

Classic Poetry Series

John Trumbull
- poems -

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John Trumbull(24 April 1750 – 11 May 1831)

John Trumbull was an American poet.

Biography

Trumbull was born in what is now Watertown, Connecticut, where his father was a Congregational preacher. At the age of seven he passed his entrance examinations at Yale, but did not enter until 1763; he graduated in 1767, studied law there, and in 1771–1773 was a tutor. In 1773 he was admitted to the bar, in 1773–1774 practiced law in Boston, working in the law office of John Adams, and after 1774 practiced in New Haven, Connecticut. He was state attorney in 1789, a member of the Connecticut Assembly in 1792 and 1800, and a judge of the Superior Court in 1801–1819. The last six years of his life were spent in Detroit, Michigan, where he died.

While studying at Yale he had contributed in 1769–1770 ten essays, called "The Meddler", imitating The Spectator, to the Boston Chronicle, and in 1770 similar essays, signed "The Correspondent" to the Connecticut Journal and New Haven Post Boy.

While a tutor he wrote his first satire in verse, The Progress of Dulness (1772–1773), an attack in three poems on educational methods of his time. His great poem, which ranks him with Philip Freneau and Francis Hopkinson as an American political satirist of the period of the War of Independence, was M'Fingal, of which the first canto, "The Town-Meeting", appeared in 1776 (dated 1775).

After the war Trumbull was a rigid Federalist, and with the "Hartford Wits" David Humphreys, Joel Barlow and Lemuel Hopkins, wrote the Anarchiad, a poem directed against the enemies of a firm central government.

Commemoration

Trumbull Avenue in Detroit is named after him.

John Trumbull Primary School in Watertown, CT

M'Fingal Rd. in Watertown, CT was named after his poem.

Beneath A Mountain's Brow

"Beneath a mountain's brow, the most remote
And inaccessible by Shepherds trod,
In a deep cave, dug by no mortals hands
An Hermit lived,--a melancholy man
Who was the wonder of our wand'ring swains:
Austere and lonely--cruel to himself
They did report him--the cold earth his bed,
Water his drink, his food the Shepherd's alms.
I went to see him, and my heart was touched
With reverence and pity. Mild he spake,
And entering on discourse, such stories told,
As made me oft re-visit his sad cell."

John Trumbull

M'Fingal - Canto I

When Yankies, skill'd in martial rule,
First put the British troops to school;
Instructed them in warlike trade,
And new manoeuvres of parade,
The true war-dance of Yankee reels,
And manual exercise of heels;
Made them give up, like saints complete,
The arm of flesh, and trust the feet,
And work, like Christians undissembling,
Salvation out, by fear and trembling;
Taught Percy fashionable races,
And modern modes of Chevy-Chases:
From Boston, in his best array,
Great 'Squire M'Fingal took his way,
And graced with ensigns of renown,
Steer'd homeward to his native town.

His high descent our heralds trace
From Ossian's famed Fingalian race:
For though their name some part may lack,
Old Fingal spelt it with a Mac;
Which great M'Pherson, with submission,
We hope will add the next edition.

His fathers flourish'd in the Highlands
Of Scotia's fog-benighted islands;
Whence gain'd our 'Squire two gifts by right,
Rebellion, and the Second-sight.
Of these, the first, in ancient days,
Had gain'd the noblest palm of praise,
'Gainst kings stood forth and many a crown'd head
With terror of its might confounded;
Till rose a king with potent charm
His foes by meekness to disarm,
Whom every Scot and Jacobite
Strait fell in love with at first sight;
Whose gracious speech with aid of pensions,

Hush'd down all murmurs of dissensions,
And with the sound of potent metal
Brought all their buzzing swarms to settle;
Who rain'd his ministerial manna,
Till loud Sedition sung hosanna;
The grave Lords-Bishops and the Kirk
United in the public work;
Rebellion, from the northern regions,
With Bute and Mansfield swore allegiance;
All hands combin'd to raze, as nuisance,
Of church and state the Constitutions,
Pull down the empire, on whose ruins
They meant to edify their new ones;
Enslave th' Amer'can wildernesses,
And rend the provinces in pieces.
With these our 'Squire, among the valiant'st,
Employ'd his time, and tools and talents,
And found this new rebellion pleasing
As his old king-destroying treason.

Nor less avail'd his optic sleight,
And Scottish gift of second-sight.
No ancient sybil, famed in rhyme,
Saw deeper in the womb of time;
No block in old Dodona's grove
Could ever more orac'lar prove.
Nor only saw he all that could be,
But much that never was, nor would be;
Whereby all prophets far outwent he,
Though former days produced a plenty:
For any man with half an eye
What stands before him can espy;
But optics sharp it needs, I ween,
To see what is not to be seen.
As in the days of ancient fame,
Prophets and poets were the same,
And all the praise that poets gain
Is for the tales they forge and feign:
So gain'd our 'Squire his fame by seeing
Such things, as never would have being;
Whence he for oracles was grown

The very tripod of his town.
Gazettes no sooner rose a lie in,
But strait he fell to prophesying;
Made dreadful slaughter in his course,
O'erthrew provincials, foot and horse,
Brought armies o'er, by sudden pressings,
Of Hanoverians, Swiss and Hessians,
Feasted with blood his Scottish clan,
And hang'd all rebels to a man,
Divided their estates and pelf,
And took a goodly share himself.
All this with spirit energetic,
He did by second-sight prophetic.

Thus stored with intellectual riches,
Skill'd was our 'Squire in making speeches;
Where strength of brains united centers
With strength of lungs surpassing Stentor's.
But as some muskets so contrive it,
As oft to miss the mark they drive at,
And though well aim'd at duck or plover,
Bear wide, and kick their owners over:
So fared our 'Squire, whose reas'ning toil
Would often on himself recoil,
And so much injured more his side,
The stronger arguments he applied;
As old war-elephants, dismay'd,
Trod down the troops they came to aid,
And hurt their own side more in battle,
Than less and ordinary cattle.
Yet at Town-meetings every chief
Pinn'd faith on great M'Fingal's sleeve;
Which when he lifted, all by rote
Raised sympathetic hands to vote.

The Town, our hero's scene of action,
Had long been torn by feuds of faction,
And as each party's strength prevails,
It turn'd up different, heads or tails;
With constant rattling, in a trice,

Show'd various sides, as oft as dice.
As that famed weaver, wife t' Ulysses,
By night her day's-work pick'd in pieces,
And though she stoutly did bestir her,
Its finishing was ne'er the nearer:
So did this town with ardent zeal
Weave cobwebs for the public weal,
Which when completed, or before,
A second vote in pieces tore.
They met, made speeches full long-winded,
Resolv'd, protested and rescinded;
Addresses sign'd; then chose committees
To stop all drinking of Bohea teas;
With winds of doctrine veer'd about,
And turn'd all whig committees out.
Meanwhile our Hero, as their head,
In pomp the tory faction led,
Still following, as the 'Squire should please,
Successive on, like files of geese.

And now the town was summon'd, greeting,
To grand parading of Town-meeting;
A show, that strangers might appal,
As Rome's grave senate did the Gaul.
High o'er the rout, on pulpit stairs,
Mid den of thieves in house of prayers,
(That house, which loth a rule to break
Serv'd heaven, but one day in the week,
Open the rest for all supplies
Of news, and politics, and lies
Stood forth the Constable; and bore
His staff, like Merc'ry's wand of yore,
Waved potent round, the peace to keep,
As that laid dead men's souls to sleep.
Above and near th' hermetic staff,
The Moderator's upper half
In grandeur o'er the cushion bow'd,
Like Sol half seen behind a cloud.
Beneath stood voters of all colours,
Whigs, Tories, orators and brawlers;
With every tongue in either faction

Prepared like minute-men for action;
Where truth and falsehood, wrong and right,
Drew all their legions forth to fight.
With equal uproar scarcely rave
Opposing winds in Æolus' cave;
Such dialogues with earnest face
Held never Balaam with his ass.

With daring zeal and courage blest,
Honorius first the crowd addres'd.
When now our 'Squire, returning late,
Arrived to aid the grand debate;
With strange, sour faces sate him down,
While thus the orator went on.
--"For ages blest thus Britain rose,
The terror of encircling foes;
Her heroes ruled the bloody plain,
Her conq'ring standard awed the main.
The different palms her triumph grace
Of arms in war, of arts in peace.
Unharrass'd by maternal care,
Each rising province flourish'd fair;
Whose various wealth, with liberal hand,
By far o'erpaid the parent land.
But though so bright her sun might shine,
'Twas quickly hasting to decline,
With feeble ray, too weak t' assuage
The damps, that chill the eve of age.

"For states, like men, are doom'd as well
Th' infirmities of age to feel,
And from their different forms of empire,
Are seiz'd with every deep distemper.
Some states high fevers have made head in,
Which nought could cure but copious bleeding;
While others have grown dull and dozy,
Or fix'd in helpless idiocy;
Or turn'd demoniacs to belabour
Each peaceful habitant and neighbour;
Or vex'd with hypochondriac fits,

Have broke their strength, and lost their wits.
Thus now while hoary years prevail,
Good mother Britain seem'd to fail;
Her back bent, crippled with the weight
Of age, and debts, and cares of state.
For debts she owed, and those so large,
As twice her wealth could ne'er discharge,
And now 'twas thought, so high they'd grown,
She'd come upon the parish soon.
Her arms, of nations once the dread,
She scarce could lift above her head;
Her deafen'd ears, 'twas all their hope,
The final trump perhaps might ope;
So long they'd been, in stupid mood,
Shut to the hearing of all good.
Grim death had put her in his scroll
Down on the execution-roll;
And Gallic crows, as she grew weaker,
Began to whet their beaks to pick her.

"And now her powers decaying fast,
Her grand climact'ric had she pass'd,
And just like all old women else,
Fell in the vapors much by spells.
Strange whimsies on her fancy struck,
And gave her brain a dismal shock;
Her memory fails, her judgment ends;
She quite forgot her nearest friends,
Lost all her former sense and knowledge,
And fitted fast for Bedlam-college.
Of all the powers she once retain'd,
Conceit and pride alone remain'd.
As Eve, when falling, was so modest
To fancy she should grow a goddess;
As madmen, straw who long have slept on,
Style themselves Jupiter and Neptune:
So Britain in her airs so flighty,
Now took a whim to be Almighty;
Urg'd on to desperate heights of frenzy,
Affirm'd her own Omnipotency;
Would rather ruin all her race,

Than yield supremacy, an ace;
Assumed all rights divine, as grown
The church's head, like good Pope Joan;
Swore all the world should bow and skip,
At her almighty goodyship;
Anath'matized each unbeliever,
And vow'd to live and rule for ever.
Her servants humour'd every whim,
And own'd at once her power supreme;
Her follies nursed in all their stages,
For sake of liveries and wages;
In Stephen's Chapel then in state too
Set up her golden calf to pray to;
Proclaim'd its power and right divine,
And call'd for worship at its shrine;
And for poor heretics to burn us,
Bade North prepare his fiery furnace;
Struck bargains with the Romish churches,
Infallibility to purchase;
Set wide for Popery the door,
Made friends with Babel's scarlet whore,
Till both the matrons join'd in clan;
No sisters made a better span.

"What wonder then, ere this was over,
That she should make her children suffer?
She first without pretence or reason,
Claim'd right whate'er we had to seize on;
And with determin'd resolution
To put her claims in execution,
Sent fire and sword, and call'd it Lenity;
Starv'd us, and christen'd it Humanity.
For she, her case grown desperater,
Mistook the plainest things in nature;
Had lost all use of eyes or wits,
Took slavery for the bill of rights;
Trembled at whigs and deem'd them foes,
And stopp'd at loyalty her nose;
Styled her own children, brats and catiffs,
And knew us not from th' Indian natives.

"What though with supplicating prayer,
We begg'd our lives and goods she'd spare;
Not vainer vows with sillier call
Elijah's prophets raised to Baal;
A worshipp'd stock of god or goddess
Had better heard and understood us.
So once Egyptians at the Nile
Ador'd their guardian crocodile,
Who heard them first with kindest ear,
And ate them to reward their prayer;
And could he talk, as kings can do,
Had made as gracious speeches too.

"Thus, spite of prayers, her schemes pursuing,
She still went on to work our ruin;
Annull'd our charters of releases,
And tore our title-deeds in pieces;
Then sign'd her warrants of ejection,
And gallows rais'd to stretch our necks on:
And on these errands sent in rage
Her bailiff, and her hangman, Gage;
And at his heels, like dogs to bait us,
Dispatch'd her Posse Comitatus.

"No state e'er chose a fitter person
To carry such a silly farce on.
As heathen gods in ancient days
Receiv'd at second hand their praise,
Stood imaged forth in stones and stocks,
And deified in barber's blocks:
So Gage was chose to represent
Th' omnipotence of Parliament.
As antient heroes gain'd by shifts,
From gods, as poets tell, their gifts;
Our General, as his actions show,
Gain'd like assistance from below,
By satan graced with full supplies
From all his magazine of lies.
Yet could his practice ne'er impart

The wit to tell a lie with art.
Those lies alone are formidable
Where artful truth is mix'd with fable.
But Gage has bungled oft so vilely,
No soul would credit lies so silly,
Outwent all faith, and stretch'd beyond
Credulity's extremest end:
Whence plain it seems, though satan once
O'erlook'd with scorn each brainless dunce,
And blundering brutes in Eden shunning,
Chose out the serpent for his cunning;
Of late he is not half so nice,
Nor picks out aids because they're wise:
For had he stood upon perfection,
His present friends had lost th' election,
And fared as hard, in this proceeding,
As owls and asses did in Eden.

"Yet fools are often dangerous enemies;
As meanest reptiles are most venomous:
Nor e'er could Gage, by craft or prowess,
Have done a whit more mischief to us;
Since he began th' unnat'ral war,
The work his masters sent him for.

"And are there in this freeborn land
Among ourselves a venal band;
A dastard race, who long have sold
Their souls and consciences for gold;
Who wish to stab their country's vitals,
Could they enjoy surviving titles;
With pride behold our mischiefs brewing,
Insult and triumph in our ruin?
Priests, who, if satan should sit down
To make a bible of his own,
Would gladly, for the sake of mitres,
Turn his inspired and sacred writers;
Lawyers, who, should he wish to prove
His claim to his old seat above,
Would, if his cause he'd give them fees in,

Bring writs of Entry sur disseisin,
Plead for him boldly at the session,
And hope to put him in possession;
Merchants who, for his friendly aid
Would make him partner in their trade,
Hang out their signs in goodly show,
Inscribed with, Beelzebub & Co.;
And judges, who would list his pages,
For proper liveries and wages;
And who as humbly cringe and bow
To all his mortal servants now?
There are; and shame, with pointing gestures,
Marks out th' Addressers and Protesters;
Whom following down the stream of fate,
Contempts ineffable await;
And public infamy forlorn,
Dread hate and everlasting scorn."

As thus he spake, our 'Squire M'Fingal
Gave to his partisans a signal.
Not quicker roll'd the waves to land,
When Moses waved his potent wand,
Nor with more uproar, than the Tories
Set up a general rout in chorus;
Laugh'd, hiss'd, hem'd, murmur'd, groan'd and jeer'd;
Honorius now could scarce be heard.
Our Muse, amid th' increasing roar,
Could not distinguish one word more;
Though she sate by, in firm record
To take in short hand every word,
As ancient Muses wont; to whom
Old bards for depositions come;
Who must have writ them; for how else
Could they each speech verbatim tell 's?
And though some readers of romances
Are apt to strain their tortured fancies,
And doubt (when lovers all alone
Their sad soliloquies do groan,
Grieve many a page, with no one near 'em,
And nought, but rocks and groves, to hear 'em)
What sprite infernal could have tattled,

And told the authors all they prattled;
Whence some weak minds have made objection
That what they scribbled must be fiction:
'Tis false; for while the lover spoke,
The Muse was by with table-book,
And least some blunder should ensue,
Echo stood clerk, and kept the cue.
And though the speech ben't worth a groat,
It can't be call'd the author's fault;
But error merely of the prater,
Who should have talk'd to th' purpose better:
Which full excuse, my critic brothers,
May help me out as well as others;
And 'tis design'd, though here it lurk,
To serve as Preface to this work.
So let it be--for now our 'Squire
No longer could contain his ire,
And rising 'midst applauding Tories,
Thus vented wrath upon Honorius.

Quoth he, "'Tis wondrous what strange stuff
Your Whigs-heads are compounded of;
Which force of logic cannot pierce,
Nor syllogistic carte and tierce,
Nor weight of scripture or of reason
Suffice to make the least impression.
Not heeding what ye rais'd contest on,
Ye prate, and beg, or steal the question;
And when your boasted arguings fail,
Strait leave all reas'ning off, to rail.

"Have not our High-church Clergy made it
Appear from Scriptures, which ye credit,
That right divine from heaven was lent
To kings, that is, the Parliament,
Their subjects to oppress and tease,
And serve the devil when they please?
Did not they write, and pray, and preach,
And torture all the parts of speech,
About rebellion make a pother,

From one end of the land to th' other?
And yet gain'd fewer proselyte Whigs,
Than old St. Anth'ny 'mongst the pigs;
And changed not half so many vicious,
As Austin when he preach'd to fishes,
Who throng'd to hear, the legend tells,
Were edified, and wagg'd their tails:
But scarce you'd prove it, if you tried,
That e'er one Whig was edified.
Have ye not heard from Parson Walter
Much dire presage of many a halter?
What warnings had ye of your duty,
From our old rev'rend Sam. Auchmuty;
From priests of all degrees and metres,
T' our fag-end man, poor Parson Peters?
Have not our Cooper and our Seabury
Sung hymns, like Barak and old Deborah;
Proved all intrigues to set you free
Rebellion 'gainst the Pow'rs that be;
Brought over many a scripture text,
That used to wink at rebel sects,
Coax'd wayward ones to favor regents,
And paraphrased them to obedience;
Proved every king, ev'n those confest
Horns of the Apocalyptic beast,
And sprouting from its noddles seven,
Ordain'd, as Bishops are, by heaven;
(For reasons similar, as we're told
That Tophet was ordain'd of old)
By this lay-ordination valid,
Becomes all sanctified and hallow'd,
Takes patent out as heaven has sign'd it,
And starts up strait, the Lord's Anointed?
As extreme unction, which can cleanse
Each penitent from deadly sins;
Make them run glib, when oiled by priest,
The heav'nly road, like wheels new greased;
Serve them, like shoe-ball, for defences,
'Gainst wear and tear of consciences:
So king's anointment clears betimes,
Like fuller's earth, all spots of crimes,
For future knaveries gives commissions,

Like Papists sinning under license.
For heaven ordain'd the origin,
Divines declare, of pain and sin,
Prove such great good they both have done us,
Kind mercy 'twas they came upon us;
For without sin and pain and folly,
Man ne'er was blest, nor wise, nor holy:
And we should thank the Lord 'tis so,
As authors grave wrote long ago.
Now heav'n its issues never brings
Without the means, and these are kings;
And he who blames when they announce ills,
Would counteract th' eternal counsels.
As when the Jews, a murm'ring race,
By constant grumblings fell from grace,
Heav'n taught them first to know their distance,
By famine, slavery and Philistines;
When these could no repentance bring,
In wrath it sent them last a king:
So nineteen, 'tis believ'd, in twenty
Of modern kings for plagues are sent you;
Nor can your cavillers pretend
But that they answer well their end.
'Tis yours to yield to their command,
As rods in Providence's hand;
For when it means to send you pain,
You toss your foreheads up in vain;
Your way is, hush'd in peace, to bear it,
And make necessity a merit.
Hence sure perdition must await
The man, who rises 'gainst the State,
Who meets at once the damning sentence,
Without one loophole for repentance;
Ev'n though he gain the Royal See,
And rank among the Powers that be.
For hell is theirs, the scripture shows,
Whoe'er the Powers that be oppose;
And all those Powers (I'm clear that 'tis so)
Are damn'd for ever, ex officio.

"Thus far our Clergy: but 'tis true

We lack'd not earthly reas'ners too.
Had I the Poet's brazen lungs,
As soundboard to his hundred tongues,
I could not half the scribblers muster,
That swarm'd round Rivington in cluster;
Assemblies, Councilmen, forsooth,
Brush, Cowper, Wilkins, Chandler, Booth:
Yet all their arguments and sapience
You did not value at three halfpence.
Did not our Massachusettensis
For your conviction strain his senses;
Scrawl every moment he could spare
From cards and barbers and the fair;
Show, clear as sun in noonday heavens,
You did not feel a single grievance;
Demonstrate all your opposition
Sprung from the eggs of foul Sedition;
Swear he had seen the nest she laid in,
And knew how long she had been sitting;
Could tell exact what strength of heat is
Required to hatch her out Committees;
What shapes they take, and how much longer's
The time before they grow t' a Congress?
He white-wash'd Hutchinson, and varnish'd
Our Gage, who'd got a little tarnish'd;
Made them new masks, in time no doubt,
For Hutchinson's was quite worn out:
Yet while he muddled all his head,
You did not heed a word he said.

"Did not our grave Judge Sewall hit
The summit of newspaper wit;
Fill every leaf of every paper
Of Mills & Hicks, and mother Draper;
Draw proclamations, works of toil,
In true sublime of scarecrow style,
Write farces too 'gainst sons of freedom,
All for your good, and none would read 'em;
Denounce damnation on their frenzy,
Who died in Whig-impenitency;
Affirm that heav'n would lend us aid,

As all our Tory writers said;
And calculate so well its kindness,
He told the moment when it join'd us?

"'Twas then belike," Honorius cried,
"When you the public fast defied,
Refused to heaven to raise a prayer,
Because you'd no connections there;
And since with reverent hearts and faces,
To Governors you'd paid addresses,
In them, who made you Tories, seeing
You lived and moved and had your being,
Your humble vows you would not breathe
To powers, you'd no acquaintance with.

"As for your fasts," replied our 'Squire,
"What circumstance could fasts require?
We kept them not, but 'twas no crime,
We held them merely loss of time.
For what advantage firm and lasting,
Pray, did you ever get by fasting,
Or what the gain, that can arise
From vows and offerings to the skies?
Will heaven reward with posts and fees,
Or send us tea, as consignees,
Give pensions, salaries, places, bribes,
Or chuse us judges, clerks or scribes?
Has it commissions in its gift,
Or cash to serve us at a lift?
Are acts of parliament there made,
To carry on the placeman's trade,
Or has it pass'd a single bill
To let us plunder whom we will?

"And look our list of placemen all over;
Did heaven appoint our chief Judge Oliver,
Fill that high bench with ignoramus,
Or has it councils by mandamus?
Who made that wit of water-gruel

A judge of admiralty, Sewall?
And were they not mere earthly struggles,
That raised up Murray, say, and Ruggles?
Did heaven send down, our pains to medicine,
That old simplicity of Edson,
Or by election pick out from us
That Marshfield blunderer, Nat. Ray Thomas;
Or had it any hand in serving
A Loring, Pepperell, Browne or Irving?

"Yet we've some saints, the very thing,
To pit against the best you'll bring;
For can the strongest fancy paint,
Than Hutchinson, a greater saint?
Was there a parson used to pray,
At times more regular, twice a day;
As folks exact have dinners got,
Whether they've appetites or not?
Was there a zealot more alarming
'Gainst public vice to hold forth sermon,
Or fix'd at church, whose inward motion
Roll'd up his eyes with more devotion?
What puritan could ever pray
In godlier tone, than Treasurer Gray,
Or at town-meetings speechifying,
Could utter more melodious whine,
And shut his eyes, and vent his moan,
Like owl afflicted in the sun;
Who once sent home, his canting rival,
Lord Dartmouth's self, might outbedrivel.

"Have you forgot," Honorius cried,
"How your prime saint the truth defied,
Affirm'd he never wrote a line
Your charter'd rights to undermine,
When his own letters then were by,
Which proved his message all a lie?
How many promises he seal'd
To get th' oppressive acts repeal'd,
Yet once arrived on England's shore,

Set on the Premier to pass more?
But these are no defects, we grant,
In a right loyal Tory saint,
Whose godlike virtues must with ease
Atone for venial crimes, like these:
Or ye perhaps in scripture spy
A new commandment, "Thou shalt lie;"
If this be so (as who can tell?)
There's no one sure ye keep so well."

Quoth he, "For lies and promise-breaking,"
Ye need not be in such a taking:
For lying is, we know and teach,
The highest privilege of speech;
The universal Magna Charta,
To which all human race is party,
Whence children first, as David says,
Lay claim to't in their earliest days;
The only stratagem in war,
Our generals have occasion for;
The only freedom of the press,
Our politicians need in peace.
Thank heaven, your shot have miss'd their aim,
For lying is no sin nor shame.

"As men last wills may change again,
Tho' drawn, "In name of God, Amen;"
Be sure they must have clearly more
O'er promises as great a power,
Which, made in haste, with small inspection,
So much the more will need correction;
And when they've, careless, spoke or penn'd 'em,
Have right to look them o'er and mend 'em;
Revise their vows, or change the text,
By way of codicil annex'd;
Strike out a promise, that was base,
And put a better in its place.

"So Gage of late agreed, you know,

To let the Boston people go;
Yet when he saw 'gainst troops that braved him,
They were the only guards that saved him,
Kept off that satan of a Putnam
From breaking in to maul and mutton him;
He'd too much wit, such leagues t' observe,
And shut them in again, to starve.

"So Moses writes, when female Jews
Made oaths and vows unfit for use,
Their parents then might set them free
From that conscientious tyranny:
And shall men feel that spir'tual bondage
For ever, when they grow beyond age?
Shall vows but bind the stout and strong,
And let go women weak and young,
As nets enclose the larger crew,
And let the smaller fry creep through?
Besides, the Whigs have all been set on,
The Tories to affright and threaten,
Till Gage amidst his trembling fits,
Has hardly kept him in his wits;
And though he speak with fraud and finesse,
'Tis said beneath duress per minas.
For we're in peril of our souls
From your vile feathers, tar and poles;
And vows extorted are not binding
In law, and so not worth the minding.
For we have in this hurly-burly
Sent off our consciences on furlow;
Thrown our religion o'er in form,
Our ship to lighten in the storm.
Nor need we blush your Whigs before;
Had we no virtue, you've no more.

"Yet black with sins, would spoil a mitre,
Rail ye at faults by ten tints whiter?
And, stuff'd with choler atrabilious,
Insult us here for peccadilloes?
While all your vices run so high

That mercy scarce could find supply:
And should you offer to repent,
You'd need more fasting days than Lent,
More groans than haunted church-yard vallies,
And more confessions than broad-alleys.
I'll show you all at fitter time,
Th' extent and greatness of your crime,
And here demonstrate to your face,
Your want of virtue, as of grace,
Evinced from topics old and recent:
But thus much must suffice at present.
To th' after portion of the day,
I leave what more remains to say;
When, I've good hope, you'll all appear,
More fitted and prepared to hear,
And grieved for all your vile demeanour:
But now 'tis time t' adjourn for dinner."

John Trumbull

M'Fingal - Canto II

The Sun, who never stops to dine,
Two hours had pass'd the mid-way line,
And driving at his usual rate,
Lash'd on his downward car of state.
And now expired the short vacation,
And dinner o'er in epic fashion,
While all the crew, beneath the trees,
Eat pocket-pies, or bread and cheese,
(Nor shall we, like old Homer, care
To versify their bill of fare)
Each active party, feasted well,
Throng'd in, like sheep, at sound of bell;
With equal spirit took their places,
And meeting oped with three Oh Yesses:
When first, the daring Whigs t' oppose,
Again the great M'Fingal rose,
Stretch'd magisterial arm amain,
And thus resumed th' accusing strain.

"Ye Whigs attend, and hear affrighted
The crimes whereof ye stand indicted;
The sins and follies past all compass,
That prove you guilty, or non compos.
I leave the verdict to your senses,
And jury of your consciences;
Which though they're neither good nor true,
Must yet convict you and your crew.

"Ungrateful sons! a factious band,
That rise against your parent land!
Ye viper race, that burst in strife
The genial womb that gave you life,
Tear with sharp fangs and forked tongue
The indulgent bowels whence ye sprung;
And scorn the debt and obligation,
You justly owe the British nation,
Which, since you cannot pay, your crew

Affect to swear was never due.

"Did not the deeds of England's primate
First drive your fathers to this climate,
Whom jails and fines and every ill
Forced to their good against their will?
Ye owe to their obliging temper
The peopling your new-fangled empire,
While every British act and canon
Stood forth your causa sine qua non.
Who'd seen, except for these restraints,
Your witches, quakers, whigs and saints,
Or heard of Mather's famed Magnalia,
If Charles and Laud had chanced to fail you?
Did they not send your charters o'er,
And give you lands you own'd before,
Permit you all to spill your blood,
And drive out heathens where you could;
On these mild terms, that, conquest won,
The realm you gain'd should be their own?
And when of late attack'd by those,
Whom her connection made your foes,
Did they not then, distress'd by war,
Send generals to your help from far,
Whose aid you own'd, in terms less haughty,
And thankfully o'erpaid your quota?
Say, at what period did they grudge
To send you Governor or Judge,
With all their Missionary crew,
To teach you law and gospel too?
They brought all felons in the nation
To help you on in population;
Proposed their Bishops to surrender,
And made their Priests a legal tender,
Who only ask'd, in surplice clad,
The simple tithe of all you had:
And now, to keep all knaves in awe,
Have sent their troops t' establish law,
And with gunpowder, fire and ball,
Reform your people, one and all.
Yet when their insolence and pride

Have anger'd all the world beside;
When fear and want at once invade,
Can you refuse to lend them aid,
And rather risk your heads in fight,
Than gratefully throw in your mite?
Can they for debts make satisfaction,
Should they dispose their realm at auction,
And sell off Britain's goods and land all
To France and Spain, by inch of candle?
Shall good King George, with want oppress'd,
Insert his name in bankrupt list,
And shut up shop, like failing merchant,
That fears the bailiffs should make search in't;
With poverty shall princes strive,
And nobles lack whereon to live?
Have they not rack'd their whole inventions
To feed their brats on posts and pensions;
Made their Scotch friends with taxes groan,
And pick'd poor Ireland to the bone:
Yet have on hand, as well deserving,
Ten thousand bastards, left for starving?
And can you now, with conscience clear,
Refuse them an asylum here,
And not maintain, in manner fitting,
These genuine sons of mother Britain?

"T' evade these crimes of blackest grain
You prate of liberty in vain,
And strive to hide your vile designs
In terms abstruse, like school-divines.

"Your boasted patriotism is scarce,
And country's love is but a farce:
For after all the proofs you bring,
We Tories know there's no such thing.
Hath not Dalrymple show'd in print,
And Johnson too, there's nothing in't;
Produced you demonstration ample,
From others' and their own example,
That self is still, in either faction,

The only principle of action;
The loadstone, whose attracting tether
Keeps the politic world together:
And spite of all your double dealing,
We all are sure 'tis so, from feeling.

"Who heeds your babbling of transmitting
Freedom to brats of your begetting,
Or will proceed, as tho' there were a tie,
And obligation to posterity?
We get them, bear them, breed and nurse.
What has posterity done for us,
That we, least they their rights should lose,
Should trust our necks to gripe of noose?

"And who believes you will not run?
Ye're cowards, every mother's son;
And if you offer to deny,
We've witnesses to prove it by.
Attend th' opinion first, as referee,
Of your old general, stout Sir Jeffery;
Who swore that with five thousand foot
He'd rout you all, and in pursuit
Run thro' the land, as easily
As camel thro' a needle's eye?
Did not the mighty Colonel Grant
Against your courage pour his rant,
Affirm your universal failure
In every principle of valour,
And swear no scamperers e'er could match you,
So swift, a bullet scarce could catch you?
And will you not confess, in this
A judge most competent he is;
Well skill'd on running to decide,
As what himself has often tried?
'Twould not methinks be labor lost,
If you'd sit down and count the cost,
And ere you call your Yankies out,
First think what work you've set about.
Have you not roused, his force to try on,

That grim old beast, the British Lion:
And know you not, that at a sup
He's large enough to eat you up?
Have you survey'd his jaws beneath,
Drawn inventories of his teeth,
Or have you weigh'd, in even balance,
His strength and magnitude of talons?
His roar would change your boasts to fear,
As easily, as sour small beer;
And make your feet from dreadful fray,
By native instinct run away.
Britain, depend on't, will take on her
T' assert her dignity and honor,
And ere she'd lose your share of pelf,
Destroy your country, and herself.
For has not North declared they fight
To gain substantial rev'nue by't,
Denied he'd ever deign to treat,
Till on your knees and at his feet?
And feel you not a trifling ague
From Van's "Delenda est Carthago?
For this now Britain has projected,
Think you she has not means t' effect it?
Has she not set at work all engines
To spirit up the native Indians,
Send on your backs the tawney band,
With each an hatchet in his hand,
T' amuse themselves with scalping knives.
And butcher children and your wives;
And paid them for your scalps at sale
More than your heads would fetch by tale;
That she might boast again with vanity,
Her English national humanity?
For now in its primeval sense
This term, humanity, comprehends
All things of which, on this side hell,
The human mind is capable;
And thus 'tis well, by writers sage,
Applied to Britain and to Gage.
On this brave work to raise allies,
She sent her duplicate of Guys,
To drive at different parts at once on,

Her stout Guy Carlton and Guy Johnson;
To each of whom, to send again you,
Old Guy of Warwick were a ninny,
Though the dun cow he fell'd in war,
These killcows are his betters far.

"And has she not essay'd her notes
To rouse your slaves to cut your throats;
Sent o'er ambassadors with guineas,
To bribe your blacks in Carolinas?
And has not Gage, her missionary,
Turn'd many an Afric to a Tory;
Made the New-England Bishop's see grow,
By many a new-converted negro?
As friends to government, when he
Your slaves at Boston late set free,
Enlisted them in black parade,
Emboss'd with regimental red;
While flared the epaulette, like flambeau,
On Captain Cuff and Ensign Sambo:
And were they not accounted then
Among his very bravest men?
And when such means she stoops to take,
Think you she is not wide awake?
As the good man of old in Job
Own'd wondrous allies through the globe,
Had brought the stones along the street
To ratify a cov'nant meet,
And every beast, from lice to lions,
To join in leagues of strict alliance:
Has she not cringed, in spite of pride,
For like assistance, far and wide,
Till all this formidable league rose
Of Indians, British troops and Negroes?
And can you break these triple bands
By all your workmanship of hands?

"Sir," quoth Honorius, "we presume
You guess from past feats what's to come,
And from the mighty deeds of Gage

Foretell how fierce the war he'll wage.
You doubtless recollected here
The annals of his first great year:
While, wearying out the Tories' patience,
He spent his breath in proclamations;
While all his mighty noise and vapour
Was used in wrangling upon paper,
And boasted military fits
Closed in the straining of his wits;
While troops, in Boston commons placed,
Laid nought, but quires of paper, waste;
While strokes alternate stunn'd the nation,
Protest, Address and Proclamation,
And speech met speech, fib clash'd with fib,
And Gage still answer'd, squib for squib.

"Though this not all his time was lost on;
He fortified the town of Boston,
Built breastworks, that might lend assistance
To keep the patriots at a distance;
For howso'er the rogues might scoff,
He liked them best the farthest off;
Works of important use to aid
His courage, when he felt afraid,
And whence right off, in manful station,
He'd boldly pop his proclamation.
Our hearts must in our bosoms freeze,
At such heroic deeds as these."

"Vain," said the 'Squire, "you'll find to sneer
At Gage's first triumphant year;
For Providence, disposed to tease us,
Can use what instruments it pleases.
To pay a tax, at Peter's wish,
His chief cashier was once a fish;
An ass, in Balaam's sad disaster,
Turn'd orator and saved his master;
A goose, placed sentry on his station,
Preserved old Rome from desolation;
An English bishop's cur of late

Disclosed rebellions 'gainst the state;
So frogs croak'd Pharaoh to repentance,
And lice delay'd the fatal sentence:
And heaven can ruin you at pleasure,
By Gage, as soon as by a Cæsar.
Yet did our hero in these days
Pick up some laurel wreaths of praise.
And as the statuary of Seville
Made his crackt saint an exc'llent devil;
So though our war small triumph brings,
We gain'd great fame in other things.

"Did not our troops show great discerning,
And skill your various arts in learning?
Outwent they not each native noodle
By far, in playing Yankee-doodle,
Which as 'twas your New-England tune,
'Twas marvellous they took so soon?
And ere the year was fully through,
Did not they learn to foot it too,
And such a dance, as ne'er was known,
For twenty miles on end lead down?
Did they not lay their heads together,
And gain your art to tar and feather,
When Colonel Nesbit, thro' the town,
In triumph bore the country-clown?
Oh what a glorious work to sing
The veteran troops of Britain's king,
Adventuring for th' heroic laurel
With bag of feathers and tar-barrel!
To paint the cart where culprits ride,
And Nesbitt marching at its side,
Great executioner and proud,
Like hangman high on Holborn road;
And o'er the slow-drawn rumbling car,
The waving ensigns of the war!
As when a triumph Rome decreed
For great Caligula's valiant deed,
Who had subdued the British seas,
By gath'ring cockles from their base;
In pompous car the conq'ror bore

His captive scallops from the shore,
Ovations gain'd his crabs for fetching,
And mighty feats of oyster-catching:
'Gainst Yankies thus the war begun,
They tarr'd, and triumph'd over, one;
And fought and boasted through the season,
With force as great and equal reason.

"Yet thus though skill'd in vict'ry's toils,
They boast, not unexpert, in wiles.
For gain'd they not an equal fame in
The arts of secrecy and scheming;
In stratagem show'd wondrous force,
And modernized the Trojan horse,
Play'd o'er again the tricks Ulyssean,
In their famed Salem expedition?
For as that horse, the poets tell ye,
Bore Grecian armies in its belly,
Till their full reckoning run, with joy
Shrewd Sinon midwived them in Troy:
So in one ship was Leslie bold
Cramm'd with three hundred men in hold,
Equipp'd for enterprize and sail,
Like Jonas stow'd in womb of whale.
To Marblehead in depth of night
The cautious vessel wing'd her flight.
And now the sabbath's silent day
Call'd all your Yankies off to pray;
Safe from each prying jealous neighbour,
The scheme and vessel fell in labor.
Forth from its hollow womb pour'd hast'ly
The Myrmidons of Colonel Leslie.
Not thicker o'er the blacken'd strand,
The frogs detachment, rush'd to land,
Furious by onset and surprize
To storm th' entrenchment of the mice.
Through Salem straight, without delay,
The bold battalion took its way,
March'd o'er a bridge, in open sight
Of several Yankies arm'd for fight;
Then without loss of time or men,

Veer'd round for Boston back again,
And found so well their projects thrive,
That every soul got home alive.

"Thus Gage's arms did fortune bless
With triumph, safety and success.
But mercy is without dispute
His first and darling attribute;
So great, it far outwent and conquer'd
His military skill at Concord.
There, when the war he chose to wage,
Shone the benevolence of Gage;
Sent troops to that ill-omen'd place,
On errands mere of special grace;
And all the work, he chose them for,
Was to prevent a civil war;
For which kind purpose he projected
The only certain way t' effect it,
To seize your powder, shot and arms,
And all your means of doing harms;
As prudent folks take knives away,
Lest children cut themselves at play.
And yet, when this was all his scheme,
The war you still will charge on him;
And tho' he oft has swore and said it,
Stick close to facts, and give no credit.
Think you, he wish'd you'd brave and beard him?
Why, 'twas the very thing, that scared him.
He'd rather you should all have run,
Than staid to fire a single gun.
So, for the civil war you lament,
Faith, you yourselves must take the blame in't;
For had you then, as he intended,
Given up your arms, it must have ended:
Since that's no war, each mortal knows,
Where one side only gives the blows,
And t'other bears them; on reflection
The most we call it is correction.
Nor could the contest have gone higher,
If you had ne'er return'd the fire:
But when you shot, and not before,

It then commenced a civil war.
Else Gage, to end this controversy,
Had but corrected you in mercy;
Whom mother Britain, old and wise,
Sent o'er, the colonies to chastise;
Command obedience on their peril
Of ministerial whip and ferule;
And since they ne'er must come of age,
Govern'd and tutor'd them by Gage.
Still more, that mercy was their errand,
The army's conduct makes apparent.
What though at Lexington you can say,
They kill'd a few, they did not fancy;
At Concord then with manful popping,
Discharged a round, the ball to open;
Yet when they saw your rebel rout
Determined still to brave it out,
Did they not show their love of peace,
Their wish that discord straight might cease;
Demonstrate, and by proofs uncommon,
Their orders were to injure no man?
For did not every regular run,
As soon as e'er you fired a gun;
Take the first shot you sent them, greeting,
As meant their signal for retreating;
And fearful, if they staid for sport,
You might by accident be hurt,
Convey themselves with speed away
Full twenty miles in half a day;
Race till their legs were grown so weary,
They scarce sufficed their weight to carry?
Whence Gage extols, from general hearsay,
The great activity of Lord Percy;
Whose brave example led them on,
And spirited the troops to run;
Who now may boast, at royal levees,
A Yankee-chace worth forty Chevys.

"Yet you, as vile as they were kind,
Pursued, like tygers, still behind;
Fired on them at your will, and shut

The town, as though you'd starve them out;
And with parade preposterous hedged,
Affect to hold them there besieged:
Though Gage, whom proclamations call
Your Gov'rnor and Vice-Admiral,
Whose power gubernatorial still
Extends as far as Bunker's hill,
Whose admiralty reaches, clever,
Near half a mile up Mystic river,
Whose naval force yet keeps the seas,
Can run away whene'er he'd please.
Nay, stern with rage grim Putnam boiling
Plunder'd both Hogg and Noddle Island;
Scared troops of Tories into town,
Burn'd all their hay and houses down,
And menaced Gage, unless he'd flee,
To drive him headlong to the sea;
As once, to faithless Jews a sign,
The De'el, turn'd hog-reeve, did the swine.

"But now your triumphs all are o'er;
For see from Britain's angry shore,
With deadly hosts of valor join
Her Howe, her Clinton and Burgoyne!
As comets thro' th' affrighted skies
Pour baleful ruin as they rise;
As Ætna with infernal roar
In conflagration sweeps the shore;
Or as Abijah White, when sent
Our Marshfield friends to represent,
Himself while dread array involves,
Commissions, pistols, swords, resolves,
In awful pomp descending down
Bore terror on the factious town:
Not with less glory and affright,
Parade these generals forth to fight.
No more each British colonel runs
From whizzing beetles, as air-guns;
Thinks horn-bugs bullets, or thro' fears
Muskitoes takes for musketeers;
Nor scapes, as if you'd gain'd supplies,

From Beelzebub's whole host of flies.
No bug these warlike hearts appalls;
They better know the sound of balls.
I hear the din of battle bray;
The trump of horror marks its way.
I see afar the sack of cities,
The gallows strung with Whig-committees;
Your moderators triced, like vermin,
And gate-posts graced with heads of chairmen;
Your Congress for wave-off'rings hanging,
And ladders throng'd with priests haranguing.
What pillories glad the Tories' eyes
With patriot ears for sacrifice!
What whipping-posts your chosen race
Admit successive in embrace,
While each bears off his sins, alack!
Like Bunyan's pilgrim, on his back!
Where then, when Tories scarce get clear,
Shall Whigs and Congresses appear?
What rocks and mountains will you call
To wrap you over with their fall,
And save your heads, in these sad weathers,
From fire and sword, and tar and feathers?
For lo! with British troops tar-bright,
Again our Nesbitt heaves in sight;
He comes, he comes, your lines to storm,
And rig your troops in uniform.
To meet such heroes will ye brag,
With fury arm'd, and feather-bag,
Who wield their missile pitch and tar
With engines new in British war?

"Lo! where our mighty navy brings
Destruction on her canvass wings,
While through the deep the British thunder
Shall sound th' alarm, to rob and plunder!
As Phoebus first, so Homer speaks,
When he march'd out t' attack the Greeks,
'Gainst mules sent forth his arrows fatal,
And slew th' auxiliaries, their cattle:
So where our ships shall stretch the keel,

What vanquish'd oxen shall they steal!
What heroes, rising from the deep,
Invade your marshall'd hosts of sheep;
Disperse whole troops of horse, and pressing,
Make cows surrender at discretion;
Attack your hens, like Alexanders,
And regiments rout of geese and ganders;
Or where united arms combine,
Lead captive many a herd of swine!
Then rush in dreadful fury down
To fire on every seaport town;
Display their glory and their wits,
Fright helpless children into fits;
And stoutly, from the unequal fray,
Make many a woman run away.

"And can ye doubt, whene'er we please,
Our chiefs shall boast such deeds as these?
Have we not chiefs transcending far
The old famed thunderbolts of war;
Beyond the brave knight-errant fighters,
Stiled swords of death, by novel-writers;
Nor in romancing ages e'er rose
So terrible a tier of heroes.
From Gage what sounds alarm the waves!
How loud a blunderbuss is Graves!
How Newport dreads the blustering sallies,
That thunder from our popgun, Wallace,
While noise in formidable strains,
Spouts from his thimble-full of brains!
I see you sink in awed surprise!
I see our Tory brethren rise!
And as the sect'ries Sandemanian,
Our friends, describe their hoped millennium;
Boast how the world in every region
At once shall own their true religion,
For heaven shall knock, with vengeance dread,
All unbelievers on the head;
And then their church, the meek in spirit,
The earth, as promised, shall inherit
From the dead wicked, as heirs male,

Or next remainder-men in tail:
Such ruin shall the Whigs oppress;
Such spoils our Tory friends shall bless:
While Confiscation at command
Shall stalk in terror through the land,
Shall give all whig-estates away,
And call our brethren into play.

"And can you pause, or scruple more?
These things are near you, at the door.
Behold! for though to reasoning blind,
Signs of the times you still might mind,
And view impending fate, as plain
As you'd foretell a shower of rain.

"Hath not heaven warn'd you what must ensue.
And providence declared against you?
Hung forth the dire portents of war
By fires and beacons in the air;
Alarm'd old women all around
With fearful noises under ground,
While earth, for many a hundred leagues,
Groan'd with her dismal load of Whigs?
Was there a meteor, far and wide,
But muster'd on the Tory side;
A star malign, that has not bent
Its aspects for the parliament,
Foreboding your defeat and misery,
As once they fought against old Sisera?
Was there a cloud, that spread the skies,
But bore our armies of allies,
While dreadful hosts of flame stood forth
In baleful streamers from the north?
Which plainly show'd what part they join'd:
For North's the minister, ye mind;
Whence oft your quibblers in gazettes
On Northern blasts have strain'd their wits;
And think you not, the clouds know how
To make the pun, as well you?
Did there arise an apparition,

But grinn'd forth ruin to sedition;
A death-watch, but has join'd our leagues,
And click'd destruction to the Whigs?
Heard ye not, when the wind was fair,
At night our prophets in the air,
Who, loud, like admiralty libel,
Read awful chapters from the Bible,
And war and plague and death denounced,
And told you how you'd soon be trounced?
I see, to join our conq'ring side,
Heaven, earth and hell at once allied;
See from your overthrow and end,
The Tory paradise ascend,
Like that new world, which claims its station,
Beyond the final conflagration.
I see the day, that lots your share
In utter darkness and despair;
The day of joy, when North, our lord,
His faithful fav'rites shall reward.
No Tory then shall set before him
Small wish of 'Squire and Justice Quorum;
But to his unmistaken eyes
See lordships, posts and pensions rise.

"Awake to gladness then, ye Tories!
Th' unbounded prospect lies before us.
The power, display'd in Gage's banners,
Shall cut their fertile lands to manors;
And o'er our happy conquer'd ground,
Dispense estates and titles round.
Behold! the world shall stare at new setts
Of home-made Earls in Massachusetts;
Admire, array'd in ducal tassels,
Your Ol'vers, Hutchinsons and Vassals;
See join'd in ministerial work
His Grace of Albany, and York.
What lordships from each carved estate,
On our New-York Assembly wait!
What titled Jauncys, Gales and Billops;
Lord Brush, Lord Wilkins and Lord Philips!
In wide-sleeved pomp of godly guise,

What solemn rows of Bishops rise!
Aloft a Cardinal's hat is spread
O'er punster Cooper's reverend head.
In Vardell, that poetic zealot,
I view a lawn-bedizen'd Prelate;
While mitres fall, as 'tis their duty,
On heads of Chandler and Auchmuty!
Knights, Viscounts, Barons, shall ye meet,
As thick as pebbles in the street;
E'en I perhaps (heaven speed my claim!)
Shall fix a Sir before my name.
For titles all our foreheads ache,
For what blest changes can they make!
Place Reverence, Grace and Excellence,
Where neither claim'd the least pretence;
Transform by patent's magic words
Men, likest devils, into Lords;
Whence commoners, to Peers translated,
Are justly said to be created.
Now where commissioners you saw,
Shall boards of nobles deal you law;
Long-robed comptrollers judge your rights,
And tide-waiters start up in knights.
While Whigs subdued, in slavish awe,
Our wood shall hew, our water draw,
And bless the mildness, when past hope,
That saved their necks from noose of rope.
For since our leaders have decreed,
Their blacks, who join us, shall be freed,
To hang the conquer'd whigs, we all see,
Would prove but weak, and thriftless policy,
Except their Chiefs: the vulgar knaves
Will do more good, preserved for slaves."

"'Tis well," Honorius cried; "your scheme
Has painted out a pretty dream.
We can't confute your second-sight;
We shall be slaves and you a knight.
These things must come, but I divine,
They'll come not in your day, nor mine."

"But, oh my friends, my brethren, hear;
And turn for once th' attentive ear.
Ye see how prompt to aid our woes
The tender mercies of our foes;
Ye see with what unvaried rancour
Still for our blood their minions hanker;
Nor aught can sate their mad ambition,
From us, but death, or worse, submission.
Shall these then riot in our spoil,
Reap the glad harvest of our toil,
Rise from their country's ruins proud,
And roll their chariot-wheels in blood?
See Gage, with inauspicious star,
Has oped the gates of civil war,
When streams of gore, from freemen slain,
Encrimson'd Concord's fatal plain;
Whose warning voice, with awful sound,
Still cries, like Abel's, from the ground;
And heaven, attentive to its call,
Shall doom the proud oppressor's fall.

"Rise then, ere ruin swift surprize,
To victory, to vengeance, rise.
Hark, how the distant din alarms;
The echoing trumpet breathes, to arms.
From provinces remote afar,
The sons of glory rouse to war.
'Tis Freedom calls! the raptured sound
The Apalachian hills rebound.
The Georgian coasts her voice shall hear,
And start from lethargies of fear.
From the parch'd zone, with glowing ray
Where pours the sun intenser day,
To shores where icy waters roll,
And tremble to the glimm'ring pole,
Inspired by freedom's heavenly charms,
United nations wake to arms.
The star of conquest lights their way,
And guides their vengeance on their prey.
Yes, though tyrannic force oppose,

Still shall they triumph o'er their foes;
Till heaven the happy land shall bless
With safety, liberty and peace.

"And ye, whose souls of dastard mould
Start at the bravery of the bold;
To love your country who pretend,
Yet want all spirit to defend;
Who feel your fancies so prolific,
Engend'ring visions whims terrific,
O'errun with horrors of coercion,
Fire, blood and thunder in reversion;
King's standards, pill'ries, confiscations,
And Gage's scare-crow proclamations;
Who scarce could rouse, if caught in fray,
Presence of mind to run away;
See nought but halts rise to view,
In all your dreams, and deem them true;
And while these phantoms haunt your brains,
Bow down your willing necks to chains.
Heavens! are ye sons of sires so great,
Immortal in the fields of fate,
Who braved all deaths, by land or sea,
Who bled, who conquer'd, to be free?
Hence coward souls, the worst disgrace
Of our forefathers' valiant race;
Hie homeward from the glorious field,
There turn the wheel, the distaff wield;
Act what ye are, nor dare to stain
The warrior's arms with touch profane;
There beg your more heroic wives
To guard your own, your children's, lives;
Beneath their aprons seek a screen,
Nor dare to mingle more with men."

As thus he spake, the Tories' anger
Could now restrain itself no longer;
Who tried before by many a freak, or
Insulting noise, to stop the speaker;
Swung th' un-oil'd hinge of each pew-door,

Their feet kept shuffling on the floor;
Made their disapprobation known
By many a murmur, hum and groan,
That to his speech supplied the place
Of counterpart in thorough bass.
Thus bagpipes, while the tune they breathe,
Still drone and grumble underneath;
And thus the famed Demosthenes
Harangued the rumbling of the seas,
Held forth with elocution grave,
To audience loud of wind and wave;
And had a stiller congregation,
Than Tories are, to hear th' oration.
The uproar now grew high and louder,
As nearer thund'rings of a cloud are,
And every soul with heart and voice
Supplied his quota of the noise.
Each listening ear was set on torture,
Each Tory bellowing, "Order, Order;"
And some, with tongue not low or weak,
Were clam'ring fast, for leave to speak;
The Moderator, with great vi'lence,
The cushion thump'd with, "Silence, Silence!"
The Constable to every prater
Bawl'd out, "Pray hear the moderator;"
Some call'd the vote, and some in turn
Were screaming high, "Adjourn, Adjourn."
Not Chaos heard such jars and clashes,
When all the el'ments fought for places.
The storm each moment fiercer grew;
His sword the great M'Fingal drew,
Prepared in either chance to share,
To keep the peace, or aid the war.
Nor lack'd they each poetic being,
Whom bards alone are skill'd in seeing;
Plumed Victory stood perch'd on high,
Upon the pulpit-canopy,
To join, as is her custom tried,
Like Indians, on the strongest side;
The Destinies, with shears and distaff,
Drew near their threads of life to twist off;
The Furies 'gan to feast on blows,

And broken head, and bloody nose:
When on a sudden from without
Arose a loud terrific shout;
And straight the people all at once heard
Of tongues an universal concert;
Like Æsop's times, as fable runs,
When every creature talk'd at once,
Or like the variegated gabble,
That crazed the carpenters of Babel.
Each party soon forsook the quarrel,
And let the other go on parol,
Eager to know what fearful matter
Had conjured up such general clatter;
And left the church in thin array,
As though it had been lecture-day.
Our 'Squire M'Fingal straitway beckon'd
The Constable to stand his second;
And sallied forth with aspect fierce
The crowd assembled to disperse.

The Moderator, out of view,
Beneath the desk had lain perdue;
Peep'd up his head to view the fray,
Beheld the wranglers run away,
And left alone, with solemn face
Adjourn'd them without time or place.

John Trumbull

M'Fingal - Canto Iii

Now warm with ministerial ire,
Fierce sallied forth our loyal 'Squire,
And on his striding steps attends
His desperate clan of Tory friends.
When sudden met his wrathful eye
A pole ascending through the sky,
Which numerous throngs of whiggish race
Were raising in the market-place.
Not higher school-boy's kites aspire,
Or royal mast, or country spire;
Like spears at Brobdignagian tilting,
Or Satan's walking-staff in Milton.
And on its top, the flag unfurl'd
Waved triumph o'er the gazing world,
Inscribed with inconsistent types
Of Liberty and thirteen stripes.
Beneath, the crowd without delay
The dedication-rites essay,
And gladly pay, in antient fashion,
The ceremonies of libation;
While briskly to each patriot lip
Walks eager round the inspiring flip:
Delicious draught! whose powers inherit
The quintessence of public spirit;
Which whoso tastes, perceives his mind
To nobler politics refined;
Or roused to martial controversy,
As from transforming cups of Circe;
Or warm'd with Homer's nectar'd liquor,
That fill'd the veins of gods with ichor.
At hand for new supplies in store,
The tavern opes its friendly door,
Whence to and fro the waiters run,
Like bucket-men at fires in town.
Then with three shouts that tore the sky,
'Tis consecrate to Liberty.
To guard it from th' attacks of Tories,
A grand Committee cull'd of four is;
Who foremost on the patriot spot,

Had brought the flip, and paid the shot.

By this, M'Fingal with his train
Advanced upon th' adjacent plain,
And full with loyalty possest,
Pour'd forth the zeal, that fired his breast.

"What mad-brain'd rebel gave commission,
To raise this May-pole of sedition?
Like Babel, rear'd by bawling throngs,
With like confusion too of tongues,
To point at heaven and summon down
The thunders of the British crown?
Say, will this paltry Pole secure
Your forfeit heads from Gage's power?
Attack'd by heroes brave and crafty,
Is this to stand your ark of safety;
Or driven by Scottish laird and laddie,
Think ye to rest beneath its shadow?
When bombs, like fiery serpents, fly,
And balls rush hissing through the sky,
Will this vile Pole, devote to freedom,
Save like the Jewish pole in Edom;
Or like the brazen snake of Moses,
Cure your crackt skulls and batter'd noses?

"Ye dupes to every factious rogue
And tavern-prating demagogue,
Whose tongue but rings, with sound more full,
On th' empty drumhead of his scull;
Behold you not what noisy fools
Use you, worse simpletons, for tools?
For Liberty, in your own by-sense,
Is but for crimes a patent license,
To break of law th' Egyptian yoke,
And throw the world in common stock;
Reduce all grievances and ills
To Magna Charta of your wills;
Establish cheats and frauds and nonsense,

Framed to the model of your conscience;
Cry justice down, as out of fashion,
And fix its scale of depreciation;
Defy all creditors to trouble ye,
And keep new years of Jewish jubilee;
Drive judges out, like Aaron's calves,
By jurisdiction of white staves,
And make the bar and bench and steeple
Submit t' our Sovereign Lord, The People;
By plunder rise to power and glory,
And brand all property, as Tory;
Expose all wares to lawful seizures
By mobbers or monopolizers;
Break heads and windows and the peace,
For your own interest and increase;
Dispute and pray and fight and groan
For public good, and mean your own;
Prevent the law by fierce attacks
From quitting scores upon your backs;
Lay your old dread, the gallows, low,
And seize the stocks, your ancient foe,
And turn them to convenient engines
To wreak your patriotic vengeance;
While all, your rights who understand,
Confess them in their owner's hand;
And when by clamours and confusions,
Your freedom's grown a public nuisance,
Cry "Liberty," with powerful yearning,
As he does "Fire!" whose house is burning;
Though he already has much more
Than he can find occasion for.
While every clown, that tills the plains,
Though bankrupt in estate and brains,
By this new light transform'd to traitor,
Forsakes his plough to turn dictator,
Starts an haranguing chief of Whigs,
And drags you by the ears, like pigs.
All bluster, arm'd with factious licence,
New-born at once to politicians.
Each leather-apron'd dunce, grown wise,
Presents his forward face t' advise,
And tatter'd legislators meet,

From every workshop through the street.
His goose the tailor finds new use in,
To patch and turn the Constitution;
The blacksmith comes with sledge and grate
To iron-bind the wheels of state;
The quack forbears his patients' souse,
To purge the Council and the House;
The tinker quits his moulds and doxies,
To cast assembly-men and proxies.
From dunghills deep of blackest hue,
Your dirt-bred patriots spring to view,
To wealth and power and honors rise,
Like new-wing'd maggots changed to flies,
And fluttering round in high parade,
Strut in the robe, or gay cockade.
See Arnold quits, for ways more certain,
His bankrupt-perj'ries for his fortune,
Brews rum no longer in his store,
Jockey and skipper now no more,
Forsakes his warehouses and docks,
And writs of slander for the pox;
And cleansed by patriotism from shame,
Grows General of the foremost name.
For in this ferment of the stream
The dregs have work'd up to the brim,
And by the rule of topsy-turvies,
The scum stands foaming on the surface.
You've caused your pyramid t' ascend,
And set it on the little end.
Like Hudibras, your empire's made,
Whose crupper had o'ertopp'd his head.
You've push'd and turn'd the whole world up-
Side down, and got yourselves at top,
While all the great ones of your state
Are crush'd beneath the popular weight;
Nor can you boast, this present hour,
The shadow of the form of power.
For what's your Congress or its end?
A power, t' advise and recommend;
To call forth troops, adjust your quotas--
And yet no soul is bound to notice;
To pawn your faith to th' utmost limit,

But cannot bind you to redeem it;
And when in want no more in them lies,
Than begging from your State-Assemblies;
Can utter oracles of dread,
Like friar Bacon's brazen head,
But when a faction dares dispute 'em,
Has ne'er an arm to execute 'em:
As tho' you chose supreme dictators,
And put them under conservators.
You've but pursued the self-same way
With Shakespeare's Trinc'lo in the play;
"You shall be Viceroy here, 'tis true,
"But we'll be Viceroy over you."
What wild confusion hence must ensue?
Tho' common danger yet cements you:
So some wreck'd vessel, all in shatters,
Is held up by surrounding waters,
But stranded, when the pressure ceases,
Falls by its rottenness to pieces.
And fall it must! if wars were ended,
You'll ne'er have sense enough to mend it:
But creeping on, by low intrigues,
Like vermin of a thousand legs,
'Twill find as short a life assign'd,
As all things else of reptile kind.
Your Commonwealth's a common harlot,
The property of every varlet;
Which now in taste, and full employ,
All sorts admire, as all enjoy:
But soon a batter'd strumpet grown,
You'll curse and drum her out of town.
Such is the government you chose;
For this you bade the world be foes;
For this, so mark'd for dissolution,
You scorn the British Constitution,
That constitution form'd by sages,
The wonder of all modern ages;
Which owns no failure in reality,
Except corruption and venality;
And merely proves the adage just,
That best things spoil'd corrupt to worst:
So man supreme in earthly station,

And mighty lord of this creation,
When once his corse is dead as herring,
Becomes the most offensive carrion,
And sooner breeds the plague, 'tis found,
Than all beasts rotting on the ground.
Yet with republics to dismay us,
You've call'd up Anarchy from chaos,
With all the followers of her school,
Uproar and Rage and wild Misrule:
For whom this rout of Whigs distracted,
And ravings dire of every crack'd head;
These new-cast legislative engines
Of County-meetings and Conventions;
Committees vile of correspondence,
And mobs, whose tricks have almost undone 's:
While reason fails to check your course,
And Loyalty's kick'd out of doors,
And Folly, like inviting landlord,
Hoists on your poles her royal standard;
While the king's friends, in doleful dumps,
Have worn their courage to the stumps,
And leaving George in sad disaster,
Most sinfully deny their master.
What furies raged when you, in sea,
In shape of Indians, drown'd the tea;
When your gay sparks, fatigued to watch it,
Assumed the moggison and hatchet,
With wampum'd blankets hid their laces,
And like their sweethearts, primed their faces:
While not a red-coat dared oppose,
And scarce a Tory show'd his nose;
While Hutchinson, for sure retreat,
Manoeuvred to his country seat,
And thence affrighted, in the suds,
Stole off bareheaded through the woods.

"Have you not roused your mobs to join,
And make Mandamus-men resign,
Call'd forth each duff-drest curmudgeon,
With dirty trowsers and white bludgeon,
Forced all our Councils through the land,

To yield their necks at your command;
While paleness marks their late disgraces,
Through all their rueful length of faces?

"Have you not caused as woeful work
In our good city of New-York,
When all the rabble, well cockaded,
In triumph through the streets paraded,
And mobb'd the Tories, scared their spouses,
And ransack'd all the custom-houses;
Made such a tumult, bluster, jarring,
That mid the clash of tempests warring,
Smith's weather-cock, in veers forlorn,
Could hardly tell which way to turn?
Burn'd effigies of higher powers,
Contrived in planetary hours;
As witches with clay-images
Destroy or torture whom they please:
Till fired with rage, th' ungrateful club
Spared not your best friend, Beelzebub,
O'erlook'd his favors, and forgot
The reverence due his cloven foot,
And in the selfsame furnace frying,
Stew'd him, and North and Bute and Tryon?
Did you not, in as vile and shallow way,
Fright our poor Philadelphian, Galloway,
Your Congress, when the loyal ribald
Belied, berated and bescribbled?
What ropes and halters did you send,
Terrific emblems of his end,
Till, least he'd hang in more than effigy,
Fled in a fog the trembling refugee?
Now rising in progression fatal,
Have you not ventured to give battle?
When Treason chaced our heroes troubled,
With rusty gun, and leathern doublet;
Turn'd all stone-walls and groves and bushes,
To batteries arm'd with blunderbusses;
And with deep wounds, that fate portend,
Gaul'd many a Briton's latter end;
Drove them to Boston, as in jail,

Confined without mainprize or bail.
Were not these deeds enough betimes,
To heap the measure of your crimes:
But in this loyal town and dwelling,
You raise these ensigns of rebellion?
'Tis done! fair Mercy shuts her door;
And Vengeance now shall sleep no more.
Rise then, my friends, in terror rise,
And sweep this scandal from the skies.
You'll see their Dagon, though well jointed,
Will shrink before the Lord's anointed;
And like old Jericho's proud wall,
Before our ram's horns prostrate fall."

This said, our 'Squire, yet undismay'd,
Call'd forth the Constable to aid,
And bade him read, in nearer station,
The Riot-act and Proclamation.
He swift, advancing to the ring,
Began, "Our Sovereign Lord, the King"--
When thousand clam'rous tongues he hears,
And clubs and stones assail his ears.
To fly was vain; to fight was idle;
By foes encompass'd in the middle,
His hope, in stratagems, he found,
And fell right craftily to ground;
Then crept to seek an hiding place,
'Twas all he could, beneath a brace;
Where soon the conq'ring crew espied him,
And where he lurk'd, they caught and tied him.

At once with resolution fatal,
Both Whigs and Tories rush'd to battle.
Instead of weapons, either band
Seized on such arms as came to hand.
And as famed Ovid paints th' adventures
Of wrangling Lapithæ and Centaurs,
Who at their feast, by Bacchus led,
Threw bottles at each other's head;
And these arms failing in their scuffles,

Attack'd with andirons, tongs and shovels:
So clubs and billets, staves and stones
Met fierce, encountering every scone,
And cover'd o'er with knobs and pains
Each void receptacle for brains;
Their clamours rend the skies around,
The hills rebellow to the sound;
And many a groan increas'd the din
From batter'd nose and broken shin.
M'Fingal, rising at the word,
Drew forth his old militia-sword;
Thrice cried "King George," as erst in distress,
Knights of romance invoked a mistress;
And brandishing the blade in air,
Struck terror through th' opposing war.
The Whigs, unsafe within the wind
Of such commotion, shrunk behind.
With whirling steel around address'd,
Fierce through their thickest throng he press'd,
(Who roll'd on either side in arch,
Like Red Sea waves in Israel's march)
And like a meteor rushing through,
Struck on their Pole a vengeful blow.
Around, the Whigs, of clubs and stones
Discharged whole vollies, in platoons,
That o'er in whistling fury fly;
But not a foe dares venture nigh.
And now perhaps with glory crown'd
Our 'Squire had fell'd the pole to ground,
Had not some Pow'r, a whig at heart,
Descended down and took their part;
(Whether 'twere Pallas, Mars or Iris,
'Tis scarce worth while to make inquiries)
Who at the nick of time alarming,
Assumed the solemn form of Chairman,
Address'd a Whig, in every scene
The stoutest wrestler on the green,
And pointed where the spade was found,
Late used to set their pole in ground,
And urged, with equal arms and might,
To dare our 'Squire to single fight.
The Whig thus arm'd, untaught to yield,

Advanced tremendous to the field:
Nor did M'Fingal shun the foe,
But stood to brave the desp'rate blow;
While all the party gazed, suspended
To see the deadly combat ended;
And Jove in equal balance weigh'd
The sword against the brandish'd spade,
He weigh'd; but lighter than a dream,
The sword flew up, and kick'd the beam.
Our 'Squire on tiptoe rising fair
Lifts high a noble stroke in air,
Which hung not, but like dreadful engines,
Descended on his foe in vengeance.
But ah! in danger, with dishonor
The sword perfidious fails its owner;
That sword, which oft had stood its ground,
By huge trainbands encircled round;
And on the bench, with blade right loyal,
Had won the day at many a trial,
Of stones and clubs had braved th' alarms,
Shrunk from these new Vulcanian arms.
The spade so temper'd from the sledge,
Nor keen nor solid harm'd its edge,
Now met it, from his arm of might,
Descending with steep force to smite;
The blade snapp'd short--and from his hand,
With rust embrown'd the glittering sand.
Swift turn'd M'Fingal at the view,
And call'd to aid th' attendant crew,
In vain; the Tories all had run,
When scarce the fight was well begun;
Their setting wigs he saw decreas'd
Far in th' horizon tow'rd the west.
Amazed he view'd the shameful sight,
And saw no refuge, but in flight:
But age unwieldy check'd his pace,
Though fear had wing'd his flying race;
For not a trifling prize at stake;
No less than great M'Fingal's back.
With legs and arms he work'd his course,
Like rider that outgoes his horse,
And labor'd hard to get away, as

Old Satan struggling on through chaos;
Till looking back, he spied in rear
The spade-arm'd chief advanced too near:
Then stopp'd and seized a stone, that lay
An ancient landmark near the way;
Nor shall we as old bards have done,
Affirm it weigh'd an hundred ton;
But such a stone, as at a shift
A modern might suffice to lift,
Since men, to credit their enigmas,
Are dwindled down to dwarfs and pigmies,
And giants exiled with their cronies
To Brobdignags and Patagonias.
But while our Hero turn'd him round,
And tugg'd to raise it from the ground,
The fatal spade discharged a blow
Tremendous on his rear below:
His bent knee fail'd, and void of strength
Stretch'd on the ground his manly length.
Like ancient oak o'erturn'd, he lay,
Or tower to tempests fall'n a prey,
Or mountain sunk with all his pines,
Or flow'r the plow to dust consigns,
And more things else--but all men know 'em,
If slightly versed in epic poem.
At once the crew, at this dread crisis,
Fall on, and bind him, ere he rises;
And with loud shouts and joyful soul,
Conduct him prisoner to the pole.
When now the mob in lucky hour
Had got their en'mies in their power,
They first proceed, by grave command,
To take the Constable in hand.
Then from the pole's sublimest top
The active crew let down the rope,
At once its other end in haste bind,
And make it fast upon his waistband;
Till like the earth, as stretch'd on tenter,
He hung self-balanced on his centre.
Then upwards, all hands hoisting sail,
They swung him, like a keg of ale,
Till to the pinnacle in height

He vaulted, like balloon or kite.
As Socrates of old at first did
To aid philosophy get hoisted,
And found his thoughts flow strangely clear,
Swung in a basket in mid air:
Our culprit thus, in purer sky,
With like advantage raised his eye,
And looking forth in prospect wide,
His Tory errors clearly spied,
And from his elevated station,
With bawling voice began addressing.

"Good Gentlemen and friends and kin,
For heaven's sake hear, if not for mine!
I here renounce the Pope, the Turks,
The King, the Devil and all their works;
And will, set me but once at ease,
Turn Whig or Christian, what you please;
And always mind your rules so justly,
Should I live long as old Methus'lah,
I'll never join in British rage,
Nor help Lord North, nor Gen'ral Gage;
Nor lift my gun in future fights,
Nor take away your Charter-rights;
Nor overcome your new-raised levies,
Destroy your towns, nor burn your navies;
Nor cut your poles down while I've breath,
Though raised more thick than hatchel-teeth:
But leave King George and all his elves
To do their conq'ring work themselves."

This said, they lower'd him down in state,
Spread at all points, like falling cat;
But took a vote first on the question,
That they'd accept this full confession,
And to their fellowship and favor,
Restore him on his good behaviour.

Not so our 'Squire submits to rule,

But stood, heroic as a mule.
"You'll find it all in vain, quoth he,
To play your rebel tricks on me.
All punishments, the world can render,
Serve only to provoke th' offender;
The will gains strength from treatment horrid,
As hides grow harder when they're curried.
No man e'er felt the halter draw,
With good opinion of the law;
Or held in method orthodox
His love of justice, in the stocks;
Or fail'd to lose by sheriff's shears
At once his loyalty and ears.
Have you made Murray look less big,
Or smoked old Williams to a Whig?
Did our mobb'd Ol'ver quit his station,
Or heed his vows of resignation?
Has Rivington, in dread of stripes,
Ceased lying since you stole his types?
And can you think my faith will alter,
By tarring, whipping or the halter?
I'll stand the worst; for recompense
I trust King George and Providence.
And when with conquest gain'd I come,
Array'd in law and terror home,
Ye'll rue this inauspicious morn,
And curse the day, when ye were born,
In Job's high style of imprecations,
With all his plagues, without his patience."

Meanwhile beside the pole, the guard
A Bench of Justice had prepared,
Where sitting round in awful sort
The grand Committee hold their Court;
While all the crew, in silent awe,
Wait from their lips the lore of law.
Few moments with deliberation
They hold the solemn consultation;
When soon in judgment all agree,
And Clerk proclaims the dread decree;
"That 'Squire M'Fingal having grown

The vilest Tory in the town,
And now in full examination
Convicted by his own confession,
Finding no tokens of repentance,
This Court proceeds to render sentence:
That first the Mob a slip-knot single
Tie round the neck of said M'Fingal,
And in due form do tar him next,
And feather, as the law directs;
Then through the town attendant ride him
In cart with Constable beside him,
And having held him up to shame,
Bring to the pole, from whence he came."

Forthwith the crowd proceed to deck
With halter'd noose M'Fingal's neck,
While he in peril of his soul
Stood tied half-hanging to the pole;
Then lifting high the ponderous jar,
Pour'd o'er his head the smoking tar.
With less profusion once was spread
Oil on the Jewish monarch's head,
That down his beard and vestments ran,
And cover'd all his outward man.
As when (so Claudian sings) the Gods
And earth-born Giants fell at odds,
The stout Enceladus in malice
Tore mountains up to throw at Pallas;
And while he held them o'er his head,
The river, from their fountains fed,
Pour'd down his back its copious tide,
And wore its channels in his hide:
So from the high-raised urn the torrents
Spread down his side their various currents;
His flowing wig, as next the brim,
First met and drank the sable stream;
Adown his visage stern and grave
Roll'd and adhered the viscid wave;
With arms depending as he stood,
Each cuff capacious holds the flood;
From nose and chin's remotest end,

The tarry icicles descend;
Till all o'erspread, with colors gay,
He glitter'd to the western ray,
Like sleet-bound trees in wintry skies,
Or Lapland idol carved in ice.
And now the feather-bag display'd
Is waved in triumph o'er his head,
And clouds him o'er with feathers missive,
And down, upon the tar, adhesive:
Not Maia's son, with wings for ears,
Such plumage round his visage wears;
Nor Milton's six-wing'd angel gathers
Such superfluity of feathers.
Now all complete appears our 'Squire,
Like Gorgon or Chimæra dire;
Nor more could boast on Plato's plan
To rank among the race of man,
Or prove his claim to human nature,
As a two-legg'd, unfeather'd creature.

Then on the fatal cart, in state
They raised our grand Duumvirate.
And as at Rome a like committee,
Who found an owl within their city,
With solemn rites and grave processions
At every shrine perform'd lustrations;
And lest infection might take place
From such grim fowl with feather'd face,
All Rome attends him through the street
In triumph to his country seat:
With like devotion all the choir
Paraded round our awful 'Squire;
In front the martial music comes
Of horns and fiddles, fifes and drums,
With jingling sound of carriage bells,
And treble creak of rusted wheels.
Behind, the croud, in lengthen'd row
With proud procession, closed the show.
And at fit periods every throat
Combined in universal shout;
And hail'd great Liberty in chorus,

Or bawl'd 'confusion to the Tories.'
Not louder storm the welkin braves
From clamors of conflicting waves;
Less dire in Lybian wilds the noise
When rav'ning lions lift their voice;
Or triumphs at town-meetings made,
On passing votes to regulate trade.

Thus having borne them round the town,
Last at the pole they set them down;
And to the tavern take their way
To end in mirth the festal day.

And now the Mob, dispersed and gone,
Left 'Squire and Constable alone.
The constable with rueful face
Lean'd sad and solemn o'er a brace;
And fast beside him, cheek by jowl,
Stuck 'Squire M'Fingal 'gainst the pole,
Glued by the tar t' his rear applied,
Like barnacle on vessel's side.
But though his body lack'd physician,
His spirit was in worse condition.
He found his fears of whips and ropes
By many a drachm outweigh'd his hopes.
As men in jail without mainprize
View every thing with other eyes,
And all goes wrong in church and state,
Seen through perspective of the grate:
So now M'Fingal's Second-sight
Beheld all things in gloomier light;
His visual nerve, well purged with tar,
Saw all the coming scenes of war.
As his prophetic soul grew stronger,
He found he could hold in no longer.
First from the pole, as fierce he shook,
His wig from pitchy durance broke,
His mouth unglued, his feathers flutter'd,
His tarr'd skirts crack'd, and thus he utter'd.

"Ah, Mr. Constable, in vain
We strive 'gainst wind and tide and rain!
Behold my doom! this feathery omen
Portends what dismal times are coming.
Now future scenes, before my eyes,
And second-sighted forms arise.
I hear a voice, that calls away,
And cries 'The Whigs will win the day.'
My beck'ning Genius gives command,
And bids me fly the fatal land;
Where changing name and constitution,
Rebellion turns to Revolution,
While Loyalty, oppress'd, in tears,
Stands trembling for its neck and ears.

"Go, summon all our brethren, greeting,
To muster at our usual meeting;
There my prophetic voice shall warn 'em
Of all things future that concern 'em,
And scenes disclose on which, my friend,
Their conduct and their lives depend.
There I--but first 'tis more of use,
From this vile pole to set me loose;
Then go with cautious steps and steady,
While I steer home and make all ready.

John Trumbull

M'Fingal - Canto Iv

Now Night came down, and rose full soon
That patroness of rogues, the Moon;
Beneath whose kind protecting ray,
Wolves, brute and human, prowl for prey.
The honest world all snored in chorus,
While owls and ghosts and thieves and Tories,
Whom erst the mid-day sun had awed,
Crept from their lurking holes abroad.

On cautious hinges, slow and stiller,
Wide oped the great M'Fingal's cellar,
Where safe from prying eyes, in cluster,
The Tory Pandemonium muster.
Their chiefs all sitting round descried are,
On kegs of ale and seats of cider;
When first M'Fingal, dimly seen,
Rose solemn from the turnip-bin.
Nor yet his form had wholly lost
Th' original brightness it could boast,
Nor less appear'd than Justice Quorum,
In feather'd majesty before 'em.
Adown his tar-streak'd visage, clear
Fell glistening fast th' indignant tear,
And thus his voice, in mournful wise,
Pursued the prologue of his sighs.

"Brethren and friends, the glorious band
Of loyalty in rebel land!
It was not thus you've seen me sitting,
Return'd in triumph from town-meeting;
When blust'ring Whigs were put to stand,
And votes obey'd my guiding hand,
And new commissions pleased my eyes;
Blest days, but ah, no more to rise!
Alas, against my better light,
And optics sure of second-sight,
My stubborn soul, in error strong,

Had faith in Hutchinson too long.
See what brave trophies still we bring
From all our battles for the king;
And yet these plagues, now past before us,
Are but our entering wedge of sorrows!

"I see, in glooms tempestuous, stand
The cloud impending o'er the land;
That cloud, which still beyond their hopes
Serves all our orators with tropes;
Which, though from our own vapors fed,
Shall point its thunders on our head!
I see the Mob, beflipp'd at taverns,
Hunt us, like wolves, through wilds and caverns!
What dungeons open on our fears!
What horsewhips whistle round our ears!
Tar, yet in embryo in the pine,
Shall run on Tories' backs to shine;
Trees, rooted fair in groves of shallows,
Are growing for our future gallows;
And geese unhatch'd, when pluck'd in fray,
Shall rue the feathering of that day.

"For me, before that fatal time,
I mean to fly th' accursed clime,
And follow omens, which of late
Have warn'd me of impending fate.

"For late in visions of the night
The gallows stood before my sight;
I saw its ladder heaved on end;
I saw the deadly rope descend,
And in its noose, that wavering swang,
Friend Malcolm hung, or seem'd to hang.
How changed from him, who bold as lion,
Stood Aid-de-camp to Gen'ral Tryon,
Made rebels vanish once, like witches,
And saved his life, but dropp'd his breeches.
I scarce had made a fearful bow,

And trembling ask'd him, "How d'ye do;"
When lifting up his eyes so wide,
His eyes alone, his hands were tied;
With feeble voice, as spirits use,
Now almost choak'd by gripe of noose;

"Ah, fly my friend, he cried, escape,
And keep yourself from this sad scrape;
Enough you've talk'd and writ and plann'd;
The Whigs have got the upper hand.
Could mortal arm our fears have ended,
This arm (and shook it) had defended.
Wait not till things grow desperater,
For hanging is no laughing matter.
Adventure then no longer stay;
But call your friends and haste away.

"For lo, through deepest glooms of night,
I come to aid thy second-sight,
Disclose the plagues that round us wait,
And scan the dark decrees of fate.

"Ascend this ladder, whence unfurl'd
The curtain opes of t'other world;
For here new worlds their scenes unfold,
Seen from this backdoor of the old.
As when Æneas risk'd his life,
Like Orpheus vent'ring for his wife,
And bore in show his mortal carcass
Through realms of Erebus and Orcus,
Then in the happy fields Elysian,
Saw all his embryon sons in vision;
As shown by great Archangel, Michael,
Old Adam saw the world's whole sequel,
And from the mount's extended space,
The rising fortunes of his race:
So from this stage shalt thou behold
The war its coming scenes unfold,
Raised by my arm to meet thine eye;

My Adam, thou; thine Angel, I.

But first my pow'r, for visions bright,
Must cleanse from clouds thy mental sight,
Remove the dim suffusions spread,
Which bribes and salaries there have bred;
And from the well of Bute infuse
Three genuine drops of Highland dew,
To purge, like euphrasy and rue,
Thine eyes, for much thou hast to view.

Now freed from Tory darkness, raise
Thy head and spy the coming days.
For lo, before our second-sight,
The Continent ascends in light.
From north to south, what gath'ring swarms
Increase the pride of rebel arms!
Through every State our legions brave
Speed gallant marches to the grave,
Of battling Whigs the frequent prize,
While rebel trophies stain the skies.
Behold o'er northern realms afar
Extend the kindling flames of war!
See famed St. John's and Montreal
Doom'd by Montgomery's arm to fall!
Where Hudson with majestic sway
Through hills disparted plows his way,
Fate spreads on Bemus' heights alarms,
And pours destruction on our arms;
There Bennington's ensanguined plain,
And Stony-Point, the prize of Wayne.
Behold near Del'ware's icy roar,
Where morning dawns on Trenton's shore,
While Hessians spread their Christmas feasts,
Rush rude these uninvited guests;
Nor aught avails the captured crew
Their martial whiskers' grisly hue!
On Princeton plains our heroes yield,
And spread in flight the vanquish'd field;
While fear to Mawhood's heels puts on

Wings, wide as worn by Maia's son.
Behold the Pennsylvanian shore
Enrich'd with streams of British gore;
Where many a veteran chief in bed
Of honor rests his slumb'ring head,
And in soft vales, in land of foes,
Their wearied virtue finds repose!
See plund'ring Dunmore's negro band
Fly headlong from Virginia's strand;
And far on southern hills our cousins,
The Scotch M'Donalds, fall by dozens;
Or where King's Mountain lifts its head,
Our ruin'd bands in triumph led!
Behold, o'er Tarlton's blustering train
Defeat extends the captive chain!
Afar near Eutaw's fatal springs,
Lo, rebel Vict'ry spreads her wings!
Through all the land, in varied chace,
We hunt the rainbow of success,
In vain! their Chief, superior still,
Eludes our force with Fabian skill;
Or swift descending by surprize,
Like Prussia's eagle, sweeps the prize.

"I look'd; nor yet, oppress'd with fears,
Gave credit to my eyes or ears;
But held the sights an empty dream,
On Berkley's immaterial scheme;
And pond'ring sad with troubled breast,
At length my rising doubts express'd.
'Ah, whither thus, by rebels smitten,
Is fled th' omnipotence of Britain;
Or fail'd its usual guard to keep,
Absent from home or fast asleep?
Did not, retired to bowers Flysian,
Great Mars leave with her his commission,
And Neptune erst, in treaty free,
Give up dominion o'er the sea?
Else where's the faith of famed orations,
Address, debate and proclamations,
Or courtly sermon, laureat ode,

And ballads on the wat'ry God;
With whose high strains great George enriches
His eloquence of gracious speeches?
Not faithful to our Highland eyes,
These deadly forms of vision rise.
Some whig-inspiring rebel sprite
Now palms delusion on our sight.
I'd scarcely trust a tale so vain,
Should revelation prompt the strain;
Or Ossian's ghost the scenes rehearse
In all the melody of Erse."

"Too long," quoth Malcolm, "from confusion,
You've dwelt already in delusion;
As sceptics, of all fools the chief,
Hold faith in creeds of unbelief.
I come to draw thy veil aside
Of error, prejudice and pride.
Fools love deception, but the wise
Prefer sad truths to pleasing lies.
For know, those hopes can ne'er succeed,
That trust on Britain's breaking reed.
For weak'ning long from bad to worse,
By cureless atrophy of purse,
She feels at length with trembling heart,
Her foes have found her mortal part.
As famed Achilles, dipp'd by Thetis
In Styx, as sung in antient ditties,
Grew all case-harden'd o'er, like steel,
Invulnerable, save his heel;
And laugh'd at swords and spears and squibs,
And all diseases, but the kibes;
Yet met at last his deadly wound,
By Paris' arrow nail'd to ground:
So Britain's boasted strength deserts
In these her empire's utmost skirts,
Removed beyond her fierce impressions,
And atmosphere of omnipresence;
Nor to this shore's remoter ends
Her dwarf-omnipotence extends.
Hence in this turn of things so strange,

'Tis time our principles to change:
For vain that boasted faith, that gathers
No perquisite, but tar and feathers;
No pay, but stripes from whiggish malice,
And no promotion, but the gallows.
I've long enough stood firm and steady,
Half-hang'd for loyalty already,
And could I save my neck and pelf,
I'd turn a flaming whig myself.
But since, obnoxious here to fate,
This saving wisdom comes too late,
Our noblest hopes already crost,
Our sal'ries gone, our titles lost,
Doom'd to worse suff'rings from the mob,
Than Satan's surg'ries used on Job;
What hope remains, but now with sleight
What's left of us to save by flight?

'Now raise thine eyes, for visions true
Again ascending wait thy view.'

"I look'd; and clad in early light,
The spires of Boston met my sight;
The morn o'er eastern hills afar
Illumed the varied scenes of war;
Great Howe had sweetly in the lap
Of Loring taken out his nap;
When all th' encircling hills around
With instantaneous breastworks crown'd,
With pointed thunders met his sight,
Like magic, rear'd the former night.
Each summit, far as eye commands,
Shone, peopled with rebellious bands.
Aloft their tow'ring heroes rise,
As Titans erst assail'd the skies;
Leagued in superior force to prove
The sceptred hand of British Jove.
Mounds piled on hills ascended fair
With batt'ries placed in middle air,
That hurl'd their fiery bolts amain,

In thunder on the trembling plain.
I saw, along the prostrate strand
Our baffled generals quit the land,
Eager, as frightened mermaids, flee
T' our boasted element, the sea,
And tow'rd their town of refuge fly,
Like convict Jews condemn'd to die.
Then to the north I turn'd my eyes,
Where Saratoga's heights arise,
And saw our chosen vet'ran band
Descend in terror o'er the land;
T' oppose this fury of alarms,
Saw all New-England wake to arms,
And every Yankee, full of mettle,
Swarm forth, like bees at sound of kettle.
Not Rome, when Tarquin raped Lucretia,
Saw wilder must'ring of militia.
Through all the woods and plains of fight,
What mortal battles pain'd my sight,
While British corpses strew'd the shore,
And Hudson tinged his streams with gore.
What tongue can tell the dismal day,
Or paint the parti-color'd fray,
When yeomen left their fields afar
To plow the crimson plains of war;
When zeal to swords transform'd their shares,
And turn'd their pruning hooks to spears,
Changed tailor's geese to guns and ball,
And stretch'd to pikes the cobbler's awl;
While hunters, fierce like mighty Nimrod,
Made on our troops a furious inroad,
And levelling squint on barrel round,
Brought our beau-officers to ground;
While sunburnt wigs, in high command,
Rush daring on our frightened band,
And ancient beards and hoary hair,
Like meteors, stream in troubled air;
While rifle-frocks drove Gen'ral's cap'ring,
And Red-coats shrunk from leathern apron,
And epaulette and gorget run
From whinyard brown and rusty gun.
With locks unshorn not Samson more

Made useless all the show of war,
Nor fought with ass's jaw for rarity
With more success, or singularity.
I saw our vet'ran thousands yield,
And pile their muskets on the field,
And peasant guards, in rueful plight,
March off our captured bands from fight;
While every rebel fife in play
To Yankee-doodle tuned its lay,
And like the music of the spheres,
Mellifluous sooth'd their vanquish'd ears."

"Alas, I cried, what baleful star
Sheds fatal influence on the war?
And who that chosen Chief of fame,
That heads this grand parade of shame?"

"There see how fate, great Malcolm cried,
Strikes with its bolts the tow'rs of pride!
Behold that martial Macaroni,
Compound of Phoebus and Bellona,
Equipp'd alike for feast or fray,
With warlike sword and singsong lay,
Where equal wit and valour join!
This, this is he--the famed Burgoyne!
Who pawn'd his honor and commission,
To coax the patriots to submission,
By songs and balls secure allegiance,
And dance the ladies to obedience.
Oft his Camp-Muses he'll parade
At Boston in the grand blockade;
And well inspired with punch of arrack,
Hold converse sweet in tent or barrack,
Aroused to more poetic passion,
Both by his theme and situation.
For genius works more strong and clear
When close confined, like bottled beer.
So Prior's wit gain'd matchless power
By inspiration of the Tower;
And Raleigh, once to prison hurl'd,

Wrote the whole hist'ry of the world;
So Wilkes grew, while in jail he lay,
More patriotic every day,
But found his zeal, when not confined,
Soon sink below the freezing point,
And public spirit, once so fair,
Evaporate in open air.
But thou, great favourite of Venus,
By no such luck shalt cramp thy genius;
Thy friendly stars, till wars shall cease,
Shall ward th' ill fortune of release,
And hold thee fast in bonds not feeble,
In good condition still to scribble.
Such merit fate shall shield from firing,
Bomb, carcass, langridge and cold iron,
Nor trust thy doubly-laurell'd head,
To rude assaults of flying lead.
Hence thou, from Yankee troops retreating,
For pure good fortune shalt be beaten,
Not taken oft, released or rescued,
Pass for small change, like simple Prescott;
But captured then, as fates befall,
Shall stand thy fortune, once for all.
Then raise thy daring thoughts sublime,
And dip thy conq'ring pen in rhyme,
And changing war for puns and jokes,
Write new Blockades and Maids of Oaks."

This said, he turn'd and saw the tale
Had dyed my trembling cheeks with pale;
Then pitying in a milder vein,
Pursued the visionary strain;

"Too much perhaps hath pain'd your view,
From vict'ries of the Rebel crew.
Now see the deeds, not small or scanty,
Of British valour and humanity;
And learn from this heroic sight,
How England's sons and friends can fight,
In what dread scenes their courage grows,

And how they conquer all their foes."

I look'd, and saw in wintry skies
Our spacious prison-walls arise,
Where Britons, all their captives taming,
Plied them with scourging, cold and famine,
By noxious food and plagues contagious
Reduced to life's last, fainting stages.
Amid the dead, that crowd the scene,
The moving skeletons were seen.
Aloft the haughty Loring stood,
And thrived, like Vampire, on their blood,
And counting all his gains arising,
Dealt daily rations out, of poison.
At hand our troops, in vaunting strain,
Insulted all their wants and pain,
And turn'd upon the dying tribe
The bitter taunt and scornful gibe;
And British captains, chiefs of might,
Exulting in the joyous sight,
On foes disarm'd, with courage daring,
Exhausted all their tropes of swearing.
Distain'd around with rebel blood,
Like Milton's Lazar house it stood,
Where grim Despair presided Nurse,
And Death was Regent of the house.

Amazed I cried, "Is this the way
That British valor wins the day?"
More had I said in strains unwelcome,
Till interrupted thus by Malcolm.

"Blame not, said he, but learn the reason
Of this new mode of conq'ring treason.
'Tis but a wise, politic plan
To root out all the rebel clan;
For surely treason ne'er can thrive
Where not a soul is left alive;
A scheme all other chiefs to surpass,

And do th' effectual work to purpose.
Know, War itself is nothing further
Than th' art and mystery of Murther;
He, who most methods has essay'd,
Is the best Gen'ral of the trade,
And stands Death's plenipotentiary
To conquer, poison, starve and bury.
This Howe well knew and thus began;
(Despising Carlton's coaxing plan,
To keep his pris'ners well and merry,
And deal them food, like commissary,
And by parol or ransom vain,
Dismiss them all to fight again)
Hence his first captives, with great spirit
He tied up, for his troops to fire at,
And hoped they'd learn on foes thus taken,
To aim at rebels without shaking.
Then deep in stratagem, he plann'd
The sure destruction of the land;
Turn'd famine, torture and despair
To useful enginry of war;
Sent forth the small-pox, and the greater,
To thin the land of every traitor;
Spread desolation o'er their head,
And plagues in providence's stead;
Perform'd with equal skill and beauty
Th' avenging Angel's tour of duty:
Then bade these prison-walls arise,
Like temple tow'ring to the skies,
Where British Clemency renown'd
Might fix her seat on hallow'd ground,
(That Virtue, as each herald saith,
Of whole blood kin to Punic Faith)
Where all her godlike pow'rs unveiling,
She finds a grateful shrine to dwell in:
And at this altar for her honor,
Chose this High-priest to wait upon her,
Who with just rites, in ancient guise,
Offers the human sacrifice.
Here every day, her vot'ries tell,
She more devours, than th' idol Bel;
And thirsts more rav'nously for gore,

Than any worshipp'd Power before.
That ancient heathen godhead, Moloch,
Oft stay'd his stomach with a bullock;
And if his morning rage you'd check first,
One child sufficed him for a breakfast:
But British clemency with zeal
Devours her hundreds at a meal;
Right well by nat'ralists defined
A being of carniv'rous kind:
So erst Gargantua pleased his palate,
And eat six pilgrims up in sallad.
Not blest with maw less ceremonious
The wide-mouth'd whale, that swallow'd Jonas;
Like earthquake gapes, to death devote,
That open sepulchre, her throat;
The grave or barren womb you'd stuff,
And sooner bring to cry, enough;
Or fatten up to fair condition
The lean-flesh'd kine of Pharaoh's vision.

Behold her temple, where it stands
Erect, by famed Britannic hands.
'Tis the Black-hole of Indian structure,
New-built in English architecture,
On plan, 'tis said, contrived and wrote
By Clive, before he cut his throat;
Who, ere he took himself in hand,
Was her high-priest in nabob-land:
And when with conq'ring triumph crown'd,
He'd well enslaved the nation round,
With tender British heart, the Chief,
Since slavery's worse than loss of life,
Bade desolation circle far,
And famine end the work of war;
And loosed their chains, and for their merits
Dismiss'd them free to worlds of spirits.
Whence they with choral hymns of praise,
Return'd to sooth his latter days,
And hov'ring round his restless bed,
Spread nightly visions o'er his head.

Now turn thine eyes to nobler sights,
And mark the prowess of our fights.
Behold, like whelps of Britain's lion,
Our warriors, Clinton, Vaughan, and Tryon,
March forth with patriotic joy
To ravish, plunder, burn, destroy.
Great Gen'ral, foremost in their nation,
The journeymen of Desolation!
Like Samson's foxes, each assails,
Let loose with firebrands in their tails,
And spreads destruction more forlorn,
Than they among Philistine corn.
And see in flames their triumphs rise,
Illuming all the nether skies,
O'er-streaming, like a new Aurora,
The western hemisphere with glory!
What towns, in ashes laid, confess
These heroes' prowess and success!
What blacken'd walls and burning fanes,
For trophies spread the ruin'd plains!
What females, caught in evil hour,
By force submit to British power;
Or plunder'd negroes in disaster
Confess King George their lord and master!
What crimson corses strew their way,
What smoaking carnage dims the day!
Along the shore, for sure reduction,
They wield the besom of destruction.
Great Homer likens, in his Ilias,
To dogstar bright the fierce Achilles;
But ne'er beheld in red procession
Three dogstars rise in constellation,
Nor saw, in glooms of evening misty,
Such signs of fiery triplicity,
Which, far beyond the comet's tail,
Portend destruction where they sail.
Oh, had Great-Britain's warlike shore
Produced but ten such heroes more,
They'd spared the pains, and held the station
Of this world's final conflagration;
Which when its time comes, at a stand,

Would find its work all done t' its hand!

Yet though gay hopes our eyes may bless,
Malignant fate forbids success;
Like morning dreams our conquest flies,
Dispersed before the dawn arise."

Here Malcolm paused; when pond'ring long
Grief thus gave utt'rance to my tongue.
"Where shrink in fear our friends dismay'd,
And where the Tories' promised aid?
Can none, amid these fierce alarms,
Assist the power of royal arms?"
"In vain, he cried, our King depends
On promised aid of Tory friends.
When our own efforts want success,
Friends ever fail, as fears increase.
As leaves, in blooming verdure wove,
In warmth of summer clothe the grove,
But when autumnal frosts arise,
Leave bare their trunks to wintry skies:
So, while your power can aid their ends,
You ne'er can need ten thousand friends;
But once in want, by foes dismay'd,
May advertise them, stol'n or stray'd.
Thus ere Great-Britain's force grew slack,
She gain'd that aid she did not lack;
But now in dread, imploring pity,
All hear unmoved her dol'rous ditty;
Allegiance wand'ring turns astray,
And Faith grows dim for lack of pay.
In vain she tries, by new inventions,
Fear, falsehood, flatt'ry, threats and pensions;
Or sends Commiss'ners with credentials
Of promises and penitentials.
As, for his fare o'er Styx of old,
The Trojan stole the bough of gold,
And least grim Cerb'rus should make head,
Stuff'd both his fobs with ginger-bread:
Behold, at Britain's utmost shifts,

Comes Johnstone loaded with like gifts,
To venture through the whiggish tribe,
To cuddle, wheedle, coax and bribe:
And call, to aid his desp'rate mission,
His petticoated politician,
While Venus, join'd to act the farce,
Strolls forth embassadress for Mars.
In vain he strives, for while he lingers,
These mastiffs bite his off'ring fingers;
Nor buys for George and realms infernal
One spaniel, but the mongrel, Arnold.

"'Twere vain to paint, in vision'd show,
The mighty nothings done by Howe;
What towns he takes in mortal fray,
As stations whence to run away;
What triumphs gain'd in conflict warm,
No aid to us, to them no harm;
For still th' event alike is fatal,
Whate'er success attend the battle,
Whether he vict'ry gain or lose it,
Who ne'er had skill enough to use it.
And better 'twere, at their expense,
T' have drubb'd him into common sense,
And waked, by bastings on his rear,
Th' activity, though but of fear.
By slow advance his arms prevail,
Like emblematic march of snail,
That, be Millennium nigh or far,
'Twould long before him end the war.
From York to Philadelphian ground,
He sweeps the pompous flourish round,
Wheel'd circ'lar by eccentric stars,
Like racing boys at prison-bars,
Who take th' opposing crew in whole,
By running round the adverse goal;
Works wide the traverse of his course,
Like ship t' evade the tempest's force;
Like mill-horse circling in his race,
Advances not a single pace,
And leaves no trophies of reduction,

Save that of cankerworms, destruction.
Thus having long both countries curst,
He quits them as he found them first,
Steers home disgraced, of little worth,
To join Burgoyne and rail at North.

"Now raise thine eyes and view with pleasure,
The triumphs of his famed successor."

"I look'd, and now by magic lore
Faint rose to view the Jersey shore:
But dimly seen in gloom array'd,
For night had pour'd her sable shade,
And every star, with glimm'rings pale,
Was muffled deep in ev'ning veil.
Scarce visible, in dusky night
Advancing red-coats rose in sight;
The length'ning train in gleaming rows
Stole silent from their slumb'ring foes;
No trembling soldier dared to speak,
And not a wheel presumed to creak.
My looks my new surprize confess'd,
Till by great Malcolm thus address'd.
"Spend not thy wits in vain researches;
'Tis one of Clinton's moonlight marches.
From Philadelphia now retreating
To save his baffled troops a beating,
With hasty strides he flies in vain,
His rear attack'd on Monmouth plain.
With various chance the dread affray
Holds in suspense till close of day,
When his tired bands, o'ermatch'd in fight,
Are rescued by descending night.
He forms his camp, with great parade,
While evening spreads the world in shade,
Then still, like some endanger'd spark,
Steals off on tiptoe in the dark:
Yet writes his king in boasting tone
How grand he march'd by light of moon.
I see him, but thou canst not; proud

He leads in front the trembling crowd,
And wisely knows, as danger's near,
'Twill fall much heaviest on his rear.
Go on, great Gen'ral, nor regard
The scoffs of every scribbling bard;
Who sings how gods, that fearful night,
Aided by miracle your flight,
As once they used, in Homer's day,
To help weak heroes run away;
Tells how the hours, at this sad trial,
Went back, as erst on Ahaz' dial,
While British Joshua stay'd the moon
On Monmouth plains for Ajalon.
Heed not their sneers or gibes so arch,
Because she set before your march.
A small mistake! your meaning right;
You take her influence for her light:
Her influence, which shall be your guide,
And o'er your Gen'ralship preside.
Hence still shall teem your empty skull
With vict'ries, when the moon's at full,
Which by transition passing strange
Wane to defeats before the change.
Still shall you steer, on land or ocean,
By like eccentric lunar motion;
Eclips'd in many a fatal crisis,
And dimm'd when Washington arises.

"And see how Fate, herself turn'd traitor,
Inverts the ancient course of nature;
And changes manners, tempers, climes,
To suit the genius of the times!
See, Bourbon forms a gen'rous plan,
New guardian of the rights of man,
And prompt in firm alliance joins
To aid the Rebels' proud designs!
Behold from realms of eastern day
His sails innum'rous shape their way,
In warlike line the billows sweep,
And roll the thunders of the deep!
See, low in equinoctial skies,

The western islands fall their prize;
See British flags, o'ermatch'd in might,
Put all their faith in instant flight,
Or broken squadrons, from th' affray,
Drag slow their wounded hulks away!
Behold his Chiefs, in daring setts,
D'Estaignes, De Grasses and Fayettees,
Spread through our camps their dread alarms,
And swell the fear of rebel arms!
Yet ere our glories sink in night,
A gleam of hope shall strike your sight;
As lamps, that fail of oil and fire,
Collect one glimm'ring to expire.

"For lo, where southern shores extend,
Behold our gather'd hosts descend,
Where Charleston views, with varying beams
Her turrets gild th' encircling streams!
There by superior force compell'd,
Behold their gallant Lincoln yield;
Nor aught the wreaths avail him now,
Pluck'd from Burgoyne's imperious brow.
See, furious from the vanquish'd strand,
Cornwallis leads his mighty band;
The southern realms and Georgian shore
Submit and own the victor's power;
Lo! sunk before his wasting way,
The Carolinas fall his prey!
See, shrinking from his conq'ring eye,
The Rebel legions fall or fly;
And with'ring in these torrid skies,
The northern laurel fades and dies!
With rapid force he leads his train
To fair Virginia's cultured plain,
Triumphant eyes the travell'd zone,
And boasts the southern realm his own.

"Nor yet this hero's glories bright
Blaze only in the fields of fight.
Not Howe's humanity more deserving

In gifts of hanging and of starving;
Not Arnold plunders more tobacco,
Or steals more negroes for Jamaica;
Scarce Rodney's self, among th' Eustatians,
Insults so well the laws of nations;
Ev'n Tryon's fame grows dim, and mourning
He yields the civic crown of burning.
I see, with pleasure and surprize,
New triumph sparkling in your eyes;
But view, where now renew'd in might,
Again the Rebels dare the fight."
"I look'd, and far in southern skies
Saw Greene, their second hope, arise,
And with his small, but gallant, band.
Invade the Carolinian land.
As winds, in stormy circles whirl'd,
Rush billowy o'er the darken'd world,
And where their wasting fury roves
Successive sweep th' astonish'd groves:
Thus where he pours the rapid fight,
Our boasted conquests sink in night,
And far o'er all the extended field
Our forts resign, our armies yield,
Till now, regain'd the vanquish'd land,
He lifts his standard on the strand.

"Again to fair Virginia's coast
I turn'd and view'd the British host,
Where Chesapeak's wide waters lave
Her shores and join th' Atlantic wave.
There famed Cornwallis tow'ring rose,
And scorn'd secure his distant foes;
His bands the haughty rampart raise,
And bid the Royal standard blaze.
When lo, where ocean's bounds extend,
Behold the Gallic sails ascend,
With fav'ring breezes stem their way,
And crowd with ships the spacious bay.
Lo! Washington, from northern shores,
O'er many a region wheels his force,
And Rochambeau, with legions bright,

Descends in terror to the fight.
Not swifter cleaves his rapid way
The eagle, cowering o'er his prey;
Or knights in famed romance, that fly
On fairy pinions through the sky.
Amazed, the Briton's startled pride
Sees ruin wake on every side,
And all his troops, to fate consign'd,
By instantaneous stroke, Burgoyned.
Not Cadmus view'd with more surprise,
From earth embattled armies rise,
Who from the dragon's teeth beheld
Men starting fierce with spear and shield.
I saw, with looks downcast and grave,
The Chief emerging from his cave,
Where chased, like fox, in mighty round,
His hunters earth'd him first in ground;
And doom'd by fate to rebel sway,
Yield all his captured host a prey.
There while I view'd the vanquish'd town,
Thus with a sigh my friend went on."

"Behold'st thou not that band forlorn,
Like slaves in Roman triumphs borne,
Their faces length'ning with their fears,
And cheeks distain'd with streams of tears;
Like dramatis personæ sage,
Equipp'd to act on Tyburn's stage.
Lo, these are they, who lured by follies
Left all, and follow'd great Cornwallis,
Expectant of the promised glories,
And new Millennial reign of Tories!
Alas! in vain, all doubts forgetting,
They tried th' omnipotence of Britain;
But found her arm, once strong and brave,
So shorten'd now, she cannot save.
Not more aghast, departed souls
Who risk'd their fate on Popish bulls,
And find St. Peter, at the wicket,
Refuse to countersign their ticket,
When driven to purgatory back,

With each his pardon in his pack;
Than Tories, must'ring at their stations,
On faith of royal proclamations.
As Pagan chiefs at every crisis,
Confirm'd their leagues by sacrifices,
And herds of beasts, to all their deities,
Oblations fell, at close of treaties:
Cornwallis thus, in ancient fashion,
Concludes his grand capitulation;
And heedless of their screams or suff'rings,
Gives up the Tories for sin-off'rings.
See where, relieved from sad embargo,
Steer off consign'd a recreant cargo;
Like old scape-goats to roam in pain,
Mark'd like their great forerunner, Cain.
The rest now doom'd by British leagues
To vengeance of resentful Whigs,
Hold doubtful lives on tenure ill
Of tenancy at Rebel-will,
While hov'ring o'er their forfeit persons,
The gallows waits his just reversions.

"Thou too, M'Fingal, ere that day,
Shalt taste the terrors of th' affray.
See, o'er thee hangs in angry skies,
Where Whiggish Constellations rise,
And while plebeian signs ascend,
Their mob-inspiring aspects bend,
That baleful Star, whose horrid hair
Shakes forth the plagues of down and tar!
I see the pole, that rears on high
Its flag terrific through the sky;
The mob beneath prepared t' attack,
And tar predestined for thy back.
Ah quit, my friend, this dang'rous home,
Nor wait the darker scenes to come.
For know, that fate's auspicious door,
Once shut to flight, is oped no more;
Nor wears its hinge, by changing stations,
Like Mercy's door in Proclamations.

"But lest thou pause, or doubt to fly,
To stranger visions turn thine eye.
Each cloud, that dimm'd thy mental ray,
And all the mortal mists decay.
See, more than human pow'rs befriend,
And lo! their hostile forms ascend.
There tow'ring o'er the extended strand,
The Genius of this western land,
For vengeance arm'd, his sword assumes,
And stands, like Tories, dress'd in plumes!
See, o'er yon Council-seat, with pride
How Freedom spreads her banners wide!
There Patriotism, with torch address'd
To fire with zeal each daring breast;
While all the Virtues in their train,
Escaped with pleasure o'er the main,
Desert their ancient British station,
Possess'd with rage of emigration.
Honor, his bus'ness at a stand,
For fear of starving quits their land;
And Justice, long disgraced at Court, had
By Mansfield's sentence been transported.
Vict'ry and Fame attend their way,
Though Britain wish their longer stay;
Care not what George or North would be at,
Nor heed their writs of Ne exeat;
But fired with love of colonizing,
Quit the fall'n empire for the rising."

"I look'd, and saw, with horror smitten,
These hostile pow'rs averse to Britain.

"When lo, an awful spectre rose,
With languid paleness on his brows;
Wan dropsies swell'd his form beneath,
And iced his bloated cheeks with death;
His tatter'd robes exposed him bare
To every blast of ruder air;
On two weak crutches propp'd he stood,

That bent at every step he trod;
Gilt titles graced their sides so slender,
One, "Regulation," t'other, "Tender;"
His breastplate graved, with various dates,
"The Faith of all th' United States;"
Before him went his funeral pall,
His grave stood, dug to wait his fall.

"I started, and aghast I cried,
"What means this spectre at their side?
What danger from a pow'r so vain,
Or union with that splendid train?"

"Alas, great Malcolm cried, experience
Might teach you not to trust appearance.
Here stands, as dress'd by fell Bellona,
The ghost of Continental Money!
Of Dame Necessity descended,
With whom Credulity engender'd:
Though born with constitution frail,
And feeble strength, that soon must fail,
Yet strangely vers'd in magic lore,
And gifted with transforming power.
His skill the wealth Peruvian joins,
With diamonds of Brazilian mines.
As erst Jove fell, by subtle wiles,
On Danae's apron through the tiles,
In show'rs of gold; his potent wand
Shall shed like show'rs o'er all the land.
Less great the wondrous art was reckon'd
Of tallies cast by Charles the second,
Or Law's famed Mississippi schemes,
Or all the wealth of South-Sea dreams.
For he, of all the world, alone
Owns the long-sought Philos'pher's stone,
Restores the fabulous times to view,
And proves the tale of Midas true.
O'er heaps of rags he waves his wand;
All turn to gold at his command,
Provide for present wants and future,

Raise armies, victual, clothe, accoutre,
Adjourn our conquests by essoin,
Check Howe's advance, and take Burgoyne;
Then makes all days of payment vain,
And turns all back to rags again.
In vain great Howe shall play his part
To ape and counterfeit his art;
In vain shall Clinton, more belated,
A conj'rer turn to imitate it.
With like ill luck and pow'rs as narrow,
They'll fare, like sorcerers of old Pharaoh;
Who, though the art they understood
Of turning rivers into blood,
And caused their frogs and snakes t' exist,
That with some merit croak'd and hiss'd,
Yet ne'er by every quaint device
Could frame the true Mosaic lice.
He for the Whigs his arts shall try,
Their first, and long their sole, ally;
A Patriot firm, while breath he draws,
He'll perish in his Country's cause,
And when his magic labors cease,
Lie buried in eternal peace.

Now view the scenes, in future hours,
That wait the famed European powers.
See, where yon chalky cliffs arise,
The hills of Britain strike your eyes;
Its small extension long supplied
By full immensity of pride;
So small, that had it found a station
In this new world, at first creation,
Or doom'd by justice, been betimes
Transported over for its crimes,
We'd find full room for't in lake Erie, or
That larger water-pond, Superior,
Where North at margin taking stand,
Would scarce be able to spy land.
See, dwindling from her height amain,
What piles of ruin spread the plain;
With mould'ring hulks her ports are fill'd,

And brambles clothe the lonely field!
See, on her cliffs her Genius lies,
His handkerchief at both his eyes,
With many a deep-drawn sigh and groan,
To mourn her ruin, and his own!
While joyous Holland, France and Spain
With conq'ring navies awe the main;
And Russian banners wide unfurl'd
Spread commerce round the eastern world.

And see, (sight hateful and tormenting!)
This Rebel Empire, proud and vaunting,
From anarchy shall change her crasis,
And fix her pow'r on firmer basis;
To glory, wealth and fame ascend,
Her commerce wake, her realms extend;
Where now the panther guards his den,
Her desert forests swarm with men;
Gay cities, tow'rs and columns rise,
And dazzling temples meet the skies;
Her pines, descending to the main,
In triumph spread the wat'ry plain,
Ride inland seas with fav'ring gales,
And crowd her ports with whitening sails:
Till to the skirts of western day,
The peopled regions own her sway."

Thus far M'Fingal told his tale,
When startling shouts his ears assail;
And strait the Constable, their sentry,
Aghast rush'd headlong down the entry,
And with wild outcry, like magician,
Dispersed the residue of vision.
For now the Whigs the news had found
Of Tories must'ring under ground,
And with rude bangs and loud uproar,
'Gan thunder furious at the door.
The lights put out, each tory calls,
To cover him on cellar walls,
Creeps in each box, or bin, or tub,

To hide him from the rage of mob,
Or lurks, where cabbage-heads in row
Adorn'd the sides with verdant show.
M'Fingal deem'd it vain to stay,
And risk his bones in second fray:
But chose a grand retreat from foes,
In literal sense, beneath their nose.
The window then, which none else knew,
He softly open'd and crept through,
And crawling slow in deadly fear,
By movements wise made good his rear.
Then scorning all the fame of martyr,
For Boston took his swift departure,
Nor look'd back on the fatal spot,
More than the family of Lot.
Not North in more distress'd condition,
Out-voted first by opposition;
Nor good King George, when our dire phantom
Of Independence came to haunt him,
Which hov'ring round by night and day,
Not all his conj'rors e'er could lay.
His friends, assembled for his sake,
He wisely left in pawn, at stake,
To tarring, feath'ring, kicks and drubs
Of furious, disappointed mobs,
Or with their forfeit heads to pay
For him, their leader, crept away.
So when wise Noah summon'd greeting,
All animals to gen'ral meeting,
From every side the members went,
All kinds of beasts to represent;
Each, from the flood, took care t' embark,
And save his carcass in the ark:
But as it fares in state and church,
Left his constituents in the lurch.

John Trumbull

The Country Clown

Bred in distant woods, the clown
Brings all his country airs to town;
The odd address, with awkward grace,
That bows with half-averted face;
The half-heard compliments, whose note
Is swallow'd in the trembling throat;
The stiffen'd gait, the drawling tone,
By which his native place is known;
The blush, that looks by vast degrees,
Too much like modesty to please;
The proud displays of awkward dress,
That all the country fop express:
The suit right gay, though much belated,
Whose fashion's superannuated;
The watch, depending far in state,
Whose iron chain might form a grate;
The silver buckle, dread to view,
O'ershadowing all the clumsy shoe;
The white-gloved hand, that tries to peep
From ruffle, full five inches deep;
With fifty odd affairs beside,
The foppishness of country pride.
Poor Dick! though first thy airs provoke
The obstreperous laugh and scornful joke
Doom'd all the ridicule to stand,
While each gay dunce shall lend a hand;
Yet let not scorn dismay thy hope
To shine a witling and a fop.
Blest impudence the prize shall gain,
And bid thee sigh no more in vain.
Thy varied dress shall quickly show
At once the spendthrift and the beau.
With pert address and noisy tongue,
That scorns the fear of prating wrong
'Mongst listening coxcombs shalt thou shine,
And every voice shall echo thine.

John Trumbull

The Owl And The Sparrow

In elder days, in Saturn's prime,
Ere baldness seized the head of Time,
While truant Jove, in infant pride,
Play'd barefoot on Olympus' side,
Each thing on earth had power to chatter,
And spoke the mother tongue of nature.
Each stock or stone could prate and gabble,
Worse than ten labourers of Babel.
Along the street, perhaps you'd see
A Post disputing with a Tree,
And mid their arguments of weight,
A Goose sit umpire of debate.
Each Dog you met, though speechless now,
Would make his compliments and bow,
And every Swine with congees come,
To know how did all friends at home.
Each Block sublime could make a speech,
In style and eloquence as rich,
And could pronounce it and could pen it,
As well as Chatham in the senate.

Nor prose alone.--In these young times,
Each field was fruitful too in rhymes;
Each feather'd minstrel felt the passion,
And every wind breathed inspiration.
Each Bullfrog croak'd in loud bombastic,
Each Monkey chatter'd Hudibrastic;
Each Cur, endued with yelping nature,
Could outbark Churchill's[2] self in satire;
Each Crow in prophecy delighted,
Each Owl, you saw, was second-sighted,
Each Goose a skilful politician,
Each Ass a gifted met'physician,
Could preach in wrath 'gainst laughing rogues,
Write Halfway-covenant Dialogues,[3]
And wisely judge of all disputes
In commonwealths of men or brutes.

'Twas then, in spring a youthful Sparrow
Felt the keen force of Cupid's arrow:
For Birds, as Æsop's tales avow,
Made love then, just as men do now,
And talk'd of deaths and flames and darts,
And breaking necks and losing hearts;
And chose from all th' aerial kind,
Not then to tribes, like Jews, confined
The story tells, a lovely Thrush
Had smit him from a neigh'bring bush,
Where oft the young coquette would play,
And carol sweet her siren lay:
She thrill'd each feather'd heart with love,
And reign'd the Toast of all the grove.

He felt the pain, but did not dare
Disclose his passion to the fair;
For much he fear'd her conscious pride
Of race, to noble blood allied.
Her grandsire's nest conspicuous stood,
Mid loftiest branches of the wood,
In airy height, that scorn'd to know
Each flitting wing that waved below.
So doubting, on a point so nice
He deem'd it best to take advice.

Hard by there dwelt an aged Owl,
Of all his friends the gravest fowl;
Who from the cares of business free,
Lived, hermit, in a hollow tree;
To solid learning bent his mind,
In trope and syllogism he shined,
'Gainst reigning follies spent his railing;
Too much a Stoic--'twas his failing.

Hither for aid our Sparrow came,
And told his errand and his name,
With panting breath explain'd his case,

Much trembling at the sage's face;
And begg'd his Owlship would declare
If love were worth a wise one's care.

The grave Owl heard the weighty cause,
And humm'd and hah'd at every pause;
Then fix'd his looks in sapient plan,
Stretch'd forth one foot, and thus began.

"My son, my son, of love beware,
And shun the cheat of beauty's snare;
That snare more dreadful to be in,
Than huntsman's net, or horse-hair gin.
"By others' harms learn to be wise,"
As ancient proverbs well advise.
Each villany, that nature breeds,
From females and from love proceeds.
'Tis love disturbs with fell debate
Of man and beast the peaceful state:
Men fill the world with war's alarms,
When female trumpets sound to arms;
The commonwealth of dogs delight
For beauties, as for bones, to fight.
Love hath his tens of thousands slain,
And heap'd with copious death the plain:
Samson, with ass's jaw to aid,
Ne'er peopled thus th'infernal shade.

"Nor this the worst; for he that's dead,
With love no more will vex his head.
'Tis in the rolls of fate above,
That death's a certain cure for love;
A noose can end the cruel smart;
The lover's leap is from a cart.
But oft a living death they bear,
Scorn'd by the proud, capricious fair.
The fair to sense pay no regard,
And beauty is the fop's reward;
They slight the generous hearts' esteem,

And sigh for those, who fly from them.

Just when your wishes would prevail,
Some rival bird with gayer tail,
Who sings his strain with sprightlier note,
And chatters praise with livelier throat,
Shall charm your flutt'ring fair one down,
And leave your choice, to hang or drown.

Ev'n I, my son, have felt the smart;
A Pheasant won my youthful heart.
For her I tuned the doleful lay,[4]
For her I watch'd the night away;
In vain I told my piteous case,
And smooth'd my dignity of face;
In vain I cull'd the studied phrase,
And sought hard words in beauty's praise.
Her, not my charms nor sense could move,
For folly is the food of love.
Each female scorns our serious make,
"Each woman is at heart a rake." [5]
Thus Owls in every age have said,
Since our first parent-owl was made;
Thus Pope and Swift, to prove their sense,
Shall sing, some twenty ages hence;
Then shall a man of little fame,
One ** **** sing the same.

John Trumbull

To A Young Lady

In vain, fair Maid, you ask in vain,
My pen should try th' advent'rous strain,
And following truth's unalter'd law,
Attempt your character to draw.
I own indeed, that generous mind
That weeps the woes of human kind,
That heart by friendship's charms inspired,
That soul with sprightly fancy fired,
The air of life, the vivid eye,
The flowing wit, the keen reply--
To paint these beauties as they shine,
Might ask a nobler pen than mine.

Yet what sure strokes can draw the Fair,
Who vary, like the fleeting air,
Like willows bending to the force,
Where'er the gales direct their course,
Opposed to no misfortune's power,
And changing with the changing hour.
Now gaily sporting on the plain,
They charm the grove with pleasing strain;
Anon disturb'd, they know not why,
The sad tear trembles in their eye:
Led through vain life's uncertain dance,
The dupes of whim, the slaves of chance.

From me, not famed for much goodnature,
Expect not compliment, but satire;
To draw your picture quite unable,
Instead of fact accept a Fable.

One morn, in Æsop's noisy time,
When all things talk'd, and talk'd in rhyme,
A cloud exhaled by vernal beams
Rose curling o'er the glassy streams.
The dawn her orient blushes spread,

And tinged its lucid skirts with red,
Wide waved its folds with glitt'ring dies,
And gaily streak'd the eastern skies;
Beneath, illumed with rising day,
The sea's broad mirror floating lay.
Pleased, o'er the wave it hung in air,
Survey'd its glittering glories there,
And fancied, dress'd in gorgeous show,
Itself the brightest thing below:
For clouds could raise the vaunting strain,
And not the fair alone were vain.

Yet well it knew, howe'er array'd,
That beauty, e'en in clouds, might fade,
That nothing sure its charms could boast
Above the loveliest earthly toast;
And so, like them, in early dawn
Resolved its picture should be drawn,
That when old age with length'ning day
Should brush the vivid rose away,
The world should from the portrait own
Beyond all clouds how bright it shone.

Hard by, a painter raised his stage,
Far famed, the Copley[1] of his age.
So just a form his colours drew,
Each eye the perfect semblance knew;
Yet still on every blooming face
He pour'd the pencil's flowing grace;
Each critic praised the artist rare,
Who drew so like, and yet so fair.

To him, high floating in the sky
Th' elated Cloud advanced t' apply.
The painter soon his colours brought,
The Cloud then sat, the artist wrought;
Survey'd her form, with flatt'ring strictures,
Just as when ladies sit for pictures,
Declared "whatever art can do,

My utmost skill shall try for you:
But sure those strong and golden dies
Dipp'd in the radiance of the skies,
Those folds of gay celestial dress,
No mortal colours can express.
Not spread triumphal o'er the plain,
The rainbow boasts so fair a train,
Nor e'en the morning sun so bright,
Who robes his face in heav'nly light.
To view that form of angel make,
Again Ixion would mistake,[2]
And justly deem so fair a prize,
The sovereign Mistress of the skies,"

He said, and drew a mazy line,
With crimson touch his pencils shine,
The mingling colours sweetly fade,
And justly temper light and shade.

He look'd; the swelling Cloud on high
With wider circuit spread the sky,
Stretch'd to the sun an ampler train,
And pour'd new glories on the main.
As quick, effacing every ground,
His pencil swept the canvas round,
And o'er its field, with magic art,
Call'd forth new forms in every part.

But now the sun, with rising ray,
Advanced with speed his early way;
Each colour takes a differing die,
The orange glows, the purples fly.
The artist views the alter'd sight,
And varies with the varying light;
In vain! a sudden gust arose,
New folds ascend, new shades disclose,
And sailing on with swifter pace,
The Cloud displays another face.
In vain the painter, vex'd at heart,

Tried all the wonders of his art;
In vain he begg'd, her form to grace,
One moment she would keep her place:
For, "changing thus with every gale,
Now gay with light, with gloom now pale,
Now high in air with gorgeous train,
Now settling on the darken'd main,
With looks more various than the moon;
A French coquette were drawn as soon."

He spoke; again the air was mild,
The Cloud with opening radiance smiled;
With canvas new his art he tries,
Anew he joins the glitt'ring dies;
Th' admiring Cloud with pride beheld
Her image deck the pictured field,
And colours half-complete adorn
The splendor of the painted morn.

When lo, the stormy winds arise,
Deep gloom invests the changing skies;
The sounding tempest shakes the plain,
And lifts in billowy surge the main.
The Cloud's gay dies in darkness fade,
Its folds condense in thicker shade,
And borne by rushing blasts, its form
With lowering vapour joins the storm.

John Trumbull

To Ladies Of A Certain Age

Ye ancient Maids, who ne'er must prove
The early joys of youth and love,
Whose names grim Fate (to whom 'twas given,
When marriages were made in heaven)
Survey'd with unrelenting scowl,
And struck them from the muster-roll;
Or set you by, in dismal sort,
For wintry bachelors to court;
Or doom'd to lead your faded lives,
Heirs to the joys of former wives;
Attend! nor fear in state forlorn,
To shun the pointing hand of scorn,
Attend, if lonely age you dread,
And wish to please, or wish to wed.

When beauties lose their gay appearance,
And lovers fall from perseverance,
When eyes grow dim and charms decay,
And all your roses fade away,
First know yourselves; lay by those airs,
Which well might suit your former years,
Nor ape in vain the childish mien,
And airy follies of sixteen.

We pardon faults in youth's gay flow,
While beauty prompts the cheek to glow,
While every glance has power to warm,
And every turn displays a charm,
Nor view a spot in that fair face,
Which smiles inimitable grace.

But who, unmoved with scorn, can see
The grey coquette's affected glee,
Her ambuscading tricks of art
To catch the beau's unthinking heart,
To check th' assuming fopling's vows,

The bridling frown of wrinkled brows;
Those haughty airs of face and mind,
Departed beauty leaves behind.

Nor let your sullen temper show
Spleen louring on the envious brow,
The jealous glance of rival rage,
The sourness and the rust of age.
With graceful ease, avoid to wear
The gloom of disappointed care:
And oh, avoid the sland'rous tongue,
By malice tuned, with venom hung,
That blast of virtue and of fame,
That herald to the court of shame;
Less dire the croaking raven's throat,
Though death's dire omens swell the note.

Contented tread the vale of years,
Devoid of malice, guilt and fears;
Let soft good humour, mildly gay,
Gild the calm evening of your day,
And virtue, cheerful and serene,
In every word and act be seen.
Virtue alone with lasting grace,
Embalms the beauties of the face,
Instructs the speaking eye to glow,
Illumes the cheek and smooths the brow,
Bids every look the heart engage,
Nor fears the wane of wasting age.

Nor think these charms of face and air,
The eye so bright, the form so fair,
This light that on the surface plays,
Each coxcomb fluttering round its blaze,
Whose spell enchants the wits of beaux,
The only charms, that heaven bestows.
Within the mind a glory lies,
O'erlook'd and dim to vulgar eyes;
Immortal charms, the source of love,

Which time and lengthen'd years improve,
Which beam, with still increasing power,
Serene to life's declining hour;
Then rise, released from earthly cares,
To heaven, and shine above the stars.

Thus might I still these thoughts pursue,
The counsel wise, and good, and true,
In rhymes well meant and serious lay,
While through the verse in sad array,
Grave truths in moral garb succeed:
Yet who would mend, for who would read?

But when the force of precept fails,
A sad example oft prevails.
Beyond the rules a sage exhibits,
Thieves heed the arguments of gibbets,
And for a villain's quick conversion,
A pillory can outreach a parson.

To thee, Eliza, first of all,
But with no friendly voice I call.
Advance with all thine airs sublime,
Thou remnant left of ancient time!
Poor mimic of thy former days,
Vain shade of beauty, once in blaze!
We view thee, must'ring forth to arms
The veteran relics of thy charms;
The artful leer, the rolling eye,
The trip genteel, the heaving sigh,
The labour'd smile, of force too weak,
Low dimpling in th' autumnal cheek,
The sad, funereal frown, that still
Survives its power to wound or kill;
Or from thy looks, with desperate rage,
Chafing the sallow hue of age,
And cursing dire with rueful faces,
The repartees of looking-glasses.

Now at tea-table take thy station,
Those shambles vile of reputation,
Where butcher'd characters and stale
Are day by day exposed for sale:
Then raise the floodgates of thy tongue,
And be the peal of scandal rung;
While malice tunes thy voice to rail,
And whispering demons prompt the tale--
Yet hold thy hand, restrain thy passion,
Thou cankerworm of reputation;
Bid slander, rage and envy cease,
For one short interval of peace;
Let other's faults and crimes alone,
Survey thyself and view thine own;
Search the dark caverns of thy mind,
Or turn thine eyes and look behind:
For there to meet thy trembling view,
With ghastly form and grisly hue,
And shrivel'd hand, that lifts sublime
The wasting glass and scythe of Time,
A phantom stands: his name is Age;
Ill-nature following as his page.
While bitter taunts and scoffs and jeers,
And vexing cares and torturing fears,
Contempt that lifts the haughty eye,
And unblest solitude are nigh;
While conscious pride no more sustains,
Nor art conceals thine inward pains,
And haggard vengeance haunts thy name,
And guilt consigns thee o'er to shame,
Avenging furies round thee wait,
And e'en thy foes bewail thy fate.

But see, with gentler looks and air,
Sophia comes. Ye youths beware!
Her fancy paints her still in prime,
Nor sees the moving hand of time;
To all her imperfections blind,
Hears lovers sigh in every wind,
And thinks her fully ripen'd charms,

Like Helen's, set the world in arms.

Oh, save it but from ridicule,
How blest the state, to be a fool!
The bedlam-king in triumph shares
The bliss of crowns, without the cares;
He views with pride-elated mind,
His robe of tatters trail behind;
With strutting mien and lofty eye,
He lifts his crabtree sceptre high;
Of king's prerogative he raves,
And rules in realms of fancied slaves.

In her soft brain, with madness warm,
Thus airy throngs of lovers swarm.
She takes her glass; before her eyes
Imaginary beauties rise;
Stranger till now, a vivid ray
Illumes each glance and beams like day;
Till furbish'd every charm anew,
An angel steps abroad to view;
She swells her pride, assumes her power,
And bids the vassal world adore.

Indulge thy dream. The pictured joy
No ruder breath should dare destroy;
No tongue should hint, the lover's mind
Was ne'er of virtuoso-kind,
Through all antiquity to roam
For what much fairer springs at home.
No wish should blast thy proud design;
The bliss of vanity be thine.
But while the subject world obey,
Obsequious to thy sovereign sway,
Thy foes so feeble and so few,
With slander what hadst thou to do?
What demon bade thine anger rise?
What demon glibb'd thy tongue with lies?
What demon urged thee to provoke

Avenging satire's deadly stroke?

Go, sink unnoticed and unseen,
Forgot, as though thou ne'er hadst been.
Oblivion's long projected shade
In clouds hangs dismal o'er thy head.
Fill the short circle of thy day,
Then fade from all the world away;
Nor leave one fainting trace behind,
Of all that flutter'd once and shined;
The vapoury meteor's dancing light
Deep sunk and quench'd in endless night

John Trumbull