave way, twice shunn'd the infernal rout,
And twice you would have cry'd all hell's broke out.
They fought like those who press for death's embrace,
And laugh the grizly monarch in the face.
Putnam's brave troops, your honor would have swore,
Had robb'd the clouds of half their sulph'rous store,
Call'd thunder down whence Jove his vengeance spreads,
And drove it mix'd with lightning on our heads!
What tho' Cop's-hill its black artillery play'd,
Clouding the plains in worse than Stygian shade;

"Since, then, this truth no mortal dares deny,
That heroes, kings—and lords, themselves, must die,
And yield to him who dreads no hostile sword,
But treats alike the peasant and the lord;
Since even great George must in his turn give place
And leave his crown, his Scotchmen, and his lace,—
How blest is he, how prudent is the man
Who keeps aloof from fate—while yet he can;
One well-aimed ball can make us all no more
Than shipwrecked scoundrels on that leeward shore.
"But why, my friends, these hard reflections still
On Lexington affairs—'tis Bunker's hill—

Tho' floating batteries rais'd their dismal roar,
Tho' all the navy bellow'd from the shore,
They roar'd in vain, death claim'd from them no share,
But helpless, spent their force in empty air.
Alas! what scenes of slaughter I beheld,
What sudden carnage flush'd the glutted field!
Heaven gave the foe to thin my warlike train,
For not a musket was discharg'd in vain;
Yes, that short hour, while heaven forbore to smile,
Made many widows in Britannia's isle,
And shewing all what power supreme can do,
Gave many orphans to those widows too.
But Gage arouse, come lift thy languid head,
Full fifty foes we pack'd off to the dead:
Who feeling death, from their hot posts, withdrew,
And Warren with the discontented crew—
Blest be the hand that laid his head so low,
Not fifty common deaths could please me so—
But to be short, so quick our men came in,
The hostile army was so very thin;
We fix'd our bay'nets and resum'd the fray,
Then forc'd their lines and made the dogs give way."
Next rose Burgoyne and rais'd his brazen voice,
And cry'd, "We have no reason to rejoice.
Warren is dead—in that we all agree,
Not fate itself is half so fix'd as he;

O fatal hill!—one glance at thee restrains
My once warm blood, and chills it in my veins—
May no sweet grass adorn thy hateful crest
That saw Britannia's bravest troops distrest—
Or if it does—may some destructive gale
The green leaf wither, and the grass turn pale—
All moisture to your brow may heaven deny,
And God and man detest you, just as I;—
'Tis Bunker's hill, this night has brought us here,
Pray question him who led your armies there,
Nor dare my courage into question call,
Or blame Lord Piercy for the fault of all."

But my suspecting heart bids me foredoom
A thousand Warrens rising in his room—
Heaven knows I left my native country's air,
In full belief of things that never were;
Deceiv'd by Grant, I've sail'd thus far in vain,
And like a fool may now sail back again—
Grant call'd them cowards—curse the stupid ass,
Their sides are iron and their hearts are brass—
Cowards he said, and lest that should not do,
He pawn'd his oath and swore that they were so:
O, were he here, I'd make him change his note,
Disgorge his lie or cut the rascal's throat.

Here follow lines 209–252 above, with the following variations: 209, "But Captains"; 213, 214, not in original version; 215, "to make his law obey'd"; 216, "ten thousand Russians to our aid"; 218, "form the ocean shore"; 219, "commands my heart"; 225, "strikes three"; 230, "I've eat no fresh provision, but in dreams"; 231, "to my eyes"; 232, "and chew"; 235, "hold a council"; 236, "some consultation how to filch their sheep"; 237, "Unnumbered cattle"; 238, "sheep an undefended prey"; 239, "fit victims"; 240, "if the Gods would act"; 241, "shall glad your hearts"; 242, "on beef we'll dine"; 247, "the chieftain's eye"; 251, 252, "to dullest slumbers deep, And in his arms embrac'd the powers of sleep."

In Boston's southern end there stands a tree
Long sacred held to darling Liberty;
Its branching arms with verdant leaves were crown'd,
Imparting shade and grateful coolness round:
To its fam'd trunk, invisible as air,
I from the sleepy council did repair,

Howe chanced to nod while heathenish Piercy spoke,
But as his Lordship ceased, his Honour awoke,
(Like those whom sermons into sleep betray)
Then rubbed his eyes, and thus was heard to say:
"Shall those who never ventured from the town,
Or their ships' sides, now pull our glory down?
We fought our best—so God my honour save!—
No British soldiers ever fought so brave—
Resolved I led them to the hostile lines,
(From this day famed where'er great Phœbus shines)
Firm at their head I took my dangerous stand,
Marching to death and slaughter, sword in hand,

And at its root, fair Freedom's shrine, I paid
My warmest vows, and blest the virtuous shade.
Now shin'd the gay fac'd sun with morning light,
All Nature joy'd exulting at the sight,
When swift as wind, to vent their base-born rage,
The Tory Williams* and the Butcher Gage
Rush'd to the tree, a nameless number near,
Tories and Negroes following in the rear—
Each, axe in hand, attack'd the honour'd tree,
Swearing eternal war with Liberty;
Nor ceas'd their strokes, 'till each repeated wound
Tumbled its honours headlong to the ground;
But e'er it fell, not mindless of its wrong,
Aveng'd it took one destin'd head along.
A Tory soldier on its topmost limb—
The Genius of the shade look'd stern at him,
And mark'd him out that self same hour to dine,
Where unsnuff'd lamps burn low at Pluto's shrine,
Then tripp'd his feet from off their cautious stand;
Pale turn'd the wretch—he spread each helpless hand,
But spread in vain, with headlong force he fell,
Nor stopp'd descending 'till he stopp'd in Hell.

Next, curious to explore, I wander'd where
Our injur'd countrymen imprison'd are,

*A notable Tory in Boston.—*Freneau's note.*

But wonted Fortune halted on her way,
We fought with madmen, and we lost the day—
Putnam's brave troops, your honours would have swore
Had robbed the clouds of half their nitrous store,
With my bold veterans strewed the astonished plain,
For not one musquet was discharged in vain.—
But, honoured Gage, why droops thy laurelled head?—
Five hundred foes we packed off to the dead.—[1]
Now captains, generals, hear me and attend!
Say, shall we home for other succours send?
Shall other navies cross the stormy main?—
They may, but what shall awe the pride of Spain?
Still for dominion haughty Louis pants—
Ah! how I tremble at the thoughts of France.—

[1] "In this battle, in which not more than one hour was spent in actual fighting, the British loss in killed and wounded was 1,054. . . . The American loss, mainly incurred at the rail fence and during the hand-to-hand struggle at the redoubt, was 449."—*Fiske's American Revolution.*

Some closely coop'd in the unwelcome town;
Some in dark dungeons held ignobly down;
Gage holds them there, and all recess denies,
For 'tis in these the coward's safety lies:
Were these once out, how would our troops consign
Each licens'd robber to the gulphy brine,
Or drive them foaming to the ships for aid,
To beg of stormy Greaves to cannonade,
And midnight vengeance point, like Vandeput,
Voiding his hell-hounds to their devilish glut.
A deed like that the muse must blush to name,
And bids me stamp a coward on thy fame;
Rage, ruffian, rage, nor lay thy thunder down,
'Till all our Tories howl and flee the town.
What is a Tory? Heavens and earth reveal!
What strange blind monster does that name conceal?
There! there he stands—for Augury prepare,
Come lay his heart and inmost entrails bare,

Shall mighty George, to enforce his injured laws,
Transport all Russia to support the cause?—
That allied empire countless shoals may pour
Numerous as sands that strew the Atlantic shore;
But policy inclines my heart to fear
They'll turn their arms against us when they're here—
Come, let's agree—for something must be done
Ere autumn flies, and winter hastens on—
When pinching cold our navy binds in ice,
You'll find 'tis then too late to take advice."
The clock strikes two!—Gage smote upon his breast,
And cried,—"What fate determines, must be best—
But now attend—a counsel I impart
That long has laid the heaviest at my heart—
Three weeks—ye gods!—nay, three long years it seems
Since roast-beef I have touched except in dreams.

I, by the forelock, seize the Stygian hound;
You bind his arms and bind the dragon down.
Surgeon, attend with thy dissecting knife,
Aim well the stroke that damps the springs of life,
Extract his fangs, dislodge his teeth of prey,
Clap in your pincers, and then tear away.—
Soldier, stand by, the monster may resist,
You draw your back-sword, and I'll draw my fist.
Lo! mixt with air his worthless ghost has fled;
Surgeon, his paleness speaks the monster dead;
Part, part the sutures of his brazen scull,
Hard as a rock, impenetrably dull.
Hold out his brain, and let his brethren see
That tortoise brain, no larger than a pea—
Come, rake his entrails, whet thy knife again,
Let's see what evils threat the next campaign,
If ministerial force shall prove too great,
Or if the Congress save their mighty freight:

In sleep, choice dishes to my view repair,
Waking, I gape and champ the empty air.—
Say, is it just that I, who rule these bands,
Should live on husks, like rakes in foreign lands?—[1]
Come, let us plan some project ere we sleep,
And drink destruction to the rebel sheep.
"On neighbouring isles uncounted cattle stray,
Fat beeves and swine, an ill-defended prey—

[1] Burgoyne, in one of his letters, declares that "a pound of fresh mutton could only be bought for its weight in gold."

See on his breast, deep grav'd with iron pen,
"Passive obedience to the worst of men."
There to his lights direct thy searching eyes,
"Slavery I love, and freedom I despise."
View next his heart, his midriff just above,
"To my own country I'll a traitor prove."
Hard by his throat, for utterance meant, I spy,
"I'll fight for tyrants and their ministry."
His crowded guts unnumber'd scrawls contain,
The scandal of our country and the bane;
His bleeding entrails shew some great design,
Which shall abortive prove, as I divine;
But, freedom lost, nor danger do I see,
If we can only with ourselves agree.
How like St. George, invincible I stand,
This home bred dragon stretch'd beneath my hand!
Here may he lie, and let no traveller dare
The grass green hillock o'er his carcase rear,
Or heap up piles of monumental stones,
To shield from Phœbus and the stars his bones.
This feat perform'd, I girt my magic gown,
And march'd, unlicens'd, from the guarded town.
To our fam'd camp I held my eager course,
Curious to view the courage and the force
Of those, whose hearts are flush'd with freedom's flame,
Who yet stand foremost in the field of fame,
And deeply griev'd with their departing laws,
Arm in conviction of a righteous cause.
But e'er I reach'd the great encampment's bound
The friendly Genius on the way I found;

These are fit visions for my noon day dish,
These, if my soldiers act as I would wish,
In one short week should glad your maws and mine;
On mutton we will sup—on roast beef dine."
Shouts of applause re-echoed through the hall,
And what pleased one as surely pleased them all;
Wallace was named to execute the plan,
And thus sheep-stealing pleased them to a man.
Now slumbers stole upon the great man's eye,
His powdered foretop nodded from on high,

Graceful he smil'd, his azure locks he shook,
While from his lips these flowing accents broke:
"O mortal! guided by the fates and me,
To view what thousands wish in vain to see;
Now to my care the magic vest restore,
Chearful return to what thou wast before,
I to the shades this wond'rous mantle bear,
And hang it safe in Fancy's temple there;
Nor let its loss provoke thee to repine,
The vest was Jove's, the will to lend it mine."
So said the God, and blending with the light,
I walk'd conspicuous and reveal'd to sight,
No more impervious to the human view,
But seeing all, and seen by others too.
Now throngs on throngs on ev'ry side surround,
Beneath the burthen groans the heaving ground,
Those fam'd afar to drive the deadly shot,
With truest level to the central spot;
Those whom Virginia's vast dominion sends,
From her chaste streams and intervening lands,
And those who conscious of their country's claim,
From Pennsylvania's happy climate came.
These, and ten thousand more were scatter'd round
In black battalions on the tented ground,
Prepar'd, whene'er the trumpet's iron roar
Should summon forth to all the woes of war,
To hear with joy the loud alarming call,
And rush perhaps to their own funeral.
Just in the center of the camp arose
An elm, whose shade invited to repose;

His lids just opened to find how matters were,
Dissolve, he said, and so dissolved ye are,
Then downward sunk to slumbers dark and deep,—
Each nerve relaxed—and even his guts asleep.[1]

EPILOGUE

What are these strangers from a foreign isle,
That we should fear their hate or court their smile?—
Pride sent them here, pride blasted in the bud,
Who, if she can, will build her throne in blood,

[1] Gage's inertness and procrastination were a constant source of ridicule both in England and America. No man was ever more severely criticised. Hume even branded him as a contemptible coward.

Thither I rov'd, and at the cool retreat
A brave, tho' rough-cast, soldier chanc'd to meet:
No fop in arms, no feather on his head,
No glittering toys the manly warrior had,
His auburne face the least employ'd his care,
He left it to the females to be fair;
And tho't the men, whom shining trifles sway,
But pageant soldiers for a sun-shine day.
Marking my pensive step, his hand he laid
On his hard breast, and thus the warrior said:
"Stranger, observe, behold these warlike fields,
Mark well the ills, that civil discord yields:
No crimes of our's this vengeful doom require,
Our city ravag'd and our towns on fire,
Troops pour'd on troops to Britain's lasting shame,
That threaten all with universal flame:
These are the kings, the monarchs of the sea,
Exerting power in lawless tyranny,
These, hot for power, and burning for command,
Would rule the ocean and subject the land;
But while this arm the strength of man retains,
While true-born courage revels through my veins,
I'll spill my blood yon' hostile force to quell,
And lawless power by lawful strength repel;

With slaughtered millions glut her tearless eyes,
And bid even virtue fall, that she may rise.
What deep offence has fired a monarch's rage?
What moon-struck madness seized the brain of Gage?
Laughs not the soul when an imprisoned crew
Affect to pardon those they can't subdue,
Though thrice repulsed, and hemmed up to their stations,
Yet issue pardons, oaths, and proclamations!—
Too long our patient country wears their chains,
Too long our wealth all-grasping Britain drains.
Why still a handmaid to that distant land?
Why still subservient to their proud command?

This rough, black cannon shall our cause defend,
This black, rough cannon is my truest friend.
This, arm'd with vengeance, belching death afar,
Confus'd their thousands marching to the war:
Yet, deeply griev'd, the tears bedew my eyes,
For this, the greatest of calamities;
That our keen weapons, meant for other ends,
Should spend their rage on Britons, once our friends;
But Liberty!—no price hast thou below,
And e'en a Briton's life for thee must go.
Come, then, my weapons, rise in Freedom's aid,
Her steps attend and be her call obey'd;
Let Carleton arm his antichristian might,
And sprinkle holy-water 'ere he fight,
And let him have, to shield his limbs from hurt,
St. Stephen's breeches,* and St. Stephen's shirt,*
Don Quixote's sword, the valiant knight of Spain,
Which now may grace a madman's side again,
St. Bernard's hose,* and lest we give too few,
John Faustus' cap, and Satan's cloven shoe;
(These precious relicks may defend their backs,
And good Guy Johnson should, I think, go snacks)
Nay, let him, ere the clashing armies cope,
Procure a pardon from his friend the Pope,

* Certain well known relicks among the Papists.—*Freneau's note.*

Britain the bold, the generous, and the brave
Still treats our country like the meanest slave,
Her haughty lords already share the prey,
Live on our labours, and with scorn repay;—
Rise, sleeper, rise, while yet the power remains,
And bind their nobles and their chiefs in chains:
Bent on destructive plans, they scorn our plea,
'Tis our own efforts that must make us free—
Born to contend, our lives we place at stake,
And rise to conquerors by the stand we make.—
The time may come when strangers rule no more,
Nor cruel mandates vex from Britain's shore,
When commerce may extend her shortened wing,
And her rich freights from every climate bring,
When mighty towns shall flourish free and great,
Vast their dominion, opulent their state,

That if his soul should be dislodg'd from hence,
Heaven may with all his scarlet sins dispense,
And place him safe beyond the reach of ball,
Where Abrah'm's bosom may be had for all.
Some powerful cause disarms my heart of fear,
And bids me bring some future battle near,
When crowds of dead shall veil the ghastful plain,
And mighty Lords like Percy, fly again;
When every pulse with treble force shall beat
And each exert his valour to retreat.
And each shall wish his stature may be made,
Long as it seems at Sol's descending shade:
So tallest trees that tour toward the skies,
From simple acorns take their humble rise.
To see from death their boasted valour shrink,
And basely fly, has sometimes made me think,
The true great heart is often found remote
From the gay trappings of a scarlet coat.
Stranger, in pity lend one pensive sigh,
For all that dy'd and all that yet may die,
If wars intestine long their rage retain,
This land must turn a wilderness again.

When one vast cultivated region teems
From ocean's side to Mississippi streams,
While each enjoys his vineyard's peaceful shade,
And even the meanest has no foe to dread.
And you, who, far from Liberty detained,
Wear out existence in some slavish land—
Forsake those shores, a self-ejected throng,
And armed for vengeance, here resent the wrong:
Come to our climes, where unchained rivers flow,
And loftiest groves, and boundless forests grow.
Here the blest soil your future care demands;
Come, sweep the forests from these shaded lands,
And the kind earth shall every toil repay,
And harvests flourish as the groves decay.
O heaven-born Peace, renew thy wonted charms—
Far be this rancour, and this din of arms—

While civil discord plumes her snaky head,
What streams of human gore must yet be shed,
With sanguine floods shall Mystick's waves be dy'd,
And ting'd the ocean, with her purple tide;
Enough.—The prospect fills my heart with woe;
Back to the heart my freezing spirits flow,
No more remains; no more than this, that all
Must fight like Romans, or like Romans fall:
O heaven-born peace, renew thy wonted charms,
Where Neptune westward spreads his aged arms;
To hostile lands return an honour'd guest,
And bless our crimson shores among the rest;
'Till then may heaven assert our injur'd claims,
And second every stroke Columbia aims,
Direct our counsels and our leaders sway,
Confound our foes and fill them with dismay.
So shall past years, those happy years, return,
And war's red lamp in Boston cease to burn:
Hear and attest the warmest wish I bring,
God save the Congress and reform the King!
Long may Britannia rule our hearts again,
Rule as she rul'd in George the Second's reign;

To warring lands return, an honoured guest,
And bless our crimson shore among the rest—
Long may Britannia rule our hearts again,
Rule as she ruled in George the Second's reign,
May ages hence her growing grandeur see,
And she be glorious—but ourselves as free!

THE SILENT ACADEMY[1]

Subjected to despotic sway,
Compelled all mandates to obey,
Once in this dome I humbly bowed,
A member of the murmuring crowd,
Where Pedro Blanco held his reign,
The tyrant of a small domain.
By him a numerous herd controuled,
The smart, the stupid, and the bold,
Essayed some little share to gain
Of the vast treasures of his brain;
Some learned the Latin, some the Greek,
And some in flowery style to speak;

May ages hence her growing empire see,
And she be glorious, but ourselves be free,
In that just scale an equal balance hold,
And grant these climes a second age of gold."

He ceas'd, and now the sun's declining beam
With fainter radiance shot a trembling gleam,
The thickening stars proclaim'd the day expir'd,
And to their tented mansions all retir'd.

[1] In the 1786 edition the title is "The Desolate Academy." In place of the first six lines above, the 1786 edition had the following:

"Subjected to despotic rule
Once in this dome I went to school,
Where *Pedro Passive* held his reign,
The tyrant of a small domain."

Some writ their themes, while others read,
And some with Euclid stuffed the head;
Some toiled in verse, and some in prose,
And some in logick sought repose;
Some learned to cypher, some to draw,
And some began to study law.
But all is ruined, all is done,
The tutor to the shades is gone,
And all his pupils, led astray,
Have each found out a different way.
Some are in chains of wedlock bound,
And some are hanged and some are drowned;
Some are advanced to posts and places,
And some in pulpits screw their faces;
Some at the bar a living gain,
Perplexing what they should explain;
To soldiers turned, a bolder band
Repel the invaders of the land;
Some to the arts of physic bred,
Despatch their patients to the dead;
Some plough the land, and some the sea,
And some are slaves, and some are free;
Some court the great, and some the muse,
And some subsist by mending shoes—
While others—but so vast the throng,
The Cobblers shall conclude my song.

LINES TO A COASTING CAPTAIN[1]

Shipwrecked and Nearly Drowned on Hatteras Shoals

So long harassed by winds and seas,
'Tis time, at length, to take your ease,
Change ruffian waves for quiet groves[2]
And war's loud blast for sylvan loves.

In all your rounds, 'tis passing strange
No fair one tempts you to a change—
Madness it is, you must agree,
To lodge alone 'till forty-three.

Old Plato said, no blessing here
Could equal Love—if but sincere;
And writings penn'd by heaven, have shown
That man can ne'er be blest alone.

O'er life's meridian have you pass'd;
The night of death advances fast!
No props you plant for your decline,
No partner soothes these cares of thine.

If Neptune's self, who ruled the main,
Kept sea-nymphs there to ease his pain;
Yourself, who skim that empire o'er,
Might surely keep one nymph on shore.

Myrtilla fair, in yonder grove,
Has so much beauty, so much love,
That, on her lip, the meanest fly
Is happier far than you or I.

[1] In the 1786 edition the title is "The Sea-Faring Bachelor;" in 1795 it was changed to "Advice to a Friend."

[2] "And seek a bride—for few can find
The sea a mistress to their mind."—*Ed. 1786.*

TO THE AMERICANS[1]

ON THE RUMOURED APPROACH OF THE HESSIAN FORCES, WALDECKERS, &C. (PUBLISHED 1775)

The blast of death! the infernal guns prepare—
"Rise with the storm and all its dangers share."

Occasioned by General Gage's Proclamation that the Provinces were in a state of Rebellion, and out of the King's protection.[2]

Rebels you are—the British champion[3] cries—
Truth, stand thou forth!—and tell the wretch, He lies:—
Rebels!—and see this mock imperial lord
Already threats these rebels with the cord.[4]

[1] The first trace that I can find of this poem is in the Oct. 18, 1775, issue of Anderson's *Constitutional Gazette*, where it has the title, "Reflections on Gage's Letter to Gen. Washington of Aug. 13." It was published in the 1786 edition with the title, "On the Conqueror of America shut up in Boston. Published in New York, *August* 1775." The 1795 edition changed the title to "The Misnomer." I have followed the title and text of the 1809 edition.

[2] General Gage's proclamation, issued June 12, 1775, was as follows: "Whereas the infatuated multitudes, who have long suffered themselves to be conducted by certain well-known incendiaries and traitors, in a fatal progression of crimes against the constitutional authority of the state, have at length proceeded to avowed rebellion, and the good effects which were expected to arise from the patience and lenity of the king's government have been often frustrated, and are now rendered hopeless by the influence of the same evil counsels, it only remains for those who are intrusted with the supreme rule, as well for the punishment of the guilty as the protection of the well-affected, to prove that they do not bear the sword in vain."

[3] "The hopeful general."—*Constitutional Gazette.*

[4] On June 11, Washington had written Gage, among other things, "that the officers engaged in the cause of liberty and their country, who by the fortune of war had fallen into your hands, have been thrown indiscriminately into a common gaol appropriated for felons," and threatening retaliation in like cases, "exactly by the rule you shall observe towards those of ours now in

The hour draws nigh, the glass is almost run,
When truth will shine, and ruffians[1] be undone;
When this base miscreant[2] will forbear to sneer,
And curse his taunts and bitter insults here.[3]
If to controul the cunning of a knave,
Freedom respect, and scorn the name of slave;
If to protest against a tyrant's laws,
And arm for vengeance in a righteous cause,
Be deemed Rebellion—'tis a harmless thing:
This bug-bear name, like death, has lost its sting.
Americans! at freedom's fane adore!
But trust to Britain, and her flag,[4] no more;
The generous genius of their isle has fled,
And left a mere impostor in his stead.
If conquered, rebels (their Scotch records show),[5]
Receive no mercy from the parent *foe;[6]
Nay, even the grave, that friendly haunt of peace,
(Where Nature gives the woes of man to cease,)
Vengeance will search—and buried corpses there
Be raised, to feast the vultures of the air—

your custody." To this Gage replied, on the 13th: "Britons, ever pre-eminent in mercy, have outgone common examples, and overlooked the criminal in the captive. Upon these principles your prisoners, whose lives, by the law of the land, *are destined to the cord*, have hitherto been treated with care and kindness," &c.—*Duyckinck.*

*After the battle of Culloden: See Smollett's History of England.—*Freneau's note.*

[1] "Gage shall be."—*Gazette.* [2] "Black monster."—*Gazette.*

[3] The *Gazette* version adds here the lines,

"Nay, with himself, ere freedom sent to quell
Had seen the lowest lurking place of hell."

[4] "British clemency."—*Ed. 1786.*

[5] "Their past records show."—*Ed. 1786.* "Gage already lets us know."—*Gazette.*

[6] "The viper foe."—*Gazette.*

Be hanged on gibbets, such a war they wage—
Such are the devils that swell our souls with rage![1]
If Britain conquers, help us, heaven, to fly:
Lend us your wings, ye ravens of the sky;—
If Britain conquers—we exist no more;
These lands will redden with their children's gore,
Who, turned to slaves, their fruitless toils will moan,
Toils in these fields that once they called their own!
To arms! to arms! and let the murdering sword
Decide who best deserves the hangman's cord:
Nor think the hills of Canada too bleak
When desperate Freedom is the prize you seek;
For that, the call of honour bids you go
O'er frozen lakes and mountains wrapt in snow:[2]
No toils should daunt the nervous and the bold,
They scorn all heat or wave-congealing cold.
Haste!—to your tents in iron fetters bring
These slaves, that serve a tyrant and a king;[3]
So just, so virtuous is your cause, I say,
Hell must prevail if Britain gains the day.

[1] This and the preceding line not in the earlier versions. In place of them the *Gazette* has the lines:

"Spoil'd of their shrouds and o'er Canadia's plains
Be hung aloft to terrify in chains."

[2] The *Gazette* version ends the poem from this point as follows:

"Let Baker's head be snatch'd from infamy,
And Carleton's Popish scull be fixt on high,
And all like him o'er St. John's castle swing,
To show that freedom is no trifling thing."

[3] "Their tyrant of a king."—*Ed. 1786.*

THE VERNAL AGUE

Where the pheasant[1] roosts at night,
Lonely, drowsy, out of sight,[2]
Where the evening breezes sigh
Solitary, there stray I.

Close along the shaded stream,
Source of many a youthful dream,
Where branchy cedars dim the day,
There I muse, and there I stray.

Yet, what can please amid this bower,
That charmed the eye for many an hour!
The budding leaf is lost to me,
And dead the bloom on every tree.

The winding stream, that glides along,
The lark, that tunes her early song,
The mountain's brow, the sloping vale,
The murmuring of the western gale,

Have lost their charms!—the blooms are gone!
Trees put a darker aspect on,
The stream disgusts that wanders by,
And every zephyr brings a sigh.

Great guardian of our feeble kind!
Restoring Nature, lend thine aid!
And o'er the features of the mind
Renew those colours, that must fade,
When vernal suns forbear to roll,
And endless winter chills the soul.

[1] "Blackbird."—*Ed. 1786.*

[2] "In groves of half distinguish'd light."—*Ib.*

GENERAL GAGE'S CONFESSION[1]

Being the Substance of His Excellency's Last Conference with his Ghostly Father, Father Francis

Compassion!—'tis a stranger to my heart,
Or if it comes—unwelcome guest depart,—
Boston, farewell, thy final doom is pass'd,
North hears my prayers, and I'm recall'd at last;[2]
Sailor on high thy canvas wings display,
Howl, ye west winds, and hurry me away;
Rise, boisterous clouds, and bellowing from on high,
Whisk me along, ye tyrants of the sky—
Quick! let me leave these friendless shores that shed
Ten thousand curses on my hated head.—
But why so swift, why ask I gales so strong,
Since conscience, cruel conscience, goes along?
Must conscience rack my bosom o'er the deep?
I live in hell while she forbears to sleep;
Come, Father Francis, be my heart display'd,
My burden'd conscience asks thy pious aid;
Come, if confession can discharge my sin,
I will confess till hell itself shall grin,

[1] "General Gage's Confession" was printed in pamphlet form in 1775. As far as I can ascertain, there exists but a single copy of this publication, that in the possession of the Library Company of Philadelphia. A manuscript note upon this copy, unquestionably the handwriting of Freneau, is as follows: "By Gaine. Published October 25, 1775." The poem was manifestly written after Gage's recall. The poet never reprinted it.

[2] On July 28, 1775, George III. wrote to Lord North: "I have desired Lord Dartmouth to acquaint Lt. G. Gage that as he thinks nothing further can be done this campaign in the province of Massachusetts Bay that he is desired instantly to come over, that he may explain the various wants for carrying on the next campaign." "It was a kindly pretext devised to spare the feelings of an unprofitable but a faithful and a brave servant."—*Trevelyan.* General Gage embarked at Boston for England, Oct. 12, 1775.

And own the world has found in me again
A second Nero; nay, another Cain.

Friar

Why swells thy breast with such distressing woe?
Your honour surely has the sense to know
Your sins are venial—trust me when I say
Your deepest sins may all be purged away.—
But if misfortunes rouse this nightly grief,
Sure Friar Francis can afford relief:
I thought e're this that leaders of renown
Would scorn to bow to giddy fortune's frown;
See yon bright star (the dewy eve begun)
Walks his gay round and sparkles in the sun;
Faints not, encircled by the ambient blaze,
Tho' pestering clouds may sometimes blunt his rays;
But come, confession makes the conscience light,
Confess, my son, and be absolv'd this night.

Gage

First of the first, I tell it in your ear
(For tho' we whisper, heaven, you know, can hear)
This faultless country ne'er deserv'd my hate;
Just are its pleas; unmerited its fate.
When North ordained me to this thankless place,
My conscience rose and star'd me in the face,
And spite of all I did to quench its flame,
Convinc'd me I was wrong before I came.—
But what, alas, can mortal heroes do,
They are but men, as sacred writings shew,—
Tho' I refus'd, they urged me yet the more,
Nay, even the king descended to implore,
And often with him in his closet pent,
Was plagu'd to death to rule this armament;

Who could a monarch's favourite wish deny ?
I yielded just for peace—ay, faith did I—
If this be sin, O tell me, reverend sage,
What will, alas, become of guilty Gage ?

Friar

If this be sin—'tis sin, I make no doubt,
But trust me, honour'd sir, I'll help you out,
Even tho' your arms had rag'd from town to town,
And mow'd like flags these rebel nations down,
And joyful bell return'd the murdering din,
And you yourself the master butcher been,—
All should be well—from sins like this, I ween,
A dozen masses shall discharge you clean;
Small pains in purgatory you'll endure,
And hell, you know, is only for the poor,
Pay well the priest and fear no station there,
For heaven must yield to vehemence of prayer.

Gage

Heaven grant that this may be my smallest sin;
Alas, good friar, I'm yet deeper in—
Come round my bed, with friendly groans condole,
To gratify my paunch, I've wrong'd my soul;
Arms I may wield and murder by command,
Spread devastation thro' a guiltless land,
Whole ranks to hell with howling cannon sweep—
But what had I to do with stealing sheep?[1]
I've read my orders, conn'd them o'er with care,
But not a word of stealing sheep is there;

[1] The scarcity of provisions in the British camp during the siege of Boston has been already alluded to. "When marauding expeditions," says Bancroft, "returned with sheep and hogs and cattle captured from islands, the bells were rung as for victory."

Come, holy friar, can you make a shift
To help a sinner at so dead a lift?
Or must I onward to perdition go,
With theft and murder to complete my woe?

Friar

Murder—nay, hold!—your honour is too sad,
Things are not yet, I hope, become so bad,
Murder, indeed—you've stole, and that I know,
But, sir, believe me, you've not struck a blow;
Some few Americans have bled, 'tis true,
But 'twas the soldiers killed them, and not you.

Gage

Well said, but will this subtile reasoning stand?
Did not the soldiers murder by command,
By my command?—Friar, they did, I swear,
And I must answer for their deeds, I fear.

Friar

Let each man answer for his proper deed,
From sins of murder I pronounce you freed,
And this same reasoning will your honour keep
From imputations of purloining sheep:
Wallace for this to Rome shall post away,
And for this crying sin severely pay,
And tho' his zeal may think his penance slight,
Hair cloth and logs shall be his bed at night,
Coarse fare by day—till his repeated groans
Convince the world he for this sin atones.

Gage

Alas, poor Wallace, how I pity thee!—
But let him go—'tis better him than me;

Yes, let him harbour in some convent there,
And fleas monastic bite him till he swear;
But, friar, have you patience for the rest?
Half my transgressions are not yet confest.

Friar

Not half!—you are a harmless man, I'm told—
Pray, cut them short—the supper will be cold.

Gage

Some devil, regardless of exalted station,
In evil hour assail'd me with temptation,
To issue forth a damned proclamation,
What prince, what king, from Belzebub is free,
He tempted Judas, and has tempted me!
This, this, O friar, was a deadly flaw,
This for the civil founded martial law,[1]
This crime will Gage to Lucifer consign,
And purgatory must for this be mine.
Next—and for this I breathe my deepest sigh,
Ah cruel, flinty, hard, remorseless I!—
How could I crowd my dungeons dark and low
With wounded captives of our injur'd foe?
How could my heart, more hard than hardened steel,
Laugh at the pangs that mangled captives feel?
Why sneer'd I at my fellow men distrest,
Why banished pity from this iron breast!
O friar, could heaven approve my acting so,
Heaven still to mercy swift, to vengeance slow?—

[1] Alluding to the proclamation of June 12, five days before Bunker Hill, which established martial law throughout Massachusetts and proscribed Hancock and Samuel Adams. By this proclamation, all who were in arms about Boston, every member of the State Government and of the Continental Congress, were threatened with condign punishment as rebels and traitors.

O no—you say, then cease your soothing chat,
Cowards are cruel, I can instance that.—
But hold! why did I, when the fact was done,
Deny it all to gallant Washington?
Why did I stuff the epistolary page
With vile invectives only worthy Gage?[1]
Come, friar, help—shall I recant and say
I writ my letter on a drunken day?
How will it sound, if men should chance to tell
A drunken hero can compose so well?

Friar

Your fears are groundless, give me all the blame,
I writ the letter, you but sign'd your name,
Nor let the proclamation cloud your mind,
'Twas I compos'd it and you only sign'd.—
I, Friar Francis—papist tho' I be,
You private papists can't but value me;
Your sins in Lethe shall be swallowed up,
I'll clear you, if you please, before we sup.

Gage

Nay, clear me not—tho' I should cross the brine,
And pay my vows in distant Palestine,
Or land in Spain, a stranger poor and bare,
And rove on foot a wretched pilgrim there,

[1] Washington had written to Gage, remonstrating against the cruel treatment of certain American officers, who were denied the privileges and immunities due their rank. Almost the last official act of Gage was to reply through Burgoyne in a letter addressed to "George Washington, Esqr.," that "Britons, ever pre-eminent in mercy, have overlooked the criminal in the captive. Your prisoners, whose lives by the law of the land are destined to the cord, have hitherto been treated with care and kindness;—indiscriminately, it is true, for I acknowledge no rank that is not derived from the King."

And let my eyes in streams perpetual flow,
Where great Messiah dy'd so long ago,
And wash his sacred footsteps with my tears,
And pay for masses fifty thousand years,
All would not do—my monarch I've obey'd,
And now go home, perhaps to lose my head;—
Pride sent me here, pride blasted in the bud,
Which, if it can, will build its throne in blood,
With slaughter'd millions glut its tearless eyes,
And make all nature fall that it may rise;—
Come, let's embark, your holy whining cease,
Come, let's away, I'll hang myself for peace:
So Pontius Pilate for his murder'd Lord
In his own bosom sheath'd the deadly sword—
Tho' he confess'd and wash'd his hands beside,
His heart condemn'd him and the monster dy'd.

THE DISTREST SHEPHERDESS[1]

or, Mariana's Complaint for the Death of Damon
Written 1775

What madness compell'd my dear shepherd to go
To the siege of Quebec, and distract me with woe!
My heart is so full, it would kill me to tell
How he died on the banks of the river Sorel.

O river Sorel! Thou didst hear him complain,
When dying he languish'd, and called me in vain!
When, pierc'd by the Briton he went to repel,
He sunk on the shores of the river Sorel.

[1] This poem is unique in the 1788 edition of Freneau's works. It is evidently an earlier version of the "Mars and Hymen" below.

O cruel misfortune, my hopes to destroy:
He has left me alone with my Colin, his boy;
With sorrow I see him, with tears my eyes swell;
Shall we go, my sweet babe, to the river Sorel?

But why should I wander, and give him such pain?
My Damon will ne'er see his Colin again:
To wander so far where the wild Indians dwell,
We should faint ere we came to the river Sorel.

But even to see the pale corpse of my dear
Would give me such rapture, such pleasure sincere!
I'll go, my dear boy, and my grief I will tell
To the willows that grow by the river Sorel.

How shall I distinguish my shepherd's dear grave
Amidst the long forest that darkens the wave:—
Perhaps they could give him no tomb when he fell;
Perhaps he is sunk in the river Sorel.

He was a dear fellow!—O, had he remain'd!
For he was uneasy whene'er I complain'd;
He call'd me his charmer, and call'd me his belle,
What a folly to die on the banks of Sorel!

Then let me remain in my lonely retreat;
My shepherd departed I never shall meet—
Here's Billy O'Bluster—I love him as well,
And Damon may stay at the river Sorel.

MARS AND HYMEN[1]

Occasioned by the separation of a young widow from a young military lover, of the troops sent to attack Fort Chamblee, in Canada; in which expedition he lost his life [1775]

Persons of the Poem—Lucinda, Damon, Thyrsis

Damon

Why do we talk of shaded bowers,
  When frosts, my fair one, chill the plain,
And nights are cold, and long the hours
  That damp the ardour of the swain,
Who, parting from his rural fire,
All pleasure doth forego—
  And here and there,
  And everywhere,
Pursues the invading foe.

Yes, we must rest on frosts and snows!
  No season shuts up our campaign!
Hard as the rocks, we dare oppose
  The autumnal, or the wintery reign.
Alike to us, the winds that blow
In summer's season, gay,
  Or those that rave
  On Hudson's wave,
And drift his ice away.

[1] This poem seems first to have appeared in the edition of 1786, where it bore the title, "Female Frailty. Written *November* 1775." Freneau made use of the opening speeches of Damon and Lucinda in his drama, *The Spy*. He omitted the poem from the 1795 edition of his works, retaining, however, the opening lyric, which he entitled "The Northern Soldier." The poem was reprinted in the edition of 1809, the text of which I have used. The poet edited the earlier version with great care, making verbal variations in almost every line, and adding lines and even stanzas. I have marked only a few of the more notable changes.

Winter and war may change the scene!
The ball may pierce, the frost may chill;
And dire misfortunes intervene,
But freedom must be powerful still,
To drive these Britons from our shore,
Who come with sail, who come with oar,
So cruel and unkind,
With servile chain, who strive in vain,
Our freeborn souls to bind. [*Exit*]

Lucinda (*two months after*)

They scold me, and tell me I must not complain,
To part a few weeks with my favourite swain!
He goes to the battle!—and leaves me to mourn—
And tell me—and tell me—and will he return?[1]
When he left me, he kiss'd me—and said, My sweet dear,
In less than a month I again will be here;
But still I can hardly my sorrows adjourn—
You may call me a witch—if ever I return.[2]
I said, My dear soldier, I beg you would stay;
But he, with his farmers,[3] went strutting away—
With anguish and sorrow my bosom did burn,
And I wept—for I thought he would never return.[4]

Thyrsis

Fairest of the female train,
You must seek another swain,
Damon will not come again!

[1] "And, say what you please, he will never return."—*Ed. 1786.*

[2] "With anguish and sorrow my bosom did burn,
And I wept, being sure he would never return."—*Ib.*

[3] "With his soldiers."—*Ib.*

[4] "Then why should I longer my sorrows adjourn?—
You may call me a fool if he ever return."—*Ib.*

All his toils are over!
As you prized him, to excess,
Your loss is great, I will confess,
But, lady, yield not to distress—
I will be your lover.

Lucinda

Not all the swains the land can shew,
(If Damon is not living now)[1]
Can from my bosom drive my woe,
Or bid a second passion glow;—
For Damon has possession;
Not all the gifts that wealth can bring,
Nor all the airs that you can sing,
Nor all the music of the string
Can banish his impression.

Thyrsis

Wedlock and death too often prove
Pernicious to the fires of Love:
With equal strength they both combine
Hearts best united[2] to disjoin:
Hence ardent loves too soon remit;
Thus die the fires that Cupid lit.
Female tears and April snow
Sudden come and sudden go.
Since his head is levelled low,
Cease remembrance of your woe.
Can it be in reason found
To be crazy for Love's wound?[3]
Must you live in sorrows drowned
For a lover under ground?

[1] Not in the earliest version. [2] "Hearts once united."—*Ed. 1786.*

[3] "Never yet was reason found
So distracted with love's wound
As to be in sorrow drown'd."—*Ib.*

Lucinda

What a picture have I seen!
What can all these visions mean!
Wintry groves and vacant halls,
Coffins hid by sable palls,
Monuments and funerals!
Forms terrific to the sight,
Ghastly phantoms clad in white;
Streams that ever seemed to freeze,
Shaded o'er by willow trees,[1]
Ever drooping—hardly green—
What a vision have I seen!
One I saw of angel kind,
From the dregs of life refined;
On her visage such a smile,[2]
And she talk'd in such a style!
All was heaven upon her brow;—
Yes, I think I see her now!
All in beams of light arrayed;
And these cheering words she said:
Fair Lucinda, come to me;
What has grief to do with thee?
O forsake your wretched shore,
Crimsoned with its children's gore![3]
Could you but a moment stray
In the meadows where I play,
You would die to come away.
Come away, and speed your wing—[4]
Here we love, and here we sing!

[1] "Planted round with cypress trees."—*Ed. 1786.*
[2] Four lines beginning with this not in original version.
[3] "Shrouded all with darkness o'er."—*Ib.*
[4] "'Come away! and speed thy flight,
All with me is endless light.'"—*Ib.*

Thyrsis

You will not yet forget your glooms,
The heavy heart, the downcast eye,
The cheek that scarce a smile assumes,
The never-ending sigh![1]

Lucinda

Had you the secret cause to grieve—
That in this breast doth lie,
Instead of wishing to relieve
You would be just as I.

Thyrsis

What secret cause have you to grieve?—
A lover gone astray?—[2]
If one was able to deceive,
Perhaps another may.

Lucinda

My lover has not me deceived,
An act he would disdain:
Oh! he is gone—and I am grieved—
He'll never come again!
He'll never come again!

Thyrsis

The turtle on yon' withered bough
Who lately moaned her murdered mate,
Has found another partner now,—
Such changes all await.

[1] "The breast that heaves a sigh."—*Ed. 1786.*

[2] "A lover gone away?"—*Ib.*

Again her drooping plume is dress'd,
Again she wishes to be bless'd,
And takes a husband to her nest.
If nature has decreed it so
With some above, and all below,
Let us, Lucinda, banish woe,[1]
  Nor be perplext with sorrow:
If I should leave your arms this night,
And die before the morning light,
I would advise you—and you might
  Wed again to-morrow.

Lucinda

The turtle on yon' withered tree!—
That turtle never felt like me!
Her grief is but a moment's date,
Another day, another mate:
And true it is, the feathered race
Hold many a partner no disgrace.
How would the world my fault display,
What would censorious Sally[2] say?
Would say, while grinning malice sneers,—[3]
She made a conquest by her tears!

Thyrsis

My Polly!—once the pride of all,
That shepherd lads their charmers call,
Too early parted with her bloom,
And sleeps in yonder sylvan tomb:

[1] "Let us, like them, forget our woe,
  And not be kill'd with sorrow."—*Ed. 1786.*

[2] "Censorious *Chloe.*"—*Ib.*

[3] "While laughing folly hears."—*Ib.*

Her death has set me free—
Fair as the day, and sweet as May,
But what is that to me!
Since all must bow to fate's arrest,[1]
No love deceased shall rack my breast—
Come, then, Lucinda, and be blest.

Lucinda

My Damon! Oh, can I forget
The hour you left these moistened eyes,
O'er northern lakes to wander far
To colder climes and dreary skies!
There, vengeful, in their wastes of snow
The Britons guard the frozen shore,
And Damon there is perished now,
The swain that shall return no more!

Thyrsis

Weep, weep no more, my Jersey lass,[2]
The pang is past that fixed his doom—
They, too, shall to destruction pass,
Perhaps—and hardly find a tomb.
Refrain your tears—enough are shed—
They, too, shall have their share of woe:
Fled is their fame, their honours fled;
And Washington shall lay them low.

Lucinda

If you had but yon' sergeant's size,
His mien and looks, so debonaire,

[1] "Death's arrest."—*Ed. 1786.*

[2] "My lovely lass."—*Ib.*

You might seem lovely in my eyes,
Nor should you quite despair.[1]
There's something in your looks, I find,
Recalling Damon to my mind—
He is dead, and I must be resigned!
His lively step, his sun-burnt face,
His nervous arm in you I trace—
Indeed,—I think you no disgrace.[2]

Thyrsis

On this dismal, cloudy day,[3]
In these fighting times, I say,
Will you Yea, or will you Nay?

Lucinda

Oh! I will not tell you Nay,
You have such a coaxing way!

Thyrsis

Call the music!—half is done
That my heart could count upon—
From the grave I seize a prize!
Here she is, and where he lies,
She or I but little care!
O, what animals we are!

[1] "If you had once a soldier's guise,
The splendid coat, the sprightly air,
You might seem charming in these eyes,
Nor would I quite despair."—*Ed. 1786.*

[2] "His handsome shape, his manly face,
His youthful step in you I trace—
All, all I wish for, but the *lace*."—*Ib.*

[3] The following eleven lines not in the original version.

For you!—I would forego all ease,[1]
And traverse sands or travel seas.
Of all they sent us from above,
Nothing, nothing is like love!
Happiest passion of the mind,
Sent from heaven to bless mankind,
Though at variance with your charms,
Fate's eternal mandate stands;
Hymen, come!—unite our hands,
And give Lucinda to my arms!

[1] The 1786 version ended as follows :

Thyrsis

For you I would forego my ease,
And traverse lakes, or ravage seas,
And dress in lace, or what you please.

This enchanting month of May,
So bright, so bloomy, and so gay,
Claims our nuptials on this day.

For her vernal triumphs, we
Tune the harp to symphony—
Conquest has attended me.

Brightest season for the mind,
Vigorous, free, and unconfin'd,
Golden age of human kind.

Still at variance with thy charms
Death's eternal empire stands—
Hymen, come—while rapture warms,
And give Lucinda to my arms.

MAC SWIGGEN[1]

A Satire

Written 1775

Long have I sat on this disast'rous shore,
And, sighing, sought to gain a passage o'er
To Europe's towns, where, as our travellers say,
Poets may flourish, or, perhaps they may;
But such abuse has from your coarse pen fell
I think I may defer my voyage as well;
Why should I far in search of honour roam,
And dunces leave to triumph here at home?
Great Jove in wrath a spark of genius gave,
And bade me drink the mad Pierian wave,
Hence came these rhimes, with truth ascrib'd to me,
That swell thy little soul to jealousy:[2]
If thus, tormented at these flighty lays,
You strive to blast what ne'er was meant for praise,
How will you bear the more exalted rhime,
By labour polish'd, and matur'd by time?
Devoted madman! what inspir'd thy rage,
Who bade thy foolish muse with me engage?

[1] I can find only two versions of this poem: that in the 1786 edition of the poet, which I have reproduced, and that in the 1809 edition, in which the title is changed to "A Satire in Answer to a Hostile Attack. [First written, and published 1775.]" From the nature of the concluding lines of the poem, it may be inferred that it was the last work done by the poet before starting on his voyage to the West Indies, late in November. I have not been able to find a trace of the hostile attack in the newspapers or publications of the period, or of the original publication of "Mac Swiggen." The poem was omitted from the 1795 edition, only the first eight lines being used in the short poem "To Shylock Ap-Shenken." The poet made many verbal changes for the later edition, but I have marked only the most significant.

[2] "Urge your little soul to cruelty."—*Ed. 1809.*

Against a wind-mill would'st thou try thy might,
Against a giant[1] would a pigmy fight?
What could thy slanderous pen with malice arm
To injure him, who never did thee harm?[2]
Have I from thee been urgent to attain
The mean ideas of thy barren brain?
Have I been seen in borrowed clothes to shine,
And, when detected, swear by Jove they're mine?
O miscreant, hostile to thine own repose,
From thy own envy thy destruction flows!
  Bless'd be our western world—its scenes conspire
To raise a poet's fancy and his fire,
Lo, blue-topt mountains to the skies ascend!
Lo, shady forests to the breezes bend!
See mighty streams meandering to the main!
See lambs and lambkins sport on every plain!
The spotted herds in flowery meadows see!
But what, ungenerous wretch, are these to thee?—
You find no charms in all that nature yields,
Then leave to me the grottoes and the fields:
I interfere not with your vast design—
Pursue your studies, and I'll follow mine,
Pursue, well pleas'd, your theologic schemes,
Attend professors, and correct your themes,
Still some dull nonsense, low-bred wit invent,
Or prove from scripture what it never meant,
Or far through law, that land of scoundrels, stray,
And truth disguise through all your mazy way;
Wealth you may gain, your clients you may squeeze,
And by long cheating, learn to live at ease;
If but in Wood or Littleton well read,
The devil shall help you to your daily bread.

[1] "Castle."—*Ed. 1809.*

[2] "Meant you harm."—*Ib.*

O waft me far, ye muses of the west—
Give me your green bowers and soft seats of rest—
Thrice happy in those dear retreats to find
A safe retirement from all human kind.
Though dire misfortunes every step attend,
The muse, still social, still remains a friend—
In solitude her converse gives delight,
With gay poetic dreams she cheers the night,
She aids me, shields me, bears me on her wings,
In spite of growling whelps, to high, exalted things,
Beyond the miscreants that my peace molest,
Miscreants, with dullness and with rage opprest.
Hail, great Mac Swiggen![1] foe to honest fame,[2]
Patron of dunces, and thyself the same,
You dream of conquest—tell me, how, or whence?
Act like a man and combat me with sense—
This evil have I known, and known but once,[3]
Thus to be gall'd and slander'd by a dunce,
Saw rage and weakness join their dastard plan
To crush the shadow, not attack the man.
What swarms of vermin from the sultry south
Like frogs surround thy pestilential mouth—
Clad in the garb of sacred sanctity,
What madness prompts thee to invent a lie?
Thou base defender of a wretched crew,

[1] "Thou bright genius." In each case where Mac Swiggen is used in the earlier version, it is changed later.—"This giant," "Sangrado," "dear satirist," "a green goose," "scribbler," and "insect," are supplied in its place.

[2] Of the ninety-four remaining lines of the poem, fifty were taken from the satires written by the poet while in college, in the war between the Whig and Cliosophic Societies. Many of the lines were much changed. The portion used by Freneau may be said to comprise all of the three early satires that could be quoted with decency.

[3] This line and the one following not in the Clio-Whig satires.

Thy tongue let loose on those you never knew,
The human spirit with the brutal join'd,
The imps of Orcus in thy breast combin'd,
The genius barren, and the wicked heart,
Prepar'd to take each trifling scoundrel's part,
The turn'd up nose, the monkey's foolish face,
The scorn of reason, and your sire's disgrace—
Assist me, gods, to drive this dog of rhime
Back to the torments of his native clime,
Where dullness mingles with her native earth,[1]
And rhimes, not worth the pang that gave them birth!
Where did he learn to write or talk with men?—
A senseless blockhead, with a scribbling pen—
In vile acrostics thou may'st please the fair,[2]
Not less than with thy looks and powder'd hair,
But strive no more with rhime to daunt thy foes,
Or, by the flame that in my bosom glows,
The muse on thee shall her worst fury spend,
And hemp, or water, thy vile being end.
Aspers'd like me, who would not grieve and rage!
Who would not burn, Mac Swiggen to engage?
Him and his friends, a mean, designing race,
I, singly I, must combat face to face—
Alone I stand to meet the foul-mouth'd train, [3]
Assisted by no poets of the plain,
Whose timerous Muses cannot swell their theme
Beyond a meadow or a purling stream.—
Were not my breast impervious to despair,
And did not Clio reign unrivall'd there,
I must expire beneath the ungenerous host,
And dullness triumph o'er a poet lost.

[1] This line and the one following not in the Clio-Whig satires.

[2] This line and the seven following not in the Clio-Whig satires.

[3] This line and the seven following not in the Clio-Whig satires.

Rage gives me wings, and fearless prompts me on
To conquer brutes the world should blush to own;
No peace, no quarter to such imps I lend,
Death and perdition on each line I send;
Bring all the wittlings that your host supplies,
A cloud of nonsense and a storm of lies—
Your kitchen wit—Mac Swiggen's loud applause,
That wretched rhymer with his lanthorn jaws—
His deep-set eyes forever on the wink,
His soul extracted from the public sink—
All such as he, to my confusion call—
And tho' ten myriads—I despise them all.
Come on, Mac Swiggen, come—your muse is willing,
Your prose is merry, but your verse is killing—
Come on, attack me with that whining prose,
Your beard is red, and swine-like is your nose,
Like burning brush your bristly head of hair,
The ugliest image of a Greenland bear—
Come on—attack me with your choicest rhimes,
Sound void of sense betrays the unmeaning chimes—
Come, league your forces; all your wit combine,
Your wit not equal to the bold design—
The heaviest arms the Muse can give, I wield,
To stretch Mac Swiggen floundering on the field,
'Swiggen, who, aided by some spurious Muse,
But bellows nonsense, and but writes abuse,
'Swiggen, immortal and unfading grown,[1]
But by no deeds or merits of his own.—
So, when some hateful monster sees the day,
In spirits we preserve it from decay,
But for what end, it is not hard to guess—
Not for its value, but its ugliness.

[1] Six lines not in Clio-Whig satires.

Now, by the winds which shake thy rubric mop,
(That nest of witches, or that barber's shop)
Mac Swiggen, hear—Be wise in times to come,
A dunce by nature, bid thy muse be dumb,
Lest you, devoted to the infernal skies,
Descend, like Lucifer, no more to rise.—
Sick of all feuds, to Reason I appeal[1]
From wars of paper, and from wars of steel,
Let others here their hopes and wishes end,
I to the sea with weary steps descend,
Quit the mean conquest that such swine might yield,
And leave Mac Swiggen to enjoy the field—
In distant isles some happier scene I'll choose,
And court in softer shades the unwilling Muse,
Thrice happy there, through peaceful plains to rove,
Or the cool verdure of the orange grove,
Safe from the miscreants that my peace molest,
Miscreants, with dullness and with rage opprest.

[1] The remainder of the poem not in the Clio-Whig satires.

THE HOUSE OF NIGHT[1]

A Vision

ADVERTISEMENT—This Poem is founded upon the authority of Scripture, inasmuch as these sacred books assert, that *the last enemy that shall be conquered is Death.* For the purposes of poetry he is here personified, and represented as on his dying bed. The scene is laid at a solitary palace, (the time midnight) which, tho' before beautiful and joyous, is now become sad and gloomy, as being the abode and receptacle of Death. Its owner, an amiable, majestic youth, who had lately lost a beloved consort, nevertheless with a noble philosophical fortitude and humanity, entertains him in a friendly manner, and by employing Physicians, endeavours to restore him to health, altho' an enemy; convinced of the excellence and propriety of that divine precept, *If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink.* He nevertheless, as if by a spirit of prophecy, informs this (fictitiously) wicked being of the certainty of his doom, and represents to him in a pathetic manner the vanity of his expectations, either of a reception into the abodes of the just, or continuing longer to make havock of mankind upon earth. The patient finding his end approaching, composes his epitaph, and orders it to be engraved on his tombstone, hinting to us thereby, that even Death and Distress have vanity; and would be remembered with honour after he is no more, altho' his whole life has been spent in deeds of devastation and murder. He dies at last in the utmost agonies of despair, after agreeing with an avaricious Undertaker to intomb his bones. This reflects upon the inhumanity of those men, who, not to mention an enemy, would scarcely cover a departed friend with a little dust, without certainty of reward for so doing. The circumstances of his funeral are then recited, and the visionary and fabulous part of the poem disappears. It concludes with a few reflexions on the impropriety of a too great attachment to the present life, and incentives to such moral virtue as may assist in conducting us to a better.

I

Trembling I write my dream, and recollect
A fearful vision at the midnight hour;
So late, Death o'er me spread his sable wings,
Painted with fancies of malignant power!

[1] The text is from the edition of 1786, which contains the only complete version. The poem was first published in the August number of *The United*

2

Such was the dream the sage Chaldean saw
Disclos'd to him that felt heav'n's vengeful rod,
Such was the ghost, who through deep silence cry'd,
Shall mortal man—be juster than his God?

3

Let others draw from smiling skies their theme,
And tell of climes that boast unfading light,
I draw a darker scene, replete with gloom,
I sing the horrors of the House of Night.

4

Stranger, believe the truth experience tells,
Poetic dreams are of a finer cast
Than those which o'er the sober brain diffus'd,
Are but a repetition of some action past.

5

Fancy, I own thy power—when sunk in sleep
Thou play'st thy wild delusive part so well
You lift me into immortality,
Depict new heavens, or draw the scenes of hell.

States Magazine, 1779, which also contained the following note: "'*The House of Night*,' a poem in the present number of the Magazine, is from a young gentleman who has favoured us with several original pieces in the course of this work; and readers of taste will no doubt be pleased with it, as perfectly original both in the design and manner of it." It bore the title "The House of Night; or, Six Hours Lodging with Death, A Vision," and the quotation:

"*Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,*
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile Fatum
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.
VIRG. GEORG. II., v. 490."

As printed in the magazine it consisted of seventy-three stanzas, which coincide with the following numbers of the 1786 edition: 3, 4, 6–10, 12, 14,

6

By some sad means, when Reason holds no sway,
Lonely I rov'd at midnight o'er a plain
Where murmuring streams and mingling rivers flow
Far to their springs, or seek the sea again.

7

Sweet vernal May! tho' then thy woods in bloom
Flourish'd, yet nought of this could Fancy see,
No wild pinks bless'd the meads, no green the fields,
And naked seem'd to stand each lifeless tree:

8

Dark was the sky, and not one friendly star
Shone from the zenith or horizon, clear,
Mist sate upon the woods, and darkness rode
In her black chariot, with a wild career.

9

And from the woods the late resounding note
Issued of the loquacious Whip-poor-will,*
Hoarse, howling dogs, and nightly roving wolves
Clamour'd from far off cliffs invisible.

*A Bird peculiar to America, of a solitary nature, who never sings but in the night. Her note resembles the name given to her by the country people.—*Freneau's note.*

18, 20–26, 28, 29, 31, 32, 47–54, 58, 59, 65, 66, 68, 69, 72, 74, 75, 78, 79, 86, 87, 94, 96–100, 102–106, 111, 113–115, 117, 118, 125–127, 130, 131. Following are the variations:

Line 10, "eternal light"; 11, "a deeper scene"; 21, "the mind cannot recall"; 23, "where Chesapeque's deep rivers upward flow"; 25, "Though then the woods, in fairest vernal bloom"; 28, "childless tree"; 29, "a friendly star"; 35, "Hoarse roaring wolves, and nightly roving bears"; 37, "Fierce from the loudly sounding Chesapeque"; 45, 46, "When to my view a pile of buildings stood, And near, a garden of autumnal hue"; 55,

10

Rude, from the wide extended Chesapeke
I heard the winds the dashing waves assail,
And saw from far, by picturing fancy form'd,
The black ship travelling through the noisy gale.

11

At last, by chance and guardian fancy led,
I reach'd a noble dome, rais'd fair and high,
And saw the light from upper windows flame,
Presage of mirth and hospitality.

12

And by that light around the dome appear'd
A mournful garden of autumnal hue,
Its lately pleasing flowers all drooping stood
Amidst high weeds that in rank plenty grew.

13

The Primrose there, the violet darkly blue,
Daisies and fair Narcissus ceas'd to rise,
Gay spotted pinks their charming bloom withdrew,
And Polyanthus quench'd its thousand dyes.

"The yew, the willow"; 69, "Peace to those buildings; when at once I heard"; 70, "in a remoter dome"; 77, "a superior chamber"; 78, "Confused murmurs, scarce distinguish'd sounds"; 81, "Long were their feuds, for they design'd to talk"; 95, "And from a bed behind a curtain veil"; 97, "Turning to view from whence the murmur came"; 99, "Death, dreary death, upon the gloomy couch"; 100, "in rueful form"; 101, "High o'er his head"; 109, 110, "Sad was his aspect, if we so can call, That aspect where but skin and bones were seen"; 111, "deep and low"; 121, 122, "Then at my hand I saw a comely youth, Of port majestic, who began to tell"; 126, "The monarch"; 127, "melancholy reign"; 185, "the man"; 186, "with frightful tone"; 188, "To answer, and"; 192, "their sickly stores"; 194, "the placid main"; 195, "fine groves"; 196, "Beckoning his footsteps"; 198, "The summer winds, and of the church-yard hoar"; 202, "Of fevers and con-

14

No pleasant fruit or blossom gaily smil'd,
Nought but unhappy plants or trees were seen,
The yew, the myrtle, and the church-yard elm,
The cypress, with its melancholy green.

15

There cedars dark, the osier, and the pine,
Shorn tamarisks, and weeping willows grew,
The poplar tall, the lotos, and the lime,
And pyracantha did her leaves renew.

16

The poppy there, companion to repose,
Display'd her blossoms that began to fall,
And here the purple amaranthus rose
With mint strong-scented, for the funeral.

17

And here and there with laurel shrubs between
A tombstone lay, inscrib'd with strains of woe,
And stanzas sad, throughout the dismal green,
Lamented for the dead that slept below.

tagions"; 206, "Arise, make search"; 229, 230, "But now refresh'd, the phantom rais'd his head, And writhing, seem'd to aim once more to talk"; 232, "expiring death"; 234, "the monstrous spectre"; 257, "Now to the anxious youth his speech he turn'd"; 274, "inspired page"; 275, "harden'd breast"; 285, "Wicked old man"; 295, 296, "nor dost thou now deserve To have 'here lies' engrav'd"; 299, 300, "Might dwell unmov'd amidst November's glooms, And laugh the dullest of his shades away"; 309, "thy savage rage"; 310, "a bloody army"; 315, "The Caledonian with the Albion join'd." Here in the 1779 version occur the following stanzas:

"Why runs thy stream dejected to the main,
O Hudson, Hudson, dreary, dull and slow?
Seek me no more along that mountain stream,
For on his banks is heard the sound of woe.

18

Peace to this awful dome!—when strait I heard
The voice of men in a secluded room,
Much did they talk of death, and much of life,
Of coffins, shrouds, and horrors of a tomb.

19

Pathetic were their words, and well they aim'd
To explain the mystic paths of providence,
Learn'd were they all, but there remain'd not I
To hear the upshot of their conference.

20

Meantime from an adjoining chamber came
Confused murmurings, half distinguish'd sounds,
And as I nearer drew, disputes arose
Of surgery, and remedies for wounds.

21

Dull were their feuds, for they went on to talk
Of *Anchylosis*,* and the shoulder blade,
Os Femoris,* *Trochanters**—and whate'er
Has been discuss'd by Cheselden or Meade:

* *Anchylosis*—a morbid contraction of the joints. *Os Femoris*—the thigh bone. *Trochanters*—two processes in the upper part of the thigh bone, otherwise called *rotator major et minor*, in which the tendons of many muscles terminate.—*Freneau's notes.*

Sword, famine, thirst, and pining sickness there,
Shall people half the realms this monster owns;
He like the cruel foe, accursed he,
Laughs at our pains, rejoices in our groans.

Now will you tremble if you hear your fate,
Out of the dread Apocalypse your doom,
That death and hell must perish in the lake
Of fire, dispelling half hell's ancient gloom."

22

And often each, to prove his notion true,
Brought proofs from Galen or Hippocrates—
But fancy led me hence—and left them so,
Firm at their points of hardy No and Yes.

23

Then up three winding stairs my feet were brought
To a high chamber, hung with mourning sad,
The unsnuff'd candles glar'd with visage dim,
'Midst grief, in ecstacy of woe run mad.

24

A wide leaf'd table stood on either side,
Well fraught with phials, half their liquids spent,
And from a couch, behind the curtain's veil,
I heard a hollow voice of loud lament.

25

Turning to view the object whence it came,
My frighted eyes a horrid form survey'd;
Fancy, I own thy power—Death on the couch,
With fleshless limbs, at rueful length, was laid.

341, "black optics"; 348, "And leave the business to some deputy"; 373, "Now thus the drooping victim gave me charge"; 381, "A quivering light"; 383, "by whose far glimmering beams"; 384, "arrayed with ghosts"; 388, "furies snatch the engraving pen"; 390–392,

> "Tir'd of his long continued victory:
> What glory can there be to vanquish those
> Who all beneath his stroke are sure to die?"

398, "Is borne secure, and rides aloft in state"; 399, "No, the stars"; 410, "Burst from the skies the fury of a blast"; 411, "Round the four eaves"; 414, "Sport with the sands"; 417, "Lights through the air like blazing stars"; 420, "As if afraid the fearful"; 424, "its dreary song";

26

And o'er his head flew jealousies and cares,
Ghosts, imps, and half the black Tartarian crew,
Arch-angels damn'd, nor was their Prince remote,
Borne on the vaporous wings of Stygian dew.

27

Around his bed, by the dull flambeaux' glare,
I saw pale phantoms—Rage to madness vext,
Wan, wasting grief, and ever musing care,
Distressful pain, and poverty perplext.

28

Sad was his countenance, if we can call
That countenance, where only bones were seen
And eyes sunk in their sockets, dark and low,
And teeth, that only show'd themselves to grin.

29

Reft was his scull of hair, and no fresh bloom
Of chearful mirth sate on his visage hoar:
Sometimes he rais'd his head, while deep-drawn groans
Were mixt with words that did his fate deplore.

441, "Now from within"; 451, "Roar'd like a devil; while the woods around"; 458–460,

"Haste, seize the wretch who my request denies.
Tophet receive him to thy lowest pit,
Chain'd midst eternal oaths and blasphemies."

470, "And found the cœmetery in the gloom"; 471, "a hell-red waving light"; 472, "horrid circles"; 497, 498, "to the grave"; 499, 500, "A sable chariot drove with wild career, And following close a gloomy cavalcade"; 501, "Whose spectre forms"; 502, "by Pluto's consort wove"; 507, "lanthorn's beam"; 517, "Now deep was plac'd"; 520, "The sable steeds went swifter than the wind"; 523, 524, "Blooming the morn arose, and in the east Stalk'd gallantly in her sun-beam parade." The poem closes in the 1779 version with the following stanzas:

30

Oft did he wish to see the daylight spring,
And often toward the window lean'd to hear,
Fore-runner of the scarlet-mantled morn,
The early note of wakeful Chanticleer.

31

Thus he—But at my hand a portly youth
Of comely countenance, began to tell,
"That this was Death upon his dying bed,
"Sullen, morose, and peevish to be well;

32

"Fixt is his doom—the miscreant reigns no more
"The tyrant of the dying or the dead;
"This night concludes his all-consuming reign,
"Pour out, ye heav'ns, your vengeance on his head.

33

"But since, my friend (said he), chance leads you here,
"With me this night upon the sick attend,
"You on this bed of death must watch, and I
"Will not be distant from the fretful fiend.

"Waking I found my weary night a dream;
Dreams are perhaps forebodings of the soul;
Learn'd sages tell why all these whims arose,
And from what source such mystic visions roll.

Do they portend approaching death, which tells
I soon must hence my darksome journey go?
Sweet Cherub Hope! Dispel the clouded dream
Sweet Cherub Hope, man's guardian god below.

Stranger, who'er thou art, who this shall read,
Say does thy nightly fancy rove like mine;
Transport thee o'er wide lands and wider seas
Now underneath the pole and now the burning line?

34

"Before he made this lofty pile his home,
"In undisturb'd repose I sweetly slept,
"But when he came to this sequester'd dome,
"'Twas then my troubles came, and then I wept:

35

"Twice three long nights, in this sad chamber, I,
"As though a brother languish'd in despair,
"Have 'tended faithful round his gloomy bed,
"Have been content to breathe this loathsome air.

36

"A while relieve the languors that I feel,
"Sleep's magic forces close my weary eyes;
"Soft o'er my soul unwonted slumbers steal,
"Aid the weak patient till you see me rise.

37

"But let no slumbers on your eye-lids fall,
"That if he ask for powder or for pill
"You may be ready at the word to start,
"And still seem anxious to perform his will.

Poet, who thus dost rove, say, shall thou fear
New Jordan's stream prefigured by the old?
It will but waft thee where thy fathers are
The bards with long eternity enroll'd.

It will but waft thee where thy Homer shrouds
His laurell'd head in some Elysian grove,
And on whose skirts perhaps in future years,
At awful distance you and I may rove.

Enough—when God and nature give the word,
I'll tempt the dusky shore and narrow sea:
Content to die, just as it be decreed,
At four score years, or now at twenty-three."

38

"The bleeding Saviour of a world undone
"Bade thy compassion rise toward thy foe;
"Then, stranger, for the sake of Mary's son,
"Thy tears of pity on this wretch bestow.

39

"'Twas he that stole from my adoring arms
"Aspasia, she the loveliest of her kind,
"Lucretia's virtue, with a Helen's charms,
"Charms of the face, and beauties of the mind.

40

"The blushy cheek, the lively, beaming eye,
"The ruby lip, the flowing jetty hair,
"The stature tall, the aspect so divine,
"All beauty, you would think, had center'd there.

41

"Each future age her virtues shall extol,
"Nor the just tribute to her worth refuse;
"Fam'd, to the stars Urania bids her rise,
"Theme of the moral, and the tragic Muse.

In the edition of 1795, Freneau used only stanzas 3–17, 119–124 of the poem, giving it the title "The Vision of the Night. A Fragment." In this there are some sixteen variations from the earlier text, nearly all minor verbal changes not always for the better. Several, however, are significant, for instance, line 12 is made to read, "I sing the horrors and the shades of night"; line 32 is changed to "with her ebon spear"; line 478 to "raised by churchmen's hands"; and 480 to "texts from Moses."

The poet used the 1786 edition as a sort of quarry for his later editions. He used thirteen stanzas for "The Sexton's Sermon," q.v.; stanzas 39–43 were reprinted in the 1809 edition in connection with stanzas 35–38 of "Santa Cruz" and entitled "Elegiac Lines"; stanza 79 became stanza one and 55 stanza two of the "Hessian Embarkation," and stanza 49 was inserted after stanza 90 of the 1809 version of "Santa Cruz."

42

"Sweet as the fragrance of the vernal morn,
"Nipt in its bloom this faded flower I see;
"The inspiring angel from that breast is gone,
"And life's warm tide forever chill'd in thee!

43

"Such charms shall greet my longing soul no more,
"Her lively eyes are clos'd in endless shade,
"Torpid, she rests on yonder marble floor;
"Approach, and see what havock Death has made.

44

"Yet, stranger, hold—her charms are so divine,
"Such tints of life still on her visage glow,
"That even in death this slumbering bride of mine
"May seize thy heart, and make thee wretched too.

45

"O shun the sight—forbid thy trembling hand
"From her pale face to raise the enshrouding lawn,—
"Death claims thy care, obey his stern command,
"Trim the dull tapers, for I see no dawn!"

46

So said, at Death's left side I sate me down,
The mourning youth toward his right reclin'd;
Death in the middle lay, with all his groans,
And much he toss'd and tumbled, sigh'd and pin'd.

47

But now this man of hell toward me turn'd,
And strait, in hideous tone, began to speak;
Long held he sage discourse, but I forebore
To answer him, much less his news to seek.

48

He talk'd of tomb-stones and of monuments,
Of Equinoctial climes and India shores,
He talk'd of stars that shed their influence,
Fevers and plagues, and all their noxious stores.

49

He mention'd, too, the guileful *calenture*,*
Tempting the sailor on the deep sea main,
That paints gay groves upon the ocean floor,
Beckoning her victim to the faithless scene.

50

Much spoke he of the myrtle and the yew,
Of ghosts that nightly walk the church-yard o'er,
Of storms that through the wint'ry ocean blow
And dash the well-mann'd galley on the shore,

51

Of broad-mouth'd cannons, and the thunderbolt,
Of sieges and convulsions, dearth and fire,
Of poisonous weeds—but seem'd to sneer at these
Who by the laurel o'er him did aspire.

52

Then with a hollow voice thus went he on:
"Get up, and search, and bring, when found, to me,
"Some cordial, potion, or some pleasant draught,
"Sweet, slumb'rous poppy, or the mild Bohea.

* *Calenture*—an inflammatory fever, attended with a delirium, common in long voyages at sea, in which the diseased persons fancy the sea to be green fields and meadows, and, if they are not hindered, will leap overboard.—*Freneau's note.*

53

"But hark, my pitying friend!—and, if you can,
"Deceive the grim physician at the door—
"Bring half the mountain springs—ah! hither bring
"The cold rock water from the shady bower.

54

"For till this night such thirst did ne'er invade,
"A thirst provok'd by heav'n's avenging hand;
"Hence bear me, friends, to quaff, and quaff again
"The cool wave bubbling from the yellow sand.

55

"To these dark walls with stately step I came,
"Prepar'd your drugs and doses to defy;
"Smit with the love of never dying fame,
"I came, alas! to conquer—not to die!"

56

Glad, from his side I sprang, and fetch'd the draught,
Which down his greedy throat he quickly swills,
Then on a second errand sent me strait,
To search in some dark corner for his pills.

57

Quoth he, "These pills have long compounded been,
"Of dead men's bones and bitter roots, I trow;
"But that I may to wonted health return,
"Throughout my lank veins shall their substance go."

58

So down they went.—He rais'd his fainting head
And oft in feeble tone essay'd to talk;
Quoth he, "Since remedies have small avail,
"Assist unhappy Death once more to walk."

59

Then slowly rising from his loathsome bed,
On wasted legs the meagre monster stood,
Gap'd wide, and foam'd, and hungry seem'd to ask,
Tho' sick, an endless quantity of food.

60

Said he, "The sweet melodious flute prepare,
"The anthem, and the organ's solemn sound,
"Such as may strike my soul with ecstacy,
"Such as may from yon' lofty wall rebound.

61

"Sweet music can the fiercest pains assuage,
"She bids the soul to heaven's blest mansions rise,
"She calms despair, controuls infernal rage
"And deepest anguish, when it hears her, dies.

62

"And see, the mizzling, misty midnight reigns,
"And no soft dews are on my eye-lids sent!—
"Here, stranger, lend thy hand; assist me, pray,
"To walk a circuit of no large extent."—

63

On my prest shoulders leaning, round he went,
And could have made the boldest spectre flee,
I led him up stairs, and I led him down,
But not one moment's rest from pain got he.

64

Then with his dart, its cusp unpointed now,
Thrice with main strength he smote the trembling floor;
The roof resounded to the fearful blow,
And Cleon started, doom'd to sleep no more.

65

When thus spoke Death, impatient of controul,
"Quick, move, and bring from yonder black bureau
"The sacred book that may preserve my soul
"From long damnation, and eternal woe.

66

"And with it bring—for you may find them there,
"The works of holy authors, dead and gone,
"The sacred tome of moving Drelincourt,
"Or what more solemn Sherlock mus'd upon:

67

"And read, my Cleon, what these sages say,
"And what the sacred Penman hath declar'd,
"That when the wicked leaves his odious way,
"His sins shall vanish, and his soul be spar'd."

68

But he, unmindful of the vain command,
Reason'd with Death, nor were his reasonings few:
Quoth he—"My Lord, what frenzy moves your brain,
"Pray, what, my Lord, can Sherlock be to you,

69

"Or all the sage divines that ever wrote,
"Grave Drelincourt, or heaven's unerring page;
"These point their arrows at your hostile breast,
"And raise new pains that time must ne'er assuage.

70

"And why should thus thy woe disturb my rest?
"Much of Theology I once did read,
"And there 'tis fixt, sure as my God is so,
"That Death shall perish, tho' a God should bleed.

71

"The martyr, doom'd the pangs of fire to feel,
"Lives but a moment in the sultry blast;
"The victim groans, and dies beneath the steel,
"But thy severer pains shall always last.

72

"O miscreant vile, thy age has made thee doat—
"If peace, if sacred peace were found for you,
"Hell would cry out, and all the damn'd arise
"And, more deserving, seek for pity too.

73

"Seek not for Paradise—'tis not for thee,
"Where high in heaven its sweetest blossoms blow,
"Nor even where, gliding to the Persian main,
"Thy waves, Euphrates, through the garden flow!

74

"Bloody has been thy reign, O man of hell,
"Who sympathiz'd with no departing groan;
"Cruel wast thou, and hardly dost deserve
"To have *Hic Jacet* stampt upon thy stone.

75

"He that could build his mansion o'er the tombs,
"Depending still on sickness and decay,
"May dwell unmov'd amidst these drowsier glooms,
"May laugh the dullest of these shades away.

76

"Remember how with unrelenting ire
"You tore the infant from the unwilling breast—
"Aspasia fell, and Cleon must expire,
"Doom'd by the impartial God to endless rest:

77

"In vain with stars he deck'd yon' spangled skies,
"And bade the mind to heaven's bright regions soar,
"And brought so far to my admiring eyes
"A glimpse of glories that shall blaze no more!

78

"Even now, to glut thy devilish wrath, I see
"From eastern realms a wasteful army rise:
"Why else those lights that tremble in the north?
"Why else yon' comet blazing through the skies?

79

"Rejoice, O fiend; Britannia's tyrant sends
"From German plains his myriads to our shore.
"The fierce Hibernian with the Briton join'd—
"Bring them, ye winds!—but waft them back no more.

80

"To you, alas! the fates in wrath deny
"The comforts to our parting moments due,
"And leave you here to languish and to die,
"Your crimes too many, and your tears too few.

81

"No cheering voice to thee shall cry, Repent!
"As once it echoed through the wilderness—
"No patron died for thee—damn'd, damn'd art thou
"Like all the devils, nor one jot the less.

82

"A gloomy land, with sullen skies is thine,
"Where never rose or amaranthus grow,
"No daffodils, nor comely columbine,
"No hyacinths nor asphodels for you.

83

"The barren trees that flourish on the shore
"With leaves or fruit were never seen to bend,
"O'er languid waves unblossom'd branches hang,
"And every branch sustains some vagrant fiend.

84

"And now no more remains, but to prepare
"To take possession of thy punishment;
"That's thy inheritance, that thy domain,
"A land of bitter woe, and loud lament.

85

"And oh that He, who spread the universe,
"Would cast one pitying glance on thee below!
"Millions of years in torments thou might'st fry,
"But thy eternity!—who can conceive its woe!"

86

He heard, and round with his black eye-balls gaz'd,
Full of despair, and curs'd, and rav'd, and swore:
"And since this is my doom," said he, "call up
"Your wood-mechanics to my chamber door:

87

"Blame not on me the ravage to be made;
"Proclaim,—even Death abhors such woe to see;
"I'll quit the world, while decently I can,
"And leave the work to George my deputy."

88

Up rush'd a band, with compasses and scales
To measure his slim carcase, long and lean—
"Be sure," said he, "to frame my coffin strong,
"You, master workman, and your men, I mean:

89

"For if the Devil, so late my trusty friend,
"Should get one hint where I am laid, from you,
"Not with my soul content, he'd seek to find
"That mouldering mass of bones, my body, too!

90

"Of hardest ebon let the plank be found,
"With clamps and ponderous bars secur'd around,
"That if the box by Satan should be storm'd,
"It may be able for resistance found."

91

"Yes," said the master workman, "noble Death,
"Your coffin shall be strong—that leave to me—
"But who shall these your funeral dues discharge?
"Nor friends nor pence you have, that I can see."

92

To this said Death—"You might have ask'd me, too,
"Base caitiff, who are my executors,
"Where my estate, and who the men that shall
"Partake my substance, and be call'd my heirs.

93

"Know, then, that hell is my inheritance,
"The devil himself my funeral dues must pay—
"Go—since you must be paid—go, ask of him,
"For he has gold, as fabling poets say."

94

Strait they retir'd—when thus he gave me charge,
Pointing from the light window to the west,
"Go three miles o'er the plain, and you shall see
"A burying-yard of sinners dead, unblest.

95

"Amid the graves a spiry building stands
"Whose solemn knell resounding through the gloom
"Shall call thee o'er the circumjacent lands
"To the dull mansion destin'd for my tomb.

96

"There, since 'tis dark, I'll plant a glimmering light
"Just snatch'd from hell, by whose reflected beams
"Thou shalt behold a tomb-stone, full eight feet,
"Fast by a grave, replete with ghosts and dreams.

97

"And on that stone engrave this epitaph,
"Since Death, it seems, must die like mortal men;
"Yes—on that stone engrave this epitaph,
"Though all hell's furies aim to snatch the pen.

98

"*Death in this tomb his weary bones hath laid,*
"*Sick of dominion o'er the human kind—*
"*Behold what devastations he hath made,*
"*Survey the millions by his arm confin'd.*

99

"*Six thousand years has sovereign sway been mine,*
"*None, but myself, can real glory claim;*
"*Great Regent of the world I reign'd alone,*
"*And princes trembled when my mandate came.*

100

"Vast and unmatch'd throughout the world, my fame
"Takes place of gods, and asks no mortal date—
"No; by myself, and by the heavens, I swear,
"Not Alexander's name is half so great.

101

"Nor swords nor darts my prowess could withstand,
"All quit their arms, and bowd to my decree,
"Even mighty Julius died beneath my hand,
"For slaves and Cæsars were the same to me!

102

"Traveller, wouldst thou his noblest trophies seek,
"Search in no narrow spot obscure for those;
"The sea profound, the surface of all land
"Is moulded with the myriads of his foes."

103

Scarce had he spoke, when on the lofty dome
Rush'd from the clouds a hoarse resounding blast—
Round the four eaves so loud and sad it play'd
As though all musick were to breathe its last.

104

Warm was the gale, and such as travellers say
Sport with the winds on Zaara's barren waste;
Black was the sky, a mourning carpet spread,
Its azure blotted, and its stars o'ercast!

105

Lights in the air like burning stars were hurl'd,
Dogs howl'd, heaven mutter'd, and the tempest blew,
The red half-moon peeped from behind a cloud
As if in dread the amazing scene to view.

106

The mournful trees that in the garden stood
Bent to the tempest as it rush'd along,
The elm, the myrtle, and the cypress sad
More melancholy tun'd its bellowing song.

107

No more that elm its noble branches spread,
The yew, the cypress, or the myrtle tree,
Rent from the roots the tempest tore them down,
And all the grove in wild confusion lay.

108

Yet, mindful of his dread command, I part
Glad from the magic dome—nor found relief;
Damps from the dead hung heavier round my heart,
While sad remembrance rous'd her stores of grief.

109

O'er a dark field I held my dubious way
Where Jack-a-lanthorn walk'd his lonely round,
Beneath my feet substantial darkness lay,
And screams were heard from the distemper'd ground.

110

Nor look'd I back, till to a far off wood,
Trembling with fear, my weary feet had sped—
Dark was the night, but at the inchanted dome
I saw the infernal windows flaming red.

111

And from within the howls of Death I heard,
Cursing the dismal night that gave him birth,
Damning his ancient sire, and mother sin,
Who at the gates of hell, accursed, brought him forth.

112

[For fancy gave to my enraptur'd soul
An eagle's eye, with keenest glance to see,
And bade those distant sounds distinctly roll,
Which, waking, never had affected me.]

113

Oft his pale breast with cruel hand he smote,
And tearing from his limbs a winding sheet,
Roar'd to the black skies, while the woods around,
As wicked as himself, his words repeat.

114

Thrice tow'rd the skies his meagre arms he rear'd,
Invok'd all hell, and thunders on his head,
Bid light'nings fly, earth yawn, and tempests roar,
And the sea wrap him in its oozy bed.

115

"My life for one cool draught!—O, fetch your springs,
"Can one unfeeling to my woes be found!
"No friendly visage comes to my relief,
"But ghosts impend, and spectres hover round.

116

"Though humbled now, dishearten'd and distrest,
"Yet, when admitted to the peaceful ground,
"With heroes, kings, and conquerors I shall rest,
"Shall sleep as safely, and perhaps as sound."

117

Dim burnt the lamp, and now the phantom Death
Gave his last groans in horror and despair—
"All hell demands me hence,"—he said, and threw
The red lamp hissing through the midnight air.

118

Trembling, across the plain my course I held,
And found the grave-yard, loitering through the gloom,
And, in the midst, a hell-red, wandering light,
Walking in fiery circles round the tomb.

119

Among the graves a spiry building stood,
Whose tolling bell, resounding through the shade,
Sung doleful ditties to the adjacent wood,
And many a dismal drowsy thing it said.

120

This fabrick tall, with towers and chancels grac'd,
Was rais'd by sinners' hands, in ages fled;
The roof they painted, and the beams they brac'd,
And texts from scripture o'er the walls they spread:

121

But wicked were their hearts, for they refus'd
To aid the helpless orphan, when distrest,
The shivering, naked stranger they mis-us'd,
And banish'd from their doors the starving guest.

122

By laws protected, cruel and prophane,
The poor man's ox these monsters drove away;—
And left Distress to attend her infant train,
No friend to comfort, and no bread to stay.

123

But heaven look'd on with keen, resentful eye,
And doom'd them to perdition and the grave,
That as they felt not for the wretch distrest,
So heaven no pity on their souls would have.

124

In pride they rais'd this building tall and fair,
Their hearts were on perpetual mischief bent,
With pride they preach'd, and pride was in their prayer,
With pride they were deceiv'd, and so to hell they went.

125

At distance far approaching to the tomb,
By lamps and lanthorns guided through the shade,
A coal-black chariot hurried through the gloom,
Spectres attending, in black weeds array'd,

126

Whose woeful forms yet chill my soul with dread,
Each wore a vest in Stygian chambers wove,
Death's kindred all—Death's horses they bestrode,
And gallop'd fiercely, as the chariot drove.

127

Each horrid face a grizly mask conceal'd,
Their busy eyes shot terror to my soul
As now and then, by the pale lanthorn's glare,
I saw them for their parted friend condole.

128

Before the hearse Death's chaplain seem'd to go,
Who strove to comfort, what he could, the dead;
Talk'd much of Satan, and the land of woe,
And many a chapter from the scriptures read.

129

At last he rais'd the swelling anthem high,
In dismal numbers seem'd he to complain;
The captive tribes that by Euphrates wept,
Their song was jovial to his dreary strain.

130

That done, they plac'd the carcase in the tomb,
To dust and dull oblivion now resign'd,
Then turn'd the chariot tow'rd the House of Night,
Which soon flew off, and left no trace behind.

131

But as I stoop'd to write the appointed verse,
Swifter than thought the airy scene decay'd;
Blushing the morn arose, and from the east
With her gay streams of light dispell'd the shade.

132

What is this Death, ye deep read sophists, say?—
Death is no more than one unceasing change;
New forms arise, while other forms decay,
Yet all is Life throughout creation's range.

133

The towering Alps, the haughty Appenine,
The Andes, wrapt in everlasting snow,
The Apalachian and the Ararat
Sooner or later must to ruin go.

134

Hills sink to plains, and man returns to dust,
That dust supports a reptile or a flower;
Each changeful atom by some other nurs'd
Takes some new form, to perish in an hour.

135

Too nearly join'd to sickness, toils, and pains,
(Perhaps for former crimes imprison'd here)
True to itself the immortal soul remains,
And seeks new mansions in the starry sphere.

136

When Nature bids thee from the world retire,
With joy thy lodging leave, a fated guest;
In Paradise, the land of thy desire,
Existing always, always to be blest.

THE JAMAICA FUNERAL[1]

1776

1

Alcander died—the rich, the great, the brave;
Even such must yield to heaven's severe decree,
Death, still at hand, conducts us to the grave,
And humbles monarchs as he humbled thee.

2

When, lingering, to his end Alcander drew,
Officious friends besieg'd his lofty door,
Impatient they the dying man to view
And touch that hand they soon must touch no more.

3

"Alas, he's gone!" the sad attendants cry,
Fled is the breath that never shall return—
"Alas! he's gone!" his tearful friends reply,
"Spread the dark crape, and round his pale corpse mourn.

[1] As far as I can discover, this poem occurs only in the edition of 1786. Freneau seems deliberately to have abandoned it after this edition. A few stanzas from this poem are scattered through the poem entitled "The Sexton's Sermon," *q. v.* Stanza 43 was inserted after stanza 15 of the later versions of "Santa Cruz."

4

"Ye that attend the pompous funeral, due,
"In sable vestments let your limbs be clad,
"For vulgar deaths a common sorrow shew,
"But costly griefs are for the wealthy dead.

5

"Prepare the blessings of the generous vine,
"Let bulls and oxen groan beneath the steel,
"Throughout the board let choicest dainties shine,
"To every guest a generous portion deal."

6

A mighty crowd approach'd the mourning dome,
Some came to hear the sermon and the prayer,
Some came to shun Xantippe's voice at home,
And some with Bacchus to relieve their care.

7

A Levite came, and sigh'd among the rest,
A rusty band and tatter'd gown he wore,
His leaves he tumbled, and the house he blest,
And conn'd his future sermon o'er and o'er.

8

And oft a glance he cast towards the wine
That briskly sparkled in the glassy vase,
And often drank, and often wish'd to dine,
And red as Phœbus glow'd his sultry face.

9

Much did he chatter, and on various themes,
He publish'd news that came from foreign climes,
He told his jests, and told his last year's dreams,
And quoted dull stuff from lord Wilmot's rhymes.

10

And dunn'd the mourners for his parish dues
With face of brass, and scrutinizing eye,
And threaten'd law-suits if they dar'd refuse
To pay his honest earnings punctually.

11

An honest sire, who came in luckless hour
To hear the sermon and to see the dead,
Presuming on this consecrated hour,
Ventur'd to check the parson on that head.

12

Quoth he, "My priest, such conduct is not fit,
"For other speech this solemn hour demands:
"What if your parish owes its annual debt,
"Your parish ready to discharge it stands."

13

No more he said—for charg'd with wounds and pain,
The parson's staff, like Jove's own lightning, flew,
Which cleft his jaw-bone and his cheek in twain,
And from their sockets half his grinders drew.

14

Nor less deceas'd some moments lay the sire
Than if from heav'n the forked lightnings thrown
Had pierc'd him with their instantaneous fire,
And sent him smoking to the world unknown.

15

At last he mov'd, and, weltering in his gore,
Thus did the rueful, wounded victim say,
"Convey me hence—so bloody and so sore
"I cannot wait to hear the parson pray;

16

"And if I did, what pleasure could be mine—
"Can he allure me to the world of bliss—
"Can he present me at the heavenly shrine
"Who breaks my bones, and knocks me down in this?

17

"The scripture says—the text I well recall—
"*A Priest or Bishop must no striker be,*
"Then how can such a wicked priest but fall,
"Who at a funeral thus has murdered me?"

18

Thus he—But now the sumptuous dinner came,
The Levite boldly seiz'd the nobler place,
Beside him sate the woe-struck widow'd dame,
Who help'd him drain the brimful china vase.

19

Which now renew'd, he drank that ocean too,
Like Polypheme, the boon Ulysses gave;
Another came, nor did another do,
For still another did the monster crave.

20

With far-fetch'd dainties he regal'd his maw,
And prais'd the various meats that crown'd the board:
On tender capons did the glutton gnaw,
And well his platter with profusion stor'd.

21

But spoke no words of grace—I mark'd him well,
I fix'd my eye upon his brazen brow—
He look'd like Satan aiming to rebel,
Such pride and madness were his inmates now.

22

But not contented with this hectoring priest,
Sick of his nonsense, softly I withdrew,
And at a calmer table shar'd the feast,
To sorrow sacred, and to friendship due.

23

Which now atchiev'd, the tolling bell remote
Summon'd the living and the dead to come,
And through the dying sea-breeze swell'd the note,
Dull on the ear, and lengthening through the gloom.

24

The bier was brought, the costly coffin laid,
And prayers were mutter'd in a doleful tone,
While the sad pall, above the body spread,
From many a tender breast drew many a groan.

25

The Levite, too, some tears of Bacchus shed—
Reeling before the long procession, he
Strode like a general at his army's head,
His gown in tatters, and his wig—ah me!

26

The words of faith in both his hands he bore,
Prayers, cut and dry, by ancient prelates made,
Who, bigots while they liv'd, could do no more
Than leave them still by bigots to be said.

27

But he admir'd them all!—he read with joy
St. Athanasius in his thundering creed,
And curs'd the men whom Satan did employ
To make King Charles, that heav'n-born martyr, bleed.

28

At last they reach'd the spiry building high,
And soon they enter'd at the eastern gate—
The parson said his prayers most learnedly,
And mutter'd more than memory can relate.

29

Then through the temple's lengthy aisles they went,
Approaching still the pulpit's painted door,
From whence, on Sundays, many a vow was sent,
And sermons plunder'd from some prelate's store.

30

Here, as of right, the priest prepar'd to rise,
And leave the corpse and gaping crowd below,
Like sultry Phœbus glar'd his flaming eyes,
Less fierce the stars of Greenland evenings glow.

31

Up to the pulpit strode he with an air,
And from the Preacher thus his text he read:
"More I esteem, and better is by far
"A dog existing than a lion dead.

32

"Go, eat thy dainties with a joyful heart,
"And quaff thy wine with undissembled glee,
"For he who did these heavenly gifts impart
"Accepts thy prayers, thy gifts, thy vows, and thee."

THE SERMON

33

These truths, my friends, congenial to my soul,
Demand a faithful and attentive ear—
No longer for your 'parted friend condole,
No longer shed the tributary tear.

34

Curs'd be the sobs, these useless floods of woe
That vainly flow for the departed dead—
If doom'd to wander on the coasts below,
What are to him these seas of grief you shed?

35

If heaven in pleasure doth his hours employ—
If sighs and sorrows reach a place like this,
They blast his glories, and they damp his joy,
They make him wretched in the midst of bliss.

36

And can you yet—and here he smote his breast—
And can you yet bemoan that torpid mass
Which now for death and desolation drest,
Prepares the deep gulph of the grave to pass.

37

You fondly mourn—I mourn Alcander too,
Alcander late the living, not the dead;
His casks I broach'd, his liquors once I drew,
And freely there on choicest dainties fed.

38

But vanish'd are they now!—no more he calls,
No more invites me to his plenteous board;
No more I caper at his splendid balls,
Or drain his cellars, with profusion stor'd.

39

Then why, my friends, for yonder senseless clay,
That ne'er again befriends me, should I mourn?
Yon' simple slaves that through the cane-lands stray
Are more to me than monarchs in the urn.

40

The joys of wine, immortal as my theme,
To days of bliss the aspiring soul invite;
Life, void of this, a punishment I deem,
A Greenland winter, without heat or light.

41

Count all the trees that crown Jamaica's hills,
Count all the stars that through the heavens you see,
Count every drop that the wide ocean fills;
Then count the pleasures Bacchus yields to me.

42

The aids of wine for toiling man were meant;
I prize the smiling Caribbean bowl—
Enjoy those gifts that bounteous nature lent,
Death to thy cares, refreshing to the soul.

43

Here fixt to-day in plenty's smiling vales,
Just as the month revolves we laugh or groan,
September comes, seas swell with horrid gales,
And old Port Royal's fate may be our own.

44

A few short years, at best, will bound our span,
Wretched and few, the Hebrew exile said;
Live while you may, be jovial while you can,
Death as a debt to nature must be paid.

45

When nature fails, the man exists no more,
And death is nothing but an empty name,
Spleen's genuine offspring at the midnight hour,
The coward's tyrant, and the bad man's dream.

46

You ask me where these mighty hosts have fled,
That once existed on this changeful ball?—
If aught remains, when mortal man is dead,
Where, ere their birth they were, they now are all.*

47

Like insects busy, in a summer's day,
We toil and squabble, to increase our pain,
Night comes at last, and, weary of the fray,
To dust and darkness all return again.

48

Then envy not, ye sages too precise,
The drop from life's gay tree, that damps our woe,
Noah himself, the wary and the wise,
A vineyard planted, and the vines did grow:

49

Of social soul was he—the grape he press'd,
And drank the juice oblivious to his care;
Sorrow he banish'd from his place of rest,
And sighs and sobbing had no entrance there.

50

Such bliss be ours through every changing scene;
The glowing face bespeaks the glowing heart;
If heaven be joy, wine is to heaven a-kin,
Since wine, on earth, can heavenly joys impart.

51

Mere glow-worms are we all, a moment shine;
I, like the rest, in giddy circles run,
And Grief shall say, when I this life resign,
"His glass is empty, and his frolics done!"

* "*Quæris, quo jaceas post obitum loco?—*
Quo non nata jacent."—Senec. Troas.—*Freneau's note.*

52

He said, and ceas'd—the funeral anthem then
From the deep choir and hoarse-ton'd organ came;
Such are the honours paid to wealthy men,
But who for Irus would attempt the same?

53

Now from the church returning, as they went,
Again they reach'd Alcander's painted hall,
Their sighs concluded, and their sorrows spent,
They to oblivion gave the Funeral.

54

The holy man, by bishops holy made,
Tun'd up to harmony his trembling strings,
To various songs in various notes he play'd,
And, as he plays, as gallantly he sings.

55

The widow'd dame, less pensive than before,
To sprightly tunes as sprightly did advance,
Her lost Alcander scarce remember'd more;
And thus the funeral ended in a dance.

THE BEAUTIES OF SANTA CRUZ*[1]

1776

Sweet orange grove, the fairest of the isle,
In thy soft shade luxuriously reclin'd,
Where, round my fragrant bed, the flowrets smile,
In sweet delusions I deceive my mind.

But Melancholy's glooms assail my breast,
For potent nature reigns despotic here;—
A nation ruin'd, and a world oppress'd,
Might rob the boldest Stoic of a tear.

I

Sick of thy northern glooms, come, shepherd, seek
More equal climes, and a serener sky:
Why shouldst thou toil amid thy frozen ground,
Where half year's snows, a barren prospect lie,

2

When thou mayst go where never frost was seen,
Or north-west winds with cutting fury blow,
Where never ice congeal'd the limpid stream,
Where never mountain tipt its head with snow?

* Or St. Croix, a Danish island (in the American Archipelago), commonly, tho' erroneously included in the cluster of the Virgin Islands; belonging to the crown of Denmark.—*Freneau's note* [*Ed. 1809*].

[1] Text from the edition of 1786. The poem was first published in the February (1779) issue of the *United States Magazine*, as a part of an extended article, with the title, "Account of the Island of Santa Cruz: Containing an original Poem on the Beauties of that Island. In a letter to A. P. Esq." The poem is introduced as follows: "I believe the best thing I can do with the rest of this paper is to transcribe a few dull heavy lines which I composed near two years ago on the spot." The poem consisted of fifty-two stanzas, corresponding to the following above: 1–4, 6–10, 14–16, 18–23, 31–34, 39, 40, 48–51, 53, 54, 56, 58–63, 70, 79–82, 85, 88, 96, 98, 100, 101, 104, 106–108. Freneau

3

Twice seven days prosperous gales thy barque shall bear
To isles that flourish in perpetual green,
Where richest herbage glads each shady vale,
And ever verdant plants on every hill are seen.

4

Nor dread the dangers of the billowy deep,
Autumnal winds shall safely waft thee o'er;
Put off the timid heart, or, man unblest,
Ne'er shalt thou reach this gay enchanting shore.

5

Thus Judah's tribes beheld the promis'd land,
While Jordan's angry waters swell'd between;
Thus trembling on the brink I see them stand,
Heav'n's type in view, the Canaanitish green.

6

Thus, some mean souls, in spite of age and care,
Are so united to this globe below,
They never wish to cross death's dusky main,
That parting them and happiness doth flow.

revised it with a careful hand for his edition of 1786. Some of the lines changed most notably are as follows:

Stanza 1. "Less rigorous climes, and a more friendly sky."

6. "So some dull minds, in spite of age and care,
Are grown so wedded to this globe below."

39. "Sweet spungy plumbs on trees wide spreading hang,
The happy flavour'd pine grows crested from the ground."

51. "Where once the Indian dames inchanted slept."

56. "Cassada shrubs abound, whose poison root,
Supplies the want of snow-white Northern flour;
This grated fine, and steep'd in water fair,
Forsakes each particle of noxious power."

70. "On yonder peaked hill fresh harvests rise,
Where wretched he—the Ethiopian swain."

7

Though reason's voice might whisper to the soul
That nobler climes for man the gods design—
Come, shepherd, haste—the northern breezes blow,
No more the slumbering winds thy barque confine.

8

From the vast caverns of old ocean's bed,
Fair Santa Cruz, arising, laves her waist,
The threat'ning waters roar on every side,
For every side by ocean is embrac'd.

9

Sharp, craggy rocks repel the surging brine,
Whose cavern'd sides by restless billows wore,
Resemblance claim to that remoter isle [*Eolia*
Where once the winds' proud lord the sceptre bore.

10

Betwixt old Cancer and the mid-way line,
In happiest climate lies this envied isle,
Trees bloom throughout the year, streams ever flow,
And fragrant Flora wears a lasting smile.

Stanza 79. "He pants a land of freedom and repose,
Where cruel slavery never sought to reign,
O quit thee them, my muse, and tell me why."

88. "But now the winds are past, the storm subsides,
All nature smiles again serenely gay,
The beauteous groves renew'd—how shall I leave
My green retreat at Butler's verdant bay."

96. "Fain would I view my native climes again,
But murder marks the cruel Briton there—
Contented here I rest, in spite of pain,
And quaff the enlivening juice in spite of care."

100. "The misty night sits heavy on the sea,
Yon lagging sail drags slowly o'er the main,
Night and its kindred glooms are nought to me."

11

Cool, woodland streams from shaded clifts descend,
The dripping rock no want of moisture knows,
Supply'd by springs that on the skies depend,
That fountain feeding as the current flows.

12

Such were the isles which happy Flaccus sung,
Where one tree blossoms while another bears,
Where spring forever gay, and ever young,
Walks her gay round through her unwearied years.

13

Such were the climes which youthful Eden saw
Ere crossing fates destroy'd her golden reign—
Reflect upon thy loss, unhappy man,
And seek the vales of Paradise again.

14

No lowering skies are here—the neighbouring sun
Clear and unveil'd, his brilliant journey goes,
Each morn emerging from the ambient main,
And sinking there each evening to repose.

Stanza 104. "Then shepherd haste, and leave behind thee far
The bloody plains and iron glooms above,
Quit thy cold northern star, and here enjoy,
Beneath the smiling skies this land of love."

Each of the later editions passed under the revising pen of Freneau, but the variations consisted largely of verbal changes. As a sample of his revision, note the following :

Stanza 3, 1779, "Two weeks, with prosperous gales"; 1786, "Twice seven days prosperous gales"; 1809, "Twice ten days prosperous gales"; 26, 1779, "And tho' fierce Sol his beams directly shed"; 1786, "And though the noon-sun all his radiance shed"; 1795, "The noon sun his fierce radiance shed"; 30, 1779, "fruits that over-top the wood"; 1786, "fruits, the richest of the wood"; 1795, "fruits the noblest of the wood"; 38, 1779, "peaked

15

In June's fair month the spangled traveller gains
The utmost limits of his northern way,
And blesses with his beams cold lands remote,
Sad Greenland's coast, and Hudson's frozen bay.

16

The shivering swains of those unhappy climes
Behold the side-way monarch through the trees,
We feel his fiercer heat, his vertic beams,
Temper'd with cooling winds and trade-wind breeze.

17

Yet, though so near heav'n's blazing lamp doth run,
We court the beam that sheds the golden day,
And hence are called the children of the sun,
Who, without fainting, bear his downward ray.

18

No threatening tides upon our island rise,
Gay Cynthia scarce disturbs the ocean here,
No waves approach her orb, and she, as kind,
Attracts no water to her silver sphere.

hill"; 1786, "steepy hill"; 1795, "blue-brow'd hill"; 41, 1779, "lovely green"; 1786, "lively green"; 1795, "liveliest green." Freneau added three stanzas to the later versions. After stanza 16 above, he added the following:

"The native here, in golden plenty blest,
Bids from the soil the verdant harvests spring;
Feasts in the abundant dome, the joyous guest;
Time short,—life easy,—pleasure on the wing."

Following this he added stanza 43 of "The Jamaica Funeral." Stanza 49 of "The House of Night" was interpolated between 90 and 91. Stanzas 35–38 were omitted from the 1786 version, and in connection with stanzas 39–43 of "The House of Night," became the "Elegiac Lines" of the later editions. The text of the 1795 version was almost unrevised for the 1809 edition.

19

The happy waters boast, of various kinds,
Unnumber'd myriads of the scaly race,
Sportive they glide above the delug'd sand,
Gay as their clime, in ocean's ample vase.

20

Some streak'd with burnish'd gold, resplendent glare,
Some cleave the limpid deep, all silver'd o'er,
Some, clad in living green, delight the eye,
Some red, some blue; of mingled colours more.

21

Here glides the spangled Dolphin through the deep,
The giant-carcas'd whales at distance stray,
The huge green turtles wallow through the wave,
Well pleas'd alike with land or water, they.

22

The Rainbow cuts the deep, of varied green,
The well fed Grouper lurks remote, below,
The swift Bonetta coasts the watry scene,
The diamond coated Angels kindle as they go.

23

Delicious to the taste, salubrious food,
Which might some temperate studious sage allure
To curse the fare of his abstemious school,
And turn, for once, a cheerful Epicure.

24

Unhurt, may'st thou this luscious food enjoy,
To fulness feast upon the scaly kind;
These, well selected from a thousand more,
Delight the taste, and leave no plague behind.

25

Nor think Hygeia* is a stranger here;
To sensual souls the climate may fatal prove,
Anguish and death attend, and pain severe,
The midnight revel, and licentious love.

26

Full many a swain, in youth's serenest bloom,
Is borne untimely to this alien clay,
Constrain'd to slumber in a foreign tomb,
Far from his friends, his country far away.

27

Yet, if devoted to a sensual soul,
If fondly their own ruin they create,
These victims to the banquet and the bowl
Must blame their folly only, not their fate.

28

But thou, who first drew breath in northern air,
At early dawn ascend the sloping hills,
And oft' at noon to lime tree shades repair,
Where some soft stream from neighbouring groves distils.

29

And with it mix the liquid of the lime,
The old ag'd essence of the generous cane,
And sweetest syrups of this liquorish clime,
And drink, to cool thy thirst, and drink again.

30

This happy beverage, joy inspiring bowl,
Dispelling far the shades of mental night,
Wakes bright ideas on the raptur'd soul,
And sorrow turns to pleasure and delight.

* Goddess of Health.—*Freneau's note.*

31

Sweet verdant isle, through thy dark woods I rove,
And learn the nature of each native tree,
The fustick hard, the poisonous manchineel,
Which for its fragrant apple pleaseth thee:

32

Alluring to the smell, fair to the eye,
But deadliest poison in the taste is found—
O shun the dangerous tree, nor taste, like Eve,
This interdicted fruit in Eden's ground.

33

The lowly mangrove, fond of watry soil,
The white bark'd gregory, rising high in air,
The mastick in the woods you may descry,
Tamarind, and lofty plumb-trees flourish there.

34

Sweet orange groves in lonely vallies rise
And drop their fruits, unnotic'd and unknown,
And cooling acid limes in hedges grow,
The juicy lemons swell in shades their own.

35

Once in these groves divine Aurelia stray'd!—
Then, conscious nature, smiling, look'd more gay;
But soon she left the dear delightful shade,
The shade, neglected, droops and dies away,

36

And pines for her return, but pines in vain,
In distant isles belov'd Aurelia died,
Pride of the plains, ador'd by every swain,
Sweet warbler of the woods, and of the woods the pride.

37

Philander early left this rural maid,
Nor yet return'd, by fate compell'd to roam,
But absent from the heavenly girl he stray'd,
Her charms forgot, forgot his native home.

38

O fate severe, to seize the nymph so soon,
The nymph, for whom a thousand shepherds sigh,
And in the space of one revolving moon
To doom the fair one and her swain to die!

39

Sweet, spungy plumbs on trees wide spreading hang,
Bell-apples here, suspended, shade the ground,
Plump grenadilloes and güavas grey,
With melons in each plain and lawn abound.

40

The conic form'd cashew, of juicy kind,
Which bears at once an apple and a nut;
Whose poisonous coat, indignant to the lip,
Doth in its cell a wholesome kernel shut.

41

The prince of fruits, whom some jayama call,
Anana some, the happy flavour'd pine;
In which unite the tastes and juices all
Of apple, peach, quince, grape, and nectarine,

42

Grows to perfection here, and spreads his crest;
His diadem toward the parent sun;
His diadem, in fiery blossoms drest,
Stands arm'd with swords from potent nature won.

43

Yon' cotton shrubs with bursting knobs behold,
Their snow white locks these humble groves array;
On slender trees the blushing coffee hangs
Like thy fair cherry, and would tempt thy stay.

44

Safe from the winds, in deep retreats, they rise;
Their utmost summit may thy arm attain;
Taste the moist fruit, and from thy closing eyes
Sleep shall retire, with all his drowsy train.

45

The spicy berry, they güava call,
Swells in the mountains on a stripling tree;
These some admire, and value more than all,
My humble verse, besides, unfolds to thee.

46

The smooth white cedar, here, delights the eye,
The bay-tree, with its aromatic green,
The sea-side grapes, sweet natives of the sand,
And pulse, of various kinds, on trees are seen.

47

Here mingled vines that downward shadows cast,
Here, cluster'd grapes from loaded boughs depend,
Their leaves no frosts, their fruits no cold winds blast,
But, rear'd by suns, to time alone they bend.

48

The plantane and banana flourish here,
Of hasty growth, and love to fix their root
Where some soft stream of ambling water flows,
To yield full moisture to their cluster'd fruit.

49

No other trees so vast a leaf can boast,
So broad, so long—through these refresh'd I stray,
And though the noon-sun all his radiance shed,
These friendly leaves shall shade me all the way,

50

And tempt the cooling breeze to hasten there,
With its sweet odorous breath to charm the grove;
High shades and verdant seats, while underneath
A little stream by mossy banks doth rove,

51

Where once the Indian dames slept with their swains,
Or fondly kiss'd the moon-light eves away;
The lovers fled, the tearful stream remains,
And only I console it with my lay.

52

Among the shades of yonder whispering grove
The green palmittoes mingle, tall and fair,
That ever murmur, and forever move,
Fanning with wavy bough the ambient air.

53

Pomegranates grace the wild, and sweet-sops there
Ready to fall, require thy helping hand,
Nor yet neglect the papaw or mamee
Whose slighted trees with fruits unheeded stand.

54

Those shaddocks juicy shall thy taste delight,
And yon' high fruits, the richest of the wood,
That cling in clusters to the mother tree,
The cocoa-nut; rich, milky, healthful food.

55

O grant me, gods, if yet condemn'd to stray,
At least to spend life's sober evening here,
To plant a grove where winds yon' shelter'd bay,
And pluck these fruits that frost nor winter fear.

56

Cassada shrubs abound—transplanted here
From every clime, exotic blossoms blow;
Here Asia plants her flowers, here Europe seeds,
And hyperborean plants, un-winter'd, grow.

57

Here, a new herbage glads the generous steed,
Mules, goats, and sheep enjoy these pastures fair,
And for thy hedges, nature has decreed,
Guards of thy toils, the date and prickly pear.

58

But chief the glory of these Indian isles
Springs from the sweet, uncloying sugar-cane,
Hence comes the planter's wealth, hence commerce sends
Such floating piles to traverse half the main.

59

Whoe'er thou art that leav'st thy native shore,
And shall to fair West India climates come,
Taste not the enchanting plant—to taste forbear,
If ever thou wouldst reach thy much lov'd home.

60

Ne'er through the Isle permit thy feet to rove,
Or, if thou dost, let prudence lead the way,
Forbear to taste the virtues of the cane,
Forbear to taste what will complete thy stay.

61

Whoever sips of this enchanting juice,
Delicious nectar, fit for Jove's own hall,
Returns no more from his lov'd Santa Cruz,
But quits his friends, his country, and his all.

62

And thinks no more of home—Ulysses so
Dragg'd off by force his sailors from that shore
Where lotos grew, and, had not strength prevail'd,
They never would have sought their country more.

63

No annual toil inters this thrifty plant,
The stalk lopt off, the freshening showers prolong,
To future years, unfading and secure,
The root so vigorous, and the juice so strong.

64

Unnumber'd plants, besides, these climates yield,
And grass peculiar to the soil, that bears
Ten thousand varied herbs, array the field,
This glads thy palate, that thy health repairs.

65

Along the shore a wondrous flower is seen,
Where rocky ponds receive the surging wave,
Some drest in yellow, some array'd in green,
Beneath the water their gay branches lave.

66

This mystic plant, with its bewitching charms,
Too surely springs from some enchanted bower;
Fearful it is, and dreads impending harms,
And *Animal* the natives call the flower.

67

From the smooth rock its little branches rise,
The objects of thy view, and that alone,
Feast on its beauties with thy ravish'd eyes,
But aim to touch it, and—the flower is gone.

68

Nay, if thy shade but intercept the beam
That gilds their boughs beneath the briny lake,
Swift they retire, like a deluding dream,
And even a shadow for destruction take.

69

Warn'd by experience, seek not thou to gain
The magic plant thy curious hand invades;
Returning to the light, it mocks thy pain,
Deceives all grasp, and seeks its native shades.

70

On yonder steepy hill, fresh harvests rise,
Where the dark tribe from Afric's sun-burnt plain
Oft o'er the ocean turn their wishful eyes
To isles remote high looming o'er the main,

71

And view soft seats of ease and fancied rest,
Their native groves new painted on the eye,
Where no proud misers their gay hours molest,
No lordly despots pass unsocial by.

72

See yonder slave that slowly bends this way,
With years, and pain, and ceaseless toil opprest,
Though no complaining words his woes betray,
The eye dejected proves the heart distrest.

73

Perhaps in chains he left his native shore,
Perhaps he left a helpless offspring there,
Perhaps a wife, that he must see no more,
Perhaps a father, who his love did share.

74

Curs'd be the ship that brought him o'er the main,
And curs'd the hands who from his country tore,
May she be stranded, ne'er to float again,
May they be shipwreck'd on some hostile shore—

75

O gold accurst, of every ill the spring,
For thee compassion flies the darken'd mind,
Reason's plain dictates no conviction bring,
And passion only sways all human kind.

76

O gold accurst! for thee we madly run
With murderous hearts across the briny flood,
Seek foreign climes beneath a foreign sun,
And there exult to shed a brother's blood.

77

But thou, who own'st this sugar-bearing soil,
To whom no good the great First Cause denies,
Let freeborn hands attend thy sultry toil,
And fairer harvests to thy view shall rise.

78

The teeming earth shall mightier stores disclose
Than ever struck thy longing eyes before,
And late content shall shed a soft repose,
Repose, so long a stranger at thy door.

79

Give me some clime, the favourite of the sky,
Where cruel slavery never sought to rein—
But shun the theme, sad muse, and tell me why
These abject trees lie scatter'd o'er the plain?

80

These isles, lest nature should have prov'd too kind,
Or man have sought his happiest heaven below,
Are torn with mighty winds, fierce hurricanes,
Nature convuls'd in every shape of woe.

81

Nor scorn yon' lonely vale of trees so reft;
There plantane groves late grew of lively green,
The orange flourish'd, and the lemon bore,
The genius of the isle dwelt there unseen.

82

Wild were the skies, affrighted nature groan'd
As though approach'd her last decisive day,
Skies blaz'd around, and bellowing winds had nigh
Dislodg'd these cliffs, and tore yon' hills away.

83

O'er the wild main, dejected and afraid,
The trembling pilot lash'd his helm a-lee,
Or, swiftly scudding, ask'd thy potent aid,
Dear pilot of the Galilëan sea.

84

Low hung the clouds, distended with the gale
The clouds dark brooding wing'd their circling flight,
Tremendous thunders join'd the hurricane,
Daughter of chaos and eternal night.

85

And how, alas! could these fair trees withstand
The wasteful madness of so fierce a blast,
That storm'd along the plain, seiz'd every grove,
And delug'd with a sea this mournful waste.

86

That plantane grove, where oft I fondly stray'd,
Thy darts, dread Phœbus, in those glooms to shun,
Is now no more a refuge or a shade,
Is now with rocks and deep sands over-run.

87

Those late proud domes of splendour, pomp and ease
No longer strike the view, in grand attire;
But, torn by winds, flew piece-meal to the seas,
Nor left one nook to lodge the astonish'd squire.

88

But other groves the hand of Time shall raise,
Again shall nature smile, serenely gay,
So soon each scene revives, why should I leave
These green retreats, o'er the dark seas to stray?

89

For I must go where the mad pirate roves,
A stranger on the inhospitable main,
Torn from the scenes of Hudson's sweetest groves,
Led by false hope, and expectation vain.

90

There endless plains deject the wearied eye,
And hostile winds incessant toil prepare;
And should loud bellowing storms all art defy,
The manly heart alone must conquer there.

91

On these blue hills, to pluck the opening flowers,
Might yet awhile the unwelcome task delay,
And these gay scenes prolong the fleeting hours
To aid bright Fancy on some future day.

92

Thy vales, Bermuda, and thy sea-girt groves,
Can never like these southern forests please;
And, lash'd by stormy waves, you court in vain
The northern shepherd to your cedar trees.

93

Not o'er those isles such equal planets rule,
All, but the cedar, dread the wintry blast:
Too well thy charms the banish'd Waller sung;
Too near the pilot's star thy doom is cast.

94

Far o'er the waste of yonder surgy field
My native climes in fancied prospect lie,
Now hid in shades, and now by clouds conceal'd,
And now by tempests ravish'd from my eye.

95

There, triumphs to enjoy, are, Britain, thine,
There, thy proud navy awes the pillag'd shore;
Nor sees the day when nations shall combine
That pride to humble and our rights restore.

96

Yet o'er the globe shouldst thou extend thy reign,
Here may thy conquering arms one grotto spare;
Here—though thy conquest vex—in spite of pain,
I quaff the enlivening glass, in spite of care.

97

What, though we bend to a tyrannic crown;
Still Nature's charms in varied beauty shine—
What though we own the proud imperious Dane,
Gold is his sordid care, the Muses mine.

98

Winter, and winter's glooms are far remov'd;
Eternal spring with smiling summer join'd;—
Absence and death, and heart-corroding care,
Why should they cloud the sun-shine of the mind?

99

But, shepherd, haste, and leave behind thee far
Thy bloody plains, and iron glooms above,
Quit the cold northern star, and here enjoy,
Beneath the smiling skies, this land of love.

100

The drowsy pelican wings home his way,
The misty eve sits heavy on the sea,
And though yon' sail drags slowly o'er the main,
Say, shall a moment's gloom discourage thee?

101

To-morrow's sun now paints the faded scene,
Though deep in ocean sink his western beams,
His spangled chariot shall ascend more clear,
More radiant from the drowsy land of dreams.

102

Of all the isles the neighbouring ocean bears,
None can with this their equal landscapes boast:
What could we do on Saba's cloudy height;
Or what could please on 'Statia's barren coast?

103

Couldst thou content on rough Tortola stray,
Confest the fairest of the Virgin train;
Or couldst thou on these rocky summits play
Where high St. John stands frowning o'er the main?

104

Haste, shepherd, haste—Hesperian fruits for thee,
And cluster'd grapes from mingled boughs depend—
What pleasure in thy forests can there be
That, leafless now, to every tempest bend?

105

To milder stars, and skies of clearer blue,
Sworn foe to arms, at least a-while repair,
And, till to mightier force proud Britain bends,
Despise her triumphs, and deceive thy care.

106

Soon shall the genius of the fertile soil
A new creation to thy view unfold;
Admire the works of Nature's magic hand,
But scorn that vulgar bait, all potent gold.

107

Yet, if persuaded by no lay of mine,
You still admire your climes of frost and snow,
And pleas'd, prefer above our southern groves
The darksome forests, that around thee grow:

108

Still there remain—thy native air enjoy,
Repell the tyrant who thy peace invades,
While, pleas'd, I trace the vales of Santa Cruz,
And sing with rapture her inspiring shades.

ON A HESSIAN DEBARKATION[1]

1776

There is a book, tho' not a book of rhymes,
Where truth severe records a nation's crimes;—
To check such monarchs as with brutal might
Wanton in blood, and trample on the right.

Rejoice, O Death!—Britannia's tyrant sends
From German plains his myriads to our shore;
The Caledonian with the English joined:—
Bring them, ye winds, but waft them back no more.

To these far climes with stately step they come,
Resolved all prayers, all prowess to defy;
Smit with the love of countries not their own,
They come, indeed, to conquer—not to die.

In the slow breeze (I hear their funeral song,)
The dance of ghosts the infernal tribes prepare:
To hell's dark mansions haste, ye abandoned throng,
Drinking from German sculls old Odin's beer.

From dire Cesarea* forced, these slaves of kings,
Quick, let them take their way on eagle's wings:
To thy strong posts, Manhattan's isle, repair,
To meet the vengeance that awaits them there!

* The old Roman name of Jersey.—*Freneau's note.*

[1] This poem first appears in the 1795 edition, though the opening stanzas had formed a part of "The House of Night" in the 1786 edition. It must have been composed after this edition was published. I have inserted it here on account of its historical significance. Text is from the edition of 1809.

THE JEWISH LAMENTATION AT EUPHRATES[1]

By Babel's streams we sate and wept,
When Sion bade our sorrows flow;
Our harps on lofty willows slept
That near those distant waters grow:
The willows high, the waters clear,
Beheld our toils and sorrows there.

The cruel foe, that captive led
Our nation from their native soil,
The tyrant foe, by whom we bled,
Required a song, as well as toil:
"Come, with a song your sorrows cheer,
"A song, that Sion loved to hear."

How shall we, cruel tyrant, raise
A song on such a distant shore?—
If I forget my Sion's praise,
May my right hand assume no more
To strike the silver sounding string,
And thence the slumbering music bring.

If I forget that happy home,
My perjured tongue, forbear to move!
My eyes, be closed in endless gloom—
My joy, my rapture, and my love!
No rival grief my mind can share,
For thou shalt reign unrivalled there.

[1] First published in the *United States Magazine* for September, 1779, under the title, "Psalm CXXXVII Imitated. By Philip Freneau, a young gentleman to whom in the course of this work we are greatly indebted." Signed, "Monmouth, Sept. 10, 1779." In the 1786 edition it bore the title, "Psalm CXXXVII Versified."

Remember, Lord, that hated foe
(When conquered Sion drooped her head)
Who laughing at our deepest woe,
Thus to our tears and sorrows said,
"From its proud height degrade her wall,
"Destroy her towers—and ruin all."

Thou, Babel's offspring, hated race,
May some avenging monster seize,
And dash your venom in your face
For crimes and cruelties like these:
And, deaf to pity's melting moan,
With infant blood stain every stone.

AMERICA INDEPENDENT

AND HER EVERLASTING DELIVERANCE FROM BRITISH TYRANNY AND OPPRESSION[1]

First published in Philadelphia, by Mr. Robert Bell, in 1778

To him who would relate the story right,
A mind supreme should dictate, or indite.—
Yes!—justly to record the tale of fame,
A muse from heaven should touch the soul with flame,
Some powerful spirit, in superior lays,
Should tell the conflicts of these stormy days!

'Tis done! and Britain for her madness sighs—
Take warning, tyrants, and henceforth be wise,
If o'er mankind man gives you regal sway,
Take not the rights of human kind away.

[1] From the edition of 1809. The poem was written, according to the edition of 1786, in August, 1778. It was first published in conjunction with a work entitled "Travels of the Imagination," by Robert Bell of Philadelphia, and reissued twice by him during the same year. In this edition it bore the title, "American Independence an Everlasting Deliverance from British Tyranny. A Poem." Later were added the words, "By Philip F——u."

When God from chaos gave this world to be,
Man then he formed, and formed him to be free,
In his own image stampt the favourite race—
How darest thou, tyrant, the fair stamp deface!
When on mankind you fix your abject chains,
No more the image of that God remains;
O'er a dark scene a darker shade is drawn,
His work dishonoured, and our glory gone!
When first Britannia sent her hostile crew
To these far shores, to ravage and subdue,
We thought them gods, and almost seemed to say
No ball could pierce them, and no dagger slay—
Heavens! what a blunder—half our fears were vain;
These hostile gods at length have quit the plain,
On neighbouring isles the storm of war they shun,
Happy, thrice happy, if not quite undone.
Yet soon, in dread of some impending woe,
Even from these islands shall these ruffians go—
This be their doom, in vengeance for the slain,
To pass their days in poverty and pain;
For such base triumphs, be it still their lot
To triumph only o'er the rebel Scot,
And to their insect isle henceforth confined
No longer lord it o'er the human kind.—
But, by the fates, who still prolong their stay,
And gather vengeance to conclude their day,
Yet, ere they go, the angry Muse shall tell
The treasured woes that in her bosom swell:—
Proud, fierce, and bold, O Jove! who would not laugh
To see these bullies worshipping a calf:
But they are slaves who spurn at Reason's rules;
And men, once slaves, are soon transformed to fools.—
To recommend what monarchies have done,
They bring, for witness, David and his son;

How one was brave, the other just and wise,
And hence our plain Republics they despise;
But mark how oft, to gratify their pride,
The people suffered, and the people died;
Though one was wise, and one Goliah slew,
Kings are the choicest curse that man e'er knew!
Hail, worthy Briton!—how enlarged your fame;
How great your glory, terrible your name;
"Queen of the isles, and empress of the main,"—
Heaven grant you all these mighty things again;
But first insure the gaping crowd below
That you less cruel, and more just may grow:
If fate, vindictive for the sins of man,
Had favour shown to your infernal plan,
How would your nation have exulted here,
And scorned the widow's sigh, the orphan's tear!
How had your prince, of all bad men the worst,
Laid worth and virtue prostrate in the dust!
A second Sawney* had he shone to-day,
A world subdued, and murder but his play;
How had that prince, contemning right or law,
Glutted with blood his foul, voracious maw:
In him we see the depths of baseness joined,
Whate'er disgraced the dregs of human kind;
Cain, Nimrod, Nero—fiends in human guise,
Herod, Domitian—these in judgment rise,
And, envious of his deeds, I hear them say
None but a George could be more vile than they.
Swoln though he was with wealth, revenge, and pride,
How could he dream that heaven was on his side—
Did he not see, when so decreed by fate,
They placed the crown upon his royal pate,

* Alexander the Great.—*Freneau's note.*

Did he not see the richest jewel fall—*
Dire was the omen, and astonished all.—
That gem no more shall brighten and adorn;
No more that gem by British kings be worn,
Or swell to wonted heights of fair renown
The fading glories of their boasted crown.
Yet he to arms, and war, and blood inclined,
(A fair-day warrior with a feeble mind,
Fearless, while others meet the shock of fate,
And dare that death, which clips his thread too late,)
He to the fane (O hypocrite!) did go,
While not an angel there but was his foe,
There did he kneel, and sigh, and sob, and pray,
Yet not to lave his thousand sins away,
Far other motives swayed his spotted soul;
'Twas not for those the secret sorrow stole
Down his pale cheek—'twas vengeance and despair
Dissolved his eye, and planted sorrow there;—
How could he hope to bribe the impartial sky
By his base prayers, and mean hypocrisy?—
Heaven still is just, and still abhors all crimes,
Not acts like George, the Nero of our times.
What were his prayers—his prayers could be no more
Than a thief's wishes to recruit his store:—
Such prayers could never reach the worlds above;
They were but curses in the ear of Jove;—
You prayed that conquest might your arms attend,
And crush that freedom virtue did defend,
That the fierce Indian, rousing from his rest,
Might these new regions with his flames invest,
With scalps and tortures aggravate our woe,
And to the infernal world dismiss your foe.

*A real event of that day: See REMEMBRANCER of 1777.—*Freneau's note.*

No mines of gold our fertile country yields,
But mighty harvests crown the loaded fields,
Hence, trading far, we gained the golden prize,
Which, though our own, bewitched their greedy eyes—
For that they ravaged India's climes before,
And carried death to Asia's utmost shore—
Clive was your envied slave, in avarice bold—
He mowed down nations for his dearer gold;
The fatal gold could give no true content,
He mourned his murders, and to Tophet went.
Led on by lust of lucre and renown,
Burgoyne came marching with his thousands down,
High were his thoughts, and furious his career,
Puffed with self-confidence, and pride severe,
Swoln with the idea of his future deeds,
Onward to ruin each advantage leads:
Before his hosts his heaviest curses flew,
And conquered worlds rose hourly to his view:
His wrath, like Jove's, could bear with no controul,
His words bespoke the mischief in his soul;
To fight was not this general's only trade,
He shined in writing, and his wit displayed—
To awe the more with titles of command
He told of forts he ruled in Scottish land;—
Queen's colonel as he was, he did not know
That thorns and thistles, mixed with honours, grow;
In Britain's senate, though he held a place,
All did not save him from one long disgrace,
One stroke of fortune that convinced them all
That men could conquer, and lieutenants fall.
Foe to the rights of man, proud plunderer, say
Had conquest crowned you on that mighty day
When you, to Gates, with sorrow, rage, and shame
Resigned your conquests, honours, arms, and fame,

When at his feet Britannia's wreathes you threw,
And the sun sickened at a sight so new;
Had you been victor—what a waste of woe!
What souls had vanished to where souls do go!
What dire distress had marked your fatal way,
What deaths on deaths disgraced that dismal day!
Can laurels flourish in a soil of blood,
Or on those laurels can fair honours bud—
Cursed be that wretch who murder makes his trade,
Cursed be all wars that e'er ambition made!
What murdering Tory now relieves your grief,
Or plans new conquests for his favourite chief;
Designs still dark employ that ruffian race,
Beasts of your choosing, and our own disgrace,
So vile a crew the world ne'er saw before,
And grant, ye pitying heavens, it may no more:
If ghosts from hell infest our poisoned air,
Those ghosts have entered their base bodies here;
Murder and blood is still their dear delight—
Scream round their roofs, ye ravens of the night!
Whene'er they wed, may demons and despair,
And grief and woe, and blackest night be there;
Fiends leagued from hell the nuptial lamp display,
Swift to perdition light them on their way,
Round the wide world their devilish squadrons chace,
To find no realm, that grants one resting place.
Far to the north, on Scotland's utmost end
An isle there lies, the haunt of every fiend,
No shepherds there attend their bleating flocks,
But withered witches rove among the rocks;
Shrouded in ice, the blasted mountains show
Their cloven heads, to daunt the seas below;
The lamp of heaven in his diurnal race
There scarcely deigns to unveil his radiant face,

Or if one day he circling treads the sky
He views this island with an angry eye,
Or ambient fogs their broad, moist wings expand,
Damp his bright ray, and cloud the infernal land;
The blackening winds incessant storms prolong,
Dull as their night, and dreary as my song;
When stormy winds and gales refuse to blow,
Then from the dark sky drives the unpitying snow;
When drifting snows from iron clouds forbear,
Then down the hail-stones rattle through the air—
There screeching owls, and screaming vultures rest,
And not a tree adorns its barren breast;
No peace, no rest, the elements bestow,
But seas forever rage, and storms forever blow.
  There, Loyals, there, with loyal hearts retire,
There pitch your tents, and kindle there your fire;
There desert Nature will her stings display,
And fiercest hunger on your vitals prey,
And with yourselves let John Burgoyne retire
To reign the monarch, whom your hearts admire.
  Britain, at last to arrest your lawless hand,
Rises the genius of a generous land,
Our injured rights bright Gallia's prince defends,
And from this hour that prince and we are friends;
Feuds, long upheld, are vanished from our view.
Once we were foes—but for the sake of you—
Britain, aspiring Briton, now must bend—
Can she at once with France and us contend,
When we alone, remote from foreign aid,
Her armies captured, and distressed her trade?
Britain and we no more in combat join,
No more, as once, in every sea combine;
Dead is that friendship which did mutual burn,
Fled is the sceptre, never to return;

By sea and land, perpetual foes we meet,
Our cause more honest, and our hearts as great;
Lost are these regions to Britannia's reign,
Nor need these strangers of their loss complain,[1]
Since all, that here with greedy eyes they view,
From our own toil to wealth and empire grew.
Our hearts are ravished from our former queen
Far as the ocean God hath placed between,
They strive in vain to join this mighty mass
Torn by convulsions from its native place.
As well might men to flaming Hecla join
The huge high Alps, or towering Appenine;
In vain they send their half-commissioned tribe,
And whom they cannot conquer, strive to bribe;
Their pride and madness burst our union chain,
Nor shall the unwieldy mass unite again.
Nor think that France sustains our cause alone;
With gratitude her helping hand we own,
But hear, ye nations—Truth herself can say
We bore the heat and danger of the day:
She calmly viewed the tumult from afar,
We braved each insult, and sustained the war:
Oft drove the foe, or forced their hosts to yield,
Or left them more than once a dear bought field—
'Twas then, at last, on Jersey plains distrest,
We swore to seek the mountains of the west,
There a free empire for our seed obtain,
A terror to the slaves that might remain.[2]

[1] "Nor shall these upstarts of their loss complain,
Since all the debt we owe to Britain's throne
Was mere idea, and the rest our own."—*Ed. 1786.*

[2] "In this dark day of peril to the cause and to himself (at the close of 1776) Washington remained firm and undaunted. In casting about for some stronghold where he might make a desperate stand for the liberties of his country, his thoughts reverted to the mountain regions of his early campaigns.

Peace you demand, and vainly wish to find
Old leagues renewed, and strength once more combined—
Yet shall not all your base dissembling art
Deceive the tortures of a bleeding heart—
Yet shall not all your mingled prayers that rise
Wash out your crimes, or bribe the avenging skies;
Full many a corpse lies mouldering on the plain
That ne'er shall see its little brood again:
See, yonder lies, all breathless, cold, and pale,
Drenched in her gore, Lavinia of the vale;*
The cruel Indian seized her life away,
As the next morn began her bridal day!—
This deed alone our just revenge would claim,
Did not ten thousand more your sons defame.
Returned, a captive, to my native shore,
How changed I find those scenes that pleased before!
How changed those groves where fancy loved to stray,
When spring's young blossoms bloom'd along the way;

General Mercer was at hand, who had shared his perils among those mountains, and his presence may have contributed to bring them to his mind. 'What think you,' said Washington, 'if we should retreat to the back parts of Pennsylvania, would the Pennsylvanians support us?' 'If the lower counties give up, the back counties will do the same,' was the discouraging reply. 'We must then retire to Augusta County, in Virginia,' said Washington. 'Numbers will repair to us for safety, and we will try a predatory war. If overpowered, we must cross the Alleghanies.' Such was the indomitable spirit, rising under difficulties and buoyant in the darkest moment, that kept our tempest-tossed cause from foundering."—*Irving's Washington*, II, 448.

* Miss *M'Crea*. See histories of the revolutionary war.—*Freneau's note.*

"A most pathetic story was told of one Jenny M'Rea, murdered by Indians near Fort Edward. Her family were Loyalists; she herself was engaged to be married to a Loyalist officer. She was dressed to receive her lover when a party of Indians burst into the house, carried off the whole family to the woods, and there murdered, scalped, and mangled them in a most horrible manner."—*Hildreth's United States*. See also Irving's *Life of Washington*. Barlow, in the sixth book of the *Columbiad*, has given a poetic version of the story.

From every eye distils the frequent tear,
From every mouth some doleful tale I hear!
Some mourn a father, brother, husband, friend:
Some mourn, imprisoned in their native land,
In sickly ships what numerous hosts confin'd
At once their lives and liberties resigned:
In dreary dungeons woeful scenes have passed,
Long in the historian's page the tale will last,
As long as spring renews the flowery wood,
As long as breezes curl the yielding flood!—
Some sent to India's sickly climes afar,
To dig, with slaves, for buried diamonds there,
There left to sicken in a land of woe
Where o'er scorched hills infernal breezes blow,
Whose every blast some dire contagion brings,
Fevers or death on its destructive wings,
'Till fate relenting, its last arrows drew,
Brought death to them, and infamy to you.
  Pests of mankind! remembrance shall recall
And paint these horrors to the view of all;
Heaven has not turned to its own works a foe
Nor left to monsters these fair realms below,
Else had your arms more wasteful vengeance spread,
And these gay plains been dyed a deeper red.
  O'er Britain's isle a thousand woes impend,
Too weak to conquer, govern, or defend,
To liberty she holds pretended claim—
The substance we enjoy, and they the name;
Her prince, surrounded by a host of slaves,
Still claims dominion o'er the vagrant waves:
Such be his claims o'er all the world beside,—
An empty nothing—madness, rage and pride.
  From Europe's realms fair freedom has retired,
And even in Britain has the spark expired—

Sigh for the change your haughty empire feels,
Sigh for the doom that no disguise conceals!
Freedom no more shall Albion's cliffs survey;
Corruption there has centered all her sway,
Freedom disdains her honest head to rear,
Or herd with nobles, kings, or princes there;[1]
She shuns their gilded spires and domes of state,
Resolved, O Virtue, at thy shrine to wait;
'Midst savage woods and wilds she dares to stray,
And bids uncultured nature bloom more gay.
She is that glorious and immortal sun,
Without whose ray this world would be undone,
A mere dull chaos, sunk in deepest night,
An abject something, void of form and light,
Of reptiles, worst in rank, the dire abode,
Perpetual mischief, and the dragon's brood.
Let Turks and Russians glut their fields with blood,
Again let Britain dye the Atlantic flood,
Let all the east adore the sanguine wreathe
And gain new glories from the trade of death—
America! the works of peace be thine,
Thus shalt thou gain a triumph more divine—
To thee belongs a second golden reign,
Thine is the empire o'er a peaceful main;
Protect the rights of human kind below,
Crush the proud tyrant who becomes their foe,
And future times shall own your struggles blest,
And future years enjoy perpetual rest.
Americans! revenge your country's wrongs;
To you the honour of this deed belongs,
Your arms did once this sinking land sustain,
And saved those climes where Freedom yet must reign—

[1] "To herd with *North*, or *Bute*, or *Mansfield* there."—*Ed. 1786.*

Your bleeding soil this ardent task demands,
Expel yon' thieves from these polluted lands,
Expect no peace till haughty Britain yields,
'Till humbled Britons quit your ravaged fields—
Still to the charge that routed foe returns,
The war still rages, and the battle burns—
No dull debates, or tedious counsels know,
But rush at once, embodied, on your foe;
With hell-born spite a seven years' war they wage,
The pirate Goodrich, and the ruffian Gage.
Your injured country groans while yet they stay,
Attend her groans, and force their hosts away;
Your mighty wrongs the tragic muse shall trace,
Your gallant deeds shall fire a future race;
To you may kings and potentates appeal,
You may the doom of jarring nations seal;
A glorious empire rises, bright and new!
Firm be the structure, and must rest on you!—
Fame o'er the mighty pile expands her wings,
Remote from princes, bishops, lords, and kings,
Those fancied gods, who, famed through every shore,
Mankind have fashioned, and like fools, adore.
Here yet shall heaven the joys of peace bestow,
While through our soil the streams of plenty flow,
And o'er the main we spread the trading sail,
Wafting the produce of the rural vale.

ON AMANDA'S SINGING BIRD[1]

A native of the Canary Islands, confined in a small cage

Happy in my native grove,
I from spray to spray did rove,
Fond of music, full of love.

Dressed as fine as bird could be,
Every thing that I did see,
Every thing was mirth to me.

There had I been, happy still,
With my mate to coo and bill
In the vale, or on the hill.

But the cruel tyrant, man,
(Tyrant since the world began)
Soon abridged my little span.

How shall I the wrong forget!
Over me he threw a net;
And I am his prisoner yet.

To this rough Bermudian shore
Ocean I was hurried o'er,
Ne'er to see my country more!

To a narrow cage confined,
I, who once so gaily shined,
Sing to please the human kind.

[1] Published in the *Freeman's Journal*, July 3, 1782, under the title "On a Lady's Singing Bird, a native of the Canary Islands, confined in a very small cage. Written in Bermuda, 1778."

Dear Amanda!—leave me free,
And my notes will sweeter be;
On your breast, or in the tree![1]

On your arm I would repose—
One—oh make me—of your beaus—
There I would relate my woes.

Now, all love, and full of play,
I so innocently gay,
Pine my little life away.

Thus to grieve and flutter here,
Thus to pine from year to year;
This is usage too severe.

From the chiefs who rule your isle,
I will never court a smile;
All, with them, is prison style.[2]

But from your superior mind
Let me but my freedom find,
And I will be all resigned.

Then your kiss will hold me fast—
If but once by you embraced,
In your 'kerchief I will rest.

Gentle shepherds of the plain,
Who so fondly hear my strain;
Help me to be free again.

'Tis a blessing to be free:—
Fair Amanda![3]—pity me,
Pity him who sings for thee.

[1] This stanza and the next original in the edition of 1809.
[2] This stanza and the two following original in the edition of 1809.
[3] "Belinda."—*Ed. 1786.*

But if, cruel, you deny
That your captive bird should fly,
Here detained so wrongfully,

Full of anguish, faint with woe,
I must, with my music, go
To the cypress groves below.

ON THE NEW AMERICAN FRIGATE ALLIANCE[1]

As Neptune traced the azure main
That owned, so late, proud Britain's reign,
A floating pile approached his car,
The scene of terror and of war.

As nearer still the monarch drew
(Her starry flag displayed to view)
He asked a Triton of his train
"What flag was this that rode the main?

[1] "Built up the River Merrimack at Salisbury, Massachusetts, she was first sailed in the spring of 1778, soon after her being launched, and was then commanded by Capt. Landais, a Frenchman, who was preferred to the command as a compliment to his nation and the alliance made with us, a new people."

"As Philadelphians we are entitled to some preëminence for our connection with this peculiar frigate. After the close of the War of Independence, she was owned in our city and employed as a merchant ship. When no longer seaworthy, she has been stretched upon the margin of Petty's Island to remain for a century to come, a spectacle to many river passengers."—*Watson's Annals*, III, 338.

The *Alliance* was the only one of our first navy, of the class of frigates, which escaped capture or destruction during the war. She was during the Revolution what "Old Ironsides" became in later years, the idol of the American people. She was in many engagements and was always victorious.

Freneau's poem first appeared, as far as I can find, in the 1786 edition. It was probably written shortly after the launch of the frigate.

"A ship of such a gallant mien
"This many a day I have not seen,
"To no mean power can she belong,
"So swift, so warlike, stout, and strong.

"See how she mounts the foaming wave—
"Where other ships would find a grave,
"Majestic, aweful, and serene,
"She sails the ocean, like its queen."—

"Great monarch of the hoary deep,
"Whose trident awes the waves to sleep,
(Replied a Triton of his train)
"This ship, that stems the western main,

"To those new, rising States belongs,
"Who, in resentment of their wrongs,
"Oppose proud Britain's tyrant sway,
"And combat her, by land and sea.

"This pile, of such superior fame,
"From their strict union takes her name,
"For them she cleaves the briny tide,
"While terror marches by her side.

"When she unfurls her flowing sails,
"Undaunted by the fiercest gales,
"In dreadful pomp, she ploughs the main,
"While adverse tempests rage in vain.

"When she displays her gloomy tier,
"The boldest foes congeal with fear,
"And, owning her superior might,
"Seek their best safety in their flight.

"But when she pours the dreadful blaze,
"And thunder from her cannon plays,
"The bursting flash that wings the ball,
"Compells those foes to strike, or fall.

"Though she, with her triumphant crew,
"Might to their fate all foes pursue,
"Yet, faithful to the land that bore,
"She stays, to guard her native shore.

"Though she might make the cruisers groan
"That sail within the torrid zone,
"She kindly lends a nearer aid,
"Annoys them here, and guards the trade.

"Now, traversing the eastern main,
"She greets the shores of France and Spain;
"Her gallant flag, displayed to view,
"Invites the old world to the new.

"This task atchieved, behold her go
"To seas congealed with ice and snow,
"To either tropic, and the line,
"Where suns with endless fervour shine.

"Not, Argo, on thy decks were found
"Such hearts of brass, as here abound;
"They for their golden fleece did fly,
"These sail—to vanquish tyranny."

ON THE DEATH OF CAPTAIN NICHOLAS BIDDLE[1]

Commander of the *Randolph* Frigate, Blown up near Barbadoes, 1776

What distant thunders rend the skies,
What clouds of smoke in columns rise,
  What means this dreadful roar?
Is from his base Vesuvius thrown,
Is sky-topt Atlas tumbled down,
  Or Etna's self no more!

Shock after shock torments my ear;
And lo!—two hostile ships appear,
  Red lightnings round them glow:
The *Yarmouth* boasts of sixty-four,
The *Randolph* thirty-two—no more—
  And will she fight this foe!

[1] This poem was first published as a pamphlet in 1781, by Francis Bailey of Philadelphia, in connection with "The Prison Ship."

Nicholas Biddle, born in Philadelphia in 1750, was a sailor from his boyhood. At one time he served beside Nelson in the British navy. In 1776, when the new frigate *Randolph*, of thirty-two guns, was launched at Philadelphia, he was made commander, and after several unimportant cruises he was placed over a small fleet of war vessels, with the *Randolph* as flagship. In March, 1779, he fell in with the British ship *Yarmouth*, and after a vigorous action of twenty minutes, the *Randolph* was blown up by her own magazine, only four men escaping with their lives.

Freneau has made several minor errors. The date 1776, which is found on all the versions of the poem, should manifestly be 1779. The *Yarmouth* did not attempt flight, nor did Biddle die at the moment of victory, as the poet represents. In the words of Cooper, "Victory was almost hopeless, even had all his vessels behaved equally well with his own ship." Captain Vincent had only five men killed and twelve wounded at the time of the explosion, yet the gallantry and skill of Biddle in the face of great odds justify all the praise that Freneau gives him.

The *Randolph* soon on Stygian streams
Shall coast along the land of dreams,
The islands of the dead!
But Fate, that parts them on the deep,
May save the Briton yet to weep
His days of victory fled.[1]

Say, who commands that dismal blaze,
Where yonder starry streamer plays?
Does Mars with Jove engage!
'Tis Biddle wings those angry fires,
Biddle, whose bosom Jove inspires,
With more than mortal rage.

Tremendous flash!—and hark, the ball
Drives through old *Yarmouth*, flames and all;
Her bravest sons expire;
Did Mars himself approach so nigh,
Even Mars, without disgrace, might fly
The *Randolph's* fiercer fire.

The Briton views his mangled crew,
"And shall we strike to thirty-two?—
(Said Hector, stained with gore)
"Shall Britain's flag to these descend—
"Rise, and the glorious conflict end,
"Britons, I ask no more!"

He spoke—they charged their cannon round,
Again the vaulted heavens resound,
The *Randolph* bore it all,
Then fixed her pointed cannons true—
Away the unwieldy vengeance flew;
Britain, thy warriors fall.

[1] "His ancient honours fled."—*Ed. 1786.* This stanza was omitted from the 1795 edition, but returned again in 1809.

The *Yarmouth* saw, with dire dismay,
Her wounded hull, shrouds shot away,
  Her boldest heroes dead—
She saw amidst her floating slain
The conquering *Randolph* stem the main—
  She saw, she turned—and fled!

That hour, blest chief, had she been thine,
Dear Biddle, had the powers divine
  Been kind as thou wert brave;
But Fate, who doomed thee to expire,
Prepared an arrow, tipt with fire,
  And marked a watery grave,

And in that hour, when conquest came,
Winged at his ship a pointed flame,
  That not even he could shun—
The battle ceased, the *Yarmouth* fled,
The bursting *Randolph* ruin spread,
  And left her task undone![1]

CAPTAIN JONES'S INVITATION[2]

Thou, who on some dark mountain's brow
Hast toil'd thy life away till now,
And often from that rugged steep
Beheld the vast extended deep,
Come from thy forest, and with me
Learn what it is to go to sea.

[1] "And lost what honour won."—*Ed. 1786.* "And lost what courage won."—*Ed. 1795.*

[2] From the 1786 edition. In the 1795 edition the title was changed to "The Invitation."

Captain John Paul Jones sailed from Isle de Groaix, France, on his memorable cruise, August 14, 1779. To secure a crew for his fleet had been the work of many months.

There endless plains the eye surveys
As far from land the vessel strays;
No longer hill nor dale is seen,
The realms of death intrude between,
But fear no ill; resolve, with me
To share the dangers of the sea.

But look not there for verdant fields—
Far different prospects Neptune yields;
Green seas shall only greet the eye,
Those seas encircled by the sky,
Immense and deep—come then with me
And view the wonders of the sea.

Yet sometimes groves and meadows gay
Delight the seamen on their way;
From the deep seas that round us swell
With rocks the surges to repel
Some verdant isle, by waves embrac'd,
Swells, to adorn the wat'ry waste.

Though now this vast expanse appear
With glassy surface, calm and clear;
Be not deceiv'd—'tis but a show,
For many a corpse is laid below—
Even Britain's lads—it cannot be—
They were the masters of the sea!

Now combating upon the brine,
Where ships in flaming squadrons join,
At every blast the brave expire
'Midst clouds of smoke, and streams of fire;
But scorn all fear; advance with me—
'Tis but the custom of the sea.

Now we the peaceful wave divide,
On broken surges now we ride,
Now every eye dissolves with woe
As on some lee-ward coast we go—
Half lost, half buried in the main
Hope scarcely beams on life again.

Above us storms distract the sky,
Beneath us depths unfathom'd lie,
Too near we see, a ghastly sight,[1]
The realms of everlasting night,
A wat'ry tomb of ocean green
And only one frail plank between!

But winds must cease, and storms decay,
Not always lasts the gloomy day,
Again the skies are warm and clear,
Again soft zephyrs fan the air,
Again we find the long lost shore,
The winds oppose our wish no more.

If thou hast courage to despise
The various changes of the skies,
To disregard the ocean's rage,
Unmov'd when hostile ships engage,
Come from thy forest, and with me
Learn what it is to go to sea.

[1] " Disheartening sight."—*Ed. 1795*.

THE SEA VOYAGE[1]

From a gay island green and fair,
With gentle blasts of southern air,
  Across the deep we held our way,
Around our barque smooth waters played,
  No envious clouds obscur'd the day,
Serene came on the evening shade.

Still farther to the north we drew,
And Porto Rico's mountains blue,
  Were just decaying on the eye,
When from the main arose the sun;
  Before his ray the shadows fly,
As we before the breezes run.

Now northward of the tropic pass'd,
The fickle skies grew black at last;
  The ruffian winds began to roar,
The sea obey'd their tyrant force,
  And we, alas! too far from shore,
Must now forsake our destin'd course.

The studding sails at last to hand,
The vent'rous captain gave command;
  But scarcely to the task went they
When a vast billow o'er us broke,
  And tore the sheets and tacks away,
Nor could the booms sustain the stroke.

Still vaster rose the angry main,
The winds through every shroud complain;

[1] Unique in the October number of the *United States Magazine*, *1779*. The poem doubtless describes the poet's voyage home from the West Indies, in June and July, 1778.

The topsails we could spread no more,
Though doubly reef'd, the furious blast
Away the fluttering canvas bore,
And vow'd destruction to the mast.

When now the northern storm was quell'd,
A calm ensued—but ocean swell'd
Beyond the towering mountain's height,
Till from the south new winds arose;
Our sails we spread at dead of night,
And fair, though fierce, the tempest blows.

When morning rose, the skies were clear
The gentle breezes warm and fair,
Convey'd us o'er the wat'ry road;
A ship o'ertook us on the way,
Her thousand sails were spread abroad,
And flutter'd in the face of day.

At length, through many a climate pass'd,
Cæsaria's hills we saw at last,
And reach'd the land of lovely dames;
My charming Cælia there I found,
'Tis she my warmest friendship claims,
The fairest maid that treads the ground.

END OF VOL. I