

The Inquisition

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“The Inquisition”: Alexander Croke’s Satire on Halifax Society during the Wentworth Years.

Alexander Croke (1758-1842), later Sir Alexander Croke, arrived in Nova Scotia in the latter part of 1801. He came out to the Province from England to take up his appointment as Judge of the Vice-Admiralty Prize Court at Halifax. Shortly after his arrival, he was also appointed a member of H.M. Council and assigned a position next in rank to that of the Chief Justice, S.S. Blowers. In effect, his rank made him one of the most influential men in the government of the Province, and for the next fourteen years, until he returned to England in 1815, he was intimately involved in the political, religious, and social life of Nova Scotia.

Any man in this kind of position is bound to make enemies, but Dr. Croke¹ seemed to have a special knack for enraging those with whom he dealt. Part of his problem was simply an abysmal lack of tact; but in addition to this, Croke was an extreme Tory in his politics and in his religion. The latter manifested itself in his efforts as a governor of King’s College to exclude all but Anglicans from the College. Through his insistence, the College Statutes of 1802 required that all entrants formally accept the Thirty-nine Articles of the Established Church. In a province where at least four-fifths of the population were non-Anglican, this action sparked considerable resentment.

But the incident that really aroused Nova Scotians was his attempt in 1808 to undermine the power of the elected Assembly. While acting

as administrative head of the Province², Croke refused to assent to the appropriations bill of 1808. Moreover, he attempted to persuade the Colonial Secretary to obtain operating funds through direct taxation. This action would have effectively concentrated the bulk of political power in the administrative branch of the government (including H.M. Council), whose officers were all appointed by the Crown. It is not surprising that when Dr. Croke left Halifax in 1815, there were no tears shed.

In addition to a rather active public life in law and politics, Croke was also a writer. Most of his writings were treatises of one sort or another, but in 1841 he published a two-volume edition of his poetry, entitled *The Progress of Idolatry; a poem...and other poems* (J. H. Parker: Oxford, 1841). The title poem, which fills the whole of the first volume, appears to have been written after Croke returned to England. In the second volume, however, there are at least ten pieces which undoubtedly were written during Croke's years in Halifax. Altogether, these poems amount to over eighty pages of verse, comprising about half the second volume. They include four Occasional Prologues written for performances at the Theatre Royal, Halifax; a light, narrative poem, "The Ring"; and two moralistic, reflective poems, "The Hermit" and "Ode to Death". But the poems which Haligonians knew best were the two satires, "A Cure for Love" (on Bishop Charles Inglis) and "The Inquisition" (on Halifax Society), along with the "Inscription on the Temple of Peace", a short verse on Croke's Halifax estate, Studley. Almost seventy years after Croke's departure from Nova Scotia, the Honourable A. G. Archibald notes⁴ that manuscript copies of these poems were still held in the private libraries of older Halifax families.

Of the Halifax poems, "The Inquisition" is clearly the most interesting and sustained effort, and is the piece which attracted most attention among Haligonians. Indeed, Croke himself seems to have regarded the poem as one of his more important works. It is his second longest poem, and was extensively revised and enlarged (and retitled, "The Three Ordeals") for the 1841 edition of his poetical works. In the printed version of 1841, however, the specific targets of his satire (who would mean nothing to a British audience) are pushed into the background, and the general satire on social manners is emphasized.

This shift in emphasis gives the poem a more disinterested, philosophical tone than that of the original version, but at the expense of the vitality inherent in sharp, satiric attacks on particular individuals. In revising, Croke loses something of the delicate balance between moral objectivity and personal vengeance found in the "Halifax" version. Fortunately, at least three manuscript copies of the original version are extant. These are: one, the Akins manuscript at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Halifax; second, the Odell manuscript in the Odell papers at the New Brunswick Museum, Saint John⁵; and third, the Uniacke manuscript in the Lorne Pierce Collection at Queen's University, Kingston. The present text is derived from a collation of all three manuscripts.

"The Inquisition" was issued anonymously, though everyone in Halifax knew precisely who had written it. From internal evidence, the date of its composition appears to have been late summer or early autumn 1805. The reference to three honeymooning brides in Canto IV, line 79, points to the Uniacke marriages of May 3rd and 4th, 1805; Lord Melville's fall (Canto IV, 87) occurred during the months of May and June of the same year. No doubt the poem first circulated during the winter social season of 1805-1806.

This original version of poem was never published but was passed about in manuscript form. Judging from Archibald's report and the number of manuscripts still extant, it was a popular (if notorious) piece, often copied and widely circulated -- Jonathan Odell received a copy in Fredericton. Nor is it unusual or exceptional that the poem circulated in this manner. At this point in our cultural history, very little locally written poetry was ever published. To 1805, the only local verses that had managed to find their way into print were Henry Alline's *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, Roger Viets' *Annapolis Royal*, and the odd anonymous poem published from time to time in the local newspapers. However, this lack of a substantial body of published verse does not mean that nothing was being written, only that the medium for circulation was pen and ink rather than print.

Moreover, we should not assume that because little of this early verse was published, it was all simply doggerel or worse. "The Inquisition" is a good example of competent amateur poetry. It is

not a great poem, but it is undoubtedly better than average; indeed, it would be grossly inaccurate to call it a mediocre effort. Obviously, its mode (mock-heroic satire) and its verse form (the heroic couplet) are out of tune with contemporary developments in English poetry. The poetic responses of Croke and Wordsworth are very far apart. In "The Inquisition", Croke looks back to the great tradition of mock-heroic satire in eighteenth-century verse, the tradition of Dryden, Pope, and Churchill. In relation to the cultural context of England, then, the poem emerges as a somewhat anachronistic piece. But when we view the poem in the social and cultural context of Nova Scotia of 1805, it appears to related harmoniously to the cultural expectations of this provincial society. The eighteenth-century verse form and satiric mode employed by Croke seem to reflect and express something of the cultural nature of the society which forms the subject of the poem. In fact, it is this harmony between subject and form that makes the poem fresh, vital, and convincing as a special insight (however biased) into the upper strata of Halifax society at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Although Croke's way of approaching his subject contributes significantly to the effect of the poem, it is his skill as a versifier and his facility with satiric narrative that make the poem succeed. One does not have to read far before it becomes clear that the poem was not simply a piece of casual verse dashed off in an idle moment. Croke may be an amateur, but he develops his couplets with care and with a skill that reveals a practised hand.⁶ Moreover, he understands that the real power of satiric verse lies not in flashes of malicious wit, but in sustaining a strong and convincing tone of moral indignation. By firmly controlling the moral tone of the narrative, he is able to cut deeply with his satiric thrusts without the poem degenerating to hysterical invective. Much of this control arises from his ability to exploit the verbal potential of the heroic couplet form, a form well and truly developed at this time after more than a hundred years in the main stream of English verse. But this is not to belittle Croke's achievement. It is because of the strength of his heroic couplets that he is able to heap scorn and ridicule on the objects of his satire, while yet retaining a sense of balance and dignity in his verse.⁷

Croke also uses the heroic couplet as an effective vehicle for

narration and description. As a story, the poem is witty, well paced, and enjoyable. Indeed, even if we knew nothing of the specific satire intended, we could still appreciate the poem as an amusing "moral tale".⁸ Fortunately, however, because of the notations in the Akins manuscript, we do know who the specific targets of Croke's satire are.⁹ These identifications give the poem a special historical interest, and allow us to appreciate something of the satirical bite which the poem must have had when it first appeared in the parlors and drawing rooms of Halifax society.

But for the modern reader, the sharpness of the specific satire, the malicious delight that arises from recognizing an acquaintance being cut down by the acute thrusts of satiric wit, is largely dissipated. The people of the poem are separated from us by more than 160 years, and so mean little as individual personalities. The range of the satire, however, is not limited to the individuals singled out; it strikes at the society in which these individuals function, and which collectively they help create and sustain. Thus, for the modern reader, the shortcomings of particular personalities are important only inasmuch as they contribute to our general understanding of the social and moral context in which these personalities thrive.

When we approach the poem from this point of view, it quickly becomes evident that there are two aspects of Halifax society which form the thematic concerns of the narrative. The first is the structural composition of that society, and the second is its moral quality.

The social picture which emerges from the poem is one characterized not by stratification, but by the complex interrelationship of the various components which go to make up a "professional" class. All of the figures mentioned in the poem are more or less social equals, but each may be distinguished by his relationship to one or more of the professions out of which the social fabric of the poem is spun. This fabric includes administrative officers of the Crown, officers and elected officials of the Provincial Government, merchants, lawyers, doctors, churchmen, educationalists, and military officers of the Royal Navy and British Army. It is woven together by marriage, by common interest, and by multiplicity of roles. In a sense, it is like one big family. In fact, a family like the Halliburtons

reflects in miniature something of the structure of the society as a whole. Rebecca Halliburton was married to a leading naval officer; her sister Polly married an ex-Army officer, who became an important administrative official of the Provincial Government. A third sister, Elizabeth, married James Stewart, Solicitor-General, member of H.M. Council, and law partner of Brenton Halliburton, brother of the three girls. Brenton, whose wife Margaret was the eldest daughter of Bishop Charles Inglis, was a successful lawyer involved in local politics. The father of this brood was Dr. John Halliburton, one of the two principal medical doctors in Halifax, an officer of the Crown (as a member of H.M. Council), and associated with the Navy (as Surgeon of H.M. Naval Hospital). Their mother was a sister of James Brenton, a Judge of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia. When we apply this kind of structural concept to the society as a whole, what we get is a social group in which individuals are distinguished by their professional roles, but bound together by personal relationships and an intimate knowledge of one another's lives. Moreover, like a close-knit family, this kind of group protects its own against "outsiders". It is on this point that Croke attacks Halifax society, and in doing so established himself as an "outsider", a position which in fact he seems to have occupied during much of his stay in Nova Scotia. The role of "outsider", of course, is fundamental to the social satirist.

The second of Croke's main thematic concerns is the moral condition of the society represented in the poem. There is no mistaking his viewpoint. In the course of the narrative, he paints a picture of a society which is prepared to condone and accept sexual promiscuity and adultery as one of the normal conditions of social conduct. But what is most interesting is what he appears to omit from the poem, his conspicuous silence regarding the moral character of Frances Wentworth, the Governor's wife. Although the poem is ostensibly about Marianne Belcher, the spirit of Frances Wentworth pervades the whole. Croke is very careful to keep the Governor's Lady (Francisca) on the periphery of the narrative action, but the central symbol of the poem—the divan, or sofa—is unquestionably related to Frances Wentworth. In the 1780s, Frances had scandalized Halifax by her rather open affairs with young officers of the Navy and Army. Her prize catch was Prince William Henry (later William IV), third son of George

III. From 1786 to 1789, he served with the Royal Navy in the Western Atlantic and spent several riotous months each spring and fall in Halifax. In 1792, while the Wentworths were visiting London, the Governor of the Province suddenly died. Prince Henry was persuaded by Frances to use his influence in getting the governorship granted to her husband, John Wentworth. His influence worked and, before the triumphant Wentworths returned to Nova Scotia, he gave Frances a damask sofa as a gift. In light of their earlier relationship, the sofa seemed an ironically fitting tribute, and was viewed as such in Halifax. Nonetheless, Frances now ruled Halifax society and continued to do so until 1808. Although Croke does not explicitly single out Frances Wentworth, his contemporaries would have recognized her as the model for young wives like Marianne Belcher. Indeed, it is not difficult to read Frances Wentworth into the role of Bella. Although Croke never says so, it is her character and her morals which have set the tone of the society he satirizes. She is the ruling power in the background who, "smiles Applause/And hails the Triumph of the good Old Cause" (III, 51-52).

Finally, we should note that, although Croke roundly condemns this society and dissociates himself from it, he is not narrowly moralistic in the poem. He is clearly operating from the viewpoint of traditional moral norms, but he seems able to appreciate to some degree the underlying vitality of the kind of female figure and society he condemns. This is especially true with regard to the character of Bella. There seems to be a sneaking admiration for her spiritedness and verve when she faces the court and carries out her trials with aplomb. Also, in his description of the Victory Ball, the fun-loving vitality and natural vigour of this society emerge in spite of his apparent efforts to sustain a sense of moral propriety in the poem. In the end, we are left with the impression that Halifax society in 1805 had certain disreputable aspects, but it was also very much alive and viable, and indeed its spiciness was part of its vitality.

The importance of this poem, then, is that it gives us a very special insight into the upper strata of provincial society in Halifax in the twilight of the eighteenth century. Croke is a poet, and while he uses

the poem to present the truth of his moral point of view, he is equally honest in recording his impressions of Halifax society as he knew it.

A Note on the Text and the Annotations.

The present text is a collation of the Odell, Uniacke, and Akins manuscripts. These manuscripts are substantially the same with the exception that Canto II, 48-51, and Canto IV, 29-54 are omitted in the Uniacke and Akins copies. An attempt has been made to retain the original capitalization, but punctuation has been extensively amended.

The identification of individuals is based on the margin-notes found in the Akins manuscript. I have accepted these identifications at face value, and find no reason to question their accuracy.

In preparing this text, I have had the assistance and encouragement of Dr. M.A. Mason (Royal Military College of Canada), and I must thank Miss Phyllis R. Blakeley (Public Archives of Nova Scotia) for looking over my annotations.

1. As he was known in Halifax, because of his Oxford D.C.L.
2. Governor Sir George Prevost was away on a military expedition.
3. One of these, "Prologue to The Merchant of Venice," was published in the *Nova Scotia Royal Gazette* of March 7, 1809.
4. Hon. A.G. Archibald, "Sir Alexander Croke," *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, II (1881), 110-128.
5. There is typescript of this manuscript in Joan Anderson's "A Collection of the Poems of Jonathan Odell," an unpublished M.A. Thesis at U.B.C. (1961).
6. He would appear to look to Pope as his model. Note that in Canto I, 7-8, he adapts and incorporates two lines from *An Essay on Man* into his poem. In Canto II, 53, he paraphrases another line from the same poem.
7. Note particularly the attack on Britocamp in Canto IV, 29-54.
8. The "moral tale" was a popular eighteenth-century form of didactic narrative poetry.
9. In annotating the poem, I have accepted the identifications recorded in the Akins manuscript. Although it is not known who made these identifications, they appear to be highly reliable.

THE INQUISITION

An Heroic Poem in Four Cantos

Preface

Let not the malicious, or the envious, flatter themselves that there is anything of a Personal nature in the following Poem. Individual depravity is a subject too insignificant, and too disgusting, to dwell long upon a rational mind, much less to find employment for the immortal Muse. As long as Vice and Folly modestly withdraw themselves from public observation, Malevolence only could wish to hunt

them out of their Secret Recesses; but when they voluntarily come forward, bold and prominent, when they challenge Notice and endanger the general morals of Society, they become a public concern. No Person, therefore, at all acquainted with this Country can for a Moment entertain a supposition that any, the most distant allusion, can have been intended to any characters, or events, in this happy, decorous, and harmonious Province of Nova Scotia. He will be sensible that the Plot is entirely fictitious, and the Dramatis Personae, imaginary beings. Yet it is not on that account absolutely destitute of utility. Such Productions of mere fancy are like good Medicines in an Apothecary's Shop; not always equally applicable to every Patient, but always ready to be applied when necessity requires them. So to put a hypothetical case by way of illustration: Suppose there was any place so profligate and abandoned that [it condoned] Women who had been guilty of Numerous indiscretions and most blameable levities, whose conduct had manifested a dangerous disregard to appearances and reputation, and whose best friends and Warmest Advocates had declared it necessary that such their conduct should meet with the most avowed disapprobation and discouragement, lest it should become general among all the females of the Society, which, in their opinion, would be destructive of those Delicate Principles, which cannot be too strongly impressed on female minds. Suppose now such Women, on the Contrary, from an avowed Spirit of opposition, should receive the most marked approbation and encouragement, and should be treated with the highest honors in the most Public and ostentatious manner; suppose too, Women of respectability, Virtue & every elegant accomplishment should be as openly censured and maligned, only for Refusing to Pay such honors; Suppose likewise in addition, that those upon whom their elevated Stations had laid greater obligations of Promoting the general Welfare by good Examples, should betray the trust which Providence had reposed in them. In such a Case, when all reflecting minds would be justly alarmed for the Moral State of Society, and would feel the most anxious apprehensions for the Reputation and Virtuous Principles of their Wives and Daughters, it would immediately occur that the application of the Satyric Muse in support of Public Decency would be attended with peculiar propriety. Her Medicines would be *Severity* and *Ridicule*, and though the effects might not be adequate to her Wishes, her motives would be of the best. If Virtue and Propriety of conduct are the greatest happiness, and Vice and indecorum the greatest Misery of mankind, to enforce the one and discourage the other must be the dictate of true benevolence and Christian Charity rightly understood; very different from that Self-interested Hypocrisy which disgraces the Comprehensive Virtue of Charity by assuming her name, which Spares Offenders to the injury of the Innocent, affects to hope for the amendment of the Vitious by encouraging them in their Wickedness, and foolishly Pretends to promote their Repentance by flattering their Pride and Vanity. When the disease is fatal and Contagious, the use of the Knife, the Blister, or the Caustic may be a greater tenderness to the Patients and their Neighbours than Administering Opiates and Cordials.

THE INQUISITION

Canto 1st

Oh thou, whose Ardent and resistless Sway,
 Gods, men, and beasts, and frigid plants obey;
 At whose command, more changeful tricks are play'd,
 Than Breslaw's art to London crowds display'd;
 Who couplest Stable Boys with Courtly Dames,
 Whilst Nobles burn in Oyster wenches flames;
 "And through some certain Strainers well refined,
 "Art gentle Love, and Charmest Womankind."
 Thee I invoke, whether thy glories beam
 On Orient Ganges, by whose fruitful stream, 10
 The deep-learn'd Bramin leads the Sacred Bands,
 To where thy form, the Mystic Idol, stands,
 And blackeyed Damsels with lascivious mien,
 In dances celebrate thy Rites obscene;
 Or if thy Presence bless the fragrant bowers,
 Where some Chaste Abbess guards her choicest flowers,
 Where friendly "Windsors" midnight Portals gape,
 To Britain's Youths emboldened by the grape,
 And Venal Nymphs expose their Painted Charms,
 To lure the Novice to their hackney'd Arms: 20
 Where e'er thou art, my kindling Soul inspire,
 And fill thy Poet with a Sappho's fire;
 I sing thy triumphs, Virtue's friends in Chains,
 And discord, raging in Arcadia's plains.

In Transatlantic climes, a Country lies,
 Where nature's boons in vast profusion rise;
 No dire Contagions, thin a pallid Race,
 But health and Beauty glow in every face;

I, 1. thou: Lust.

I, 4. Breslaw's art: Philip Breslaw, a well-known English magician in the latter part of the 18th century.

I, 7-8. "Lust, thro' some certain strainers well refin'd, Is gentle love, and charms all womankind." (Pope, *An Essay on Man*, II, 189-190)

I, 17-20. This appears to be a reference to King's College at Windsor, N.S., and to the carousing of its students. As a governor of King's College, Croke was very concerned with its character and reputation.

Appropriate gifts, her favour'd Children Share,
 Her Sons, all heroes, all her Daughters, fair; 30
 No Party feuds, or jealousies, were known,
 And love and friendship called the land their own.
 But human happiness disdains Repose,
 And like some River's rapid torrent flows,
 Now here, now there, the foaming wave is tost,
 O'er Rocks, and Cat'racts, till in Ocean lost.
 He who in Eden's deep Embowering Shade,
 Our Parents first connubial bliss survey'd,
 And wept with Envy, saw Arcadia's joy,
 And swore such hateful blessings to destroy. 40
 Vex'd at the sight, his furious Passions Rise,
 And all the Demon, lightens in his eyes.

Forth from his Bands, a subtle fiend he calls
 ("Twas Belial, Once ador'd in Sidon's Walls);
 On Ardoise Hill, in deep consult they join,
 And Pro, and Con, discuss the deep design.
 The black scorch'd pines, and rocks of mournful hue,
 The cursed spot disclosed to human View;
 No Vegetation glads the Mildewed place,
 Save plants, the foes of every living race. 50
 Hemlock, and Aconite, and Poisonous Yew,
 And deadly Nightshade lurid to the view;
 Laurel, which oft the sportive Lamb beguiled
 And Savine, Murderer of the unborn child.
 The consultation o'er, the infernal chief,
 Sinks to the City of eternal grief;
 Whilst Belial executes his Lord's command,
 To raise divisions through the fated land.
 As drizly vapours, up Chebucto bay,
 From banks of Cod fish, wind their creeping way; 60
 Each narrow chink, the piercing fog pervades;
 And flannel scarcely guards the Shivering Maids;
 So thro' the Air the Daemon plied his Wings,
 And reached the City, when the Night bird sings.

I, 39.

Arcadia: Acadia.

I, 45.

Ardoise Hill: (pronounced Ar-dice) a steep hill on the Windsor Road near Newport, from which the surrounding area takes its name.

I, 59.

Chebucto Bay: the bay leading into Halifax Harbour and the Northwest Arm.

Unseen, unheard, he took his silent round,
 Whilst all the World in leaden Sleep was drown'd;
 Nor doors, nor walls, his secret course impede,
 Through all he travels, with an Angels speed;
 And in each slumbering ear, as on he past,
 He gently breath'd a Pestilential blast.
 Mortals awoke with Morn's ambrosial light,
 And rose, unconscious of the deeds of Night; 70
 Whilst usual Cares, their anxious thoughts employ,
 On business this intent, and that on joy,
 Th' impoison'd breath fermented in their Veins,
 And strange Chimeras filled their fev'rish brains
 And some fierce fire, when droughty August reigns,
 Pours desolation o'er Columbia's plains;
 Dropped from a Dutchman's Pipe, an Atom coal,
 Small cause of mighty woes, inflames the whole: 80
 The hardy settler views, with hopeless tears,
 At once destroy'd, the toil of all his Years;
 His Block-house, prov'd in many a stormy day,
 His ripening harvest, and his well saved hay.
 From hill to hill, the Conflagration Roars,
 And high in air the cloudy vapour soars;
 Spruce burns on Spruce, and Pines on Hemlock fall,
 Till Ashes, Stink, and smoke envelope all.
 So gently first a dusky Rumour rose,
 Just heard in Whispers, underneath the Nose; 90
 From Mouth to Mouth, the Wondrous story ran,
 And Ladies talk'd at Church, behind the fan.
 Tho' scarce one female told above a dozen,
 The secret she had heard from Aunt, or Cousin,
 Yet but a few, short fleeting hours had flown,
 Before the News was spread thro' all the Town,
 And Bella's name was bandied high and loud,
 This way and that way, by the vulgar crowd.
 With "*foul Adultr*ess" every corner rung,
 "Contented Cuckold" trill'd on every tongue; 100
 E'en dirty boys, Salacious wit display'd,
 And Strumpets swore that Bella spoil'd their trade.
 No salutation greets the low fall'n Dame,

I, 78. Columbia: a common name for North America derived from Christopher Columbus's surname.

I, 97. Bella: Mrs. Marianne Belcher, wife of Andrew Belcher, a wealthy Halifax merchant and member of H.M. Council (see II, 68n). She came from a socially prominent family in Boston named Von Geyer, and married Andrew Belcher in 1792.

Abhorr'd her knowledge, and disgraced her name;
 All Virtuous Matrons, with averted eye,
 Indignant scowl, and from Contagion fly;
 The World deserts her, e'en Francisca frowns,
 And good Old Brinda, such a Wretch disowns.
 What wonder, then, the selfish, venal race,
 Should fly their Benefactress in disgrace? 110
 When Ruin threatens, Cautious Rats retire,
 And Crafty Courtiers hail the rising fire.
 Bella's enchanting Parties now were o'er,
 Her splendid Banquets, and her Balls, no more;
 No more, her house receives the blind, and lame,
 No more her presents bribe the Voice of fame.
 Her harshest foes, her friendship once could boast
 (They best must know her, who had seen her most);
 From morn to night, Bettina's Larum rung,
 No words too gross for Flora's mincing tongue; 120
 To every house, with eager step they came,
 At every house they murder'd Bella's fame.

Now Bella's soul with anxious fury glows,
 To Wreak her Vengeance on her hated foes;
 Confounded, not abashed, her callous heart,
 Felt all the conscious Powers of Womans art.
 "Have I, said she, so long possessed the helm,
 "And ruled the fashion, thro' Arcadia's realm;
 "Have I been worshipped by a crowd of beaux,
 "And led my sapient Husband by the Nose; 130
 "Did I direct, thro' Carlo Vento's Pate,

- I, 107. Francisca: Lady Frances Wentworth, wife of Sir John Wentworth, Lt. Governor of Nova Scotia, 1792-1808.
- I, 108. good old Brinda: Mrs. Mary Brinley, sister of Frances Wentworth and wife of George Brinley, Deputy Commissary General to H.M. Forces in Nova Scotia. The Brinleys were in Halifax from 1786 to at least 1809, the year George Brinley died.
- I, 119. Bettina: Mrs. Rebecca Murray, wife of Captain (later Admiral) Robert Murray, R.N. (see II, 27n), and daughter of the Hon. Dr. John Halliburton, Physician to H.M. Naval Hospital (1782-1808) and member of H.M. Council (1787-1808). Her brother was Brenton Halliburton (see II, 38n), and her sister was Mrs. Polly Beckwith (see I, 120n). Their mother was a sister of James Brenton, a Judge of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia.
- I, 120. Flora: Mrs. Polly Beckwith, wife of Lt. Col. John Beckwith (see II, 33n), and sister to Rebecca Murray (see I, 119n) and Brenton Halliburton (see II, 38n).
- I, 131. Carlo Vento: Charles Mary Wentworth, only child of Sir John and Lady Frances Wentworth. After receiving his education in England, he came to Nova Scotia in the late 1790s, and was soon appointed by his father to H.M. Council (1801). He returned to England in 1805, and remained there until his death in 1844.

"The Golden Chain that draws affairs of State;
 "And shall I tamely sink, nor try to rise,
 "And yield to Paltry Wretches I despise?
 "NO! 'gainst my Power, tho' all the World combine,
 "By Heaven, or Hell, the Victory shall be mine;
 "The storm I'll weather, tho' it fiercely roar,
 "And strength, or skill, shall bring me safe to shore."
 She spake, and Jane, her faithful grand Vizier
 Approved her spirit, as she curled her hair;
 Belial Perceived his well laid ferment rise,
 And sparks of rapture darted from his eyes.

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Canto 2nd

'Twixt two wide roads, good Edwards Princely care,
 A grand Rotunda lifts its head in Air;
 High o'er the dome, a golden Peacock gleams,
 Within, an Amphitheatre it seems.
 Here now assembled, by its own decree,
 A Solemn Court of high Authority;
 Female concerns, Scandal and Reputation,
 The Weighty Subjects of their Consultation.
 If any damsel by Misfortune crost,
 Her Precious Virtue in the fields had lost, 10
 Let her petition this Mysterious Board;
 Her Stolen Commodity was soon restored.
 If Mrs. A. was caught with Mr. B.,
 And jealous husband saw, or seem'd to see,
 'Twas theirs by Process of an Opiate kind,
 To pour oblivion o'er the doubting mind.
 Or if some Spouse, of deary's beauty proud,
 Some harmless freedom to a friend allowed,
 Their Writs Prohibit meddling folks to pry,
 And shield the generous Man from infamy. 20
 Blest institution! formed to ease the smart,

- II, 1. two wide roads: the Windsor Road and Bedford Basin. The first was a major highway; the second, an important anchorage or roadstead.
- II, 1. Edward: Prince Edward Augustus, Duke of Kent, fourth son of George III and father of Queen Victoria. He served with the British Army and commanded the Nova Scotia garrisons from 1794 to 1800.
- II, 2. grand Rotunda: a round music house (built about 1796) on the grounds of "Prince's Lodge," Prince Edward's rural retreat on the shore of Bedford Basin, about six miles from Halifax on the Windsor Road. The music house was built on the site where Wentworth's summer retreat, "Friar Lawrence's Cell," had formerly stood; the land was loaned to the Prince by Wentworth. At "Prince's Lodge" Edward kept his mistress, Madame St. Laurent.

And drive Reflection from the guilty heart;
 On Vice's daughter, Virtue's meed bestow,
 And save a Sinner from repentent woe.

The Junto met, the Members took their places,
 All men of Wisdom, with sagacious faces.
 The gallant Moro, with a martial air,
 Assumed and filled the Presidential Chair;
 Attempted oft to utter manly sense,
 But Oaths and Passion checked his eloquence; 30
 Then down he sat, impatient of controul,
 Whilst fumes of Choler, choaked his Ardent Soul.
 Becco sat next, who claims an actor's due,
 And treats the merchant harder than the Jew.
 Profound Amygdalus was likewise there,
 Of scientific skill, to probe a dark affair,
 The Nurse's darling, and the ladies care.
 Two Barristers, in desperate Cases Wise,
 Bring all their learning, and unfee'd advice.
 What though in Crowds consulting Clients come, 40
 Some Lawyers cannot give the Law at home;
 Of these was Villicus, of restless mind,
 Who shakes his head, to no one place confined;
 With wit, some learning, some small love of gain,
 Parboil'd, and jumbled, in a shattered Brain;
 In all things like a Pendulum he swings,
 Midst Law, Religion, Colleges, and Kings,

- II, 25. The Junto: possibly a reference to the "Rockingham Club," a social and literary club established (c. 1800) by Governor Wentworth. Its membership included H.M. Council, the principal Navy and Army officers of the Halifax Station and Garrison, and a number of leading citizens of the city. It usually met at the Rockingham Inn, located near "Prince's Lodge."
- II, 27. gallant Moro: Captain (later Admiral) Robert Murray, R.N. He was attached to the Halifax Station from May 1794 to the early 1800s. From March to August 1800, he was a senior officer in command of the Station. He married Rebecca Halliburton in December 1794 (see I, 119n).
- II, 33. Becco: Lt. Col. John Beckwith, husband of Polly Halliburton (see I, 120n). He came from an outstanding English military family; his father and two brothers were generals. He arrived in Nova Scotia about 1785 to join the 57th (West Middlesex) Regiment stationed in Halifax. He left active service about 1799, and held various administrative positions in the government of Nova Scotia, including that of Adjutant-General of the Militia.
- II, 35. Amygdalus: (1) Brenton Halliburton, eldest son of Dr. John Halliburton (see I, 119n). He later rose to be Chief Justice of Nova Scotia and was knighted in 1859. (2) James Stewart, Solicitor-General of Nova Scotia, 1798-1815. He was Brenton Halliburton's brother-in-law and law partner. In 1815, he became a Judge of the supreme Court of Nova Scotia.
- II, 42. Villicus: (Latin for "bailiff, or steward") James Stewart (see II, 38n).

Till interest fixes firm his wavering soul,
 Interest, the guide star of the northern pole.
 So turns a Weather cock to every blast, 50
 Till, stiff with rust, it points one way at last.
 The Secretary to the high Divan,
 A Merchant, "God's best work, an honest man!"

The court convened, no Cryer, Silence bawls,
 All ears Profane are banished from those Walls.
 Not twelve sage Matrons summon'd to decide
 On Pregnant Widow, or suspected Bride,
 Or view with Spectacled, experienced Eye,
 Some Curious Case of imbecility;
 Not Cardinals, who grope with holy Care, 60
 Lest new Pope Joans should whelp in Peter's Chair;
 Not midnight Owls, in Wisdom's garb array'd,
 Such Solemn, Self-important looks displayed.
 Sole Judge of facts, imbox'd no jury sits;
 No talking Counsel puzzles honest wits;
 No harsh accuser 'gainst the Culprit pleads,
 And Screws reluctant truth from perjured maids.
 Bello appears, the injured Lady's Spouse,
 Grief and Despair sat lowering on his brows;
 His wife's Defender, tears suffused his Eyes, 70
 His blubbering Mouth, the Power of speech denies,
 Till Salts, and Hartshorne, Sovereign cure for fits,
 At length restored his half suspended Wits.

II, 52. Secretary: a number of possible candidates. The Akins manuscript suggests G. Grant or W. Smith, but Michael Wallace or Lawrence Hartshorne seem more likely. Wallace and Hartshorne were important both as politicians and merchants.

II, 52. Divan: Governor Parr died in 1792, the Wentworths were in England. In her efforts to gain the governorship for her husband, Frances sought the assistance of Prince William Henry (later William IV) with whom she had carried on an affair while he was attached to the Royal Navy in the Western Atlantic (1786-1789). The suit was successful and, before the Wentworths returned to Nova Scotia, Prince William Henry is reputed to have given Frances a Damask Sopha as a gift. Haligonians viewed the gift as an ironically fitting tribute. In the poem, the sopha is employed as a symbol of sexual promiscuity and adultery in the upper levels of Halifax society.

II, 53. Paraphrase of "An honest man's the noblest work of God" (Pope, *An Essay on Man*, IV, 247).

II, 61 Pope Joan: a legendary female pope (John VIII) who was able to disguise her sex, until she died giving birth to a child during a procession.

II, 68. Bello: Andrew Belcher, son of the Hon. Jonathan Belcher, first Chief Justice of Nova Scotia, 1754-1776. He entered business, and with the help of Alexander Brymer (see II, 95n) became one of the wealthiest merchants in Halifax. His partner was William Wright, son of the Rev. George Wright (see IV, 127n). In 1801, Belcher was sworn in as a member of H.M. Council along with one of his wife's lovers, Charles Mary Wentworth.

In Moving Strains he states "his heartfelt Woes,
 "Complains of Cruel, and Malignant foes;
 "How scandal vex'd his Dear beloved Wife,
 "Whom he had ne'er suspected in his life.
 "He swore he loved her, 'twas in vain folks talked,
 "Nay, blest the very ground on which she walked;
 "So sweet she ogled, and she kissed so sweet, 80
 "And played so pretty in a Tete a Tete.
 "He knew her Virtue, though the World in scorn,
 "Told at eight months, how swapping babes were born;
 "How this a Soldier, that a Tar betrays,
 "And Carlo's smartness shines in t'others face;
 "If all were true, 'twas his Concern alone,
 "He took Her flesh for flesh, and Bone for Bone,
 "And loved her Children, as he loved his Own.
 "Though many venial frailties might be found,
 "Well might her merits, for her faults compound; 90
 "Flora could slip a little, and recover,
 "And other Virtuous Wives had had a Lover.
 "Twas he who suffered for his Wife's disgrace,
 "Cut by his friends, who snickered in his face;
 "In vain from nought he rose by Bruno's Bounty,
 "Justice of Peace, and Member for the County;
 "By all descriptions, high and low, abhorr'd,
 "Not e'en good dinners filled his costly board."
 He ceased, two Rays ethereal from his forehead beamed,
 Two arrant Horns to Mortal Sight they seemed. 100

Hush'd be each breeze, and must the strifeful tongue,
 Be every Ear in expectation hung;
 Let soft slow Music only fan the Air,

- II, 83. swapping babes: the implication here is that the child may have had several fathers. The child in question is possibly Edward Belcher (born May 1, 1799), afterwards Sir Edward Belcher, R.N., K.C.B., the distinguished navigator and leader of the Arctic expedition in search of Sir John Franklin.
- II, 84. Soldier: John Agmond Vesey, Lt. Colonel of the 52nd (Oxfordshire) Regiment, 1798-1803; of the Nova Scotia Fencible Infantry, 1803-1805 and of the 29th (Winchester) Regiment, 1805-1807.
- II, 84. Tar: Captain (later Rear-Admiral) John Erskine Douglas, R.N. He was attached to the Halifax Station from c. 1798 to 1804. He acted as Commander-in-Chief of the Station from July 1801 to July 1802.
- II, 85. Carlo: C.M. Wentworth (see I, 131n).
- II, 91. Flora: Polly Beckwith (see I, 120n).
- II, 95. Bruno's Bounty: Alexander Brymer, a wealthy Halifax merchant who was a friend of the Belcher family and Andrew Belcher's patron.

Behold with Solemn Step the Injured Fair!
 No mean submission in her face appears,
 No forced Repentance fills her eyes with tears;
 Cloathed with Consummate impudence she stands,
 And asks for Justice only, at their hands,
 Demands her trial, every Proof defies,
 And boldly tells the meddling World it lies;
 So when some black eyed Heroine of the Strand,
 Holds up at Justice Hall her unwash'd hand,
 Inspired by Ale, Tobacco, Gin and Fury,
 She damns Judge, Witness, Counsellor, and Jury.
 The Skillful Clerk, her fair Defence records;
 Then, as by Law prescribed, the Court awards
 Three Solemn Ordeals, or her Guilt to show,
 Or prove her conduct white as driven Snow.

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Canto 3rd

The rosy hours unbar the heavenly gate
 Of day, now pregnant with a lady's fate;
 The Judges sat, the anxious crowd around.
 In awful silence check each rising sound.
 Near where St. Lawrence delv'd his wondrous cells,
 In Sherwoods wilds, an ancient Druid dwells;
 Simple his manners, Simpler yet his Wit,
 Yet skilled in all that learned Merlin Writ.
 Each Constellation by its name he knew,
 And cull'd each plant that Sips the Silver dew,
 His Wondrous Charms, the lab'ring moon Controul,
 And drag its Secret from the closest Soul.

20

Him now they summoned, joyful he attends,
 The friends of Heaven are Innocence's friends;
 With looks Mysterious, robed in purest White,

- III, 5. Where St. Lawrence delv'd...cells: an indirect reference to Wentworth's summer retreat on Bedford Basin, which he called "Friar Lawrence's Cell" This is the land that Wentworth later loaned to Prince Edward, and on which "Prince's Lodge" was built (see II, 2n).
- III, 6. Sherwoods wilds: "Sherwood" was the country estate of the Rev. Dr. Robert Stanser (see IV, 141n), located on Bedford Basin just outside the village of Rockingham in the general vicinity of "Prince's Lodge."
- III, 6. Druid: legend has it that a hermit lived in a lonely cell up behind "Prince's Lodge." However, it may also be a satiric reference to Rev. Dr. Stanser.

The Sacred man began the Magic Rite.
 With Sable wand, a Circle on the ground,
 He traced, with unknown figures marked around;
 Thrice to the East, his head submissive vails,
 Thrice to the Region of Hesperian gales.
 Then the black tome, with quivering voice, he read,
 Which to the Earth condemns the Silent dead,
 Corrupted Mortals calls to life again,
 And firmly binds the Adamantine Chain.
 A charmed substance from his Vest he drew,
 And held it high exposed to public view;
 Of herbs, and flowers, by Magic skill comprest;
 Strange words he muttered, and the crowd address'd.

“Hear all ye People, see this sacred Cake,
 “And hence let Sinners awful warning take;
 “If any foul Adultress dare Presume
 “This Charm to Swallow, mark the certain doom;
 “Senseless, distracted, and Convulsed with Pain,
 “Instant she swells, turns black, and bursts in twain.”

30

Bella unawed her lilly hand extends,
 And gently takes it with her fingers Ends:
 “Be that, or worse, my wrteched fate, she cries,
 “If this true heart, its real guilt denies;
 “If e'er in thought, I broke my solemn vows,
 “Or fixed One Antler on my good man's brows;
 “If willful falsehood e'er these Lips have past,
 “May this be Poison, and this hour my last!”

Whilst dreadful fears, the gaping Crowd appall,
 With steady face, she fairly eats it all.
 They gaze, but soon their Panic fears are o'er,
 She smiles, and looks more charming than before;
 No livid spots, the brilliant rouge deform,
 No swellings rise but Nature's Amorous form;
 No strange eclipse obscures the Star of day,
 No Earthquakes gape, no pallid lightnings play.

The Audience clap, Francisca smiles Applause
And hails the Triumph of the good Old Cause.

Deluded Mortals! little do ye know,
The secret Causes of Events below!
A Hair, a Spark, a Breath, a grain of Sand,
Can save, or ruin, an Imperial Land.
Well might they spare their wonder had they known,
A secret trusted to the Muse alone:
Her Piercing, Telescopic Eye observed,
When from the rigid path, the Druid swerv'd, 60
How soothed by kindness, and a jovial dinner,
He thought it cruel to destroy a Sinner.
And though, no doubt, the Lady's Soul was pure,
'Twas best from Accidents to be secure.
So, as the famed John Hunter once was said
Imagined ails to cure with Pills of bread,
The good old man contrived the Court to hum,
And formed his harmless spell of new baked crumb.

And now stand forth and answer, name by name,
Twelve Compurgators of the Lady's fame; 70
Six pycbald footmen, all in Liveries new,
With six meek Slipslops formed the motley crew;
Maidens well skill'd the Secret tale to bear,
And whisper Scandal in their Lady's ear,
Ope the wet Wafer, thro' a Crevice spy,
Or to a key hole fix the curious eye.
Ranged by the President, around they stand,
Each with a Sacred Volume in his hand,
Each to high Heaven, his raised right hand erects,
These words repeating, as the clerk directs: 80

"Hear, O ye Judges, all ye People hear!
"By all the dreadful Powers of Styx, we swear,
"That ne'er in sitting, standing, [kneeling,] lying,

III, 51. Francisca: Frances Wentworth (see I, 107n).

III, 65. John Hunter: a well-known English anatomist and surgeon (1728-1793).
"Hunter's works, and especially his posthumous papers, contain numerous
psychological remarks, exhibiting much originality and shrewdness..." (DNB
X, 292).

"Prone, or supine, in walking, swimming, flying,
 "On bed, chair, Sopha, either up or down,
 "In doors, or out, in Country, or in Town,
 "In mossy hermitage, or forest green,
 "We ne'er saw Bella do the deed obscene.
 "So may Heaven shield Poor Servants from disasters,
 "And grant kind Mistresses, and Purbblind Masters." 90
 They kiss the Book, the Court declares Nem: Con:
 Complete the Lady's Exculpation.

Another awful trial still remains,
 To cleanse poor Bella from imputed stains;
 With banded Eyes, and step-performing legs,
 To dance nine times, o'er nine endanger'd Eggs.
 Condemned as guilty, should but one be found,
 To shed its golden honors on the ground.
 Bella advances, whilst her loving spouse,
 Binds tight the Napkin round his deary's brows; 100
 The Eggs are placed irregularly true,
 Whilst all the Audience shudder at the view.
 Bella among them, nimbly plays her part,
 Skipping, and footing, like the bounding Hart;
 Her many twinkling feet, they scarce descry,
 This way and that, the Eggs unbroken fly,
 And whilst she passes, full nine times or more,
 No Yellow Currents stain the plaistered floor.

Not Don Chloroso could perform so well,
 Yet the plain truth the honest Muse must tell; 120
 For Jane and Polly Hays considered long:
 Eggs were but brittle, Mistress might step wrong.
 Jane's Wisdom first suggests the lucky thought,
 So nine sham Eggs, in place of true, were brought;
 With skillful hand, by Polly's husband wrought,
 So nicely formed in Statuary Stone,
 No Mortal Hen could tell then from her own.

Canto 4th

O for the Muse, who whilome did inspire,
 Anacreon's elegant translator's lyre;
 Sublime, on Della Crusca's wings to soar,
 Inflamed by Kotzebue's illumined lore;
 And taught great truths, known only to the Wise,
 That pleasure's Virtue, Pain alone is vice,
 That all our duties from our Passions flow,
 Enjoyment, best obedience here below.
 In treacherous colours tricked, the frail one's part
 Portrayed the sweetness of her feeling heart, 10
 But veiled in clouds, an helpless offspring's stain,
 An injured husband's agonizing pain;
 Then should my verse in soft meanders wind,
 Far above Vulgar Common Sense refined;
 Blaspheme my God, to keep the table roaring,
 Find Trinities in drinking, singing, whoring;
 And, like the splendours of a feverish dream,
 Pour false illusions, worthy of my theme!

But Belial now Arcadia's fate revolved,
 And Bella's triumph to complete resolved.
 Perched like a Raven on the golden Ball,
 When chimes to dinner hungry Soldiers call,
 The loyal City he examines round,
 Till some fit Tool of kindred mind he found.
 Nor Searches long, but soon directs his eyes,
 Where from the Sea, Britannia's glories rise;
 There Britocamp, Magnificent, and Proud,
 Smiles with complacence on the dunghill Crowd.

To that high emminence by merit raised,
 The great he flattered, and their harlots praised; 30
 Unreal vision, formed for empty show,

- IV, 3. Della Crusca: the pseudonym of Robert Merry (1755-1798), a writer noted for the extravagance of his style.
- IV, 4. Kotzebue: August Friedrick Ferdinand Kotzebue (1761-1819), a German dramatist whose plays were highly sentimental and theatrical in effect.
- IV, 21. golden Ball: the ornament on top of the Garrison Clock, now the Halifax Town Clock.
- IV, 26. Where Britannia's glories rise: the Dockyard, or Navy Yard.
- IV, 27. Britocamp: John Nicholson Inglefield, a Captain in the Royal Navy from 1780 to 1794, and a Commissioner of the Navy Yard at Halifax from 1801 to 1811.

All pomp above, and meanness all below!
 See his rich board with cheapened dainties spread,
 Whilst hungry servants call in vain for bread;
 The starving footmen ranging round the seats,
 Grudge every mouthful that the stranger eats.
 Where no warm charities expand the breast,
 What spreads the splendid board, the daily feast?
 Who fears reflection drowns in noisy revels
 The stings of conscience and the azure devils. 40
 Oft when the good to slumber are consigned,
 A wretched wife sets heavy on his mind;
 He sees the perjured negro at the scourge
 Aghast, and prompt the faithless tale to forge;
 Whilst the poor wife to evil tongues a prey,
 By all deserted, shuns the face of day;
 Her sex disowns her, e'en her children learn
 Her fostering bosoms kind embrace to spurn.
 Was it for this, that Heaven's transcendent care
 Closed ocean's mouth, and bade the tempest spare?
 When from the shipwrecked vessels side he flew,
 A bright example to the sinking crew.
 And taught old tars, who every danger brave,
 That precious thing, a Captain's life to save.

Him Belial instigates, with Practised sway,
 To honour Bella by a festive day.
 Cards fly by Packs to folks of each degree,
 Request the favour, and R.S.V.P.;
 What sleepless nights poor Milliners sustained,
 Of best Carmine, what Druggists Shops were drained; 60
 What Turkies, Chickens, Pigs, and Pidgeons fell,
 To grace the banquet, not the Muse could tell.

The Evening Came, the Sun withdrew his light,
 And left the World to Folly, Vice, and Night.
 The Dames arrive, in Muslins, gauzes, Satins,
 In Chariots, Coaches, One Horse Chaise, and Pattens;

IV, 49-54.

The incident referred to here took place in September of 1782. Inglefield's ship, the *Centaur*, was caught in a violent hurricane and foundered. As the ship was slowly sinking, Inglefield (the Captain), along with the Master and a few of the crew, jumped into the ship's pinnace and abandoned the doomed vessel. They were the only survivors of the shipwreck. Inglefield was exonerated by a court martial, but his reputation suffered.

Argands trimm'd lamps their fluttering light display,
 Nor lawn, nor ladies, weep the absent day.
 The gaudy Banners flutter to the Air,
 The Silver Side board groans with sumptuous fare; 70
 The fiddles crash, the merry Tambours beat,
 In Notes responsive to the Dancers feet;
 Through female Veins, the Piercing Octave thrills,
 And Dartmouth echoes from her Pine-clad hills.

Beneath a Canopy's resplendent head,
 High on a tinsel'd Sopha, Bella spread,
 With trinkets dizen'd out from top to toe,
 The well earned Spoils of many a vanquished foe.
 Three blooming Brides in honey moon elate,
 Like Venus' Graces, round the Goddess wait; 80
 Triumphant joy her smiling face expands,
 Whilst all around her, form her faithful bands.
 On every side Congratulations flow,
 Crowds press on Crowds, their Ardent love to show;
 All the great little, and the little Great,
 Great Men of Law, Great Ministers of State;
 Great Treasurers, Ice-struck at Lord Melville's falling,
 Great Fools, Great Knaves, great folks of every calling;
 Great Harlots into honest Women made,
 And some who still Profess the thriving Trade; 90
 Great Accoucheurs, Great Saints, and greater Sinners,
 And all who love great dances, and great dinners;

- IV, 67. Argands trimm'd lamps: Aime Argand of Geneva invented the first scientifically constructed oil lamp of 1784.
- IV, 79. Three blooming Brides: two of the brides referred to here are the daughters of Richard John Uniacke, Attorney-General and Speaker of the House of Assembly. The double wedding took place on May 3, 1805. Mary, the eldest daughter, married Vice-Admiral Sir Andrew Mitchell, K.B., Commander-in-Chief of the Halifax Station, 1802-1806. Martha Maria married Thomas Nicholson Jeffery, Collector of H.M. Customs. The third bride is Dorothy Fawson (daughter of Jones Fawson, Sheriff of Halifax) who on the evening of May 4, 1805, married Crofton Uniacke, brother of Mary and Martha.
- IV, 87. Lord Melville's falling: Henry Dundas, first Viscount Melville (1742-1811). He was a central figure in English politics in the late 18th century, particularly during Pitt's Ministry. In 1805-06, impeachment proceedings were brought against him for negligent management of funds during his tenure as Treasurer of the Navy, 1783-1800.

Great Ladies, who the Charms of Home despise,
 And pleasure's call above decorum prize;
 Red Coats, and Blue Coats, altogether squeeze,
 Buzzing and humming, like a swarm of bees.
 Foremost in Zeal, as deepest in offence,
 Behold the slanderers of Innocence;
 Bella's apostate, scandalizing friends,
 With fortune changed are prompt to make amends; 100
 With prudent foresight, prostrate at her feet,
 Prepared, that bitterest food, their own foul words to eat.
 All bring their offerings, nor thinks this too dear,
 A wife's, or that, a Sister's character;
 Virgins unnumber'd, blooming and divine,
 Their Mother's immolate at Bella's shrine.
 Their generous Host, attached to all the Sex,
 No nice distinctions puzzle and perplex,
 True to the Cause, he every Wh-e defends,
 And with his Daughter props his falling friends. 110

How persecuted, and insulted now, the few,
 Among the faithless, still to Virtue true;
 Who, undismayed and from Contagion free,
 Refused to Baal to bow the suppliant knee;
 And midst low, ill bred scorn, unmoved remain'd,
 And all their Sex's Noblest Pride sustained.
 Not birth, nor rank, with every grace combined,
 Not all the beauties, both of form and mind,
 Their fair possessors saved from Vulgar Spite,
 Despised and hooted on that shameless night. 120

And now advanced the Sable Stoled Race,
 Of grave demeanor and submissive face;
 Saint Austin, from the Woods, on Heaven intent,
 By his good Son, a Bishop's blessing sent;
 The Kiss of Peace, he brings with Saint like air,
 And leaves his Parish to the Sexton's care.

- IV, 95. Red Coats and Blue: uniforms of the British Army and Royal Navy.
 IV, 110. his Daughter: Inglefield's daughter was the wife of Vice-Admiral Sir Benjamin Hallowell, R.N., a naval hero.
 IV, 123. St. Austin: Bishop Charles Inglis, first Anglican Bishop of Nova Scotia, After 1796, because of ill health, he spent a good deal of time at his farm, "Clermont," at Aylesford in the Annapolis Valley.
 IV, 124. his good Son: Rev. John Inglis, later third Bishop of Nova Scotia. After graduating from King's College (Windsor), he was ordained by his father in 1802, and often acted as the Bishop's commissary. At the same time, he was rector of St. Mary's Church, Aylesford, from 1801 to 1816

Faber, who rules his Infantine Domain,
 Nor sternly bears the birchen road in Vain,
 Bestows in Bella's hands the Master Tome,
 Whilst sniveling Schoolboys tingling wait their doom; 130
 The deep read Clerks at female learning gazed,
 And "My Respected hearers" stood amazed.
 From purest realms of Academic Truth,
 See next the guardian of Arcadia's youth,
 Borne by the stream, his firmness should have checked,
 His morals floated, and his duty Wrecked;
 Alas! he kneels, by Bella's smiles subdued,
 A sad prognostic for the rising brood.
 Holy Saint Paul, if, in the realms of day,
 To Souls Seraphic, Sorrow finds its way, 140
 How wouldst thou grieve, thy Rector's face to View,
 Amidst this Venal, Prostituted Crew.
 Blest constitution of Arcadia's Church,
 Where Owls and Bats on Heaven's high Altar perch,
 Where Parishes hold ministers in chains,
 Bound by the Annual Pension's petty gains;
 In vain we seek thy fearless man of God,
 Who o'er the trembling Sinner holds the Rod;
 More then the Deity, they fear the frown
 Of Vestries, rich Church Wardens, and the Town. 150
 Is a Smart Tradesman, upstart, proud, and vain?
 Or is his Pampered wife a B--- in grain?
 Unawed, unchecked by holy exhortation,
 They slide down hill, the broad road of damnation.

- IV, 127. Faber: Rev. George Wright, headmaster of the Halifax Grammar School in the 1790s and early 1800s. He was also rector of St. George's Church, Halifax, 1801-1819.
- IV, 132. "My Respected hearers": "A favorite expression of Mr. Wright's in his sermons, I remember before this Poem appeared counting it in one Sermon 17 times." (Note in margin of Akins Ms.)
- IV, 134. guardian of...youth: Dr. Thomas Cox, President of King's College (Windsor), 1804-1805.
- IV, 141. Rector: Rev. Dr. Robert Stanser, Rector of St. Paul's Church, Halifax, from 1789 to 1816. In 1816, he was made second Bishop of Nova Scotia and was succeeded by John Inglis in 1825.
- IV, 150. rich Church Wardens: Andrew Belcher was Churchwarden of St. Paul's Church, 1800-1801.

Tis done! the glorious triumph is complete!
The Sacred Orders crouch at Vice's feet;
The Female Virtues, bleeding at the Sight,
To Heaven's high Portal, Wing their hasty flight.

FINIS