

## Charles Crawford

### *A Forgotten Poet of Early Philadelphia*

IN 1783, as the Revolution drew to a close, only five volumes of poetry were published in the new United States. Four of these were by a gentleman of Philadelphia named Charles Crawford, three from the press of Robert Aitken, at Pope's Head, in Market Street, and one from the press of Joseph Crukshank, from his shop, also in Market Street, between Second and Third streets. They were *A Poetical Paraphrase on Our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount*, *A Poem on the Death of General Montgomery*, *Liberty: A Pindaric Ode*, and *The Christian: A Poem in Four Books*.

During the next eighteen years, something more than a dozen books by Charles Crawford appeared in Philadelphia, bearing the imprints of some of its best-known eighteenth-century printers: Francis Bailey, Zachariah Poulson, Eleazer Oswald, Thomas Bradford, Asbury Dickens and James Humphreys. Crawford published *Observations on Negro Slavery* in 1784, a translation of J. P. Brissot de Warville's *Oration* against slavery in 1788, *Observations on the Downfall of Papal Power* and *George Foxe's Looking Glass* in 1790, *Observations on the Revolution in France* in 1793, *An Essay on the Propagation of the Gospel* in 1799, and *An Essay on the Eleventh Chapter of the Revelation of St. John* in 1800. His ode on liberty, which in 1789 had been reprinted in London and criticized in the *Monthly Review* as more commendable for its piety than its poetry, was expanded and renamed *The Progress of Liberty* in 1795; the *Poetical Paraphrase* appeared again, with detailed new annotation, and *The Christian* was expanded from four to six books, both in 1796; *The Dying Prostitute*, one of several poems which had been appended to the 1783 edition of *The Christian*, was issued separately in 1797.

In spite of all the literary activity and the evidences of good will which his titles suggest, Charles Crawford presents something of an enigma. Few traces remain of a man who patronized so many

printers, and seldom the same one twice, that suspicion arises of some flaw of irascibility, or perhaps of inability or unwillingness to meet financial obligations. He may have been—though I suspect he was not—the Charles Crawford who in 1785 acquired eight hundred acres of land in Bedford and Northampton counties, and another four hundred acres in Huntington County seven years later.<sup>1</sup> He was an active member of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery and the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage.<sup>2</sup> In 1784 he contributed a letter to the *Freeman's Journal* over the signature of "Justice" in which he recommended to Philadelphians the tract recently printed by Isaac Collins in Trenton entitled *A Serious Address to the Rulers of America, on the Inconsistency of Their Conduct Respecting Slavery*.<sup>3</sup> It was undoubtedly he who is listed in the Philadelphia Directory of 1794 as Charles Crawford, gentleman, residing at 163 North Third Street. But these are the only clues which records have been found to disclose.

More hints to his identity are furnished, however, by autograph annotations in several surviving copies of his books. On the title page of *The Christian* in the Huntington Library, for example, someone has described the author as "Charles Crawford of Garnock"; in *Observations on Negro Slavery* as preserved in the New York Public Library, he is named "Viscount Garnock," an attribution which is written also into some of his works in the libraries of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the New-York Historical Society, and Columbia University. Further evidence is offered by the discovery that the poem "Augustus and Sophronia" which is included in *The Christian* volume is virtually identical with a poem published nine years earlier in London as *Sophronia and Hilario* by Charles Crawford, a Fellow Commoner of Queens College Cambridge. Following directions pointed by these clues, something can be reconstructed of the career of Charles Crawford who, if he had no other distinction, might be remembered briefly as responsible for four fifths of the total

<sup>1</sup> *Pennsylvania Archives, Third Series*, XXV, 479.

<sup>2</sup> See Crawford's preface to his translation of J. P. Brissot de Warville's *An Oration upon the Necessity of Establishing at Paris, a Society to Co-operate with Those of America and London, Towards the Abolition of the Trade and Slavery of Negroes*, appended to T. Clarkson, *An Essay on the Impolicy of the Slave Trade* (Philadelphia, 1788), 137.

<sup>3</sup> Reprinted in *Observations on Negro Slavery*, 21-24.

number of volumes of poetry produced during what may be thought of as our first national year.

Charles Crawford was born in Antigua, the second son of Alexander Crawford, and was baptized at St. John's Church on that island on October 28, 1752. His father was a prosperous landowner and member of a family which had come to the West Indies early in the eighteenth century. He had served as provost marshal, had married well, and through industry increased his holdings in plantation land. On his death in 1772, he provided generously for his family: John Francis, the older son, was heir to the estate, but Charles, who was at the time in England, received a legacy of £2,000 outright and an annual income of £150.<sup>4</sup>

In England, Charles Crawford as a minor had been placed by his father under the temporary guardianship of one Michael Lovell, who seems to have handled the elder Crawford's business affairs in London. "It is well known," explained Mr. Lovell, "to be usual, among the West-India merchants, to have their children consigned to their care." In this instance, however, the responsibility seems to have been enlarged because young Charles Crawford was headstrong and hot-tempered. "When some of these young West Indians first advance to manhood," his guardian further explained, "they are frequently less discrete, and more expensive, than those born in colder climes. Mr. Crawford is a young West-Indian, whose father we offended by our indulgence to the son, whilst the son was offended by our following his father's directions." Relations between Mr. Lovell and his ward were strained to the point that one day, apparently in the summer of 1772, at high noon on a crowded street in Cheapside, the young man publicly caned his merchant protector. "A greater insult to the metropolis could not have been offered," said people who did not like Mr. Lovell and accused him of "making not the least effort to vindicate his honour." The merchant mildly replied: "I bore his impudent anger very patiently, as I dare say any other merchant would have done." The young gentleman, he continued, is now at Cambridge.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Vera Langford Oliver, *The History of the Island of Antigua* (London, 1896), II, 182; see also II, 288; III, 418.

<sup>5</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*, XLIII (October, 1773), 517.

At the university, at Queens College, where he qualified as among "the younger sons of nobility or young men of fortune" who were known as Fellow Commoners because of their privilege of dining at the Fellows' table, Charles Crawford was soon in trouble again. On September 27, 1773, he was expelled. But the action against him was, he contended, not legal because his expulsion had been the result of an order "made by the Master and two Fellows," and the paper served on him had been signed only by the Master; therefore, he disregarded it. Even when the action was confirmed on January 13, 1774, by the signature of the Masters and all ten Fellows, Crawford still remained recalcitrant. But when not long afterward he "came into the college garden with an intent to take possession of his rooms," he was seized by the porter who conducted him, we suppose with force, out of the premises. Crawford brought immediate suit against the porter, and the porter filed articles of peace against Crawford, which articles were withdrawn, however, "on Mr. Crawford's undertaking not to go in to Queen's College till the disputes between him and that society were legally determined." Litigation dragged on until the spring of 1775, when the Court of King's Bench ruled against the West Indian's contention that his expulsion had been "illegal and unstatutable and consequently the assault . . . not justifiable." As a Fellow Commoner, Crawford had been "a mere boarder" and had no corporate rights; the expulsion would therefore stand unless set aside by higher university authorities. It stood.<sup>6</sup>

More attention seems always to be paid to the misdemeanors than to the virtues of young men, and so, as Charles Crawford settles down, it becomes more difficult to discover traces of him, except in his writings. Lack of evidence prevents our taking sides in his quarrel with the college, though sympathies may reach out toward a spirited young man who was stubborn in defense of what he supposed his rights. But he could not have been completely pleasant, and whatever good will we admit to, our attitude toward him is soon strained by an examination of *A Dissertation on the Phaedon of Plato; or, a Dialogue of the Immortality of the Soul* which Crawford published during his residence at Cambridge, and of which he was monstrously

<sup>6</sup> J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigiensis* (Cambridge, 1944), II, 169; Charles Henry Conyer, *The Annals of Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1852), IV, 378.

proud.<sup>7</sup> "My intention," he explained in preface, "was to have given the substance of every thing which has been said in regard to the soul worthy of notice in the Greek, Latin, English, French, Spanish, and Italian languages." If he had not quite done all of that, the present publication might, he said, "be looked upon as the sketch only of a much larger work." He recognized that he opened himself to criticism as "rash and adventrous in the extreme," but was confident of his ability "to pluck some of the laurels which for ages have adorned the tomb of Plato, and from the luxuriant spoil to weave a chaplet for my own brow."

Not only were the ancient philosophers attacked in their arguments in support of the immortality of the soul, but the moderns also—Locke, Hartley, and Malebranche. "There is not one author to be found," he asserted with quick assurance, "who advances one convincing proof of a future state"; what was more, even "the Christian religion plainly denies the immortality of the soul," which was plainly "a quality, and not a distinct substance." The *Dissertation* was just such a forthright pronouncement as many a young man has written, before Crawford's time and since: it shouted loudly of his right independently to reach for truth, and it hedged circumspectly in denying any taint of Deism or disregard of fundamental Christian principles. Like most books of its kind, it was not well received. "We find," said a reviewer, "a pompous display of learning and reading, but . . . little of anything original or peculiar to this author (except his licentious manner)." The tract was distorted by "violent partiality toward some, whom he professes to admire and follow, such as *Lucretius*, *Bolingbroke*, and *Voltaire*." It was conceded, however, that "the young man is certainly possessed of some parts, more reading, and a tolerable share of classical learning," but his "judgment is borne away by the springtide of his vanity." Because he seemed "far from deficient in natural understanding," the time might well arrive when he would "be sufficiently grown in grace

<sup>7</sup> *A Dissertation on the Phaeton of Plato; or, a Dialogue of the Immortality of the Soul. With Some General Observations on the Writings of that Philosopher. To Which Is Annexed, a Psychology: or, an Abstract Investigation of the Nature of the Soul; in Which the Questions of All the Celebrated Metaphysicians on That Subject Are Discussed.* By Charles Crawford, Esq., Fellow Commoner of Queens College, Cambridge (London, 1773).

to become ashamed of this unadvised, illiberal, and indecent performance."<sup>8</sup>

But Crawford himself thought well enough of the *Dissertation* to bring out a second, probably revised and expanded, edition before the next year.<sup>9</sup> In 1774 he also had printed in a handsome small volume the poem which he called *Sophronia and Hilario: An Ode*. It tells in hard pressed iambic quatrains the tale of a young man who put the wildness of youth behind him when he met and married the fair Sophronia. Because of the respect for all women which his wife inspired, Hilario vowed never again to boast of his own former conquests among the fair or to allow any other man to soil their reputation by boasting in his presence. When one evening one of his companions did tell all about the women he had seduced, the young husband challenged him immediately to a duel. Hilario is killed, not because he lacked courage or skill, but because his foot slipped on a stone so that he was foully and illegally run through by his wanton antagonist. The villain is immediately struck down by Hilario's loyal friend Horatio, but Sophronia is left alone, dissolved in grief. Floridly sentimental, the poem is as undistinguished in verse as it is elusive in meaning. However, said the *Monthly Review*, "If Mr. Crawford intended this poem as an essay toward discountenancing the foolish and butcherly custom of duelling, he is to be commended for his design."<sup>10</sup>

There was something in the impetuous character or reputation of the young West Indian poet which made reviewers hesitate in criticism, or perhaps in irony pretend hesitation. *Sophronia and Hilario* was admittedly, said one of them, "not the best poem of the kind that we have ever perused," but the critic then paused in mock alarm: "we forbear; not being ambitious of the honour of having our names joined with those venerable ones of antiquity which this sweet-blooded gentleman has treated with such extraordinary marks of reverence in his Dissertation on Plato."<sup>11</sup> When three years later,

<sup>8</sup> *Monthly Review*, XLIX (December, 1773), 437-443.

<sup>9</sup> No copy of the second edition has been discovered. It is mentioned in the *Monthly Review*, above, as "recently received," and is advertised as "lately published" in *Sophronia and Hilario: An Ode* (London, 1774), [28].

<sup>10</sup> *Monthly Review*, L (May, 1774), 407; see also *Gentleman's Magazine*, XLIV (May, 1774), 230.

<sup>11</sup> *Monthly Review*, L (May, 1774), 407.

in 1777, Crawford presented another slim quarto, *Richmond Hill: A Poem*, which detailed the influences of nature upon an extremely sensitive but not overly original young man, the reviewer struck out more boldly: "Here is a wonderful poet indeed! he was not made by the hand which made human beings: he was made by—a mountain:

'Hail honour'd Mount! inspirer of my lays!  
'Thou mad'st the Bard, and merit'st all his praise.

*Ridiculus mus!*"<sup>12</sup>

Crawford's next adventure in verse, more ambitious than any he had attempted before, was issued in 1781 from Tunbridge Wells, where we may suppose the young man, now almost thirty, lived as a gentleman should, on his patrimony. *The Christian*, published first as "a poem in four books," was to be with him almost all the rest of his life, revised, expanded, and reissued at intervals during the next thirty-five years. It contained not quite a reversal of his attitude as expressed in the *Dissertation*, but a change in emphasis which suggests that the years had brought some calm, or experience some kind of quieting conversion; he may, we think, have married, or wished he had. "I have endeavoured in the poem," he explained in preface to *The Christian*, "to deliver the genuine and unadulterated doctrines of Christianity." The hand of the Enlightenment had apparently descended gently upon him; what he had to say, as far as it can be understood, was mildly humane, evangelical, and almost pietistic, but he was not ahead of his time, in sentiment or in verse. His former rash impetuosity was tempered: "If I have failed in any point, and I should be favoured with a future conviction of error, I will ingenuously retract it." Then, in verse hobbled to closed couplets, he recited the vanity and imperfection of all philosophy, from first to last, pointing a barbed pen particularly toward "bewilder'd Hobbes," "Bolingbroke fallacious," "putrid Hume," and the "flimsey, faithless, profligate Voltaire." These offered neither comfort nor light:

No more by vain Philosophy misled,  
From erring Reason, or from Fancy bred;  
Vague and desultory, no more the Mind,

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, LVII (October, 1777), 328.

In ancient schools Conviction hopes to find.

From these if no conviction we receive,  
What Comfort less the modern Sceptics give.<sup>13</sup>

He urged others to turn, as he had now turned, to the Gospels, to discover examples of true benevolence revealed in the life of Jesus and the wondrous truth of the Sermon on the Mount. It was avarice which had finally betrayed the Son of God, and love of money was still the lure which tempted men to evil. Like many of his time, ready for the prophetic exhilaration which the influence of Swedenborg was beginning to provide, he dwelt long on those portions of the New Testament which foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and its rebirth as "an important solid argument" for Christian nurture. His old antagonist, the *Monthly Review*, liked the prose preface for its "sensible remarks on the proofs of the truth of Christianity," and found it "much better reading than the poem itself, which is but a moderate performance. . . . Mr. Crawford certainly mistakes his talents when he applies them to poetry."<sup>14</sup>

It must have been soon after the publication of *The Christian* that Crawford somehow crossed the Atlantic during war years, to come to Philadelphia, and there to publish volume after volume designed to enlighten and improve his fellows. How he came, or why he came, there seems now no way of knowing. It may have been trade that lured him, some continuing connection with his planter brother in Antigua. It might even have been that he saw in the new emerging western nation something of the New Jerusalem which his pious readings foretold. When he presented an expanded version of *The Christian* in Philadelphia in 1783, he told American readers that it was not so necessary for them as for other people "to prove the truth of christianity, before we," he said, counting on the circumstance, we suppose, of his West Indian birth to explain his use of the first person plural as he included himself among them, "expatiate upon its precepts." He congratulated them on their religious liberty, their disavowal of an established church, and he urged them to expand even farther their tolerance and benevolence: "I would recommend to you to open your hearts, in this enlightened and happy aera, to all man-

<sup>13</sup> *The Christian*, 4-5.

<sup>14</sup> *Monthly Review*, LXIX (September, 1783), 259-260.



kind, to forbear to reproach the Jew, to free the Negro, to tame and to incorporate the Indian, and to invite them all to christianity."<sup>15</sup>

To piece out the volume which was to introduce him to the New World, Crawford added five miscellaneous poems as productions, he hoped, "not altogether unworthy of a Christian." First among them was "Augustus and Sophronia: A Poetical Fiction," a revision of the earlier transatlantic *Sophronia and Hilario*, which Crawford now offered with the hope that it might "have a Tendency, wherever it is read, to decry and to abolish the savage Custom of Duelling." It was followed by "The Dying Prostitute," which was identified—as if to forestall any suggestion that it might be concerned with an American subject—as "originally written in London," then by an equally pathetic and sentimental narrative of "The Forsaken Maiden," by a "Hymn to Spring," and "An Elegy on the Death of Two Young Ladies, Who Died the Same Morning of Inoculation for the Small Pox." Whatever sophisticated sentiment pervaded them, these verses must have seemed to many Philadelphians vapid indeed beside the cleverly devised satire and the pungent, penetrating wit with which Francis Hopkinson and Philip Freneau and others among their patriotic and quarreling citizens were enlivening their newspapers. If the sophistication and the sentiment appealed as imported commodities, no record of it remains, for the city was filled with too many other exciting things to leave much time for public discussion of poetry.

Nor could the other volumes which Crawford published in Philadelphia in 1783 have fared greatly better. *A Poem on the Death of Montgomery* was a pedestrian salute to the brave ideals of men who helped make the New World free, but it limped in spirit and sentiment behind the undistinguished verse on much the same kind of subject which was at just this time pouring from the prolific pen of Colonel David Humphreys of New England. *Liberty*, which in title might have been expected to find public response, was principally a humanitarian's account of the evils of slavery in the West Indies, a sedate subject which danced incongruously to the pindaric measure which Crawford attempted to impose. *A Poetical Paraphrase on Our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount* was a reminder to freethinkers

<sup>15</sup> *The Christian: A Poem; in Four Books. To Which is Prefixed a Preface in Prose in Defense of Christianity: with an Address to the People of America* (Philadelphia, 1783), iii, v-vi.

everywhere "that the Person who delivered such wise and good precepts could not have been an impostor." In each, good intention was a feebly inadequate cloak for malformed verse. The Beatitudes, for example, have probably seldom been more unimaginatively mangled:

Blessed are they, in spirit who are poor,  
 For they the kingdom shall of heav'n procure;  
 Blessed are they, who innocently grieve,  
 For they celestial comfort shall receive;  
 Blessed the meek, for they full long shall stand  
 In well earn'd honours in the plenteous land.<sup>16</sup>

Crawford's prose is better because it pretends less. *The Observations upon Negro Slavery* of 1784 warrants brief attention from students of our early literature because of a lengthy footnote on Phillis Wheatley, whose career as poet, Crawford said, offered evidence that Negroes are not by nature inferior. The *Observations upon the Downfall on Papal Power*, which may have appeared as early as 1785, is dedicated "To the Emperor of Germany. Most Noble Joseph!" and praises him for "unlimited toleration of the Jews," and *George Foxe's Looking Glass* a few years later is prefaced with a plea for the same toleration.<sup>17</sup> Though his writings do not seem to have been noticed in the Philadelphia press, Crawford apparently grew in reputation among fellow humanitarians. In September, 1788, he hurriedly translated Brissot de Warville's *Oration* urging co-operation among abolitionists everywhere, explaining that he undertook the task in order to save the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery "the expense of hiring a translator," not at all because of "overweening conceit of my own knowledge of the French language."

Yet for all his benevolent good will, Crawford seems to have remained a man with intense pride of birth, an aristocrat as loyal to British institutions as to Christian morality. "I can safely say," he averred, "though I have known many Deists, that I scarcely know one moral character among them."<sup>18</sup> Thomas Paine was a case in

<sup>16</sup> *A Poetical Paraphrase*, 12.

<sup>17</sup> I have found the *Observations upon the Downfall of Papal Power* only in "A new edition" of 1790; the preface, however, is dated November, 1785. No copy of *George Foxe's Looking Glass for the Jews* has been discovered; it is advertised in 1790 in the above *Observations*, 44, as "lately published," with "a Preface, by this Author, in which he contends for the unlimited Toleration of the Jews."

<sup>18</sup> *The Dying Prostitute* (Philadelphia, 1797), iv.

point: "It is common for infidelity and sedition to be united; but Paine, though ignorant and absurd, seems to have done more mischief than almost any man in the propagation of both" as he scattered "'firebrands, arrows, and death' through the world." Crawford called on divine justice to bring retribution to so vile an offender, so "*putrid and offensive* when alive" that his inevitable damnation is clearly manifest: "Let those who have raised the works of this detestable enemy of God and man, by a false praise, beware the law . . . here, and the punishments hereafter." Every student of history, he said, should remember "that some of the Roman emperors who persecuted Christians, died in as horrible a manner as it is possible Tom Paine will die."<sup>19</sup> For himself, Crawford stated his position without equivocation: "I am no Democrat, no contender for the wild and mischievous doctrine that all men are equal; for reason and Christianity teach us that a king is above a subject, a governor above a citizen, and the master above his servant."<sup>20</sup>

Nor did he approve of rebellions, even when they were called revolutions: "There is nothing," he said, "in any part of the scriptures which is favourable to the wanton murder of kings and nobility, from an erroneous idea of equality." His *Essay on the Eleventh Chapter of the Revelation of St. John* was dedicated to the thesis that, although the great earthquake mentioned in that part of the Bible was prophetic, its prophecy was not fulfilled with the fall of France. He warned Americans to beware, to listen carefully to the advice of John Adams which was, said Crawford, that "there is better chance of the interests of the United States being promoted by the establishment of a limited monarchy, than by a republic." He decried the atheism of Mirabeau and Robespierre and "the execrable and nonsensical writings" of Thomas Paine. He seems to have been frightened by the upsurge of sentiment toward Jefferson, and he may have been disturbed by the essays which Freneau at just this end-of-a-century time was contributing to the *Aurora* over the pseudonym of "Robert Slender, One of the Swinish Multitude." Perhaps, Crawford admitted, some few of these "modern anarchists are misguided enthusiasts," but not all of them; they rather "resemble the infidel

<sup>19</sup> *An Essay on the Eleventh Chapter of the Revelation of St. John* (Philadelphia, 1800), 62 (note).

<sup>20</sup> *An Essay on the Propagation of the Gospel* (Philadelphia, 1799), 5.

atheists, who existed in the time of the apostle," and who must be attacked as St. John had attacked them. This "republican delusion," the "most mischievous that ever afflicted society," rose through a "perversion of the scripture by ignorant or designing men," or by enthusiastic partiality to such Roman authors as Tacitus, Livy, Lucan, and Ovid, rather than to the holy word of God.<sup>21</sup>

"The titles of duke, marquis, earl, count, and baron," said Crawford, "have nothing absurd in them." Indeed, "the title duke is used by Moses, who was a great advocate for subordination and order." How important, then, it is "to expose the aim of those fanatical democrats, who have wished to bring the nobility of England, after that of France, into contempt." After all, he temporized, "though some things may be wrong, there are many right in the English government."<sup>22</sup>

Soon thereafter Charles Crawford returned to England, probably in 1800, certainly by 1803. It may have been the death of his older brother in Scotland, in April, 1800,<sup>23</sup> and the necessity for helping settle his brother's estate which sent him back over the Atlantic again. It may have been that the New Jerusalem of America seemed doomed because of its infidel democracy. It may have been that his brother's death seemed to open opportunities for inheritance of something more valuable than estate by bringing Charles Crawford, he must have thought, one step nearer to the titles which for generations had been held by members of the Lindsay and Crawford families, to which he by tradition if not by record belonged. The present twenty-second Earl of Crawford, fourth Viscount Garnock, was a little younger than he, but he had led a rugged life as an officer of the British army; he was unmarried, and without heirs.<sup>24</sup>

Only one volume with Crawford's name on the title page appeared in Philadelphia after 1800, and that was a "second edition," perhaps pirated, of *An Essay on the Propagation of the Gospel*, in 1801. Two years later, in 1803, his *Poems on Several Occasions* was published in London in two handsome volumes, the first volume containing *The Christian* in six books, the second, the shorter poems. "In proportion

<sup>21</sup> *Essay on the Eleventh Chapter of the Revelation of St. John*, 12, 34-57 *passim*.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 48, 72.

<sup>23</sup> Oliver, I, 182.

<sup>24</sup> See Sir James Balfour Paul, *The Scots Peerage* (Edinburgh, 1906), III, 40-41.

to our approbation of the virtuous and amiable tendency of Mr. Crawford's writings," said the still critical *Monthly Review*, "must be our regret in being restrained . . . from paying any high compliment to his Muse. . . . Good meaning is not sufficient atonement for bad poetry."<sup>25</sup> But Crawford, no more now in England than he had been in America, was not easily shut off. He began to issue a series of *Letters to the Hebrew Nation* which stirred up enough controversy to require an answer from a German apologist more than twenty years later.<sup>26</sup> And then, in 1814, he published as his last book a fine, fat quarto of *The Poetical Works of Charles Earl of Crawford and Lindsay, Viscount Garnock*, in which he printed again, and for the last time, the poems over which he had been working for almost forty years.

Little more is discovered of Charles Crawford, and even less of his pretensions to nobility. When George, Earl of Crawford, Viscount Garnock, did die, in Ayrshire, in 1808, still without heir, and "the dignities of Lindsay and Garnock devolved on the heirs male of the Lords Lindsays of the Byres,"<sup>27</sup> several rivals for the title put forth their claims, some persisting in attempting to restore what the *Gentleman's Magazine* called their "dormant dignity" even fourteen years later, but with no success.<sup>28</sup> Among them, though his case never seemed to have reached high enough to become matter of record, was Charles Crawford, formerly of Philadelphia, who may have based his claim on descent from a collateral line or perhaps even from one of the natural children which one or another of the Earls

<sup>25</sup> *Monthly Review*, n.s., XLV (September, 1804), 94.

<sup>26</sup> *A Second Letter to the Hebrew Nation* was published in London in 1807; *The First and Second Letters to the Hebrew Nation* was advertised as "lately published" in the *Poetical Works* (London, 1814), 211; *Three Letters to the Hebrew Nation* appeared in 1817: it may be assumed that a *First Letter* and perhaps a *Third Letter* were also issued separately, though they seem not to have survived. Evidence of controversy is supplied by the listing in the *British Museum Catalog of Printed Books* which lists Bennett(s) *Israels Beständigkeit. Eine . . . Beleuchtung mehrerer Bibelstellen, insbesondere sogenannter messianischer Weissagungen; in kritischer Erwiderung auf das von Lord Crawford erschienene öffentliche Sendschreiben an die hebräische Nation* (1835).

<sup>27</sup> *The Scots Peerage*, III, 40-41.

<sup>28</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*, XCII (February, 1822), 172; see also *Journals of the House of Lords*, LV, 214-215.

of Crawford were said to have produced.<sup>29</sup> When the history of rightful holders of the titles after which he aspired was written, Charles Crawford was dismissed as simply another unsuccessful claimant, but one who stubbornly and without any legal grounds whatever "assumed the title of Earl of Crawford and Lindsay." He was remembered as having "lived for many years at Cheltenham," an increasingly strange old gentleman who "distinguished himself by his liberal subscriptions to charities," especially missionary societies, and who "published several poems, for the most part . . . very indifferent."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *The Scots Peerage*, II, 42. There had been an earlier Charles Crawford in the family, a younger son of John, first Viscount Garnock, who died in 1746 "without legitimate issue." The administration of his estate "occasioned a family dispute" which just may have caused Alexander Crawford in Antigua to have named his second and next-born son after him, as he may also be supposed to have named his first son after the deceased's titled father. But no more than could researchers in the early nineteenth century can I today discover the links between Alexander Crawford of Belfast who settled as a planter in Antigua early in the eighteenth century and the titled family in Ayrshire from which our Charles Crawford claimed descent.

<sup>30</sup> A. W. C. L. Crawford, *Lives of the Lindsays* (London, 1849), II, 294 (note).