Concerning Francis Hopkinson's defense of Provost William Smith against the attacks of Franklin's party, George E. Hastings writes: "This act derives additional merit from the fact that the Rev. Mr. Smith was probably in the wrong, because it indicates that the first graduate of the College of Philadelphia was not the type of youth who is wiser than his masters." Strictly interpreted, this is possibly so, for Hopkinson's student days ended with his Master of Arts degree in 1760. Yet not more than two years later he was expressing open annoyance at his erstwhile preceptor "Mr. John Beveridge, Professor of the Latin (not the English) Language in the College and Academy of Philadelphia." This hitherto unpublished verse lampoon, apparently in his own hand, might be dated slightly before his graduation, but the presence on the same folded sheet of letter paper in the precious Du Simitière Collection of a second poem, "The Grammarians: or Scoto & the Doctor," in the same characters, would seem logically to associate both with Hopkinson's prose Errata, or the Art of Printing Incorrectly, the outgrowth of a new edition of Whittenhall's Latin Grammar—for the Use of the College and Academy of Philadelphia, prepared by Messrs. Beveridge and Alison. It is noted in the minutes of the College that the grammar was delivered on November 2, 1762. His temerity directly resulted in action by the Vice-Provost and the Latin professor which prevented Hopkinson—a steady contributor of music and odes for some time after his graduation—from taking part in the commencement of 1763, to the consequent impoverishment of those festivities.

1 The Life and Works of Francis Hopkinson (Chicago, 1926), 67.
2 Du Simitière Scraps Volume, deposited with the Free Library of Philadelphia by The Library Company of Philadelphia, purchasers of a considerable part of the estate. The initial poem was first kindly brought to my attention by Mr. Barney Chesnuck, to whom, and to Mr. Franklin Price of the Free Library who provided photostats and other courtesies, I express my indebtedness.
3 Dr. Richard Peters to Dr. Smith, quoted in T. H. Montgomery, A History of the University of Pennsylvania from its Foundation to A.D. 1770 (Philadelphia, 1900), 363.
That young Hopkinson was no stranger to the subject of Professor Beveridge's instruction is testified in several quarters, as is his apparent sharing of the antipathy shown the little Scotchman by the student body. When the fourteen-year-old Francis was sent to the Academy at its opening in January, 1751, he was apparently a member of the Latin class of the Reverend David Martin, its first rector, who gave him an inscribed copy of the *Comedies of Terence*. When the Academy received its first charter on July 13, 1753, Hopkinson's was chosen as one of the four best Latin declamations at the exercises to be sent by Secretary Richard Peters to the Proprietors. The curriculum of the Academy and College, moreover, offered him continued opportunity to develop his facility in the language to the point where he could look with a critical eye upon the Latin text especially prepared for the use of his alma mater. As for the students' antipathy toward Beveridge, the archives still bear witness to merciless and unceasing imposition upon a poor disciplinarian, running the gamut from "twitching off" his wig to closing the shutters suddenly from outside and pelting the "Professor of Languages" with chalk, books, and other handy missiles. Writes Alexander Graydon in his memoirs: "Mr. John Beveridge, a native of Scotland . . . retained the smack of his vernacular tongue in its primitive purity. His acquaintance with the language he taught, was, I believe justly deemed to be very accurate and very profound. But as to his other attainments, after excepting the game of backgammon . . . truth will not warrant me in saying a great deal. He was, however, diligent, and laborious in his attention to his school; and had he possessed the faculty of making himself beloved by his scholars, of exciting their emulation and exertion, nothing would have been wanting to an entire qualification for his office. But, unfortunately, he had no dignity of character, and was no less destitute of the art of making himself respected than beloved."

4 *Ibid.*, 44.

5 *Memoirs of a Life Chiefly Passed in Penna. . .* (Harrisburg, 1811), 24–25. Says Graydon further (page 29): "Might one not exclaim in the spirit of Prior to Boileau,

Pindar, that eagle mounts the skies
While virtue leads the noble way;
Too like a vulture Bev'ridge flies
Where sordid int'rest lures the prey."
Provost Smith offered fulsome praise of the Latin professor in his *American Magazine* for October, 1758, asserting that "by the specimens he has given, he will undoubtedly be acknowledged one of the ablest Masters in the Latin Tongue on this continent." In 1765 William Bradford was to see through his press, by way of confirmation, Beveridge's volume of original Latin poems, *Epistolae Familiares et Alia quaedam Miscellanea*. The present University's official historian writes: "Professors and students alike dropped readily into verse in those days; Provost Smith was always ready with a metrical production, Professor Beveridge published poems in Latin, Dove dealt in satirical verse, and pupils of both the Academy and the College had from the beginning expressed themselves in poetic form." It is not unnatural, then, that student and teacher should indulge in a brief poetic lunge and riposte, with the lad who "was not . . . wiser than his masters" drawing first blood.

When Mr. Beveridge took his Pen in hand
What for to write he did not understand
He then invok'd his Muse in plaintive strain,
His Muse obey'd & fill'd his plodding Brain
The Time of Labor comes—but then alas!
The filthy Offspring proves to be an Ass
Just like the Father from whose Loins he came
With Ears almost as long & Voice the same.
It bray'd Abuse, foul Language & false Grammar
And to its own Confusion rais'd a Clamer.

Strange that so wise, so learn'd a Latin Master
Should bring forth Asses when he breeds no faster:
But for thy Genius nothing is too low
Oh!—Mr. Beveridge!—Mr. Beveridge Oh!—

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6 Graydon comments on these poems: "Of their general merit I presume not to judge, but I think I have heard they were not much commended by the British reviewers." *Ibid.*, 27.
8 "To Mr. John Beveridge A.M., Professor of the Latin (not the English) Language in the College and Academy of Philadelphia, by F. H-pk-ns-n," Item #93, Du Simitière Scraps Volume.
This was rather ponderously parried by the little Scotchman in the language of his profession (here followed by a modern translation).  

\[
\text{Credite cornicem Tarpeia rupe locutum.}\quad \text{Roma, cave! voces extulisse bovem}
\]
\[
\text{Credite vel quicquid finxit male sana vetustas}\quad \text{Quaecumque aut vates fingere falsa solent:}
\]
\[
\text{Sed nova res veterum superat miracula vatum}\quad \text{Carmina nunc asinus, credite, fingit iners}
\]
\[
\text{At sophiam simulans, per longas proditur aures}\quad \text{Et sapiunt simulans, per longas proditur aures}
\]

Believe that a crow spoke from the Tarpeian rock.  
Rome, beware! That an ox has uttered words,  
Believe, or whatever scarcely sane old age invented,  
Or whatever falsehoods the bards are wont to invent.  
But a novelty surpasses the marvels of the old bards,  
Now a dull ass composes songs, believe it.  
But pretending wisdom, it is betrayed by its long ears  
And the songs alone smack of father ass.

As has already been remarked, the date of this poem is somewhat fluid, but Hopkinson’s return to the arena in a second poem, in its content clearly contemporary with his prose attack on Beveridge and Alison’s Latin grammar, makes them seem companion pieces. Beveridge, by his own account “under great difficulties in the discharge of his Duty, for want of a proper Sett of Rules for the Government of the Latin School and likewise for want of a proper Grammar,”\(^9\) appealed to the Provost in 1761. The result was the appointment of the Reverend Mr. Peters and Mr. Stedman\(^11\) to consider the matter. The minutes for November 9, 1762, testify to the discharge of their duties: “Dr. Alison and Mr. Beveridge . . . now acquainted the Trustees that it was printed by Mr. Steuart under their Inspection and Correction of the Press and he had delivered to them five hundred copies for which they had agreed to give him according to

\(^{9}\) *Ibid.* The transliteration and translation were made by Professor William McDermott, Department of Classical Languages, University of Pennsylvania.  
\(^{10}\) Montgomery, 467.  
\(^{11}\) Rev. Richard Peters and Andrew Stedman, both trustees.
his Bill.” It was this volume that offered the young graduate’s pen an opportunity for the amusingly satiric prose pamphlet, *Errata, or the Art of Printing Incorrectly, Plainly Set Forth by a Variety of Examples Taken from a Latin Grammar, Lately Printed by Andrew Steuart, for the Use of the College and Academy of this City.*12 That the author was no champion of grammars in general is testified by a statement in his own *Miscellaneous Essays and Occasional Writings:* “To teach a language by means of its grammar is beginning at the wrong end; for no language ever originated in a grammar, and what is worse, all the energy and spirit of a language must necessarily evaporate in a grammatical construction.”13 That he set no store at all by the Beveridge-Alison product is made clear in the preface to his “Key,” although here (contrary to his position in the poem quoted and in the one to follow) he chooses to take Steuart as his real target: “It is to be observed, then, that Mr. Steuart has been employed to print a Grammar for the use of our Academy; which, after a long Space of Time, he has done in so artful a Manner that, without the help of this our *Errata* or List of Mistakes, or some other like it, it is indeed no Grammar at all. For, as Grammar is justly defined, *that Art which teacheth to write & speak correctly,* that Book which of itself teaches no such Thing, cannot properly be said to be a Grammar. So that this our work may well be called a Key to the said Book; without which it must remain unintelligible.”14

The chief cause of the difficulty cited seems to have been a lack of thoroughness on the part of Beveridge, and the failure of Alison, beset by ministerial responsibilities in addition to his academic and administrative ones, to keep a careful check on the manuscript. The young alumnus, however, playfully suggests another, more kindly, reason: “. . . Having a strong compassion and fellow feeling for the Lazy & Idle, he, no doubt, imagined this Grammar would be a sufficient Protection for those who might make mistakes in their Versions or Tasks, from the Reproofs of their Tutors; as it will not be easy to make any grammar Blunders which it will not authorise.”15 With a snicker at these profound gentlemen, Hopkinson then offers

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12 The second edition, used by the present writer, appeared in 1763.
13 (Philadelphia, 1792), II, 47.
14 *Errata, or the Art of Printing Incorrectly . . .*, VI.
15 *Ibid.*, IX.
“capital errors” to the considerable total of one hundred fifty-one, or better than one per page—most of them of his own discovery, although he includes, carefully designated, some listed originally by Steuart, the latter offering an opportunity to show that some of the printer’s acknowledged “errata” are, as printed, further errors! Speaking of the accepted practice of a printer’s noting mistakes in his finished work, Hopkinson reminds the reader that “... those *Errata* are generally very few and always printed in a type so small, and a Manner so obscure, that they look as if the Printer was really ashamed of them; whereas, the *Errata* of Mr. Steuart, in a small Book of 137 Pages swell to a Sizeable Pamphlet and make no incon-siderable Figure.”\(^{16}\)

Steuart, smarting considerably under this latter jibe, published a reply, either his own work or that of the collaborating pedagogues, entitled, *The Ass in the Lyon’s Skin; Luckily Discover’d By his Braying*, “Printed and sold by Andrew Steuart, in Second-street, 1763 (Price two Pennies),” wherein the printer disclaimed responsibility, any oversight resting with the book’s authors. To prove that two could play the game, he cited certain of Hopkinson’s printed errata as being themselves in error. The long-eared reference may for us have added significance in view of Beveridge’s Latin poem already considered—although the not unfamiliar appellation, properly applied, would seem to make half the world kin! The second of Hopkinson’s two manuscript poems, “The Grammarians: or Scoto & the Doctor, a New Ballad,” seems obviously to belong in this general chronological neighborhood.\(^{17}\)

1. No more lets sing of Ferdinand,  
   No more the Prussian King,  
   But raising high our Voices, all  
   The new Grammarians sing.

2. From Scotland & from Ireland came  
   The Heroes of my Song Sir,  
   And thence from ancient Colleges  
   They brought their Lore along Sir.

\(^{16}\) *Ibid.*, X.

\(^{17}\) Item #93, Du Simitière Scraps Volume.
3. When on this fertile Shore they land
   They boast of all their Knowledge
   And after being tost to & fro
   They get a Seat in College.

4. There see the Heroes sit in State
   With Bands pin'd to their Chins Sir;
   Lo! Scoto opes his mickle Mouth
   And as he speaks he grins Sir.

5. Eh! a Dictur (quo'the wiley Scot
   And peers in b Danky's Face Sir)
   Methink 'two'd Honor bring to us
   And eke unto this Place Sir,

6. Could we a bonny Grammar make
   Exceeding aw our Neighbors;
   The Sum of Money we should get
   Wo'd well pay aw our Labors;

7. This Dictur be our chief Design
   But secondly, the Uses,
   For ye ken well my learned Friend
   Of Grammar the Abuses.

8. I know, I know (the Doctor cried)
   And we'll a Grammar make Sir,
   And to our Friend in Second-Street
   To print it, you shall take Sir.

9. To work the learned Conclave went
   And at length produced the Book
   Which being approved by John 18 & Hugh 19
   To his gude Mon Scote took.

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a Agreeable to his Mode of Pronunciation.
b A College Nickname for Dr. Al——n.

18 Apparently John Ewing, appointed Dec. 12, 1758 and continuing, to become first provost of the University of Pennsylvania.
19 Hugh Williamson, Scotch-Irish tutor in 1755, usher in the Latin School, and teacher of mathematics, 1761.
10. As Time roll’d on the Book roll’d forth
But oh!—the motly Picture
Twas like to nought upon G-d’s Earth
But Scoto & his Dictur.

Comparison of the two manuscript poems with volume I of the minutes of The Library Company of Philadelphia suggests the possibility that they are in Hopkinson’s own hand. Entries for the years 1762 and 1763, presumably contemporary with the poems (as well as the volume in general), in the hand of Francis Hopkinson, Secretary, show striking similarities, but at the same time a frequently repeated and quite individual capital “C” and other minor peculiarities of orthography are disturbingly unrepresented.

Although in the year of Du Simitière’s death the two men were on bad terms as a result of the point-blank refusal by the Swiss artist, whom Hopkinson had secured, to continue teaching Martha Jefferson art, their previous contacts had been close and friendly. “He says he is no school-master,” wrote Hopkinson, “& not obliged to go thro’ the Drudgery of teaching those who have no capacity.” In November of 1784 the poet-musician was to write Jefferson of the death of Du Simitière and to inform him of plans to purchase the principal part of his papers for the American Philosophical Society. But as late as October, 1776, they seem to have been on excellent terms, engaged in drawing the great seal for the state of New Jersey. It would appear that on some previous occasion, the history-conscious Du Simitière, who more than once showed ability to wheedle material for his great and varied collection, had persuaded Hopkinson, or perhaps some intermediary, to provide copies of the two amusing lampoons.

As for Hopkinson and the controversy—although the near approach of the Revolution was later to bring him into violent argument with “Cato,” Provost William Smith himself, Francis Hopkinson’s varied talents and his personal charm in 1762 were such that he could not long be kept in exile by his alma mater.

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21 Ibid., XI, 1861, in Hastings, 341.