

# PRINCETON ALUMNI WEEKLY



GOVERNOR JONATHAN BELCHER  
Grantor of Princeton's Second Charter  
*(From a rare engraving recently presented to the University)*

# PRINCETON ALUMNI WEEKLY

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**I**N INTRODUCING this first section of our annual literary review we wish to acknowledge our debt to the professors, the alumni and friends of Princeton who have so generously given us their time and service as a labor of love. For their assistance our readers will join us in expressing especial thanks. The past year has been one of unusual activity by Princetonians in the field of letters and scholarship. We are therefore printing this annual literary review in two sections, the second of which will appear next week.

ON THE COVER of this issue we are reproducing a rare engraving of Jonathan Belcher, one of Princeton's earliest patrons, who, as Governor of the Province of New Jersey, granted our second charter, that of 1747, and who so modestly declined the Trustees' proffer to name our first college building in his honor, requesting instead that it be called Nassau Hall as an expression of "the Honour we retain, in this remote Part of the Globe to the immortal Memory of the Glorious King William the 3d., who was a Branch of the illustrious House of NASSAU." This old mezzotint of Governor Belcher has just come into the possession of the University through the generosity of Messrs. Samuel S. Dennis and Charles W. McAlpin '88. For several years it has been in the Americana of the famous print collection made by Mr. Frederic R. Halsey, which was recently sold at the Anderson Galleries in New York. It has now been hung in the University Library. The portrait bears the date 1734 and was engraved by Faber after a painting by Phillips. It represents Governor Belcher at the time he was

Governor of the Provinces of Massachusetts Bay and New Hampshire, more than a decade before he became Governor of the Province of New Jersey. The inscription beneath the engraving is as follows:

HIS EXCELLENCY

JONATHAN BELCHER, ESQR.

CAPTAIN GENERAL & GOVERNOR IN  
CHIEF OF HIS MAJESTY'S PROVINCES  
OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY & NEW  
HAMPSHIRE IN NEW ENGLAND AND  
VICE-ADMIRAL OF THE SAME

We are privileged to print this reproduction of the Faber engraving of Belcher through the courtesy of the *American Art News* and the Anderson Galleries, Inc. In this connection The Weekly wishes to remind alumni that whenever such historical prints or other art works of interest to Princeton are offered for sale, they should remember their Alma Mater.

NOW THAT PRESIDENT WILSON'S election to a second term has been established beyond peradventure, and the final session of the 64th Congress is assembling, his fellow alumni of Princeton will join with his distinguished opponent in offering their hearty congratulations on his reelection and invoking for him contained health and the highest wisdom in his heavy task of dealing with the great problems, both domestic and international, which will confront him during the remaining months of his first and the four years of his second administration. President Wilson's reelection is recognized by the country as a personal triumph, an endorsement of his policies. Like our other President, James Madison of the Class of 1771, he has been elected to succeed himself immediately, and as

Princeton men we can take pride in the fact that he is the first Democratic President since Andrew Jackson to whom that unusual honor has come. We are not all of one political faith; many men of many minds naturally hold diverse convictions on questions of government; but we are all one in placing our country's welfare above political affiliations, and in responding patriotically to the toast—"The President."

"HIBBENITE," named after President John Grier Hibben, is a new mineral just discovered by Professor Alexander H. Phillips '87. The manner of its coming to light is one of the surprises of laboratory research and makes a story which in essence is not dissimilar in a minor way from the famous Darwin-Wallace coincident discovery of the theory of evolution. A single specimen of ore sent to the laboratory of Guyot Hall by Mr. David McBurney was found by Professor Phillips to contain three entirely unknown minerals. Professor Phillips began an investigation and had already completed his description and analysis of the first of these and before publishing his results was waiting to complete his analysis of the other two, when Mr. Hamil, one of his graduate students, an alumnus of Toronto University, happened to visit his *alma mater*. His former professor, Dr. T. L. Walker, showed him a specimen of a new mineral. Mr. Hamil was much astonished, and explained to Dr. Walker that Professor Phillips was also at work upon this same substance. Dr. Walker then informed Professor Phillips by letter that he had discovered this new mineral, for which he proposed the name "spencerite," and Professor Phillips was naturally estopped from proceeding with this phase of his investigation; the honor of discovering

# Princeton Dramatics in the Eighteenth Century

By V. Lansing Collins '92

THE materials for an adequate history of Princeton dramatics in the eighteenth century have not yet been discovered. This article therefore consists of little more than notes on what appears to have been, from the earliest period of the college, a fairly well established form of entertainment.

The beginning of the record, such as it is, lies in the nebulous decade that the college spent at Newark under the presidency of the Rev. Aaron Burr, and is found in a brief line jotted down in a diary of the Rev. Ezra Stiles. In the autumn of 1754 this energetic graduate of Yale, who before his career ended was to be clergyman, lawyer, missionary, dabbler in physical science, scholar, diarist, and president of Yale, all in one, but who at this time was only a young pastor of twenty-seven, journeyed on horseback from New Haven to Philadelphia, and kept note of his adventures. One of his halts was made at Newark where he arrived in the afternoon of Tuesday, September 24, the day before commencement. Partly because he was intimately acquainted with Mr. Burr, who was a Yale man, and chiefly I think because an innate and voracious curiosity impelled him to spy out the new college that had frankly announced its intention to rival Harvard and Yale, Mr. Stiles immediately "waited on President Burr." That evening after prayers, according to his diary, "2 young gent. of the college acted *Tamurlane & Bajazet, &c.*" And thus cursorily does Mr. Stiles begin the history of Princeton dramatics.

What was the play? What does "&c" refer to? Where was the performance given? These are questions on which Mr. Stiles throws no light, nor does he comment in any way on the character of the presentation. I believe that the play must have been the First Part of Marlowe's *Tamurlaine the Great* and that the students acted, or to be accurate, recited certain scenes such as the second and the fourth of Act IV. In both of these Bajazeth is brought on as a prisoner in a cage, but this detail might easily be avoided, particularly in Scene 2 where he is immediately taken out of the cage so that Tamurlaine in high royal fashion may use him for a footstool. Scene 4 is more exciting and, if again we waive the detail of the cage, is not much more difficult of presentation. The scene is Tamurlaine's banquet, to which the prisoner is brought in his cage and kept there. The only really necessary stage properties are a banqueting table, seats for the party, a sword, and three crowns. The "&c" would be Mr. Stiles' sum-

mary of the other characters. His failure to comment on the acting may have been due to his disapproval of the sulphurous though pompous vocabulary of the blank verse. Nevertheless what Mr. Burr could permit, surely Mr. Stiles could not object to, and I therefore lay no stress on his reticence.

As for the place of this performance, the large increase in the enrolment during Mr. Burr's presidency makes it certain that there was no room in his parsonage (where the college had at first been housed) to hold collective gatherings, such as for example morning and evening required prayers, and still less for commencement audiences. Every reason exists for believing that on ordinary academic occasions the fifty to sixty students assembled in an adjoining hall whose existence seems fairly well established. Graduation exercises were sometimes held in the court house; but I doubt if preliminary commencement entertainments and exhibitions were also conducted there, and for any feature needing a platform or stage the hall regularly used for college exercises would in all probability have been better adapted. Finally, as this particular exhibition was given after prayers, according to Mr. Stiles, I think it is safe to assume that it was in this hall he saw the play noted in his diary.

First "Entertainment" at Princeton  
MY NEXT reference is dated eight years later, when the college had removed to Princeton. I am not sure that the production about to be described belongs properly to drama. It is made up of spoken dialogue interspersed with choruses but it contains neither action nor plot; it is what the printed version frankly calls an "entertainment." For it was printed—less confidently perhaps than modern Triangle Club productions, since neither author nor composer is revealed—but published none the less by the well known Philadelphia printer, William Bradford. The title page, set in capitals, reads:

THE  
MILITARY GLORY  
OF  
GREAT-BRITAIN  
AN  
ENTERTAINMENT,  
GIVEN BY THE LATE CANDIDATES FOR  
BACHELOR'S DEGREE,  
AT THE CLOSE OF THE  
ANNIVERSARY COMMENCEMENT, HELD  
IN  
NASSAU HALL  
NEW JERSEY  
SEPTEMBER 29TH, 1762.  
PHILADELPHIA  
Printed by William Bradford,  
M,DCC,LXII.

The book is a small quarto of sixteen pages, of which the last is blank, with five engraved folding plates containing the music of the choruses written in three parts, and forming, unless I am much mistaken, one of the earliest examples of American engraved music.

The author of the libretto, if I may so term it, is no longer known, and his reputation will not suffer by the silence that has fallen on him. But I have long believed that the composer of the music was James Lyon of the Class of 1759, whose influence on early American music I have elsewhere suggested. It may be remarked that he prepared the text of his pioneer hymn-book *Urania* while still a student in Nassau Hall; fifty of the two hundred copies of the first edition were subscribed for in the spring of 1760 by students and officers of the college, and later in the same year the introduction of singing at evening prayers was authorized. Earlier than this, however, he had left trace on the campus. At least during the year prior to the publication of *Urania* there were manuscript hymn-books in college—or did these give him the idea of *Urania*?—and one of them is in the possession of the university library. It originally belonged to Joseph Periam of the Class of 1762, and bears his name on the inside cover,



TITLE PAGE OF "THE MILITARY GLORY OF GREAT BRITAIN"

From the Collection of Princetoniana in the University Library

with a date showing that he began to copy hymn tunes in it in his sophomore year, three months after Lyon's graduation. I think it could easily be proved that this compilation bears marks of Lyon's influence; but that falls outside the scope of this paper.

By 1762 James Lyon had written music for commencement here and elsewhere; in September of that year he came back to Princeton for his master of arts degree; nothing could be more natural than that he should have composed a little sheaf of choruses for somebody else's words, to be rendered on this to him important occasion. Sonneck, coldly scientific in his monograph on Lyon, does not claim *The Military Glory of Great Britain* as one of this Princetonian's compositions; but as Pascal said, the heart hath its reasons which the mind knoweth not, and I am morally certain that the music which "entertained" the commencement audience in 1762 was written by the compiler-author of *Urania*.

It should be remembered that the period had but recently seen the close of the French and Indian War; the story of Wolfe at Quebec was still fresh; the full length portrait of His late Majesty George II was still new in its gorgeous gilt frame in Nassau Hall; and George III was still a young king. Patriotism in the shape of loyalty to the mother country was running high on the campus, and this explains the tone of the "Entertainment." It opens with an introductory chorus phrased as follows:

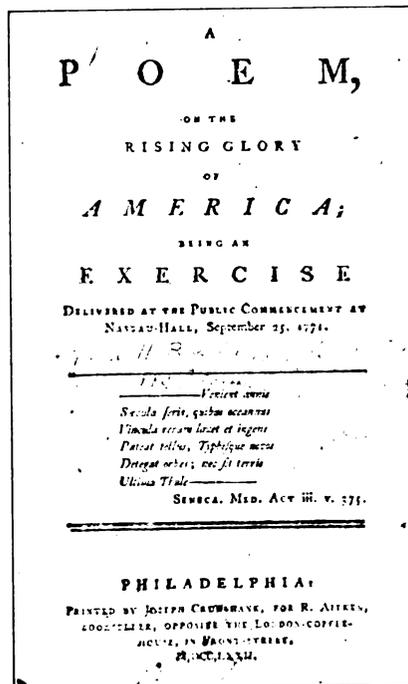
"Triumphant Fame ascend the Skies.  
Ever glorying in our Isle  
Ever proclaim o'er distant Realms  
How British Power and British Glory rise!"

These lines may pass for patriotism but they certainly are not poetry. To say the least, their author did not possess so good an ear as the contemporary owner of the library copy—a young gentleman, who was perhaps an undergraduate but who at any rate appreciated rhythm, particularly the rhythm of his own name. On the back of one of the folded music inserts he has recorded this comforting sentiment:

"Guysbert Bogart Vroom, his Book—  
God gave him Grace therein to look—  
Not only look but understand  
That learning is better than house or land.  
When house and Land is Gone and spent  
Then Learning, is most Excellent—  
Cut and Slash, Cut and Slash,  
Guysbert Bogart Vroom!"

Young Mr. Vroom may have received grace from on high as he avers, but he never got a degree from Princeton, and one may accordingly cherish the hope that he obtained house and land in place of learning. Is it possible that "cut and slash, cut and slash," a hearty motto for stirring times, represents the reaction of the playlet on him?

There is no list of characters nor is



#### TITLE PAGE OF "THE RISING GLORY OF AMERICA"

From the Collection of Princetoniana  
in the University Library

any scene named; but the stage directions are self-explanatory. Immediately after the introductory chorus the note runs: "Enter first Speaker; proclaiming Britannia Conqueror, by Way of Introduction to the next Speech." He does so in eleven lines, these in turn being followed by a second chorus. Then "Enter second Speaker; who enumerates several of the most important conquests of Great Britain, with Encomiums on some of the principal Generals." This constitutes the chief piece of declamation in the poem, running to seventy-one lines. Among the generals named are Wolfe, Amherst, and Monckton, and the latter evokes an interesting but unidentified allusion to a previous Princeton commencement exercise:

"Shall I again repeat the brave Exploits  
of Monckton in the Western Isles?  
those late  
Within these peaceful Walls we sung,  
enflam'd,  
With all the Ardours of a Patriot  
Heart—"

Chorus III of six lines now follows and then we get the first of the named characters. The stage direction reads: "Enter EUGENIO; who, by Way of Dialogue with CLEANDER, gives an account of the Reduction of the Havana." Eugenio asks Cleander if he has not heard of the deeds "so late performed by Albermarle." Cleander has heard:

but intimates very frankly that the theme

"Seemed worthy of a more exalted  
Muse;

A Muse like thine. . ."

Eugenio accepts the compliment without a quiver:

"Whilst I have Lungs to heave, a  
Tongue to speak,  
I'll not be wanting to my Country's  
Cause"

and proceeds forthwith to "heave his lungs" and describe in glowing terms, but with no little skill, the capture of Moro Castle and the taking of the city of Havana. Chorus IV follows, of five lines whose mediocrity is saved by the catchy marching air to which they are set, one of the best tunes in the book.

This is barely finished when "Enter fourth Speaker; suddenly transported."

He bursts out:

"What mean these Strains? these glad,  
triumphant Sounds,

My Heart, with what unusual Joy it  
bounds!

'Tis transport all; Britannia's Praise,  
Britannia's Praise my Soul inspires—"

Continuing thus for twenty-five lines, he urges Britannia's "sons of war" to further victories, and the catchy refrain of the Fourth Chorus is sung again—

"Glory, Triumph, Vict'ry, Fame  
Forever crown Britannia's Name."

Then "Enter fifth Speaker; who closes the whole with a Solemn Wish, for the continued Prosperity of the British Nation," in twelve lines, ending:

"Long may a George the regal Sceptre  
sway;

And scatter Blessings with a lib'ral  
Hand

Around the peaceful Globe; but dire  
Dismay

On all who dare his injur'd Arms  
withstand."

A fifth chorus to the music of the third brings the performance to a cheerful close.

We do not know what students took part in this production, nor have we any data, positive or negative, as to costumes or setting. It is also a question how the accompaniments that Lyon wrote for the choruses were played. I am fairly sure that they could not have been rendered on the college organ and am therefore inclined to think that an orchestra of two or three pieces was imported for the occasion. The performance took place in the college prayerhall, now the faculty room.

#### Princeton's Earliest Actor

WHAT influence, if any, dramatics had at Princeton in these early days I do not know. That the authorities encouraged them seems undeniable, and such activities must have proved a useful safety valve to students of histrionic bent, when valves of any kind were scarce. But at least one young Princetonian of this period emerged briefly as an actor on the professional stage, thereby causing much dismay to

some of his college contemporaries. Samuel Greville, a student for a year or two in the middle sixties, made his American debut in 1767 at the John Street Theatre, New York, says Mr. Allston Brown in his *History of the American Stage*, spelling the name "Grenville." The statement however is hardly correct. The John Street Theatre in New York was opened in December 1767, according to the same author's *History of the New York Stage*. Now, in the theatrical notices published by the Philadelphia papers during the spring of 1767, or to be accurate, from February to June of that year, Greville's name appears constantly as a member of the American Company playing at the New Theatre. There can be little doubt that he made his debut there. Indeed, I think we can even fix the date of his first performance. The *Pennsylvania Chronicle* of January 26-February 2, 1767, announces that the American Company at the New Theatre will produce the tragedy of *Cato* on February 2, and in the cast Portius is assigned to "a Gentleman (being his first appearance)." A week later the part of Sattin in a comedy *The Miser* is assigned to "Mr. Graville." In Henry Jones' tragedy *The Earl of Essex*, given in March, Greville is one of the lords; subsequently he is Malcolm in "*Macbeth*, written by Shakespeare, altered by Mr. Betterton," Balthazar in *Romeo and Juliet*, one of the two committeemen in *The Committee*, or *The Faithful Irishman*, a coachman in *The Drummer or The Haunted House*, and Guiderius in Garrick's version of *Cymbeline*. The theatre closed for the summer in June, and when it opened again in October Greville had left the company. In December at New York the papers announced the opening of the John Street Theatre, and on the 18th Greville made his New York debut in the part of Trueman in *The Clandestine Marriage*. Later he was given the part of the butler in *The Busybody*, Blunt in *King Richard III*, Marcellus in *Hamlet*, and once more Guiderius in *Cymbeline*. During the spring he took various minor parts such as the Duke in *The Merchant of Venice*, one of the hay-makers in *The Harlequin Collector*, or *The Miller Deceived*, Dapper in *The Citizen*, Sir Richard Vernon in *Henry IV*, Part I, Duncan in *Macbeth*, Marius in *Cato*, Lissordo in *Wonder! A Woman keeps a Secret*, a servant in the comic opera *Love in a Village*, and Beau Tippet in *The Lying Valet*. I have not attempted to follow him after the end of the first season.

His appearance on the stage was not unnoticed at Princeton. It finds an echo in the correspondence of William Paterson 1763, the future jurist, and his chum John Macpherson, who did not graduate but who a few years later, as a major in the American army, was to lose his life at the siege of Quebec. Writing from Princeton in January 1767 to Macpherson, Paterson says:

"Poor Greville, what a noble subject

on which to moralize 'in truth tis pitiful, most wondrous pitiful.' Sam's fate reached Princeton long ago before he appeared on the stage. You might have been more particular, and informed me what induced him to take that unhappy course. Was it because his finances were reduced to low ebb, or was he smitten by an actress, as is not uncommon? I hear he plead poverty, in order to obviate which some gentlemen offered to sustain him, during his continuance with Galloway."

We do not have Macpherson's original letter to which this is the reply nor do we have his next letter. In May 1767 Paterson writes again:

"Burt lodged with me while in town, and as he told me he had been in Philadelphia, I was very inquisitive, and almost stunned him with questions. Among other things, he informed me particularly concerning the circumstances of Sam Greville, and gave me a more adequate idea of the merit of the respective actors, than I had before."

Finally in August after the theatre had closed for the summer, Paterson, writing again to Macpherson, asks:

"What is Greville going to do? Pray tell me about him."

Once more Macpherson's answer is missing; but as we have seen, Greville joined the New York company that winter. I know nothing of his subsequent career, and thus with Paterson's question for an epilogue the curtain rings down on Princeton's earliest player.

#### "The Rising Glory of America"

IN NO commencement programme after 1762—and I have seen all but eight of the fifty eighteenth-century programmes—is any dramatic performance included. After 1763 the exercises were held in the Presbyterian Church, which fact of course precluded the presentation of drama. It is true that the commencement exercises of 1771 were enlivened by a dramatic dialogue called *The Rising Glory of America*, recited from the platform of the church. But this was less dramatic than *The Military Glory of Great Britain*, though of far greater literary merit.

Like *The Military Glory* it was published anonymously but its authorship has not been forgotten; for it was written by two members of the graduating class who were to achieve fame in American eighteenth-century letters, Philip Freneau and Hugh Brackenridge. The title page reads:

A  
POEM,  
ON THE  
RISING GLORY  
OF  
AMERICA;  
BEING AN  
EXERCISE  
DELIVERED AT THE PUBLIC COMMENCEMENT  
AT  
NASSAU-HALL, SEPTEMBER 25, 1771.  
[QUOTATION FROM SENECA]  
PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY JOSEPH CRUKSHANK, FOR  
R. AITKEN,  
BOOKSELLER, OPPOSITE THE LONDON-COFFEE-  
HOUSE, IN FRONT STREET,  
M,DCC,LXXII.

The book is a slender duodecimo of 27 pages, containing 729 lines, which, after swift allusions to ancient and modern history, prophesy the future greatness of America:

"No more of Memphis and her mighty kings,

Or Alexandria, where the Ptolemies  
Taught golden commerce to unfurl  
her sails

And bid fair science smile—"  
—begins Leander, first of the three  
speakers in the poem,

"—No more of Greece  
Where learning, first her early visit  
paid,

No more of Athens, where she  
flourished,

And saw her sons of mighty genius  
rise,

Smooth flowing Plato, Socrates, and  
him

Who with relentless eloquence reviv'd  
The Spirit of Liberty, and shook the  
throne

Of Macedon, and Persia's haughty king.  
No more of Rome . . .

. . . . imperial Rome

Whose eagle flew o'er Ganges to the  
East

And in the West far to the British Isle.  
No more of Britain and her kings  
renown'd

. . . . .

A Theme more new, tho' not less noble,  
claims

Our ev'ry thought on this auspicious  
day;

The rising glory of this western  
world."

The second speaker, Acasto, asking for a review of the history of the American continent, omitting the pitiful story of Spain's dealings with South America—

"Better these northern realms deserve  
our song"—

Eugenio, the third speaker, follows the new lead, naming in turn the explorers; Columbus

—"advent'ring first to try  
New seas, new oceans, unexplor'd by  
men"

and Cabot who

—"coasted from the Mexic bay  
To Acady and piny Labrador"—

and Hudson—"bold Hudson stemming  
to the pole", and

"Illustrious Raleigh, hapless in his fate:  
Forgive me Raleigh, if an infant muse  
Borrows thy name to grace her humble  
strain."

Eugenio ends his survey by raising the question of the origin of the American Indian tribes, whereupon Acasto offers some fifty lines of not altogether new speculation; for example

"Whether they sprang from one prim-  
eval head

In their own lands, like Adam in the  
east"—

This, however, is denied, says the speak-

er, both by reason and by the "sacred oracles"—

"For when the gen'ral deluge drow'd the world,  
Where could these tribes have found security?

Where find their fate but in the ghastly deep?

Unless as others dream, some chosen few

High on the Andes 'scaped the gen'ral death,

High on the Andes wrapped in endless snow,

Where winter in his wildest fury reigns."

Admitting, however, that most thinkers do not take kindly to this explanation, was it, he asks, through overland migrations of

—"hardy tribes

of banish'd Jews, Siberians, Tartars wild" from Northern Europe, via

"The Straits of Zembla and the Frozen Zone

And where the Eastern Greenland almost joins

America's north point. . . "

or are the Indians descendants of those who once inhabited the continent now engulfed by the Atlantic, whose remaining two extremities are Newfoundland and St. Helena and of which the

—"Bermudas and

Canary Isles, Britannia, and th' Azores, With fam'd Hibernia are but broken parts."

"Your sophistry, Acasto," retorts Leander, "makes me smile." He proposes a simpler explanation: some Carthaginian bark was swept across the sea by contrary winds to Brazil, and there her crew remained

"And in the course of many rolling years A num'rous progeny from them arose". . . .

Leander deplores the ignorance and darkness into which South America has fallen, and Acasto suggests that they recount how North America has reached her eminence. Eugenio thereupon tells the story of the settling of the colonies and in turn each of the others adds his little chapter of colonial history, bringing in the obvious names. Eugenio then suggesting that they delve into the future, Acasto sees visions of

"A thousand kingdoms rais'd, cities and men

Num'rous as sand upon the ocean shore;  
Th' Ohio shall glide by many a town  
Of note; and where the Mississippi stream

By forests shaded now runs weeping on,  
Nations shall grow and states not less in fame

Than Greece and Rome of old. . . .

And thou Potowmack, navigable stream,  
Shalt vie Thames, the Tiber, or the Rhine!"

Under Arctic skies shall rise a new St. Petersburg, a Bergen or an Archangel; far in the west a new Palmyra; and in the distant South another Babylon and "A Nineveh where Oronoque descends

With waves discolour'd from the Andes high;

Hoarse Niagara's stream now roaring on,

By some great monarch taught a better course

Or cleared of cataracts, shall flow beneath

Unnumbered boats and merchandize and men."

And here, declares Leander, fair freedom shall forever reign, and patriots equal to those of Athens and Rome shall spring up; even

"The sons of Boston, resolute and brave The firm supporters of our injur'd rights"

shall be eclipsed—an allusion to the Boston Massacre of 1770, says Freneau, in a note.

Acasto sees a correspondingly bright future for American arts and letters—

"'Tis but the morning of the world with us," he declares, and he expects a Homer, a Milton, a second Pope will rise in this country to

"Awaken the muse of Schuylkill's silent stream,"

until the dawn of the millenium; perhaps this land is destined to see the new Jerusalem, another Canaan, without earth's curse; and Paradise, "by no second Adam lost," shall return.

—"Such days the world And such America thou first shalt have When ages yet to come have run their round

And future years of bliss alone remain."

It is not surprising that Brackenridge, who seems to have recited the poem alone that September morning in 1771, was, according to the newspapers, "received with great applause."

While genuine drama does not reappear on the college commencement programmes, nevertheless it found a place in the exercises of commencement week. On Monday, September 28, 1772, the grammar school, whose habitat was the basement of Nassau Hall, came out of its dungeon and underwent public examinations. That evening the members of the graduating class, ten in number, having survived the ordeal of the morning and thereby having been admitted to the Freshman Class in the college upstairs, celebrated their emergence by performing "a dramatic Piece in Latin, before a numerous and learned Audience," says the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. This was given of course in the prayer-hall. Latin in Dr. Witherspoon's day was still a spoken language in Nassau Hall; but nevertheless one gasps at the precocity of these sub-freshmen. I have found no allusion before or since, to a commencement Latin play.

For the next ten years the history of Princeton dramatics is a blank, and we have to wait until Peter Elmendorf wrote a letter home one day in November 1782, in which, speaking of his hard studying, he says:

"Our minds have been a little relaxed from the laborious task, by acting of a tragedy called that of Ormisand

da and Alonzo, never were people better pleased, than with our performance, our dress was silk and elegant and every circumstance to render it noble was strictly adhered to, it was so affecting that it caused tears to flow from many."

This drama was written by the Rev. John Home, a college-mate of Dr. Witherspoon at Edinburgh, and the author of *Douglas*, which had captivated the Scottish capital twenty-five years before and against which Dr. Witherspoon had written a redoubtable essay. Elmendorf's letter is the only reference to dramatics in the century that mentions costume; but the manner of his allusion seems to imply that it was not a novelty but that the production only was more lavish, as if the costuming had grown more sumptuous.

### Ashbel Green as Alexander the Great

THE college seems to have had an attack of histrionics that winter; for in a correspondence which has recently come to my knowledge, between some Princeton undergraduates and John Croes of Newark, the future bishop of New Jersey who had wished to come to Princeton but could not afford it, I have found the following.

Zadoc Squier, writing from Nassau Hall on February 22, 1783, informs Croes that

"It is now all hurry with us here in college. Next Thursday evening is appointed for our public exhibitions, and besides delivering orations we shall act a play called the Rival Queens, or Alexander the Great, and a farce called the Mock Doctor. Our exercises will be very long. I wish they might be as agreeable. However, my dear Sir, if you will come down we will entertain you as well as we are capable of doing it."

With proper undergraduate procrastination young Squier did not finish his letter that day, nor the next, although he added some lines to it. Not until March 6 was the epistle concluded, for which I for one am grateful to the divinity that shapes our ends; for Squier was then able to give his Newark friend an account of the exercises of February 27.

"Our Exercises were performed before a much more crowded assembly than you saw at commencement, and what is most to us with universal applause.

"For my part I am quite sick of the compliments and praise heaped upon the class—but people in general are extravagant in their commendation. Mr. Green has gained almost immortal honour—he has had so many wreaths of laurel constantly upon his head that he has scarcely been able to put his hat on since. Indeed I think Alexander himself whom he personated could not have spoken as well as he did.

"He gained more hearts by that evening's performance than you can find in a pack of cards. The ladies, O dear Sir, the ladies, said Sir—the ladies

said, I cannot tell you what they said—but you may depend upon it the ladies said a great many pretty things.”

*The Rival Queens* was a tragedy by Nathaniel Lee which brought him the especial praise of Dryden. *The Mock Doctor* was Fielding's version of Moliere's *Médecin Malgré Lui*, and this performance is the only production of a play by the great Frenchman recorded at Princeton until the Dramatic Association in the spring of 1916 acted *The Learned Ladies*.

I cannot help wondering whether in his portrayal of Alexander the Great, Ashbel Green—for it was none other than the future president of Princeton and patriarch of the American Presbyterian Church—wore the coat he had bought on coming to college a year or so before, and for which he paid a thousand dollars. The coat had been intended for a British staff officer but an unkind American privateer had captured the vessel bringing it with other cargo to New York. Even when stripped of its military trappings it would have made a brave showing. Or

did the actors follow the example set in 1782 and dress themselves in silk? I should have added that at this time a silver dollar was worth forty in paper and Ashbel Green paid for his coat in paper.

In his autobiography there is no allusion to this memorable performance of *The Rival Queens*, although he mentions many other incidents in his two years of college life.

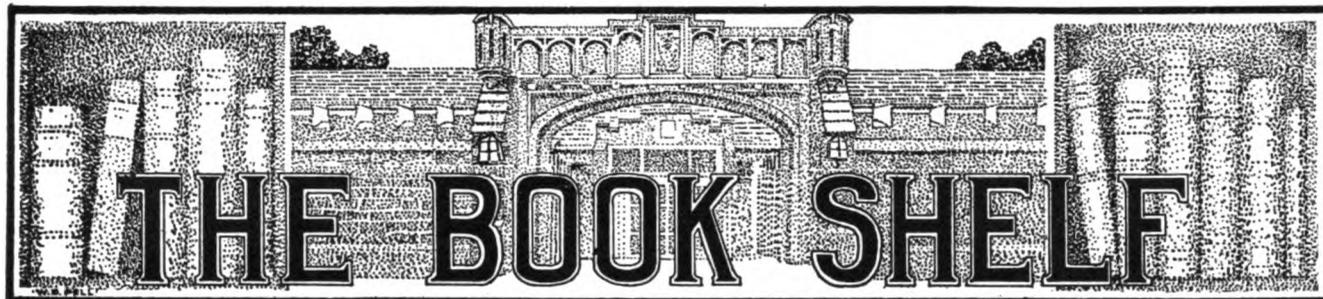
The odd thing about it all is that President Witherspoon should have not only allowed his boys to act, but apparently encouraged them in this direction. In his attack on the stage at the time of the appearance of *Douglas* in 1756 it was not the fact that Mr. Home was a minister of the gospel that led Dr. Witherspoon to oppose the play; he was consistently against the stage, and the last piece of writing he did was a letter against “plays and play actors.” Evidently John Home on the professional stage was different from John Home acted by undergraduates in a prayer hall. But in his writings Dr. Witherspoon deprecates all drama.

The manuscript Journal of 1786 mentions no true dramatics; but for commencement the author and a friend prepared a piece called “Dr. Neverout and Dr. Doughty.” The Journal refers to the preparation of this dialogue and to rehearsals before Vice-President Smith, but none of the accounts of commencement for that year refers to its delivery.

The next summer Dr. Manasseh Cutler visited Princeton and wrote this paragraph in his diary:

“I was much pleased with the hall and the stage erected in it for exhibitions. It is well formed for plays, which are permitted here, and dialogue speaking principally cultivated.”

This is my last eighteenth-century dramatic entry. That there is more material in existence I am sure. Perhaps these rambling paragraphs may lead to a fresh examination of old letters and other documents packed away in family archives and thus to the discovery of hitherto unknown sources. Such a hope is my only excuse for releasing these notes.



Conducted by Christian Gauss

### Professor Harper's Life of Wordsworth

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, his Life, Works, and Influence. By George McLean Harper '84, Holmes Professor of Belles Lettres and English Language and Literature in Princeton University. 2 vols., 879 pp. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, and London, Longman's, 1916.

**B**IOGRAPHIES are of two kinds: those made out of other biographies, and those out of which other biographies are made. Professor Harper's monumental work on Wordsworth belongs distinctly to the latter class, and it is safe to say that all future students of Wordsworth will have to reckon with this book as a storehouse of Wordsworthian facts, and a land-mark of Wordsworthian criticism. While utilizing the materials of his predecessors, especially Charles Knight, Thomas Hutchinson and Emile Legouis, Professor Harper has reexamined the sources for our knowledge of Wordsworth's life, and from unpublished Mss. has contributed important fresh facts,

and placed many others previously known, in a new perspective. This is especially true of the period spent by Wordsworth in France, to which Professor Harper's most important original contributions belong. Among these the most significant is the story, now first made public, of Wordsworth's early love affair with a young Frenchwoman of royalist family, whose name was Annette, and who was later known as Madame Vallon. By her the poet had a natural daughter named Caroline.

In speaking of Wordsworth's separation from Annette the author says: "It may well be that the objection to the permanent bond of marriage with a foreign lady of twenty-two, a republican, a free-thinker, and poor, came as much from the side of her relatives as of his." Professor Harper has shown that the journey to France made by the poet and his sister in 1802, just before Wordsworth's marriage to Mary Hutchinson, was in all likelihood to effect a settlement for Annette and his daughter, and "the dear child, dear girl" addressed in the familiar sonnet, "It is a beauteous evening, calm and free," was none other than his daughter Caroline! Professor

Harper prints with the consent of the Wordsworth family a series of letters from Dorothy to Mrs. Clarkson, the originals of which are now in the British Museum, but have never before been published, and which throw interesting and valuable light on Wordsworth's relations to Caroline and her mother.

So far as we are aware Professor Harper for the first time records that Wordsworth visited Scotland before the famous trip in 1803, viz., in 1801 (Vol. II, p. 5); that the Pantisocrats probably got a suggestion for their plan from an account in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of a French colony on the Susquehanna (I, 269); that Wordsworth was definitely and closely connected with the Godwin Circle, with fresh discoveries as to Fawcett, Nicholson and others of the group (I, 260 sq.). There are also fresh facts about Wordsworth's life at Blois, the Revolutionary Club there and Beaupey's connection with it. The Crabb Robinson Mss. were thoroughly sifted by Professor Harper and have furnished many fresh bits of information on Wordsworth, and throughout the volume there is a good deal of re-dating of poems, of interest and value