

DAVID BRUCE, FEDERALIST POET OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA.

By Harry R. Warfel

The chief interest of the works of nearly all of the American poets of the post revolutionary period is the political satire. Beginning with the works of Freneau and going down the scale to the least important writers we find what really amounts to a verse criticism and history of the times. Bruce took western Pennsylvania for his field and covered it with no mean ability. The first poem in this group expresses "The Author's Political Opinion." The prefatory quotation from Pope's "Essay on Man" indicates quite largely the philosophy of the Scots-Irishman.

"For forms of Government let fools contest,
Whate'er is best administered is best."

In Hudibrastic octameter, but more in the manner of Pope, Bruce lectures his audience on the foolishness of making distinctions between governments merely because the chief magistrates' names are different.

Whare Deil's the diff'rence i' the thing.
'Twixt Consul, President, or King?

Peace, liberty and prosperity are always secure, because the laws will protect an honest man. But when the mob—here referring to the inevitable result of the Democratic-Republican theory of government by all—is given the leadership, he begs to be allowed to leave.

Haud off frae me the clam'rous clan,
Wha system hate an' settled plan,-
A restless discontented crew,
Whase thoughts aye run on something new.
Frae, envy, pride, or mad ambition,
They're never pleased with their condition,
But think anither state of things
Wad better suit their wild designs.

The anti-Federalists were very strong in the western part of Pennsylvania because of the widespread belief that the constitution hampered the expression of the individual will in business and politics. The Whiskey Rebellion had taught them that business was controlled by the national government, and that no matter how distasteful the law or how they opposed its adoption, they were forced to obey it. The frontiersman always opposes the restriction put upon

him by the community, state, or nation, and seeks to return into law the former supremacy of the individual. The political philosophy of Jefferson and the motto of the French Revolution, "Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality", gave these people their ideals. Leaders and led embraced the doctrine wholeheartedly. Gallatin and Brackenridge were loud in their espousal of the French ideals, as indeed were most of the officials elected in Pennsylvania in 1799.

It is now very difficult for us, who see how wisely our forefathers laid the foundation of the new nation, to understand why these westerners courted the French revolutionary ideals. The answer becomes apparent when we reflect upon the events of the American Revolution. The assistance of, and our alliance with, the French tied the hearts of the Americans so sentimentally to the French that their most outrageous actions did not alienate our forefathers. And when England went to war with France in 1793, our sympathies naturally inclined toward the French. The struggle for liberty of these people, considered to have been undertaken because of the success of the American colonies, despite the inhuman and barbarous excesses, won popular sympathy among Americans, for they felt, as "Citizen" Brackenridge argued, that the Americans had led the way, and they must support, even by going to armed assistance, the struggle of his friendly people. (7)

When England, in the war with France, attacked and siezed American vessels and impressed seamen of American birth into the British navy, the opinion of the nation divided: the Federalists favored peace through agreement; the Republicans urged immediate war. The Proclamation of Neutrality, issued in 1793, antagonized the Republicans because they saw in that act a repudiation of the only ally America had had, France. Antagonism between the growing parties, the "British" and "French," rose to fever heat. Neither trusted the other, and both resorted to violent abuse. Rapidly partisan newspapers were established to praise friends and abuse enemies. Freneau, for example, was prevailed by Jefferson and others to issue a paper in Philadelphia to espouse the "French" cause. "The distrust and hatred were intense and personal," and "each party believed that to turn the government over to the other meant national ruin." (8)

(7) *Political Miscellany* (New York.) 1793, pp. 27-31.

(8) T. F. Moran, *The Formation and Development of the Constitution*, p. 262.

Not only this Federalist fear urged Bruce on in his attacks, but the growing brazenness and chicanery of the French in the seduction and prostitution of the Republican leaders made him almost hysterical in his denunciation both of the French nation and the political ideas engendered there. Between 1793, when England and France went to war, and 1799, the close of the period represented in Bruce's volume, French agents were in the United States for the purpose of securing aid and for the purpose of reducing the government of this nation under the power of France. The first activity in which the French hand played was the arrival of the French minister, Edmond Charles Genet, on April 8, 1793. Before presenting his credentials to President Washington, he enlisted men and commissioned privateers to capture British vessels in American waters. Washington, amazed at his affrontery, received him coldly. His rousing welcome by the people having emboldened him, Genet disregarded the requests of Washington, and his recall was asked in August. In the enthusiasm which greeted the minister, many republican clubs were founded. Among these was the Sans-Culottes Light Infantry Company in Philadelphia. Cobbett, in his *Porcupines's Gazette* for May 8, 1798, quotes from his journal to portray the savage partisanship which motivated this group while Jay was negotiating with the British. "August 11, 1794. Went today to see the sans-culottes process up Market Street [Philadelphia].—Scandalous work.—More than four thousand Americans with French cockades.—Heard their blood-thirsty howlings with horror.—Saw them march down street under French flag.—Saw them burn English flag. Gave them a hearty curse." The march against Pittsburgh in the Whiskey Rebellion, which took place a few days before the date of the Philadelphia parade, was said to have been caused by the French leaders, and Cobbett quotes letters and resolutions of the Philadelphia republican club which indicated sympathy with the westerners and ambiguously promised support.

In the spring of 1796 P. A. Adet, the new French minister, entered actively upon a scheme for wresting the western country from the union. Advised chiefly by Gal-

latin, of Whiskey Rebellion fame, Adet sent two spies into the west to observe, to urge the election of Jefferson, and to urge an alliance with France. The plan, simply, was to surround and then dominate or possess the United States. This plot was an outgrowth of the French hatred of the Jay treaty. Indeed, because of the Jay treaty, France this year, 1796, abrogated the treaty of 1778 with the United States.

The duplicity of Talleyrand in dealing with the American minister, C. C. Pinckney, and later with a commission, coupled with the capture of neutral American vessels, weakened the hold of French ideas on America considerably. Although many men left the Republican ranks, Jefferson's statement to Mazzei in his letter of April 24th, 1796, that "the main body of our citizens—remain true to their republican principles," was still quite true in 1798. The French had drawn many American leaders to their aide by flattery and bribery: Jefferson, Monroe, Gallatin, and others, who directed the political thinking of thousands of followers. The success of the French in America led them to boast freely, even so late as 1798, that President John Adams was in the pay and service of France.

That David Bruce was frightened, or at least greatly irritated, by the actions of the French and by the Americans' sublime folly in listening to the revolutionary enthusiasts does not surprise us, for the Federalist party stood for peace and orderly centralized government, and David Bruce was a devout worshipper at the altar of the Hamiltonian political philosophy.

The chief political theory of Bruce and the one which he stressed most, was this: "Men of sense and property must unite in defending the present republican form of government or the ignorant, and unthinking, the idle, the worthless, or the poorer part of the community, who form a considerable share of the population, would, under the guidance of artful, ambitious, and unprincipled demagogues, overturn the government". (10)

The great ease with which the crowd was led by the demagogues is trenchantly satirized in "Democracy: A Fable." In the characteristic Ramsay manner, Bruce tells the simple tale of a cow grazing peacefully and giving day

(9) *Porcupine's Gazette*, Philadelphia, March 24, 1794.

(10) Preface to Bruce's Poems

by day a full pail of milk.

Thus did she live, till on a day,
A Bawling Bullock came that way,
Some Paine or Godwin of the Flock,
Who roar'd Reform -----

then began a long discussion
'Bout *equal rights* and *Revolution*.

urging the superiority of the tail over the head. "The simple cow, no better knowing," accepted the "tail doctrine" and flew along backward. Fences she easily conquered and over stones and rocks, through mud and mire she went easily. But when she came to a precipice, "rump would not stop to think," and down the cow stumbled to death. The moral is too evident to need telling!

This Bruce followed with a gorgeous bit of irony in "Paddy's Advice: A new Irish Song" to the tune of "The Night before Larry was stretch'd." Without very great exaggeration Bruce pictures the exultant thoughts which motivated the Jacobins in their search for power. The pictures of the simple, unlettered frontiersmen being led by the ranting Republican demagogues into the grand, aristocratic life they will live under in the new regime, and the merry time they will have listening to "the snap of the guillotine's axe" are as finely drawn and almost as gruesome in their suggestion as the pictures Swift painted in his "Modest Proposal." No better account of the incipient American revolution of the late '90's has come down to us. The call to arms is first.

Now hark ye, Sweet Liberty Boys!

For now are the days of our glory,
Come on, my dear true-hearted shoys!

And drive all your rulers before you.

The magistrate, jury and court,

They stand in the way of our thriving,

They give people little support,

Who have nothing to lose or to keep by them.

Leaders are plentiful. Gallatin, Nicholas, Lyon, and Giles of Congress and the local politicians, Andrew McClure and David Acheson, and others will be at the front.

For example to France we must look,
There's liberty there to the utmost.

And as for religion :

They'll set us at large from the creed
To make us more happy and easy ;
Then the Priest need not trouble his head,
Nor bother us more with his nonsense.
For when there's no devil to dread,
What use for Religion and Conscience ?

"To all Scots-Irishmen, Citizens of America," written for the tune "The Boyne Water," is akin to Byron's "Isles of Greece" in directness, feeling, and fire. He urges the Scots and Irish to remember the heroic deeds of "glorious William," who led "their sires 'gainst Popery and Thraldom," and to repel the "proud, insulting Gaul." Here is Bruce's fear of French conquest. He reminds the Scots of brave Galagacus, the Caledonian prince who defeated the Roman General Agricola, who had marched a large army into the country to subdue it and punish the Caledonians for their obstinacy in refusing to submit to the Roman yoke. The prompt and efficient aid of his fellow-countrymen in the revolt of the colonies is recalled.

When Washington, of deathless fame,
Columbia's flag unfurl'd
The British tyranny to tame,
And free the Western World ;
The danger of the glorious strife,
Hibernians largely shar'd it,
Unheeding loss of limb or life,
When freedom's cause required it.
And can you now endure the rod
Of lawless usurpation ?
And basely tremble at the nod
Of a perfidious nation ?
Those slaves our fathers oft subdu'd
Beneath the British banners.

The reference in the last few lines to the frequent wars between England and France in which the "perfidious nation," France, was defeated by the Scots and Irish, "the best troops" in the British army.

The task of the Scots-Irish in America is evident.

Drive forth, the Scots-Irishman urges, those who would overturn the government by revolution or who would subjugate it to a foreign power.

"Brother Tamie" is an attack upon a recent Irish immigrant, Tom Annan, who published in a newspaper, doubtless, the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, a letter attacking the most respectable man in the country for talents and integrity, either Washington if 'country' means 'nation,' or Judge Alexander Addison if the locality is referred to. As much of the letter is plagiarized from a letter of the notorious Junius, Bruce condemns him to dishonor, and then tells him to keep silent. Both the whipping post and St. Johnston's ribband, the hangman's rope, have been known as punishments.

The next five poems deal with characters at the head of the Republican party in Pennsylvania during the year 1798. Despite the envenomed malice and caustic bitterness in his verse, Bruce, in his preface, "acquits himself of being actuated by the slightest sentiment of enmity or ill-will towards them, as men—It is their political opinion and conduct, only, against which he has declared war. Whether they were convinced of the soundness of their views or not, it does not lessen the mischief which their principles and conduct have done their country."

Hugh Henry Brackenridge is the first to be pilloried. On the eve of the general election for Congress, he was suspected of treachery to the Federalist party. Running as a candidate for this party, he seemed to be splitting the supporters in order to assure the election of Gallatin, the Republican candidate. His later conduct proved the truth of the suspicions, Bruce says in a note, for he turned over totally to the Jacobin side.

Bruce leads up to his point slowly by recalling the Whiskey Rebellion and Brackenridge's successful effort to exculpate himself by means of his history. Be true-hearted and sincere, the Scots-Irishman urges, and shun popular praise. Honesty needs no book to prove its virtue. If dissimulation is continued, Brackenridge will lose the favor of the Federalists and be considered a Republican. Bruce pictures his own love of peace and quietness and his faith in the protecting arm and the law and urges Brackenridge to

emulate him, to scorn ambition's snares and to live in honor.

The poem then turns upon the man for whom Brackenridge is smoothing the way, and, as the last four stanzas express most accurately the Federalist opinion of Albert Gallatin, quotation is imperative. There is little, if any over-statement here, and even the gentle Veech, (11) unlike Henry Adams, in his biography of Gallatin, admits the faults of the man who rose to be one of the nation's shrewdest financial experts as Secretary of Treasury under Jefferson.

A story, Lad, begins to rin,
 That you're owre great wi' Gallatin,
 The Wily Frenchman,
 An' that again to put him in
 Is your intention.
 Ye ken this slee, auld-farran knave
 Has gi'en the Government a heave,
 Wi' intent to throw it i' the grave
 O' mobbish ruin,
 That he an' Willie Thrum might weave
 A braw French, new one.
 Ye ken how, wi' ilk art an' shift,
 He excused French robbery and theft,
 An', wi' his will, wad let nane lift
 A han' again' 'em.
 But rather wad gie them a gift,
 Than strive to restrain 'em.
 Gif sic a man be sent again
 Whare he can put his plots in train,
 To set (which ay has been his aim)
 The mob amadding;
 What pledge hae honest peacefu' men
 For house and hauding?

Here, indeed, is a brief criticism of the life of Gallatin from 1791, the inception of the Whiskey Insurrection, to 1790. During these years he supported, as a member of the state legislature from 1790 to 1795 and as a member of congress from 1795 to 1802, the ultra-Republican policies. As secretary of the Whiskey Rebellion preliminary meetings and as counsellor to Adet in his attempt to win the West, he seemed, in the minds of his opponents, to be undermining the government at every opportunity. In congress (11) James Veech, *The Monongahela of Old*.

he was the stout champion and apologist of the French. He and William Findley (Willie Thrum, a former weaver by trade) supported every motion presented to avert war with France. They voted against granting the customary recess in honor of President Washington in 1797, and in every word and deed opposed the commander-in-chief. Through it all, however, Gallatin never lost the confidence of his constituents. Veech calls him a man of integrity, high purpose, and superior abilities; Bruce calls him a demagogue, a "slee, auld-farran knave."

Immediately after the third election of Gallatin to Congress in 1798, Bruce addressed an epistle to him. In Hudibrastic form and tone, he attacks the integrity of this very prominent legislator. He re-echoes the charges, made in the Federalist press, that Gallatin was the American representative of the French revolutionary party. The epistle is really a denunciation of the French revolution and an exposition of the venal and lecherous character of the French Goddess of Liberty.

The poem opens with the admission that Gallatin is great, if first in election determines greatness. Bruce hopes that his fortunes will be more happy than those of the Roman Gracchi. But where they were honest and sincere Gallatin merely panders to the crowd for their applause and votes.

They never carried a factious zeal,
To th' injury of the Commonweal:
They never taught degrading maxims,
The vile resort of sinking factions.

Gallatin in the course of his years in congress, coined numerous phrases which became anathema to the Federalists.

But what I wanted most to say,
Was something 'bout *la Liberte*,
that fine French lady,
Of whom, they say, Voltaire was daddy,
Dry nurs'd, and fondled in the straw,
Like Gipseys' brat, by Jean Rousseau.

Her sporting with the French leaders and her delight in taking her friends to be

Completely *shav'd* by *national razor*
are vividly pictured. Although her friends in France de-

sert her, she still has one friend in America.

Some say, this lady crossed the sea,
With French Ambassador Genet,
And that a certain *factious party*
Did give the jade a welcome hearty,
Tho' Washington, at her reception,
Frown'd sternly, and deny'd protection.
But, since of late, the nymph's supporters
Begin to fail her on all quarters,
She has, they say, to you come weeping,
And you have ta'en her into keeping.

To satire the "silly and ridiculous" statements of the Republicans during the time the American mission, General Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Elbridge Gerry, and John Marshall, vainly sought to treat with Talleyrand concerning the French destruction of American commerce, Bruce wrote "His Honour's Opinion: or, the New Democratic Doctrine of Non-Resistance." The preface to the poem, not printed in the book version, explains the humor and wrath of the poet.

"The opinions which the Democrats now hold forth and the arguments they resort to are not only false and humiliating in the extreme, but appear to me to be so silly and ridiculous as to become a fit subject for the comic muse.

"I must confess, however, that this is not the reason for merriment. When the existence of our government is at hazard, and the extinction of our liberties threatened by a foreign nation, aided by a malignant and desperate faction among ourselves, every man's mind ought to be impressed with the danger, and seriously engaged about the means of repelling it. But when the clearest and most substantial reasoning is not attended to, and the plainest and most positive facts disregarded or not credited, when the grossest falsehoods and misstatements, the weakest and most absurd arguments, and the most slanderous tales are eagerly listened to, and industriously circulated, every good man who loves his country, is called upon to step forward, with the best of his talents and abilities, to the aid of reason and truth.

"It is from this laudable motive, and from no vain ambition of being thought a Poet, or malignant disposition to gratify spleen or private resentment that I have wrote the following song.

"The shafts of ridicule have been found to prevail against prejudice and folly when the sword of reason has failed, and there are few men, however abandoned in principles, or incapable of just and generous sentiments, who can bear to be laughed at.

"O! that I was able to point this powerful weapon aright, and to give it all the force and energy which the times require; for never did such a species of ridiculous madness pervade any nation as at present exists among us. A stupid admiration and affection for the foreign nation, to the abandonment of our own country's most sacred rights, and every thing which ought to be held dear among free men—and this is called Patriotism! ! A nation, too, black with every crime which can debase human nature—the vilest perfidy, the most atrocious cruelty, open and profligate venality and the most blasphemous impiety!—Yet these are the people, who (according to the democratic creed) are to give peace and happiness to mankind, and introduce the blessed millenium upon the earth! ! !" (12)

The chief offender, "His Honour," was Thomas McKean,, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania and, later, Governor. As he rode about the state he is said to have been loud in the exposition of the doctrines ridiculed by Bruce: 1. that we should keep out of war to retain our allies; 2. that there is a possibility of defeat and death in war; 3. that resistance to France would be futile; 4. that we should surrender our foreign commerce and lay up our ships, or, as Congressman Giles of Virginia expressed it, "draw them up within our shell"; and 5. that we should give aid to France.

But, France is our sister,
We're bound to assist her,
And give her a part of our riches,
And if she'd require it,
(Tho' we cannot well spare it),
To leave ourselves e'en *without breeches*.

(12) *Porcupine's Gazette*, June 16, 1798.

And finally the last stanza sums up the whole doctrine:

Since *policy* says, then,
 To *submit* is like wise men.
 And *religion* and *virtue* require it;
 No more need we say,
 But their dictates obey,
 And be *robb'd* and *insult'd*, and bear it.

Here is lilt, movement, vigor, catchy directness also with gorgeous irony. It is in the grotesque conclusion of each stanza that the Republican doctrine is pulled to the tearing point. The hyperbole, following the platitudinous beginning in each stanza, is the essence of humor. Each stanza thus has its small climax and the whole song rises to the grand climax in the last line.

The operation of the French pirates and the disgraceful conduct of Talleyrand in refusing to treat with the American commission so weakened the hold of the French on the American people and so destroyed the confidence placed in the Republican party, that measures were taken to restore friendship and goodwill between the two nations. The plan finally adopted was cleverly executed by a Dr. George Logan, of Philadelphia. Assuming to have gone to France, he had his wife give out a letter in which he announced that he had "despatches for our government, calculated to restore . . . harmony. The most positive assurances that France is ready to enter on a treaty for the amicable accomodation of all matters in dispute." (13) It was the opinion of Cobbett and Bruce and others that this letter was a warning to France that a continuation of its policy would ruin the Republican party in the United States. With what alarm the Federalists viewed this new move is seen in Cobbett's prophecy that "a civil war or a surrender of Independence is not more than a twelve months' distance." (14) It was commonly believed that the Republican societies had united to effect an immediate overthrow of the nation.

In his epistle to Logan, Bruce, lacking his usual facility and ease, seems to grind out slowly and painfully an attack upon the French through Logan. It pictures quite accurately, though without felicity, the Federalist view of

(13) *Philadelphia Gazette*, November 9, 1798.

(14) *Porcupine's Gazette*. November 10, 1798.

the relation between France and America in 1798. The French theme was wearing thin, and the Scots-Irishman abandoned it after writing this poem.

The Jacobins having boasted that they had silenced Bruce, he replied with an attack upon their base, sordid motives in "Jouk an' let the jaw gae owre," bend and let the wave go over. The Scots phrase signifies the accomodation of one's self to circumstances from motives of interest, selfish prudence or fear. In a political sense it may be interpreted 'to avoid war by submission,' and happily characterizes the tame politics of the Jacobins with regard to France at this period. (15)

There follows two fables on the subject of the inability of the herd to understand the true motives which actuate the demagogues. "The Strange Cattle" urges the necessity of the amalgamation of the immigrant foreign groups with the party in authority. "The Progress of Democracy" is a restatement of Bruce's objection to 'government by all,' for he finds that the people are destroyed by the very leaders who promise to aid and uplift them. This same idea is again expressed in "A New Song for the Jacobins." It will be the same in America as in France:

Whare a' the folk, like horses wild,
Did frae their tethers break.
But, by and bye, the flatt'ring grooms,
Their bridles on did slip,
An' now, upo' their backs, like deils,
They ride wi' spur an' whip.

That no copies of the *Herald of Liberty*, the Republican organ of Western Pennsylvania, have come down to us is a matter of regret, for in it we would find the verses and extravagant Democratic statements that led the Scots-Irishman to compose some of his political verse. Not the least interesting material which has been lost are the attacks made upon Bruce by an unknown versifier. A second answer, "An Ode to the Man of Rhyme of the Herald," doubtless ended the tilt, for it struck, if somewhat unfairly, a mortal blow.

(15) Bruce's note, p. 72.

The Scots-Irishman discovered a new party on the political horizon, the Small Federalists, a group which apparently approved of the actions of the Federalist officials, but which at heart agreed with the Jacobins. The certainty with which Bruce saw national destruction written between the lines of the republican principles is evident from the following statement: The Small Federalists' "attachment to Jacobin principles by which are meant the doctrine of equality, sovereignty of the people, and right of resistance, which unless exploded from all free and legitimate governments, no regular system of civil liberty can have duration . . . and mankind will finally revert to that state of savage independence . . . which we see our Indian neighbors so *happily* enjoy." (16)

Addressing the Jacobins in English so that they should not fail to understand his ideas, Bruce wrote "To Liberty." Liberty, he says, does not dwell with the birds in the air, among wild herds or wild men, for they can be conquered by stronger men, and they have no recourse to legal remedy.

Nor dwell'st thou in the mad uproar
Of the licentious multitude,
Who, in thy stead, an imp adore,
Unseemly, and besmear'd with blood.

Liberty is to be found only among those who are upright, just and free from the lust for petty power.

"To the Democratic-Republicans" represents that party as being constituted of the same social elements as the present I. W. W. The needy adventurer, the exiled traitor, and the worthless and unprincipled of all nations join together, Bruce says, in the hope that they may establish a system of government in which the enormity of their crimes would be winked at.

When Brackenridge was appointed Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, Bruce accused him of having sold his honor for political preferment. For this defection, he shall lose his power to write poetry and the *Tree of Liberty*, his new periodical, will serve as a gallows to hang him and the rest of the renegades. Brackenridge is said to have been the author of many of the silly and abusive election songs so popular in 1799. James B. Oliver in his *Recollec-* (16) Bruce's note, p. 89.

tions says that Brackenridge wrote burlesque poetry on almost every prominent Federalist candidate. Examples of these verses are reprinted in Cowan's *Southwestern Pennsylvania in Song and Story*. The manner of these electioneering songs is imitated by Bruce in "Tom M'Kean," a lampooning of the Jacobin platform on which McKean made his campaign.

Cobbett prefaced Bruce's "The Author's Political Opinion" with a statement expressing his dislike of "crabbed Scots verse." This led Bruce to write his best verse criticism of the Jacobins and a press criticism of "Peter Porcupine" which is admirable for its insight and sanity. Despite the fact that Bruce and Cobbett were linked together in the same enterprise, the defeat of the Jacobins, he finds much to censure in the manner of the brilliant Englishman. Because of the fairness with which Bruce wrote, this picture is probably the sanest of the contemporary portraits of Cobbett.

"----Although I do not quite approve the manner in which he conducted his Gazette, and altogether reprobate some of his publications towards the close of it; yet I cannot help thinking that his writings were certainly useful to the American government and the people. Possessing strong reason, and great ingenuity of mind, and acuteness of wit, he contributed much by his arguments and satire to check the progress, and weaken the operations of the Jacobin principles on the minds of the people of these states. Those diabolical principles, which by substituting wild theories in government instead of the lessons of experience, and taking off from the minds of men the restraints of religion, break down the bulwarks of society, and leave it a prey to every wicked suggestion of the human heart, and every unbridled passion.

"His writings likewise did much toward curing the American mind of that fatal prejudice for the French nation, which had well nigh put in jeopardy the independence of the country.—Whatever his motives might be, the Americans were benefitted by his means, and they ought to acknowledge it, and 'give the devil his due.'" (17) (17) Bruce's note, p. 106.

We really expect unqualified approval and laudation of Cobbett from Bruce, for the two men, each in his own way, were doing the very same work. Both sought to reunite England and America into friendly alliance, to destroy the French influence, to hoot down the opponents of the Federalists, Gallatin and McKean especially, to refute the atheistic Tom Paine, and to make the principles of the Federalist party prevail. There is a similarity between the men in their almost reckless straightforwardness, in their ability to discover falsehood, and in their passion for honesty, justice, and uprightness.

One stanza will have to suffice to indicate the method of the Scots-Irishman used in picturing the hated Jacobin principles:

Virtue they mak a hobby-horse,
An' Liberty they treat still worse,
 They mak it but a rattle
To please the childish blinded crowd,
An' mak them seek *ideal good*
 In fields o' bluidy battle.

"The Democratic Office-Hunter" stands, probably, as the most caustic satire ever written upon Gallatin because of its odious connotation. In this tale the rodent family is gathered for the purpose of electing a king. A large rat speaks of their former inferior position in the state. Now, however, he proves by the New Philosophy that all animals are free and equal and are joined in sweet fraternity. The New Philosophy having been adopted, the rat counsels them to vote according to these principles. If all the larger tribes vote, they can outnumber the larger beasts and elect a member of their own species king of animaldom.

He ceased.—The meeting with a clap
Shouted—"Huzza for Good King Rat.

The application echoes a familiar statement:

'Tis this mob-flatterers would be at,
They all *want places*, like the Rat,
With false delusive, senseless babble,
They ply the passions of the rabble
To get their votes. Change but their name,

And, Gallatin, "de te narratur."

Brackenridge is brought in for another rap before the curtain is drawn. Having now gone over entirely to the Republican party, he is pitied rather than scorned, for Bruce tells him that he has certainly sold his soul by prostituting his talents.

Then ye maun bawl about Liberty,
An' 'gainst the treaty made by Jay;
Wi' mony mair things in that way;
Tho' in your conscience,
Ye b'lieve that ilks word ye say
Is but d-----d nonsense.

The reward will ultimately come in this election to the governorship, Bruce thinks, for the panderer to the mob always rises to the heights of political success.

The book closes with a touch of high comedy. All of the Republican characters mentioned in the book are marshalled together for a "Review of the Worthies." The telling points made throughout the book are repeated and lengthy footnotes explain the perfidy of each man. The Introduction, written at the same time, is the same in tone and manner as the "Review" with the exception of the stanzas of dedication to Judge Alexander Addison. Alone of all the high officials of the West, he attempted to guide the people into honorable channels, but for his service was maligned and gibbeted by the republicans.

The volume as a whole ranks well along with the best of the time. Especially in the lyrics is Bruce successful, for he modelled his poems upon well-known songs, and a certain amount of movement and ease resulted because the tune carried him along. But, the subject matter was his own, and nowhere does it degenerate into mere drivel. The whole volume is still very readable, and that alone is a fair test of the success of these early writers.

Bruce lived nearly thirty years after the publication of his one volume. The few facts which exist concerning him show that he remained a bachelor all his life. The store he established in 1795 was continued until his death in September 1830. During the last eight years of his life he was postmaster of Burgettstown. Tradition reports that he became the oracle to whom all the community went for

advice and that especially in matters pertaining to real estate he was the shrewdest man in the community. A simple slab tombstone marks his grave in the Presbyterian Cemetery, Burgettstown, Pennsylvania:

In
Memory of
David Bruce
who departed this
life September
1830 Aged
about 70 years

With the exception of four poems, the remainder of Bruce's volume tells much of the story of the attempts of the Republicans, or Jacobins, to develop a revolution that would bring the United States under the control of France, the story of the gradual defection of Brackenridge from the Federalist party, the doubtfully wise mission of Logan to conciliate France and America after Talleyrand's refusal to treat with American representatives until a bribe had been given, and the winning of the Pennsylvania election of 1799 by the Republicans. In unrestrained, withering satire, Bruce rains fire and brimstone upon the democratic leaders' heads. Their integrity, their constitutional right to office he challenges. He finds no honor among them; they are traitors.

From the first of these non-political poems, "Verses on the Approach of Spring," we have quoted at the beginning of this monograph. Here rising to a grand climax in which he despairs of the success of his political polemics, Bruce shows his former ease and simplicity in dealing with emotional subjects. The unusual yet happy figures indicate no great striving for effect. The sweet lyric tone and the accuracy of nature description in the following stanzas are rare among early American poets.

Now frosty winter slips the grip,
And bonnie Spring comes saftly on,
Like a young widow, just gat quit
O' her auld, drowsy, feckless [feeble] drone.
As yet, she maun her blackweeds wear,
An' vent her grief in wind an' rain,
But, by an' bye, in green attire,
She'll laugh an' sing on hill and plain.

The management here of the internal rhyme, assonance, and alliteration is, I dare say, unpremeditated, but it shows that the untutored poet possessed more ability than he in his modesty knew.

"To My Music" indicates the cause of his unwillingness to seek professional success. Although he might have been rich as a lawyer, judge, minister, legislator, or married man, he tells the Muse.

I'd rather feel thy inspiring glow
An', on sma' pittance, live wi' you
In a wee cabin,
Than hae the riches o' Peru,
In my sole haudin'.

"The Forlorn," a song to the tune of "Guilderoy," pictures his sorrow in having left behind him in Scotland a beautiful lass by the name of Nelly. The last of these non-political poems is an elegy on the death of Washington. It is typical, in its prosaic and hackneyed praise, of the verse of the time.

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