

Classic Poetry Series

Hugh Henry Brackenridge

- poems -

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Hugh Henry Brackenridge(1748 – 25 June 1816)

Hugh Henry Brackenridge was an American writer, lawyer, judge, and justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

A frontier citizen in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA, he founded both the Pittsburgh Academy, now the University of Pittsburgh, and the Pittsburgh Gazette, still operating today as the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

Life

Brackenridge was born in Kintyre, Scotland, a village near Campbeltown. In 1753, when he was 5, his family emigrated to York County, Pennsylvania, near the Maryland border, then a frontier. At age 15 he was head of a free school in Maryland. At age 19 he entered the College of New Jersey, now Princeton University, where he joined [Philip Morin Freneau](http://www.poemhunter.com/philip-freneau/), James Madison, and others in forming the American Whig Society to counter the conservative Cliosophic, or Tory, Society. (Today these are conjoined as the American Whig-Cliosophic Society.) Freneau and Brackenridge collaborated on a satire on American manners that may be the first work of prose fiction written in America, Father Bombo's Pilgrimage to Mecca. They also wrote The Rising Glory of America, a prophetic poem of a united nation that would rule the North American continent from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. Brackenridge recited it at the commencement exercises of 1771.

After his graduation, Brackenridge remained another year to study divinity. In 1772 he became headmaster of an academy in Somerset County, Maryland, with Freneau as his assistant. He went back to Princeton for a Master's degree, and then served in George Washington's army as a chaplain, preaching fiery patriotic sermons to the soldiers of the Revolutionary War. He started the United States Magazine in Philadelphia in 1778, where he published poems by his friend Freneau, but its lagging subscriptions convinced him to change his profession. He took a law degree, studying under Samuel Chase in Annapolis, and was admitted to the bar in Philadelphia in 1780 at age 32. Of Philadelphia he wrote, "I saw no chance for being anything in that city, there were such great men before me." Four months later he struck out for the frontier, 300 miles to the west, over the Appalachian Mountains.

In 1781 Pittsburgh was a village of 400 inhabitants, most Scots, like himself, Scots-Irish, and Germans. His aim, he wrote, in "offering myself to the place"

was "to advance the country and thereby myself."

In Pittsburgh he helped establish the first western newspaper, the Pittsburgh Gazette, in 1786. He was elected in 1786 to the Pennsylvania state assembly, where he fought for the adoption of the federal Constitution, and obtained state endowments in 1787 for the establishment of the Pittsburgh Academy (University of Pittsburgh), modeled on Benjamin Franklin's Academy of Philadelphia (University of Pennsylvania). He also played a role in the little known Westsylvania dispute, siding with Pennsylvania that the western lands should not become a 14th state. He lost a bid for re-election because he opposed popular sentiment in supporting federal controls, and he also nearly lost his life when he attempted to mediate the Whiskey Rebellion. He ran for the United States Congress, but was soundly defeated by Albert Gallatin. The formation of Allegheny County is largely due to Brackenridge's efforts. In December 1799 Governor Thomas McKean appointed him a justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

In 1815 he completed *Modern Chivalry*, his rambling satirical novel. Widely considered the first important fictional work about the American frontier and called "to the West what Don Quixote was to Europe," the third and fourth sections of the book appeared in 1793 and 1797, and a revision in 1805, with a final addition in 1815. Henry Adams called it "a more thoroughly American book than any written before 1833."

Brackenridge died June 25, 1816 in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

The Allegheny County borough of Brackenridge, Pennsylvania, is named for his son, the lawyer, judge, and writer Henry Marie Brackenridge (1786–1871).

A Poem On Divine Revelation

This is a day of happiness, sweet peace,
And heavenly sunshine; upon which conven'd
In full assembly fair, once more we view,
And hail with voice expressive of the heart,
Patrons and sons of this illustrious hall.
This hall more worthy of its rising fame
Than hall on mountain or romantic hill,
Where Druid bards sang to the hero's praise,
While round their woods and barren heaths was heard
The shrill calm echo of th' enchanting shell.
Than all those halls and lordly palaces
Where in the days of chivalry, each knight,
And baron brave in military pride
Shone in the brass and burning steel of war;
For in this hall more worthy of a strain
No envious sound forbidding peace is heard,
Fierce song of battle kindling martial rage
And desp'rate purpose in heroic minds:
But sacred truth fair science and each grace
Of virtue born; health, elegance and ease
And temp'rate mirth in social intercourse
Convey rich pleasure to the mind; and oft
The sacred muse in heaven-breathing song
Doth wrap the soul in extasy divine,
Inspiring joy and sentiment which not
The tale of war or song of Druids gave.
The song of Druids or the tale of war
With martial vigour every breast inspir'd,
With valour fierce and love of deathless fame;
But here a rich and splendid throng conven'd
From many a distant city and fair town,
Or rural seat by shore or mountain-stream,
Breathe joy and blessing to the human race,
Give countenance to arts themselves have known,
Inspire the love of heights themselves have reach'd,
Of noble science to enlarge the mind,
Of truth and virtue to adorn the soul,
And make the human nature grow divine.

Oh could the muse on this auspicious day
Begin a song of more majestic sound,
Or touch the lyre on some sublimer key,
Meet entertainment for the noble mind.
How shall the muse from this poetic bow'r
So long remov'd, and from this happy hill,
Where ev'ry grace and ev'ry virtue dwells,
And where the springs of knowledge and of thought
In riv'lets clear and gushing streams flow down
Attempt a strain? How sing in rapture high
Or touch in vari'd melody the lyre
The lyre so long neglected and each strain
Unmeditated, and long since forgot?
But yet constrain'd on this occasion sweet
To this fam'd hall and this assembly fair
With comely presence honouring the day,
She fain would pay a tributary strain.
A purer strain though not of equal praise
To that which Fingal heard when Ossian sung
With voice high rais'd in Selma hall of shells;
Or that which Pindar on th' Elean plain,
Sang with immortal skill and voice divine,
When native Thebes and ev'ry Grecian state
Pour'd forth her sons in rapid chariot race,
To shun the goal and reach the glorious palm.
He sang the pride of some ambitious chief,
For olive crowns and wreaths of glory won;
I sing the rise of that all glorious light,
Whose sacred dawn the aged fathers saw
By faith's clear eye, through many a cloud obscure
And heavy mist between: they saw it beam
From Judah's royal tribe, they saw it shine
O'er Judah's happy land, and bade the hills,
The rocky hills and barren vallies smile,
The desert blossom and the wilds rejoice.

This is that light and revelation pure,
Which Jacob saw and in prophetic view,
Did hail its author from the skies, and bade
The sceptre wait with sov'reignty and sway

On Judah's hand till Shiloh came. That light
Which Beor's son in clearer vision saw,
Its beams sore piercing his malignant eye;
But yet constrain'd by the eternal truth
Confess'd its origin and hail'd its rise,
Fresh as a star from Judah's sacred line.
This, Amos' son touch'd with seraphic fire
In after times beheld. He saw it beam
From Judah's royal tribe; he saw it shine
O'er Judah's happy land, and bade the hills,
The rocky hills and barren vallies smile,
The desert blossom and the wilds rejoice.

This is that light which purifies the soul,
From mist obscure, of envy, hate, and pride;
Bids love celestial in the bosom glow,
Fresh kindling up the intellectual eye
Of faith divine, in beatific view
Of that high glory and seraphic bliss,
Which he who reigns invisible, shall give
To wait on virtue in the realms of day.

This is that light which from remotest times
Shone to the just; gave sweet serenity,
And sunshine to the soul, of each wise sage,
Fam'd patriarch, and holy man of God,
Who in the infancy of time did walk
With step unerring, through those dreary shades,
Which veil'd the world e'er yet the golden sun
Of revelation beam'd. Seth, Enos, and
The family of him preserv'd from death
By flood of waters. Abram and that swain
Who erst exil'd in Midian did sing
The world from chaos rising, and the birth
Of various nature in the earth, or sea,
Or element of air, or heav'n above.

This is that light which on fair Zion hill
Descending gradual, in full radiance beam'd

O'er Canaan's happy land. Her fav'rite seers
Had intercourse divine with this pure source,
And oft from them a stream of light did flow,
To each adjoining vale and desert plain,
Lost in the umbrage of dark heathen shades.
'Twas at this stream the fabling poets drank
And sang how heav'n and earth from chaos rose;
'Twas at this stream the wiser sages drank
And straightway knew the soul immortal lives
Beyond the grave and all the wrecks of time.

From Judah's sacred hills a partial ray
Extraneous, visited and cheer'd the gloom
Spread o'er the shaded earth; yet more than half
In superstition and the dreams of night
Each hoary sage by long experience wise,
And high philosopher of learning fam'd
Lay buried deep shut from the light of day.
Shut from the light of revelation clear
In devious path they wandered oft,
Nor could strong reason with the partial beam
Of revelation, wholly dissipate
The midnight horrors of so dark an age.
Vain were their searches, and their reason vain,
Else whence the visionary tales receiv'd,
Of num'rous deities in earth, or heav'n
Or sea, or river, or the shades profound
Of Erebus, dark kingdom of the dead.
Weak deities of fabled origin
From king or hero, to the skies advanc'd
For sanguinary appetite, and skill
In cruel feats of arms, and tyranny
O'er ev'ry right, and privilege of man.
Vain were their searches, and their reason vain,
Else whence the sculptur'd image of a god,
And marble bust ador'd as deity,
Altar and hecatomb prepar'd for these,
Or human sacrifice when hecatomb
Consum'd in vain with ceremony dire,
And rites abhorr'd, denied the wish'd success.
Reason is dark, else why heroic deem'd

Fell suicide, as if 'twere fortitude
And higher merit to recede from life,
Shunning the ills of poverty, or pain,
Or wasting sickness, or the victor's sword,
Than to support with patience fully tried
As Job, thence equall'd with him in renown.

Shut from the light of revelation clear
The world lay hid in shades, and reason's lamp
Serv'd but to show how dark it was; but now
The joyous time with hasty steps advanc'd,
When truth no more should with a partial ray
Shine on the shaded earth; now on swift wings
The rosy hours brought on in beauty mild,
The day-spring from on high, and from the top
Of some fair mount Chaldean shepherds view
That orient star which Beor's son beheld,
From Aram east, and mark'd its lucid ray,
Shedding sweet influence on Judah's land.
Now o'er the plain of Bethl'em to the swains
Who kept their flocks beneath the dews of night,
A light appears expressive of that day
More general, which o'er the shaded earth
Breaks forth, and in the radiance of whose beams,
The humble shepherd, and the river-swain
By Jordan stream, or Galilea's lake,
Can see each truth and paradox explain'd,
Which not each wise philosopher of Greece,
Could tell, nor sage of India, nor the sons
Of Zoroaster, in deep secrets skill'd.

Such light on Canaan shone but not confin'd
With partial ray to Judah's favour'd land,
Each vale and region to the utmost bound
Of habitable earth, distant or nigh
Soon finds a gleam of this celestial day:
Fam'd Persia's mountains and rough Bactria's woods
And Media's vales and Shinar's distant plain:
The Lybian desert near Cyrene smiles
And Ethiopia hails it to her shores.

Arabia drinks the lustre of its ray
Than fountain sweeter, or the cooling brook
Which laves her burning sands; than stream long sought
Through desert flowing and the scorched plain
To Sheba's troop or Tema's caravan.

Egypt beholds the dawn of this fair morn
And boasts her rites mysterious no more;
Her hidden learning wrapt in symbols strange
Of hieroglyphic character, engrav'd
On marble pillar, or the mountain rock,
Or pyramid enduring many an age.
She now receives asserted and explain'd
That holy law, which on mount Sinai writ
By God's own finger, and to Moses giv'n,
And to the chosen seed, a rule of life.
And strict obedience due; but now once more
Grav'd on the living tablet of the heart,
And deep impress'd by energy divine,
Is legible through an eternal age.

North of Judea now this day appears
On Syria west, and in each city fair
Full many a church of noble fame doth rise.
In Antioch the seat of Syrian kings,
And old Damascus, where Hazael reign'd.
Now Cappadocia Mithridates' realm,
And poison-bearing Pontus, whose deep shades
Were shades of death, admit the light of truth.
In Asia less seven luminaries rise,
Bright lights, which with celestial vigour burn,
And give the day in fullest glory round.
There Symrna shines, and Thyatira there,
There Ephesus a sister light appears,
And Pergamus with kindred glory burns:
She burns enkindled with a purer flame
Than Troy of old, when Grecian kings combin'd
Had set her gates on fire: The Hellespont
And all th' Egean sea shone to the blaze.

But now more west the gracious day serene
On Athens rising, throws a dark eclipse
On that high learning by her sages taught,
In each high school of philosophic fame;
Vain wisdom, useless sophistry condemn'd,
As ignorance and foolishness of men.
Let her philosophers debate no more
In the Lyceum, or the Stoics porch,
Holding high converse, but in error lost
Of pain, and happiness, and fate supreme.
Fair truth from heav'n draws all their reas'ning high
In captive chains bound at her chariot wheels.

Now Rome imperial, mistress of the world
Drinks the pure lustre of the orient ray
Assuaging her fierce thirst of bloody war,
Dominion boundless, victory and fame;
Each bold centurion, and each prætor finds
A nobler empire to subdue themselves.

From Rome the mistress of the world in peace,
Far to the north the golden light ascends;
To Gaul and Britain and the utmost bound
Of Thule famous in poetic song,
Victorious there where not Rome's consuls brave,
Heroes, or conquering armies, ever came.
Far in the artie skies a light is seen,
Unlike that sun, which shall ere long retreat,
And leave their hills one half the year in shades.
Or that Aurora which the sailor sees
Beneath the pole in dancing beams of light,
Playing its gambols on the northern hills.
That light is vain and gives no genial heat,
To warm the tenants of those frozen climes,
Or give that heav'nly vigour to the soul,
Which truth divine and revelation brings;
And but for which each heart must still remain,
Hard as the rock on Scandanavia's shore,
Cold as the ice which bridges up her streams,

Fierce as the storm which tempests all her waves.

Thus in its dawn did sacred truth prevail,
In either hemisphere from north to south,
From east to west through the long tract of day.
From Shinar's plain to Thule's utmost isle,
From Persia's bay to Scandania's shores.
Cheer'd by its ray now ev'ry valley smiles,
And ev'ry lawn smote by its morning beam.
Now ev'ry hill reflects a purer ray,
Than when Aurora paints his woods in gold,
Or when the sun first in the orient sky,
Sets thick with gems the dewy mountain's brow.

The earth perceives a sov'reign virtue shed
And from each cave, and midnight haunt retires
Dark superstition, with her vot'ries skill'd,
In potent charm, or spell of magic pow'r;
In augury, by voice, or flight of birds,
Or boding sign at morn, or noon, or eve,
Portent and prodigy and omen dire.
Each oracle by Demon, or the craft
Of priests, made vocal, can declare no more
Of high renown, and victory secure,
To kings low prostrate at their bloody shrines.
No more with vain uncertainty perplex
Mistaken worshippers, or give unseen
Response ambiguous in some mystic sound,
And hollow murmur from the dark recess.
No more of Lybian Jove; Dodona's oaks,
In sacred grove give prophecy no more.
Th' infernal deities retire abash'd,
Our God himself on earth begins his reign;
Pure revelation beams on ev'ry land,
On ev'ry heart exerts a sov'reign sway,
And makes the human nature grow divine.

Now hideous war forgets one half her rage,
And smoothes her visage horrible to view.

Celestial graces better sooth the soul,
Than vocal music, or the charming sound
Of harp or lyre. More than the golden lyre
Which Orpheus tun'd in melancholy notes,
Which almost pierc'd the dull cold ear of death,
And mov'd the grave to give him back his bride.

Peace with the graces and fair science now
Wait on the gospel car; science improv'd
Puts on a fairer dress; a fairer form
Now ev'ry art assumes; bold eloquence
Moves in a higher sphere than senates grave,
Or mix'd assembly, or the hall of kings,
Which erst with pompous panegyric rung.
Vain words and soothing flattery she hates,
And feigned tears, and tongue which silver-tipt
Moves in the cause of wickedness and pride.
She mourns not that fair liberty depress'd
Which kings tyrannic can extort, but that
Pure freedom of the soul to truth divine
Which first indulg'd her and with envious hand
Pluck'd thence, left hideous slavery behind.
She weeps not loss of property on earth,
Nor stirs the multitude to dire revenge
With headlong violence, but soothes the soul
To harmony and peace, bids them aspire
With emulation and pure zeal of heart,
To that high glory in the world unseen,
And crown celestial, which pure virtue gives.

Thus eloquence and poesy divine
A nobler range of sentiment receive;
Life brought to view and immortality,
A recent world through which bold fancy roves,
And gives new magic to the pow'r of song;
For where the streams of revelation flow
Unknown to bards of Helicon, or those
Who on the top of Pindus, or the banks
Of Arethusa and Eurotas stray'd,
The poet drinks, and glorying in new strength,

Soars high in rapture of sublimer strains;
Such as that prophet sang who tun'd his harp
On Zion hill and with seraphic praise
In psalm and sacred ode by Siloa's brook,
Drew HIS attention who first touch'd the soul
With taste of harmony, and bade the spheres
Move in rich measure to the songs on high.
Fill'd with this spirit poesy no more
Adorns that vain mythology believ'd,
By rude barbarian, and no more receives,
The tale traditional, and hymn profane,
Sung by high genius, basely prostitute.
New strains are heard, such as first in the morn
Of time, were sung by the angelic choirs,
When rising from chaotic state the earth
Orbicular was seen, and over head
The blazing sun, moon, planet, and each light
That gilds the firmament, rush'd into view.

Thus did the sun of revelation shine
Full on the earth, and grateful were its beams:
Its beams were grateful to the chosen seed,
To all whose works were worthy of the day.
But creatures lucifuge, whose ways were dark,
Ere this in shades of paganism hid,
Did vent their poison, and malignant breath,
To stain the splendour of the light divine,
Which pierc'd their cells and brought their deeds to view
Num'rous combin'd of ev'ry tongue and tribe,
Made battle proud, and impious war brought on,
Against the chosen sanctified by light.
Riches and pow'r leagu'd in their train were seen,
Sword, famine, flames and death before them prey'd.
Those faithful found, who undismay'd did bear
A noble evidence to truth, were slain.
Why should I sing of these or here record,
As if 'twere praise, in poesy or song,
Or sculptur'd stone, to eternize the names,
Which writ elsewhere in the fair book of life,
Shall live unsullied when each strain shall die:
Shall undefac'd remain when sculptur'd stone,

And monument, and bust, and storied urn
Perpetuates its sage and king no more.

The pow'r of torture and reproach was vain,
But what not torture or reproach could do,
Dark superstition did in part effect.
That superstition, which saint John beheld,
Rise in thick darkness from th' infernal lake.
Locust and scorpion in the smoke ascend,
False teacher, heretic, and Antichrist.
The noon day sun is dark'ned in the sky,
The moon forbears to give her wonted light.
Full many a century the darkness rul'd,
With heavier gloom than once on Egypt came,
Save that on some lone coast, or desert isle,
Where sep'rate far a chosen spirit dwelt,
A Goshen shone, with partial-streaming ray.
Night on the one side settles dark; on Rome,
It settles dark, and ev'ry land more west
Is wrapt in shades. Night on the east comes down
With gloom Tartarean, and in part it rose
From Tartary beneath the dusky pole.
The ruthless Turk, and Saracen in arms,
O'er-run the land the gospel once illum'd;
The holy land Judea once so nam'd,
And Syria west where many churches rose.
Those golden luminaries are remov'd,
Which once in Asia shone. Athens no more
For truth and learning fam'd. Corinth obscur'd,
Ionia mourns through all her sea-girt isles.

But yet once more the light of truth shall shine
In this obscure sojourn; shall shoot its beam
In morning beauty mild, o'er hill and dale.
See in Bohemia and the lands more west
The heavenly ray of revelation shines,
Fresh kindling up true love and purest zeal.

Britannia next beholds the risen day

In reformation bright; cheerful she hails
It from her snow-white cliffs, and bids her sons,
Rise from the mist of popery obscure.
Her worthier sons, whom not Rome's pontiff high,
Nor king with arbitrary sway could move.
Those mightier who with constancy untam'd,
Did quench the violence of fire, at death
Did smile, and maugre ev'ry pain, of bond,
Cold dark imprisonment, and scourge severe,
By hell-born popery devis'd, held fast
The Christian hope firm anchor of the soul.
Or those who shunning that fell rage of war,
And persecution dire, when civil pow'r,
Leagu'd in with sacerdotal sway triumph'd,
O'er ev'ry conscience, and the lives of men,
Did brave th' Atlantic deep and through its storms
Sought these Americ shores: these happier shores
Where birds of calm delight to play, where not
Rome's pontiff high, nor arbitrary king,
Leagu'd in with sacerdotal sway are known.
But peace and freedom link'd together dwell,
And reformation in full glory shines.
Oh for a muse of more exalted wing,
To celebrate those men who planted first
The christian church in these remotest lands;
From those high plains where spreads a colony,
Gen'rous and free, from Massachusett-shores,
To the cold lakes margin'd with snow: from that
Long dreary tract of shady woods and hills,
Where Hudson's icy stream rolls his cold wave,
To those more sunny bowers where zephyrs breath,
And round which flow in circling current swift
The Delaware and Susquehannah streams.
Thence to those smiling plains where Chesapeak
Spreads her maternal arms, encompassing
In soft embrace, full many a settlement,
Where opulence, with hospitality,
And polish'd manners, and the living plant
Of science blooming, sets their glory high [1].
Thence to Virginia, sister colony,
Lib'ral in sentiment, and breathing high,
The noble ardour of the freeborn soul.

To Carolina thence, and that warm clime
Where Georgia south in summer heat complains,
And distant thence towards the burning line.

These men deserve our song, and those who still,
With industry severe, and steady aim
Diffuse the light in this late dreary land,
In whose lone wastes and solitudes forlorn,
Death long sat brooding with his raven wing.
Who many 'a structure of great fame have rais'd,
College, and school, upon th' Atlantic coast,
Or inland town, through ev'ry province wide,
Which rising up like pyramids of fire,
Give light and glory to the western world.

These men we honour, and their names shall last
Sweet in the mouths and memory of men;
Or if vain man unconscious of their worth,
Refuse a tear when in some lonely vale
He sees those faithful laid; each breeze shall sigh,
Each passing gale shall mourn, each tree shall bend
Its heavy head, in sorrow o'er their tombs,
And some sad stream run ever weeping by.
Weep not O stream, nor mourn thou passing gale,
Beneath those grassy tombs their bodies lie,
But they have risen from each labour bere
To make their entrance on a nobler stage.
What though with us they walk the humble vale
Of indigence severe, with want oppress'd?
Riches belong not to their family,
Nor sloth luxurious nor the pride of kings;
But truth meek-ey'd and warm benevolence
Wisdom's high breeding in her sons rever'd
Bespeaks them each the children[2] of a king.
The christian truth of origin divine,
Grows not beneath the shade of civil pow'r,
Riches or wealth accompanied with pride;
Nor shall it bloom transplanted to that soil,
Where persecution, in malignant streams,
Flows out to water it; black streams and foul

Which from the lake of Tartarus break forth,
The sickly tide of Acheron which flows,
With putrid waves through the infernal shades.
This plant of heaven loves the gentle beams,
Of truth and meekness, and the kindly dew
Which fell on Zion hill; it loves the care
Of humble shepherds, and the rural swain,
And tended by their hands it flourishes
With fruit and blossoms, and soon gives a shade,
Beneath which ev'ry traveller shall rest,
Safe from the burning east-wind and the sun.
A vernal shade not with'ring like the gourd
Of him who warned Nineveh, but like
The aged oaks immortal on the plain
Of Kadesh, or tall cedars on the hill
Of Lebanon, and Hermon's shady top.

High is their fame through each succeeding age
Who build the walls of Zion upon earth.
Let mighty kings and potentates combine,
To raise a pyramid, which neither storm,
Nor sea indignant, nor the raging fire,
Nor time can waste, or from firm basis move.
Or let them strive by counsel or by arms,
To fix a throne, and in imperial sway,
Build up a kingdom shadowing the earth,
Unmov'd by thunder or impetuous storm
Of civil war, dark treason, or the shock
Of hostile nations, in dire league combin'd.
They build a kingdom of a nobler date,
Who build the kingdom of the Saviour God.
This, not descending rain, nor mighty storm,
Nor sea indignant, nor the raging fire,
Nor time shall waste, or from firm basis move.
Rounded on earth its head doth reach the skies,
Secure from thunder, and impetuous storm,
Of civil war, dark treason, or the shock
Of hostile nations in dire league combin'd.
This still shall flourish and survive the date,
Of each wide state and empire of the earth
Which yet shall rise, as now of those which once

From richest Asia or from Europe spread
On mighty base and shaded half the world.
Great Babylon which vex'd the chosen seed,
And by whose streams the captive Hebrews sat,
In desolation lies, and Syria west,
Where the Seleucidæ did fix their throne,
Loud-thund'ring thence o'er Judah's spoiled land,
Boasts her proud rule no more. Rome pagan next,
The raging furnace where the saints were tried,
No more enslaves mankind. Rome papal too
Contracts her reign and speaks proud things no more.
The throne of Ottoman is made to shake,
The Russian thund'ring to his firmest seat;
Another age shall see his empire fall.
Yet in the east the light of truth shall shine,
And like the sun returning after storms
Which long had raged through a sunless sky,
Shall beam benignly on forsaken lands.
The day serene once more on Zion hill
Descending gradual, shall in radiance beam
On Canaan's happy land. Her fav'rite seers
Have intercourse divine with this pure source;
Perennial thence rich streams of light shall flow,
To each adjoining vale and desert plain
Lost in the umbrage of dark heathen shades.
The gospel light shall gloriously survive
The wasting blaze of ev'ry baser fire.
The fire of Vesta, an eternal fire,
So falsely call'd and kept alive at Rome;
Sepulchral lamp in burial place of kings,
Burn'd unconsum'd for many ages down;
But yet not Vesta's fire eternal call'd
And kept alive at Rome, nor burning lamp
Hid in sepulchral monument of kings,
Shall bear an equal date with that true light,
Which shone from earth to heav'n, and which shall shine
Up through eternity, and be the light
Of heav'n, the new Jerusalem above.
This light from heav'n shall yet illume the earth
And give its beams to each benighted land
Now with new glory lighted up again.
Then ruthless Turk and Saracen shall know

The fallacies of him Medina bred,
And whose vain tomb, in Mecca they adore.
Then Jews shall view the great Messiah come,
And each rent tribe in caravan by land,
Or ship by sea, shall visit Palestine
Thrice holy then, with vile Idolatry
No more defil'd, altar on mountain head,
Green shady hill, or idol of the grove.
For there a light appears, with which compar'd,
That was a twilight shed by rite obscure,
And ceremony dark and sacrifice
Dimly significant of things to come.
Blest with this light no more they deviate
In out-way path; distinguished no more
By school or sect, Essene or Saducee,
Cairite or Scribe of Pharisaic mould.
Jew and Samaritan debate no more,
Whether on Gerizim or Zion hill
They shall bow down. Above Moriah's mount
Each eye is raised to him, whose temple is
Th' infinitude of space, whom earth, sea, sky
And heav'n itself cannot contain. No more
The noise of battle shall be heard, or shout
Of war by heathen princes wag'd; There's nought
Shall injure or destroy; they shall not hurt
In all my holy mountain saith the Lord.
The earth in peace and ev'ry shadow fled,
Bespeaks Emmanuel's happy reign when Jew,
And kindred Gentile shall no more contend,
Save in the holier strife of hymn and song,
To him who leads captive captivity,
Who shall collect the sons of Jacob's line,
And bring the fulness of the Gentiles in.
Thrice happy day when Gentiles are brought in
Complete and full; when with its genial beams
The day shall break on each benighted land
Which yet in darkness and in vision lies:
On Scythia and Tartary's bleak hills;
On mount Imaus, and Hyrcanian cliffs
Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales;
Japan and China, and the sea-girt isles
The ancient Ophir deem'd; for there rich gems

And diamond pearl, and purest gold is found.

Thrice happy day when this whole earth shall feel
The sacred ray of revelation shed,
Far to the west, through each remotest land
With equal glory rivalling the day
Pour'd on the east. When these Americ shores
Shall far and wide be light, and heav'nly day
Shall in full glory rise on many a reign,
Kingdom and empire bending to the south,
And nation touching the Pacific shore.
When Christian churches shall adorn the streams
Which now unheeded flow with current swift
Circling the hills, where fiercest beasts of prey,
Panther and wolf in nightly concert howl.
The Indian sage from superstition freed,
Be taught a nobler heav'n than cloud-topt-hill,
Or sep'rate island in the wat'ry waste.
The aged Sachem fix his moving tribe,
And grow humane now taught the arts of peace.
In human sacrifice delight no more,
Mad cantico or savage feast of war.
Such scenes of fierce barbarity no more
Be perpetrated there, but truth divine
Shine on the earth in one long cloudless day,
Till that last hour which shuts the scene of things,
When this pure light shall claim its native skies;
When the pure stream of revelation shall,
With refluent current visit its first hills:
There shall it mix with that crystalline wave,
Which laves the walls of Paradise on high,
And from beneath the seat of God doth spring.
This is that river from whose sacred head
The sanctified in golden arms draw light,
On either side of which that tree doth grow
Which yields immortal fruit, and in whose shade
If shade were needed there, the rapt shall sing,
In varied melody to harp and lyre,
The sacred song of Moses and the Lamb:
Eternity's high arches ring; 'Tis heard
Through both infinitudes of space and time.

Thus have I sung to this high-favour'd bow'r,
And sacred shades which taught me first to sing,
With grateful mind a tributary strain.
Sweet grove no more I visit you, no more
Beneath your shades shall meditate my lay.
Adieu ye lawns and thou fair hill adieu,
And you O shepherds, and ye graces fair
With comely presence honouring the day,
Far hence I go to some sequest'red vale
By woody hill or shady mountain side,
Where far from converse and the social band,
My days shall pass inglorious away: [3]
But this shall be my exultation still
My chiefest merit and my only joy,
That when the hunter on some western hill,
Or furzy glade shall see my grassy tomb,
And know the stream which mourns unheeded by,
He for a moment shall repress his step,
And say, There lies a Son of Nassau-Hall.

Hugh Henry Brackenridge

A Poem, On The Rising Glory Of America

LEANDER.

No more of Memphis and her mighty kings,
Or Alexandria, where the Ptolomies.
Taught golden commerce to unfurl her falls,
And bid fair science smile: No more of Greece
Where learning next her early visit paid,
And spread her glories to illumine 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 Spir't 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.

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 bestowing 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.

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 descry'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 strains,
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 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
Possess these shores, or from what countries came.
Whether they sprang from some premoeval 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
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 northren 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 Pelag'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 Newfoudland
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,
You 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: league their vent'rous seamen sail'd
Thro' strait Gibraltar down the western shore

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, Paragon 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're 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 forboding signs

Still urging them to horrid rites and forms

Of human sacrifice, to sooth the pow'rs

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 rivers 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

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'urers 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 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.
For this they left their country and their friends
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.

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.
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 sought 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 same
Well known, conspicuous as the morning star
Among the lesser lights: A patriot skill'd
In all the glorious arts of peace of 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 seats
Of cruelty like Spain's unfeeling sons.
The British Epithet is merciful:
And we the sons of Britain learn like them
To conquer and to spare; for coward souls
Seek their revenge but on a vanquish'd foe.
Gold, fatal gold was the assuring 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 sapphire, 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,
Envyng 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.
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;
While on the hearth a fire still blazing high
Cheers every mind, and nature fits 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 desert 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 flew.
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.

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.
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 embryo 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.

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 fall; 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
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 Arethusas' 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'nings 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
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;
Or 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.

EUGENIO.

For him we sound 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.

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,
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
Oer many isles, wide seas, and peopled lands.

Now in the West a continent appears;
A newer world now opens to her view;
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 Petersburg,
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, Coelebe 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 towr's and observatories
Rising to heav'n; from thence astronomers
With optic glass take nobler views of God
In golden suns and shining worlds display'd
Than the poor Chaldean with the naked eye.
A Niniveh 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,
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.
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
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
Thence call'd Millennium. Paradise a new
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
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,
Which not the ravages of time shall wake
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.

Hugh Henry Brackenridge