ABSTRACT

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MARK AKENSIDE AND THE POETRY OF CURRENT EVENTS: 1738-1770.

The aim of this thesis is to provide an analysis of the historical and political context of a group of poems which were written by Mark Akenside between 1738 and 1770. Most of these poems were composed in response to particular political events or situations, or to the publication of works of literature, history, or theology; the remainder are verse-epistles addressed to political figures who were personal friends of the poet. Arguments have also been included for the attribution to Akenside of a small number of anonymous poems.

I have taken a broadly chronological approach. The first chapter covers the period 1738-1739, and discusses the background and references of two poems written before and just after the declaration of the War of Jenkins' Ear. The subject of the second chapter is two poems addressed to the 'patriot' politician William Pulteney in 1742 and 1744 (before and after his supposed political apostasy). The third chapter considers the case for attribution of two short poems on the subject of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745, and includes a discussion of an Ode addressed to the Earl of Huntingdon in 1747. In the fourth chapter, a poem composed during the contested Westminster election of 1749 is discussed, in addition to Odes addressed to Sir Francis-Henry Drake, Charles Townshend, and Dr Caleb Hardinge. The fifth chapter includes a consideration of Odes written on the occasion of the publication of three books: William Warburton's edition of Pope's works, Frederick the Great's *Mémoires...*, and Bishop Hoadly's *Sermons*; a second Ode to Drake is also discussed. The sixth chapter discusses another poem which relates to Warburton, an Ode on the poetry of the Abbé de Chaulieu, and a letter and an Ode on the subject of the Seven Years' War. The conclusion considers Akenside's revisions in the light of allegations that he abandoned his Whig principles and became a Tory towards the end of his life.

My object has been not only to elucidate obscure references and to supply contextual background information, but also to provide a picture of the political and intellectual history of the mid-eighteenth century as seen through the eyes of a highly intelligent, if politically partisan, observer.



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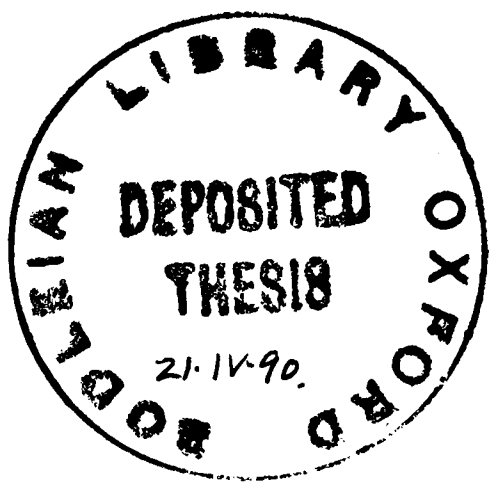
R. Wood

Mark Akenside.

MARK AKENSIDE AND THE POETRY OF CURRENT EVENTS: 1738-1770

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ABBREVIATIONS

The place of publication is London unless otherwise indicated.

Atterbury: *Sermons*	F. Atterbury: *Sermons and Discourses on Several Subjects and Occasions* (2 vols., 1726).
Bedford	John Russell, ed.: *Correspondence of John, 4th Duke of Bedford* (3 vols., 1842-6).
Bennett: *Atterbury*	G.V. Bennett: *The Tory Crisis in Church and State 1688-1730: The Career of Francis Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester* (Oxford, 1975).
Black	Jeremy Black: *British Foreign Policy in the Age of Walpole* (Edinburgh, 1985)
Bolingbroke: *Works*	D. Mallet (ed.): *The Works of the late Right Honourable Henry St. John, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke.* (5 vols., 1754)
Boswell *Life*	James Boswell: *Life of Johnson* ed. G.B. Hill, rev. L.F. Powell (6 vols., Oxford, 1934-50).
Brandenburg: *Mémoires*	*Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg.* (2 vols., Berlin et La Haye, 1751).
Brewer	John Brewer: *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III* (Cambridge, 1976).
Buck	Howard S. Buck: 'Smollett and Dr. Akenside', *JEGP* 31 (January 1932) 10-26.
Bucke	Charles Bucke: *On the Life, Writings and Genius of Akenside with some Account of his Friends* (1832).
Canons	Thomas Edwards: *The Canons of Criticism* (1748); 2nd edn. 1748; 3rd edn. 1750; 4th edn. 1750; 5th edn. 1753; 6th edn. 1758.
Charteris	E. Charteris: *William Augustus Duke of Cumberland and the Seven Years' War* (1925).
Characteristics	Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury: *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (3 vols., 1712).
Chaulieu: *Oeuvres*	*Oeuvres de l'Abbé de Chaulieu*, ed. M. de St. Marc (2 vols., Amsterdam, 1757)

Chesterfield	*Letters of Lord Chesterfield to Lord Huntingdon*, ed. A.F. Steuart (1923).
CJ	*Journals of the House of Commons.*
Collection	Robert Dodsley (ed.): *A Collection of Poems by Several Hands* (6 vols., 1748, 1754, 1758).
Colley	Linda Colley: *In Defiance of Oligarchy: The Tory Party 1714-60* (Cambridge, 1982).
Compend	Francis Hutcheson: *Philosophiae Moralis Institutio Compendaria* (Glasgow, 1742); 2nd edn. 1745; translated as *A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy* 1747.
Cruickshanks	Eveline Cruickshanks: *Political Untouchables: The Tories and the '45* (1979).
Dickinson: *Hoadly*	H.T. Dickinson: 'Benjamin Hoadly', *History Today* xxv no. 5 (May 1975) 349-355.
Dodington *Diary*	*The Diary of the late George Bubb Dodington, Baron of Melcombe Regis: From March 8 1748-9 to February 6 1761* ed. H.P. Wyndham (Dublin, 1784).
Dyce	Rev. Alexander Dyce: 'Life of Akenside'; prefixed to *The Poetical Works of Mark Akenside* (Aldine Edition, 2nd edn., enlarged, 1857).
Egmont *Diary*	*Diary of Viscount Percival, afterwards Earl of Egmont, 1730-47; HMC* (3 vols., 1920-3).
EHR	*English Historical Review*
Evans: *Warburton*	A.W. Evans: *Warburton and the Warburtonians: A Study in Some Eighteenth Century Controversies* (Oxford, 1932).
FED	Lady F. Eliot-Drake: *The Family and Heirs of Sir Francis Drake* (2 vols., 1911).
GM	*The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Register.*
Greenwood	David Greenwood: *William King: Tory and Jacobite* (Oxford, 1969)
Hawkins: *Life*	Sir John Hawkins: *Life of Samuel Johnson, LLD* (1787)
Hastings MSS	*Report on the Manuscripts of the late Reginald Rawdon Hastings, Esq., of the Manor House, Ashby de la Zouche* (*HMC*, 4 vols., 1934).
Herne's *Account*	[T. Herne]: *An Account of All the Considerable Pamphlets that have been published on either Side in the Present Controversy between the Bishop of Bangor and Others* (1717).

Hervey: *Memoirs*	John, Lord Hervey: *Some Materials towards Memoirs of the Reign of King George II* ed. Romney Sedgwick (3 vols., 1931).
H.M.C.	*Historical Manuscripts Commission.*
Hoadly: *Sermons*	Benjamin Hoadly: *Sixteen Sermons Formerly Printed, Now Collected into One Volume.* (1754).
Hoadly: *Works*	John Hoadly (ed.): *The Works of Benjamin Hoadly* (3 vols., 1773).
Hollis	Francis Blackburne: *Memoirs of Thomas Hollis* (2 vols., 1780).
Holmes: *British Politics*	Geoffrey Holmes: *British Politics in the Reign of Queen Anne* (1967).
Holmes: *Sacheverall*	Geoffrey Holmes: *The Trial of Dr Sacheverall* (1973).
Houpt	C.T. Houpt: *Mark Akenside: A Biographical and Critical Study* (Philadelphia, 1944).
Illustrations	John Nichols, ed.: *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century* (8 vols., 1817-1858).
JEGP	*Journal of English and German Philology.*
JMH	*Journal of Modern History.*
JJ	Henry Fielding: *The Jacobite's Journal and Other Political Writings*, ed. W.B. Coley (Oxford, 1974).
Johnson: *Lives*	Samuel Johnson: *Lives of the English Poets*, ed. G.B. Hill (3 vols., Oxford, 1908)
King	William King: *Political and Literary Anecdotes of his own Times* (1818).
Kramnick	I. Kramnick: *Bolingbroke and his Circle: The Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1968).
LC	*The London Chronicle or Universal Evening Post.*
LG	*The London Gazette*
Lit. Anec.	John Nichols, ed. : *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century* (9 vols., 1812-1815)
LJ	*Journals of the House of Lords.*
LM	*The London Magazine*

Mem.Geo. II	Horace Walpole: *Memoirs of King George II* ed. John Brooke (3 vols., New Haven and London, 1985).
Middleton	Richard Middleton: *The Bells of Victory: The Pitt-Newcastle Administration and the Conduct of the Seven Years' War* (Cambridge, 1985).
MLN	*Modern Language Notes*
Monnet	Jean Monnet: *Supplement au Roman Comique; ou Mémoires pour Servir à la Vie de Jean Monnet* (2 vols., 1772).
MR	*The Monthly Review; or New Literary Journal.*
Murphy: *Life*	Arthur Murphy: *An Essay on the Life and Genius of Samuel Johnson* (1792).
Namier and Brooke	Sir Lewis Namier and John Brooke, eds.: *The History of Parliament. The House of Commons 1754-1790* (3 vols., 1964).
NBT	Sir Lewis Namier and John Brooke: *Charles Townshend* (1964)
N&Q	*Notes and Queries*
Nuttall	G.F. Nuttall: *Calendar of Correspondence of Philip Doddridge, 1702-1751* (1979).
Owen	John B. Owen: *The Rise of the Pelhams* (1957).
Paret	P. Paret (ed.): *Frederick the Great: A Profile* (1972).
PMLA	*Proceedings of the Modern Language Association*
Preuss: *Oeuvres*	J.D.E. Preuss (ed.): *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand* (32 vols., Berlin, 1846).
Pyle	A. Hartshorne (ed.): *Memoirs of a Royal Chaplain, 1729-1763. The Correspondence of Edmund Pyle, D.D.* (1905).
RES	*Review of English Studies*
Richardson: *Corresp.*	A.L. Barbauld (ed.): *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson* (6 vols., 1804).
Sedgwick	Romney Sedgwick: *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1715-1754* (2 vols., 1970)
SiR	*Studies in Romanticism*

Somers *Tracts*	*A Collection of Scarce and Valuable Tracts on the most Interesting and Entertaining Subjects.* (4 series, 4 vols., each, 1748; 1750; 1751; 1752).
Speck	W.A. Speck: *The Butcher: The Duke of Cumberland and the Suppression of the '45* (Oxford, 1981).
Stephen: *English Thought*	Leslie Stephen: *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (2 vols., 1876, 3rd ed. 1902, repr. 1962).
Stromberg	R.N. Stromberg: *Religious Liberalism in Eighteenth Century England* (Oxford, 1954).
Stuart *Mem.*	Lady Louisa Stuart: *Memoire of Frances, Lady Douglas*, ed. Jill Rubenstein (Edinburgh, 1985).
Sykes	N. Sykes: 'Benjamin Hoadly, Bishop of Bangor' in F.J.C. Hearnshaw (ed.): *The Social and Political Ideas of Some English Thinkers in the Augustan Age 1650-1750* (1928).
System	Francis Hutcheson: *A System of Moral Philosophy in Three Books* (2 vols., 1755).
Townshend MSS	*Report on the Manuscripts of the Marquess Townshend, HMC* (1887).
Walpole: *Corresp.*	*The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. W.S. Lewis (48 vols., New Haven, 1937-83).
Warburton: *Dunciad*	W. Warburton (ed.): *The Dunciad Complete, in Four Books, According to Mr Pope's last Improvements.* (1749).
Warburton: *Pope*	W. Warburton (ed.):*The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq.* (9 vols., 1751).
Warburton: *Shakespeare*	W. Warburton (ed.):*The Works of Shakespear in Eight Volumes* (8 vols., 1747).
Wedgwood	C.V. Wedgwood: *Thomas Wentworth, 1st Earl of Strafford: A Revaluation* (1961).
Western	J.R. Western: *The English Militia in the Eighteenth Century: The Story of a Political Issue, 1660-1802* (London and Toronto, 1965).
Williams	Ralph M. Williams: 'Two Unpublished Poems by Mark Akenside', *MLN* 57 (December 1942) 626-631.
WM	*The Weekly Miscellany.*

AKENSIDE'S WORKS: ABBREVIATIONS

Brandenburgh Ode	*Ode to the Author of Memoirs of the House of Brandenburgh.*
Country Gentlemen Ode	*Ode to the Country Gentlemen of England.*
Curio	*An Epistle to Curio.*
Declaration	*On the Declaration of War Against Spain: A Rhapsody.*
Drake Ode 1750	*Ode to Sir Francis-Henry Drake, 1750.*
Drake Ode 1754	*Ode to Sir Francis Drake, 1754* .
Edwards Ode	*Ode to Thomas Edwards, Esq., on the late Edition of Mr. Pope's Works.*
From the Country	*Ode to the Honourable Charles Townshend, from the Country.*
Hall Ode	*Ode to William Hall Esq., with the Works of Chaulieu*
Hardinge Ode	*Ode to Caleb Hardinge, M.D.*.
Hoadly Ode	*Ode to the Right Reverend Benjamin, Lord Bishop of Winchester.*
Holland Ode	*Ode on Leaving Holland.*
Huntingdon Ode	*Ode to the Right Honourable Earl of Huntingdon.*
In the Country	*Ode to the Honourable Charles Townshend, in the Country.*
Odes (1745)	*Odes on Several Subjects* (1745).
Odes (1760)	*Odes on Several Subjects* (1760).
Philippic	*A British Philippic, Occasioned by the Insults of the Spaniards and the Present Preparations for War.*
Pleasures (1744)	*The Pleasures of Imagination* (1744).
Pleasures (1772)	*The Pleasures of the Imagination* (1772)).
Poems (1772)	*The Poems of Mark Akenside, M.D.*, ed. J. Dyson (1772).
Pulteney	*An Epistle to the Right Honourable William Pultney Esq.; Upon His Late Conduct in Publick Affairs.*
Remonstrance	*The Remonstrance of Shakespeare: Supposed to have been spoken at the Theatre Royal, while the French Comedians were acting by Subscription.*

FOREWORD

Akenside's poetic reputation, which was considerable, at least among the intelligensia, during the latter half of the eighteenth century, suffered a decline over the course of the succeeding hundred years. Apart from occasional appearances in anthologies, his poems have not been published since the end of the nineteenth century. The revival of interest which has begun to show itself recently has centered on *The Pleasures of Imagination*, either for the sake of its contribution to eighteenth-century aesthetics and theories of the imagination, or because of its influence on Wordsworth and Coleridge. Although the publication of the first edition of *Pleasures* in 1744, when Akenside was only twenty-three, did much to establish his standing, he had been successfully writing and publishing poems anonymously since 1737. He was never prolific, but he continued to compose poetry steadily throughout the remainder of his relatively short life (he died in 1770 at the age of 48). Some of his shorter poems appeared as single pamphlet editions; some were published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*; some in Dodsley's *Collection*. He published a volume of *Odes* in 1745 (which he revised and reissued in 1760), and was preparing a collected edition of his work at the time of his death which appeared posthumously in 1772.

Akenside had little time for poems which, however lyrically beautiful, set out merely to entertain. He took the role of the poet extremely seriously, believing that:

> Not far beneath the hero's feet,
> Nor from the legislator's seat

> Stands far remote the bard.
> Though not with public terrors crown'd,
> Yet wider shall his rule be found,
> More lasting his award.
> (*Ode on the Use of Poetry* 19-24).

Since he combined this view with the conviction that '*great poetical Talents, and high sentiments of Liberty, do reciprocally produce and assist each other*' (*Huntingdon Ode* note d.), it is no surprise to find that many of his shorter poems were written with the intention of putting forward his political, social or ethical views. Almost without exception, these works were written in response to a particular occurrence; sometimes a political event, sometimes the publication of a book which he felt called for some comment. Many of these poems were much admired in their day. Naturally enough, however, they came to seem less and less relevant with the passing of time, as the events which had inspired them faded in importance and as Akenside's strong Whig sympathies (together with their accompanying rhetoric) began to look decidedly dated. Looked at from the perspective of the twentieth century, however, they provide a useful insight into the current events of their period as seen by an intelligent, if politically partisan, observer. It is this group of poems -- which has attracted little, if any, attention since the beginning of the nineteenth century -- which will be discussed in this thesis.

As a political thinker, Akenside provides an interesting demonstration of the problems associated with the application of party labels at this period. While almost certainly a Whig all his life, his earliest poetry shows him to have been in opposition to the Whig administration under Sir Robert Walpole; slightly later work contains undeniable evidence of unfashionable

republicanism; his close friend Sir Francis Henry Drake appears to have been associated with the group which was formed around Frederick Prince of Wales in the late 1740s (again, Whigs in opposition to an established Whig ministry); by the late 1750s he had become an ardent admirer of the policies of William Pitt; and he was accused, posthumously (and almost certainly mistakenly), of having abandoned his Whig principles and become a Tory during the last decade of his life. What is abundantly clear, however, is that whatever his allegiance -- or lack of it -- at any particular time, the principles of what he saw as individual freedom and justly administered laws, with a strong emphasis on limiting the powers of the monarchy, never ceased to be fundamental to his political thinking. Most of his ideas on the subject originated from classical sources; like the seventeenth-century republican theorists whom he also admired, he looked back to the supposedly ideal states of Greece and republican Rome for the models which he felt Britain could and should emulate. Always an optimist, he several times fixed on a man who he felt possessed the qualities of strength and wisdom necessary to lead the country towards its ideal condition; predictably, he was always disappointed when the individual in question failed to live up to his expectations.

In my discussion of this group of poems, I have used a combination of approaches: first, an elucidation of the events and/or a discussion of the personalities with which the particular poem is concerned; second, an examination of the sources from which Akenside derived his information (these reflect his voracious and catholic reading habits, ranging from newspapers and journals to works of political theory, philosophy, theology, history, and literary criticism); third, a discussion of contemporary documentation to which

Akenside would *not* have had access (letters, diaries, etc.), which frequently show the situation in a somewhat different light from that perceived by the poet; and, finally, wherever possible, an examination of the event as viewed by twentieth-century historians. In addition, I have paid attention to the sources of Akenside's frequent classical allusions, which seem relevant because of their selectivity; the '*Graecian* Heroes, *Roman* Patriots dead' (*Curio* 108) whom he admired were invariably chosen because of their association with what he considered to be the golden age of political liberty.

It will be clear from the above that my approach has not been primarily a 'literary' one. I have not attempted a critical appreciation of the poems, nor have I noted the echoes of earlier poets -- especially Milton, Dryden, and Pope -- which occur frequently in Akenside's more juvenile writings, unless they seem relevant to the political or ethical point which the poet is making. A few biographical details have been included, where they seem relevant to discussions of dating, or where they correct the errors of Akenside's biographers.

Akenside is not an easy poet to read. Johnson complained that in his poetry the 'words are multiplied till the sense is hardly perceived; attention deserts the mind and settles in the ear' (*Lives* iii 417); a result, no doubt, of Akenside's belief, according to Mason, that 'Poetry was only true eloquence in metre' (*The Poems of Mr. Gray. To which are added Memoirs of his Life and Writings* (4 vols., 1778) iv 32). For this reason, I have included summaries of the arguments of the poems discussed, which, owing to their frequently convoluted syntax and dense allusiveness, do not always reveal their meaning at a first reading.

The texts to which I have referred are in every case the earliest ones to be published (or manuscript versions where these exist), since these would appear to reflect most closely the original reaction of the poet to the event which inspired them. Since many of these are not readily available, I have included complete texts within the thesis. Although this practice makes the chapters more cumbersome than they would otherwise be, it is to be hoped that convenience of reference will excuse it.

Part of Chapters Four and Six forms an article, 'Two New Akenside Manuscripts', which has been accepted for publication in *Review of English Studies* (to be published May 1988). Material from Chapters Three and Four is included in 'High Sentiments of Liberty: Coleridge's Unacknowledged Debt to Akenside', to be published in *Studies in Romanticism* (Winter 1988 issue).

I would like to thank the staff of the Bodleian Library, the British Library, and the Devon Public Record Office for their assistance. Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, generously gave me the Beatrix Warr-Goodman Scholarship in 1986-7. Mr Jonathan Wordsworth, of St Catherine's College, Oxford, first drew my attention to Akenside's poetry, and was my supervisor during the early stages of my research. Since then I have been jointly supervised by Mrs Karina Williamson, of St. Hilda's College, Oxford, and Dr Paul Langford, of Lincoln College, Oxford, to both of whom I am extremely grateful; Dr Langford's knowledge of the political history of the eighteenth century has been invaluable, and it is to him that I owe any historical methodology which I have managed to acquire. I have also profited from many interesting conversations about Akenside with Dr Robin Dix.

CHAPTER ONE

1738-1739

The beginning of Akenside's career as a writer of political poetry provides a striking example of the important role played by the opposition journalism of the day in forming its readers' political opinions. During the period covered by this chapter, Akenside was living a long way from London; the first poem to be discussed was composed while he was still at school in Newcastle-on-Tyne, and the second in Edinburgh, where he was a student at the university[1]. Thus, although he must have been exposed to coffee-house gossip, and perhaps at times have encountered individuals who were actively involved in political affairs, his chief source of information about current news and opinions would have been the newspapers, journals, and perhaps above all the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Indeed, the role of the *GM* in Akenside's early career was twofold. Not only did it publish all his earliest poetry[2], but it also provided

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1. For recent research into the dates of Akenside's education at Edinburgh, see Robin Dix: 'Akenside's University Career: The Manuscript Evidence', *N&Q* N.S. vol. 32 no. 2 (June 1985) 212-215.

2. Akenside's first three poems published in the *GM* all appeared in 1737: in April, *The Virtuoso: An Imitation of Spenser*; in May, *Ambition and Content: A Fable*; in July, *The Poet: A Rhapsody* (*GM* vii 224-225, 309, 441-442). In addition to the *British Philippic* of August 1738 (*GM* viii 427-428), which will be discussed in this chapter, the Magazine also published *A Hymn to Science* in October 1739 (*GM* ix 544). Several other poems published anonymously in the *GM*, some of which will be discussed below and in a subsequent chapter, have also been tentatively ascribed to Akenside by a previous commentator: see Houpt 22-39.

what appeared to be first-hand accounts of parliamentary proceedings in the form of the 'Debates from the Senate of Magna Lilliputia', which seem to have had a part to play in the writing of several of his poems. In addition, the Magazine also reprinted each month a selection of articles from such opposition journals as *The Craftsman* and *Common Sense*, thus providing a useful summary of the most recent arguments about topical issues. In addition, Akenside would, of course, have had access to these papers themselves, since they not only circulated between individuals but were also available to a wide circle of readers in the coffee houses[3].

A BRITISH PHILIPPIC

In August 1738, when Akenside was sixteen, the *GM* published his first specifically 'political' poem. Its full title was *A British Philippic, Occasion'd by the Insults of the Spaniards, and the Present Preparations for War*, and it was published under the pseudonym Britannicus. That this poem perfectly caught the mood of the time is demonstrated by the note which Cave, the Magazine's editor, attached to it:

> *N.B. It often turning to our Inconvenience, to sell a greater Number of one Magazine than of another, and believing the above noble-spirited Poem will be acceptable to many, not our constant Readers, we have printed it in Folio, Price Six Pence, together with the Motto at large, for which, receiving the Manuscript late, we could not make room. And if the ingenious Author will inform us how we may direct a Packet to his Hands, we will send him our Acknowledgments for so great a Favour, with a Parcel of the Folio Edition.*
>
> (*GM* viii 428).

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3. For a discussion of the circulation of London newspapers to coffee-houses and individual subscribers in the provinces during this period, see G.A. Cranfield: *The Development of the Provincial Newspaper, 1700-1760* (Oxford, 1962) 177-184.

Cave's anticipation of the poem's popularity was obviously well-founded, since he brought out two further printings within the next two months, each slightly emended by the 'ingenious Author'[4]. The text of the poem, as it appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, is as follows:

A BRITISH PHILIPPIC
Occasion'd by the Insults of the Spaniards, *and the present Preparations for War.*

Whence this unwonted transport in my breast?
Why glow my thoughts, and whither would the Muse
Aspire with rapid wing? Her country's cause
Demands her efforts; at that sacred call
She summons all her ardor, throws aside
The trembling lyre, and with the warrior's trump
She means to thunder in each *British* ear;
And if one spark of honour or of fame,
Disdain of insult, dread of infamy,
One thought of public virtue yet survive,
She means to wake it, rouze the gen'rous flame,
With patriot zeal inspirit ev'ry breast,
And fire each *British* heart with *British* wrongs.
Alas the vain attempt! what influence now
Can the Muse boast? Or what attention now
Is paid to fame or virtue? Where is now
The *British* spirit, generous, warm and brave,
So frequent wont from tyranny and woe
To free the suppliant nations? Where, indeed!
If that protection, once to strangers giv'n,
Be now witheld from sons? Each nobler thought
That warm'd our sires, is lost and buried now
In luxury and av'rice. Baneful vice!
How it unmans a nation! Yet I'll try,
I'll aim to shake this vile degen'rate sloth;
I'll dare to rouze *Britannia's* dreaming sons
To fame, to virtue, and impart around

---

3. Akenside's first surviving letter, addressed to Cave and dated 'Newcastle, September 30 1738', appears to have been written between the two later printings:

> Sir
>
> I have your letter with the Philippic enclos'd, & corrected according to my Manuscript & have sent it up to you again with one or two more which I believe you'll see the Reason of...
>
> (BM Stowe 748 f 153).

A generous feeling of compatriot woes.
  Come then the various pow'rs of forceful speech!
All that can move, awaken, fire, transport!
Come the bold ardor of the *Theban* bard!
Th'arouzing thunder of the patriot *Greek!*
The soft persuasion of the *Roman* sage!
Come all! and raise me to an equal height,
A rapture worthy of my glorious cause!
Lest my best efforts failing should debase
The sacred theme; for with no common wing
The Muse attempts to soar. Yet what need these?
My country's fame, my free-born *British* heart
Shall be my best inspirers, raise my flight
High as the *Theban's* pinion, and with more
Than *Greek* or *Roman* flame exalt my soul.
Oh! could I give the vast ideas birth
Expressive of the thoughts that flame within,
No more should lazy luxury detain
Our ardent youth; no more should *Britain's* sons
Sit tamely passive by, and careless hear
The prayers, sighs, groans, (immortal infamy!)
Of fellow *Britons*, with oppression sunk,
In bitterness of soul demanding aid,
Calling on *Britain*, their dear native land,
The land of liberty; so greatly fam'd
For just redress; the land so often dy'd
With her best blood, for that arouzing cause,
The freedom of her sons; those sons that now
Far from the manly blessings of her sway
Drag the vile fetters of a *Spanish* lord.
And dare they, dare the vanquish'd sons of *Spain*
Enslave a *Briton*? Have they then forgot,
So soon forgot the great, th'immortal day,
When rescu'd *Sicily* with joy beheld
The swift-wing'd thunder of the *British* arm
Disperse their navies? When their coward bands
Fled, like the raven from the bird of *Jove*,
From swift impending vengeance fled in vain:
Are these our lords? And can *Britannia* see
Her foes oft vanquish'd, thus defy her pow'r,
Insult her standard, and enslave her sons;
And not arise to justice? Did our sires
Unaw'd by chains, by exile, or by death,
Preserve inviolate her guardian rights,
And sacred ev'n to *Britons*, that their sons
Must give them up to *Spaniards*? -- Turn your eyes,
Turn ye degen'rate, who with haughty boast
Call yourselves *Britons*, to that dismal gloom,
That dungeon dark and deep, where never thought
Of joy or peace can enter; see the gates
Harsh-creaking open; what an hideous void,
Dark as the yawning grave! while still as death
A frightful silence reigns: There on the ground

Behold your brethren chain'd like beasts of prey:
There mark your num'rous glories, there behold
The look that speaks unutterable woe;
The mangled limb, the faint, the deathful eye
With famine sunk, the deep, heart-bursting groan
Suppress'd in silence; view the loathsome food,
Refus'd by dogs, and oh! the stinging thought!
View the dark *Spaniard* glorying in their wrongs,
The deadly priest triumphant in their woes,
And thundering worst damnation on their souls:
While that pale form in all the pangs of death,
Too faint to speak, yet eloquent of all,
His native *British* spirit yet untam'd,
Raises his head, and with indignant frowns
Of great defiance, and superior scorn,
Looks up and dies---Oh! I am all on fire!
But let me spare the theme, lest future times
Should blush to hear that either conquer'd *Spain*
Durst offer *Britain* such outrageous wrong,
Or *Britain* tamely bore it ---
   Descend ye guardian heroes of the land!
Scourges of *Spain*. descend! Behold your sons,
See how they run the same heroic race,
How prompt, how ardent in their country's cause,
How greatly proud t'assert their *British* blood,
And in their deeds reflect their fathers fame!
Ah! would to heav'n! ye did not rather see
How dead to virtue, in the public cause!
How cold, how careless, how to glory deaf,
They shame your laurels, and bely their birth!
   Come, ye great spirits, *Ca'endish, Rawleigh, Blake!*
And ye of later name your country's pride,
Oh! come, disperse these lazy fumes of sloth,
Teach *British* hearts with *British* fires to glow!
In wakening whispers rouze our ardent youth,
Blazon the triumphs of your better days,
Paint all the glorious scenes of rightful war,
In all its splendours; to their swelling souls
Say how ye bow'd th'insulting *Spaniard's* pride,
Say how ye thunder'd o'er their prostrate heads,
Say how ye broke their lines and fir'd their ports,
Say not how death in all its frightful shapes
Could damp your souls, or shake the great resolve
For right and *Britain*: Then display the joys
The patriot's soul exalting, while he views
Transported millions hail with loud acclaim
The Guardian of their civil, sacred rights:
How greatly welcome to the virtuous man
Is death for others good; the radiant thoughts
That beam caelestial on his passing soul,
Th'unfading crowns awaiting him above,
Th'exalting plaudit of the great supreme,
Who in his actions with complacence views
His own reflected splendor; then descend

Tho' to a lower, yet a noble scene;
Paint the just honours to his reliques paid,
Shew grateful millions weeping o'er his grave;
While his fair fame in each progressive age
For ever brightens; and the wise and good
Of every land in universal choir
With richest incense of undying praise
His urn encircle, to the wondering world
His num'rous triumphs blazon; while with awe,
With filial rev'rence in his steps they tread,
And copying every virtue, ev'ry fame,
Transplant his glories into second life,
And with unsparing hand make nations blest
By his example. Vast immense rewards!
For all the turmoils which the virtuous mind
Encounters here. Yet, *Britons*, are ye cold?
Yet deaf to glory, virtue, and the call
Of your poor injur'd countrymen? Ah! no,
I see ye are not; ev'ry bosom glows
With native greatness, and in all its state
The *British* spirit rises: Glorious change!
Fame, Virtue, Freedom, welcome! Oh! forgive
The Muse that ardent in her sacred cause
Your glory question'd: She beholds with joy,
She owns, she triumphs in her wish'd mistake.
   See! from her sea-beat throne in awful march
Britannia tow'rs; upon her laurel crest
The plumes majestic nod; behold she heaves
Her guardian shield, and terrible in arms
For battle shakes her adamantine spear:
Loud at her foot the *British* lion roars,
Frighting the nations; haughty *Spain* full soon
Shall hear and tremble. Go then, *Britons*, forth,
Your country's daring champions; tell your foes,
Tell them in thunders o'er their prostrate land
Ye were not born for slaves: Let all your deeds
Shew that the sons of those immortal men,
The stars of shining story, are not slow
In virtue's path to emulate their sires,
T'assert their country's rights, t'avenge her sons,
And hurl the bolts of justice on her foes.

BRITANNICUS.

The youthful patriotic feelings of *A British Philippic* have every appearance of being genuine, and very strongly felt. It is interesting, therefore, that the poem can at the same time be classed as an example of anti-government propaganda. B.A. Goldgar, in his *Walpole and the Wits*, calls the *Philippic* 'a party document', and Akenside a member of 'a group of literary

men who emerged in this period in support of the Opposition...the "Patriot Poets"[5]. However, while the other members of Goldgar's 'group' -- Thomson, Mallet, Glover, and Brooke -- were living in London, and were closely involved in a personal way with political affairs[6], Akenside was a sixteen-year-old schoolboy living in the far north of England. No information has survived about any friends he may have had while he was at school in Newcastle, or of any circles he may have moved in which could have influenced his political thinking; and, indeed, the impression one gets from what seem to be autobiographical allusions in his early poetry suggests a solitary, even reclusive, boy, more inclined towards reading and study than towards social interaction[7]. Whatever secondary sources of information he may have had, however, it is not necessary to look far for what was almost certainly the primary source of inspiration for the *Philippic*. Two months before the poem's publication, the *GM* had altered its method of reporting parliamentary news. During the early years of the Magazine's existence, reports of the debates in parliament had taken the form of abbreviated speeches with barely disguised

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5 B.A. Goldgar: *Walpole and the Wits: The Relation of Politics and Literature, 1722-1742* (Lincoln, Nebr. and London, 1976) 179, 137.

6. James Thomson (1700-1748), David Mallet (?1705-1765), Richard Glover (1712-1785) and Henry Brooke (?1703-1783) were all patronised by George (later Lord) Lyttleton, who introduced them into the opposition circles which centred round the Prince of Wales. For an interesting discussion of London-based opposition literature during the Walpole era, see C. H. Gerrard: 'The Patriot Opposition to Sir Robert Walpole: A Study of Politics and Poetry, 1725-1742' (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1986).

7. See for example *An Epistle to Curio*, where Akenside refers to his own earlier self as 'the learn'd Recluse' (106); the passage is discussed on page 75 below.

names attached to them (Sir R---t W---le, for example). A note from August 1732 sums up editorial policy at this period:

> *We don't pretend to give the very Words of every Speech, but hope we have done Justice to the Arguments on each Side.*
> (*GM* ii 886).

At this stage, Cave was relying on a number of sources: portions of the journals of both Houses, extracts from contemporary pamphlets, and occasional contributions from M.P.s themselves. To avoid prosecution for what was in fact illegal publication, he printed the accounts after the current session was over[9]. On 13 April 1738, however, a resolution was passed in the Lower House making it 'an high indignity and a notorious breach of privilege...to give...any account of the debates or any other proceedings of this House as well during the recess as the sitting of parliament' (*Parl. Hist.* x 811). In direct response to this resolution, Cave, with the assistance of Samuel Johnson, who was then one of his journalists, came up with the device of publishing a monthly account of 'Debates in the Senate of Magna Lilliputia'. The introductory article, which was almost certainly written by Johnson, explained at length that since the author -- said to be a grandson of Captain Gulliver -- had discovered a 'wonderful Conformity between the Constitution of *England* and *Lilliput*', the Magazine proposed to publish part of his papers on the matter

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9. For a full discussion of the *GM*'s parliamentary reporting, see C.L. Carlson: *The First Magazine: A History of the Gentleman's Magazine* (Providence, Rhode Island, 1938) 95-102.

each month, beginning with the debates from the '*Lilliputian* Senate'[9]. By this means, the *GM* was able to publish full-length speeches, with the speakers' names disguised but still recognisable (Sir Rub. Walelup, for example).

Although all the available evidence suggests that the 'Debates' bore only a slender relationship to the speeches which had actually been made, Cobbett's *Parliamentary History* for the period reported them as verbatim accounts of parliamentary proceedings; and certainly most of the *GM*'s readers took them to be so'[10]. The excitement which was generated among the readership by this new device is exemplified by Akenside's reaction; a careful examination of the *Philippic* suggests that it was written in direct response to the previous month's 'Debates'.

First, it will be helpful briefly to survey the background of events. Throughout the twenty-five years since the Anglo-Spanish Treaty of 1713 had opened up the possibility of trade with Spanish America, relations between the Spanish and English governments had been uneasy, and punctuated by a series of bitter conflicts. The situation had worsened in 1737, when the Spanish had

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9. *GM* viii 282-287. For a full discussion of Johnson's role in the writing of the 'Debates', see Boswell: *Life* i 117-118 and Appendix A 501-502. See also D.J. Greene: *The Politics of Samuel Johnson* (New Haven, 1960) 113-135.

10. Murphy records an anecdote in which a Dr Fisher remarked at a dinner party that a speech made by Pitt at the time of Walpole's fall excelled any made by Demosthenes. The company was 'struck with astonishment' when Johnson replied: 'That speech I wrote in a garret in Exeter Street'. (Murphy: *Life* 43). As late as 1948, a twentieth-century historian fell into the same trap: V.H.H. Green, in his *The Hanoverians 1714-1815* (1948) quoted a speech of Pitt's and made the comment that 'These last few sentences were typical of Pitt; they may not be dismissed as rhetoric, for they breathe intense moral earnestness...' and so on. As Donald J. Greene remarks: 'Unfortunately the sentences that provide the evidence for this judgment were composed by Johnson': D.J. Greene (ed.): *The Political Writings of Samuel Johnson* (New Haven and London, 1977) 127n..

licensed an increased number of *guarda-costas* -- some of them virtually pirates -- who had captured in that one year twelve British vessels. British indignation had flared up in early 1738 when news reached Britain that the Spanish had forced the sailors from four captured ships to work their passages back to Europe and then thrown them into Spanish prisons[11]. The *GM* of March 1738 had published a 'LIST of BRITISH MERCHANT SHIPS, taken or plundered by the SPANIARDS since *May* 1728' (*GM* viii 163-4). In the same issue was a report that a party of 'West India Merchants' had visited the House of Commons on 16 March with a petition 'complaining of the Depredations &c of the Spaniards', and had showed copies of letters from the imprisoned British sailors:

> representing their miserable Condition, that they work'd with Irons on their Legs, and lived on Beans full of Vermin, and a little Salt Fish...
>
> (*GM* viii 162).

In response to this inflammatory report, *The Craftsman* had commented that:

> One would imagine that the Depredations of the *Spaniards*, and their Barbarity to our *Seamen*, required only a full and clear Representation to raise the *antient British Spirit*, and fill every Breast with the highest Indignation and Resentment against all our Adversaries...

and had accused the government of 'Want of *publick Spirit*' and a '*mercenary low Way of thinking*' (*Craftsman*, 18 March). On 22 April, a second opposition

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11. For a full discussion of the background of these events, see H.W.V. Temperley: 'The Causes of the War of Jenkins' Ear', *Royal Historical Society Transactions* 3rd. ser. III (1909) 197-236.

journal, *Common Sense*, wrote that 'the Nation calls loud for War'. In parliament, a series of debates -- in the Commons on 3 March and in the Lords on 2 May (*Parl. Hist.* x 561ff, 729ff) -- culminated in a motion on 5 May brought by William Pulteney (1684-1764), the leading opposition spokesman in the House of Commons. The motion called for the introduction of a bill requesting the government to take more active measures against Spain. Property of all prizes which were taken from the Spaniards after war was declared was to be given to the officers and seamen who were present in the action; the sailors were to be granted 'head-money', a payment of £5 for every Spaniard taken prisoner at sea; and the property of all the places taken by the British was to be vested in the captors, by King's patent (*Parl. Hist.* x 811ff). As the *Gentleman's Magazine* commented, the bill, if passed: 'in the Apprehension of his...Majesty's Ministers, must have infallibly brought on a War, or rendered a Peace more difficult' (*GM* viii 288)[12]. Walpole, however, who had pursued a pacific policy throughout his long period of office, was extremely unwilling to engage in a war with Spain. In the debate which followed, he was reported as arguing that he felt 'it would be very imprudent for this House to take any Steps that may prevent the conclusion of a safe and honourable Peace' (*GM* viii 332). This highly controversial debate was the first which the *GM* reported in its new series of 'Debates from the Senate of Magna Lilliputia'.

The speech made against Pulteney's bill by Walpole occupies the whole of the 'Debates' section in the June issue of the Magazine, and the first two

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12. After three readings, on 8,9 and 15 May, the bill was voted out by a majority of 143 to 73 on 15 May (*CJ* xxiii 188, 190, 192, 195, 196, 197, 198).

pages of July (*GM* viii 288-292, 331-332). It is then followed by the speech supposedly made by Pulteney in reply. That whoever wrote the 'Debate' was in sympathy with the opposition's views seems clear from the way it is introduced: Pulteney, spoken of as 'this great Patriot', is glowingly described as defending his bill 'with great strength of Reasoning and not a little Warmth, tho' temper'd with Candour' (332). The speech itself is highly inflammatory. After attacking the government in a general way for their manner of proceeding upon the bill ('I never saw Gentlemen so negligent of Parliamentary Duty...' (333)), Pulteney goes on specifically to criticise Walpole for being 'too forgetful' of the honour of Britain:

> many Blows have been received, which it is now Time to return. We have, Sir, to a melancholy Degree of Certainty, heard how the most useful Body in the Nation has not only been insulted, plundered, and imprisoned; but tortured and maimed in cold Blood[13]. Outrages! not to be justified in the Heat of War, and which the Law of Nations will not allow Enemies to practice on one another.
>
> (333).

The speech continues in this vein at some length, detailing the 'unjust, partial and barbarous Method of Tryal' practised in Spain, which is said to be accompanied by 'Rapine, Imprisonment and Tortures', and asks rhetorically:

> Have we not lived to see the subjects of Britain made Slaves by a People of whom they were once the Terror? Have we not liv'd to see the British flag, once a Protection to our Merchants, become to Foreigners an Object of Scorn, and to our Fellow Subjects

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13. Pulteney is presumably referring to the incident of Jenkins' ear, which is reported in the same issue of the *GM* (*GM* viii 336).

Destruction?
(333-334)[14].

How closely this speech corresponded to the one which Pulteney actually made is impossible to say. Certainly the excitement of reading, for the first time, an apparently first-hand account of Pulteney's famous opposition rhetoric must have been considerable. Perhaps taking his cue from the *Craftsman* article of 18 March (quoted above), which suggested that a 'full and clear Representation' of the depredations and barbarity of the Spanish was needed in order to raise the 'British Spirit' and to 'fill every Breast with the highest Indignation', and almost certainly inspired by the forceful arguments of Pulteney's speech, Akenside apparently composed his *Philippic* and sent it off to London[15]. The poem, which is specifically designed to stir up the dormant war-spirit of the British people, contains a number of passages which echo either the *GM* report of Pulteney's speech or other news and articles which appeared in the July edition of the Magazine .

The poet begins with a question: 'Whence this unwonted transport in my breast?' (1). In the lines which follow, he supplies his own answer: his Muse is answering the call of her country, and means to make herself heard throughout Britain, to re-awaken the dormant patriotism of the British people,

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14. In this and all subsequent quotations from the *GM* 'Debates', names of speakers and of places have been given in their 'de-coded' form.

15. The poem must have been written shortly after the July *GM* arrived in Newcastle, and been posted rapidly to Cave to arrive just in time for inclusion in August; hence Cave's note that he had received the manuscript 'late' (see page 2 above).

and to 'fire each *British* heart with *British* wrongs' (2-12). It appears, however, that this may be a 'vain attempt' (13); the Muse has lost her influence. The *Craftsman* had urged the revival of the 'British Spirit': Akenside deplores the loss of the '*British* spirit, generous, warm and brave', which used in the past to come to the aid of 'suppliant nations', but is now witheld even from her own people (13-21). It has gone, he says, to be buried in 'luxury and av'rice'; yet he means to try to shake Britain's 'vile degen'rate sloth', and to arouse the British to a fellow feeling for their compatriots (22-28).

He begins by invoking the great poets and orators of classical times: Pindar ('the *Theban* bard'), Homer ('the patriot *Greek*') and Cicero ('the *Roman* sage'). He needs to be raised to an 'equal height' in order to do justice to his 'glorious cause' (29-38). But yet, he realises, he should not need this outside help; his 'country's fame' -- 'the Honour of Britain', which was invoked in the Pulteney speech -- and his own British nationality, are inspiration enough (38-43). If he could only give full expression to his 'vast ideas', then the British people would no longer be able to ignore the 'prayers, sighs, groans' of their fellow Britons, who are in need of help from their 'dear native land' (44-51). He recalls Britain's past greatness: 'the land so often dy'd/ With her best blood, for that arouzing cause/ The freedom of her sons' ; and remembers that those same sons are now imprisoned in Spanish dungeons (52-56). He reminds the British that they have conquered Spain in the past (compare Pulteney's reminders that Britain was once 'the Terror' of the nation which has now enslaved her subjects): 'And dare they, dare the vanquish'd sons of *Spain*/ Enslave a *Briton*?' (58-59). He wonders if the Spanish can already have forgotten:

> the great, th'immortal day,
> When rescu'd *Sicily* with joy beheld
> The swift-wing'd thunder of the *British* arm
> Disperse their navies? when their coward bands
> Fled, like the raven from the bird of *Jove*,
> From swift impending vengeance fled in vain:
> (59-65).

The incident which Akenside is recalling here took place on 11 August 1718. At the end of the previous June, a Spanish armada had sailed for Sicily with the intention of invading the island. Britain, although not, at the time, at war with Spain, had dispatched a British fleet under the command of Admiral George Byng (1663-1733) to prevent the invasion. The Spanish had turned, and beaten a hasty retreat; but Byng, following orders, had pursued them, and had utterly destroyed the Spanish fleet off Cape Passaro[16]. With the memory of such triumphs in the past, can Britain stand by and watch the present insults and enslavement? Did our forefathers win sacred rights for us -- at the time, presumably, of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 -- in order that we should give them up to Spaniards? asks the poet (66-73).

Next, just as Pulteney's speech had gone on to dwell at some length on the 'outrages' which the British sailors were suffering in the Spanish prisons, so Akenside asks his readers to visualise the miserable degradation which he imagines the captured seamen to be enduring, 'chain'd like beasts of prey', dying of starvation, fed on ' loathsome food,/ Refus'd by dogs' (80-87). Here, the poet is almost certainly recalling the report in the *Gentleman's Magazine* that the British sailors were working with irons on their legs, and being fed on 'Beans full of Vermin, and a little Salt Fish' (*GM* viii 162). Worse still, he

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16. See Basil Williams: *Stanhope: A Study in Eighteenth-Century War and Diplomacy* (Oxford, 1932) 304-306, 308-309.

continues, is the 'stinging thought' that they are being triumphed over, and even damned, by 'deadly' Spanish priests, while they succumb defiantly -- their 'British spirit yet untam'd' -- to the 'pangs of death' (87-96). 'Oh! I am all on fire!' the poet exclaims; and concludes that he must 'spare the theme', in order to save the blushes of 'future times' at the loss of honour suffered by the British at the hands of Spain (87-100).

The poet calls up the 'guardian heroes' of Britain's past. The 'Scourges of Spain' who he asks to come to his aid are *'Ca'endish'* -- Thomas Cavendish (1560-1592), the second British circumnavigator, whose voyage round the world (1586-1588), distinguished by a record of capturing Spanish ships, burning Spanish-American towns, and slaughtering Spanish sailors, made him a national hero ; *'Rawleigh'* -- Sir Walter Raleigh (?1552-1618), who presumably appears in this context for his part in the storming of Cadiz (June 1596); and Robert Blake (1599-1657), the Oxford educated republican, whose impressive career -- he fought for Cromwell in the civil war and then became admiral of the British fleet, which he led against the Portuguese in 1650-1, and the Dutch in 1651-4 -- culminated in the destruction of the entire Spanish fleet off Santa Cruz on 20 April 1657[17]. He asks for their help in arousing Britain's 'ardent youth' by recounting their exploits, their fearlessness in the face of death, and the joy which they experienced when they were acclaimed by 'Transported millions' on their return (115-127). He wishes them to point out that 'greatly welcome to

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17. For Cavendish see D.B. Quinn (ed.): *The Last Voyage of Thomas Cavendish, 1591-1592* (*Studies in the History of Discoveries*, Chicago, 1975), and A. Watson: *Cavendish: An Elizabethan Hero* (1980); for Raleigh and the storming of Cadiz, see Willard M. Wallace: *Sir Walter Raleigh* (Princeton, 1959) 125-138; for Blake, see F.E. Knight: *General-at-Sea: The Life of Admiral Blake* (1971) and J.R. Powell: *Robert Blake: General-at-Sea* (1972).

the virtuous man/ Is death for others' good' (128-129), since the martyr in the cause of liberty will receive not only 'Th'exalting plaudit of the great supreme', but also the 'lower' yet still 'noble' satisfaction of knowing that after his death he will have 'grateful millions weeping o'er his grave' and become a shining example to generations yet unborn -- all 'Vast, immense rewards!' (132-148).

As the poem's conclusion approaches, Akenside goes on to imagine that his stirring words have had their desired effect:

> ev'ry bosom glows
> With native greatness, and in all its state
> The *British* spirit rises: Glorious change!
> Fame, Virtue, Freedom, welcome! Oh! forgive
> The Muse that ardent in her sacred cause
> Your glory question'd: She beholds with joy,
> She owns, she triumphs in her wish'd mistake.
>
> (153-159).

Finally, he evokes the mighty figure of Britannia, who 'tow'rs' from her 'sea-beat throne', shaking her spear and shield at the enemy, with the '*British* lion' roaring at her feet (160-165). He calls upon the youth of Britain to follow her 'awful march' with their new-found courage, to show the Spanish that 'Ye were not born for slaves' (compare Pulteney's: 'Have we not lived to see the Subjects of Britain made Slaves...'), to avenge their country's wrongs, and to 'hurl the bolts of justice on her foes' (165-175).

To a twentieth-century reader, all this will seem somewhat excessive, and it would be easy to dismiss it as inflated adolescent war-mongering; but, quite apart from the remarkably accomplished handling of the blank verse, Akenside manipulates the rhetoric of his argument extremely skilfully. Above all, however, it is clear both from the poem's obvious popularity and from the fact

that it echoes the sentiments of a purportedly genuine parliamentary speech that in its day such violent patriotism was perfectly acceptable. Perhaps the poem's major interest for a modern reader lies in the sense of how intensely the ordinary man -- or, indeed, boy -- in the street was involved in political questions at this time.

Akenside was to continue to write poetry in response to current events for over twenty years. As he grew older, however, he obviously became self-conscious about some of his more juvenile works; and the collection of his poetry which he was preparing at the time of his death -- edited and posthumously published by Jeremiah Dyson in 1772 -- appears deliberately to have omitted many of his earliest poems, among them the *Philippic*[18]. It is by no means impossible, therefore, that other juvenilia also failed to find their way into *Poems* (1772); and on this basis, Akenside's most recent biographer, C.T. Houpt, has argued that several anonymous poems which were published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* between 1739 and 1745 should be attributed to Akenside[19]. Among them is a poem which was published in the Magazine in November 1739 (*GM* ix 596-597), and which bears a number of resemblances to the *Philippic*. The many parallels between the two poems suggest to me that this attribution may be correct.

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18. Dyson's edition omitted the early *GM* poems (see note 2 above), the original version of *Curio* (although he included the much altered Ode version), and several miscellaneous shorter poems, including the two which were discovered in 1942 and first published in Ralph M. Williams: 'Two Unpublished Poems by Mark Akenside' *MLN* 57 (1942) 626-631, and which will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

19. See Houpt 28-29.

ON THE DECLARATION OF WAR AGAINST SPAIN: A RHAPSODY

This poem, like the *Philippic*, is written in blank verse, and is of comparable length to the earlier work (it had been longer than its 153 lines: Cave attached a note at the end: 'N.B. We are obliged to shorten this poem'). Unlike the *Philippic*, which had appeared under the pseudonym Britannicus, the *Declaration* was unsigned; but, as Houpt points out, it does resemble the *Philippic* both in style and in subject matter. Just as the *Philippic* had apparently been inspired by the speeches and news items in the previous month's *Gentleman's Magazine*, so this poem was evidently written in response to the publication of the Declaration of War itself, which had been printed in the Magazine in October (*GM* ix 551-552). The text of the poem follows:

On the Declaration of War *against SPAIN:*
A RHAPSODY

---Terrorum & fraudis abunde est;
Staut belli causae. *Virgil.*

ENOUGH! at length with just resentment fir'd,
Indignant, from his *keeper's* irksome chains,
The *British* lion bursts, and rampant shakes
His brinded mane: dishonour'd *Albion* hears
The dire but wish'd-for voice, the voice of war,
Joy to her heart, and musick to her ear.
From *Scilly's* rocks to *Orkney's* snowy isles,
Hills, woods and dales wide ring th'impetuous roar.
From clime to clime affrighted echo bears
Th'harmonious terror, 'till with tenfold din
It pours on proud *Iberia's* trembling coasts.
Already, see, for his *Peruvian* ore

Th'uxorious monarch quakes, already drops*
Th'unstable scepter of his *Western* world;
And, maugre all the artful blandishments
Of the aspiring *Parmesan*, or tears
Of courtiers well-dissembled, hastes to quit
The tottering burthen of a crown, and flee
From the dread fury of *Britannia's* arms.
Long suffering genius of fair freedom's isle!
How shall the muse express the gen'ral joy,
The glowing breasts, with which thy sons behold
Thy slumb'ring ardor rous'd, and thee once more
Panting for fame, the burnish'd shield resume,
And grasp again the long-neglected spear!
See! to redress an injur'd nations's wrongs,
In awful wrath thy royal guardian rise:
Tremble, ye foes to *Britain*, and behold
The hero to his gen'rous breast recall
Th'inimitable rage of *Audenarde*.
Victorious fame, long stranger to our isle,
Tho' courted by the fav'rite *Russian*, leaves
Moldavia's Plains enrich'd with *Turkish* gore,
Glad to revisit *Albion's* lofty cliffs,
Her once well-known resort. To war, to war
Resounds her silver trump: the fierce alarms
Pierce ev'ry ear, and kindle ev'ry breast.
No more shall *Britain* languish, and bemoan
Her withered lawrels and insulted flag:
No more shall hear the lamentable groans,
Which nought but misery extreme could force
From her brave sons, oh execrable shame!
Her free-born sons in *Spanish* dungeons chain'd:
No more with agony heart-piercing view
Their mangled limbs, and meagre famish'd looks:
Great gallant souls by all those ills unbroke.
Success awaits the justice of our cause,
And heav'n, propitious, shall with pleasure smile
On the just vengeance of our conqu'ring arms.
O at the glorious thought the lab'ring muse
Fires with unusual warmth; or is't the love
Of thee. dear native soil, the love of thee!
Than life, than liberty, than fame more dear,
That thus a *Briton's* forward hopes impels,
And wings the sanguine longings of his soul?
O joy to mark our future annals swell
With blazon'd triumphs, num'rous as our wrongs,
And golden Time roll on with better days,
A glorious period and renown'd, as when
The great *Eliza*, or the glorious *Anne*
Our scepter sway'd, and scourg'd insidious *Spain*.
No more shall *Britain's* royal squadrons ride
In useless pomp, and idly with the wind

* *Alluding to the report in the public Papers of the King of* Spain *intending to resign his crown.*

Their pendant streamers wave: but, hark, again
Their brazen mouths with vengeful thunder roar,
And dictate homage to the vassal seas.
In wild dismay again the sons of *Spain*
Their smoking ports survey, and sunk galleons
Or see the precious bullion melt in fires
Far other than the dastard owners wish'd:
Or rather (as a righteous cause suggests)
To *British* valour doom'd a shining prey,
Just recompense of toil and glorious wounds.
Mean while t'escape the more impetuous fire
Of *British* rage, the vanquish'd *Spaniard* strives,
But strives in vain; desponding, and at once
Forgetful of his treasure and his life,
He courts a refuge in the vast abyss;
Nor in dread *Haddock* doubts a second *Blake*.
Haddock, intrepid admiral! to whom
His injur'd country and his prince commit
Their great revenge. He the important trust
Joyous accepts. Among the hardy sons
Of *Neptune* with a more undaunted heart
None ploughs the proudly-swelling tide, or breathes
A bolder *British* spirit. This grating truth
In sad rememb'rance hostile *Spain* must own.
How fierce, how furious fought the mighty chief,
And drove the burning tempest on the foe!
'Twas he began the prelude to the day,
The memorable day! when *Britain's* fleet
In order rang'd, a dreadful line of death,
Advancing, while the softly-breathing gales
In gentle homage kiss'd th'imperial flag
Display'd majestick; and the briny waves,
Proud of their weight, the glassy surface smooth'd.
Impending doom the proud *Iberian* saw,
With terror and confusion saw, nor yet
His inbred pride forgot: but ah! how chang'd!
When lo! from the deep-throated cannon burst
A storm of iron globes, and swift-wing'd hail,
Chain'd thunderbolts of war, a thousand deaths
Disgorging in a thousand ruthless forms.
While dauntless *Britons* at each hoarse discharge
In glad acclaim loud join the bellowing roar.
Death rages thro' the scene; sublime in air
Mount trunks deform'd, and their dissever'd limbs
With riven splinters and huge shatter'd masts,
The sport of winds. Thro' many a gaping wound
The coward souls of *Spaniards* wing'd their flight[.]
What haggard looks when the beleaguer'd hulk,
Pierc'd by resistless lead, amain receives
The rushing sea, precipitate, alas!
With masts inverted, and declining prow,
Of death short signal, its embattled womb
It empties in the bosom of the main.
Or see destruction raging in a more

Disastrous shape (if more disastrous shape
Can e'er exist) when with a nitrous blaze
The vessel labours; and the sulphr'ous flames,
And foaming surges, elemental strife,
Mix in combustion dire: O'er ev'ry face
Confusion and Despair sit brooding link'd
With ghastly Terror; while the redd'ning clouds
Shed from above their stifling steam; beneath
The yawning sea, or the victorious foe,
More dreadful than them both, urge on their fate.
In vain, fond wretches, to the kindling masts,
And sputt'ring cables, do they cling, soon forc'd
Their fiery hold to quit. What cries, what groans!
Till half burnt carkasses, and melted arms,
And all the naval furniture of war
Sink, hiss and bubble in the glowing main.
   Such be their foul catastrophe, who tempt
Britain's long patient rage, and dare t'insult
Her floating bulwarks, and her flag deride.
   Go on, brave *Haddock*, may thy brow be deck'd
With lawrels fresh. Efface thy country's wrongs;
And glorious in the ruin of her foes,
Equal the honours of illustrious *Byng*.
   O may *Britannia's* other valiant chiefs,
Fir'd with like ardors, bear to climes remote
The terror of her arms, till trembling *Spain*
Suppliant accept her **previous terms*, nor dare
E'er to molest the meanest of her sons.
Then shall fair *Peace*, and not till then, extend
Her olive wand, and from her fruitful horn
Gay plenty shedding, hush th'alarms of war.
Her commerce settled, and her flag rever'd,
And blest with Freedom, choicest gift of heaven,
Britannia, happy isle, once more shall shine
The envy and the terror of the world!

* *See Lords and Commons Address*, p.604. [?Editorial note]

A number of correspondences with the earlier work suggest that this poem may be Akenside's. Apart from anything else, a comparison between the end of the *Philippic* and the opening lines of the *Declaration* suggests that the later work is a deliberate continuation from the end of the earlier poem:

   See! from her sea-beat throne in awful march
Britannia tow'rs; upon her laurel crest
The plumes majestic nod; behold she heaves
Her guardian shield, and terrible in arms
For battle shakes her adamantine spear:
Loud at her foot the *British* lion roars,

> Frighting the nations...
> (*Philippic* 160-166).
>
> ENOUGH[20]! at length with just resentment fir'd,
> Indignant, from his *keeper's* irksome chains,
> The *British* lion bursts, and rampant shakes
> His brinded mane...
> Long suffering genius of fair freedom's isle!
> How shall the muse express the gen'ral joy,
> The glowing breasts, with which thy sons behold
> Thy slumb'ring ardor rous'd', and thee once more
> Panting for fame, thy burnish'd shield resume,
> And grasp again the long-neglected spear!
> *Declaration* 1-4, 20-25).

The *Declaration* seems here overtly to be making the point that the situation which the poem celebrates is the reverse of the one which was lamented in the *Philippic*.

It was clear that Akenside had relied heavily on reports in the press for the political points which he made in the *Philippic*. The later poem goes so far as to acknowledge a similar indebtedness: to a passage which optimistically envisages the imminent abdication of Philip V of Spain:

> Already, see, for his *Peruvian* ore
> Th'uxorious monarch quakes, already drops
> Th'unstable scepter of his *Western* world;
> And, maugre all the artful blandishments
> Of the aspiring *Parmesan*, or tears
> Of courtiers well-dissembled, hastes to quit
> The tottering burden of a crown, and flee
> From the dread fury of *Britannia*'s arms.
> (12-19)

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20. The opening word of the *Declaration* echoes the poem's epigraph, taken from Virgil: *Aeneid* vii 552: 'terrorum et fraudis abunde est/ stant belli causae' ('Enough of alarms and treachery; sure are the causes of war': *Virgil*, trans. H.R. Fairclough (*Loeb Classical Edition*, 2 vols., 1978) ii 41). Although the use of a classical quotation as an epigraph was a common enough device at the period, it is worth noting that Akenside affixed such epigraphs to *The Virtuoso* (1737), *Ambition and Content* (1737), *Hymn to Science* (1739) and *Curio* (1744).

the poet attached a footnote: *'Alluding to the Report in the public Papers of the King of* Spain*'s intending to resign his Crown*'. This is a reference to a rumour which had been reported in the 'Foreign Affairs' column of *Read's Weekly Journal or British Gazeteer* at the end of October:

> *Fontainebleau, Oct. 11 O.S.*
> A Packet of Letters being brought to the King t'other Day as he was in Council, his Majesty presently opened it, and retired into his Closet with the Duke of Orleans. Since this it is reported, that his Catholick Majesty [i.e. Philip of Spain] has again resolved to abdicate his Crown in favour of his Son the Prince of Asturias; and the Queen try'd what she could to defer his Purpose till some Time longer.
> (*Read's Weekly Journal* no. 790, 27 October 1739).

Philip had, as the report implies, previously abdicated in favour of his eldest son Luis in January 1724, but had been persuaded to resume the monarchy after Luis' death from smallpox only eight months later. However, although he was notoriously unstable, and had suffered a series of mental crises since 1728, there appears to have been no foundation for the rumour to which the newspaper report, and the poet's note, refer. The poet is still following *Read's* in his portrayal of the 'aspiring Parmesan' attempting, by means of 'artful blandishments', to dissuade Philip from this course of action; this is his ambitious and powerful queen consort, Isabel (or Elizabeth) Farnese (1692-1766), who, before her marriage to Philip in 1714, had been Princess Isabel of Parma. The poet probably refers to her as 'aspiring' because of her well-known and long-standing obsession with the recovery of the duchies of Parma and Piacenza for her heirs; as recently as July 1739 the 'Foreign Affairs' column of the *Gentleman's Magazine* had reported from Madrid that:

> By the Alliance on foot between this Court and that of *France*, the Queen of *Spain* hopes in due time to recover her Patrimonial Estate

in *Italy*...
(*GM* ix 386)[21].

In the Philippic, Akenside had recalled a notable British victory over the Spanish at Cape Passaro in 1718 (60-65). The poet of the *Declaration* evokes another great battle, calling on the 'foes to *Britain*' to tremble at the sight of Britannia's 'royal guardian' (George II) rising to redress his country's injuries, and recalling to his breast 'Th'inimitable rage of Audenarde' (26-30). This is a reminder that, as Prince George of Hanover, Britain's monarch had distinguished himself in the Battle of Oudenarde (11 July 1708), one of Marlborough's great victories over the French in the War of the Spanish Succession. He had led a brilliant charge of Hanoverian horsemen which succeeded in routing twenty squadrons of French cavalry, had been given up for lost when his horse had been shot from under him, but had risen and continued to fight[22].

The poet goes on to rejoice in the fact that 'Victorious fame', which has been absent from Britain too long:

> Tho' courted by the fav'rite *Russian*, leaves
> *Moldavia*'s Plains enrich'd with *Turkish* gore,
> Glad to revisit *Albion*'s lofty cliffs...
> (31-34).

The 'fav'rite *Russian*' is Burkhard Christoph, Count Münnich (1683-1767), Russian soldier and statesman, who made his reputation in the Russo-Turkish

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21. See W.N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley: *Eighteenth-Century Spain 1700-1788: A Political, Diplomatic and Institutional History* (London, 1979), 53-54, 62-68, 74-76. See also E. Armstrong: *Elizabeth Farnese: 'The Termagent of Spain'* (London, 1892) passim.

22. For a lively account of the battle, see G.M. Trevelyan: *England Under Queen Anne* (3 vols., London, 1932) vol. ii: *Ramilles and the Union with Scotland* 357-366. For Prince George's part in it, see ibid. 359-360.

War of 1735-1739. In 1737 he had taken Ochakov in a famous siege, and in August 1739, after taking Khotin (or Choczim) in Northern Bessarabia, had established himself firmly in Moldavia[23]. An account of the taking of Khotin '*From the* Russian *Army under Count* Munich [sic], August 24, O.S.' had appeared in the September issue of the Magazine (*GM* ix 498-499); and the October *GM* had reported that:

> Count *Munich* had pursued his Conquests in *Moldavia*, the Capital of which Place, *Jassy*, receiv'd him in Triumph, after which *Bender* surrendering without Resistance, *Bialograd*, and the *Budziack Tartars* submitted.
>
> (*GM* ix 555)

In the *Philippic*, Akenside had attempted to shame the British into demanding war by depicting the agonies which he imagined the British sailors to be suffering in the Spanish dungeons:

> Behold your brethren chain'd like beasts of prey...
> The look that speaks unutterable woe;
> The mangled limb, the faint, the deathful eye,
> With famine sunk, the deep, heart-bursting groan...
>
> (80, 83-85).

The poet of the *Declaration* depicts a strikingly similar scene, this time in order to celebrate the fact that Britain will no longer have cause to regret

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23. See M.T. Florinsky: *Russia: A History and an Interpretation* (2 vols., New York, 1947, 1953) i 462-465. Florinsky points out that:
> It is a moot question...whether [the capture of Ochakov] was achieved by the skill of the Russian commanders and the heroism of their troops, as claimed by Münnich, or whether, as alleged by several of his critics, it was a fortunate accident caused by an explosion of powder magazines in the fortress at the very moment when the Russian commander in chief had abandoned all hope of success. (464).

her loss of honour, and:

> No more shall hear the lamentable groans
> Which naught but misery extreme could force
> From her brave sons, oh execrable shame!
> Her free-born sons in *Spanish* dungeons chain'd:
> No more with agony heart-piercing view
> Their mangled limbs, and meagre famish'd looks:
>
> (40-45)

Quite apart from a number of what could conceivably be coincidental verbal echoes, the closeness of this to the rhetoric of the parallel passage from the *Philippic* is obvious.

In the *Philippic*, Akenside had been 'all on fire' at the thought of the sailors' sufferings (96); in the *Declaration*, the 'glorious thought' of Britain's forthcoming success in the war 'Fires with unusual warmth' the poet's muse (50-51). In 1738, Akenside had invoked the 'great spirits' of Britain's glorious past, whom he described as 'scourges of *Spain*' (101). In 1739, the poet of the *Declaration* looks forward to 'a glorious period', which he expects will in future be as 'renown'd' as two of the great wars against Spain in the past (the war of 1585-1604, and the War of the Spanish Succession, 1701-1713), when:

> The great *Eliza*, or the glorious *Anne*
> Our scepter sway'd, and scourg'd insidious *Spain*.
>
> (60-63);

Indeed, Robert Blake, one of the 'scourges' of the *Philippic*, reappears in the *Declaration*, this time in the role of an illustrious forerunner of the current commander in chief of the Mediterranean, Admiral Nicholas Haddock (1686-1746). The poet of the *Declaration* pays tribute to 'dread *Haddock*', the 'intrepid admiral':

> Among the hardy sons
> Of *Neptune* with a more undaunted heart
> None ploughs the proudly-swelling tide, or breathes

A bolder *British* spirit.
(79-86);

and hopes that his brow may be 'deck'd/ With lawrels fresh', and that he may go on to 'Equal the honours of illustrious *Byng*' (138-139, 141). Unfortunately Haddock failed to live up to the poet's expectations. In 1740, he caused an outcry in England by allowing the escape of a blockaded Spanish squadron in Cadiz, and the opposition moved unsuccessfully for his recall. In the winter of 1741, another burst of indignation greeted his failure to prevent the Spanish and French fleets from combining to escort a Spanish expedition to Italy, despite the fact that he had complained about lack of reinforcements and conflicting instructions. Haddock suffered a mental breakdown as a result, and was ordered complete rest by his doctor. The Earl of Egmont reported in his diary for 4 March 1742 that 'Admiral Haddock is on his return to England, melancholy distracted'. He never went to sea again[24].

These unhappy events were yet to come at the time of the *Declaration*'s composition, however; and the expectations which the poet expressed here were based on the fact that Haddock had been reported in the October *GM* as having, 'besides lesser Prizes':

> intercepted two rich Ships from *Carracas*, having on Board 2,000,000 Pieces of Eight, one of which of 800 Tun is arrived at *Spithead* worth above 150,000l. with the Crew, being 76 *Spaniards*....And since the above, Admiral *Haddock* has taken 20 Prizes, 2 Privateers, and a rich Ship from *Buenos Ayres*.
> (*GM* ix 543).

It is presumably the capture of these two 'rich Ships' which the poet is thinking of when he evokes 'The memorable day! when *Britain*'s fleet/ In order

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24. See Sedgewick ii 93-94, Egmont *Diary* iii 258.

rang'd a dreadful line of death' (91-92). A reader who found the war-mongering of the *Philippic* a little excessive would be unlikely to respond very favourably to that of the *Declaration*. The poet imagines the battle:

> Death rages thro' the scene; sublime in air
> Mount trunks deform'd, and their dissever'd limbs
> With riven splinters and huge shatter'd masts,
> The sport of winds. Thro' many a gaping wound
> The coward souls of *Spaniards* wing'd their flight...
> ... What cries, what groans!
> Till half burnt carkasses, and melted arms,
> And all the naval furniture of war
> Sink, hiss and bubble in the glowing main.
>
> (106-110; 130-133).

The poet hopes that such a 'foul catastrophe' will befall all who goad or insult Britain (134-136); and that '*Britannia*'s other valiant chiefs' will conduct themselves with similar bravery, and force the Spanish to accept Britain's '*previous terms*'. This is a reference to the fact that the war with Spain had been declared because the Spanish were felt to have been acting contrary to the Convention of Pardo, which had been signed by Britain and Spain on 14 January 1739 (see *GM* ix 68-71). The note which is attached to this line (which must, presumably, have been added by Cave), directs the reader to the 'Historical Chronicle' for November, which carries a report of the Lords' and Commons' address to the king, made on 23 November:

> Both Houses of Parliament waited on his Majesty with an Address, in Substance, That his Majesty would not make any Peace, Treaty, nor Agreement with the K. of *Spain*, unless that Prince gives up all Right and Pretensions whatsoever to visit, search, or molest any of the *British* Ships trading to the *W. Indies*. To which his Majesty gave a most gracious Answer.
>
> *My Lords and Gentlemen,*
>
> 'I Thank you for this dutiful Address, which is so agreeable to former Resolutions of both Houses of Parliament. Your unanimous and vigourous Support in carrying on the War, will be the best Means of procuring safe and honourable Terms of Peace; and you may rely on

> my utmost Care and Endeavour, to obtain effectual Security for the just Rights of Navigation and Commerce belonging to my Subjects'.
> (*GM* ix 604).

As the poem ends, the poet points out that the acceptance of Britain's 'terms' is the only condition under which an end to the war is conceivable:

> Then shall fair *Peace*, and not till then, extend
> Her olive wand, and from her fruitful horn
> Gay plenty shedding, hush th'alarms of war.
> Her commerce settled, and her flag rever'd,
> And blest with Freedom, choicest gift of heaven,
> *Britannia*, happy isle, once more shall shine
> The envy and the terror of the world!
> (147-153).

On the basis of internal evidence of style, theme, numerous verbal parallels, and the fact that, as in the earlier poem, so much use is made of recently reported current events, it seems possible that the poem could be Akenside's. Given the immaturity of its sentiments, it would be scarcely surprising that he would not have wished to include it in his collected *Poems*, from which the *Philippic* was, after all, also excluded. Apart from the fact that Akenside was known to be publishing other work in the Magazine at this period (his *Hymn to Science* had been published in the previous month's issue) there is, however, no external evidence to support the attribution.

It has emerged clearly from an examination of these two poems that they contain little in the way of political attitudes or commentary on current events which cannot be traced directly to sources in opposition-based journalism. However, this dependence on such sources, far from detracting from the poems' interest, in many ways rather increases it, since it provides a clear demonstration of the powerful impression which such anti-administration polemics could exert even on a mind as critical and intellectual as that of Akenside.

CHAPTER TWO

1742-1744

Although Akenside is now known to have begun his course at Edinburgh University in November 1738[1], no information appears to have survived as to when he completed his studies there. However, a letter which he wrote from Newcastle on 24 May 1742 suggests that he had only recently returned to his home town (Add. MS 21,508 f.26). During his stay in Edinburgh, according to Dugald Stewart, he:

> was a member of the Medical Society, then recently formed, and was eminently distinguished by the eloquence which he displayed in the course of the debates. Dr. Robertson...told me that he was frequently led to attend their meetings, chiefly to hear the speeches of Akenside, the great object of whose ambition then was a seat in Parliament, a situation which he was sanguine enough to flatter himself he had some prospect of obtaining; and for which he conceived his talents to be much better adapted than for the profession he had chosen[2].

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1. See Chapter 1 note 1.

2. Dugald Stewart: *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (3 vols., London, 1792) iii 501. As a dissenter, Akenside would not in fact have been eligible for a parliamentary seat unless he abandoned his religion and assented to the 39 articles; possibly in the end he was not prepared to do this.

The period of Akenside's studies, and his involvement in political debates at Edinburgh coincided with the increasingly intense pressure which led to Walpole's resignation in early 1742. The first poem to be discussed in this chapter is concerned with the events which immediately followed that resignation.

AN EPISTLE TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM PULTNEY ESQ.

I have argued elsewhere for the attribution of this poem to Akenside[3]; the discussion here will therefore be confined to the references to current events which the poem contains. As in the case of the *Declaration*, the fact that the poem was not included in *Poems* (1772) is no cause for surprise, since neither Akenside nor Dyson would have been likely to have wanted to include a panegyric to Pulteney after the politician's apparent apostasy, which forms the subject of *An Epistle to Curio* two years later.

As far as the question of dating is concerned, there is little problem. Akenside himself refers back to his earlier poem in the opening lines of *Curio*, and in doing so gives the date of its composition with remarkable precision:

> Thrice has the Spring beheld thy faded Fame,
> And the fourth Winter rises on thy Shame,
> Since I exulting grasp'd the votive Shell,
> In sounds of Triumph all thy Praise to tell;
>
> (*Curio* 1-4).

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3. See Harriet Jump: 'Akenside's Other Epistle', *N&Q* n.s. vol. 33 no.4 (December 1986) 508-512.

The 'fourth Winter', which is approaching as Akenside composes his *Curio* Epistle, is that of 1744-5; the poem was published in November 1744 (*GM* xiv 624). Three winters earlier, therefore, would have been that of of 1741-2; while the fact that the spring is mentioned suggests a composition date towards the end of that period: say late March or early April 1742. A brief examination of the state of political affairs at that date quickly reveals why Akenside would have chosen that particular point in time to address his first poem to Pulteney.

The winter of 1741-2 was a period which, to Walpole's opponents both in and out of parliament, brought high excitement, and hopes for an almost utopian future. Rumblings of discontent against Walpole's administration both at home and overseas had been in the air throughout his twenty-year period as First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, a position which amounted to that of Prime Minister, although the term seems rarely to have been used at the time except with derogatory implications. As the previous chapter has shown, matters had begun to come to a head in 1738-9, when Walpole's unwillingness to engage in a war with Spain had brought accusations of cowardliness and lack of concern for his country. His subsequent handling of the war which he had been forced to declare in October 1739, together with the War of the Austrian Succession, in which Britain had become involved the following year, had been heavily criticised in both Houses of Parliament, and by opposition journalists and pamphleteers outside. Finally, motions on behalf of the opposition were brought in the House of Commons by Samuel Sandys and in the Lords by Carteret on 13 February 1741:

> That an humble Address be presented to his majesty, most humbly to advise and beseech his majesty, that he will be most graciously

> pleased to remove the right honourable sir Robert Walpole ...from his majesty's presence and counsels forever.
>
> (*Parl. Hist.* xi 1085).

It seemed, however, that the time was not yet ripe to oust Walpole from office; the ensuing debate in the Commons, which lasted for fourteen hours, ended in a defeat for the opposition's motion by a surprisingly large majority of 184 votes[4]. In spite of this disappointment, the campaign continued unabated. The *Craftsman* of 21 February summed up the opposition's view of the case against Walpole, which included accusations of mismanagement both at home and abroad:

> that vast Armaments had been made at an infinite Expense, without doing any real or substantial Service...that great Opportunities had been lost by unnecessary Delays; that at home Frauds were suspected in every Branch of Business, the publick Treasure improperly applied, for the Support of the *Minister*'s Person; that the Manufactories were starving from the Decay of Trade, to the Ruin of the Countries where they were settled.

These charges were reiterated in the magazines and journals throughout the ensuing months. The *GM* of May and June printed a lengthy 'Summary of the charges against Sir Robert Walpole' (*GM* xi 254-256, 295-296), while the issues for July and August published the Lords' debate on the 13 February motion (*GM* xi 339-358, 395-416).

The general election of May-June 1741 was energetically fought by leading members of the opposition; and, owing largely to the efforts of the Prince of Wales in Cornwall and of the Duke of Argyll in Scotland, the newly elected

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4. *CJ* xxiii 648. The size of the majority seems to have been mainly owing to internal disagreements between the Tories and dissident Whigs who together formed the opposition to Walpole's administration (see Owen 3).

parliament contained a somewhat reduced number of members who might be expected to vote for Walpole's administration[5]. When the winter sitting of parliament was declared open on 1 December, Pulteney led the renewed attack on Walpole with vigour. Motions which he tabled on 18 December 1741 and on 21 January 1742, designed to bring to light Walpole's misconduct of the war, were defeated, in the first case by a majority of ten, in the second by a majority of only three (*CJ* xxiv 32-33, 53). Finally, when on 28 January the opposition gained a victory of only one on a comparatively minor issue (*CJ* xxiv 65-66), Walpole was forced to accept the outcome which he had been avoiding for so long. On the evening of 31 January 1742 he made the decision to resign the office he had held for nearly 21 years[6], and on 11 February it was announced that 'Sir Robert Walpole created Earl of Orford on the 8th, resigned all his employments' (*GM* xii 105). The *Craftsman* of 20 February greeted the news with cautious optimism:

> I must rejoice with my Country-men in general, for their happy Deliverance from a most oppressive Bondage of, at least, twenty Years Duration. -- And in particular, I...congratulate those worthy Patriots, whose wise, uniform, and steady Conduct has accomplish'd this great Event...Our *present Representatives*, as They have it in their Power, there can be no Doubt that They likewise have it in their Will to redress us not only in the *present* but to secure Us against *future Grievances*, if They persevere in the same watchful Attendance, and preserve the same Unanimity.
>
> As far as human Foresight can prognosticate, We shall soon, from a low, depress'd People, become a glorious and flourishing Kingdom.

Clearly, the defeat of Walpole appeared to be of immense importance in

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5. See Owen 3-7 for a full discussion of the implications of the 1741 election.

6. Horace Walpole to Mann, 4 February 1742 (Walpole: *Corresp.* 17 319).

the eyes of opposition supporters, since it offered an opportunity for all the country's wrongs to be set right at long last. To achieve this desired result, however, what was obviously needed was a firm hand of wise, enlightened leadership. To Pulteney's followers, at least, noone seemed to be more suited for this position than the man who had been Walpole's chief opponent for so many years; and for a brief period after Walpole's fall:

> it was expected that [Pulteney] would have formed a patriot ministry, and have put the public affairs in such a train as would necessarily...have repaired all the breaches in our consitution.
> (King 42-43).

But although on 2 February Pulteney was approached by the Duke of Newcastle, acting on behalf of the king, and asked to accept the headship of the Treasury, he refused the post, apparently on the grounds that:

> he utterly disclaimed at aiming at Power, that he would accept of no place, that what he aimed at was not merely a change of men, but measures also, and that he would never come in to carry on the same system of corruption...
> (Add. MS 18915 f 29).

News of Pulteney's refusal was not slow to reach the opposition press, and his decision was greeted jubliantly by *Common Sense* on 20 February:

> We already see the Falshood of what the Slaves of the Corruptor have constantly given out, that all the Struggle was for nothing but Places. -- Those who have most strenuously contended for a Change of Measures have refused to accept of the most honourable and profitable Employments.

Despite his refusal of a place for himself, however, Pulteney took an active part in the re-shuffling of places which followed Walpole's defeat[7], as well as in the setting up of a committee to enquire into the conduct of Walpole's administration during his twenty years of office. In the midst of these negotiations his only daughter Anna Maria, aged fourteen, became fatally ill, and died on 9 March (*GM* xii 163). By 15 March, however, Pulteney was back in parliament, proclaiming his support for the committee of enquiry; and on 23 March he 'gave great satisfaction to his Party in the speech he made', in which he declared that:

> though he was not forward for an enquiry into the late Minister's bad administration, because of an expression he had used several years ago, viz., that he would pursue him to destruction, (which yet he only meant of his ministerial influence, not of his person) yet the nation would not be satisfied without an enquiry, and that it would be of good example and a terror to future Ministers to keep them to their duty.
> (Egmont *Diary* iii 263).

Although even at this stage cynical voices were beginning to suggest that Pulteney's actions were not altogether unselfish -- Egmont wrote on 15 March that 'he began to be suspected of the Country [i.e. opposition] party' (Egmont *Diary* iii 262) -- to some at least of his more ingenuous and idealistic supporters his conduct evidently appeared wholly admirable and laudable. It was certainly taken to be so by the poet of *Pulteney*. The text of the poem follows.

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7. By Pulteney's own account, this re-shuffling produced some rather undignified behaviour on the part of other opposition M.P.s:
> almost everyone in the opposition expected some employment, and a total change of hands; scarce any person (tho' never so inconsiderable) but had carried out some good thing for himself.
> (Bath to Stair, 11 February 1743, Add. MS 35458 f 24).

AN EPISTLE To the RIGHT HONOURABLE *WILLIAM PULTNEY*, Esq; Upon his late CONDUCT in Publick Affairs.

To the READER.

THE following lines being chiefly Historical, it was thought necessary that the Narrative should commence at that Point of Time wherein the noble PERSONAGE *to whom they are addressed exibited an Instance of the most generous, I might almost venture to say supernatural Concern for the Welfare of his Country, whose Deliverence was then at the very Crisis, that any Age or Nation can boast of. This may serve to obviate any Objection relating to the Distance of Time when the Calamity deplored in the beginning of this Epistle, the* Death *of his only* DAUGHTER, *happened.*

I have endeavoured, throughout this performance, at a rigid Impartiality, not bearing upon the Edges, but steering in the Middle, in humble Imitation of his glorious Example to whom I was writing; for which Reason I expect to be condemned by the Violent on both Sides.

There is a poisonous Spirit gone forth amongst us at present of indulging groundless Jealousies and Surmises, which are the Seed-Plot of various Mischiefs, and the very Bane of all Human Society; This is the Particular I have principally aim'd to discourage. It betrays the utmost want of Gratitude to our Benefactors, to insinuate that they pretend contrary to what they confess, to judge the Tree to be bad when we see the Fruit good, and to pronounce of Men's Hearts in direct contrariety to their very Actions; this is to subvert the Foundations of all Publick Spirit, and the least bad Consequence of it must be this, that it will discourage others from henceforth employing their Toil and Time for the Service of those who make such untoward Requitals for it.

'TWAS Heav'ns Decree -- 'tis seal'd -- the Moment's past,
The dire, dire Moment when SHE smil'd her last!
No Plaints can e'er regain th'immortal Maid,
No Prayers bring back the Sky-adopted Shade:
Cease then, illustrous Mourner, cease to dwell
On fruitless Woe -- let thy firm Bosom swell
With Patriot Cares; attend thy Country's Call;
Heark! she implores thy Aid to break her Fall;
Each fainting Heart, and ev'ry feeble Knee,
For Life and Vigour, anxious wait on Thee. [10]
'Tis done! once more the storm-tost State you guide,
The People's Pilot, and the Senate's Pride:
For us the Patriot from the Parent's Eye
Wipes ev'ry Tear, and smothers ev'ry Sigh.
Is't possible? Could, then, the Beam divine
Of publick Love dispel a Grief like thine?
Can no reversing Surge, no adverse Wind
O'erset the Ballast of thy anchor'd Mind?
Was there, in mortal Mould, a Breast so man'd

As Fate's whole Host could, thus, unshaken stand!
Thy Loss, *Affliction*'s Self could not express,
Creation's Darling in her fairest Dress!
A *Form* so fraught with all that ought to please,
Wants in the *Mind* had been o'erlook'd with ease,
Yet such the radiant Treasures of her *Mind*,
That all who view'd them, to her *Form* were blind;
Wit which could strike assuming Folly dead,
And *Sense* which temper'd ev'ry thing she said;
Judgment which ev'ry little Fault could spie,
But *Candor* which would pass a thousand by;
Such wondrous Heights the Virgin Phoenix soar'd
Beyond her Years, that she was half ador'd:
There was no Twilight seen, at once 'twas Day,
And her Morn's Sun display'd a Noon-tide Ray;
No wonder, then, that Sun so early set,
When, tho' its Course was short, 'twas still complete;
No wonder she so early disappears,
Who swiftly liv'd by Moments, not by Years;
Her purer Soul soon cast its Case of Clay,
And to eternal Freedom wing'd its Way.
The circling Spheres, with Modulation sweet,
In fuller Chorus her Ascension greet;
Whilst Heav'n receives her from repining Earth,
And a *new-kindled Star* proclaims th'etherial Birth.

Happy, O happy! to those Regions flown
Where Heav'ns full Streams of Pleasures are thy own,
Hail! youngest, purest Daughter of the Sky --
Who'd wish to live that hop'd like thee to die?

Ignoble Minds when they're depriv'd of ought,
Which charm'd the Sense or dwelt upon the Thought,
Meanly exclaim, their Darling's *lost* -- but You
Who Wisdom's Dictates in *each* Scene pursue,
Cry not you've *lost*, but say that you've *restor'd*
What bounteous Heav'n did for a while afford.
Your only Daughter, your fond Hope is dead,
Yet you nor beat the Breast, nor droop the Head,
But yield her, with resign'd Humility,
To the kind *Owner*'s Hands who lent her Thee.

Rome's godlike *Patriot*, who condemn'd a Son
That counter to his Nation's Welfare run,
Gain'd, by that single Act, immortal Fame,
And *Father of his Country* was his Name;
How much more justly is that *Stile* YOUR due!
BRUTUS condemn'd a *guilty* Son -- but YOU
A *spotless* Daughter lost, a while forget,
And for the *Publick*, run in *Nature*'s Debt:
He *justly* from Society was swept,

[44] Alluding to the late Comet which made its Appearance at that Time.

Nor merited one *Moment* to be wept;
But SHE, the Boast and Blessing of her Age,
Wish of the Youth, and Wonder of the Sage;
A *shining Light* in darkest Days set forth,
Just to display our *Barrenness* of *Worth*;
No sooner shewn than snatch'd away again,
Lest our foul Vapours should her Lustre stain;
She, she deserv'd thy Tears should endless flow,
And claim'd a Tribute from each Fount of Woe.

Ev'n CICERO's Self, that Idol of Mankind!
By you o'ermatch'd in Fortitude of Mind,
Lags in the Race of Glory far behind.
For when the Sisters cut his *Tullia*'s Thread,
And number'd his fair Offspring with the Dead,
How did the *Patriot* melt away in Tears,
And wear the Vassalage of Woe for Years?
From *Rome* and all its Cares *Rome*'s Guardian fled,
Dead to Renown, and to his Country dead;
The *Orator*, by frantick Passion toss'd,
Found his *own* Rhet'rick, on *himself*, first lost,
And long, too long, the Chambers of Despair
Depriv'd the Publick of his genial Care.

Not so was PULTNEY's manlier Breast unnerv'd,
Not so from Right the steadier *Briton* swerv'd:
His Country's Genius bade his leave the Urn,
Quit private Woe, and for *her* Welfare burn;
Instant he rouses at th'inspiring Call,
Instant he chears the drooping *Capitol*.
Again his Breast with *double* Ardor glows,
With *double* Force his social Rhet'rick flows;
So when the genial *Thames* a few Years past
Found its Course check'd by an all-conqu'ring Blast,
Some Moments at the Stroke appall'd it stood
And a dead Langour chain'd the gen'rous Flood;
But soon collecting all its scatter'd Force,
And rolling on itself a backward Course,
With a redoubled Strength away it bounds,
Resistless overleaps its wonted Mounds,
And makes more fertile all the neighb'ring Grounds.

Britannia's Sun now shot a *parting* Ray,
Just on the Point of putting out her Day;
Now, half *enslav'd*, half *bankrupt*, *Albion*'s Realm,
Had neither *Weight* nor *Wisdom* at the *Helm*,

[98-106] The Incident here alluded to happened in *September* 1716, when the *Thames* lay perfectly dry both above and below Bridge for some time.

[107] The following Forty Lines represent the State of *Great Britain* in the Year 1741.

But *Walpolle*, like a boding *Screech-Owl* sate
Close to the Window of the dying State;
At *more* than *War's Expence* now *Peace* was kept,
And *War* on *Peace*'s Poppy Pillow *slept*.
Our Rulers now for this, now that, now either,
Nor durst a Step 'till FLEURY told 'em whither;
Unknowing how to *strike*, or how *depend*,
Fear'd by *no* Foe, and *trusted* by *no* Friend;
Cajol'd, by *foreign* Craft, of half our Trade,
Whilst *native* Knaves our *native* Rights betray'd;
Court-Moths corrupt, court-Thieves broke through and stole,
Brib'ry and Plunder jogg'd on cheek by jole,
Whilst *Wrong* enobled went so *cloth'd* like *Right*,
That Virtue *blush'd* because her Robe was *white*.
No Power, no Shelter left the Common-weal,
But *Albion's* Head was crush'd by *Gallia*'s Heel.

Nay in the *Church* as well as *State* we found
Corruption, Guile, and frantick Dreams abound;
The sacred *Scribes*, for Midwife *Whitefield*'s Gain,
From *Light* were into *Darkness born again*,
Whilst the *low* Mob the *monstrous* Birth adore,
Who trampl'd on the *Heav'n-sprung* one before;
And the *high* Rabble, to be thought more wise,
And *neither* reverence, put *out* their *Eyes*.

Now all things tow'ards their pristine *Chaos* lean'd,
No Seed of Art or Science to be glean'd;
St. STEPHEN's *Curfew* toll'd -- *put out the Light*,
And the P[ ]'s Chimes play'd round -- *let there be Night*.
Now the last Times of *Peril* seem'd begun,
For fatal *Discord* reign'd 'twixt *Sire* and *Son*;
Each *Nation* against *Nation* fierce rose up,
And *Britons* drank the Dregs of *Circe*'s Cup;
Whilst ev'ry *Patriot* Eye distill'd a Tear,
And BOURBON rung his *Shackles* in our Ear.

Then, in that very *Crisis* of our *Fate*,
Just at that *Point* when 'twas not *quite* too *late*,
PULTNEY step'd forth the SAVIOUR of the State,
And with an out-stretch'd Arm, and mighty Hand,
From *worse* than *Egypt*'s *Bondage* snatch'd the Land.

O arduous Task! to stem th'*impetuous* Tide
When NEPTUNE and his *Host* were on its Side;
To scale the Skies, bring banish'd Freedom thence,
And our *lost* Heav'n retake, *by Violence*!
Could Truth, or Sense, or Eloquence prevail,
When Pow'r, Pelf, Honours urg'd the counter Scale?
Could the still Voice of Reason e'er be heard
Amidst a noisy, witless, *hireling* Herd?
Could all thy Assiduity, or Art,
E'er cure our *Constitution*'s *rotten Part*?
Or could'st thou hope to master the *foul Fiend*

That *curs'd the Land*, when by a *Legion* screen'd?

Yes, PULTNEY, you did stem th'incroaching Tide
Tho' NEPTUNE and his *Host* were on its Side;
Brought banish'd Freedom back from whence 'twas flown,
And made the Heav'n we'd lost once more our own;
Thy Truth, Sense, Eloquence no longer fail'd,
But Reason's gentle Voice at length prevail'd;
Thy gen'rous Assiduity, and Art,
Did cure our *Constitution*'s *rotten Part*
And marvellously master'd the *foul Fiend*
That *curs'd the Land*, tho' by a *Legion* screen'd.
No longer able to resist thy Might,
He steals into a *mean*, inglorious *Flight*,
Whilst you disdain to crush a Wretch that *flies*,
And only, now, *pursue him with your Eyes*.
So gen'rous Wines, which still ferment the most,
The Vict'ry gain'd, the mildest Spirit boast.

Our guardian Angels watch the *turning* Scene,
And from their Orbs with wond'ring Transport lean;
Britannia's Genius starts up from the Dead,
And her chear'd Sons once more erect the Head;
Viewing with Joy, at ORNAN's *Threshing-Floor*,
The *Minister* of *Wrath*, at length, give o'er.
Loud Peals of just Applause our Bliss proclaim,
And Heav'n's high Vault resounds with PULTNEY's Name;
The Zephyrs bland our rapt'rous *Paeans* bear,
And distant Realms the glorious Triumph share;
All LAUD, on Wings of Incense soars on high,
'Till Joy itself's half lost in Ecstasy.
So subterranean Fire in *AEtna* pent,
Which long in vain had struggled for a Vent,
Whence once the warring Winds evade the Weight,
And a free Passage for the Flame create,
The blazing Spires rush out with rapid Force,
And to the Skies impetuous wing their Course.

The Reins now *forc'd* from the *Corruptor*'s Hand,
And plac'd in *Their*'s who join'd the glorious Stand,
For HE refus'd -- O Self-denial rare!
Ought, but the *Glory* and the *Toil*, to share!
This Godlike Man, who late with Zeal inspir'd.
And at *Britannia*'s Wrongs divinely fir'd,
With Peals of Rhet'rick bore upon the Foe,
Nor ceas'd its Thunder 'till he laid him low,
Now calm sits down, debating in his Breast,
What Labour next must give his Country Rest;
Free from all Rancour, Pique, or partial Hate,
How to compose the long perturbed State;
How to undo what the *Arch-Foe* had done,
And perfect the great Work he had begun:
And who so skill'd to smooth the Publick Rage,
As HE who his own Griefs could thus assuage.

For this the SIRE he boldly undeceiv'd,
And heal'd that baneful *Breach* we long had griev'd:
For this he *strove* to bring to Justice *Those*
Whom *Truth* proclaim'd their *King*'s and *Country*'s Foes.

But here, great PULTNEY! in *this Point* of Light,
You shine the most *conspicuously* bright!
When Blood beat *high*, when Rage unbounded reign'd,
And all *demanded* what could *ne'er be gain'd*;
When such *warm* Lengths our rous'd Resentment ran,
As well you knew would mar your *gen'rous Plan*;
A Plan concerted for the *gen'ral* Good,
Form'd nor on *Cowardice* nor *Thirst of Blood*,
You step'd between, quench'd hot Revenge's Brand,
Determin'd not to *burn* but *warm* the Land,
And taught us *Vengeance* is a *dang'rous* Force,
Unless 'tis *smooth'd* and *guided* in its Course.
For sake of *Peace*, Things not so *good* as *Peace*
Judicious You *gave up*, that with more Ease
Our *various* Int'rests you might reconcile,
And lull to Rest the Storms that rent our Isle,
Or make those Tempests cease *at Home* to blow,
And turn their *blended Fury* on the *common* Foe.
And lo the bless'd *Effects*! we now no more
See *fetter'd* Fleets lie *slumb'ring* round our Shore,
But *distant* Regions tremble at their *Roar*:
Our Troops no longer are a useless Band
Of *Lady-Birds* that redden all the Land,
But active *Champions* for their *Country* stand:
Whilst *long-lost* Friends once more a *Trust* repose,
And gladly join us 'gainst invading Foes.

And now a *whiter* AEra is begun,
Britannia joys in her *returning Sun*;
The dark'ning Clouds that hung upon her Day,
Like Morning Mists, are swiftly chas'd away;
Her Realm shall now, with *wiser* Counsels blest,
Not only *balance*, but *direct* the rest:
Her *guarded* Commerce shall no Limits know,
But like her Seas in boundless Circles flow;
Whilst her brave *Sailors* safely plough the Main,
And her eas'd *Craftsmen* now no more in vain
Of *sinking Trade*, and *rising Tax* complain.

Let *Those*, then, who still *curse* their *present* State,
And grudge themselves the Bliss they cannot rate,
Who *Jew-like*, whilst with *Manna* they are fed,
Still *munch* and *murmur* at the heavn'ly bread;
And their great MOSES's Honour now contest,
Who led them to the Verge of promis'd Rest,
Let such *repine* and *grumble* whilst they will,
PULTNEY proceed, thy righteous Measure fill,
And teach those Churls who are so prompt to blame,
You toil with publick, not with private Aim.

> Great Actions still by Great must be maintain'd,
> As Bodies are by *kindred* Food sustain'd;
> A gen'rous Care for *us* first fir'd your Breast,
> And your OWN FAME will now secure the *rest*.

The poem's publication was announced in the *GM*'s 'Register of Books for July 1742' (*GM* xii 392) -- a peculiarly ironic date for its appearance, in the light of future developments, as will appear. However, internal references in the poem itself make it clear that it was written several months earlier. Not only does it celebrate Pulteney's part in the overthrow of Walpole, and the fact that he had returned to the political fray so soon after his daughter's death, but it also includes references to news items which had appeared in the March issue of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. This would give a composition date of the beginning of April, which would fit Akenside's specifications in *Curio* very neatly. The time-lapse between the poem's composition and its publication is easy to explain in the light of the obvious difficulties which would have faced the poet, living so far from London, in finding a publisher willing to take the manuscript; this would have been his first venture into independent publication, since that of the *Philippic* had of course been handled by Cave. That the poet of *Fulteney* was aware that the poem had lost some of its topicality as a result of this time-lapse is clear from the slightly defensive note 'To the Reader' which prefaces the poem:

> The following Lines being chiefly Historical, it was thought necessary that the Narrative should commence at that Point of Time wherein the noble PERSONAGE to whom they are addressed exhibited an Instance of the most generous, I might almost venture to say supernatural Concern for the Welfare of his Country, whose Deliverance was then at the very Crisis, that any Age or Nation can boast of. This may serve to obviate any Objection relating to the Distance of Time when the Calamity deplored in the beginning of this Epistle, the Death of his only Daughter, happened.

It was seen above that even in the early days following Walpole's fall, doubting voices were to be heard questioning the politician's motives. The poet's address to the reader confronts those cynics with an indignant defence which demonstrates an ingenuous faith in the purity of Pulteney's aims. He acknowledges that there is ' a poisonous Spirit gone forth amongst us at present of indulging groundless Jealousies and Surmises'; but it is his aim to discourage these, since:

> It betrays the utmost want of Gratitude to our Benefactors, to insinuate that they pretend contrary to what they profess, to judge the Tree to be bad when we see the Fruit good, and to pronounce of Men's Hearts in direct contrariety even to their very Actions; this is to subvert the Foundations of all Publick Spirit, and the least bad Consequence of it must be this, that it will discourage others from henceforth employing their Toil and Time for the Service of those who make such untoward Requitals for it.

The poem opens with an exhortation to Pulteney: since the 'dire, dire moment' of his daughter's death is past, and no amount of grieving will bring her back, he is advised to stop dwelling on 'fruitless Woe', and instead to come to the aid of his country (1-10). No sooner has this request been made, than the poet realises that "Tis done!"; that Pulteney has conquered his grief and taken his place at the helm of the 'storm-tost State' (11-14). He expresses his amazement that 'the Beam divine/ Of publick Love' could have such a powerful effect (15-20); and in the passage which follows(22-48) he celebrates the remarkable qualities supposedly possessed by Anna Maria Pulteney. Whether the poet would have known that she was in fact said to have been 'a sensible and handsome girl' (Walpole: *Corresp.* 17.366) is difficult to say; he might, perhaps, have encountered friends and acquaintances of Pulteney at, for example, political debating societies. However, the conventions of the genre in which he was writing were such that beauty, wit and virtue would

necessarily be attributed to the subject of the poem. The poet ends this passage imagining Anna Maria's soul winging its way to 'eternal Freedom'. Her arrival in Heaven is proclaimed by the appearance of a '*new-kindled Star*' (44); according to the poet's note, this alludes: 'to the late Comet which made its Appearance at that Time', a phenomenon which had been reported in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for February 1742 (*GM* xii 106-107).

The poet moves on to consider the implications of Pulteney's fortitude at this difficult time. His mental strength is first compared with the reaction of 'Ignoble Minds' to the loss of a loved object. While they can think no further than their immediate loss (49-51), Pulteney has shown 'resign'd Humility', in surrendering her back 'To the kind *Owner*'s Hands who lent her Thee' (51-58). In this, he has shown himself to surpass even the heroes and patriots of the classical age. He is first compared to Lucius Junius Brutus, who had condemned his own son to death for treason and had gained:

> by that single Act, immortal Fame,
> And *Father of his Country* was his Name;
> How much more justly is that *Stile* Your due!
> BRUTUS condemn'd a *guilty* Son - but You
> A *spotless* Daughter lost, a while forget,
> And for the *Publick*, run in *Nature*'s Debt:
>
> (59-66).

Brutus, the founder of the Roman republic, had instituted an oath to be taken by the people that they would never submit to kingly authority. Among the first to break the oath were his two sons, Titus and Tiberius, both of whom he

therefore condemned to death[8]; the demands of the poetic parallel presumably necessitated the way in which this is expressed. Not only does Pulteney's heroism surpass that of Brutus, the poet continues, but also that of Cicero, who after his own daughter's death, had taken refuge in 'the Chambers of Despair' for 'long, too long'. (77-89). Cicero's daughter Tullia died in February 45 BC, and Cicero, after spending a few weeks with his friend Atticus, retired to a villa in Astura. The depth of his grief is evident in his letters to Atticus and other friends at this time. It was over a year (March 44 BC) before he again began to play a major part in Roman politics[9].

'Not so was PULTNEY's manlier Breast unnerv'd' (90), however. At the call of his country, he had quitted his 'private Woe' and returned to the political fray with redoubled ardour, and doubly forceful rhetoric (91-97)[10]. In this, he is compared to the River Thames, which had been frozen 'a few Years past', but which, on melting, had bounded away with 'redoubled Strength' (98-106). This alludes to the severe frost of January 1740, which was reported in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for that month:

> This Month, the Frost, which began the 26th of last, grew more severe than has been known since the memorable Winter of 1715-16....The *Thames* floated with Rocks and Shoals of Ice; and when they fixed, represented a snowy Field, rising every where in Hillocks and

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8. The story of Brutus' condemnation of his sons for treason against the state appears in several classical sources; see for example *Florus* i.3.5, where Brutus is referred to as 'publicus parens' (parent of the state, or, as the poet translates it, 'Father of his Country'). See also Dionysus of Halicarnassus: *Roman Antiquities* v.8, and ibid. iv.68- v.18 for a full account of Brutus' life.

9. See E. Rawson: *Cicero: A Portrait* (London, 1975) 225-229, 260.

10. The poet may have been aware of the fact that Pulteney was said to have given 'great satisfaction to his Party' by the speech he had made on his return to the lower house on 23 March (see p. 37 above).

> huge Rocks of Ice and Snow; of which Scene several Painters took Sketches. Booths, Stalls, and Printing-Presses were erected, and a *Frost-Fair* held on it: Multitudes walk'd over it, and some were lost by their Rashness.
>
> (*GM* x 35).

The long passage which follows (107-144), as the poet's note explains, represents 'the State of *Great Britain* in the Year 1741'. The passage is characterised by some powerfully apocalyptic imagery, almost certainly influenced by the recent publication of Book iv of the *Dunciad*[11]:

> *Britannia*'s Sun now shot a *parting* Ray,
> Just on the Point of putting out her Day;
> Now, half *enslav'd*, half *bankrupt*, *Albion*'s Realm,
> Had neither *Weight* nor Wisdom at the *Helm*,
> But *Walpolle*, like a boding *Screech-Owl* sate
> Close to the Window of the dying State;
>
> (107-112).

The lines which follow offer a detailed analysis of the condition of England during the year which preceded Walpole's fall, indicating the various aspects of the corruption which the poet sees as characterising Walpole's administration.

The poet starts by recalling Walpole's unwillingness to engage in the Spanish war in 1738-9, an unwillingness which he considers to have been economically damaging in terms of loss of trade; and goes on to accuse him of lack of zeal -- in terms of deployment of forces, presumably -- once war had been declared (113-114). Furthermore, he suggests that Britain's 'Rulers' were being manipulated by Cardinal André Hercule de Fleury (1633-1743) for the

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11. Published as *The New Dunciad* in March 1742; and in October 1743 as Book iv of the revised *Dunciad* in four books.

political benefit of France (115-116). This had been a common opposition view throughout most of Walpole's period in office. The main brunt of attacks and criticism was directed at Horatio Walpole, brother to Sir Robert, who had been ambassador to France between 1723 and 1730. The fact that he was known to have particularly good relations with Fleury, who was chief minister of France and Regent for the juvenile Louis XV from 1726, laid him open to accusations that he was being duped by Fleury into responding too readily to France's suggestions. There is, however, evidence to suggest that he was in fact well aware of the precariousness of the uneasy Anglo-French Alliance of 1716, and of Fleury's unreliability[12].

According to the poet, Britain's indecisiveness had led in its turn to loss of credibility; so that she found herself: '*Fear'd* by *no* Foe, and *trusted* by *no* Friend' (117-118). This is almost certainly a reference to the fact that in signing the Second Treaty of Vienna with Charles VI of Austria in 1731, Walpole had undertaken on behalf of Britain to recognise Maria Theresa as Empress in default of a male heir, and to protect the Austrian rights to the Habsburg dominions. This had, in effect, brought an end to Anglo French co-operation; and Britain's credibility had been further undermined when Walpole, despite the legal and moral commitments imposed by the Treaty, had refused to come to Charles' aid when he was attacked by the French in 1734-5 (Black 9-11, 12-14).

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12. See Black 60-64. See also Paul Vaucher: *Robert Walpole et la Politique de Fleury (1731-1741)* (Paris, 1924) passim; and Sir Richard Lodge: 'The Anglo-French Alliance, 1716-31' in A. Colville and H. Temperley (eds): *Studies in Anglo-French History During the Eighteenth, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Cambridge, 1935) 3-18.

All the instances used by the poet to demonstrate Walpole's ineffectiveness and corruption were, naturally, being rehearsed in parliament, as well as finding their way into the newspapers and journals, at the time when the poem was written. The accusations of wavering and double-dealing in foreign policy after the signing of the Treaty of Vienna in 1731, for example, were detailed in the speech reportedly made by Carteret in the House of Lords on the motion to remove Walpole from office on 13 February 1741, which had been published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in July of that year (*GM* xi 339-350). According to Carteret, the French had used the Treaty to persuade Britain that Austria and Spain were about to:

> employ their joint Forces against [the British] ... exalt the *Pretender* to the Throne, take immediate Possession of Gibraltar, and without Mercy debar us for ever from our Trade both in Spain and in the Western Indies...
>
> (*GM* xi 343).

Carteret goes on to assert that the terror raised in British minds by these supposedly quite spurious threats resulted in Britain becoming 'the Instruments of French Policy', losing her alliance with Austria, and entering into wars with Spain for reasons more beneficial to the French than useful to the British (*GM* xi 346).

Next, the poet charges Walpole with lethargy with regard to defending Britain against the Spanish depredations, and with criminal negligence at home:

> Cajol'd, by *foreign* Craft, of half our Trade,
> Whilst *native* Knaves our *native* Rights betray'd;
>
> (119-120).

This second charge was also reportedly made by Carteret, who accused Walpole of responsibility for the decline in the woollen manufactories, which led to 'Riots and Insurrections' by dispossessed employees 'made desperate by the Want of Bread' (*GM* xi 347); and of imposing exorbitant taxes without diminishing the national debt (*GM* xi 348).

Worse still, the poet accuses Walpole of appropriating public funds for his own use, and of corrupt giving of places (121-124). With this could be compared Carteret's allegations:

> that an immense Revenue is divided among the Members of the other House, by known Salaries and publick Employments...that large Sums are privately scattered on pressing Exigencies, that some late Transactions of the Ministry were not confirmed but at a high Price, the present Condition of the civil List...makes highly probable.
> (*GM* xi 349).

As a result of this lethal combination of indecisivness, bad management, and deliberate corruption, Britain is seen by the poet as having been left without 'Power' or 'Shelter', her 'Head' crushed beneath the 'Heel' of France' (125-126).

Next, the *Pulteney* Epistle moves from corruption within the government to corruption within the church, as:

> The sacred *Scribes*, for midwife *Whitefielld*'s Gain,
> From *Light* were into *Darkness born again*,
> Whilst the *low* Mob the *monstrous* Birth adore,
> Who trampled on the *Heav'n-sprung* one before.
> (129-132).

Here, the poet is demonstrating a common contemporary reaction to the activities of the 'field preacher' George Whitefield (1714-1770). Whitefield had joined the Wesleys to become one of the founder members of the Methodist movement in 1735; and his open-air sermons, sometimes attended by huge numbers of the poorer classes, were notorious from the late 1730s onwards. In

1741, a doctrinal breach had occurred between Whitefield and John Wesley[13], and Whitefield had continued his activities separately from the mainstream of Wesleyan Methodism. The lines just quoted contain three of the most frequent criticisms which were made of Whitefield at this period. First, there is the fact that he was accused by his detractors of using his preaching methods for personal gain (129). The *Weekly Miscellany* wrote in May 1741 that Whitefield's Methodists 'load their Followers with many Taxes, Burdens, and heavy Impositions' (*WM* 30 May 1741); and a contemporary letter, written after Whitefield's visit to Scotland (July-October 1741) called him a 'pickpocket', and stated that:

> he was inflexible about the article of gathering money. He went off to England with a very full purse indeed, but with a ruined reputation among all except his most bigoted admirers[14].

Second, the poet suggests that Whitefield's Calvinistic doctrines constitute a step backwards into the 'Darkness' of the past, and out of the 'Light' of a more natural, rational system of belief (such as, perhaps, the system of 'natural morality' advocated by Shaftesbury, to whom Akenside referred as his 'Master'[15]). Finally, the poet criticises Whitefield's techniques, which he sees

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13. The breach was reported by the *Weekly Miscellany*:
> Mr *Whitefield* owns the Doctrines of Predestination and Reprobation, Mr *Wesley* denies them. Mr *Whitefield* saith, that our Redemption is only particular. Mr *Wesley* affirms, that it is universal. Mr *Wesley* affirms a Free Will; Mr *Whitefield* denies it...Mr *Wesley* affirms a State of sinless Perfection in this Life; Mr *Whitefield* denies it.
> (*WM* 14 June 1741).

14. Quoted in J.B. Wakely: *Anecdotes of the Rev. George Whitefield* (London, 1872) 231. Akenside was almost certainly in Edinburgh during at least part of Whitefield's visit.

15. See for example Akenside's letter to Fordyce, 30 July 1743; quoted Dyce lxxix.

as having been specifically, and very successfully, aimed at the '*low* Mob', who had previously, as he implies, rejected religious teaching altogether (131-132). The preacher's activities at this time were, in the main, confined to large public gatherings attended by the lower classes; and his combination of impressive oratory and doctrines of hell-fire and damnation were said to produce frequent attacks of fits, or even insanity, among his hearers:

> Their Doctrines, whatever they are, God knows, have this fatal Tendency, to make their Hearers distracted. There have been above Thirty of them, from Time to Time, in *Bedlam*; and there are Six of them there at present.
>
> (*WM* 30 May 1741).

It is difficult to see, in terms of the poem's line of argument, how Walpole's administration could be held directly responsible for Whitefield's activities, or what Pulteney is supposed to have done to put the situation right. In fact, the lines seem to be included simply to lend weight to the suggestion that every aspect of life in Britain had degenerated in 1741 so that, as the next passage (again, clearly influenced by the *Dunciad*) apocalyptically states:

> Now all things tow'rds their pristine *Chaos* lean'd,
> No Seed of Art or Science to be glean'd;
> St STEPHEN's *Curfew* toll'd -- *put out the Light*,
> And the P[ ]s Chimes play'd round - *let there be Night*'[16].
>
> (135-138)

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16. The last two lines are obscure. St. Stephen (137) may be St. Stephen Walbrook in the City of London. 'P[ ]'s' is presumably St. Paul's, though it is hard to see why a blank would be necessary in this case.

One symptom of this advanced state of deterioration is seen to be the fact that relations between George II and Frederick Prince of Wales were in a state of 'fatal Discord' (139-140); another that Europe was locked in conflict, and the threat of domination by the Franco-Spanish Bourbon alliance was causing intense suffering to every right-thinking Englishman (139-144).

Even in this seemingly hopeless situation, however, salvation was at hand, since then:

> in that very *Crisis* of our *Fate*,
> Just at that *Point* when 'twas not *quite* too *late*,
> PULTNEY step'd forth the Saviour of the State...
> (145-147).

The activities of Pulteney and the opposition in engineering the fall of Walpole had, of course, extended over a fairly long period of time, although they had intensified considerably in December 1741-January 1742. In the poem, however, they are seen as having taken place at one specific 'Point' in time. In view of the fact that Walpole's resignation finally came in a rather anti-climactic way after a defeat on a minor issue by a minimal majority, this must be seen as an exercise of poetic license.

The passage which follows (150-195) elaborately celebrates Pulteney's part in stemming the 'encroaching Tide' of corruption and bringing 'banish'd Freedom back from whence 'twas flown' (162-164). The ensuing celebrations, in which 'Loud Peals of just Applause our Bliss proclaim,/And Heav'n's high Vault resounds with PULTNEY's name' (184-185), are compared to the eruption of a volcano:

> So subterranean Fire in *AEtna* pent,
> Which long in vain had struggled for a Vent,
> Whence once the warring Winds evade the Weight,
> And a free Passage for the Flame create,

> The blazing Spires rush out with rapid Force,
> And to the Skies impetuous wing their Course.
>
> (190-195).

Moving towards its conclusion, the *Pulteney* Epistle now pays specific tribute to Pulteney's altruism during the period immediately following Walpole's fall, and to what the poet sees as his remarkable self-denial in refusing the headship of the Treasury (198-199).

In the lines which follow, Pulteney (described as 'this God-like Man' (200)), is, by means of a Miltonic echo, likened to Christ in *Paradise Regained*; while Walpole becomes Milton's Satan. The poet imagines Pulteney entering into a state of meditative withdrawal, in which he:

> Now calm sits down, debating in his Breast,
> What Labour next must give his Country Rest...
> How to undo what the *Arch-Foe* had done,
> And perfect the great Work he had begun:
>
> (204-205, 208-209).

These lines clearly echo the passage in *Paradise Regained* Book One in which the Son of God is described as pursuing his 'holy Meditations' (195) in solitude, and:

> Musing and much revolving in his brest,
> How best the mighty work he might begin
> Of Saviour to mankind, and which way first
> Publish his God-like office, now mature...
>
> (*Paradise Regained* i 185-188).

Obviously, the poet, in common with most other opposition supporters, envisaged the beginning of happier days for Britain; days of which the signs seemed already to be showing themselves. Every positive sign of improvement is unhesitatingly ascribed to Pulteney's influence. He is held to be responsible for reconciling the long-standing rift between the king and the Prince of

Wales: 'For this the SIRE he boldly undeceiv'd,/ And heal'd that baneful *Breach* we long had griev'd' (212-213). This event -- though not Pulteney's part in it -- had been joyfully reported in the *GM*'s 'Historical Chronicle' for February 1742:

> WEDNESDAY 17
>
> Several Messages having passed Yesterday between his Majesty, and the Prince of *Wales*, His Royal Highness waited on his Majesty at St *James* about one o'Clock this Day and met with a most gracious Reception. Great Joy was shewn in all Parts of the Kingdom, upon this happy Reconciliation.
>
> (*GM* xii 105).

Pulteney is also given full credit for setting up the committee of enquiry designed to 'bring to Justice *Those*/ Whom *Truth* proclaim'd their *King* and *Country*'s Foes' (214-215). The poet is quick to point out, however, that Pulteney had excelled himself, in the tense and angry political atmosphere which followed Walpole's resignation, acting as a peacemaker and moderating and controlling the country's demands for revenge (216-227). Pulteney's refusal of the Treasury is represented as the result of his desire to act more effectively in his conciliatory role, calming the internal discords within the government in order to present a concerted front in the final demolition of Walpole (228-233). Already, the 'bless'd Effects' of this intervention are said to be making themselves felt: Britain's naval and land-forces, after a long period of enforced inactivity, are now fully engaged in the war overseas (234-239); and Britain is again on friendly terms with her allies (240-241). Both these developments had been announced in the *GM*'s 'Historical Chronicle' for March:

> The Reports of this Month were, that no less than 15 principal Officers of the Government were to undergo a strict Examination, on account of Neglect and Mal-Administration, some in the Sea, others

> in y^e^ Land-Service. That Admiral *Vernon* had taken *Cartagena*....That on *April* 1. the Commissioners of the Navy are to hire Transports for carrying 7000 Forces into *Flanders*, who are to be followed by 10,000 more. -- That the Queen of *Hungary* has proposed a Mortgage, to the *British* Court, of certain Towns in the *Low Countries*, in which *Ostend* is to be a Place of Arms, and to be garrison'd by 3000 *English*.
>
> (*GM* xii 162)

As the poem moves towards its conclusion, the poet looks forward to a '*whiter* AERA' (242); the imagery of encroaching darkness which dominated the passage on Britain's decline is reversed, as '*Britannia* joys in her *returning Sun*', and the 'dark'ning Clouds' are dispersed (243-245). Under the 'wiser Counsels' of the new administration, Britain will once more set a standard for other countries to follow; her overseas trade will expand; her sailors will no longer fear foreign attacks; and her economy will no longer attract the complaints of opposition journalists (246-252).

The only cloud on this utopian horizon, as the poet had intimated in his prefatory note, is the fact that dissident voices are beginning to *'murmur'* that Pulteney's aims may not be altogether unselfish (253-258). He himself, however, is sure that these unkind rumours are without foundation. He urges Pulteney to demonstrate, by means of his future conduct, that 'You toil with publick, not with private Aim' (259-262). He reminds the politician that:

> Great Actions still by Great must be maintain'd,
> As bodies are by *kindred* Food sustain'd;
> (263-264);

but he feels no doubt that since: 'A gen'rous Care for *us* first fir'd your Breast', Pulteney's 'OWN FAME will now secure the *rest*' (265-266).

A period of approximately three months elapsed between the poem's composition and its publication in July. Its author's feelings can only be

guessed at when, as a result, it finally made its appearance within days of the following announcement:

> *Whitehall, July 13th*
> The King has been pleased to grant the Dignity of a Baron, Viscount, and Earl of the Kingdom of Great Britain, unto the Right Honourable William Pulteney, Esq, by the Name, Stile and Title of Baron Hedon, in the County of York, Viscount Pulteney of Wrington, in the County of Somerset, and Earl of Bath, in the said County of Somerset'[17].

Here, then, was Pulteney vindicating the worst prognostications of the rumour-mongers by accepting the very 'Pow'r, Pelf, Honours' (155) which the *Pulteney* Epistle had strenuously denied he was seeking. Akenside's reaction to this announcement is not recorded, although a month earlier he appears already to have been feeling disillusioned with the new administration; in a letter to David Fordyce from Newcastle, dated 18 June 1742, he wrote that: 'I am quite sick of politics -- our present politics, I mean' (Dyce lxxxviii). He makes clear, however, in *An Epistle to Curio*, that he was 'long reluctant' (25) to believe that Pulteney had entirely deserted the cause of liberty. In this he differed considerably from most of the politician's supporters, who viewed his elevation to the peerage in the worst possible light. As one contemporary observer recalled:

> NO INCIDENT in this reign astonished us so much as the conduct of my lord BATH, who chose to receive his honours as the wages of iniquity, which he might have had as the reward of virtue...how were we deceived! He deserted his country: he betrayed his friends and adherents: he ruined his character; and from a glorious eminence sunk down to a degree of contempt.
> (King 42-43).

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17. *London Gazette* 8135, 10-13 July 1742. The news was also printed in the *GM*'s 'List of Promotions for July 1742' (*GM* xii 387). This was the same issue of the Magazine which carried the announcement of the publication of the *Pulteney* Epistle.

Pulteney's real motives for accepting the peerage are not entirely clear. It has been suggested that the king -- under Walpole's influence -- made it a condition of conferring office on other opposition members that Pulteney himself should accept what amounted to political retirement by taking his seat in the Lords (Owen 120-121). Many years later, Pulteney was quoted as asserting that 'he had good & honest reasons for what he did' and that there were 'some particulars known to no soul living except the king and himself' (Add. MS 18915). At the time, however, he justified his decision more in terms of sheer exhaustion after what had been a long and bitter struggle:

> I had then taken a pretty firm Resolution, never to concern myself with publick affairs any more; I had been long tired, with a tedious and disagreeable opposition, & was resolved, whenever I could get fairly & honourably out of it, never to engage on any side any more.
> (Add. MS 35458 f 24)

Few outside observers were able to take such a generous view of the politician's motives'[18], which appeared to most of his supporters to constitute an unforgiveable breach of trust. It was nearly two and a half years, however, before Akenside made the decision to address a second Epistle to Pulteney. When he did so, he followed the well-established convention of disguising the politician's identity behind a classical pseudonym; in this case, that of Caius Scribonius Curio, a Roman senator who was widely believed to have betrayed the

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18. Pulteney himself is said to have regretted his decision, at least according to Horace Walpole:
> Sir Robert Walpole, to defeat Pulteney's ambition, persuaded the King to insist on his going into the House of Lords; the day he carried his patent thither, he flung it upon the floor in a passion and could scarce be prevailed on to have it passed.
> (Walpole: *Corresp.* 17 485n.).

cause of the Roman republic in 50 B.C. by accepting a bribe from Caesar. Contemporary readers would, of course, have had little difficulty in identifying Pulteney from the information given by Akenside in the poem's Argument.

AN EPISTLE TO CURIO

Neque tam ulciscendi causa dixi, quam ut & in praesens sceleratos cives timore ab impugnanda patria detinerem; & in posterum, documentum statuerum, nequis talem amentiam vellet imitari.

TULL.

ARGUMENT

CAIUS SCRIBONIUS CURIO *was a* Roman *Senator of great Spirit, Eloquence and Popularity. By Extract a* Plebian; *but ennobled by the Offices his Family had sustain'd. His Education had form'd him to the most active Zeal for the legal Constitution of his Country, which he afterwards publicly exerted with great Applause under the Direction of* CICERO, *against the Insolence and Usurpations of the first Triumvirate. This Character he maintain'd even after the pernicious Designs of* JULIUS CAESAR *began to appear. But at last, unhappily for himself and his Country, the Difficulties into which his ungovernable Passions had plung'd him, gave that artful Man an Opportunity of seducing him to betray the Cause of Liberty at its very Crisis. So that he is justly charg'd by the* Roman *Historians, as the chief Incendiary of* CAESAR's *Ambition, and the Author of all the public Ruin that ensued.*

TO *CURIO*

Thrice has the Spring beheld thy faded Fame,
And the fourth Winter rises on thy Shame,
Since I exulting grasp'd the votive Shell,
In Sounds of Triumph all thy Praise to tell;
Blest could my Skill thro' Ages make thee shine,
And proud to mix my Memory with thine.
But now the Cause that wak'd my Song before,
With Praise, with Triumph crowns the Toil no more.
If to the glorious Man, whose faithful Cares,
Nor quell'd by Malice, nor relax'd by Years,
Had aw'd Ambition's wild audacious Hate,
And dragg'd at length Corruption to her Fate;
If every Tongue its large Applauses ow'd,
And well-earn'd Laurels every Muse bestow'd,
If public Justice urg'd the high Reward,
And Freedom smil'd on the devoted Bard;

Say then, to him whose Levity or Lust
Laid all a People's gen'rous Hopes in Dust;
Who taught Ambition firmer Heights of Pow'r,
And sav'd Corruption at her hopeless Hour;
Does not each Tongue its Execrations owe?
Shall not each Muse a Wreath of Shame bestow?
And public Justice sanctify th'Award?
And Freedom's Hand protect th'impartial Bard?

Yet long reluctant I forbore thy Name,
Long watch'd thy Virtue like a dying Flame,
Hung o'er each glimm'ring Spark with anxious Eyes,
And wish'd and hop'd the Light again would rise.
But since thy Guilt still more intire appears,
Since no Art hides, no Supposition clears;
Since vengeful Slander now too sinks her Blast,
And the first Rage of Party-hate is past;
Calm as the Judge of Truth, at length I come
To weigh thy Merits and pronounce thy Doom:
So may my Trust from all Reproach be free,
And Earth and Time confirm the fair Decree.

There are who say they view'd without Amaze
The sad Reverse of all thy former Praise;
That thro' the Pageants of a Patriot's Name,
They pierc'd the Foulness of thy secret Aim;
Or deem'd thy Arm exalted but to throw
The public Thunder on a private Foe.
But I, whose Soul consented to thy Cause,
Who felt thy Genius stamp its own Applause,
Who saw the Spirits of each glorious Age
Move in thy Bosom and direct thy Rage;
I scorn'd th'ungen'rous Gloss of slavish Minds,
The Owl-ey'd Race, whom Virtue's Lustre blinds.
Spite of the Learned in the Ways of Vice,
And all who prove *that each Man has his Price*,
I still believ'd thy End was just and free;
And yet, ev'n yet believe it ----- spite of thee.
Ev'n tho' thy Mouth impure has dar'd disclaim,
Urg'd by the wretched Impotence of Shame,
Whatever filial Cares thy Zeal had paid
To Laws infirm and Liberty decay'd;
Has begg'd Ambition to forgive the Show;
Has told Corruption thou wert ne'er her Foe;
Has boasted in thy Country's awful Ear,
Her gross Delusion when she held thee dear;
How tame she follow'd thy tempestuous Call,
And heard thy pompous Tales, and trusted all----
Rise from your sad Abodes, ye Curst of old
For Laws subverted and for Cities sold!
Paint all the noblest Trophies of your Guilt,
The Oaths you perjur'd and the Blood you spilt;
Yet must you one untempted Vileness own,
One dreadful Palm reserv'd for him alone;

With studied Arts his Country's Praise to spurn,
To beg the Infamy he did not earn,
To challenge Hate when Honour was his Due,
And plead his Crimes where all his Virtue knew.

Do Robes of State the guarded Heart inclose
From each fair Feeling human Nature knows?
Can pompous Titles stun th'inchanted Ear
To all that Reason, all that Sense would hear?
Else could'st thou e'er desert thy sacred Post,
In such unthankful Baseness to be lost?
Else could'st thou wed the Emptiness of Vice,
And yield thy Glories at an Idiot's Price?

When they who loud for Liberty and Laws,
In doubtful Times had fought their Country's Cause,
When now of Conquest and Dominion sure,
They sought alone to hold their Fruits secure;
When taught by these, Oppression hid the Face
To leave Corruption stronger in her Place,
By silent Spells to work the public Fate,
And taint the Vitals of the passive State,
Till healing Wisdom should avail no more,
And Freedom loathe to tread the poison'd Shore;
Then, like some guardian God that flies to save
The weary Pilgrim from an instant Grave,
Whom sleeping and secure, the guileful Snake
Steals near and nearer thro' the peaceful Brake;
Then CURIO rose to ward the public Woe,
To wake the Heedless and incite the Slow,
Against Corruption Liberty to arm,
And quell th'Enchantress by a mightier Charm.

Swift o'er the Land the fair Contagion flew,
And with thy Country's Hopes thy Honours grew.
Thee, Patriot, the Patrician Roof confess'd;
Thy pow'rful Voice the rescued Merchant bless'd;
Of thee with Awe the rural Hearth resounds;
The Bowl to thee the grateful Sailor crowns;
Touch'd in the sighing Shade with manlier Fires,
To trace thy Steps the love-sick Youth aspires;
The learn'd Recluse, who oft amaz'd had read
Of *Graecian* Heroes, *Roman* Patriots dead,
With new Amazement hears a living Name
Pretend to share in such forgotten Fame;
And he who, scorning Courts and Courtly Ways,
Left the tame Track of these dejected Days,
The Life of nobler Ages to renew
In Virtues sacred from a Monarch's View,
Rouz'd by thy Labours from the blest Retreat,
Where social Ease and public Passions meet,
Again ascending treads the civil Scene,
To *act* and be *a Man*, as thou had'st been.

Thus by Degrees thy Cause superior grew,
And the great End appear'd at last in view:
We heard the People in thy Hopes rejoice;
We saw the Senate bending to thy Voice;
The Friends of Freedom hail'd th'approaching Reign
Of Laws for which our Fathers bled in vain;
While venal Faction, struck with new Dismay,
Shrunk at their Frown, and self-abandon'd lay.
Wak'd in the Shock, the PUBLIC GENIUS rose,
Abash'd and keener from his long Repose;
Sublime in ancient Pride, he rais'd the Spear
Which Slaves and Tyrants long were wont to fear:
The City felt his call: from Man to Man,
From Street to Street the glorious Horror ran;
Each crouded Haunt was stirr'd beneath his Pow'r,
And murmuring challeng'd the deciding Hour.

Lo! the deciding Hour at last appears;
The Hour of every Freeman's Hopes and Fears!
Thou, Genius! Guardian of the *Roman* Name,
O ever prompt tyrannic Rage to tame!
Instruct the mighty Moments as they roll,
And guide each Movement steady to the Goal.
Ye Spirits, by whose providential Art
Succeeding Motives turn the changeful Heart,
Keep, keep the best in View to CURIO's Mind,
And watch his Fancy and his Passions bind!
Ye Shades immortal, who, by Freedom led,
Or in the Field or on the Scaffold bled,
Bend from your radiant Seats a joyful Eye,
And view the Crown of all your Labours nigh.
See Freedom mounting her eternal Throne!
The Sword submitted and the Laws her own:
See! public Pow'r chastiz'd beneath her stands,
With Eyes intent and uncorrupted Hands:
See private Life by wisest Arts reclaim'd!
See ardent Youth to noblest Manners fram'd!
See us acquire whate'er was sought by You,
If CURIO, only CURIO will be true.

'Twas then---O Shame! O Trust, how ill repaid!
O *Latium* oft by faithless Sons betray'd!-----
'Twas then ----- What Frenzy on thy Reason stole?
What Spells unsinew'd thy determin'd Soul?
-----Is this the Man in Freedom's Cause approv'd?
The Man so great, so honour'd, so belov'd?
This patient Slave by Tinsel Chains allur'd?
This wretched Suitor for a Boon abjur'd?
This CURIO hated and despis'd by all?
Who fell himself, to work his Country's Fall?

O lost alike to Action and Repose!
Unown'd, unpitied in the worst of Woes!
With all that conscious, undissembled Pride,

Sold to the Insults of a Foe defy'd!
With all that Habit of familiar Fame,
Doom'd to exhaust the Dregs of Life in Shame!
The sole sad Refuge of thy baffled Art,
To act a Statesman's dull, exploded Part,
Renounce the Praise no longer in thy Pow'r,
Display thy Virtue tho' without a Dow'r,
Contemn the giddy Crowd, the vulgar Wind,
And shut thy Eyes that others may be blind.
-----Forgive me, *Romans*, that I bear to smile
When shameless Mouths your Majesty defile,
Paint you a thoughtless, frantic, headlong Crew,
And cast their own Impieties on you.
For witness, Freedom, to whose sacred Pow'r
My Soul was vow'd from Reason's earliest Hour,
How have I stood exulting to survey
My Country's Virtues opening in thy Ray!
How, with the Sons of every foreign Shore
The more I match'd them, honour'd hers the more!
O Race erect! whose native Strength of Soul,
Which Kings, nor Priests, nor sordid laws controul,
Bursts the tame Round of animal Affairs,
And seeks a nobler Center for its cares;
Intent the Laws of Life to comprehend,
And fix Dominion's Limits by its End.
Who bold and equal in their Love or Hate,
By conscious Reason judging every State,
The *Man* forget not, tho' in Rags he lies,
And know the *Mortal* thro' a Crown's Disguise:
Thence prompt alike with witty Scorn to view
Fastidious Grandeur lift his solemn Brow,
Or all awake at Pity's soft Command,
Bend the mild Ear and stretch the gracious Hand:
Thence large of Heart, from Envy far remov'd,
When public Toils to Virtue stand approv'd,
Not the young Lover fonder to admire,
Nor more indulgent the delighted Sire;
Yet high and jealous of their freeborn Name,
Fierce as the Flight of *Jove*'s destroying Flame,
Where'er Oppression works her wanton Sway,
Proud to confront and dreadful to repay.
But if to purchase CURIO's sage Applause,
My Country must with him renounce her Cause,
Quit with a Slave the Path a Patriot trod,
Bow the meek Knee and kiss the regal Rod;
Then still, ye Pow'rs, instruct his Tongue to rail,
Nor let his Zeal, nor let his Subject fail:
Else ere he change the Style, bear me away
To where the *Gracchi*, where the *Bruti* stay!

Ver. 218] The two Brothers, *Tiberius* and *Caius Gracchus* lost their Lives in attempting to introduce the only Regulation that could give Stability and good Order to the *Roman* Republic.

L. Jun. Brutus founded the Commonwealth, and died in its Defence.

O long rever'd and late resign'd to Shame!
If this uncourtly Page thy Notice claim
When the loud Cares of Bus'ness are withdrawn,
Nor well-drest Beggars round thy Footsteps fawn;
In that still, thoughtful, solitary Hour,
When Truth exerts her unresisted Pow'r,
Breaks the false Optics ting'd with Fortune's Glare,
Unlocks the Breast and lays the Passions bare;
Then turn thy Eyes on that important Scene,
And ask thyself-----if all be well within.
Where is the Heart-felt Worth and Weight of Soul,
Which Labour cou'd not stop, not Fear controul?
Where the known Dignity, the Stamp of Awe,
Which, half abash'd, the Proud and Venal saw?
Where the calm Triumphs of an honest Cause?
Where the delightful Taste of just Applause?
Where the strong Reason, the commanding Tongue,
On which the Senate fir'd, or trembling hung?
All vanish'd, all are sold-----And in their Room,
Couch'd in thy Bosom's deep, distracted Gloom,
See the pale Form of barb'rous Grandeur dwell,
Like some grim Idol in a Sorc'rer's Cell!
To her in Chains thy Dignity was led;
At her polluted Shrine thy Honour bled;
With blasted Weeds thy awful Brow she crown'd,
Thy pow'rful Tongue with poison'd Philters bound,
That baffled Reason straight indignant flew,
And fair Persuasion from her Seat withdrew:
For now no longer Truth supports thy Cause;
No longer Glory prompts thee to Applause;
No longer Virtue breathing in thy Breast,
With all her conscious Majesty confest,
Still bright and brighter wakes th'almighty Flame
To rouze the Feeble and the Wilful tame,
And where she sees the catching Glimpses roll,
Spreads the strong Blaze and all involves the Soul;
But cold Restraints thy conscious Fancy chill,
And formal Passions mock thy struggling Will;
Or if thy Genius e'er forget his Chain,
And reach impatient at a nobler Strain,
Soon the sad Bodings of contemptuous Mirth
Shoot thro' thy Breast and stab the gen'rous Birth,
Till blind with Smart, from Truth to Frenzy tost,
And all the Tenour of thy Reason lost,
Perhaps thy Anguish drains a real Tear;
While some with Pity, some with Laughter hear.
------Can Art, alas! or Genius guide the Head,
Where Truth and Freedom from the Heart are fled?
Can lesser Wheels repeat their native Stroke,
When the prime Function of the Soul is broke?

But come, unhappy Man! thy Fates impend;
Come, quit thy Friends, if yet thou hast a Friend;

Turn from the poor Rewards of Guilt like thine,
Renounce thy Titles and thy Robes resign;
For see the Hand of Destiny display'd
To shut thee from the Joys thou hast betray'd!
See the dire Fane of INFAMY arise!
Dark as the Grave, and spacious as the Skies;
Where from the first of Time, thy kindred Train,
The Chiefs and Princes of th'Unjust remain.
Eternal Barriers guard the pathless Road
To warn the Wand'rer of the curst Abode;
But prone as Whirlwinds scour the passive Sky,
The Heights surmounted, down the Steep they fly.
There black with Frowns, relentless TIME awaits,
And goads their Footsteps to the guilty Gates;
And still he asks them of their unknown Aims,
Evolves their Secrets and their Guilt proclaims;
And still his Hands despoil them on the Road
Of each vain Wreath by lying Bards bestow'd,
Break their proud Marbles, crush their festal Cars,
And rend the lawless Trophies of their Wars.
At last the Gates his potent Voice obey;
Fierce to their dark Abode he drives his prey,
Where ever arm'd with adamantine Chains,
The watchful Daemon o'er her Vassals reigns,
O'er mighty Names and Giant-Pow'rs of Lust,
The *Great*, the *Sage*, the *Happy* and *August*.
No Gleam of Hope their baleful Mansion chears,
No Sound of Honour hails their unblest Ears;
But dire Reproaches from the Friend betray'd,
The childless Sire and violated Maid;
But vengeful Vows for guardian Laws effac'd,
From Towns inslav'd and Continents laid waste;
But long Posterity's united Groan,
And the sad Charge of Horrors not their own,
For ever thro' the trembling Space resound,
And sink each impious Forehead to the Ground.

Ye mighty Foes of Liberty and Rest,
Give way, do Homage to a mightier Guest!
Ye daring Spirits of the *Roman* Race,
See CURIO's Toil your proudest Claims efface!
-----Aw'd at the Name, fierce *Appius* rising bends,
And hardy *Cinna* from his Throne attends:

Ver. 296] Titles which have been generally ascrib'd to the most pernicious of Men.

Ver. 311, 312] *Appius Claudis* the Decemvir and *L. Cornelius Cinna* both attempted to establish a tyrannical Dominion in *Rome*, and both perish'd by the Treason.

"He comes," they cry, "to whom the Fates assign'd
"With surer Arts to work what we design'd,
"From Year to Year the stubborn Herd to sway,
"Mouth all their Wrongs, and all their Rage obey;
"Till own'd their Guide and trusted with their Pow'r,
"He mock'd their Hopes in one decisive Hour;
"Then tir'd and yielding, led them to the Chain,
"And quench'd the Spirit we provok'd in vain."

But thou, Supreme, by whose eternal Hands
Fair Liberty's heroic Empire stands;
Whose Thunders the rebellious Deep controul,
And quell the Triumphs of the Traitor's Soul,
O turn this dreadful Omen far away!
On Freedom's Foes their own Attempts repay;
Relume her sacred Fire so near suppress,
And fix her Shrine in every *Roman* Breast.
Tho' bold Corruption boast around the Land,
"Let Virtue, if she can, my Baits withstand!"
Tho' bolder now she urge th'accursed Claim,
Gay with her Trophies rais'd on CURIO's Shame;
Yet some there are who scorn her impious Mirth,
Who know what Conscience and a Heart are worth.
-----O Friend and Father of the Human Mind,
Whose Art for noblest Ends our Frame design'd!
If I, tho' fated to the studious Shade
Which Party-strife nor anxious Pow'r invade,
If I aspire in public Virtue's Cause,
To guide the Muses by sublimer Laws,
Do thou her own Authority impart,
And give my Numbers Entrance to the Heart.
Perhaps the Verse might rouze her smother'd Flame,
And snatch the fainting Patriot back to Fame;
Perhaps by worthy Thoughts of human Kind,
To worthy Deeds exalt the conscious Mind;
Or dash Corruption in her proud Career,
And teach her Slaves that Vice was born to fear.

The poem's epigraph is adapted from Cicero's *Letters to Brutus* (I.15.10.13-15); Akenside has inserted 'dixi' after 'causa' (1), and written 'detinerem' for 'deterrem' (2). In English, the passage reads: '[I have spoken] not so much for retribution's sake, as to discourage and deter evil-minded citizens from attacking their country at the present time, and to set up a warning example for the future, so that none should feel inclined to repeat

such acts of madness'[19]. It is used by Akenside as a statement of his purpose in writing the poem. The 'acts of madness' referred to in the letter were not committed by Curio; Cicero is speaking of Antony and Lepidus, who in July 43 B.C., when the letter was written, had joined forces in an attempt to seize power in Rome[20]. The Argument which is prefixed to the poem gives a summarised historical account of Curio, for which Akenside appears to have drawn his information from a combination of classical sources[21].

The first six lines of the poem explain that the 'fourth Winter' is rising on Pulteney's 'Shame', since Akenside first addressed a poem to him. But now, he continues, 'the Cause that wak'd my Song before,/ With Praise, with Triumph crowns the Toil no more' (7-8). The lines which follow (9-16) describe the state of affairs as they had appeared at the time of the earlier poem's composition. Pulteney had then seemed a 'glorious Man', acting entirely for his country's good, who:

> Had aw'd Ambition's wild audacious Hate,
> And dragg'd at length Corruption to her Fate;
>
> (11-12),

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19. Cicero: *Letters to his Friends*, trans. W. Glynn Williams (Loeb Classical Edition, 4 vols., 1960) iii 715.

20. See *Cambridge Ancient History* volume x: *The Augustan Empire 44 BC to AD 70*, ed. S.A. Cook, F.E. Adcock, M.P. Charlesworth (Cambridge, 1934) 13-19.

21. Curio's possession of 'great Spirit, Eloquence and Popularity' (2) is clear from Cicero's *Letters to Atticus* (see for example II.18, II.19). The depiction of his 'ungovernable Passions' (13-14), his bribery by Caesar (14-16), and his responsibility for 'all the public Ruin [i.e. the civil war] that ensued' (19) is chiefly derived from Velleius Paterculus, *Compendium of Roman History*: II 48. 3-5. For a full discussion of the classical sources, see W.K. Lacey: 'The Tribunate of Curio', *Historia* 10 (1961) 318-329.

and who, as a result, was applauded by all, made the subject of 'well-earn'd' poems, urged by 'public Justice' to accept the 'high Reward' (the Headship of the Treasury), and who seemed to the 'devoted Bard' to epitomise Freedom itself. What does he deserve, then, the poet continues, since his 'Levity or Lust/ Laid all a People's gen'rous Hopes in Dust?' (17-18). It is interesting that Akenside offers two possible motives for Pulteney's acceptance of the peerage: 'heedlessness in making or breaking promises; instability, fickleness, inconstancy' (*OED* 3b), or greed for wealth and power. Since he has now 'taught Ambition firmer Heights of Pow'r/ And sav'd Corruption at her hopeless Hour' surely he deserves execration and shame, and the 'impartial Bard' is justified in saying so? (19-24).

Even so, a long period of time has elapsed since Pulteney accepted the peerage. Akenside explains his delay in writing this second poem as having been caused by a faint hope that Pulteney would revert to his former ideals:

> long reluctant I forbore thy Name,
> Long watch'd thy Virtue like a dying Flame,
> Hung o'er each glimm'ring Spark with anxious Eyes,
> And wish'd and hop'd the Light again would rise.
> (25-28).

But now, however, 'thy Guilt the more intire appears', and he is forced to admit that Pulteney has indeed deserted the cause of freedom (29-30). Once again, Akenside seems to have been stimulated to write by the current political situation, and by the response to it which was attributed to Pulteney in the October *Gentleman's Magazine*. This issue had carried the report of a debate which had in fact taken place on 27 January 1744 in the House of Lords (*Parl. Hist.* xiii 505ff) on the subject of '*the troops which were hired from* Hanover' (*GM* xiv 515-533). This was an extremely sensitive issue. Growing resentment

had existed in Britain since the previous autumn when, as part of the Treaty of Worms (2 September 1743) Carteret had pledged Britain's assistance to Maria Theresa in her pursuit of compensation for the loss of Silesia and cessions in Italy. Britain, at considerable expense, was employing Hanoverian troops to this end, which led to suspicions that Carteret, who was already far from popular, was pursuing a policy which was more in line with the German interests of the king than with those of the British people (Owen 134-139). Opposition literature at this time was mainly directed against this highly unpopular policy, in an attempt to persuade the cabinet to abandon the troops' employment[22].

A series of three protests on the matter were filed in the House of Lords, dated 9 December 1743, 31 January and 27 April 1744, as the *GM* reported in May (*GM* xiv 249-256). The impassioned wording of the first protest is a measure of how responsive parliament was to the journalists' and pamphleteers' polemics:

> December 9 1743
>
> The House was moved, *that an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, that his Majesty will be graciously pleased to give Orders, that the* 16,000 Hanoverians, *now in the Pay of* Great Britain, *be no longer contained in the Service of this Nation, after the 25th of this instant* December, *thereby to put a Stop to the Jealousies and Heart-burnings among his Majesty's faithful Subjects at Home, and His* British *Forces Abroad.*
>
> (*GM* xiv 249).

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22. Pamphlets published on both sides of the question had included: *The Case of the Hanover Troops in the pay of Great Britain, examin'd* (1742); *A Vindication of a late Pamphlet, entitled, The Case of the Hanover Troops* (1743); *The H----r T---p come again* (1743); *An Answer to the Case of the Hanover Troops* (1743); *A Farther Vindication of the Case of the Hanover Troops* (1743).

It must certainly have been a source of pain to Akenside that Pulteney's name was conspicuously absent from the lists of signatures which were appended to all three protests; and the report of the 27 January debate which was published the following October could only have confirmed his worst misgivings. Pulteney is represented in the report as taking what can only be seen as an entirely establishment line. His speech -- which is short, and noticeably free from the fine rhetorical oratory which had characterised the reports of his earlier opposition speeches[23] -- makes just one simple point. He cannot, he says, see the object of another debate on a matter which he feels had been settled satisfactorily the previous month:

> as the sense of the house with regard to the continuation of these troops was...sufficiently apparent from the great majority, by which the motion was rejected after a very long debate, I cannot think it reasonable to recall it into debate after it has been so fully considered, and so solemnly decided.
>
> (*GM* xiv 528).

At the end of his speech, he attempts to justify his vote against the discharge of the troops in purely practical terms, arguing that:

> that diminution of our army...can not now be attempted without giving such apparent advantages to our enemies, that we shall appear to desert the common cause.
>
> (*GM* xiv 529).

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23. This may, of course, simply reflect a change of writer for the *GM* 'Debates'; it is generally thought that Johnson had stopped writing them by this stage (see Boswell: *Life* i Appendix A 501-502). For an argument that Johnson was responsible for the 'Hanover troops' debate, however, see D.J. Greene: 'Some notes on Johnson and the *Gentleman's Magazine*', *PMLA* 74 (1959) 77-78.

However, the very fact that Pulteney was speaking in support of such a highly unpopular aspect of government policy, to which the majority of the people of Britain were violently opposed, must have been particularly disturbing for his former supporters. It is not difficult to imagine Akenside being inspired once again to grasp the votive shell, this time in response to a demonstration of Pulteney's apparent culpability. He feels that the time is propitious, since the 'first Rage of Party-hate is past' (32); and he acknowledges that others, more cynical than himself, had long been suggesting that the politician's supposed 'Patriotism' had simply been a ploy to gain personal power (37-42). Certainly Bolingbroke, Pulteney's one-time collaborator on *The Craftsman*, had privately suspected this as early as 1740, when he wrote that certain members of the opposition had been labouring for some time 'to turn a virtuous opposition to a maladministration into a dirty intrigue of low ambition'[24]. The same point was made publicly in the numerous satirical poems which were addressed to Pulteney shortly after his elevation to the peerage. Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, member of parliament for Monmouthshire and a supporter of Walpole who was in danger of losing his place to one of Pulteney's followers after Walpole's fall, was responsible for at least twenty-three of these[25], of which *An Ode from the Earl of Bath to Ambition* (1742) is representative. In it, the

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24. Bolingbroke to Polwarth, 1 January 1741; quoted G.H. Rose (ed.): *The Marchmont Papers* (3 vols., London, 1831) ii 204.

25. See Charles Hanbury Williams: *Works*, ed. Horace Walpole (3 vols., London, 1822) i 132, 137, 146, 150, 153, 157, 174, 176, 177, 190, 194, 198, 201, 203, 209, 212, 216, 217, 221, 224, iii 33.

newly made peer addresses the personified Ambition:

> To Thee I sacrific'd my Youth,
> Gave up my Honour, Friendship, Truth,
> My K[ing] and C[ommon]'s Weal.
> For Thee I sinn'd against my Reason,
> My Daily Lie, my Weekly Treason,
> Proclaim'd by blinded Zeal.
> (13-18).

Although, as Akenside says in his poem, his previous address to Pulteney had set out to counter this cynical view of the politician's motives, he now finds himself torn between a complete loss of confidence in Pulteney's supposed championship of liberty -- the Patriots' earlier admiration of him now seems like a 'gross Delusion' (60), and his fine speeches like 'pompous Tales' (62) -- and a strong desire to believe that Pulteney had genuinely held the ideals which he had preached:

> I still believ'd thy End was just and free;
> And yet, ev'n yet believe it -- spite of thee.
> (51-52).

Much of the poem's 'great vigour and poignancy' (Johnson: *Lives* iii 419) is derived from this tension between Akenside's disappointment at Pulteney's abandonment of what had seemed admirably high ideals, and his unwillingness to believe that those ideals have gone forever[26].

The poet calls on the greatest traitors, perjurers and murderers of the past to witness that Pulteney's 'untempted Vileness' exceeds any of the crimes they may have committed (63-72); and asks whether Pulteney's 'Robes of State' and 'pompous Titles' have removed the capacity for human feeling, or for reasoning (73-80).

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26. Cf. also ll. 119-228, ll. 269-272, and ll. 343-344.

The long passage which follows (81-155) gives a detailed, if somewhat idealistic, account of the politician's career up to the fall of Walpole[27]. It begins with a description of the political situation which, according to the poet, existed in the early part of the eighteenth century:

> When they who loud for Liberty and Laws,
> In doubtful Times had fought their Country's Cause,
> When now of Conquest and Dominion sure,
> They fought alone to hold their Fruits secure;
> When taught by these, Oppression hid the Face
> To leave Corruption stronger in her Place,
> By silent Spells to work the public Fate,
> And taint the Vitals of the passive State...
>
> (81-88).

These lines describe the way in which Akenside sees the Walpole administration as having insidiously corrupted the hard-won freedom which had been gained for the country by the Whigs (the clamourers for 'Liberty and Laws') after the Glorious Revolution of 1688: Walpole had been made Head of the Treasury in 1721, by which time the Whigs were firmly established in power. Into this dangerous situation, 'like some guardian God', had stepped Pulteney, 'to ward the public Woe' and 'Against Corruption Liberty to arm' (91-98). At the beginning of his career, Pulteney had in fact worked in close association with Walpole; the poet's reference here is presumably to the fact that he had gone into opposition in 1724, and, two years later, in association with Bolingbroke, had started the opposition journal *The Craftsman*.

The positive effects of Pulteney's intervention are depicted as having been rapid, as is the growth of his own popular acclaim (99-100). The

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27. For a more objective twentieth-century summary of Pulteney's political career, see Sedgwick ii 375-376.

'Patrician Roof' (the House of Commons) had recognised him as a 'Patriot' (101); this refers to his formation in 1730, together with Sir William Wyndham, of the Whig-Tory opposition party known as the 'Patriots'. He is shown being blessed by the 'rescued Merchant', and toasted by the 'grateful Sailor' (102, 104). That Akenside is almost certainly remembering the speech which had inspired him to write the *Philippic* in 1738, which was designed to protect the merchant-seamen from the Spanish depredations and to grant 'head-money' to the sailors (see pp. 10-12 above) is suggested by his reference to the 'learn'd Recluse', who felt that Pulteney's name belonged with those of '*Graecian* Heroes, *Roman* Patriots dead' (106-110). Pulteney is, indeed, held directly responsible for bringing the Prince of Wales back from the 'blest Retreat' where he had been 'scorning Courts and courtly Ways', and inspiring him to engage in 'the civil Scene,/ To *act* and be a *Man*, as thou hads't been' (115-120). While it is certainly true that Frederick did become involved with the opposition in the late 1730s and early 1740s, campaigning actively in Cornwall against the administration during the 1741 election, it is questionable how great a part Pulteney had played in this involvement. In the poet's view, however, every success for the opposition seemed at the time to be directly attributable to Pulteney's activities.

By degrees, the poem goes on, Pulteney's 'Cause superior grew', until the 'great End [Walpole's fall] appear'd at last in view' (119-120). The 'deciding Hour at last appears' (135): Pulteney spearheads the final attack on Walpole. The attack is successful; Freedom mounts her 'eternal Throne', while 'public Pow'r chastiz'd beneath her stands' (Walpole, in other words, tenders his resignation) (149-151). Again, as at the end of *Pulteney*, Britain's golden future seems assured:

> See private Life by wisest Arts reclaim'd!
> See ardent Youth to noblest Manners fram'd!
> See us acquire whate'er was sought by You,
> If CURIO, only CURIO will be true.
> (153-156).

but then:

> 'Twas then -- O shame! O Trust how ill repaid!
> O *Latium* oft by faithless Sons betray'd!
> 'Twas then -- What Frenzy on thy Reason stole?
> What Spells unsinew'd thy determin'd Soul?--
> --Is this the Man in Freedom's Cause approv'd?
> The Man so great, so honour'd, so belov'd?
> *This* patient Slave by Tinsel Chains allur'd?
> *This* wretched suitor for a Boon abjur'd?
> *This* CURIO, hated and despis'd by all?
> Who fell himself, to work his Country's fall?
> (157-166).

The passage which follows is one of the most bitter reproach ('O lost alike to Action and Repose!/ Unown'd, unpity'd in the worst of Woes!...' (167-168)). Pulteney's decision to 'act a Statesman's dull, exploded Part' (174) is contrasted with the British character, with its ' native Strength of Soul,/ Which Kings, nor Priests, nor sordid Laws controul' (189-190)[28]. Akenside depicts his fellow-countrymen as seekers after knowledge, both metaphysical and scientific (191-193); as conquerers of distant lands (194); and as rational, dispassionate judges of human nature, who:

> The *Man* forget not, tho' in Rags he lies,

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28. Akenside's idealistic depiction here of the sterling qualities of the British is characteristic: cp. *Philippic* ll. 17-19, *Ode on Leaving Holland* ll. 65-84.

And know the *Mortal* thro' a Crown's disguise:
(197-198)[29].

It is this capacity for reason which he sees as being responsible for their repudiation of 'Fastidious Grandeur', their sympathetic response to pity, their approval of virtuous 'public Toils', and their fierce defence of freedom 'Where'er Oppression works her wanton Sway' (200-210). If, in order to please Pulteney, Britain is to renounce her love of freedom, then he prays that he himself may be removed to a better world, 'where the *Gracchi*, where the *Bruti* stay!' (215-218)[30].

Still, however, the poet fights his growing belief that Pulteney's high ideals have gone forever. He makes another impassioned appeal to his better nature:

> In that still, thoughtful, solitary Hour,
> When Truth exerts her unresisted Pow'r,
> Breaks the false Optics tinged with Fortune's Glare,
> Unlocks the Breast, and lays the Passions bare;
> Then turn thy Eyes on that important Scene,
> And ask thyself -- if all be well within.
> (223-228).

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29. This reminder of the 'natural equality' of man is probably derived from Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (1690): 'Creatures of the same species and rank promiscuously born to the same advantages of Nature, and the use of the same faculties, should also be equal one amongst another without Subordination or Subjection...' (220).

30. Akenside's note to this passage reads:
> The two Brothers, *Tiberius* and *Caius Gracchus* lost their Lives in attempting to introduce the only Regulation that could give Stability and good Order to the *Roman* Republic.
> *L. Jun. Brutus* founded the Commonwealth, and died in its Defence.

For Tiberius and Caius Gracchus see for example Plutarch, *Lives*: *Tiberius and Caius Gracchus*; the 'Regulation' referred to by Akenside was the Agrarian Law, intended to distribute all the land gained by conquest among the Roman people. For L. Junius Brutus, who also appears in the *Pulteney Epistle*, see note 15 above.

He admits to a sinking sense that Pulteney has abandoned his tireless and fearless inner worth, his dignity, his clear thinking, and his 'commanding Tongue' (Pulteney had been known as 'a most compleat orator...eloquent, entertaining, persuasive'[31]) (229-236), and that, in place of these fine qualities,

> Couch'd in thy Bosom's deep, distracted Gloom,
> See the pale Form of barb'rous Grandeur dwell,
> Like some grim Idol[32] in a Sorc'rer's Cell!
>
> (237-240).

He warns Pulteney that worship at this 'polluted Shrine' has 'bound' his 'pow'rful Tongue', destroyed his ability for reasoning, and driven away the support of truth, glory, and virtue (241-255). But this is scarcely surprising, since neither 'Art' nor 'Genius' will survive 'Where Truth and Freedom from the Heart are fled' (265-266).

Once again, Akenside attempts in a long passage (269-320) to persuade Pulteney to renounce his titles and resign his robes, this time by painting a dismal picture of the future which otherwise awaits him in 'the dire Fane of INFAMY' (275), where he will be given the place of honour by the other 'mighty Foes of Liberty and Rest' (307). He appeals to the supreme being to 'turn this

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31. P.D. Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield: *Characters of Eminent Personages of His Own Time* (London, 1777) 26.

32. Cf. Milton, *Paradise Lost* i 395-396: 'that passd through fire/To his grim Idol.'. Milton is referring to '*Moloch*, horrid King besmeard with blood/Of human sacrifice' (i 392-393), a resonance which Akenside probably intended to reflect on Pulteney; compare the Miltonic echo -- used with a reverse intention -- in *Pulteney* (see p 55 above).

dreadful Omen far away', to punish the foes of freedom, and to 'fix her shrine in every *Roman* Breast' (321-328); despite this apparent triumph for corruption, there still remain some who recognise the value of 'Conscience and a Heart' (329-334).

As the poem ends, Akenside makes his final appeal to the 'Friend and Father of the Human Mind' (335). His own fate, he says, is to be that of a studious recluse, uninvolved with the machinations of 'Party-strife' and 'anxious Pow'r'. Still, he aspires 'in public Virtue's Cause/ To guide the Muses by sublimer Laws'[33]; and he asks that he be given the Muse's own authority, so that his poetry may have the maximum effect:

> Perhaps the Verse might rouze her smother'd Flame,
> And snatch the fainting Patriot back to Fame;
> Perhaps by worthy Thoughts of Human Kind,
> To worthy Deeds exalt the conscious Mind;
> Or dash Corruption in her proud Career,
> And teach her Slaves that Vice was born to fear[34].
>
> (337-348).

Akenside's poem was only one of a number of works which were addressed to Pulteney at this period. What makes it exceptional is not only the toughness of its rhetoric, but also, above all, the very tangible sense which it conveys

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33. The view that poetry could be conducive to 'public Virtue's Cause' (339) was of fundamental importance to Akenside, and lay behind the composition of a number of his 'political' poems. Cp. for example *Ode on the Use of Poetry*, especially ll. 19-24; *Huntingdon Ode* ll. 1-10; *In the Country* ll. 45-50.

34. These final lines echo the sentiment expressed in the Epigraph: even if Pulteney proves impervious to Akenside's appeal, he hopes that others may be inspired by the poem either to perform 'worthy Deeds' (346), or to abandon the pursuit of 'Corruption' (347); for an expression of a comparable dual purpose, see *Huntingdon Ode* ll. 9-12.

of thwarted hopes and a trust betrayed. It is this contrast between Akenside's impossibly idealistic adulation of Pulteney -- an adulation which can be seen even more clearly in what is almost certainly his own earlier *Fulteney* Epistle -- and his subsequent disillusionment which makes the poem interesting.

At the time of composition of *An Epistle to Curio*, Akenside was living in Northampton, where he was struggling to set up his first medical practice, and thus still relying mainly on the public press for news of current events. A few months later, however, he moved to London, where he was to remain for the rest of his life. The poems which were composed during the years immediately following his move will form the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

1745-1748

Following *An Epistle to Curio*, which was published in November 1744, Akenside published no major political poetry for over three years; his next important work, *An Ode to the Earl of Huntingdon*, appeared in January 1748. Before moving on to this poem, however, it is necessary to assess the claim made by a previous commentator, C.T. Houpt, that a pair of more minor poems which were published pseudonymously in the *GM* at the end of 1745 should be attributed to Akenside. These poems, *A Soliloquy* (*GM* XV (October 1745) 552) and *To Mr Urban,on His Compleating the 15th Volume of his Magazine* (preface to bound set of *GM* XV, 1745), are both signed Britannicus, the pseudonym which Akenside had used for the *Philippic* seven years earlier, and it is largely on this basis that Houpt assigns the poems to him[1]. Although on its own this would be insufficient grounds for such an attribution, I think that, taken

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1. See Houpt 34-36. Houpt also attributes to Akenside a short poem written in praise of Cervantes and signed 'Your friend and correspondent Britannicus', which the *GM* had published in May 1741 (*GM* xi 272). The poem is is little interest as far as the subject of this thesis is concerned, although, as Houpt points out, it contains one couplet which refers to the Spanish situation: 'While armed for war our navies scour the main,/ Our coast rejoicing with the spoils of Spain' (13-14). If Akenside did write this poem, it obviously strengthens the case for his having maintained contact with the *GM*, as does the fact that when Cave reprinted 56 lines of *The Pleasures of Imagination* soon after its publication in 1744 he referred to Akenside as 'an old friend' (*GM* xiv 329).

together with other pieces of evidence both internal and external, a case could possibly be made for Akenside's authorship of the poems.

Akenside's early political poetry was invariably stimulated by exceptional events in the public sphere; the Spanish depredations, the declaration of war,the fall of Walpole, and the apostasy of Pulteney all appear to have generated a response which, in every case but the last, was virtually instantaneous. After the somewhat undignified jostling for places which had followed Walpole's resignation, however, parliamentary affairs had become less immediately exciting; and in any case, Akenside's disappointment with Pulteney may well have generated a more general disenchantment with the whole political sphere. Less than a year after the publication of the *Curio* Epistle, however, England was faced with a situation which, in terms of sheer excitment, exceeded anything which had occurred in the country for a generation at least. This was, of course, the Jacobite rebellion of 1745-6.

The young pretender's attempt to seize the throne of Britain is one of the most famous events of British history. It has tended, however, to be highly romanticised, and it is instructive to follow the course of events as they were reported day by day in the London or provincial newspapers, or to read the monthly summaries and related articles which appeared in the *GM*. The sense of rising panic is unmistakable. Given Akenside's history of response to comparable situations, it would have been surprising if he had failed to respond to this one; and *A Soliloquy*, published in October 1745, could well show him doing so in an entirely characteristic way.

Before turning to the poem itself, it will be useful to survey the state of affairs in the country at the time of its composition. Even a cursory examination of newspapers and journals during the late summer and early autumn

of 1745 quickly reveals a set of circumstances of precisely the kind to which Akenside would have been likely to react. It is difficult to be certain of his precise whereabouts during this period, although the strongest likelihood is that he was still in Northampton. However, in terms of availability of news and articles, this is of little real importance, since, in common with a number of other provincial newspapers of the period, Northampton's weekly newspaper reproduced news items and essays from the London papers and magazines, adding initials at the end of an item to indicate its source[2]. Thus, wherever he was, Akenside would have had access to the latest news with a delay of only a few days at the most.

To reach the *GM*'s offices in time to be included in the October issue, which appeared in the first week of November, the *Soliloquy* would have had to have been written in late September or early October. By this time, the initial rather vague and confused rumours:

> Letters from *Paris* say, that the young pretender is ship'd from *Nantz* with 2 men of war of 60 and 30 guns.-- Others say he is in the *French* army in *Flanders*, where he is publickly caressed.
> (*GM* XV (July 1745) 391)

which had been dismissed, in some quarters at least, as diversionary tactics on the part of an administration eager to distract attention from embarassing enquiries into its own conduct[3], had become certainties. On the basis of the rumours alone, the government had issued a proclamation:

> *Ordering a Reward of Thirty Thousand Pounds to any Person who shall seize and secure the eldest Son of the Pretender, in case he shall land, or attempt to land, in any of His Majesty's Dominions.*
> (*LG* 8455 and 8456 (3-6 and 7-10 August 1745)).

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2. See *Northampton Mercury*, issues for 1745.

3. See for example 'A Caveat against all tales and panics about an invasion', *Old England Journal*, 10 August 1745.

On 13 August the *London Gazette* had published a directive from the War Office that *'all Officers belonging to His Majesty's Land Forces serving in England or Scotland, do immediately repair to their respective Posts'* (*LG* 8458, 13-17 August). In fact, as far as troops were concerned, Britain found herself caught in a somewhat awkward position. Most of the British army was on the continent engaged in the War of the Austrian Succession under the command of William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland (1721-1765), second son of George II. The regular troops which remained in Britain consisted of no more than 3,850 men in Scotland, under the command of Sir John Cope, and about 6000 men in London and at various other centres in England[4]. However, for a short time at least, Cumberland seems to have taken the view that to detach part of his army in order to deal with a threatened invasion which he hoped would never take place would be disastrous for the conduct of the war in Europe; and indeed, as his private secretary wrote, his initial reaction was that the invasion was a deliberate ploy on the part of the French for precisely this reason, since:

> if they can alarm us so far as to make a detachment they do everything; for if the allied army once comes to divide, I am afraid all is irretrievably over[5].

By 20 August, however, much to the gratification of the Pelhams, who had been pressing from the start for the matter to be taken seriously, orders were sent by the lords justices 'for all British troops that were in garrison at Ostend to be re-embarked forthwith and brought to Great Britain'[6]. Meanwhile,

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4. See Speck 29-30.

5 R.A. CP (M) 4/116; quoted Speck 29.

6. ibid. 4/204; quoted Speck 29.

on 20-24 August and for several subsequent issues, the *London Gazette* carried an announcement of a reward of £25 for a report of anyone concealing arms in any part of Great Britain (*LG* 8460 et subseq.). In the *London Gazette* of 31 August to 3 September appeared the first of the 'humble Addresses to His Majesty', in this instance from the Lord Lieutenant of Worcester, assuring the king of the loyalty of the people of Worcester in the face of 'that severest Evil a Popish Pretender' (*LG* 8463). Two issues later (*LG* 8466), following the news that the pretender had taken Perth on 4 September, the presenting of humble Addresses had reached such epidemic proportions that there was little space in the newspaper for anything else. No doubt the need to assure the king of one's loyalty had become particularly pressing since the issue of a royal proclamation on 5 September putting into application laws against papists and non-jurors (*LG* 8464).

Also at the beginning of September, the government issued orders that the militia should be mustered in each county. Unfortunately this system, which was supposed to provide a regular 'amateur army' of able-bodied civilians, had fallen into disarray in recent years; many districts lacked the financial wherewithal to sustain their forces, and in a number of cases arms were either in bad repair or even non-existent, and the net result was a disappointingly small turnout of men[7]. By 21 September, when it was announced that the rebels had taken Edinburgh on the 17th (*LG* 8468), the country was fast approaching a state of panic.

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7. See Speck 38. See also Western, passim, and Chapter 6 below for a further discussion of the militia in the eighteenth century.

The *Gentleman's Magazine* for September 1745 -- which would have appeared during the first few days of October -- provides a useful summary of prevailing journalistic attitudes. Although the Magazine still carries the Debates and several essays which are not related to the invasion -- it was not until December that the editor announced that:

> Our Readers in every part of his Majesty's Dominions being too much alarmed by the present Rebellion, and threatned Invasion, to relish with their usual Delight the *Debates* in the *Senate* of LILLIPUT, we shall postpone them for a Season, that we may be able to furnish out a fuller entertainment of what we find to be more suitable to their present Taste.
>
> (*GM* XV 619).

--by far the greatest amount of space is devoted to material which bears with varying degrees of directness on the rapidly escalating state of current events. In addition to the greatly augmented 'Historical Chronicle' at the end of the Magazine (496-501), which has expanded to between two and three times its usual size[8], and is, of course, almost exclusively devoted to a blow by blow account of the apparently inexorable approach of the rebels, there are a number of other highly inflammatory essays and reports. Pages 469-71, for example, are given over to '*A Short Account of the Rebellion of 1715*'. The account, not unnaturally, ends with the ignominious flight of the pretender in December and the subsequent confusion and dispersal of his followers, and an

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8. The 'Historical Chronicle' for September occupies six pages of the Magazine, as opposed to two in January, March. April and June, and three in February, May, July, and August.

editorial note has been appended stating that:

> *So true is it, that if rebels receive any considerable loss, they can never recover it; and that no rebellion can succeed against the king and parliament of* Britain.
>
> (471).

Nevertheless, the account hardly seems calculated to inspire confidence in its readers; it contains an extract from Patten's *History*[9], which describes how:

> several towns...and...small villages were burnt to the ground; by which the poor inhabitants, being only the old infirm men, the women and children (the able bodied being forced from their homes either into the rebellion, or to seek shelter) were driven out, and exposed to the open air, which made a most dismal sight, to behold those under these unhappy circumstances, exposed in the extremest season of the year, and in one of the coldest winters that has been felt these many ages; so great a load of snow upon the earth, that a speedy dispatch or death, would have been more eligible to these poor naked creatures, than the unconceivable pains that follow cold, hunger or nakedness to the old and infirm; besides the tenderness of the other sex, and sucking infants.

Also from Patten's *History* is the list which follows of '*the most considerable* CHIEFS *in* Scotland, *with the Number of men they could raise in* 1715' (471). Again, it is difficult to see this as anything but directly scare-mongering, since the number of men raised against the government considerably outweighs the number raised for it[10].

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9. Robert Patten: *History of the Late Rebellion* (London, 1717); 2nd ed., with additions, London, 1717. 3rd. ed., reprinted as *The History of the Rebellion in 1715*, London, 1745. The *GM*'s quotations are taken from the second edition, Part Two: 'The History of the Rebellion in Scotland', 79-80.

10. The table is not easy to follow; but the totals are somewhere in the region of 15,500 for and 23,000 against.

Following the table of chiefs and clans, the Magazine prints a speech which had been made by the Archbishop of York on 24 September, on the occasion of the formation of an Association (471-2). As has been seen, the need for extra troops (and money to support them) was a matter of pressing urgency, and from it was born the notion of the Association. The initial declaration of the one which was formed in York, which the *GM* printed, is representative of the terms under which these bodies were formed. In addition to the Archbishop, its signatories were the 'lords lieutenant, nobility, deputy lieutenants, justices of the peace, clergy, gentlemen, freeholders, and others of the county of *York*'; and its declared aims:

> that with our whole powers, bodies, lives and estates we and every one of us will stand by and assist each other in the defence of his majesty's sacred person and government, and will withstand, offend and pursue, as well by force of arms, as by all other means...popish pretenders and traytors.
> (472).

As the 'Historical Chronicle' reports, the Association was signed 'most heartily and unanimously', and 'a sett of brave young gentlemen' immediately formed a volunteer regiment, while the signatories pledged themselves to raise £40,000 towards maintaining the troops (499).

Over four pages of the Magazine are devoted to Humble Addresses (478-82); and two more to letters from the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishops of London, Rochester and Winchester to the clergy of their various diocese, enjoining them to ensure that their flocks are not tempted to stray in the direction of the church of Rome. As the Bishop of London's letter puts it, they are to:

> raise in your people an abhorrence of popery...to shew in your discourses from the pulpit, the grossness and perniciousness of the manifold errors and innovations of the church of *Rome*, and how inconsistent they are with the plain, pure, and uncorrupted doctrines

> of christianity, as contained in the holy scriptures, and received and established in this nation.
>
> (482).

The purpose of raising 'an abhorrence of popery' is remarkably well served by the most inflammatory of all the articles in this issue of the *GM*. This is a document entitled '*The* Pope's *dreadful curse...the form of excommunication of the church of* Rome''[11], which would undoubtedly have helped to fuel the horror of catholicism which was so common at this period, and which is demonstrated by Akenside in a number of poems:

> By the authority of God almighty, the father, son, and holy ghost, and of the holy canons, and of the undefiled *Virgin Mary* ...and of all the celestial virtues, angels, arch angels, thrones, dominions, powers, cherubins and seraphins, and of the holy patriarchs, prophets, and of all the apostles and evangelists, and of the holy innocents...and of the holy virgins, and of all the saints, and together with the holy and elect of god: we excommunicate and anathematise him or them, malefactor or malefactors, -- and from the thresholds of the holy church of god almighty we sequester them, that he or they may be tormented, disposed and delivered over....And as fire is quenched with water, so let the light of him or them be put out for evermore...
>
> ...May he or they be cursed, wherever he or they may be, whether in their house or in their field, or in the highway, or in the path, or in the wood, or in the water, or in the church. May he or they be cursed in living, in dying, in eating, in drinking, in being hungry, in being thirsty, in fasting, in sleeping, in slumbering, in waking, in walking, in standing, in sitting, in lying, in working, in resting, in pissing, in shitting, and in blood-letting. May he or they be cursed in all the faculties of their body....May he or they be cursed in the hair of his or their head ...in his or their brain...in their temples, in their forehead, in their ears, in their eyebrows, in their cheeks, in their jaw-bones, in their nostrils, in their fore teeth or grinders, in their lips, in their throat, in their shoulders, in their wrists, in their arms, in their hands, in their fingers, in their breast, in their heart, and in all the interior parts to the very stomach: in their reins, in the groin, in the thighs, in the genitals, in the hips, in the knees, in the legs, in the feet, in the joints and in the nails. May he or they be cursed in all their joints, from the top of the head to the sole of the foot. May there

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11. This document was to be quoted in full by Sterne in *Tristram Shandy*. For a full discussion of its background and provenence, see Laurence Sterne: *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* , ed. Melvyn New and Joan New (3 vols., Florida, 1978),ii Appendix 8, 952-957.

> not be any soundness in him or them.
>
> May the son of the living god, with all the glory of his majesty, curse him or them; and may heaven, with all the powers that move therein, rise against him or them, to damn him or them. ...*Amen, Amen, So be it.*
>
> (490)

At the end of this document is an editorial note which leaves no doubt as to the purpose of its appearance:

> The publication of this is to shew what is to be expected from the pope, if he comes to be supreme head of the church in this nation.
>
> (490)

Finally, at the end of the 'Historical Chronicle' appears a 'Letter from Northampton', which gives an account of a stirring speech made by the Earl of Halifax at the George Inn on 25 September, urging his listeners to take vigo rous action against the 'most unnatural rebellion', an 'infamous attempt which our enemies are making to ruin our happy constitution both in church and state' (501). As Akenside was almost certainly in Northampton at this time, it is highly likely that he would have been present on this occasion. The writer's purpose in sending the report of Halifax's speech is, he says:

> to animate a zeal for the publick safety in persons of all ranks at this critical conjuncture of our affairs, now our bleeding and our trembling country needs, I am sure needs, all the assistance which the warmest spirit of patriotism can give it.
>
> (501).

The same purpose lies behind *A Soliloquy*, which was published under the pseudonym Britannicus in the next month's *GM*.

A SOLILOQUY

---*From evil still educing good.* Thomson.

SHALL FREEDOM now, her care for *Britain* o'er,
Spread her white wings, and spurn her long-lov'd shore!
Our weeping *maids* shall lawless ruffians stain!
To spare the *babe* our *mothers* kneel in vain?
Insulted, vanquish'd, in unequal strife,
Shall the fond husband stabb'd resign the wife?
Shall hungry robbers plunder *English* wealth?
And skulking *Britons* eat their bread by stealth?
With thee, O GODDESS! ev'ry *filial art*,
Peace, plenty, science, shall at once depart;
Incumbent o'er us *Ign'rance* shall display
Her leathern wings, and intercept the day;
Blind Zeal's red torch alone, with hateful light,
Shall just disclose the terrors of the night,
While *Superstition*, raving, shakes the blade,
That smokes with blood, and glitters through y^{e} shade;
What once were men grow brutes at her controul,
Debased, enslav'd -- in *body* and in *soul*!
But whence these doubts, and whence the fears I feel?
Can rebel outlaws shake the publick weal?
Slaves -- by a beardless, hot-brain'd bigot led!--
My indignation burns, my fears are fled;
They come to bid our sleeping virtues rise,
By these our Genius speaks; -- his words are wise:
'Hear me, ye sons of *Ease*, whom *Sloth* disarms,
And *Pleasure* captivates with tinsel charms,
Yours is the sinewy nerve that taught so late
France, conquered *France*, to tremble for her fate.
You smil'd, contemptuous, at the tyrant's nod,
And drew the sword for *Liberty* and GOD,
Each man an hero, -- GLORY all his pay;
And yet you sleep in Lux'ry's lap today.
The foe's at hand! -- there's ruin at the door!
Wake now *for Liberty*, or wake no more!'
Rouz'd at the call, our heroes shine again,
Old English courage beats in ev'ry vein,
With honest blushes ev'ry cheek is dy'd,
And ev'ry hand is to the sword apply'd;
Rome's host of sculptur'd saints neglect her pray'r,
And all her curses are dispers'd in air:
Still, as of old, the cords she weaves we break,
Our strength returning with the rowzing shake.
So *Sampson*, slumb'ring on an harlot's knee,
With ease was fetter'd, dreaming he was free;
But --*The Philistine's come!* --he heard and rose,
Lord of himself, the terror of his foes;
Resumes his might, their various arts disdains,
Looks up, and smiling breaks the facile chains.

As Houpt has pointed out [34], this poem 'constitutes another call to arms', whose aim and rhetoric strongly recall those of the earlier *Philippic*. The epigraph with which it is headed is adapted from Thomson's *Hymn to the Seasons* (1730); the correct version reads: 'From seeming evil still educing good' (114). The poem opens with an image of Freedom (threatened by the invasion of the Jacobites) spreading her 'white wings', and spurning her 'long-loved shore' (1-2); compare *Curio*: 'And Freedom loathe to tread the poison'd Shore' (90).

It has already become clear that, in his early political writing, Akenside habitually drew on material which he had found in the Magazines and journals. As will be obvious, much of this poem's inflammatory rhetoric also echoes the articles and essays in the previous month's Magazine. The highlanders are portrayed as desperate, incontrollable, violent marauders, 'lawless ruffians' whose progress through the country will leave a trail of rape, robbery and murder (3-8); compare, for example, the Archbishop of York's speech, enjoining every man in England to guard against the attempts of 'these wild and desperate ruffians....our savage and bloodthirsty enemies' (471). Having fanned the flames of the already increasing public alarm at the imminent approach of the enemy, the poet goes on the emphasise the accompanying evils of popery; the Goddess addressed is Freedom:

> With thee, O GODDESS! ev'ry filial art,
> *Feace, plenty, science*, shall at once depart;
> Incumbent o'er us, *Ign'rance* shall display
> Her leathern wings, and intercept the day;
> (9-12)

This metaphor, in which the heavy, cumbrous, light-obscuring 'leathern wings' of Ignorance are in deliberate contrast to the spreading 'white wings' of the fast-disappearing Freedom in the poem's opening lines, clearly owes much to the *Dunciad* Book iv, in which Dulness is shown at 10-16 and again at 627-656 as extinguishing the light of science, learning, art and civilisation'[12]. The political dimension which it is given here is, however, entirely characteristic of Akenside, who believed that '*great poetical Talents, and high Sentiments of Liberty, do reciprocally produce and assist each other*' (*Huntingdon Ode* note d).

The *Soliloquy* goes on, still playing with images of light and darkness:

> *Blind Zeal*'s red torch alone, with hateful light,
> Shall just disclose the terrors of the night,
> While *Superstition*, raving, shakes the blade,
> That smokes with blood, and glitters through y^e^ shade;
> (13-16).

These strongly anti-papist lines carry a possible reminiscence of the Archbishop's speeches and the 'pope's dreadful curse', as well as of the Earl of Halifax's Northampton speech, which refers to the 'infamous attempt' of the rebels to 'reduce us to superstition and bondage' (501). This suggestion is reinforced by the succeeding couplet, in which men are shown to be

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12. In *Pulteney*, which was written shortly after the publication of *Dunciad* IV, the loss of Britain's freedom is presented in terms of comparable images of diminished light: 'Britannia's Sun now shot a parting Ray,/ Just on the Point of putting out her Day.../ St Stephen's Curfew toll'd --*put out the Light*,/ And the P[ ]'s Chimes play'd round --*Let there be Night*' (107-108, 137-138).

deteriorating to the level of brutes, and becoming: 'Debased, enslaved -- in body and in soul!(17-18). The sense which these lines convey of a strong revulsion from a state of psychological slavery to a false doctrine, which reduces men to the condition of beasts, is undoubtedly characteristic of Akenside; compare, for instance, the autobiographical lines from *Curio*:
'I scorn'd th'ungen'rous Gloss of slavish Minds,/ The Owl-ey'd Race, whom Virtue's lustre blinds...' (47-8)[13]. 'But whence these doubts, and whence the fears I feel?' (19), goes on the poet of the *Soliloquy*, recalling the opening of the *Philippic*: 'Whence this unwonted transport in my breast?/ Why glow my thoughts...?' (1-2). Here, however, the question signals the beginning of a rhetorical twist which seems to have been a favourite device of Akenside's. The poet here begins to realise that the quality of the outlaws, and in particular that of their leader, 'a beardless, hot-brain'd bigot' cannot pose a threat to 'the public weal' (20-21); compare the September *GM*'s extract from the *Westmorland Journal* of September 21, which attempts to minimise the threat by denying the possibility that British liberty could be in any real danger from 'the wild projects of a brainless boy' (488). 'My indignation burns, my fears are fled' (22), continues the poet (again recalling the *Philippic*: 'O, I am all on fire!' (96)). The outlaws, it seems, have a value as far as the moral good of the country is concerned (hence the poem's epigraph), since:

> They come to bid our sleeping virtues rise,
> By these our Genius speaks; -- his words are wise:
> (23-4)

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13. Compare also *Pulteney*, where the internal discord before Walpole's fall causes Britons to 'drink the Dregs of Circe's Cup'(142) (and, presumably, to turn into swine as a result).

These lines offer a possible parallel to the passage from *Curio* in which: 'Wak'd in the Shock the public Genius rose,/ Abashed and keener from his long repose...' (127-8)[14]. Another possible parallel, this time to the *Philippic*, is offered by the words spoken by Britain's Genius in the *Soliloquy:*

> 'Hear me, ye sons of *Ease*, whom *Sloth* disarms,
> And *Pleasure* captivates with tinsel charms,
> Yours is the sinewy nerve that taught so late
> *France*, conquered *France*, to tremble for her fate.
> You smil'd, contemptuous, at the tyrant's nod,
> And drew the sword for *Liberty* and GOD,
> Each man an hero, -- *Glory* all his pay'[15];
> And yet you sleep in *Lux'ry*'s lap today.
> The foe's at hand! -- there's ruin at the door!
> Wake now *for Liberty*, or wake no more!'
>
> (25-34).

In the *Philippic*, Britain's 'sons' were upbraided for their 'vile, degenerate sloth', and for the fact that 'each nobler thought/ That warmed our sires, is lost and buried now/ In luxury and avarice' (25, 21-3); in that poem, too, Britain's past glories had been invoked in order to spur her 'sons' on to more effective action in the present conflict.

Finally, just as Akenside had ended the *Philippic* by imagining that the desired change of heart had already taken place:

> Yet, Britons, are ye cold?
> Yet deaf to glory, virtue, and the call
> Of your poor injured countrymen? Ah no,
> I see you are not; every bosom glows
> With native greatness...
>
> (150-4)

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14. See also *Pulteney*: 'Britannia's Genius starts up from the Dead...' (180).

15. The conflict with France which is referred to here must be the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1713); and the victories celebrated those of Marlborough at Blenheim, Ramillies, and Oudenarde (for which see the *Declaration*, discussed in Chapter 1 above). The 'tyrant' is Louis XIV.

here a similar device is used to end the poem:

> Rouz'd at the call, our heroes shine again,
> *Old English* courage beats in ev'ry vein,
> With honest blushes ev'ry cheek is dy'd,
> And ev'ry hand is to the sword apply'd;
> *Rome*'s host of sculptured saints neglect her pray'r,
> And all her curses are dispersed in air:

(this is almost certainly a reference to the 'pope's dreadful curse')

> Still, as of old, the cords she weaves we break,
> Our strength returning with the rowzing shake.
> (35-42).

If, on the basis of the possible parallels and of the use of source materials, Houpt's attribution of this poem to Akenside is accepted, then Akenside must presumably also be the author of the piece entitled *To Mr Urban, on his Compleating the 15th Volume of his Magazine*, which is also signed Britannicus, and which prefaces the bound volume of the 1745 *GM*. As Houpt points out (36), this poem was probably printed and sent out at the same time as the December issues of the Magazine, together with the Preface and title page, so that the year's issues could be bound together; this would have been at the beginning of January 1746, giving a probable composition date of December for the poem (not November, as Houpt wrongly calculates). The text is as follows:

TO MR URBAN
On His Compleating the 15TH Volume of his Magazine

> BANISH'D, an exile from the nations round,
> When PEACE in *Britain* an asylum found,
> At ease you proudly spread th'important page,
> In high debate where demi-gods engage;
> Give ocean law from *Indus* to the *Pole*,
> And teach *Britannia*'s thunder where to roll:
> You show'd the thoughtful eye what *Learning* found,
> By curious search on philosophic ground;
> To fair *Industry*'s busy race display'd
> Whatever *Art* produc'd in *Nature*'s aid; [10]
> And gave, their hours of leisure to amuse,

Plans, Maps, Political Essays, and News;
The *Nine* you courted for the varying lay;
The varying theme the ready *Nine* display:
In easy verse the humourous tale they told,
The *young* all laughing, smiling all the *old*;
By *Satire*, sneer'd the villain into *shame*,
And paid the *worthy* their reward of *fame*:
Around fair *Virtue* bad the *Graces* throng,
Show'd *Vice* unmask'd, and moraliz'd the song.
   But when the *Scots* advance, a desperate band,
By *right divine* to desolate the land,
To root up Freedom, to dethrone the King,
To stop forever the *Pierian* spring,
In popish night to bid the world forget
The *fruits* of *learning*, and the *flow'rs* of *wit*,
Then lighter themes forgot, you fill the page
With heav'n-born ardour, and an honest rage;
In *Britain*'s cause exerting all your art,
Rouse *English* Virtue in each *English* heart;
Commend the forward, stimulate the slow,
And drive th'united nation on her foe:
   So *Pallas* taught, in peaceful *Greece*, we find,
Whate'er could please, instruct, and mend mankind;
Led wond'ring *Science* thro' the devious way,
And charm'd the Poet with the various lay.
But, *Greece* insulted by the *Phrygian* boy,
At once she turn'd the theme to arms and *Troy*;
Each *Greek* became a hero at her voice,
And death, or glory, was the gen'ral choice.
Divine *Achilles* then was born to fame,
The type of WILLIAM, now a greater name.

There seems little reason not to identify the Britannicus of this poem with the one who had written the *Soliloquy* two months earlier. The likelihood that Akenside was responsible for both poems is perhaps slightly increased by the way in which classical references are used in *To Mr Urban*, which invites comparison with Akenside's usage in other poems. In this poem, as in the *Soliloquy*, a connection is made between political or religious freedom and the flowering of artistic or intellectual endeavour; here, the poet asserts that the advance of the 'desperate band' of Jacobites (whom he ironically represents as being impelled by the need to assert the divine right of the pretender) had threatened to 'stop forever the *Pierian* spring' and thus to deprive the world

of 'the *fruits* of *learning* and the *flow'rs* of *wit*' (21- 26). These lines recall a passage in *Pleasures* (1744), in which the poet describes the way in which the invasion of Italy by barbarian hordes from the north had:

> swept the works
> Of liberty and wisdom down the gulph
> Of all-devouring night. As long immur'd
> In noontide darkness by th'glimm'ring lamp,
> Each muse and each fair science pin'd away
> The sordid hours: while foul, barbarian hands
> Their mysteries profan'd, unstrung the lyre,
> And chain'd the soaring pinion down to earth.
> (ii 11-18).

Certainly the link between freedom and art was a theme very close to Akenside's heart; it was to be enlarged on at length in the *Huntingdon Ode*.

Certain recognisable uses of format, rhetoric, and imagery, then, suggest that Houpt may be right in assigning these two relatively minor works to Akenside. If so, they are interesting for two reasons. First, they would suggest that his recent disillusionment with Pulteney had done little to lessen his susceptibility to journalistic propaganda; and second, they indicate that, although he was by now an established and highly regarded poet publishing under his own name, he was not above some anonymous and inflammatory war-mongering when he felt the situation required it.

The next poem which will be discussed is a more significant work, which was published two years later with Akenside's name on the title page. This is the *Ode to the Earl of Huntingdon* (1748). This poem is important in a number of ways. Not only does it make the first attempt clearly to set out Akenside's view of the role of the poet in the political life of the nation, but also it contains some surprisingly radical political views, which provide an interesting contrast to the conventional opposition rhetoric which had characterised his earlier poetry.

ODE TO THE EARL OF HUNTINGDON

The *Huntingdon Ode* is addressed to the eighteen year old Francis Hastings (1729-1789), who had succeeded to the title of 10th Earl of Huntingdon after the death of his father Theophilus in October 1746. His mother, Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon (1707-1791), was in her day famous for her ardent and vociferous Methodism. She appears to have been converted in 1736, and by 1742 she had acquired a reputation for converting, or attempting to convert, other members of her social circle. By February 1744 she had made the acquaintance of Dr Philip Doddridge (1702-1751), the non-conformist minister who had established a dissenting academy in Northampton, and she entered into a regular correspondence with him over the rest of the decade. The chief residence of the Huntingdon family was at Donnington Park in Leicestershire, a few hours' journey from Northampton; and it is clear from the Countess' surviving letters to Doddridge that the two were on visiting terms from the start of their friendship. The first of these letters is dated 27 February 1744[16]. By coincidence, June of the same year saw the beginning of Doddridge's acquaintance with Akenside, who had recently returned from taking his degree in Leyden, and had made the decision to settle in Northampton. He had arrived there in mid-June, bringing with him a letter of introduction to Doddridge from their mutual friend David Fordyce[17]. Although initially

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16. For the Countess's attempts to spread methodism, see *Hastings MSS* iii 20, 32; for her correspondence with Doddridge, see Nuttall 953, 968, 1164, 1222, 1228, 1257, 1289, 1369, 1373, 1375-7, 1392, 1428, 1514, 1569. The Countess's first letter, unpublished, is in Yale University Library; it is quoted in part in Nuttall 953.

17. LNC MS L1/1/55; quoted Nuttall 977. For Fordyce, see pp. 119-120 below.

Doddridge had doubts about the wisdom of Akenside's attempt to set up a medical practice in Northampton, owing to the presence there of the successful Dr. Stonehouse, he had no personal animosity against the poet, whose reputation had preceded him. The two were soon 'on terms of considerable intimacy', and would spend their evenings in friendly debate about the doctrine of immortality, which Doddridge would relate in detail to his pupils the following morning'[18].

It is impossible to substantiate the claim that 'Dr. Akenside was patronised by the Huntingdon family', or that 'Dr. Akenside, a medical man in the neighbourhood...might be regarded as a retainer of the family'[19]. However, in view of the fact that Akenside's recent publication of *The Pleasures of Imagination* had made him something of a celebrity, it seems highly probable that at the very least Doddridge would have introduced him to the family during his eighteen-month stay in Northampton. Throughout this period the young Francis Hastings was living for the most part in London, where he was attending Westminster School; but surviving correspondence makes it clear that he used to return to Donnington Park during his holidays[20], and he could well have met Akenside during that time.

It is certainly tempting to think that Akenside addressed his Ode to

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18. The anecdote is told in A. Kippis: 'Life of the Author', prefixed to his edition of Philip Doddridge: *The Family Expositor* (London, 1792) xliv. Kippis (1725-1795) was a pupil of Doddridge between 1741 and 1746 (see *DNB* xi 195).

19. A.C.H. Seymour: *The Life and Times of Selina Countess of Huntingdon* (2 vols., London, 1839-40) i 137; Sarah Tytler: *The Countess of Huntingdon and her Circle* (London, 1907) 34.

20. See for example Hastings' undated letter of ?late 1744 describing his return journey to London: *Hastings MSS* iii 48-49.

Hastings on the basis of some personal acquaintance, however slight; and quite apart from the strong probability suggested both by the hearsay evidence and by the mutual friendship with Doddridge, there are indications in the poem itself that this was the case. Undoubtedly Akenside, with his high regard for intellectual attainments, would have been strongly attracted to the young Earl, who was by all accounts not only 'a most charming boy' (*Hastings MSS* iii 62), but also highly intelligent, with a precocious interest in political affairs, as his letters to his parents from Westminster School between 1742 and 1746 clearly indicate. At thirteen, for instance, he was recounting the news of Walpole's resignation and speculating as to the identity of his successor; a month or so later he spent several days of a week's holiday 'down (all the time) at the House of Peers' listening intently to the proceedings. Similarly, some four years later, he spent a considerable time in the Lords attending the trials of the rebel jacobite peers Kilmarnock, Cromarty, and Balmerino, which he described in vivid detail to his mother (*Hastings MSS* iii 34, 38, 58-9). In June 1747 he went up to Christ Church, Oxford; but, in common with many of his peers, he remained there only a year and a half, and in December of the following year he set out for Caen in order (ostensibly, at least) to study French[21]. This is to jump ahead, however, since Akenside's poem, published in January 1748, is dated 1747 and was presumably written sometime towards the end of that year. Akenside was living in London by this time, and, thanks to his friend and patron Dyson, was moving in the sort of circles which might have brought him into renewed contact with the Huntingdon family. Although it

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21. For Hastings' matriculation on 22 June 1747, see *Alumni Oxonienses* ii 624. For his projected expedition to Caen, see *Hastings MSS* iii 69.

is necessary to be cautious about speculating along these lines, this would provide a useful explanation of the fact that he decided at this time to address to Hastings a poem which seems in many ways remarkably specific in its argument and intentions. The text which follows is quoted from the first (1748) edition.

ODE
TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE FRANCIS, EARL OF HUNTINGDON.
1747.

I.1.

The Wise and Great of every Clime,
   Thro' all the spacious Walks of Time,
Where'er the Muse her Power display'd,
With Joy have listen'd and obey'd.
For, taught of Heav'n, the sacred Nine
Persuasive Numbers, Forms divine,
   To mortal Sense impart:
They best the Soul with Glory fire;
They noblest Counsels, boldest Deeds inspire;
And high o'er Fortune's Rage enthrone the fixed Heart.

I.2.

Nor less prevailing is their Charm
The vengeful Bosom to disarm;
To melt the Proud with human Woe,
And prompt unwilling Tears to flow.
Can Wealth a Power like this afford?
Can *Cromwell*'s Arts, or *Marlbro*'s Sword,
   An equal Empire claim?
No, HASTINGS. Thou my Words wilt own:
Thy Breast to every Muse was early known;
Nor shall the mutual Tie disgrace thy noble Name.

I.3.

   The Muse's genuine Praise,
And the fair Function of the Poet's Tongue,
Ne'er shalt thou blush to vindicate and raise
From all that scorned Vice or slavish Fear hath sung.
Nor shall the Blandishment of *Tuscan* Strings
Warbling at Will in Pleasure's myrtle Bower;
Nor shall the baser Notes to *Celtic* Kings,
By lying Minstrels paid in evil Hour,
Move thee to spurn the heavenly Muse's Reign.
   A different Strain,
   And other Themes,

From *her* prophetic Shades and hallow'd Streams,
(Thou well cans't witness) visit the chaste Ear:
Such, as when *Greece* to her immortal Shell
Rejoicing listen'd, godlike Words to hear;
To hear the sweet Instructress tell
(While Men and Heroes throng'd around)
How Life its noblest Use may find,
How best for Freedom be resign'd;
And how by Glory Virtue shall be crown'd.

II.1.

Such was the *Chian* Father's Strain
To many a kind domestic Train,
Whose pious Hearth and genial Bowl
Had chear'd the reverend Pilgrim's Soul:
When, ev'ry hospitable Rite
With equal Bounty to requite,
He struck his magic Strings;
And pour'd spontaneous Numbers forth,
And caught their Ears with Tales of ancient Worth,
And fill'd their musing Hearts with vast heroic Things.

II.2.

Now oft, where happy Spirits dwell,
Where yet he tunes his sacred Shell,
Oft near him, with applauding Hands,
The Genius of his Country stands.
To list'ning Gods he makes him known,
That Man divine, by whom were sown
The Seeds of *Graecian* Fame:
Who first the Race with Freedom fir'd;
From whom *Lycurgus Sparta's* Sons inspir'd;
From whom *Plataean* Palms and *Cyprian* Trophies came.

II.3.

O noblest, happiest Age!
When *Aristides* rul'd, and *Cimon* fought;
When all the generous Fruits of *Homer's* Page
Exulting *Pindar* saw to full Perfection brought.
O *Pindar*, oft shalt thou be hail'd of me:
Not that *Apollo* fed thee from his Shrine;
Not that thy Lips drank Sweetness from the Bee;
Nor yet that, studious of thy Notes divine,
Pan danc'd their Measure with the sylvan Throng:
But that thy Song
Was proud to unfold
What thy base Rulers trembled to behold;
Amid corrupted *Thebes* was proud to tell
The Deeds of *Athens*, and the *Persian* shame:
Hence on thy Head their impious Vengeance fell.
But thou, O faithful to thy Fame,
The Muse's Law dids't rightly know;
That who would animate his Lays,
And other Minds to Virtue raise,
Must feel his own with all her Honours glow.

III.1.

Are there, approv'd of later Times,
Whose Verse adorn'd a Tyrant's Crimes?
Who saw majestic *Rome* betray'd,
And lent th'imperial Ruffian Aid?
Alas! not one polluted Bard,
No, not the Strains that *Mincius* heard,
Or *Tibur's* Hills reply'd,
Dare to the Muse's Ear aspire;
Save while, instructed by the *Graecian* Lyre,
With Freedom's native Notes their shameful Task they hide.[90]

III.2.

Mark, how the dread *Pantheon* stands,
Amid the Domes of modern Hands!
Amid the Toys of idle State,
How simply, how severely great!
Then pause; and, while each western Clime
Presents her tuneful Sons to Time,
Cry, Hail, on *Milton*'s Name;
And add, "Thus differs from the Throng
"The Spirit which inform'd thy awful Song,
"Which bade thy potent Voice protect thy Country's Fame".[100]

III.3.

Yet hence barbaric Zeal
His Memory with unholy Rage pursues;
While from these arduous Cares of public Weal
She bids each Bard begone, & rest him with his Muse.
O Fool! to think the Man, whose ample Mind
Must grasp whatever yonder Stars survey;
And with the Charms of every Scene combin'd,
The World's most perfect Image must display,
Can e'er his Country's Majesty descry,
With heedless Eye! [110]
O Fool! to deem
That *He*, whose Thought must visit every Theme,
Whose Heart must every strong Emotion know
By Nature planted, or by Fortune taught;
That *He*, if haply some presumptuous Foe,
With false ignoble Science fraught,
Shall spurn at Freedom's faithful Band;
That *He* their dear Defence will shun,
Or hide their Glories from the Sun,
Or deal their Vengeance with a Woman's Hand! [120]

IV.1.

I care not, that in *Arno's* Meads,
Or where the *Seine* his Current leads,
From public Themes the Muse's Quire
Content with polish'd Ease retire.
Where Priests the studious Head command,
Where Tyrants bow the warlike Hand
To vile Ambition's Aim,

Say, what can public Themes afford,
Save venal Honours to an hateful Lord,
Reserv'd for angry Heaven, & scorn'd of honest Fame?

IV.2.

But *here*, where Freedom's equal Throne
To all her valiant Sons is known;
Where All direct the Sword she wears,
And Each the Power, that rules him, shares;
Here let the Bard, whose listless Feet
From public Labours would retreat,
Bid public Joys farewell:
Let him to fitter Climes remove,
Far from the Heroe's and the Patriot's Love,
And lull mysterious Monks to Slumber in their Cell.

IV.3.

O HASTINGS, not to All
Can ruling Heaven the same Endowments lend:
Yet still doth Nature to her Offspring call,
That each their different Powers to one Pursuit should bend;
To one, the general Weal. What, tho' the Muse
With Sweetness fill the Bosom of her Son?
Tho' public Power the high Patrician's Brows
With Honour clothe? Yet this Pursuit alone
Can rescue *Both* from Envy and from Blame.
The Poet's Name
He best shall prove,
Whose Lays the Soul to noblest Functions move.
But Thee, O Progeny of Heroes old,
Thee to severer Toils thy Fate requires:
The Fate which form'd Thee in a chosen Mould,
The grateful Country of thy Sires,
Thee to sublimer Paths demand;
Sublimer than thy Sires could trace,
Or thy own EDWARD teach his Race,
Tho' *Gaul*'s proud Genius sunk beneath his Hand.

V.1.

From rich Domains and subject Farms,
They led the rustic Youth to Arms;
And Kings their stern Atchievements fear'd;
While private Strife their Banners rear'd.
But loftier Scenes to Thee are shown,
Where Empire's wide-establish'd Throne
No private Master fills:
Where, long foretold, THE PEOPLE reigns;
Where each a Vassal's humble Heart disdains;
And judges what he sees; and as he judges, wills.

V.2.

Here be it thine to calm and guide
The swelling democratic Tide;
To watch the State's uncertain Frame,

And baffle Faction's partial Aim:
But chiefly, with determin'd Zeal,
To quell that servile Band, who kneel
To Freedom's banish'd Foes;
That Monster, which is daily found,
Expert and bold its Country's Peace to wound;
Yet dreads to handle Arms, nor manly Counsel knows.

V.3.

'Tis highest Heavens Command,
That guilty Aims should sordid Paths pursue;
That what ensnares the Heart should curb the Hand,
And Virtue's worthless Foes be false to Glory too.
But look on Freedom. See, thro' ev'ry Age,
What Labours, Perils, Griefs, hath she disdain'd!
What Arms, what regal Pride, what priestly Rage,
Have her dread Offspring conquer'd or sustain'd!
For *Albion* well have conquer'd. Let the Strains
Of happy Swains,
Which now resound
Where *Scarsdale's* Cliffs the swelling Vale surround,
Bear witness. There, let the glad Farmer say
What mighty Scenes have honour'd his low Gate,
And shews the Stranger passing on his Way,
Where *Ca'ndish, Booth,* and *Osborn* sate,
When, bursting from their Country's Chain,
Ev'n in the midst of deadly Harms,
Of papal Snares and lawless Arms,
They plann'd for Freedom this her awful Reign.

VI.1.

This Reign, these Laws, this public Care,
Which NASSAU gave us All to share,
Had ne'er adorn'd the *English* Name,
Could Fear have silenc'd Freedom's Claim.
But Fear in vain attempts to bind
Those lofty Efforts of the Mind,
Which social Good inspires;
Where Men, for *this*, assault a Throne,
Each adds the common Welfare to his own;
And each unconquer'd Heart the Strength of All acquires.

VI.2.

Say, was it thus, when late we view'd
Our Fields in civil Blood imbrued?
When Fortune crown'd the barbarous Host,
And half the astonish'd Isle was lost?
Did One of all that vaunting Train
Who dare to curse a *peaceful* Reign,
Durst One in *Arms* appear?
Durst One in Counsels pledge his Life?
Stake his luxurious Fortunes in the Strife?
Or lend his boasted Name his vagrant Friends to chear?

VI.3.

Yet, HASTINGS, these are they
Who challenge to themselves thy Country's Love:
The true; the constant: who alone can weigh,
What Glory should demand, or Liberty approve!
But let their Works declare them. Thy free Powers,
The generous Powers of thy prevailing Mind,
Not for the Tasks of *their* confederate Hours,
Lewd Brawls and lurking Slander, were design'd.
Be thou thine own Approver. Honest Praise
Oft nobly sways [230]
Ingenuous Youth;
But, from the Coward, and the lying Mouth,
Praise is Reproach. Eternal GOD alone
For Mortals fixes that sublime Award.
He, from the faithful Records of his Throne,
Bids the Historian and the Bard
Dispose of Honour and of Scorn;
Discern the Patriot from the Slave;
And write the Good, the Wise, the Brave,
For Lessons to the Multitude unborn. [240]

The *Huntingdon Ode* was not Akenside's first published use of the ode form; he had pre-dated both Gray and Collins by publishing a book of *Odes on Several Subjects* in the spring of 1745[22]. Unlike his earlier uses of the form, however, the *Huntingdon Ode* is structurally a Pindaric ode; that is, it is divided into six sections, each of which is subdivided into strophe, antistrophe, and epode, with lines of unequal length[23]. It is evident, too, that its subject matter is intended to emulate that which is most characteristic of Pindar, not only because it glorifies Hastings' family for its past achievements

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22. *GM* 'Register of Books for March 1745', *GM* xv 168. William Collins' *Odes on Several Descriptive and Allegorical Subjects* appeared in December 1746 (dated 1747). Thomas Gray's earliest Odes were published by Dodsley in May 1746 (*Eton Ode*), and in his *Collection* in January 1747.

23. Akenside's *Ode on Leaving Holland* and *Ode on Lyric Poetry* were so divided and numbered in later editions, but the numbering does not occur in the 1745 *Odes on Several Subjects*.

and exalts his intellectual and moral superiority[24], but also, above all, as Akenside makes clear in the poem, because of the value which Pindar placed on political freedom, an important theme in his own *Huntingdon Ode*.

The poem begins with an assertion of the power of poetry to produce beneficent effects. The 'Wise and Great of every Clime', says the poet, know the power of the Muses to fire the soul with glory; they endow wisdom, valour, and the ability to remain unmoved in the face of great misfortune (1-10). Not only can the Muses produce elevated feelings, he continues, but they also have the ability to neutralise potentially destructive ones, such as revenge and pride. Can wealth, political machinations -- such as those of Cromwell --, or military prowess -- like that of Marlborough --, achieve as much? (15-17). The answer addresses Hastings for the first time: he will realise the truth of what the poet is saying, because since his early youth he has appreciated all the arts; an appreciation which in no way disgraces his 'noble Name' (18-20).

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24. See W.H. Race: *Pindar* (Boston, 1986) 11-18 et passim. The views on the role of poetry which Pindar expresses in *Nemean* vii seem relevant to Akenside's practice both here and elsewhere:

> But, if a man prospereth in his doings, he supplieth a sweet source for the Muse's rills; for mighty deeds of prowess are wrapt in darkness deep, if destitute of song; but for noble deeds, we can hold up a mirror, in one way only -- if, by grace of Memory with the gleaming crown, one findeth a meed for toil in sounding streams of song.
>
> (11-16; Loeb: *Pindar* 381).

Having introduced Hastings, Akenside enlarges at length on his ability to distinguish between less elevated forms of poetry, whether lacking in moral seriousness ('the Blandishment of *Tuscan* strings/ Warbling at Will in Pleasure's myrtle Bower') or ideologically unsound ('the baser Notes to *Celtic* kings,/ By lying Minstrels paid in evil Hour') (21-28), and what he himself believes to be a different, and far higher, form. The ideal which he puts forward is the poetry of ancient Greece, which he considers to have been 'immortal' and 'godlike', enthralling its listeners (both 'Men and Heroes') by describing the noblest way of living one's life and of pursuing the cause of liberty, and by showing how virtuous deeds will merit a glorious reward (34-40).

The first great poet of ancient Greece, Akenside continues, was Homer, 'the *Chian* father', whose 'spontaneous Numbers' not only inspired his listeners with images of great heroic achievements (41-50), but also survived through the succeeding ages, so that wherever his poetry is heard, 'Oft near him, with applauding Hands,/ The Genius of his Country stands.' (53-54). Akenside, indeed, sees Homer as having been responsible for sowing the seeds of the golden age of ancient Greece (56-57). This, as the poem and the appended explanatory note make clear, is because Lycurgus, 'the *Lacaedemonian* Law-giver' had 'brought into *Greece* from *Asia Minor* the first compleat Copy of *Homer*'s Works', which had inspired the Spartans at Plataea, where 'was fought the decisive Battle between the *Persian* Army and the united Militia of *Greece* under *Pausanias* and *Aristides*'; and the Athenians, led by Cimon, who gained 'two great victories on the same day' in Cyprus 'over the *Persians*, by

Sea and Land'[25].

Great as Homer was, continues Akenside, his gifts were surpassed by those of Pindar, who brought them to 'full Perfection'. The reason, he explains, that he pays such frequent tribute to Pindar is not that, according to mythology, he was allowed to partake of the offerings from the shrine of Apollo, or that he was said to have been fed honey by a swarm of bees when he was born, or that Pan was reputed to have been seen dancing to one of his hymns in the Theban mountains (61-69)[26]. He admires Pindar because he stood for a political ideal: in the climate of tyranny and corruption which prevailed in Thebes during his lifetime, he was proud to write poetry which celebrated the achievements of the Athenians in the cause of freedom. As a result, he suffered the 'impious Vengeance' of the 'base' Theban rulers; but he remained true to his ideals, knowing that a fundamental law of poetic composition is:

> That who would animate his Lays,
> And other Minds to Virtue raise,
> Must feel his own with all her Honours glow.
>
> (70-80)

A long explanatory note is attached to this passage. First, Akenside notes that

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25. *Huntingdon Ode* p.24, notes a, b, and c. For 'the Lacaedemonian lawgiver', see Plutarch: *Lycurgus*, which contains the story of Lycurgus bringing home copies which he had made of Homer's epics (iv.4). For the battle at Plataea (479 BC)see Plutarch: *Aristides* xv-xix. The 'great victory over the Persians by sea and land' is the battle of Thermopylae, c.466 BC; see Diodorus of Sicily xi.11 (Akenside quotes a passage from this source in his note).

26. Akenside's source for the legends about Pindar's life was probably the 'Vita Ambrosiana'; for a translation, see Mary R. Lefkowitz: *Lives of the Greek Poets* (Baltimore, 1981) 155-157.

Pindar was 'contemporary with *Aristides* and *Cimon*', and describes the subjects of two of his most famous odes: one 'expresses the great Distress and Anxiety of his Mind, occasion'd by the vast Preparations of *Xerxes* against *Greece*', and the other 'celebrates the Victories of *Salamis, Plataea*, and *Himera*'. The odes which Akenside is referring to are *Isthmian* viii, in which Pindar speaks of 'a treacherous time....Yet even this may be healed for mortals, if only they have freedom...' (14-16); and *Pythian* i, especially lines 75-80[27]. After enlarging on the legends about Pindar's life which he has alluded to in the text, he comes to the 'real Historical Fact' of Pindar's life which he considers to be of primary importance. The italics in the passage are Akenside's, and emphasise a statement which is central to an understanding of his own poetic practice:

> the *Thebans* imposed a large Fine upon [Pindar] on account of the Veneration which he express'd in his Poems for that Heroic Spirit, shewn by the People of *Athens* in Defence of the common Liberty, which his own Fellow Citizens had shamefully betrayed. And as the Argument of this Ode implies, that *great Poetical Talents, and high Sentiments of Liberty, do reciprocally produce and assist each other*, so *Pindar* is perhaps the most exemplary Proof of this Connection, which occurs in history. The *Thebans* were remarkable, in general, for a slavish Disposition through all the Fortunes of their Common-wealth....And every one knows, they were no less remarkable for great Dullness, and Want of all Genius. That *Pindar* should have equally distinguished himself from the rest of his Fellow Citizens in both these Respects, seems somewhat extraordinary, and not to be accounted for but by the preceding Observation.
>
> (*Huntingdon Ode* p.25-6, note d).

Next, after dismissively concluding that great and enduring poets never emerge in countries dominated by tyrannical monarchs (81-90), Akenside introduces a more contemporary poet who represents for him that ideal combination of '*great Poetical Talents*' and '*high Sentiments of Liberty*'. This

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27. See Loeb *Pindar* 496-507, 152-167.

is Milton who, the poet says, 'differs from the Throng' as much as:

> the dread *Pantheon* stands,
> Amid the Domes of modern Hands!
> Amid the Toys of idle State,
> How simply, how severely great!
> (91-94)[28].

Despite Milton's genius, however, the poet continues, commentators, fired with 'barbaric Zeal', have deplored his political views and suggested that he should not have involved himself in matters of state and government (101-104). These lines give a misleading impression. Milton's poetry, especially *Paradise Lost*, was in fact enjoying an enormous upsurge of popularity in the mid-eighteenth century. Six different editions of *Paradise Lost*, annotated with varying degrees of reputable scholarship, had appeared during the fifteen years immediately preceding the publication of the *Huntingdon Ode*, starting with Richard Bentley's 'New Edition' of 1732, which had undertaken to 'correct' what Bentley saw as Milton's (or his printer's) textual blunders[29]. In addition, Thomas Birch had recently published his edition of Milton's *Historical*,

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28. Joseph Warton suggested that these lines echoed Pope's *Essay on Criticism*:
> Thus when we view some well-proportion'd Dome,
> (The *World*'s just Wonder, and ev'n *thine*, O *Rome*!)
> No single Parts unequally surprise;
> All comes *united* to th'admiring Eyes;
> No monstrous Height, or Breadth, or Length appear;
> The *Whole* at once is *Bold*, and *Regular*.
> (247-252).

However, the similarity between the two passages does not seem particularly striking. (See also Houpt 137).

29. For a full discussion of the various eighteenth century editions and 'Lives' of Milton, see Ants Oras: *Milton's Editors and Commentators from Patrick Hume to Henry John Todd (1695-1801): A Study in Critical Views and Methods* (London and Estonia, 1931).

Political and Miscellaneous Works (1738). All these editions had had some version of Milton's 'Life' attached to them. Only one edition, however, had ventured to criticise Milton's politics. This was the version to which Johnson would refer in 1779 as 'Mr Fenton's elegant abridgement' (*Lives* i 85): Elijah Fenton's 'The Life of John Milton', prefixed to Tonson's edition of *Paradise Lost*. It had first appeared in 1725, but was reprinted in 1730 and again in 1741. There can be little doubt that Akenside would have been familiar with it.

Fenton was clearly embarrassed by Milton's republicanism; and, although less virulent on the subject than Johnson was to be some fifty years later[30], he referred to it in a way which would undoubtedly have displeased Akenside:

> 'Tis vain to dissemble, and far be it from me to defend, his engaging with a Party combin'd in the destruction of our Church and Monarchy. Yet, leaving the justification of a mis-guided sincerity to be debated in the Schools, may I presume to observe in his favor, that his Zeal, distemper'd and furious though it was, does not appear to have been inspirited by self-interested Views?
>
> (1725 edn., p. xiv).

A few pages later, Fenton noted the fact that Milton was treated leniently at the time of the Restoration, and expressed the wish that 'the Laws of Civil History could have extended the benefit of that Oblivion to the memory of his guilt, which was extended to his Person...' (xviii). It is difficult to be certain, but it seems probable that these were the critical remarks which Akenside had in mind, and which he goes on to deplore:

> O Fool! to think the Man, whose ample Mind
> Must grasp whatever yonder Stars survey;
> And with the Charms of every Scene combin'd,
> The World's most perfect Image must display,

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30. For Johnson on Milton's 'acrimonious and surly' republicanism, see *Lives* i 156-157, and page 137 below.

> Can e'er his Country's Majesty descry,
> With heedless Eye![30a]
> (105-110).

If such a poet, endowed equally with a powerful intellect and a capacity for passionate feeling, encounters political injustice, he will have no hesitation in speaking out in defence of his country's freedom (111-120). Akenside is not concerned, he continues, that in Italy, or in France, poets avoid public themes, and are happy to compose well-finished but empty verses; after all, in countries which are oppressed by both religious and monarchical tyranny, to write on public themes would be a dishonourable pursuit, since it would entail paying tribute to an unjust ruler (121-130). In England, however, the situation is different, since the British people have a share in the government of their country; here:

> Freedom's equal Throne
> To all her valiant Sons is known;
> [And] all direct the Sword she wears,
> And Each the Power, that rules him, shares;
> (131-134).

In consequence, he continues, the British poet carries a greater responsibility; and if he chooses not to work for the public good, he may as well say goodbye to the joys of living in Britain, and exile himself in a country where heroism and patriotism are unknown, and where his chief function will be to 'lull mysterious Monks to Slumber in their Cell' (135-140).

So far, apart from the initial formal complimentary nod in the direction of Hastings, the poem has paid little attention to him. From this point on, however, the mode changes. As the poet moves from generalised statement to specific instance, there are, as will become apparent, several indications that

30a. Akenside's note to this stanza reads: 'Alluding to his *Defence of the People of* England, against *Salmasius*. See particularly the Manner in which he himself speaks of that Undertaking, in the Introduction to his Reply to *Morus*'. (*Huntingdon Ode* note e.). The works to which he refers are Milton's two *Defences*, published in 1651 and 1654. The remarks in the introduction to the *Second Defence* (which Akenside refers to as the 'Reply to *Morus*' owing to the fact that Milton thought -- wrongly in fact -- that he was defending himself against Alexander More) to which the poet draws his reader's attention are probably the following:

> when one man above all...had in a book of unparalleled baseness attacked us and wickedly assumed the defence of all tyrants, it was I and no other who was deemed equal to a foe of such repute and to the task of speaking on so great a theme, and who received from the very liberators of my country this role, which was offered spontaneously with universal consent, the task of publicly defending (if anyone ever did) the cause of the English people and thus of Liberty herself.

See *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton* (8 vols., Yale, 1953-82), vol. iv, ed. Don M. Wolfe, Introduction pp. 101-117, 252-265, and pp. 285-686. The passage quoted above is taken from this edition p. 549 (translation by Helen North).

he is addressing Hastings on the basis of some degree of personal acquaintance.

He begins by pointing out that God has endowed different people with different gifts ('O HASTINGS, not to All/ Can ruling Heaven the same Endowments lend'[31]); still, the duty of all mankind is to work towards one common end, the one common goal, the welfare of his fellow man. One may have been endowed with the ability to compose fine poetry, another may have received public honours for his achievements in the world of politics; but they both deserve equal praise for their pursuit of the common good of the people (141-149). The poet most worthy of the name, therefore, must necessarily be he whose poems afford the greatest inspiration to perform noble acts (150-152).

In the lines which follow, Akenside himself undertakes to attempt this task. He appeals to Hastings to recognise, and to live up to, 'the Fate which form'd thee in a chosen Mould'. He reminds the Earl of the greatness of his ancestry ('O Progeny of Heroes old'), and of his descent from Edward III, whose grand-daughter had married the second Earl and given birth to both the third and fourth Earls. He suggests (wrongly, in fact) that Hastings is directly

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31. Compare *Pleasures* (1744):

> But not alike to every mortal eye
> Is this great scene unveil'd. For since the claims
> Of social life, to diff'rent labours urge
> The active pow'rs of man; with wise intent
> The hand of nature on peculiar minds
> Imprints a diff'rent byass, and to each
> Decrees its province in the common toil.
> (i 79-85).

descended from the third Earl, Henry Hastings (1535-1595)[32], the heroic ancestor who had led an army formed of young men from 'rich Domains and subject Farms' (153-164). This presumably refers to the fact that the third Earl, who had been appointed by Elizabeth I to the offices of Lord Lieutenant of all the northern counties and Lord President of the North, had in 1581 raised an army of 2500 men in an attempt to prevent the execution of the Earl of Morton, one of the murderers of Darnley[33].

The young Earl himself, however, is destined for even greater things:

> But loftier Scenes to Thee are shown,
> Where Empire's wide-establish'd Throne
> No private Master fills:
> Where, long foretold, THE PEOPLE reigns;
> Where each a Vassal's humble Heart disdains;
> And judges what he sees; and as he judges, wills.
> Here be it thine to calm and guide
> The swelling democratic Tide...
> (165-172).

In these lines, the poet is looking forward to a period in the near future when 'no private Master' will sit on the throne of Britain; in other words, to the abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of a democratic republic. Such a development, he adds, has been 'long foretold'. This statement gives a clue to the influences which may have been in the background of this

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32. See *Huntingdon Ode* p.26, note f. For Hastings' ancestry, see *Hastings MSS* i and ii, Introduction. Akenside makes a similar mistake about Drake's ancestry; see Chapter 4 below.

33. See *DNB* IX 126-129, and V 1225-1227.

prediction, which represents a departure from Akenside's previously expressed political opinions. Although, as is clear from the many references which are to be found throughout his poetry, Akenside was strongly drawn to the writing of classical republican authors such as Cicero, and was an ardent admirer of the supposedly ideal states of Sparta and the Roman republic, it is more likely that at this point in the *Huntingdon Ode* he has in mind more recent writings on the subject, with more immediate relevance to British politics. Classical republicanism had enjoyed a major revival among political theorists in the seventeenth century; and Akenside would certainly have been familiar with the writings of its more important proponents -- Milton, James Harrington, Algernon Sydney and Walter Moyle, for example. The works of all these men contain discussions of kingship and its abolition; Moyle, for instance (who had died in 1721, and was thus closest in time to Akenside himself), wrote in his *Essay upon the Constitution of the Roman Government* that the history of Rome demonstrated that:

> the Ballance of Domination being vested in the Commons, the Monarchy in course must die a natural Death[34].

Moyle's collected works, which had been published a few years after his death, in 1726 and 1727, seemed already to be somewhat old fashioned, a

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34. *The Works of Walter Moyle Esq; None of which were ever before Publish'd* (2 vols., 1726) i 70. See also *The Whole Works of Walter Moyle, Esq; That were Published by Himself. To which is prefixed Some Account of his Life and Writings* [by Anthony Hammond] (1727). See Chapter Six, p 297, below, for discussion of the possible influence of Moyle on Akenside's views on standing armies. Akenside refers to Harrington in *In the Country*; see Chapter Four below. For a full discussion of the 'classical republicans' of the seventeenth century, see Zera S. Fink: *The Classical Republicans: An Essay in the Recovery of a Pattern of Thought in Seventeenth Century England* (Evanston, Ill., 1945).

survival of modes of thinking and writing which had largely disappeared by the mid-1680s. Thus, Akenside's introduction of these ideas into a poem of 1747 was unexpectedly radical, given the context of its time. In the mid-eighteenth century, public expressions of republicanism such as that which had flourished a century earlier, or which was to reappear again towards the end of the century among the more radical British thinkers inspired by the example of the American and French revolutions were extremely rare. The 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688, by removing James II from the throne and putting in his place not his son but his daughter and son-in-law, had dealt a blow to the two traditional bastions of Tory belief, direct divine ordination and indefeasible hereditary succession of the monarchy. Since then, and up to Akenside's day, the major ideological disputes had centred on the extent to which a king should be granted absolute authority. The traditional Tory position -- which had been argued, for example, in Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha* (1680) -- was that the king ruled by the will and command of God; that thus the laws of the land were under his sole control; and that to take up arms against him was a damnable sin[35]. The Whigs, on the other hand -- their arguments supported, most famously, by Locke's *Two Treatises Of Government* (1690) -- had mounted a dual attack based either on 'historical' appeals to the ancient constitution of England, or on the Lockean theory of the natural equality, and therefore natural rights, of men, the origins of government being viewed as a contract to protect those rights[36]. Clearly, Locke's argument that:

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35. See *Patriarcha and Other Political Works of Sir Robert Filmer*, ed. Peter Laslett (Oxford, 1949), 62, 93, 126.

36. For a discussion of Locke's political ideas, see *Two Treatises of Government* ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge, 1960) Introduction pp. 92-120.

> Creatures of the same species and rank promiscuously born to the same advantages of Nature, and the use of the same faculties, should also be equal one amongst another without Subordination or Subjection.
> (220)

was capable of a literal interpretation along lines which would logically lead to a form of true government by the people; and, indeed, Locke's writings were to be so interpreted by the political revolutionaries and radicals who emerged later in the century. At the mid-century, however, even the most liberal Whigs, whether they were theoretical writers or active politicians, were arguing for limiting the powers of the throne rather than for abolishing the monarchy altogether[37].

This being said, however, there is evidence that more egalitarian and republican thinking did survive in certain quarters, as Caroline Robbins has pointed out in her thorough study of the subject. Most notable of these pockets of republicanism, in terms of the present discussion, was the continuing and developing radical thinking which persisted at the Scottish universities[38].

During his period at Edinburgh University (1738-1742), Akenside had established a close friendship with David Fordyce (1711-1751), the Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Aberdeen. Fordyce, who was the nephew of the well-known Scottish republican Thomas Blackwell, was a follower (and

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37. For a full discussion of these questions, see H.T. Dickinson: *Liberty and Property: Political Ideology in Eighteenth Century Britain* (London, 1977).

38. See chapter on 'The Interest of Scotland', Robbins 177-220. Relevant to Akenside, owing to his unitarian upbringing, is the fact that, as Robbins points out, republicanism also persisted among the dissenters: see 'The Contribution of Nonconformity', ibid 221-257.

possibly a friend) of the philosopher and political theorist Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746), who taught Moral Philosophy at Glasgow University between 1710 and 1716, and again from 1730 until his death in 1746. Fordyce's *Dialogues on Education* (1745-8), and an essay which he wrote for Dodsley's *Preceptor* (1748) (afterwards reprinted in a separate volume by Dodsley and issued under the title *Elements of Moral Philosophy* (1754)), clearly show the influence of Hutcheson's thinking. Fordyce may, indeed, have been responsible for introducing Akenside to Hutcheson's work. Hutcheson's *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725) has long been recognised as a pervasive influence on *The Pleasures of Imagination*, and, indeed, Akenside himself acknowledges a debt to the work in his notes to the poem[39].

Hutcheson's most radical political theorising can be found in his posthumously published *System of Moral Philosophy* (1755), which was written in the late 1730s and is known to have circulated in manuscript among his friends and colleagues during his lifetime[40]. A later version of this text, in Latin, entitled *Philosophiae Moralis Institutio Compendaria* (1742) was translated into English after Hutcheson's death and published a few months before the writing of the *Huntingdon Ode*. Given his considerable classical scholarship, Akenside would almost certainly have read the work in its Latin version; but its re-publication in English would undoubtedly have meant that the ideas which it contained would have been much thought about and discussed

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39. *Pleasures* (1744) p.30, note. For a most thorough recent commentary on influences in the poem, see Robin Dix: 'A Critical Introduction to *The Pleasures of (the) Imagination*', D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1983.

40. See W.R. Scott: *Francis Hutcheson: His Life, Teachings and Position in the History of Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1980) 113-114.

by Hutcheson's admirers during this period. Thus, some of these ideas could possibly have influenced the direction of Akenside's thinking during the Ode's composition.

Hutcheson follows Locke in advocating the natural rights and liberties of man, arguing that:

> In this respect all men are originally *equal*, that these natural rights belong to all...and they are equally confirmed to all by the law of nature, which requires that we should consult the interest of each individual as far as the common utility will allow...
>
> (*Compend* 143).

However, he also believes that 'some of our species are manifestly superior in wisdom to the vulgar', and argues that if these men also possess:

> eminent moral virtues, goodness, justice, fortitude; [then] the appearance of such excellencies obtains the trust and confidence of all, and kindles their zeal to promote such persons to honour and power...
>
> (*Compend* 280).

Certainly these are precisely the kinds of virtue which Akenside's poem has been attributing to Hastings. It would not, therefore, be difficult to see a recent re-reading of Hutcheson as an influence which could have been responsible for Akenside postulating a position of leadership for Hastings in which he would 'calm and guide/ The swelling democratic Tide' (171-172). However, this does not explain the poet's prediction of a future in which the monarchy has been abolished altogether. In the *Compend*, Hutcheson is cautious on this matter. He devotes several pages to an analysis of the 'various Plans of Government' (292-301), which he subdivides into monarchies (either hereditary or elective), aristocracies, and democracies. He concludes that the best form of government is one in which all three kinds are 'artfully

compounded' (299). Thus, his ideal government would consist of 'a council of delegates or deputies duly elected by a general popular interest', a '*senate* of a few who have approved their abilities and fidelity' (300) and, finally:

> some sort of regal or dictatorial power is requisite; but such a one as has no other foundation of its force but the laws themselves. (301).

This hardly sounds like a recommendation for the total abolition of the monarchy; indeed, it seems more or less precisely descriptive of the state of affairs existing in Britain in the mid-eighteenth century, with its tri-partite structure of commons, lords, and king, with some added admonishment as regards limiting the powers of the throne. In his earlier version of the work, however, Hutcheson sails a little closer to the wind on this matter. Here, he advocates that the 'monarchick or dictatorial power' should be either 'committed hereditarily to some family', or, more radical a suggestion, put into the hands of 'a small number or council of a few elected for a certain term by the senate' and 'changing by rotation' (*System* II 263). It is likely that David Fordyce, moving as he did in the same academic circles as Hutcheson, had had an opportunity to read this as yet unpublished text; and if he had done so, he would certainly have discussed the ideas in it with Akenside at this period, especially as he himself was at this time presumably working on his own *Elements of Moral Philosophy*, which contains a 'Hutchesonian' chapter on 'Social Duties of the Political Kind' (189-204). Thus, although it is impossible conclusively to prove that a reading of Hutcheson influenced Akenside's republican views as expressed in this poem, it does appear likely that such matters would have been under discussion in Akenside's circle at this period.

To return to the Ode: having placed Hastings in this projected position of authority over the 'swelling democratic Tide' -- the metaphor, incidentally,

suggests that Akenside saw government by the people as a powerful, and potentially threatening, force -- the poet goes on to specify what the duties of this position would be. He would, of course, need to observe and to balance the various forces at work, 'To watch the State's uncertain Frame,/ And baffle Faction's partial Aim'; but his chief function would be:

> with determin'd Zeal,
> To quell that servile Band, who kneel
> To Freedom's banish'd Foes;
> (173-177)

Here, having immersed his readers briefly in political ideology, the poet has returned to the arena of current events, with a reminder that this poem was written in the aftermath of the rebellion of 1745-6; the 'servile Band', clearly, are the Jacobites, kneeling to the banished pretender. Akenside chooses here to identify Jacobitism with Toryism, calling it 'That Monster, which is daily found,/ Expert and bold its Country's Peace to wound' (178-179). He goes on to make an even more specific accusation: Toryism is, he says, characterised by a fundamental cowardice and effeminacy, fearing to take up arms, or engage in 'manly Counsel' (180). He will return to this point towards the end of the poem; first, however, he makes a general statement about the lack of success which he sees as naturally attendant upon the enterprises of those whose conduct falls short of his moral ideal : 'guilty Aims' can only be pursued by 'sordid Paths', and a mind which has fallen prey to wrong thinking will inhibit effective action, so that the enemies of virtue will never be rewarded with honour (181-184).

Those who have fought on behalf of freedom, on the other hand, have bravely suffered great hardship, danger and pain, and have overcome the fiercest arms, the pride of monarchs, and the rage of priests (185-188). To illustrate this point, a rather unexpected image is introduced:

> Let the Strains
> Of happy Swains,
> Which now resound
> Where *Scarsdale's* Cliffs the swelling Vale surround,
> Bear witness.
> (189-93).

These celebrations, as Akenside's note to the passage explains, are in honour of an event which took place at the end of the previous century:

> At *Whittington*, a Village on the Edge of *Scarsdale* in *Derbyshire*, the Earls of *Devonshire* and *Danby*, with the Lord *Delamere*, privately concerted the Plan of the Revolution [of 1688]. The House, in which they met, is at present a Farm-house, and the Country-people distinguish the Room, where they sate, by the Name of *the plotting Parlour*.
> (*Huntingdon Ode* p.26, note g).

Within the poem itself, the account is given with some rhetorical embellishment. The 'glad Farmer' , it is said, will willingly show a passing stranger:

> Where *Ca'ndish*, *Booth*, and *Osborn*[41] sate,
> When, bursting from their Country's Chain,
> Ev'n in the midst of deadly Harms,

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41. As Akenside's note explains, the revolutionaries were William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Devonshire (1640-1707); Henry Booth, 2nd Baron Delamere and 1st Earl of Warrington (1652-1694); Thomas Osborn, 1st Earl of Danby, Marquis of Carmarthen, Duke of Leeds (1631-1712).

> Of papal Snares and lawless Arms,
> They plann'd for Freedom this her awful Reign.
> (196-200).

The state of freedom which is enjoyed by Britain would never have been possible, the poet continues, if the British had given way to fear. This is an unlikely eventuality, however, since, the poet believes, if enterprises are undertaken on behalf of the improvement of society -- if, to be specific, the monarchy is attacked in a virtuous cause -- then each man, working for the general good rather than any individual benefit, will add to his own strength that of the other men with whom he is labouring (205-210).

This attempt at a moral justification of the right of men to remove from the throne an unjust or tyrannical monarch again seems to owe a possible debt to Hutcheson's *Compend*. Hutcheson argued that:

> a people may justly dethrone a perfidious prince; they have a better right to exclude from the succession anyone who shews himself plainly unfit for the trust: and such are those who hold tenets about divine rights which must excite them to trample upon the most sacred rights of the people, as soon as they get into power...and...think themselves commissioned by God to break through in the most audacious manner the fundamental laws or constitution, and all limits set by it to their power....Any heir apparent who professes such tenets, or refuses upon a just demand to renounce and abjure them in the most solemn manner, may be excluded from succession with much better ground than if he were an ideot or a madman...
>
> (*Compend* 315-316).

To prove his point, Akenside returns to his earlier statement about the cowardice of the Tories during the recent rebellion. When civil war soaked the fields of England in blood, and the barbarous army of the pretender appeared to have conquered half of Britain, he asks, did any of those boastful Tories --

who had been quick enough to condemn the reigning monarch in times of peace -- fight on behalf of the Jacobites? Did any one of them pledge himself to the pretender's cause, or contribute any of his wealth to aid the war, or allow his name to be used to encourage his 'vagrant Friends' (211-220)?

It is certainly true that the rebels had been deeply disappointed by their failure to attract the large numbers of Jacobite sympathisers who, they had been optimistically led to expect, would support them in their attempt at a restoration. The list of names sent to the old pretender in September 1743 of 'seigneurs ou gentilhommes qui ont le plus de crédit dans des différentes provinces d'Angleterre et sur lesquels ont peut compter' had been long and impressive: it included Tory peers and M.P.s, roman catholic landowners (including those who had unwillingly conformed or taken oaths of allegiance) and some opposition Whigs[42]. Recently, however, Linda Colley has not only argued that this list bore little relation to the numbers of real potential supporters, but has also disputed the common assumption (to which Akenside appears to subscribe) that to be a Tory meant one was necessarily a Jacobite[43]. In support of her primary thesis that:

> not only did the bulk of tory politicians see themselves as a constitutional opposition party and act as a remarkably organised one, but they also preserved a distinct ideological identity.
> (23-24),

she suggests that the Whig ministers were well aware that the majority of Tory M.P.s were loyal to the crown, and that their attempts to suggest otherwise

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42. See Cruickshanks Appendix I, 115-138.

43. See Colley 27-50 et passim.

were entirely propagandist, undertaken solely in order to undermine the credibility of a party which they viewed as a genuine threat to their own supremacy (38).

Whether or not Colley's forcefully argued thesis is accepted, Akenside's poem makes it clear that, from the point of view of a Whig supporter, it was politically convenient to suggest that Toryism and Jacobitism were synonymous, since thus any failure of support for the rebellion could be used as a stick with which to beat the Tory party. Contemporary Whig historians had also been ready to draw attention to this failure; the following is from an account entitled '*A succinct History of the REBELLION*' which had appeared in Dodsley's *Museum* in March 1746:

> [on 28 November] an advanced Party [of rebels] entered *Manchester*, where they began to beat up for Volunteers, but with much less success than they had expected, tho' some few People joined them; and they had likewise picked up some Persons of desperate Fortune in their March, but however no body of any Rank or Distinction came in, which without Doubt was a great Disappointment, for they had flattered themselves with the Hopes of a considerable Insurrection in their Favour....They also endeavoured to levy Men [in Derby]...but with very little success, since there were not above three who listed in the Town, and those of the very lowest of the People in point of Morals as well as Condition.[44].

It is almost certain that some potential sympathisers did fail to make any positive moves to assist the pretender, choosing instead to sit on the fence

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44. *Museum* I (March 1746) 35, 38. The account is sometimes attributed to Henry Fielding, although there seems to be little evidence to support this (see R.C. Jarvis: 'Fielding, Dodsley, Marchant, and Ray: Some Fugitive Histories of the '45', *N&Q* 189 (1945) 90-92). Akenside was, of course, the *Museum*'s editor during the entire period of its publication: see Chapter Four, pp. 145-146, 148-149 and notes 10, 11 and 13, below.

until the issue was decided one way or the other. It also appears that there was a severe breakdown in communications; Charles Edward does not seem to have contacted any leading Jacobite supporters before he arrived in Britain, and had no safe and certain means of doing so once he had landed. A modern historian, Eveline Cruickshanks, argues that if he had been able to do so, he might have raised some considerable support, quoting a letter from Donald Cameron of Lochiel to the young pretender, dated 23 February 1747:

> Your royal highness is not ignorant, that, both before and after the time of your last attempt, your English friends were ready and willing to support you, if you could have furnished them with arms, or brought a body of troops capable to protect them[45].

Whatever the real facts about Tory or Jacobite support for the rebels may have been -- and at this distance in time it is probable they may never be resolved with any degree of certainty -- the fact remains that by late 1747, when the *Huntingdon Ode* was composed, the initial excitement of the rebellion was a thing of the past. This raises the question of why Akenside chose to resurrect what was by then old news, and why he did so in a poem addressed to the Earl of Huntingdon.

As far as the first part of this question is concerned, the answer is not hard to find. Indeed, it is partly suggested by the beginning of the final stanza of Akenside's poem:

> Yet, HASTINGS, these are they
> Who challenge to themselves thy Country's Love:
> The true; the constant: who alone can weigh,

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45. Quoted from James Browne: *A History of the Highlands and of the Highland Clans* (4 vols., Glasgow, 1832-3) iii 489.

> What Glory should demand, or Liberty approve!
> But let their Works declare them.
>
> (221-225)

What Akenside seems to be referring to here is the fact that, as a number of contemporary accounts make clear, late 1747 was a time when, as Pelham wrote to Cumberland on 8 September, 'a lurking jacobite spirit begins to show itself'[46]. Certainly there seems at this time to have been what a recent historian of the period has described as a Tory backlash (Cruickshanks 104-113). This appears partly to have been owing to the fact that the harshness of the treatment received both by the rebel peers and Jacobite supporters in England, and by the Scots at the hands of the Duke of Cumberland, had aroused considerable public sympathy. One rather curious manifestation of this was a fashion for appearing in public wearing a plaid waistcoat, a hat tied round with plaid ribbon, and a white cockade, in order to demonstrate support for the Jacobite cause. The fashion is satirised in the frontispiece of Henry Fielding's *Jacobite's Journal* (*JJ* 89), a publication which, according to Fielding's farewell essay in its 49th number (dated 5 November 1748), had owed its existence to the fact that:

> a strange Spirit of Jacobitism, indeed of Infatuation, discovered itself at the latter End of the Year 1747, in many Parts of the Kingdom....A Spirit which gave the highest Encouragment to our Enemies...as it afforded them a reasonable Hope, that if an Invasion of this Island was but coloured over with the specious Pretence of supporting the Pretender's Cause, a considerable Party among ourselves, would be found ready to join and assist the then avowed and declared Enemies of our Country.
>
> (*JJ* 424).

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46. Quoted in William Coxe: *Memoirs of the Administration of Henry Pelham* (2 vols., London, 1829) i 375.

Once again, it is possible that the extent of this backlash of Jacobitism was exaggerated by Whig ministerial propagandists. Nevertheless, it was clearly believed in by less well-informed Whig supporters; and, added to the fact that considerable uncertainty existed in Britain throughout 1747 as to the the whereabouts of the young pretender[47], it was undoubtedly a factor in fuelling fears of another invasion.

Looked at in the context of its time, then, Akenside's attack on Jacobitism in a poem of this date becomes easier to understand. However, this still leaves unanswered the second part of the question: why Akenside should have chosen a poem addressed to Francis Hastings as a medium for his attack. It seems clear from the lines which immediately follow that the poet had good reason to believe that Hastings was in imminent danger of succumbing to Tory propaganda:

> Thy free Powers,
> The generous Powers of thy prevailing Mind
> Not for the Tasks of *their* confederate Hours,
> Lewd Brawls and Lurking Slander, were design'd.
> Be thou thine own Approver. Honest Praise
> Oft nobly sways
> Ingenuous Youth;
> But, from the Coward, and the lying Mouth,
> Praise is Reproach.
> (125-133)

This passage adds considerable weight to the suggestion that Akenside knew Hastings personally. Given the lack of any documentary evidence beyond that of the poem itself, it is impossible to say with any certainty what exactly had occurred in late 1747; but these lines do appear to suggest that Hastings

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47. See for example Mann to Walpole, Walpole: *Corresp.* 19. 367-369, 377-378, 392-393.

was being courted by the Tory party as a potential supporter. Given his obvious gifts and relatively high social standing, he would, of course, have been a very influential asset to the party.

The fact that the Earl was apparently being so courted is in some ways not surprising, since his own father had been a member of the Tory party. His name, indeed, had appeared on the list of potential sympathisers which had been given to Charles Edward in 1743 (Cruickshanks 130). However, this list was almost certainly extremely over-optimistic, and indeed the 9th Earl, although he had had 'interests both religious and literary', had not been active in parliament (*Hastings MSS* iii p.vii). According to the epitaph on his monument in the church of Ashby-de-la-Zouche:

> Despairing to do national good,
> He mingled as little as his rank permitted
> In national affairs[48].

Interestingly enough, this epitaph provides evidence of another -- though rather tenuous -- link between the young Earl and the Tory party, since it was written by Bolingbroke, who had been a close friend of the Huntingdon family for many years. By the late 1740s, however, Bolingbroke appears effectively to have ceased to have any active involvement, or even interest, in political affairs[49]. Thus, it is difficult to cast him in the role of Akenside's devil's advocate, attempting to win Hastings over to Toryism. Nevertheless, he does seem to have taken a great interest in the Earl's education; a year or so later

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48. Quoted in H.N. Bell: *The Huntingdon Peerage* (1820) 157.

49. See Kramnick 36 for a discussion of Bolingbroke's politics at this period.

he was engaged in intense and detailed correspondence with Hastings, who was by then at Oxford. His chief aim in the letters which have been preserved, however, was to dissuade Hastings from the study of Plato and Hutcheson, who were, of course, two of Akenside's most admired philosophers (*Hastings MSS* iii 65-70).

The tantalising lack of any solid background evidence means that the finer details of the situation which lay behind Akenside's writing and subsequent publication of the *Huntingdon Ode* seem destined to remain a mystery. Akenside ends his poem with a solemn warning that, whatever the immediate rewards of subscribing to a misguided ideology may be in this life:

> Eternal GOD alone
> For Mortals fixes that sublime Award.
> He, from the faithful Records of his Throne,
> Bids the Historian and the Bard
> Dispose of Honour and of Scorn;
> Discern the Patriot from the Slave;
> And write the Good, the Wise, the Brave,
> For Lessons to the Multitude unborn.
> (233-240)[50].

It would be pleasant to be able to end this account by recording that Hastings had responded favourably to Akenside's blandishments and had indeed found his way to the position which the poet had predicted for him, calming and guiding the swelling democratic tide. Unfortunately such a convenient conclusion is impossible. There is no record of the Earl's immediate response; but in the long term he failed completely to live up to his early promise. This seems partly to have been owing to the efforts of his godfather, the Earl of

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50. Compare *In the Country* 58-60, where Akenside makes a similar point: see Chapter Four below.

Chesterfield, who was responsible for sending Hastings abroad at the beginning of 1749. The young Earl seems to have spent the greater part of the next seven years travelling in France, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Germany, supposedly being trained 'to make that figure in your own country, in Court, and in Parliament, which you certainly will make if you please' (*Hastings MSS* iii 74). Chesterfield's plan was that, at such time as the Prince of Wales should be of an age to form his own household, Hastings should make a triumphal return to take an active part in it. When he finally did return, in October 1756, he did indeed become the Prince's Master of the Horse (Chesterfield 110); but there is no indication that he distinguished himself in any way at all. Since Chesterfield's idea of a suitable foreign education consisted in a large part of helpful advice such as the following, from a letter of 29 September 1750:

> As for mistresses, I do not presume to stint you, the more the better, provided they are such as neither endanger your health or your character, and Paris abounds with such[51].

(advice which Hastings appears to have followed enthusiastically), perhaps this is scarcely surprising.

In 1761, Hastings was appointed Groom of the Stole -- the Prince of Wales had by now succeeded his grandfather as George III -- but in 1770 he was 'turned out', according to Horace Walpole:

> not for having joined the enemy, but merely for having absented himself -- For him, he has played the fool; he has no strength of his own, and had no support but the King; and so falls unpitied[52].

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51. Chesterfield 26. For more advice of the same nature, see for example Chesterfield 28, 30-32, 37.

52. Walpole to Mann, 18 January 1770: Walpole: *Corresp.* 23. 173.

Since Akenside himself had become a member of the royal household in 1761, when he was appointed Physician to the Queen, it is highly probable that his path would have crossed with that of Hastings. It is interesting to speculate what the relationship of the two men must have been at this stage.

The republican thinking which appears in the *Huntingdon Ode* was a new departure in Akenside's published work; and he was never, in print at least, to express such radical statements again. It seems almost certain, therefore, that his well-attested contemporary reputation for republicanism was based entirely on this poem. Interestingly, this reputation seems to have occasioned a surprising amount of acrimony. Sir John Hawkins records a most undignified sounding coffee-house dispute between Akenside and a lawyer called Ballow, which apparently took place in the late 1740s, based on a disagreement over Akenside's republican principles (Hawkins: *Life* 245-246). A more famous, and more durable, attack on the poet saw the light of day in early 1751, in the form of Smollett's caricature of Akenside as the poetry-writing physician in *Peregrine Pickle*. Eighteenth century biographers of Smollett took it for granted that the novelist was satirising Akenside in this extremely unflattering portrait[53]. More recently, Howard S. Buck has made a careful survey of the evidence in favour of identifying the physician with Akenside. He concludes that such an identification is unquestionable, largely because the *Huntingdon Ode* is referred to, and, indeed, directly quoted, in a number of passages in Smollett's novel. However, although he notes the physician's many

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53. See Robert Anderson: *The Life of Tobias Smollett, MD, with Critical Observations on his Works* (London, 1796) 47; John Moore (ed.): *The Works of Tobias Smollett, MD, with Memoirs of his Life; to which is prefixed A View of the Commencement and Progress of Romance* (8 vols., London, 1797) i pp. cxxiii-cxxiv.

references to Pindar, rightly tracing their source to the Ode, and although he points out two direct echoes of the poem in the novel[54], he fails to notice that the passages in which the physician expresses his most radical political opinions are clearly also references to Akenside's poem. For example, in Chapter XLVII (in which '*the Doctor enters into a Dispute upon Government*'), the physician -- whom Smollett describes as a 'rank republican' -- puts forward the opinion that:

> it was an eternal truth, that no constitution was so perfect as the democracy, and that no country could flourish, but under the administration of the mob.
> (229).

This is obviously a reference to the passage in the Ode in which Akenside forsees a future when 'Empire's wide-established Throne/ No private Master fills,/ Where long foretold, THE PEOPLE reigns...' and when Hastings will 'calm and guide/ The swelling democratic Tide' (166-172). In the interests of satire, however, Smollett has chosen to ignore the fact that the form of government which Akenside proposes is very far from the kind of mob rule which he

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54. Buck 10-26. Buck points out that in Chapter LXIX the physician exclaims: 'Would to heaven my Muse were blessed with an occasion to emulate that glorious testimony on the trophy in Cyprus, erected by Cimon, for the two great victories gained the same day over the Persians, by land and sea; in which it is very remarkable that the greatness of the occasion has raised the manner above the usual modesty and simplicity of all other inscriptions' (344),
which is an almost verbatim transcription of Akenside's note c, *Huntingdon Ode* p.24. In Chapter LI, he is made to quote two lines from an Ode which he is writing, which are lifted straight out of Akenside's poem: 'O fool! to think the man, whose ample mind/ Must grasp whatever yonder stars survey...' (*Huntingdon Ode* 105-6). Buck fails to note, however, that immediately before this, the physician is made to say: 'There...I would have proved, that great poetical talents and high sentiments of liberty, do reciprocally produce and assist each other', which is taken almost verbatim from *Huntingdon Ode* p.25 note d.

suggests in the novel.

Later in the same chapter the physician 'mention[s] the death of Charles the first, and the expulsion of his son, with raptures of applause, inveighed with great acrimony against the kingly name' (230-1). This almost certainly invokes the passage from the Ode in which Akenside rejoices at the overthrow of James II during the Glorious Revolution (196-200). Finally, the lines which follow this passage in the Ode, in which Akenside argues for the justice of overthrowing an unjust and tyrannical monarch (208-210), seem likely to have initiated Smollett's physician's enquiry of Peregrine as to whether:

> he did not think that very power of rewarding merit, enabled an absolute prince to indulge himself in the most arbitrary licence over the lives and fortunes of his people?
>
> (231).

Buck argues convincingly, on the basis of both internal and external evidence, that Akenside was not personally known to Smollett; and he concludes that 'Akenside's views on Scotland...were the cause of Smollett's "pique"'(21). In support of this view, he cites the passage from the Ode in which Akenside refers back to the Jacobite rebellion, calls the Scots 'the barb'rous Host', and attacks the Tories for cowardice (211-220). As a Scot, and one who had apparently all but deserted his own early Whig background owing to the Whig government's inhumane treatment of the Scots after the rebellion[55], it does seem likely that Smollett would have taken exception to these sentiments.

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55. See L.M. Knapp: *Tobias Smollett: Doctor of Men and Manners* (Princeton, 1949) 194. For Smollett's reaction to the treatment of the Scots in the aftermath of the rebellion, see his *The Tears of Scotland* (1746), which mourns the fact that:

> What foreign arms could never quell,
> By civil rage and rancour fell.
>
> (iii).

Whether or not Akenside's republicanism would also have displeased Smollett is difficult to say with any certainty, although he is unmercifully witty at the expense of the way in which it is expressed in the poem. Some thirty years later, however, Johnson made no secret of his disapproval of Akenside's political views, speaking of his:

> unneccessary and outrageous zeal for what he called and thought liberty -- a zeal which sometimes disguises from the world...an envious desire of plundering wealth or degrading greatness; and of which the immediate tendency is innovation and anarchy, an impetuous eagerness to subvert and confound, with very little care what shall be established.
>
> (*Lives* iii 411-412).

Once again, this is not entirely fair to Akenside who, if the *Huntingon Ode* is taken as evidence, was deeply concerned about the establishment of a proper form of enlightened government in the event of the abolition of the monarchy. Although republicanism is not mentioned explicitly in Johnson's 'Life of Akenside', it seems likely that his reputation for such views (based almost entirely on the passage from this Ode) was responsible for Johnson's violent response: see, for example, his comparable remarks on Milton:

> Milton's republicanism was, I am afraid, founded in an envious hatred of greatness, and a sullen desire of independence; in petulance impatient of controul, and pride disdainful of superiority. He hated monarchs in the state and prelates in the church; for he hated all whom he was required to obey. It is to be suspected that his predominant desire was to destroy rather than to establish, and that he felt not so much the love of liberty as repugnance to authority.
>
> (*Lives* i 157).

The similarities in wording between this passage and his attack on Akenside's politics strongly suggest that a distaste for republican views lay at the basis of both.

Whether or not the response to the radicalism of the *Huntingdon Ode* was a direct cause of Akenside's unwillingness to be so outspoken in public again, or whether he in fact modified his views, is uncertain. He does not appear to have published any political poetry for some time after this period. He did, however, continue to write poetry which was directly influenced by politics and current affairs, although that which he produced in the late 1740s and early 1750s does not appear to have been published until after his death. The next phase of his writing life will form the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

1749-1750

With the composition of the *Ode to the Earl of Huntingdon*, Akenside appears to have reached the end of a phase in his writing life. After this poem's publication in January 1748 he did not stop writing poetry; but he seems to have stopped publishing it, either under his own name or anonymously. A period of approximately eight years passed before his next published works, which were presumably written at different times throughout this period, made their appearance in the sixth volume of Dodsley's *Collection* in 1758[1]. The reasons for this are not entirely clear. Possibly he wanted to concentrate on furthering his medical career; or he may simply have felt that the kind of poetry he was now writing was not suitable for immediate publication. Certainly the poems of this period, with one exception, are of a different character from his earlier work. Like the *Huntingdon Ode*, they are Odes addressed to public figures who were, in most cases, also friends of the poet; but unlike that poem, which was deliberately presented as a formal panegyric, these poems are less public, and more personal. They could best be described as verse-epistles; and one slightly later example, which was published in

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1. Dodsley's *Collection of Poems* appeared first in three volumes (1748); vol. iv was published in 1755; and vols. v and vi in 1758. Akenside's contributions to vol. vi were his *Hymn to the Naiads; Ode to the Earl of Huntingdon* (the only poem to have been published previously); *Ode to the Bishop of Winchester* (*the Hoadly Ode*, which will be discussed in Chapter Five); six *Inscriptions*; and an untitled Ode which begins 'If rightly tuneful bards decide...' (Book II Ode viii in *Poems* (1772)).

Poems (1772) but which exists in an earlier manuscript version, suggests that when Akenside did decide to publish these works, his revisions tended to increase the formality of both their content and their style[2].

THE REMONSTRANCE OF SHAKESPEARE

The one work of this period which is not a verse-epistle seems to have been the next poem which Akenside wrote after the *Huntingdon Ode*. Its full title is *The Remonstrance of Shakespeare: Supposed to have been spoken at the Theatre Royal, while the French Comedians were acting by Subscription. MDCCXLIX*[3]. The circumstances surrounding the poem's composition make it possible to date it fairly precisely, certainly to within a matter of weeks.

In the summer of 1749, an invitation had been issued to Jean Monnet, the director of the Opéra-Comique in Paris, to bring a company of French actors to Samuel Foote's New (sometimes called Little) Theatre in the Haymarket[4].

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2. The poem in question is the *Drake Ode* (1754), which will be discussed in Chapter Five.

3. Although dated 1749, this poem does not appear to have been published until much later; this question will be discussed below.

4. Since the Licensing Act of 1737, only two theatres -- Drury Lane and Covent Garden -- had been granted royal patents to remain officially open. However, Samuel Foote (1721-1777), the manager of the New, or Little, Theatre (later to be patented and renamed the Theatre Royal, which is how Akenside refers to it), showed the most remarkable creativity in finding ways to evade the terms of the Act. He sold tickets in advance rather than at the door; he advertised his performances as 'concerts', 'public break-fastings' or 'picture auctions'; and so on. See the entry on Foote in *A Bibliographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers and Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800* (Illinois, 1973 -), vol. v, *Eagen to Garrett*, by P.H. Highfill Jr., K.A. Burnim and E.A. Langhans (1978).

Possibly the timing of this arrangement was a little misjudged. The eight years of the War of the Austrian Succession had only recently come to an end with the signing of the Treaty of Aix la Chapelle in October 1748. Although this treaty brought a technical end to hostilities with France, it was widely regarded as unsatisfactory and inconclusive, and did little to decrease the prevalent francophobia which had long existed in Britain. On 31 October 1749, David Garrick wrote to the Countess of Burlington:

> The french Players are at present the only Topick of Conversation: there are many Parties forming for & against 'Em -- I don't in the least concern Myself in the Matter, for if they are permitted they can't hurt Drury Lane; so I am quite Neuter, & am very well satisfy'd, whether they succeed or Not...[5].

Garrick's neutrality does indeed appear to have been exceptional, and was no doubt owing in part to the fact that, as manager of Drury Lane, he was in a position of unassailable strength. According to Monnet's own account, the general anti-French feeling in London was augmented by two groups with particular interests of their own. The first was made up of numbers of out-of-work actors, who not unnaturally resented the fact that a foreign company was taking up theatre space which was very much at a premium because of the limits set by the Licensing Act; the second of Huguenot refugees, whose ancestors had settled in London following Louis XIV's revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, and who, according to Monnet, 'ni laisserent point échapper une si belle occasion de se venger' (Monnet ii 17). Later, various factions within the complicated political scene which was developing around the

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5. D.M. Little and G.M. Kahrl (eds.): *The Letters of David Garrick* (3 vols., 1963) i 136.

contested Westminster election also seized the opportunity of making political capital out of the presence of the French company. However, since Akenside's poem reflects the anti-gallicism which was prevalent when the players first arrived, but makes no mention of factional squabbles, it seems probable that it was written before these developed. The text of the poem, as it appeared in *Poems* (1772), is as follows:

THE REMONSTRANCE OF SHAKESPEARE:

Supposed to have been spoken at the Theatre Royal, while the French Comedians were acting by Subscription

MDCCXLIX

IF, yet regardful of your native land,
Old Shakespeare's tongue you deign to understand,
Lo, from the blissful bowers where heaven rewards
Instructive sages and unblemish'd bards,
I come, the ancient founder of the stage,
Intent to learn, in this discerning age,
What form of wit your fancies have imbrac'd,
And whither tends your elegance of taste,
That thus at length our homely toils you spurn,
That thus to foreign scenes you proudly turn,
That from my brow the laurel wreath you claim
To crown the rivals of your country's fame.
What, though the footsteps of my devious Muse
The measur'd walks of Grecian art refuse?
Or though the frankness of my hardy style
Mock the nice touches of the critics file?
Yet, what my age and climate held to view,
Impartial i[6] survey'd and fearless drew.
And say, ye skillful in the human heart,
Who know to prize a poet's noblest part,
What age, what clime, could e'er an ampler field
For lofty thought, for daring fancy, yield?
I saw this England break the shameful bands
Forg'd for the souls of men by sacred hands:
I saw each groaning realm her aid implore;
Her sons the heroes of each warlike shore:

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6. It is a graphical idiosyncrasy of Akenside's (or just possibly his editor's) in *Poems* (1772), to print first person pronouns in lower case.

Her naval standard (the dire Spaniard's bane)
Obey'd through all the circuit of the main.
Then too great commerce, for a late-found world,
Around your coast her eager sails unfurl'd:
New hopes, new passions, thence the bosom fir'd;
New plans, new arts, the genius thence inspir'd;
Thence every scene, which private fortune knows,
In stronger life, with bolder spirit rose.
Disgrac'd i this full prospect which i drew?
My colours languid, or my strokes untrue?
Have not your sages, warriors, swains, and kings,
Confess'd the living draught of men and things?
What other bard in any clime appears
Alike the master of your smiles and tears?
Yet have i deign'd your audience to intice
With wretched bribes to luxury and vice?
Or have my various scenes a purpose known
Which freedom, virtue, glory, might not own?
Such from the first was my dramatic plan;
It should be your's to crown what i began:
And now that England spurns her Gothic chain,
And equal laws and social science reign,
I thought, Now surely shall my zealous eyes
View nobler bards and juster critics rise,
Intent with learned labour to refine
The copious ore of Albion's native mine,
Our stately Muse more graceful airs to teach,
And form her tongue to more attractive speech,
Till rival nations listen at her feet,
And own her polish'd as they own'd her great.
But do you thus my favorite hopes fullfil ?
Is France at last the standard of your skill?
Alas for you! that so betray a mind
Of art unconscious and to beauty blind.
Say; does her language your ambition raise,
Her barren, trivial, unharmonious phrase,
Which fetters eloquence to scantiest bounds,
And maims the cadence of poetic sounds,
Say; does your humble admiration chuse
The gentle prattle of her Comic Muse,
While wits, plain-dealers, fops, and fools appear,
Charg'd to say naught but what the king may hear?
Or rather melt your sympathizing hearts
Won by her tragic scene's romantic arts,
Where old and young declaim on soft desire,
And heroes never, but for love, expire?
No. Though the charms of novelty, awhile,
Perhaps too fondly win your thoughtless smile,
Yet not for you design'd indulgent fate
The modes or manners of the Bourbon state.
And ill your minds my partial judgment reads,
And many an augury my hope misleads,
If the fair maids of yonder blooming train

To their light courtship would an audience deign,
Or those chaste matrons a Parisian wife
Chuse for the model of domestic life;
Or if one youth of all that generous band,
The strength and splendour of their native land,
Would yield his portion of his country's fame,
And quit old freedom's patrimonial claim,
With lying smiles oppression's pomp to see,
And judge of glory by a king's decree.
O blest at home with justly envied laws,
O long the chiefs of Europe's general cause,
Whom heaven has chosen at each dangerous hour
To check the inroads of barbaric power,
The rights of trampled nations to reclaim
And guard the social world from bonds and shame;
Oh let not luxury's fantastic charms
Thus give the lye to your heroic arms;
Nor for the ornaments of life imbrace
Dishonest lessons from that vaunting race,
Whom fate's dread laws (for, in eternal fate
Despotic rule was heir to freedom's hate)
Whom in each warlike, each commercial part,
In civil counsel, and in pleasing art,
The judge of earth predestin'd for your foes,
And made it fame and virtue to oppose.

Akenside's use of Shakespeare as his speaker in this poem -- ostensibly because he was 'the ancient founder of the stage' (5), but in fact, clearly, because he could be made to represent the values of the Elizabethan 'golden age' -- seems to have needed defending:

> What, though the footsteps of my devious Muse
> The measur'd walks of Grecian art refuse?
> Or though the frankness of my hardy style
> Mock the nice touches of the critics file?
>
> (13-16)

Since the Restoration, Shakespeare had frequently been attacked for breaking the 'rules' of Aristotle. Charles Gildon, for example, argued in 1710 that Shakespeare's 'Confusions of want of Art' made his plays inferior to those of classical Greece, and that '*Shakespear* is indeed stor'd with a great many

Beauties, but they are in a heap of Rubbish'[7]. Even defenders of Shakespeare tended to apologise for his shortcomings; Akenside would certainly have been aware of Shaftesbury's comments that:

> Notwithstanding his natural Rudeness, his unpolish'd Stile, his antiquated Phrase and Wit, his want of Method and Coherence, and his Deficiency in almost all the Graces and Ornaments of this kind of Writings...

Shakespeare still managed to please his audience[8]; and Addison's, who wrote in 1714 that critics seemed not to be aware:

> That there is more Beauty in the Works of a great Genius who is ignorant of the Rules of Art, than in the Works of a little Genius, who not only knows, but scrupulously observes them[9].

Freshest in Akenside's mind, however, would probably have been a more recent work, John Upton's *Critical Observations on Shakespeare* (1746), which had been reviewed (probably by Akenside himself) in the *Museum* on 16 August 1746 (*Museum* i 426-30)[10]. One of the paragraphs which the reviewer

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7. 'An Essay on the Art, Rise and Progress of the Stage in Greece, Rome and England', prefixed to *The Works of Mr William Shakespear. Volume the Seventh* (1710) 424-425.

8. *Characteristics* i 275-276.

9. *Spectator* 592 (10 September 1714).

10. Akenside's contract to edit *The Museum* stipulated that he should:
> prepare and have ready for the press, once a fortnight, an account of the most considerable books in English, Latin, French, or Italian, which have been lately published...

(see *GM* xxxix n.s. (February 1853) 158, where the contract is reproduced).

quotes is a deprecation of those critics who:

> having never read one Word of *Aristotle*, gravely cite his Rules, and talk of the Unities of Time and Place, at the very mentioning SHAKESPEARE's Name...
> (426-427).

The *Museum*'s reviewer also notes that Upton 'speaks with great Indignation of our servile Attachment to *French* Manners, and our affected Disgust at the Roughness of SHAKESPEARE' (426), a theme which is echoed by Akenside in the *Remonstrance*. A few months later, an essay appeared in the *Museum* which has been definitely attributed to Akenside[11]; its title was 'The Ballance of Poets', and its author placed Shakespeare at the top of the table of poetic merit which was appended at the end (*Museum* i 165-169). When Akenside says that 'the frankness of [Shakespeare's] hardy style/ Mock[s] the nice touches of the critic's file' (15-16), he is almost certainly thinking of his old enemy William Warburton, who had brought out an edition of Shakespeare's works in 1747 in which he had undertaken to 'correct' Shakespeare's use of language employing criteria which had made him the butt of ridicule in certain quarters. Most notably, his edition had been attacked in *The Canons of Criticism* (1748), which was written by Thomas Edwards, to whom Akenside was to address an Ode in 1751[12].

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11. According to Dyce, this essay is attributed to Akenside 'on the authority of Isaac Reed' (Dyce xxxiv). No further reference is given. Akenside's contract (see previous note) also stipulated that he should produce 'once a fortnight [i.e. per issue] one Essay'.

12. This poem, and Akenside's continuing feud with Warburton, are discussed in Chapter Five.

Having disposed of the commonest contemporary criticisms, Shakespeare addresses himself to those arbiters of taste who pride themselves on their ability to judge poetry (19-20). Are they not aware, he asks, that the Elizabethan age was one of unparalleled greatness, offering the amplest 'field/ For lofty thought, for daring fancy...?' (21-22). This was, first, because of the reformation, when England managed to throw off the 'shameful bands/ Forg'd for the souls of men' by the Catholic church (23-24); second, because of the great victories won by the Elizabethans at sea (25-28); third, because this was the period when Britain's trading supremacy came into its full flowering with the recent discovery of America (29-30); and, finally, because the age saw a cultural renaissance 'in every scene which private fortune knows' (31-34).

'Disgrac'd i this full prospect which i drew?' asks Shakespeare: and he points out that all men ('sages, warriors, swains and kings') have recognised the wonderful verisimilitude of his depiction of life (35-38). Moreover, he continues, he had an exceptional ability to manipulate the emotions of his audience:

> What other bard in any clime appears
> Alike the master of your smiles and tears?
>
> (39-40).

This passage suggests that Akenside had been reading Pope's 'Preface' to *The Works of Shakespeare, Collated and Corrected* (6 vols., 1725):

> The *Power* over our *Passions* was never possess'd in any more eminent degree or display'd in so different instances. Yet all along, there is seen no labour, no pains to raise them.... But the heart swells, and the tears burst out, just at the proper places.... How astonishing it is again, that the passions directly opposite to these, Laughter and Spleen, are no less at his command!
>
> (i p. iii).

However, Shakespeare reminds his audience, he was never tempted to use these abilities for ignoble purposes, either to lure his audience into vicious practices, or to write any scenes which would betray the cause of 'freedom, virtue, glory' (41-44).

The writers of the eighteenth century, continues Shakespeare, should be able to 'crown what i began', since Britain now 'spurns her Gothic chain' (as a result of the Treaty of Aix la Chapelle, presumably), and enjoys just social laws (45-48). He had believed that as result, even greater poets and fairer critics would emerge, to refine still further the British Muse, so that 'rival nations' would recognise our greatness in the field of art (49-56). He is disappointed, then, to find that France, rather than England, has apparently become 'the standard of your skill', a fact that betrays a lamentable lack of aesthetic taste (57-60). He deplores the French language, which is quite unsuited to poetry:

> Her barren, trivial, unharmonious phrase,
> Which fetters eloquence to scantiest bounds,
> And maims the cadence of poetic sounds...
> (62-64).

A comparable view was taken by Horace Walpole, who wrote to Lady Craven in December 1788 that French was 'the most unpoetic language in Europe, the most barren and the most clogged with difficulties' (Walpole: *Corresp.* 42. 230). Akenside himself had expressed similar sentiments three years before the writing of the *Remonstrance*, in an essay entitled 'On Correctness', which was

published in the *Museum* on 26 April 1746[13]:

> Were I a *Frenchman*, concern'd for the Poetical Glory of my Country, I should lament its *unmusical* Language, and the Impossibility of forming it to Numbers or Harmony....Their Language is very unfortunate for Poetry; but is it not diverting to hear [the French] valuing them selves upon this wretched, unmusical Poverty in their Verse...?
>
> (*Museum* i 88).

Not only is the French language unsuited to poetry, Shakespeare continues, but it is impossible not to be aware of the paucity of the subject matter of the French drama: he criticises both the comedy, in which the characters, 'wits, plain-dealers, fops, and fools' are only allowed dialogue which will not displease the king (67-68), and the tragedy, which, he implies, lacks both depth and nobility -- it is concerned only with 'soft desire', and its heroes 'never, but for love, expire' (70-72). Akenside had criticised this lack of depth in the *Museum* essay which was quoted above:

> I am not accusing the *French* Tragedians of Inconsistence, or poetical Falshood in their Characters; but I say their Characters are not always *capable* of Inconsistence; I mean, they are so vague and undetermined, that you hardly know what they *should* say, or what they should *not*....their most flagrant ill Taste and Crudeness of Imitation appears in the Frenchify'd Air of all their Dramatic Personages...
>
> (*Museum* i 86-87)

From all that has gone before, it might be assumed that Shakespeare has come to despair of his eighteenth-century British audience. However, with a

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13. 'On Correctness' is assigned to Akenside by Joseph Warton, who quotes two passages from it in his edition of *The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq.* (9 vols., 1797) i 264, iv 190. For further comments by Akenside on French poetry, see the *Hall Ode*, discussed in Chapter Six below.

neat rhetorical twist which was a favorite device of Akenside's, the argument is turned on its head, as the poet experiences an upsurge of faith in the judgment and discrimination of his public. Britain's 'fair maids', he realises, will never allow themselves to be seduced by the frivolity of French fashion and behaviour; no 'chaste [British] matron' would model herself on her Parisian counterpart (73-82); and, above all, no:

> youth of all that generous band,
> The strength and splendour of their native land,
> Would yield his portion of his country's fame,
> And quit old freedom's patrimonial claim,
> With lying smiles oppression's pomp to see,
> And judge of glory by a king's decree.
> (83-88).

The poem ends with an impassioned plea to the British people not to forget their 'justly envied' superiority over the rest of Europe; they have been chosen by heaven to defend weaker nations from the encroachment of barbarism and the disgrace of bondage and oppression (91-94). To allow themselves to be lured by 'luxury's fantastic charms' would be a fatal mistake, and in any case contrary to the inexorable law of fate; the British are solemnly warned not to learn 'dishonest lessons' from 'that vaunting race' (96-102), whom:

> The judge of earth predestin'd for your foes,
> And made it fame and virtue to oppose.
> (103-104)

This poem appears to have been written as an urgent response to what the poet saw as a troublesome state of affairs. It is puzzling, therefore, to discover that there is no trace of its having been published at the time of its writing; it apparently made its first appearance in *Poems* (1772). It is just possible, as I.A. Williams speculates, that a limited number of pamphlets

were printed which have since disappeared[14]; but if this was the case, it is surprising that the publication was not announced in either the *Gentleman's* or *London Magazine*'s monthly lists for the relevant period. In addition, there is no sign of the poem being published anonymously in any of the Magazines. Another possibility is that Akenside had it privately printed for the amusement of his friends; but this would presumably have amounted to preaching to the converted.

It is perhaps conceivable that the answer to this problem lies in the political events which surrounded the French players' performances. The first indication of what occurred can be found in the *Daily Advertiser* for Thursday 16 November:

> On Tuesday night [14 November] there was a great Disturbance...at the French play, it being the Night of Opening; the first Act was very much disturbed and some Persons were wounded.

A more detailed, and more sensational, account of the evening is given in Jean Monnet's autobiography:

> Ce qu'on m'avoit prédit arriva.... L'Orchestre se disposoit à jouer l'ouverture; mais au premier coup d'archet, les Conjurés, qui étoient en très-grand nombre, & presques tous placés dans la seconde Gallerie, entonnerent une chanson Angloise, dont le refrain étoit: *Nous ne voulons point de Comédians François*. Cependent on leva le toile; un Acteur & une Actrice parurent pour commencer la piece; ils furent salués d'une grêle de pommes & oranges, qui succédoient sans relâche. Une Actrice...reçut sur la gorge une chandelle qui lui fut jetée par un homme ivre, payé pour troubler le Spectacle. Le bruit qui se faisoit dans la Gallerie, empèchoit d'entendre ce qu'on disoit sur le Théâtre. Le Lord G**, qui jusque là s'étoit contenu, élevant la voix, & s'addressant aux mutins, dit: 'Et bien, Messieurs, voulez vous bien cesser, & nous laisser jouir du Spectacle? S'il vous ne plait pas, sortez, & reprenez l'argent de vos billets'. Plusieurs

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14. *Seven Eighteenth-Century Bibliographies* (1924) 92. Williams gives no authority for his belief that the poem was published in 1749. It is not in Foxon.

> repondirent qu'ils ne souffriroient jamais une Comédie Françoise à Londres. Lord G**, piqué de cette réponce, & plusieurs autres de mes défenseurs, entrent dans la Gallerie, & imposerent, pour un moment, silence à mes adversaires. Pendent cette scène, il s'en passoit deux autres, l'une sur le Théâtre, et l'autre dans la Parterre. La premiere étoit composées de jeunes Militaires en uniforme, qui, l'epée nue à la main, formoient un demi-cercle & servoient de rampart aux Acteurs....Un jeune homme, caché dans un coin de la Salle, s'avisa d'emboucher un gros sifflet de portier; il fut découvert & surpris par le General Wal***, qui d'un vigoureux coup de poing, sur sa bouche, lui fit entrer le sifflet jusqu'au milieu du gosier'[15].

Unpleasant though this must have been for the actors (and any member of the audience who might conceivably have been present actually to watch the performance), it would not appear, at first glance, that any political repercussions would result. However, it happened that the French players' season coincided with the hotly contested election for Westminster; and certain interested parties clearly saw their chance of making political capital out of the riots.

Representing the court interest as the candidate for the Westminster seat was Granville Leveson-Gower, Viscount Trentham (1721-1803), later Earl Gower and 1st Marquis of Stafford, who had held the seat since 1747, but who had to seek re-election on becoming a Lord of the Admiralty. Opposing Trentham was Sir George Vandeput (d. 1784), an independent candidate who had the support of certain country Tories as well as that of the Prince of Wales' Leicester House

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15. Monnet ii 20-27. 'Lord G**', to whom Monnet has referred earlier as one of the greatest men in England, who had commanded his majesty's troops in Hanover (Monnet ii 10n.) may perhaps be Carteret, who had succeeded to the title of Earl of Granville in 1744; certainly he had attended George II on the campaign of 1743, and was present at Dettingen.

côterie[16]. The first indication that a smear campaign had been started by Trentham's opponents was a notice which appeared in the *General Advertiser* on 20 November. Signed by Trentham, the notice read:

> Whereas it has been maliciously reported...that I was active in the Disturbance...last Tuesday Night: I do declare...that I was neither in the Pit nor the Gallery where the Disturbance happened during the Time of the Performance...

Whether or not Trentham was actually present at the performance at all is difficult to ascertain; evidently Vandeput's supporters wished to prove that he was deeply involved in the riots, which were repeated at several performances. On 22 November, the *Daily Advertiser* printed the 'alleged Deposition of Wm Davison', which stated that on 17 November he had seen one John Haines, a waiter:

> and several other Persons, to the Number of 16...each of which had a great Bludgeon in his Hand, which he put under his Coat, in order to hide the same...and was informed by several Persons of credit that they and others to the number of 30, were hired by Lord Trentham to protect the French Strollers from any Attempt that might be made to prevent their acting...

Furthermore, he added, Haines had a list of the names of these 'persons', who had been told that Trentham would need them on other nights. Trentham, not surprisingly, sprang to his own defence by offering a £50 reward for the original of this affidavit; and this offer was quickly followed by a deposition from Haines himself, in which he swore on oath that he had 'never had any

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16. For a full discussion of the political machinations surrounding this election, see N. Rogers: 'Aristocratic Clientage, Trade and Independency: Popular Politics in Pre-Radical Westminster', *P&P* 61 (November 1973) 70-106.

Conversation directly or indirectly, with Lord Trentham, relating to the French Players...'. Wary, no doubt, of further trouble, the French company cancelled their performance on 24 November (during the election); and after several half-hearted attempts on their part to resume, the *London Evening Post* finally announced on 21 December that:

> his Majesty has been graciously pleased to order the Licence to the French Strollers to be withdrawn, in order to prevent any more Disturbances or ill Blood among his Subjects.

The French company returned to Paris on 28 December; but they left without Monnet, who spent several months in prison for debts incurred as a result of his many cancelled performances[17].

Not surprisingly, these sensational events occasioned a flood of scurrilous squibs and pamphlets, such as the anti-Trentham *Peg Trantum in the Suds: or No French Strollers* (1749), which ends rousingly:

> Ye Electors! who hate all the Frenchify'd Clan,
> If you love your selves, chuse not the M[inister]s' Man;
> But Each give his Voice, for the Man of the K[ing];--
> Sir George Vandeput's he, so Sir George we will sing,
> Derry down, down, down, derry down.

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17. A full account of the visit of the French players may be found in *The London Stage 1660-1800* (11 vols., Illinois, 1960-68), Part 4: *1747-1776*, ed. G.W. Stone Jr. (1962) i 135-163. See also ibid i 200 for Monnet's financial problems before his return to France.

or the compendium published under the title *A True and Impartial Collection of Pieces in Prose and Verse, Which have been written and published on both sides the question during the contest for the Westminster Election* (1749). In none of the published collections, however, does Akenside's poem appear; and a glance at the style and content of the poems which were published at the time -- all of which are poorly written and crudely satirical -- strongly suggests that Akenside would have been anxious to dissociate himself from the factional squabbles which they represent. As suggested above, the poem may well have been written before the players began their performances, and thus before the factional elements had entered the situation. In this case it is conceivable that Akenside might have decided not to publish it when party politics became so deeply involved in the issue. Of course, this can only be speculation, since any evidence as to the exact time of writing is impossible to obtain. However, it does provide one possible explanation for what is a somewhat puzzling circumstance.

ODE TO SIR FRANCIS HENRY DRAKE (1750)

This poem is something of a curiosity, since it is one of only two poems of Akenside's which are known to exist only in manuscript, since he chose not to publish them during his own lifetime, and they were also excluded from Dyson's posthumous 1772 edition. Indeed this poem, together with the *Epode* of 1758 (which will be discussed in Chapter Six), was not published until 1942, when they both made their appearance in an article by

Ralph M. Williams in *Modern Language Notes*[18]. It is addressed to one of Akenside's closest friends, Sir Francis Henry Drake (1723-1794), the 5th Baronet, of Buckland Abbey and Nutwell Court in Devon, who was Member of Parliament for his family seat, Bere Alston in Devon, from 1747 until 1774.

It is not clear when exactly Akenside and Drake first met, although it is reasonable to suppose that when Dyson acquired the office of Clerk to the House of Commons in February 1748, he and Akenside would naturally have widened their circle to include their contemporaries among the younger members of the House. Since Drake appears to have suffered from recurrent ill-health and depression for most of his life, and since Akenside was evidently his physician as well as his friend in the 1750s, it is possible that their acquaintance began on a professional basis and progressed to become a more intimate friendship[19]. Certainly by January 1750, when this poem was written, Drake had become more of a friend than a patient, as its easy, familiar tone quickly reveals. The poem, which will subsequently be referred to as *Drake Ode 1750*, should not be confused with the published Ode to Drake (*Drake Ode 1754*), which was written some four years later and

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18. The manuscript of the poem is now in Amherst College Library. For Williams' comments, see Williams 626-7.

19. The primary source of information about Drake is a series of letters written to him between 1740 and 1767 by Nicholas Rowe, who looked after Drake's estates in Devon while he was in London. These letters, which are in the keeping of the Devon Record Office (Drake Papers 346 M ff 196-487), contain a number of references to Akenside as Drake's physician as well as his friend. A less reliable source is Lady F.Eliott-Drake: *The Family and Heirs of Sir Francis Drake* (2 vols., London, 1911) ii 223-335.

will be discussed in the next chapter. The text of the poem is as follows:

ODE
to Sir Francis Henry Drake, Bart.
January, M.DCC.XLIX. O.S.

1.

While by the order of the day,
Next week, the House & Speaker pray
That heaven may ne'er, at Britain's hand,
The royal martyr's life demand;
While Bentham labours much in vain
The rights of freedom to maintain
With good Saint Charles's blessed reign;

2.

Then, Drake, to Hampstead haste away,
Where Dyson spends with me the day:
And try if Hardinge cannot find
That fate hath just one more design'd:
Townshend is digging at his farm;
Nor would a loud promiscuous swarm
Or thee, or any of us charm.

3.

I hate the table & the treat
Where friends, beset with strangers, meet;
Where prudent form the tongue restrains
From uttering what the heart contains;
While, in your own despite, your eyes
Tell how importantly you prize
The deep discourse that round you flies.

4.

But say; from orators ador'd,
From every heir to every board,
From Egmont's pathos, Warren's fights,
And Nugent's tragi-comic flights,
Can'st thou an hour's attention steal
To talk with me of England's weal,
And smile at my untutor'd zeal?

5.

Then, if too grave the subject grow,
(Foreboding aught we fear to know)
To bring more pleasing prospects home,
Thro' distant ages we can roam;
When Athens spurn'd the Persian chain;
When thy fam'd grandsire aw'd the main,
Or Somers guided William's reign.

6.

Thence may we turn to calmer views,

The haunts of science & the Muse;
To groves where Milton walks alone,
To Bacon's philosophic throne;
Or where those Attic themes we find,
The moral law, the almighty mind,
And man for future worlds design'd.

7.

O Drake, in spite of all the zeal
Which for the public oft we feel,
When I before the shrine of fame
Present some English patriot's name,
Or when thy nobler cares demand
How England's Genius safe may stand
From usury's insatiate hand;

8.

Yet, if blind selfishness can* foil
Both Barnard's hope and Pelham's toil,
Surely the happiest hours below,
(Which yet must from the public flow)
The hours which most sincerely please,
Belong to private scenes like these,
To friendship & to lettered ease.

* The attempts to defeat the reduction of the interest of the national debt. [Akenside's note].

The dating of this poem is an easy matter. Not only does Akenside date it himself at the start as having been written in *January 1749 O.S.* (that is, January 1750 as we would count it today -- the reformation of the calendar would not take place until 1752), but the internal references in the first stanza narrow down the time of composition still further:

> While by the order of the day,
> Next week, the House and Speaker pray
> That heaven may ne'er, at Britain's hand,
> The royal martyr's life demand;
> (1-4)

The occasion which Akenside is referring to here, which he says is to take place 'next week', is the sermon which is to be preached on 30 January, the

anniversary of the death of Charles I (the 'royal martyr' to whom Akenside ironically refers). Since 30 January fell on a Tuesday in 1750, the poem must presumably have been written between Sunday 21st and Saturday 27th in order for the event to take place the following week. The mention of Bentham in the next three lines, who will, it is said, labour

> much in vain
> The rights of freedom to maintain
> With good saint Charles's blessed reign;
>
> (5-7)

puzzled Williams, who conjectured in his notes to the poem that it possibly referred to 'James Bentham (1708-1794), the historian' (Williams 627). However, the *Commons Journal* for 18 December 1749, contains an entry which clarifies the reference:

> ORDERED, That the Reverend Dr *Bentham*, of *Oriel College*, in the University of *Oxford*, be desired to preach before this House, at *St. Margarets, Westminster*, upon *Tuesday* the 30th Day of *January* next...
>
> (*C.J.* XXV 917).

This, then, is not James Bentham the historian, but his older brother Edward Bentham D.D. (1707-1776), Fellow (1731) and Tutor (1732) of Oriel until 1752, when he became Regius Professor of Divinity, and Canon of Christ Church. Bentham, a rare Whig in an Oxford almost entirely dominated by Tories, had suffered a good deal of ridicule at the University over the preceding few years, mainly at the hands of Dr William King. King had made fun both of what he saw as Bentham's verbose pamphleteering and of his role as a Whitehall preacher; in one lampoon, Bentham is made to say:

> But howe'er, to cajole my good Friends at *Whitehall*,
> And to find out the Way to some pretty neat Stall,

Let me loudly declare, Ye are JACOBITES all![20]

Whether or not Akenside was familiar with King's satires, his prediction of the contents of Bentham's sermon seems to have been an accurate one[21]. This is hardly surprising in view of the fact that the preaching of such sermons on 30 January had been an annual event since 1649, and was, indeed, to remain so until it was abolished by an act of parliament in 1858. By the mid-eighteenth century, the emphasis of most of these sermons had begun to shift away from the original tradition, which had emphasised Charles' martyrdom and his virtues, although the University of Oxford appears to have preserved this tradition well into the second half of the century. Elsewhere, however, preachers had begun increasingly to use the sermon as a vehicle for the dissemination of political principles,

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20. William King: *A Poetical Abridgement both in Latin and English of the Rev. Mr. Tutor Bentham's Letter to a Young Gentleman of Oxford*...(London, 1749). This pamphlet was one of King's replies to a number of pamphlets which Bentham produced in the late 1740s, among them *A Letter to a Young Gentleman* (1748) and *An Epistolary Conference between a Reverend Non-Juror and a Loyal Oxonian* (n.d.), which contained an attack on King. King had previously published *A Proposal for publishing a Poetical Translation of the Rev. Mr. Tutor Bentham's Letter to a Young Gentleman of Oxford* (London, 1749); and he was possibly responsible for *A Certain Proposal of a Certain Little Tutor for making Certain Reformations in a Certain Method of Education, most Certainly practis'd in a Certain University* (London, n.d.). For a full discussion of the feud between King and Bentham, see W.R. Ward: *Georgian Oxford: University Politics in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1958) 171-186, and Greenwood 183-192.

21. Bentham's sermon was published at the request of the House (the order of thanks which contains the request is signed by Dyson, in his capacity as Clerk to the House); its full title is *A Sermon Preached before the Honorable House of Commons at St Margaret's Westminster, On Tuesday January 30, 1749-50. Being the Anniversary of the Martyrdom of K. Charles I* (Oxford, 1750).

and, in particular, to stress the evils of strife and contention[22]. Both these elements are clearly present in Bentham's sermon. In the opening passages of the sermon Charles I is presented as having been:

> adorned by...[a] train of personal and social virtues...his mind enriched with...liberal accomplishments...elegant in the cultivation and magnificent in the display of politer arts....

Any failings which Charles might have had were, it is suggested, the result of unfortunate influences in his youth, in the form of:

> a vain Theory of Government, unhappily imbibed in his early years, [which] too much diverted his attention from following the safer guidance of national Laws.
>
> (14)

In the second half of the sermon, Bentham's political purpose becomes clear. Here, he seems fully to justify King's satirical suggestions about his being merely an anti-Jacobite mouthpiece for the king and ministers, and shows himself to be the kind of 'court Whig' whom Akenside would undoubtedly have despised (the italics at the end of the extract are mine):

> whoever delights to view, in the Offices appointed for this mournful solemnity, the many great virtues of K. *Charles* I. Whoever feels a just indignation at those base detractions and infamous slanders, by which His intentions were traduced while living, and His character vilified after death, must surely...feel strongly the obligation of extending the same fairness of mind towards his own Contemporaries; *and be ready to discourage all undutifulness to his present Majesty's person and government; ...owning...His inflexible regard to his royal Word, His*

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22. See Helen W. Randall: 'The Rise and Fall of a Martyrology: Sermons on Charles I', *HLQ* 10 No. 2 (February 1947) 135-67.

tenderness for the Rights of all his Subjects.

(32-33)[23].

Akenside's poem, then, is an invitation to Drake to avoid what promises to be a dull and predictable church service, and instead to travel out to Hampstead 'where Dyson spends with me the day'(9) (in fact, Akenside was by now apparently living in 'a small but handsome house in Bloomsbury Square' (Hawkins: *Life* 244),and the villa at Golder's Hill, Hampstead, belonged to Dyson; but as this invitation and later poems suggest, he seems to have treated Hampstead as a second home). The day is to be a quiet one, although Hardinge is to be present; this, it must be assumed, is Dr Caleb Hardinge (1701-1775), another close friend of Akenside's, and brother to the Nicholas Hardinge from whom Dyson had purchased the office of Clerk to the House of Commons in February 1748[24] -- Akenside addressed an Ode to Caleb Hardinge inviting him to a similar (or possibly even the same) celebration, which will be discussed below. The reference here is obscure; they are, says Akenside, to 'try if Hardinge cannot find/That fate hath just one more design'd;'(10-11). Possibly Hardinge had a reputation for bringing an univited guest, or for finding a last unopened bottle of wine? Townshend, however, will not be there, as he is 'digging at his farm'(12). This is presumably Charles Townshend M.P.(1725-1767) with whom Akenside enjoyed what was apparently a rather brief period of friendship, and to whom he was to address two poems later this same year.

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23. See Greenwood 182-3.

24. See Namier and Brooke ii 371.

Evidently, however, the intimacy of the occasion appeals to Akenside, and he assumes that it will appeal to Drake too (13-21); his only misgiving seems to be whether Drake can tear himself away from the attractions of the proceedings of the House:

> But say; from orators ador'd,
> From every heir to every board,
> From Egmont's pathos, Warren's fights,
> And Nugent's tragic-comic flights,
> Canst thou an hour's attention steal...?
>
> (22-26)

The 'orators ador'd' whose speeches Akenside ironically invites Drake to miss are John Perceval, 2nd Earl of Egmont (1711-1770); Admiral Sir Peter Warren (c.1703-1752); and Robert Nugent (1702-1788).

Egmont had at one time been a supporter of Pulteney, and had in fact written a pamphlet defending Pulteney's apostasy (*Faction Detected by the Evidence of Facts* (Dublin, 1743)). He had joined the Prince of Wales' coterie in 1748, and had quickly become the most prominent opposition leader in the House of Commons. As Horace Walpole wrote to Mann in March 1749, he then:

> made as great a figure as perhaps was ever made in so short a time. He is very bold and resolved, master of vast knowledge, and speaks at once with fire and method....his language is useful, clear and strong.
>
> (Walpole:*Corresp.* 20. 32)

By the end of 1749, Egmont had become the Prince of Wales' principal associate. He would almost certainly have become Prime Minister in the new administration which was to be formed on Frederick's accession, and was responsible for drawing up a series of enormously detailed plans,

lists, and speeches for Frederick in preparation for that event[25]. He had been instrumental in putting forward Sir George Vandeput at the recent Westminster election, and he had also spoken against the address (which had been moved by Charles Townshend, and which had contained among other matters notice that the government intended to attempt to reduce the interest on the national debt -- see below) at the opening of the new session of parliament on November 16. According to George Bubb Dodington, he had 'made a violent and very injudicious speech' on this occasion, 'throwing out every thing he could think, or had heard of against the Ministry' (Dodington *Diary* 16-17). Since both Drake and Townshend (and presumably Dyson) were present on this occasion (see *CJ* XXV 892), Akenside would have had plenty of opportunity to hear about what he describes as 'Egmont's pathos' (at this period. of course, the term simply meant *emotionalism*).

Sir Peter Warren was a relative newcomer to politics. He had become very popular as a result of his distinguished naval career, which had included the capture of over twenty prizes in the Leeward Islands in 1742 and the command of the fleet in the capture of Louisburg in 1745, when he took several more valuable prizes from the French. Disappointed by his failure to get the governorships of both New York and New Jersey, which he had requested from Pelham, he had expressed his intention 'to get into Parliament, and perhaps venture to open my mouth with more temper though

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25. See A. N. Newman : 'Leicester House Politics, 1750-6, From the Papers of John, Second Earl of Egmont', *Camden Miscellany XXIII*, Camden 4th Series, Vol. 7 (1969) 84-228. It is interesting to note that Drake's name appears on the list of a future parliament which Egmont drew up in April 1749, a fact which suggests that he was seen as belonging to the opposition party at this time. See also A.N. Newman: 'Leicester House Politics, 1749-51', *EHR* LXXVI (1961) 577-89.

less eloquence than our friend Mr Vernon'[26] (Admiral Edward Vernon (1684-1757)). Warren had taken his seat as member of parliament for Westminster in 1747, and had had an opportunity to open his mouth at some length in March 1749, at the reading of a bill 'for amending, explaining, and reducing into One Act of Parliament, the Laws relating to the Government of his Majesty's Ships' (*CJ* XXV 708). As Walpole reported to Mann, this new navy bill was:

> vehemently opposed by half the fleet, headed by Sir Peter Warren, the conquerer of cape Breton, richer than Anson [George Anson, Lord Anson, admiral of the fleet, had recently increased his wealth by marrying Lady Elizabeth Yorke, the daughter of Lord Hardwicke] and as absurd as Vernon.
>
> (Walpole: *Corresp.* 20. 33)

No doubt Warren gained a certain amount of notoriety on this occasion, which would explain Akenside's ironic reference to his 'fights'[27].

If Warren was an unpractised, and perhaps a rather inept speaker, the same was certainly not true of Robert Nugent. A 'jovial and voluptuous Irishman, who had left Popery for the Protestant religion, money, and widows'[28], Nugent had long had the reputation of being a prolific, if at times somewhat farcical, orator. He had also attached himself to the Prince of Wales at the beginning on the previous year, although he seems to have been in opposition to Egmont at Leicester House; certainly in March 1751 Egmont noted[29] that the Prince had spoken 'angrily to Nugent...for his

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26. Quoted Sedgwick ii 522.

27. For further information on Warren, see Sedgwick ii 522-3.

28. Glover: *Memoirs* 47.

29. 'Occasional Memoranda', Add. MS 47073, quoted Sedgwick ii 302-3.

conduct in the House in opposing me and continually to be with the other side and to form a party'. Akenside would have been well informed by his friends in the House about the quality (and quantity) of Nugent's 'tragi-comic flights'; Walpole wrote that his speeches were extremely variable, 'sometimes nothing finer, generally nothing more crowded with absurdities' (*Mem. Geo. II* i 32)[30].

After his private digs at these three notorious parliamentary speakers, Akenside moves on to give a revealing picture of the projected subject matter of the conversation which he hopes to have with Drake in Hampstead. First they will discuss the state of the country ('England's weal') (27-28); it is interesting to note that Akenside is able to make a self-deprecatory joke about his own 'untutor'd zeal', which seems to indicate that he has abandoned the youthful position of his earlier poems, which gave the impression that he was quite sure he had the solution to all the country's problems. This subject threatens, however, to become too depressing ('foreboding aught we fear to know'(30)), and Akenside suggests as an antidote that they can take refuge in a discussion of the glories of past ages; either those of classical Greece, when 'Athens spurn'd the Persian chain'(33) or the triumphs of the Elizabethan age when 'thy fam'd grandsire aw'd the main'(34) (Drake was not, in fact, directly descended from the first Sir Francis; compare the note to the *Huntingdon Ode* IV 3 where Akenside makes a similar mistake); or the great recent period of newly-gained liberty for the British government 'when Somers guided

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30. For further pronouncements by Walpole on Nugent's character and oratory, see also Walpole: *Corresp.* 17. 254-5 and 20. 32. See also Sedgwick ii 302-3.

William's reign'(35). John, Lord Somers (1651-1716) was much admired by eighteenth-century Whigs, who saw him as the most important figure in the parliaments of both William III and Queen Anne; he reappears in the *Ode to the Honourable Charles Townshend, from the Country* (1750), where his virtues are enlarged upon at length, and in the *Hoadly Ode*.

From these exciting topics, suggests Akenside, they may then turn to 'calmer views,/ The haunts of science & the Muse', and discuss the poetry of Milton and the philosophy of Bacon (36-39); alternatively, they may review 'those Attic themes.../The moral law, the almighty mind,/And man for future worlds designed' (40-42) -- subjects which Akenside was particularly well qualified to discuss, having made them the predominant themes of *The Pleasures of Imagination*.

'O Drake', Akenside continues:

> in spite of all the zeal
> Which for the public oft we feel,
> When I before the throne of fame
> Present some English patriot's name,
> Or when thy nobler cares demand
> How England's Genius safe may stand
> From usury's insatiate hand;
> (44-49)

It is interesting here to note that although Akenside does not appear to have been publishing his political poetry at this period, he still presents himself as actively engaged in working for 'the public weal' through the writing of it in a way which parallels Drake's parliamentary activities (compare the *Huntingdon Ode* IV.3). The first two lines of the next stanza elucidate the slightly puzzling reference to 'usury's insatiate hand' in the final lines quoted above: 'Yet, if blind selfishness can foil/

Both Barnard's hope & Pelham's toil' (45-46). As Akenside's own note explains, this refers to 'the attempts to defeat the reduction of the national debt', and he was not alone in attributing the plan for this attempt to Sir John Barnard (1685-1764). Barnard, who came from a prosperous and successful Quaker family, had begun life as a wine-merchant like his father, combining this occupation with working in marine insurance. He had entered parliament in the early 1720s and was in opposition to Walpole until 1742. He had quickly begun to apply his hard-headed business sense to national issues, and had become the opposition's principal spokesman on matters of trade and public finance. He had been offered the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1737, but he had refused it, on the grounds that it was:

> a laborious and envied place, by which he could honestly get but 4000l. a year, and so much he gets by his trade without trouble. (Egmont *Diary* ii 366)

In 1737 Barnard had become Lord Mayor of London; and during his term as Mayor, he had worked out a scheme for reducing the interest on the national debt, which he had presented to Walpole, but Walpole had rejected it. Pelham, however, had supported the plan, and with his approval it had been re-introduced before parliament in November 1749, at which time it had been adopted, to be put into effect by the following 28 February. The details of the plan were published in the *London Gazette* dated 29 November 1749; briefly, they entailed paying the creditors -- who ranged from large companies such as the East India Company to private individuals -- at a reduced rate of interest. The current rate of 4% per annum was to be lowered after one year to 3½%; after seven years (from December 25 1757) it was to be further reduced to 3%. Barnard argued cogently in favour of the

plan in a pamphlet entitled *Considerations on the Proposals for the Reduction of the National Debt* (1750). A twentieth-century historian, however, has shown that Samson Gideon, the Jewish financier, played as large a part in the reduction of interest as did Barnard, a fact which Akenside may not have known[31].

When Akenside refers to 'usury's insatiate hand' and 'blind selfishness', he is presumably thinking of the fact that when the plan was announced at a meeting of the East India Company on December 19, a significant number of those present were reported as urging 'that there is no reason to hasten the agreeing to any terms, to the prejudice or hazard of the company...'; while 'a meeting of a considerable number of proprietors of East India stock at the Crown tavern' on December 29 had resolved that 'they were unanimous to be against the question' (*GM* XIX (Dec. 1749) 570). Despite Akenside's fears, the scheme did go through, and appears to have been successful[32]. Here, however, he concludes his poem with the thought that, whatever the outcome of this particular project, 'Surely the happiest hours below,':

> The hours, which most sincerely please,
> Belong to private scenes like these,
> To friendship & to lettered ease.
> (52,54-56).

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31. For Barnard, see Sedgwick i 435-437. For Gideon's part in these matters, and an interesting discussion of their background, see Lucy Sutherland: 'Samson Gideon and the Reduction of Interest, 1749-50', reprinted in *Politics and Finance in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. A.N. Newman (London, 1984) 399-415.

32. See P.G.M. Dickson: *The Financial Revolution in England: The Development of Public Credit 1688-1756* (London, 1967).

Whether or not Drake accepted the invitation to this somewhat rarified but no doubt enjoyable occasion is not recorded.

ODE TO CALEB HARDINGE M.D.

This poem, which has so far proved resistent to attempts to date it accurately, suggests that private celebrations such as the dinner to which Drake was invited in the *Drake Ode 1750* may have been annual events for Akenside's circle. It was first published in *Poems* (1772):

ODE

To CALEB HARDINGE M.D.

I.

WITH sordid floods the wintry +Urn
Hath stain'd fair Richmond's level green:
Her naked hill the Dryads mourn,
No longer a poetic scene.
No longer there thy raptur'd eye
The beauteous forms of earth or sky
Surveys as in their Author's mind:
And London shelters from the year
Those whom thy social hours to share
The Attic Muse design'd. [10]

II.

From Hampstead's airy summit me
Her guest the city shall behold,
What day the people's stern decree
To unbelieving kings is told,
When common men (the dread of fame)
Adjudg'd as one of evil name,
Before the sun, the anointed head.
Then seek thou too the pious town,
With no unworthy cares to crown
That evening's awful shade. [20]

III.

Deem not i call thee to deplore
The sacred martyr of the day,

By fast and penitential lore
To purge our ancient guilt away.
For this, on humble faith i rest
That still our advocate, the priest,
From heavenly wrath will save the land:
Nor ask what rites our pardon gain,
Nor how his potent sounds restrain
The thunderer's uplifted hand. [30]

IV.

No, Hardinge: peace to church and state!
That evening, let the Muse give law:
While i anew the theme relate
Which first my youth inamor'd saw.
Then will i oft explore thy thought,
What to reject which Locke hath taught,
What to pursue in Virgil's lay:
Till hope ascends to loftiest things,
Nor envies demagogues or kings
Their frail and vulgar sway. [40]

V.

O vers'd in all the human frame,
Lead thou where'er my labor lies,
And English fancy's eager flame
To Grecian purity chastize:
While hand in hand, at wisdom's shrine,
Beauty with truth i strive to join,
And grave assent with glad applause;
To paint the story of the soul,
And Plato's visions to controul
By *Verulamian laws. [50]

+Aquarius [Akenside's note].
*Verulam gave one of his titles to Francis Bacon, author of the Novum Organum [Akenside's note].

Convenient though it would be to see Akenside sitting down to issue these two verse invitations to the same party, this does not seem to have been the case, unless he changed his plans halfway through; as we saw above, in the *Drake Ode 1750* he invited Drake to spend the day with him in Hampstead, whereas in this poem he tells Hardinge that he will be leaving 'Hampstead's airy summit' and spending the day in the city. This is still more unfortunate since the only internal clue to a possible year of writing does point rather tentatively at 1750. This clue is of course Akenside's

mention, in the first stanza, of the 'sordid floods' which have covered Richmond. Although no such event appears to have been reported during the ten year period between 1747 and 1757 when the poem seems most likely to have been written, there are reports of violent storms and torrential rain at the beginning of 1750 (see *London Magazine* xix 90-91; and *GM* xx 88).

Little is added to the picture of such an occasion which was given in the *Drake Ode 1750* , although it is noticeable that with Hardinge the conversation is to be less political and more philosophical. It is interesting to find Akenside prepared to bow to the older man's superior knowledge with respect to Locke and Virgil (36-37); although he is still to be found taking the lead in the argument which will 'strive to join' beauty and truth at the shrine of wisdom (this is an important theme in *Pleasures of Imagination* -- see especially *Pleasures* (1744) i 372-376). Certainly Hardinge -- a man of 'infinite humour and wit' -- is said to have been superior to Akenside in his medical acumen, as the poet politely suggests: 'O vers'd in all the human frame...' (41)[33].

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the poem is the third stanza, which adds a dimension to the important question of Akenside's attitude to the church. Here, as in the *Drake Ode 1750*, he makes it clear that he has no wish to participate in the annual commemoration service, the purpose of which he presents somewhat cynically as being 'to purge our ancient guilt away':

For this, on humble faith i rest

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33. The relationship between Hardinge and Akenside is described by Hardinge's nephew in Nichol's *Literary Anecdotes* viii 521-525, from which the description of Hardinge is also taken. See also Nichol's *Illustrations* iii (1818) 4n.

> That still our advocate, the priest,
> From heavenly wrath will save the land:
> Nor ask what rites our pardon gain,
> Nor how his potent sounds restrain
> The thunderer's uplifted hand.
>
> (24-30)

The deliberately hyperbolic terms of these final lines -- 'heavenly wrath', 'rites', 'potent sounds', 'the thunderer' -- suggest a marked degree of scepticism on Akenside's part towards the more ritualistic aspects of religious orthodoxy. This attitude is entirely consistent with his Unitarian upbringing, and need in no way suggest any fundamental loss of faith. Indeed, as will be seen in the discussion of the *Hoadly Ode* in Chapter Five, he evidently had a great deal of sympathy with the low-church latitudinarianism of Bishop Hoadly, while sharing the Bishop's distrust of sacerdotalism. Thus, these lines should be read as an attack on the high-church by a low-church dissenter, and not as an indication of atheism on the poet's part.

ODES TO CHARLES TOWNSHEND

Akenside addressed two poems to Charles Townshend (1725-1767). The longer, and more interesting, of these, the *Ode to the Honourable Charles Townshend, in the Country*, is dated 1750, while internal references suggest that it was written in the summer, thus post-dating the *Drake Ode 1750* by about six months. The shorter, the title of which differs by only one word, is called *Ode to the Honourable Charles Townshend, from the Country* (these will subsequently be referred to as *In the Country* and *From the Country*). Since *In the Country* contains what appears to be a reference back to *From*

the Country, and since, in addition, in this shorter poem, the poet himself states that he is writing at the end of the winter (or the beginning of spring), it seems probable that *From the Country* was written in about March 1750, and thus preceded the longer poem. Certainly it seems to have been written at the height of what was apparently a rather short-lived friendship. The text of the poem, as it appeared in *Poems* (1772), is as follows:

ODE
TO THE HONOURABLE CHARLES TOWNSHEND:
FROM THE COUNTRY

Say, Townshend, what can London boast
To pay thee for the pleasures lost,
     The health to-day resign'd,
When spring from this her favorite seat
Bade winter hasten his retreat,
     And met the western wind.

II.

Oh knews't thou how the balmy air,
The sun, the azure heavens prepare
     To heal thy languid frame,
No more would noisy courts ingage;
In vain would lying faction's rage
     Thy sacred leisure claim.

III.

Oft i look'd forth, and oft admir'd;
Till with the studious volume tir'd
     I sought the open day;
And sure, i cry'd, the rural gods
Expect me in their green abodes,
     And chide my tardy lay.

IV.

But ah in vain my restless feet
Trac'd every silent shady seat
     Which knew their forms of old:
Nor Naiad by her fountain laid,
Nor Wood-nymph tripping through her glade,
     Did now their rites unfold:

V.

Whether to nurse some infant oak
They turn the slowly-tinkling brook
     And catch the pearly showers,

Or brush the mildew from the woods,
Or paint with noontide beams the buds,
     Or breathe on opening flowers.

VI.

Such rites, which they with spring renew,
The eyes of care can never view;
     And care hath long been mine:
And hence offended with their guest,
Since grief of love my soul oppress'd,
     They hide their toils divine.

VII.

But soon shall thy inlivening tongue
This heart, by dear affliction wrung,
     With noble hope inspire:
Then will the sylvan powers again
Receive me in their genial train,
     And listen to my lyre.

VIII.

Beneath yon Dryad's lonely shade
A rustic altar shall be paid,
     Of turf with laurel fram'd:
And thou the inscription wilt approve;
"This for the peace which, lost by love,
     "By friendship was reclaim'd".

This is one of Akenside's more conventional odes, and has little overtly political or topical content. Its main interest must be the fact that it suggests that at this period the two men were involved in a friendship which was close enough for Akenside to turn to Townshend when he himself was suffering from disappointed love. Again, as was suggested in the case of Drake above, this friendship may well have begun on a professional basis. Unlike Drake, however, who was possibly something of a hypochondraic[34], Townshend had very real problems with his health; he

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34. Drake's physical illnesses seem frequently to have coincided with states of depression, as can be seen for example in letters from Rowe, Drake papers 346M ff 296, 314, 362, 367, 389.

suffered from epilepsy, and consequently spent much of his life consulting various physicians. He was certainly under the care of William Heberden (1710-1801) -- said to be another friend of Akenside's -- in February 1745, while later the same year he was being treated by a Dr Dealtry. By the end of 1747 he was being attended by Dr Caleb Hardinge (see above); and it seems quite possible that he also consulted Akenside[35]. Indeed, one purpose of the Ode to Townshend *From the Country* appears to be to remonstrate with him for breaking an engagement to visit the poet (in Hampstead, presumably); not, apparently, because of any pain it may have caused Akenside, but because of 'the health today resign'd'(3) -- Akenside seems to be speaking as much out of professional concern as out of friendship when he regretfully tells Townshend how effective the balmy spring air and the sun would have been in healing his 'languid frame'(7-9).

Although little is known of the details of Akenside's relationship with Townshend beyond the existence of these two poems and a certain amount of hearsay, other aspects of Townshend's life are extremely well documented. This is owing to the fact that, of all the recipients of Akenside's Odes, Townshend was not only the most considerable public figure in his own day, but is also the best remembered today, since he was the politician who was chiefly responsible for the introduction of the customs duties which in 1767 did so much to exacerbate relations between Britain and her American

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35. Numerous letters between Townshend and his father refer to his epilepsy; see for example *Townshend MSS* 359, and letters from the Townshend MSS at Raynham reprinted NBT 9-17. See NBT 8 for a reference to Heberden; NBT 12-13 for references to Dealtry; *Townshend MSS* 364 for a reference to Hardinge. For Akenside's friendship with Heberden, see Nichol's *Literary Anecdotes* viii 525.

colonies. In the mid-eighteenth century, he was very much in the public eye; Horace Walpole saw him as 'a young man of unbounded ambition, of exceeding application, and... of abilities capable of satisfying that ambition', and felt that he was 'marked by nature for leader[ship]' (*Mem. Geo. II* i 227-8). He was extremely well connected: his 'primitive, suspicious, vehement and oppressive' father (NBT 2) was Charles, 3rd Viscount Townshend, and his mother 'the famous Lady Townshend...you may...judge of her wit, her impudence and profligacy, by her being the known original of...Fielding's Lady Bellaston' (Stuart *Mem* 38). Henry Pelham and the Duke of Newcastle were his uncles. After studying for the law, he managed in 1747 to persuade his parsimonious father to subsidise his standing as M.P. for Great Yarmouth; in 1749, by means of his family connections, he secured a junior place on the Board of Trade; and later, by the same means, a place in the Admiralty. In 1755, he was to marry 'for interest-sake a disagreeable woman six or seven years older than himself', Caroline, widow of the Earl of Dalkeith, and daughter of the 2nd Duke of Argyll (Stuart *Mem* 34).

Certainly Akenside would have been drawn to Townshend's reputedly brilliant intelligence -- David Hume once described him as 'the cleverest fellow in England'[36] -- and to his obvious qualities of leadership; initially, too, he would presumably have responded to his undoubted personal charm, although some of his characteristics might well have come to trouble the more serious-minded poet. According to his step-daughter, Frances Lady Douglas, his 'private character' was:

> careless, gay, inconsiderate, volatile, seemingly foreign to

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36. David Hume to Adam Smith, 12 April 1759: *New Letters of David Hume*, ed. R. Klibansky and E.C. Mosser (Oxford, 1964) 54.

> every serious reflection or feeling. He had one of those happy tempers which nothing can ruffle, without a grain of pride sternness or resentment in his nature. Ready to laugh with every body and at every thing, he poured out wit in torrents; and it was so much the worse for truth if ever truth stood in wit's way....when once he had sprung the rattle adieu to strict veracity.
>
> (Stuart *Mem* 37).

It seems likely, too, that Akenside, who seems to have had strict views on sexual morality[37], would have come to disapprove of Townshend's conduct in this area, since 'with regard to women he was without doubt a man of pleasure, a libertine...' (Stuart *Mem* 38). Whether or not Townshend's unreliability, or his loose living, or some quite different factor contributed to the ending of his friendship with Akenside is impossible to say; Boswell conjectured that it had 'withered' because Townshend rose above Akenside in rank, but as has frequently been pointed out, he was in fact 'as much above Akenside in their earliest days as at any subsequent period'[38]. A careful reading of *In the Country*, however, seems to suggest a not entirely untroubled relationship. The text of the poem, first published in

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37. See for example his letter to Fordyce of 30 July 1743 deploring the subject matter of Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*: 'it is custom, corrupted custom, and not nature, which teaches us to annex ideas of contempt to [Joseph's] abstinence; for by vicious conversations and writings the world is deceived, to think it incongruous...' (reprinted Dyce lxxxix).

38. See Boswell: *Life* ed. G.B. Hill iii 3. Hill quotes the lines from *In the Country* about Akenside being 'not imprudent of my loss to come' (21-24) to support Boswell's theory. The comment is from one of Boswell's earlier editors, J.W. Crocker: see his *Life* (5 vols., 1831) iii 367-8.

Poems (1772), is as follows:

ODE
TO THE HONOURABLE CHARLES TOWNSHEND
IN THE COUNTRY
MDCCL

I.1.

HOW oft shall i survey
This humble roof, the lawn, the greenwood shade,
The vale with sheaves o'erspread,
The glassy brook, the flocks which round thee stray?
When will thy cheerful mind
Of these have utter'd all her dear esteem?
Or, tell me, dost thou deem
No more to join in glory's toilsome race,
But here content imbrace
That happy leisure which thou hads't resign'd? [10]

I.2.

Alas, ye happy hours,
When books and youthful sport the soul could share,
Ere one ambitious care
Of civil life had aw'd her simpler powers;
Oft as your winged train
Revisit here my friend in white array,
Oh fail not to display
Each fairer scene where i perchance had part,
That so his generous heart
The abode of friendship ever may remain. [20]

I.3.

For not imprudent of my loss to come,
I saw from contemplation's quiet cell
His feet ascending to another home
Where public praise and envied greatness dwell.
But shall we therefore, o my lyre
Reprove ambition's best desire?
Extinguish glory's flame?
Far other was the talk injoin'd
When to my hand thy strings were first assign'd:
Far other faith belongs to friendship's honor'd
name. [30]

II.1.

Thee, Townshend, not the arms
Of slumbering ease, nor pleasure's rosy chain,
Were destin'd to detain:
No, nor bright science, nor the Muse's charms.
For them high heaven prepares
Their proper votaries, an humbler band:

And ne'er would Spenser's hand
Have deign'd to strike the warbling Tuscan shell,
Nor Harrington to tell
What habit an immortal city wears,

II.2.

Had this been born to shield
The cause which Cromwell's impious hand betray'd,
Or that, like Vere, display'd
His redcross banner o'er the Belgian field.
Yet where the will divine
Hath shut those loftiest paths, it next remains,
With reason clad in strains
Of harmony, selected minds to inspire,
And virtue's living fire
To feed and eternize in hearts like thine.

II.3.

For never shall the herd, whom envy sways,
So quell my purpose or my tongue controul,
That i should fear illustrious worth to praise,
Because it's master's friendship mov'd my soul.
Yet, if this undissembling strain
Should now perhaps thine ear detain
With any pleasing sound,
Remember thou that righteous fame
From hoary age a strict account will claim
Of each auspicious palm with which thy youth was crown'd,

III.1.

Nor obvious is the way
Where heaven expects thee, nor the traveller leads,
Through flowers or fragrant meads,
Or groves that hark to Philomena's lay.
The impartial laws of fate
To nobler virtues wed severer cares.
Is there a man who shares
The summit next where heavenly natures dwell?
Ask him (for he can tell)
What storms beat round that rough laborious height.

III.2.

Ye heroes, who of old
Did generous England freedom's throne ordain;
From Alfred's parent reign
To Nassau, great deliverer, wise and bold;
I know your perils hard,
Your wounds, your painful marches, wintry seas,
The night estrang'd from ease,
The day by cowardice and falsehood vex'd,
The head with doubt perplex'd,
The indignant heart disdaining the reward

III.3.

Which envy hardly grants. But, o renown,
O praise from judging heaven and virtuous men,
If thus they purchas'd thy divinest crown,
Say, who shall hesitate? or who complain?
And now they sit on thrones above:
And when among the gods they move
Before the sovran mind,
"Lo, these," he saith, "lo, these are they
"Who to the laws of mine eternal sway
"From violence and fear asserted human kind." [90]

IV.1.

Thus honor'd while the train
Of legislators in his presence dwell;
If i may aught fortell,
The statesman shall the second palm obtain.
For dreadful deeds of arms
Let vulgar bards, with undiscerning praise,
More glittering trophies raise:
But wisest heaven what deeds may chiefly move
To favor and to love?
What, save wide blessings, or averted harms? [100]

IV.2.

Nor to the imbattled field
Shall these achievements of the peaceful gown
The green immortal crown
Of valor, or the songs of conquest, yield.
Not Fairfax wildly bold,
While bare of crest he hew'd his fatal way,
Through Naseby's firm array,
To heavier dangers did his breast oppose
Than Pym's free virtue chose,
When the proud force of Strafford he controul'd. [110]

IV.3.

But what is man at enmity with truth?
What were the fruits of Wentworth's copious mind
When (blighted all the promise of his youth)
The patriot in a tyrant's league had join'd?
Let Ireland's loud-lamenting plains,
Let Tyne's and Humber's trampled swains,
Let menac'd London tell
How impious guile made wisdom base;
How generous zeal to cruel rage gave place;
And how unbless'd he liv'd and how dishonor'd fell.[120]

V.1.

Thence never hath the Muse
Around his tomb Pierian roses flung:
Nor shall one poet's tongue

His name for music's pleasing labor chuse.
And sure, when nature kind
Hath deck'd some favor'd breast above the throng,
That man with grievous wrong
Affronts and wounds his genius, if he bends
To guilt's ignoble ends
The functions of his ill-submitting mind. [130]

V.2.

For worthy of the wise
Nothing can seem but virtue; nor earth yield
Their fame an equal field,
Save where impartial freedom gives the prize.
There Somers fix'd his name,
Inroll'd the next to William. There shall Time
To every wondering clime
Point out that Somers, who from faction's croud,
The slanderous and the loud,
Could fair assent and modest reverence claim. [140]

V.3.

Nor aught did laws or social arts acquire,
Nor this majestic weal of Albion's land
Did aught accomplish, or to aught aspire,
Without his guidance, his superior hand.
And rightly shall the Muse's care
Wreaths like her own for him prepare,
Whose mind's inamor'd aim
Could forms of civil beauty draw
Sublime as ever sage or poet saw,
Yet still to life's rude scene the proud ideas
tame. [150]

VI.1.

Let none profane be near!
The Muse was never foreign to his breast:
On power's grave seat confess'd,
Still to her voice he bent a lover's ear.
And if the blessed know
Their ancient cares, even now the unfading groves,
Where haply Milton roves
With Spenser, hear the inchanted echos round
Through farthest heaven resound
Wise Somers, guardian of their fame below. [160]

VI.2.

He knew, the patriot knew,
That letters and the Muses powerful art
Exalt the ingenuous heart,
And brighten every form of just and true.
They lend a nobler sway
To civil wisdom, than corruption's lure
Could ever yet procure:
They too from envy's pale malignant light

Conduct her forth to sight
Cloath'd in the fairest colors of the day. [170]

VI.3.
O Townshend, thus may Time, the judge severe,
Instruct my happy tongue of thee to tell:
And when i speak of one to freedom dear
For planning wisely and for acting well,
Of one whom glory loves to own,
Who still by liberal means alone
Hath liberal ends pursu'd;
Then, for the guerdon of my lay,
"This man with faithful friendship," will i say,
"From youth to honor'd age my arts and me hath
view'd" [180]

The first stanza of this poem contains what is almost certainly a deliberate echo of the shorter poem to Townshend. In the earlier poem, the poet was addressing Townshend *From the Country* in an attempt to persuade him to come and enjoy some 'sacred leisure' (12). In this later poem, he has achieved his object: Townshend is with him *In the Country*; that he is visiting Akenside rather than vice versa is indicated by the reference to 'this humble roof' (2) which is plainly not an expression which Akenside would use if he were describing Townshend's house. The poet asks him when he is going to get bored with the idyllic surroundings and, surely somewhat ironically, if he has decided to give up 'glory's toilsome race' and simply sit back and 'imbrace/That happy leisure which thou hads't resign'd' (5-10); a possible echo of *From the Country*, where it was Townshend's health that had been 'resign'd' by his failure to visit Akenside suggests an intentional reference back to the earlier poem, and reinforces the suggestion of irony.

So far, the tone seems to be light, as if the poet is teasing his friend; but in the next two stanzas more serious concerns, ones which perhaps more closely reflect Akenside's true feelings, start to make themselves felt. He expresses his hope that when Townshend is looking back

at what will seem a relatively untroubled youth before his entry into the 'ambitious care' of 'civil life' (11-14), those memories will include scenes in which the poet himself 'had part' (15-18); the worry seems to be that Townshend's desire for public success will bring about a 'loss' of friendship (21-4). He realises at once, however, that this is a selfish attitude which runs directly counter to his own expressed aims since he began to write poetry, as well as to the demands of 'friendship's honoured name' (25-30). As was apparent in the *Huntingdon Ode*, Akenside believes that 'The poet's name/He best shall prove/Whose lays the soul to noblest functions move' (vi.3); and this attempt, it transpires, is to be the purpose of the present Ode as well.

Akenside begins by telling Townshend that he is not destined to be detained either by 'slumbering ease', by 'pleasure's rosy chain', or even by the charms of science or of art (31-4). Other men, he says, ('an humbler band') have been chosen to perform these functions; and he argues that if Spenser or Harrington[39] had been destined to be great soldiers they would never have produced their poetry and prose (35-40)[40]. Only if the divine will shuts off those 'loftiest' possibilities should a man do the next best thing, which is to write poetry which will inspire 'selected minds' and

> virtue's living fire
> To feed and eternize in hearts like thine.
> (45-50).

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39. James Harrington (1611-1677), the political theorist, author of *The Commonwealth of Oceana* (1656), a work which David Hume described as 'the only valuable model of a commonwealth': 'The Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth'; Charles W. Hendel (ed.): *David Hume's Political Essays* (New York, 1953) 146.

40. Akenside's example of military bravery is Sir Horace Vere, Baron Vere of Tilbury (1565-1635) who distinguished himself on a number of occasions between 1590 and 1632 fighting against the Spanish in the Netherlands (see *DNB* XX 235-239).

He is not afraid, he goes on, of public opinion, which may suggest that he should not be setting out to praise Townshend's 'illustrious worth' simply because he happens also to be his friend (51-54).

Having stated his purpose, Akenside becomes even more directly admonitory. Do not forget, he tells Townshend, that you will have to give a 'strict account' in your old age of the means by which you achieved each 'auspicious palm' which crowned your youth (55-60); and do not expect, he continues, that the path will be either easy or pleasant (61-64). Fate weds 'severer cares' to 'nobler virtues'; Townshend only needs to ask anyone who has reached the summit of human achievement, and he will be told 'What storms beat round that rough laborious height' (65-70). Next, the poet turns to apostrophise the great 'heroes...of old', from 'Alfred's parent reign' to that of William III. He knows, he says, what a difficult and dangerous time they had of it (71-81); but knowing as we do that by this means they purchased the 'divinest crown' of virtue, and a place 'on thrones above' where they are praised by the 'sovran mind', how could anyone in the same position hesitate to do as they did? (81-90).

If legislators are assigned to the highest position of all, continues Akenside, then surely statesmen (such as, of course, Townshend himself) must obtain the 'second palm' (91-94); indeed, he himself believes that although 'vulgar bards' may bestow greater praise on 'dreadful deeds of arms', the achievements of peace are in fact greater than those of war (95-104). To illustrate his point, he evokes examples drawn from the previous century:

> Not Fairfax wildly bold,
> While bare of crest he hew'd his fatal way,
> Through Naseby's firm array,

> To heavier dangers did his breast oppose
> Than Pym's free virtue chose,
> When the proud force of Strafford he controul'd.
> (105-110)

Akenside's references are to the reign of Charles I and the Civil War. Fairfax is Thomas, 3rd Baron Fairfax (1612-1671), a notable parliamentarian general who became Cromwell's commander-in-chief in 1645; and Naseby his most famous victory, on Saturday 14 June 1645, when he brought the king to a battle and eventually to a decisive defeat entailing huge losses. By all accounts Fairfax himself displayed great courage on this occasion, leading several charges and personally capturing a standard[41].

In Akenside's view, however, this victory was at least equalled by that of Pym over Strafford. These two statesmen were the leading adversaries of the period immediately before the Civil War. John Pym (1584-1643) was a parliamentarian who, during the short parliament of April 1640, had taken the lead in the attack on Charles I, alleging that Charles's attempt to set up an arbitrary government was connected with a papist plot to destroy protestantism. As Akenside's poem states, he was also responsible for the impeachment of the man who had become Charles's most trusted statesman, Thomas Wentworth, 1st Earl of Strafford (1593-1641) (Akenside refers to him by both his names).

The next stanza (111-120) outlines some of the reasons why the poet considers Wentworth's overthrow to have been a victory by Pym on behalf of 'free virtue' (109). The opening line of this stanza, 'But what is man at enmity with truth?' suggests a parallel with *Curio* (for instance 'Can Art,

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41. See *DNB* VI 1005-1013.

alas! or Genius guide the Head,/Where Truth and Freedom from the Heart are fled?' (265-6)) which is significant, since Wentworth, like Pulteney, committed what could be viewed as an act of political apostasy. When Akenside says that he 'blighted all the promise of his youth' (113), he is referring to the fact that Wentworth first made his name in 1621 as a firmly moderate speaker in opposition to James I's declaration that the privileges of parliament were not the 'ancient and undoubted right' of the House. Throughout the mid-1620s he acted as the unacknowledged 'leader' of the House of Commons, arguing in favour of accommodating Charles if he would abandon his unconstitutional claims; in April 1628 he was the moving force behin ł the Petition of Rights.

His supposed political apostasy took place in the summer of 1628, when he accepted the title of Baron (later Viscount) Wentworth, and, in December, was made Lord President of the of the North. The 'trampled swains' of Tyne and Humber (116) are presumably the inhabitants of the northern counties, who, unused to being governed from so close at hand, demonstrated a spirit of fierce independence which Wentworth attempted to subdue.

In 1632, Wentworth was made Lord Deputy of Ireland, a post which he held for eight vexed years. When Akenside speaks of 'Ireland's loud-lamenting plains' (115), he is presumably referring to Wentworth's handling of the land question. In the mid-1630s, defending his action on the grounds that the land would be better tilled and managed under English landowners, he set up the Commission for Defective Titles, the function of which was to appropriate to the Crown all land to which a doubtful or confused claim was held. In practice, this amounted to a large-scale colonisation of Ireland,

and made bitter enemies for Wentworth of both the native Irish and the Roman Catholic 'old English' inhabitants[42].

Wentworth was created Earl of Strafford in 1640, and in that same year, in pursuance of the hostilities with Scotland, he requested the sum of £200,000 from the City of London (this is what Akenside means by 'menac'd London' (117)). At the start of the sitting of the long parliament in November 1640, Pym decided to call him to account; he was charged on 25 November with having:

> traiterously endeavoured to subvert the Fundamental Laws and Government of the Realms of *England* and *Ireland*, and instead thereof, to introduce an arbitrary and tyrannical Government against Law...
> (*LJ* iv 97);

and -- again mainly owing to the efforts of Pym -- he was executed on 12 May 1641[43].

Because Wentworth's 'generous zeal' gave way to 'cruel rage' (119), the poem continues, the Muses have never paid him a poetic tribute (121-124); and indeed, if any man has been singled out by nature with particular gifts, it 'affronts and wounds his genius' if he uses them for anything but noble and virtuous ends (125-134).

In complete contrast to Wentworth, Akenside points to Somers, who also appeared in the *Drake Ode 1750*. England would have accomplished nothing in the realm of either 'laws or social arts', he says, 'without his

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42. For a twentieth-century account of Wentworth's activities in Ireland, see Wedgwood 117-259; for the land question, see ibid. 169-175.

43. For a full discussion of Wentworth's career see Wedgwood passim. For the parliamentary battles with Pym, see A. J. Fletcher: *The Outbreak of the English Civil War* (New York and London, 1984) 4-17.

guidance, his superior hand' (135-144); thus, the Muse rightly prepares wreaths for him, since he was capable of drawing up truly sublime plans for civil life and of putting them into practice as well (145-150). Also greatly in Somers' favour, in Akenside's eyes, was the fact that 'The Muse was never foreign to his breast' (152-154). A friend of Addison, Swift and Congreve, and a founder-member of the Kit Kat Club, Somers not only wrote poetry himself -- including, for example, versions of *Ariadne to Theseus* and *Dido to Aeneas* -- but also helped to raise subscriptions for Tonson's edition of *Paradise Lost* (1688); hence the fact that Milton and Spenser bless Somers' name in the 'unfading groves' as the 'wise...guardian of their fame below' (155-160). Somers knew, as Akenside himself knows, the efficacy of letters and poetry for the purpose of exalting 'the generous heart' and of lending ' a nobler sway/To civil wisdom'...(161-170). Akenside's main source of information about Somers was probably Addison's *Freeholder* essay of 4 May 1716, the seventh edition of which had appeared as recently as 1746; this is a frankly eulogistic tribute written shortly after Somers' death, which represents him as:

> not more Conspicuous as a Patriot and a Statesman, than as a Person of universal Knowledge and Learning. As by dividing his Time between the publick Scenes of Business, and the private Retirements of Life, he took care to keep up both the Great and Good Man; so by the same Means he accomplished himself not only in the Knowledge of Men and Things, but in the Skill of the most refined Arts and Sciences[44].

As the poem ends, Akenside turns back to Townshend in order to point out the practical application of the examples he has been offering. His

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44. Joseph Addison: *The Freeholder*, ed. J. Leheny (Oxford, 1979) 211-212.

prayer is that he himself may be instructed by 'Time, the judge severe' to speak thus of Townshend himself; in other words, to be able to praise him 'for planning wisely and for acting well', and for pursuing 'liberal ends' by 'liberal means' (171-177). Only then, as a reward for his poetry, will he be happy to say that ' "This man with faithful friendship.../From youth to honour'd age my arts and me hath view'd" '(178-180).

Interestingly, then, the implication of this final stanza -- and of the admonitory earlier passage (55-70) -- seems to be that Akenside has some reason to be concerned about the means by which Townshend intends to rise to heights of political power. Since the poem was written very early in the politician's career, at a period which is, unfortunately, very badly documented as far as correspondence is concerned (see NBT 27), it is impossible to do more than speculate as to the reasons for Akenside's concern; indeed, it may well have been based on private discussions with Townshend, who, as far as his public life was concerned, was busily attending meetings at the Board of Trade and being assigned places on numerous committees in the House of Commons[45]. This Ode, then, seems to suggest that the friendship between Akenside and Townshend may have foundered not because Townshend dropped Akenside when he became too important and powerful, but because Akenside came to disapprove of the means by which Townshend set about achieving that power; certainly Horace

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45. For Townshend's attendance at Board of Trade meetings see A.H. Basye: *The Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations Commonly Known as the Board of Trade 1748-1782* (New Haven and London, 1925) Appendix A 221-2; for his placement on House of Commons committees, although his attendance is impossible to prove, see *CJ* XXV 892-1094. At the time when this poem was written, parliament would have been in summer recess.

Walpole wrote that, in 1753, finding that he was 'not rising in proportion to his ambition', Townshend:

> comforted himself with employing as many strategems, as had ever been imputed to the most successful statesmen...seem[ed] to have no passion but ambition...[and was] impetuous and unsteady...
> (*Mem Geo II* i 228).

The rather dismissive tone of a letter written by Akenside to Thomas Barratt-Lennard, Lord Dacre, on 9 November 1756, suggests that he had by then become disillusioned with his former friend:

> Charles Townshend, it seems, is gone out of town, dissatisfied that he cannot be secretary at war: Duke of Dev. having represented to Mr Pitt that he would be by no means agreeable to the great persons with whom he must transact the business of that office. So, Cofferer is talk'd of for him[46].

By the end of his life, Townshend appears to have acquired a reputation for untrustworthiness, as Smollett's posthumous portrait of him in *Humphry Clinker* (1771) makes clear:

> he certainly knows more than all the ministry and all the opposition, if their heads were laid together, and talks like an angel on a vast variety of subjects -- He would really be a great man, if he had any constancy or stability of character -- Then, it must be owned, he wants courage....Besides this defect, C[harles] has another, which he is at too little pains to hide -- There's no faith to be given to his assertions, and no trust to be put in his promises....As for principle, that's out of the question -- in a word, he is a wit and an orator, extremely entertaining, and he shines very often at the

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46. Essex Record Office D/DL C43/3/229. The occasion of the letter is the formation of the short-lived alliance between Pitt and Devonshire in the winter of 1756; the 'great persons' to whom Townshend has been representented as potentially disagreeable are presumably the Duke of Cumberland (no friend to the Townshend family) and the king. See NBT 45-48 for this episode in Townshend's life.

> expence even of those ministers to whom he is a retainer -- This is a mark of great imprudence, by which he has made them all his enemies, whatever face they may put upon the matter; and sooner or later he'll have cause to wish he had been able to keep his own counsel[47]

One final question needs to be answered in relation to this poem: why did Akenside choose to draw almost all his examples from the reign of Charles I and the Civil War? The most likely answer seems to be that this period would have come to his attention as a result of the recent publication of the second four-volume set of Lord Somers *Tracts* earlier that year. The second volume of this collection was almost entirely devoted to the 1640s, and contained, among other relevant material, Pym's speech in the House of Commons 'After the Articles of the Charge against the Earle of STRAFFORD were read' (1-3); and 'THE SPEECH of THOMAS WENTWORTH, late Earle of STRAFFORD, and Deaputy of *IRELAND*, in the TOWER, to the LORDS, before he went to Execution' (4-9). Wentworth's speech is full of impassioned rhetoric, and would certainly have made Akenside aware of the fact that he had been possessed of a 'copious mind'(112). It is also imbued with a sense of regret that he had been misled into taking the wrong path, which could well have helped to suggest to Akenside the solemn warnings which he passed on to Townshend:

> I could now wish...that God with his outward goodness towards me had so commixed his inward grace, that I had chused the *medium* path...but like *Icarus* with my waxen wings...I soared too high, and too near the Sun, by which they being melted; I ayming at the highest, am precipitated to the lowest: and am

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46. Tobias Smollet: *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771), ed. Lewis M. Knapp (Oxford, 1966) 114.

made a wretched prey to the Waters...
(6)[47].

Finally, it would be interesting to know what Akenside's reaction was when he learned of Townshend's death in September 1767 at the age of only 42. Failing that, the last word on Townshend must be Horace Walpole's famous comment to Mann on the occasion:

> our comet is set...! Charles Townshend is dead. All those parts and fire are extinguished, those volatile salts are evaporated, that first eloquence of the world is dumb, that duplicity is fixed, that cowardice terminated heroically. He joked on death as naturally as he used to do on the living...
> (Walpole: *Corresp.* 22. 551).

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47. Akenside could also have referred back to volume iv of the 1748 set of Somers *Tracts* , which contained 'Two speeches made by Sir Thomas Wentworth, now Earle of Strafford, in the Parliament holden at Westminster, 1628 [that is, just before his supposed apostasy]. The One concerning the Liberty of the Subject. The Other the priviledges of the House of Commons' (446-447); 'The Earle of Strafford's Speech on the Scaffold, before he was beheaded on Tower-Hill, the 12th of May, 1641' (448-449); and to another impassioned and moving document, 'The Speech of Thomas Earle of Strafford, intended to be spoken on the Scaffold the Day he was beheaded; (May 12 1641) but being interrupted, he deliver'd it to his brother, Sir George Wentworth, from whose Original Copy, under the Earl's own hand, this is word for word transcribed' (449-451). He might also have known *The Earl of Strafford's Letters and Despatches, with an Essay towards his Life by Sir George Radcliffe. From the Originals in the Possession of his Great Grandson the Right Honourable Thomas Earl of Malton, Knight of the Bath*, ed. William Knowler (2 vols., London, 1739).

CHAPTER FIVE

1751-1754

Of the five poems which were discussed in the previous chapter, none was published in Akenside's lifetime, and one (the *Drake Ode 1750*) failed to find a place even in the posthumous *Poems* (1772). The present chapter moves on to the period between 1751 and 1754. Four poems have survived from this period. Two of these, although not published straight away, made their appearance before the poet's death, while the other two were first printed in *Poems* (1772).

It was suggested in Chapter Four that the failure to publish immediately may have been owing in part to Akenside's desire to establish himself as a physician[1], and in part to the more informal and personal nature of his subject matter. Both these possibilities may still apply to some extent to the poem in this chapter. Certainly in the case of the *Ode to Thomas Edwards Esquire: On the Late Edition of Mr Pope's Works* (1751), a desire to avoid

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1. Certainly during the early 1750s Akenside was concentrating hard on furthering his medical career. In 1751 he had his preliminary interview, took two examinations, and was admitted as a licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians on 3 May, 6, 20 and 25 June respectively. In 1752 he applied for a Doctor's degree at Cambridge, which was conferred on him on 4 January 1753; on 2 and 9 February and 8 March of the same year he was examined as a candidate for a fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians; he was admitted as a candidate on 16 April, and on 8 April 1754 he was admitted a Fellow. In May 1755 he delivered the Gulstonian Lectures before the Royal College of Physicians; and on 30 September of that year he was chosen 4th Censor of the College (*H.M.C.* 8th Report, Part I Section 1 226b.).

reviving a long-standing personal controversy seems likely to have motivated the poet's unwillingness to publish the poem at once, although he appears to have considered the possibility of doing so at one point. In the case of the *Ode to Sir Francis Drake* (1754), informality and intimacy of tone almost certainly contributed to the decision; when Akenside revised the poem for publication (the version in *Poems* (1772) differs in many respects from the manuscript), many of his alterations were in the direction of increased formality and distance. The poet's reasons for not wishing to publish the *Ode to the Author of Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg* (1751), and the *Ode to the Right Reverend Benjamin Lord Bishop of Winchester* (1754), are less obvious; in any case, the second of these was presented to the public some three and a half years after it was written, as one of the poems which Akenside contributed to the sixth volume of Dodsley's *Collection*, which was published in March 1758[2].

A further point of interest may be noted in relation to the poems which Akenside wrote during this period: with the exception of the *Drake Ode 1754*, they were not written as a result of events in the immediate political sphere. In the case of the other three poems under discussion, the poet took as his starting point the recent publication of works of literature, history and theology. The first of these to be examined here will be the *Edwards Ode*,

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2 See Chapter Six below.

which was probably composed in the summer of 1751[3].

ODE TO THOMAS EDWARDS ESQ.

In order fully to understand Akenside's reasons for writing this poem, it is necessary to know something about the immediate circumstances surrounding its composition. In addition, Akenside's own involvement in the background of events made an important contribution both to the writing of the poem and to the decisions which he made regarding its publication.

The man to whom the poem was addressed, Thomas Edwards (1699-1757), appears to have been a personal acquaintance of Akenside, although little real evidence has survived in support of this fact[4]. Edwards was a barrister, and had kept chambers at Lincoln's Inn from 1727. Since 1740, however, he had spent most of his time on the estate which he had bought at Turrick, in Buckinghamshire. Here, he was able to engage in what was evidently his preferred pursuit, the study of literature. Edwards was a prolific letter-writer (the Bodleian Library holds six volumes of his manuscript letters), and much may be learned of his habits of mind from his correspondence. From the late

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3. The poem was not published until 1766, for reasons which will be discussed below.

4. Bucke alleged (48-49n.) that Edwards was the 'Phaedria' to whom Akenside had addressed an Ode entitled *To a Gentleman whose Mistress had married an Old Man* in the early 1740s (see *Odes* (1745), Ode IV p.19-22; the poem was re-entitled *To a Friend, Unsuccessful in Love* in *Odes* (1760) and in *Poems* (1772), where it appears as I. iii); but the manuscript of the poem, now in Amherst College Library, is addressed to 'S n' [sic]. However, since Dyson took chambers at Lincoln's Inn in the early 1740s (see Akenside's letter to him from Leyden, 7 April 1744, Dyce xxv-xxviii), it is likely that he and Akenside would have met Edwards there.

1740s, he had 'maintained a cordial, affectionate, and long-continued friendship'[5] with Samuel Richardson; and his letters to the novelist and printer reveal the seriousness -- relatively unusual at this period -- of his textual scholarship, and his genuine concern about the cavalier fashion in which so many contemporary editors were treating the great English poets. In March 1751, for instance, in response to a letter from Richardson urging him to undertake a new edition of Spenser, Edwards wrote that he had considered the possibility, and had begun to collate some early texts:

> but to give such an edition of that charming poet as he deserves, and as is really wanted, now when a great deal of his language is become obsolete, -- this is a work not to be done with a wet finger, and is, I doubt, beyond my strength; not to mention the collecting parallel places where he has imitated other authors....I will by no means engage myself to publish a work which I cannot perfect; for I should die with shame to be guilty of such crude unlicked performances as I justly blame in others. In short, I doubt nothing can be done to save our classic authors from such scandalous injuries as we do both lament, unless they can be rescued out of the hands of the book-sellers, who begin at quite the wrong end of the work. Instead of waiting till they can get a good edition of an author, they procure a competency of cuts, publish proposals, levy subscriptions, and then beat about for an undertaker, no matter whom, the cheaper the better, to perform their part of the contract they have made with the public. Can any thing good, any thing reputable either to themselves or to their authors, be the result of such preposterous proceedings?
>
> (Richardson: *Corresp.* iii 14-16).

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5. Richardson: *Corresp.* i p. cxcv. A biographical note on Edwards is prefixed to the 1758 (posthumous) edition of *Canons*. See also *DNB* vi 547.

This serious, and well-founded, concern had, in 1748, caused Edwards to publish the intelligent and witty piece of work for which he became well-known, the *Canons of Criticism*. The full title of this publication, on its first appearance in April 1748, goes some way towards explaining its content: *A Supplement to Mr Warburton's Edition of Shakespeare. Being the Canons of Criticism and Glossary, Collected from the Notes in that Celebrated Work and proper to be bound up with it*. By another Gentleman of Lincolns Inn (London, 1748)[6].

It was noted in Chapter Four above that when Akenside, in *The Remonstrance of Shakespeare*, made Shakespeare ask his audience:

> [What] though the frankness of my hardy style
> Mock the nice touches of the critic's file?
> (15-16)

he was almost certainly referring to the edition which had recently been published by William Warburton under the title: *The Works of Shakespear in Eight Volumes. The Genuine Text (Collated with all the former Editions, and then corrected and emended) is here settled: Being restored from the Blunders of the first Editors, and the Interpolations of the two Last: With a Comment and Notes, Critical and Explanatory*. By Mr Pope and Mr Warburton (8 vols.,London, 1747). Pope had, of course, died in May 1744. According to the terms of his will, Warburton, who had been his friend for many years,

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6. Subsequent editions of the work were entitled *The Canons of Criticism, and Glossary, Being a Supplement to Mr Warburton's Edition of Shakespeare. Collected from the Notes in that Celebrated Work, and Proper to be bound up with it*. The pseudonym 'Gentleman of Lincolns Inn' had been first appended to a criticism of Warburton's *Divine Legation* by Philip Carteret Webb in 1744.

inherited 'the property of such of my Works already printed as he hath written or shall write commentaries upon'[7]. Warburton had been working on Shakespeare for a number of years; and, according to his introduction to the 1747 edition:

> dear Mr POPE....was desirous I should give a new Edition of this Poet, as he thought it might contribute to put a stop to a prevailing folly of altering the Text of celebrated Authors without Talents or Judgment[8]. And he was willing that *his* Edition should be melted down into *mine*, as it would, he said, afford him...a fit opportunity of confessing his Mistakes.
>
> (Warburton: *Shakespeare* i p.xix).

Unfortunately this statement of Warburton's, combined with the way in which he executed his stated intention of 'restoring the Poet's genuine Text... in those Places...where it labours with inextricable Nonsense...' (Warburton: *Shakespeare* i p. xiii) laid him open to a number of attacks on his own methods of editing,

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7. For Pope's will, see *GM* xiv (June 1744) 313-314. Pope thought Warburton 'the greatest general critic I ever knew' (J. Spence: *Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters of Books and Men*, ed. J.M. Osborn (2 vols., Oxford, 1966) i 217).

8. Edwards used this somewhat injudicious statement against Warburton; see *Canons* (1st edn.) 17.

annotating and correcting[9]. Of these, by far the most popular, enduring, and damaging proved to be Edwards' *Canons*[10]. This is clearly attributable to the fact that it is the most astute. Unlike many of the participants in the numerous controversies in which Warburton became engaged (including Akenside), Edwards had no personal axe to grind[11]; his reason for publishing the work was the genuine concern for the state of contemporary scholarship which he had expressed in the letter to Richardson quoted above. Thus he never sinks to the level of personal abuse; the skill of his attack lies in the fact that he quite simply makes Warburton appear as his own worst enemy -- three quarters at least of the content of the *Canons* consists of quotations from Warburton's edition, interspersed with occasional comments from Edwards himself.

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9. Other attacks on Warburton's *Shakespeare* included two by Zachary Grey: *A Free and Familiar Letter to that great Refiner of Pope and Shakespeare, the very Rev. Mr William Warburton, Preacher of Lincoln's Inn. With Remarks upon the Epistle of Friend A.E. In which his Unhandsome Treatment of this celebrated Writer is expos'd in the Manner it deserves* (1750) and *Remarks upon a late Edition of Shakespeare. With a Long String of Emendations borrowed by the Celebrated Editor from the Oxford Edition in that Acknowledgment. To which is prefixed A Defence of the late Thomas Hanmer, Bart. Addressed to the Reverend Mr Warburton* , n.d. [1755]. See also John Upton: *Critical Observations on Shakespeare* (2nd edn., 1748); and Benjamin Heath: *A Revival of Shakespeare's Text, wherein the Alterations introduced into it by more modern Editors and Critics, are particularly considered* (1766).

10. The popularity of *Canons* is evident from the fact that five further editions of the work appeared; a second edition in 1748, a third and fourth in 1750, a fifth in 1753, and a sixth, following Edwards' death, in 1758.

11. A contributor to the *GM* in 1782 alleged that Warburton and Edwards had once met and engaged in a dispute (see *GM* lii (June, 1782) 288); but this story seems to have been untrue. See Evans: *Warburton* 158-159.

In his introduction to the *Shakespeare*, Warburton had asserted that:

> I once intended to have given the Reader a *body of Canons*, for literal Criticism, drawn out in form; as well such as concern the Art in general, as those that arise from the Nature and Circumstances of our Author's Works in particular.
>
> (Warburton: *Shakespeare* i p.xiii).

Again, further on in the Introduction, Warburton stated that 'I had it once, indeed, in my Design, to give a general alphabetic *Glossary*...' (Warburton: *Shakespeare* i p. xvi). These assertions are taken up by Edwards, who ironically puts himself forward as merely completing the work which Warburton had begun:

> Nothing seems wanting to this most perfect edition of Shakespear, but the CANONS or RULES *for Criticism*, and the GLOSSARY, which Mr Warburton left to be collected out of his Notes; both of which I have endeavoured, in some measure to supply, and have given examples to confirm and illustrate each Rule.
>
> (*Canons*, 1st. edn., 10-11).

The first edition contained twenty-one 'Canons' (more were added to subsequent editions). A few examples will demonstrate Edwards' procedure:

> CANON I
> *A Professed Critic has a right to declare, that his Author wrote whatever he thinks he should have written, with as much positiveness as if he had been at his elbow.*
>
> EXAMPLE
>
> 1. Vol. IV p. 330.
>
> "Never went with his forces into France"
>
> Shakespear wrote the line thus,
>
> "Ne'er went with his *full* forces into France"....
>
> (ibid. 12)

> CANON II
> *He has a right to alter any passage which he does not understand....*
>
> (ibid. 13)

> CANON IV
> *Where he does not like an expression, and yet cannot mend it, he may abuse his author for it.*

EXAMPLE

1. V. 353. *Henry VIII*

"My life itself, and the *best heart* of it".

and the best heart of it]. The expression is monstrous. The heart is supposed to be the seat of life: But as if he had many lives, and to each of them a heart, he says his *best heart*. A way of speaking, that would have become a cat rather than a king. WAR.

This example is commented on by Edwards:

> Poor Shakespear! your anomalies will do you no service, when once you go beyond Mr Warburton's apprehension; and you will find a profess'd critic is a terrible adversary, when he is thoroughly provoked: you must then speak by the card, or equivocation will undo you. How happy is it that Mr Warburton was either not so attentive, or not so angry, when he read these lines in *Hamlet*,
>
> "Give me that man,
> That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
> In my heart's core; aye, in my heart of heart" --
>
> We should then perhaps have heard, that this was a way of speaking, that would have rather become an apple than a prince.
>
> (ibid. 21-22)

Further Canons point to, among other things, Warburton's over-ingenious pedantry (CANON VI (22-23)), his readiness to perceive '*a bawdy or immoral meaning...where there does not appear to be any hint that way*' (CANON XII (42)), his tendency to abuse earlier editors (CANON XVII (49-50)) and his absurdly literal-minded annotations (CANON XX (53)).

Never one to let the opportunity to engage in controversy slip by, Warburton made use of his own next appearance in print to reply to Edwards. This happened to be in a new edition which he brought out in 1749 of Pope's *Dunciad*[12]. Thus, in a note to Book IV lines 567-8 of that poem ('Her Children

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12. The publication of Warburton's *Dunciad* was announced in 'Books and Pamphlets published January 1750', *GM* xx (January 1750) 48; but the title page bears the date 1749.

first of more distinguish'd sort,/Who study Shakespeare at the Inns of Court'), Warburton attacks Edwards as one of 'those whom DULNESS has *distinguished*', suggests that he has no right to call himself a '*Gentleman*', and says that he is 'nothing but a Grub Street Critic run to Seed', a member of:

> That worthless band... Who, with an understanding too dissipated and futile for the offices of *civil* life; and a heart too lumpish, narrow, and contracted for those of *social*, become fit for nothing: And so turn *Wits* and *Criticks*, where sense and civility are neither required nor expected.
>
> (Warburton: *Dunciad* 66-67).

The following year, 1750, a 3rd edition of *Canons* was published. As well as adding four new Canons, a great many more examples, and an Appendix which set out to show that Warburton used the same Canons 'in his notes on other Authors, and in other works' (*Canons*, 3rd. edn., 165), Edwards also prefixed a Preface in which he defended himself against Warburton's attacks at some length. One passage in particular must certainly have acted as a strong irritant to Warburton, who was presumably sensitive about his own relatively humble background and the fact that he was largely self-educated[13]:

> Who is Mr. Warburton? what is his birth, or whence his priviledge? that the reputations of men both living and dead, of men in birth, character, station, in every instance of true worthiness much his superiors, must lie at the mercy of his petulant satire, to be hacked and mangled as his ill-mannered spleen shall prompt him; while it shall be unlawful for any body, under penalty of degradation, to laugh at the unscholar-like blunders, the crude and far fetch'd conceits, the illiberal and indecent reflections, which he has endeavoured with so much self-sufficiency and arrogance to put off upon the world as a standard of true criticism?
>
> (*Canons*, 3rd. edn., 7).

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13. For Warburton's background and education, see Evans: *Warburton* 3-8.

Finally, Edwards answered accusations that he had 'done injury both to Mr Warburton and his bookseller' by pointing out that if the *Canons* had prevented the sale of Warburton's edition, 'it must be because the objections it contains...are well grounded; otherwise, a little twelve-penny pamphlet could never stop the progress of eight large octavo volumes...' (*Canons*, 3rd. edn., 10).

At the time when Edwards' third edition was published, Warburton was engaged in editing Pope's complete works. It is no surprise to find, therefore, that when Warburton's *Pope* was published in June 1751 it contained not only the previously published note to the *Dunciad*, somewhat augmented (Warburton: *Pope* v 287-288) but also another equally gratuitous slur on Edwards in the form of a note on the *Essay on Criticism* (463) which accused Edwards of being a critic with neither 'parts' nor 'learning' (Warburton: *Pope* i 188-189)[14]. It was in response to this edition of *Pope* that Akenside wrote his Ode to Edwards. The text quoted is that of the first (1766) edition:

ODE
TO
THOMAS EDWARDS, Esq.
ON THE LATE EDITION OF
MR. POPE'S WORKS.
MD.CC.LI.

I.
Believe me, EDWARDS, to restrain
The licence of a railer's tongue

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14. The *Monthly Review*'s review of Warburton's *Pope*, while paying tribute to Warburton's 'talents as a critic, as well as a philosopher and divine', was also of the opinion that:

> some readers may think many of the observations and explanations unnecessary to readers of tolerable capacity; and that the sarcasms and lashes which our annotator has so freely interspersed and bestowed upon some living writers of no mean rank, might well have been spared.
>
> (*MR* v (July 1751) 97-102).

Is what but seldom men obtain
By sense or wit, by prose or song:
A task for more Herculean powers,
Nor suited to the sacred hours
Of leisure in the MUSE's bowers.

II.

In bowers where laurel weds with palm
The MUSE, the blameless queen, resides:
Fair fame attends, and wisdom calm
Her eloquence harmonious guides:
While, shut for ever from her gate,
Oft trying, still repining wait
Fierce envy and calumnious hate.

III.

Who then from her delightful bounds
Would step one moment forth to heed
What impotent and savage sounds
From their unhappy mouths proceed?
No: rather SPENSER's lyre again
Prepare, and let thy pious strain
For POPE's dishonour'd shade complain.

IV.

Tell how displeas'd was every bard,
When lately in the Elysian grove
They of his Muse's guardian heard,
His delegate to fame above;
And what with one accord they said
Of wit in drooping age misled,
And WARBURTON's officious aid:

V.

How VIRGIL mourn'd the sordid fate
To that melodious lyre assign'd
Beneath a tutor who so late
With Midas and his rout combin'd
By spiteful clamor to confound
That very lyre's enchanting sound,
Though listening realms admired around:

VI.

How HORACE own'd he thought the fire
Of his friend POPE's satiric line
Did farther fuel scarce require
From such a militant divine:
How MILTON scorn'd the sophist vain
Who durst approach his hallow'd strain
With unwash'd hands and lips profane.

VII.

Then SHAKESPEARE debonnair and mild
Brought that strange comment forth to view;
Conceits more deep, he said and smil'd,
Than his own fools or madmen knew:
But thank'd a generous friend above,
Who did with free adventurous love
Such pageants from his tomb* remove.

VIII.

And if to POPE, in equal need, [50]
The same kind office thou would'st pay,
Then, EDWARDS, all the band decreed
That future bards with frequent lay
Should call on thy auspicious name,
From each absurd intruder's claim
To keep inviolate their fame.

* See the Canons of Criticism by Mr EDWARDS [Akenside's note].

Akenside's message to Edwards in this poem may be simply stated: don't waste your time and talents in replying to Warburton on his own terms, but instead attack him where it will hurt him most, by demonstrating the failings of his critical abilities. The poem's opening ('Believe me, EDWARDS...') is characteristic of the poet at his most informal (compare 'Say, Townshend...' (*From the Country* 1)), giving the reader the impression that he is listening to a conversation which has already begun, and that Akenside is replying to a statement which has just been made by Edwards. The suggestion is that the two men had been discussing Warburton's latest onslaught against Edwards in the recently published *Pope*, and that Edwards has expressed the intention of publishing some form of defence. The poem then shows Akenside attempting to dissuade him from this course of action, which he suggests is fraught with difficulty and highly unlikely to succeed, whatever approach or vehicle may be used, whether 'sense or wit...prose or song' (1-4). Furthermore, he continues, such an undertaking assorts ill with the creative process, which is traditionally associated with the positive values of good reputation ('Fair

fame') and 'wisdom calm', which help to promote eloquence and harmony (5-11). By definition, qualities such as 'Fierce envy and calumnious hate' (such as are displayed, presumably, by Warburton) have no place in this rarified atmosphere (12-14); and Edwards is advised to ignore their ineffective and disharmonious expression (15-18). Instead, he is urged to take up again his previous instrument -- that is, supposedly, criticism, to which Akenside refers as 'Spenser's lyre' presumably because he knows that Edwards is working on Spenser at this period (see the letter to Richardson quoted above) and intends a compliment, rather than because he wishes to compare Edwards' style or methods with those of Spenser -- and use it to complain on Pope's behalf against the dishonour which has just been done to his memory (19-21).

Akenside then goes on to invoke a scene which he imagines as having taken place recently in 'the Elysian grove', when the poets there gathered heard the news of Warburton's edition (22-25). They are presented as having been in complete agreement in deprecating the fact that the aging Pope had come under Warburton's influence and allowed the prelate to have a free hand in editing his works (26-28). According to Akenside, Virgil was particularly concerned about:

> the sordid fate
> To that melodious lyre assign'd
> Beneath a tutor who so late
> With Midas and his rout combin'd
> By spiteful clamor to confound
> That very lyre's enchanting sound
> Though listening realms admired around.
>
> (29-35).

These somewhat puzzling lines are partially explained by Akenside's 1766 note:

> During Mr POPE's war with THEOBALD, CONCANEN, and the rest of their tribe; Mr. WARBURTON, the present Lord Bishop of *Gloucester*, did with great zeal cultivate their friendship; having been introduc'd, forsooth, at the meetings of that respectable confederacy: a favor,

> which he afterwards spoke of in very high terms of complacency and thankfulness. At the same time, in his intercourse with them, he treated Mr. POPE in a most contemptuous manner, and as a writer without genius. Of the truth of these assertions his Lordship can have no doubt, if he recollects his own correspondence with CONCANEN; a part of which is still in being, and will probably be remember'd as long as any part of this prelate's writings.

For reasons which will become apparent when the circumstances of the poem's publication are discussed below, Akenside wished in 1766 to make Warburton as uncomfortable as possible; and he chose to do so not only by publishing the poem itself, but also by reminding Warburton of some facts about his own past which he would undoubtedly have preferred to have concealed. The 'correspondence with CONCANEN...which is still in being' to which Akenside refers was a letter from Warburton to Matthew Concanen (1701-1749), whom Pope had attacked in *The Dunciad* (see ii 130 and note), dated 2 January 1726. The chief target of the letter is Addison, whom Warburton accuses of plagiarism; but he also says of Pope that he 'borrows for want of genius' -- a remark which would certainly have embarrassed Pope's subsequent friend and editor[15].

Horace, who appears next, recognises Pope as a fellow satirist, and takes the view that his gifts can well stand on their own, without any assistance from Warburton (36-39). Milton is represented as taking the most exalted view of Pope's poetry; he calls it a 'hallow'd strain', and wonders how Warburton dare approach it with 'unwash'd hands and lips profane' (40-42). Shakespeare, however, who is the last to appear, has a more tangible contribution to make, since he is able to bring 'that strange comment [Warburton's edition of his own works] forth to view':

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15. For a discussion of the relationship between Pope and Warburton, see Evans: *Warburton* 71-93; and Maynard Mack: *Alexander Pope: A Life* (New Haven and London, 1985) 741-745.

> Conceits more deep, he said and smil'd,
> Than his own fools and madmen knew:
> But thank'd a generous friend above,
> Who did with free adventurous love
> Such pageants from his tomb remove.
> (43-49).

By this means, Akenside has been able neatly to bring his poem back to Edwards; and he now finishes it by telling him that if he will pay 'the same kind office' to Pope, who is now 'in equal need', then the assembly of poets have decreed that his 'auspicious name' will be invoked by 'future bards' so that he can 'keep inviolate their fame' (50-56).

No correspondence between Edwards and Akenside has been preserved, and so no record exists of Edwards' immediate response to this ode. Interestingly enough, however, it appears that, early in the following year, Richardson also urged Edwards to 'vindicate' Pope; and Edwards' reply gives a fair indication of his reasons for not wishing to do so. For one thing, says Edwards, although he admired Pope as a poet, he 'never had any great opinion of him in any other light....he was certainly a very ill-natured man; and can such a one easily be a good man?' But even if he were so disposed, Edwards goes on:

> what can I vindicate? Not the morality of his essays, for I think it very faulty. Mr Warburton has, indeed, tinkered it in some places to make it look orthodox, but yet it will not hold water: what then will become of it, when these patches are taken off? Would it not be ruining the poet to chastise his commentator? And as to any alterations in the text, who can prove against him, who has all Mr Pope's papers, what is and what is not genuine? Upon the whole, whatever the consequences may be as to Mr Pope's reputation, I think he deserves them for his ill-judged confidence; and I fear my attacking Mr Warburton in his defence would look like spleen and resentment for his unworthy treatment of me, rather than an honest justification of a cause perhaps not very defensible. But I really believe he will not suffer much from his commentator; and that he, as well as a much better man, Shakespeare, will soon get rid of the

> lumber which at present encumbers them, and emerge to posterity clear of their heavy annotator.
> (Richardson: *Corresp.* iii 43-45)[16].

The next question to be considered is why Akenside chose not to publish the *Edwards Ode* at the time of writing. It appears that he had considered the possibility of publication, probably fairly soon after the poem's composition; since Edwards stated as much to Daniel Wray, a mutual friend, in a letter of 28 April 1756:

> I hope the Dr [Akenside] will publish the Ode you mention to the Bishop of Winchester[17]. I could have wished he had not recalled the liberty he once gave me to print that he honoured me with.
> (MSS. Bodl. 1012).

It must be assumed that Akenside's reasons were connected with his own relations with Warburton, which had originated at the time of the publication of *The Pleasures of Imagination*, in January 1744. As has been stated above, many of the ideas in that poem originated in the writings of Shaftesbury. One such idea was the theme with which the poet engages in Book Three, that ridicule may be used as the test of truth[18]. Warburton, who was no great friend to Shaftesbury or to his doctrines, had attacked this idea at some length in an ironic 'Dedication to the Freethinkers', prefixed to the first

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16. Edwards did, however, write three sonnets attacking Warburton; see Chapter Six below.

17. This is the *Hoadly Ode*, which will be discussed below.

18. See *Pleasures* (1744) iii 70-278.

volume of his *Divine Legation*[19]. When Akenside's poem was published, Warburton seized upon a note to iii 260-265, which stated that:

> one cannot without astonishment reflect on the conduct of those men who imagine it is for the service of true religion to vilify and blacken [our natural sense of the ridiculous] without distinction, and endeavour to persuade us that it is never applied but in a bad cause...
>
> (*Pleasures* (1744) p. 105).

and assumed that the poet was making a direct reference to himself. Two months later, therefore, when Warburton published his *Remarks on Several Occasional Reflections...*[20], he attached a Preface attacking 'the nameless author' of the poem, suggesting that he must be, at best, a deist, if not an atheist, and referring to him throughout, with heavy irony, as 'our poet'. Six weeks later, an anonymous 30 page pamphlet was published under the title: *An Epistle to the Rev. Mr Warburton. Occasioned by his Treatment of the Author of the Pleasures of Imagination*[21]. Although this pamphlet, which closely examines Warburton's Preface, points out the flaws in his reasoning, and sets out to defend the poem, has been attributed to Dyson, Akenside's biographers have

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19. This work was published in two parts. The first, which contained the remarks referred to, appeared as *The Divine Legation of Moses demonstrated, on the Principles of a Religious Deist, from the Omission of the Doctrine of a Future State of Reward and Punishment in the Jewish Dispensation. In Six Books.* (London, 1738)

20. *Remarks on Several Occasional Reflections: In Answer to the Rev. Dr Middleton, Dr Pococke, the Master of the Charter House, Dr Richard Grey, and others. Serving to explain and justify divers passages in the Divine Legation objected to by these learned Writers. To which is added, A General Review of the Argument of the Divine Legation, as far as it is yet advanced: wherein is considered the Relation the several Parts bear to each other, and to the Whole. Together with an Appendix in answer to a late Pamphlet entitled, An Examination of Mr Warburton's Second Proposition* (London, 1744).

21. For publication see *Daily Post* of 1 May 1744.

suggested that Akenside wrote it himself[22]. Since Akenside himself, in a letter to Dyson from Leyden dated 7 April 1744, asked his friend to call at Dodsley's, where the printer would 'give you a copy of that answer to Warburton' (quoted Dyce xviii), this seems a strong probability.

By the time of the writing of the *Edwards Ode*, in the summer of 1751, this controversy had been quiescent for a number of years. It seems logical to assume that Akenside reconsidered his decision to allow Edwards to publish the poem because he was unwilling to revive Warburton's animosity; that he was still sensitive even at this late date is evident from a letter which he wrote to Thomas Birch on 28 September 1754:

> I see this instant in the Public Advertiser that Dr Warburton is made King's Chaplain & enters into waiting immediately. Can you tell me whether this be true? If there be any hazard of finding him at Kensington, I shall not go thither today.
> (Add. MS 4300 f.52).

A few years later, after Edwards' death, Akenside evidently considered again the possibility of attacking Warburton in print, and again decided against the idea; this time the poem in question was the unpublished *Epode* (to be discussed in Chapter Six below). His eventual decision to publish the *Edwards Ode* in May 1766[23], was obviously a direct result of the fact that a month earlier Warburton had brought out the 5th edition of the *Divine*

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22. See Dyce xiv, Houpt 81-82.

23. *St James's Chronicle*, 1 May 1766.

Legation[24] and had chosen to reprint in somewhat revised, but no less vituperative, form the attack on Akenside which had originally appeared as the Preface to *Remarks*... in 1744, now re-entitled 'A Postscript to the Dedication to the Freethinkers'[25]. Warburton's reasons for wishing at this stage to revive this controversy are not clear; but it is evident that Akenside saw no reason to withold any longer his own attack, together with the reference to the letter to Concanen.

ODE TO THE AUTHOR OF MEMOIRS OF THE HOUSE OF BRANDENBURGH

This poem was also written in 1751, and also took as its starting point the publication of a literary work, as Akenside's own note to the poem explains:

> In the year 1751 appeared a very splendid edition, in quarto, of *Memoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg, à Berlin & à la Haye*; with a privilege signed FEDERIC; the same being engraved in imitation of hand-writing...

As the note suggests, the author of this work was Frederick the Great of Prussia; its full title was *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg. Précédez d'un Discours Préliminaire, & Suivis de trois*

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24. *London Chronicle*, 3 April 1766.

25. *The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated in Nine Books. The Fifth Edition, Corrected and Enlarged. By William, Lord Bishop of Gloucester* (6 vols., London, 1766) i pp. xxxiii-xlvi (misnumbered for pp. xlix-lxx).

Dissertations, sur la Religion, les Moeurs, le Gouvernement du Brandebourg, & d'une quatrième sur les Raisons d'Etablir ou d'Abroger les Loix, le tout enrichi de Cartes & de Tables Géographiques & Généalogiques. Nouvelle édition, revuë, corrigée & augmentée. (2 vols., Berlin et La Haye, 1751). The 'privilege' to which Akenside refers is printed on the title page:

> *PRIVILEGE POUR LE LIBRAIRE DU ROI*
> *Jean Neaulme.*
>
> Il est permis au Libraire Privilegié Jean Neaulme d'Imprimer les Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg; en tels format, Papier et Caractere qu'il lui conviendra, et de les vendre et débiter, tant en Hollande, que dans sa Maison à Berlin; avec défence expresse à tous libraires et Imprimeurs dans les Etats de sa Majesté, de vendre, imprimer ou débiter ledit livre, sous peine de Confiscation des Exemplaires et d'une amende de Cinq cent Ecus pour chacun des Exemplaires, ainsy contrefaits, qui pourront être saisis dans les Etats de sa Majesté, ladite amende au profit des Pauvres du lieu ou se sera faite ladite Confiscation, et permis audit Jean Neaulme de faire Imprimer le présent Privilége à la tête des Editions dudit Livre et partout où besoin sera.
> Donné à Potsdam le 22 Juillet 1750.
>
> Féderic.

The *Mémoires* had originated between 1747 and 1749, in the form of a series of dissertations written by Frederick to be read at various sessions of his newly re-formed Berlin Academy[26]. In 1750 he decided to publish the entire work.

The arrival in Britain of the 'very splendid edition' to which Akenside

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26. For details of readings, see Preuss: *Oeuvres* i p.xxxvii. The dissertations were published in *Histoire de l'Academie Royale des Sciences et Belles Lettres, Année 1746* (Berlin, 1748), 337-377; *Année 1747* (Berlin, 1749) 387-428; *Année 1748* (Berlin, 1750) 395-424. For a discussion of Frederick's ideals for, and contributions to the Berlin Academy, see Wilhelm Dilthey: 'Friedrich der Grosse und die deutsche Aufklärung' in *Studien zur Geschichte des deutschen Geistes*, vol. iii of *Gesammelte Schriften* (Leipzig, 1927), reprinted as 'Frederick and the Academy' in Paret 177-197.

refers had been preceded by that of a one-volume version of the work, entitled *Mémoires Pour Servir à l'Histoire de Brandebourg. De Main de Maître. Avec quelques autres Pièces intéressantes* (1750)[27]. It was quickly followed by an English version: *Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg. From the earliest Accounts, to the Death of Frederick I King of Prussia. By the Hand of a Master. To which are added, by the same Author, Two Dissertations. The First on Manners, Customs, Industry, and the Progress of the Human Understanding in the Arts and Sciences. The Second on Superstition and Religion* (London, 1751). Frederick's name did not appear on the title pages of either of these versions, and the announcement of the publication of the English translation in the *GM* stated that the work was 'said to be compiled by Voltaire from the Royal Archives'[28].

At all events, as has been seen, Akenside makes it clear that the edition which he read was the 1751 revised version of the work. Although his ode is dated 1751, and was presumably written soon after he obtained a copy of the

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27. This edition, which differs in a number of minor respects from the version of 1751, is not included by J.D.E. Preuss in the list of editions of *Mémoires* which he gives in his *Oeuvres de Frederic le Grand* (Preuss: *Oeuvres* i pp. xxxv-xxxviii).

28. 'Books published January 1751', *GM* xxi (Jan. 1751) 47. The *Monthly Review* for January 1751 was of the same opinion (*MR* iv (Nov. 1750- Jan. 1751) 201.

Berlin edition, it was apparently not published until it appeared in *Poems*: (1772):

ODE

TO THE AUTHOR OF MEMOIRS OF THE HOUSE OF BRANDENBURGH:

MDCCLI

I.

The men renown'd as chiefs of human race,
And born to lead in counsels or in arms,
Have seldom turn'd their feet from glory's chace
To dwell with books or court the Muse's charms.
Yet, to our eyes if haply time hath brought
Some genuine transcript of their calmer thought,
There still we own the wise, the great, or good;
And Caesar there and Xenophon are seen,
As clear in spirit and sublime of mien,
As on Pharsalian plains, or by the Assyrian flood. [10]

II.

Say thou too, Frederic, was not this thy aim?
Thy vigils could the student's lamp ingage,
Except for this? except that future fame
Might read thy genius in the faithful page?
That if hereafter envy shall presume
With words irreverent to inscribe thy tomb,
And baser weeds upon thy palms to fling,
That hence posterity may try thy reign,
Assert thy treaties, and thy wars explain,
And view in native lights the hero and the king. [20]

III.

O evil foresight and pernicious care!
Wilt thou indeed abide by this appeal?
Shall we the lessons of thy pen compare
With private honor or with public zeal?
Whence then at things divine those darts of scorn?
Why are the woes, which virtuous men have borne
For sacred truth, a prey to laughter given?
What fiend, what foe of nature urg'd thy arm
The Almighty of his scepter to disarm?
To push this earth adrift and leave it loose from heaven? [30]

IV.

Ye godlike shades of legislators old,

Ye who made Rome victorious, Athens wise,
Ye first of mortals with the bless'd inroll'd,
Say did not horror in your bosoms rise,
When thus by impious vanity impell'd,
A magistrate, a monarch, ye beheld
Affronting civil order's holiest bands?
Those bands which ye so labor'd to improve?
Those hopes and fears of justice from above,
Which tam'd the savage world to your divine commands? [40]

Akenside's note on the origin of the poem, quoted on p. 213 above, follows here; the poet's notes then continue:

> In this edition, among other extraordinary passages, are the two following, to which the third stanza of this ode more particularly refers:
> Page 163.] *Il se fit une migration* (the author is speaking of what happened of the revocation of the edict of *Nantes*) *dont on n'avoit guere vu d'exemples dans l'histoire: un peuple entier sortit du royaume par l'esprit de parti en haine du pape, & pour recevoir sous un autre ciel la communion sous les deux especes: quatre cent mille ames s'expatrierent ainsi & abandonnerent tous leur biens pour detonner dans d'autres temples les vieux pseaumes de Clement Marot.*
> Page 242.] *La crainte donna le jour à la credulité, & l'amour propre interessa bientot le ciel au destin des hommes*[29].

As stanza three and his notes suggest, Akenside's poem is a response to certain opinions on the subject of religion which Frederick has expressed in his *Mémoires*, and which the poet finds to be inconsistent with the public character which he thinks a ruler should present to the world. He begins his poem with the observation that great leaders, whether civil or military, rarely

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29. Apart from the fact that he writes 'une migration' for 'une émigration' and (following common eighteenth century practice) fails to note that his first quotation continues onto page 164, Akenside's quotations are accurate, although he omits much of the capitalisation, and most of the accents, of the original. The 1751 *Mémoires* is a two volume work; but the page numbering follows through from volume one (which contains the first quotation) to volume two (from which the second has been taken).

abandon the pursuit of glory in order to write books or poetry (1-4). When -- as in the case of Caesar or Xenophon -- they have done so, however, this has ensured that their finer qualities have been made all the more obvious to posterity, and has brought them as vividly before us as if they were alive today (5-10). He goes on to assume that Frederick has had a comparable aim in view: in case his reputation should diminish with the passing of time, he has produced this work so that posterity may judge him fairly, and 'view in native lights the hero and the king' (11-20)[30].

'O evil foresight and pernicious care!' (21), exclaims the poet. Does Frederick really wish this work to represent him in the fields either of 'private honor' or of 'public zeal'? (22-24). Why, then, has he expressed such questionable opinions on the subject of 'things divine' (25)?

> Why are the woes, which virtuous men have borne
> For sacred truth, a prey to laughter given?
>
> (26-27).

As Akenside's note to these lines makes clear, this is a reference to the passage in *Mémoires* where Frederick is discussing Louis XIV's revocation of the Edict of Nantes which had allowed the Huguenots the liberty to practise the protestant religion. The poet's objection is to the flippant tone which Frederick uses to discuss what to him is no joking matter, since the Huguenots' voluntary exile and relinquishment of all their possessions in pursuit of

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30. Such an assumption was possibly a little unfair to Frederick, who appears to have had a genuine, if misplaced, desire to shine in the field of literature for its own sake -- hence his large output of poetry, for example. See, however, Horace Walpole's comment that 'the King of Prussia [wrote] verses only to prove he was an universal genius' (Walpole: *Corresp.* 40. 301).

'sacred truth' (27) was, in his view, a wholly exemplary act. In fact, although the flippancy is indubitably present, it is modified to some extent in the original by the comments -- not included by Akenside -- which immediately precede and follow this passage: Frederick begins his account of these events by speaking of Louis' act as a persecution[31]; and goes on to say that England and Holland had been enriched by the industry of those who had settled there[32].

In the final lines of this stanza, the poet moves on to the second of the 'extraordinary passages' to which he has taken exception:

> What fiend, what foe of nature urg'd thy arm
> The Almighty of his scepter to disarm?
> To push this earth adrift and leave it loose from heaven?
> (28-30).

The passage to which this refers has been taken from the section of the second volume of *Mémoires* which is entitled 'De la Superstition et de la Religion'. Here again, Akenside has been carefully selective in his choice of illustration: Frederick is not, in fact, discussing the growth of the Christian religion, as the poet's outraged tone implies, but of 'tous [les] cultes différens' which were followed by the early pagans of ancient Germany, in

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31. 'Louis XIV, dont la Politique avoit protégé les Protestans d'Allemagne contre l'Empereur, persécuta ceux de son Roïaume qui étoient inquiets...'(*Mémoires* i 163).

32. '[B]eaucoup enricherent L'Angleterre & la Hollande de leur industrie' (*Mémoires* i 164). Compare Frederick's statement, in a letter to d'Alembert,18 December 1770, that he was most obliged to Louis XIV for the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, because it had freed free-thinking protestant philosophers to come to Prussia (Preuss: *Oeuvres* xxiv 579-580).

which, as he goes on to say:

> tout fut adoré; l'Encens fuma pour des Champignons; le Crocodile eut des Autels; les Statues des Grands hommes, qui les premiers avoient gouverné des Nations, eurent des Temples & des Sacrificateurs; & dans le tems où des afflictions générales désoloient un païs, la Superstition redoubloit.
>
> (*Mémoires* ii 242-243).

Even though the quotations which Akenside has chosen may have been pruned in order to prove the point which he wishes to make, he has nevertheless accurately deduced from the *Mémoires* the undoubted fact that Frederick's religious beliefs were far from orthodox, if, indeed, they existed at all. To some extent this may be attributed to the influence of Voltaire, with whom the king had been in communication since 1736; but it is clear that from an early age Frederick had been beset with doubts about Christianity, perhaps as a result of the rigidity of the early training in religion which had been imposed on him by his tyrannical father[33]. Certainly as early as 1736 Frederick was requesting Antoine Achard (1696-1772), the pastor of the French church of Werder, in Berlin, to resolve recurring religious doubts:

> J'avoue, monsieur, que j'attends une grande édification des peines que vous vous donnerez, car j'ai malheur d'avoir la foi très-faible, et il me faut étayer souvent par des bonnes raisons et des arguments solides.
>
> (*Oeuvres* xvi 125-126).

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33. For a discussion of Frederick's early religious training and his eventual questioning and rejection of his father's religious beliefs, see Carl Hinrichs: 'Der Konflict zwischen Friedrich Wilhelm I und Kronprinz Friedrich', in *Preussen alshistorisches Problem* (Berlin, 1964), reprinted as 'The Conflict between Frederick and his Father' in Paret 3-22.

Akenside was not alone in taking exception to Frederick's lack of respect for the Protestant religion; the same objection permeates the anonymous *Comment upon the Memoirs of the House of Brandenburgh* which was published in May 1751[34]. Horace Walpole's comment, a few years later, takes up the same theme; writing of Frederick's part in the Seven Years' War, he states that:

> Should [the King of Prussia] prove oftener our enemy than our ally, we must comfort ourselves with having guarded the Protestant religion in Germany -- for the Protestantism of its chief, it was too ridiculous to be made, as it was, even a serious object by the mob! Atheistic odes were the psalms which that Protestant confessor sung by the waters of Babylon!
>
> (*Mem. Geo. II* iii 60).

Having stated his own objections, Akenside ends his poem with an appeal to a higher authority to substantiate his case: predictably, this is the 'godlike shades of legislators old' (31) who are supposedly surveying the scene from above. Were they not horrified, the poet enquires:

> When thus by impious vanity impell'd,
> A magistrate, a monarch, ye beheld
> Affronting civil order's holiest bands?
>
> (34-37);

the 'holiest bands' (37) which Frederick has supposedly affronted are, presumably, the fundamental spiritual laws which give meaning to man's earthly

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34. See 'Books published May 1751', *GM* xxi (May 1751) 238. The full title of this work was: *A Comment upon the Memoirs of the House of Brandenburgh; wherein the Mistakes, Misrepresentations, Inconsistencies, of the ingenious Author are candidly discussed: with a Sketch of a Comparison between Cromwell and Lewis XIV and a Vindication of the French Protestants* (London, 1751).

existence, 'Those hopes and fears of justice from above' (39), which the legislators had 'so labor'd to improve' (38), and which 'tam'd the savage world to your divine commands' (40).

ODE TO THE RIGHT REVEREND BENJAMIN LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER

No poems have survived which can definitely be dated from the period between the writing of the *Edwards* and *Brandenburg* Odes and the *Hoadly Ode*, which is dated 1754, and was written as a tribute to Benjamin Hoadly (1676-1761), successively bishop of Bangor (1715), Hereford (1721), Salisbury (1723) and Winchester (1734). The text of the poem, as it was published two years later in the 6th volume of Dodsley's *Collection*, is as follows:

ODE
To the Right Reverend
BENJAMIN Lord Bishop of WINCHESTER.

I.1.

For toils which patriots have endur'd,
For treason quell'd and laws secur'd,
In every nation Time displays
The palm of honourable praise.
Envy may rail; and faction fierce
May strive: but what, alas, can Those
(Though bold, yet blind and sordid foes)
To gratitude and love oppose,
To faithful story and persuasive verse?

I.2.

O nurse of freedom, Albion, say, [10]
Thou tamer of despotic sway,
What man, among thy sons around,
Thus heir to glory hast thou found?
What page, in all thy annals bright,
Hast thou with purer joy survey'd
Than that where truth, by Hoadly's aid,
Shines through the deep unhallow'd shade
Of kingly fraud and sacerdotal night?

I.3.

To him the Teacher bless'd,
Who sent religion, from the palmy field
By Jordan, like the morn to cheer the west,
And lifted up the veil which heaven from earth conceal'd,
To Hoadly thus He utter'd his behest:
"Go thou, and rescue my dishonour'd law
"From hands rapacious and from tongues impure:
"Let not my peaceful name be made a lure
"The snares of savage tyranny to aid:
"Let not my words be impious chains to draw
"The free-born soul in more than brutal awe,
"To faith without assent, allegiance unrepaid."

II.1.

No cold nor unperforming hand
Was arm'd by heaven with this command,
The world soon felt it: and, on high,
To William's ear with welcome joy
Did Locke among the blest unfold
The rising hope of Hoadly's name:
Godolphin then confirm'd the fame;
And Somers, when from earth he came,
And valiant Stanhope the fair sequel told.*

II.2.

Then drew the lawgivers around,
(Sires of the Graecian name renown'd)
And listening ask'd, and wondering knew,
What private force could thus subdue
The vulgar and the great combin'd;
Could war with sacred folly wage;
Could a whole nation disengage
From the dread bonds of many an age,
And to new habits mould the public mind.

II.3.

For not a conqueror's sword,
Nor the strong powers to civil founders known,
Were his: but truth by faithful search explor'd,
And social sense, like seed, in genial plenty sown.
Wherever it took root, the soul (restor'd
To freedom) freedom too for others sought.
Not monkish craft the tyrant's claim divine,
Not regal zeal the bigot's cruel shrine
Could longer guard from reason's warfare sage;
Not the wild rabble to sedition wrought,
Nor synods by the papal Genius taught,
Nor St. John's spirit loose, nor Atterbury's rage.

III.1.

But where shall recompence be found?
Or how such arduous merit crown'd?

For look on life's laborious scene:
What rugged spaces lie between
Adventurous virtue's early toils
And her triumphal throne! The shade
Of death, mean time, does oft invade
Her progress; nor, to us display'd,
Wears the bright heroine her expected spoils.

III.2.

Yet born to conquer is her power:
--O Hoadly, if that favourite hour
On earth arrive, with thankful awe
We own just heaven's indulgent law,
And proudly thy success behold;
We' attend thy reverend length of days
With benediction and with praise,
And hail Thee in our public ways
Like some great spirit fam'd in ages old.

III.3.

While thus our vows prolong
Thy steps on earth, and when by us resign'd
Thou join'st thy seniors, that heroic throng
Who rescu'd or preserv'd the rights of human kind,
O! not unworthy may thy Albion's tongue
Thee still, her friend and benefactor, name:
O! never, Hoadly, in thy country's eyes,
May impious gold, or pleasure's gaudy prize,
Make public virtue, public freedom, vile:
Nor our own manners tempt us to disclaim
That heritage, our noblest wealth and fame,
Which thou hast kept intire from force and factious guile.

* *Mr. Locke died in 1704, when Mr Hoadly was beginning to distinguish himself in the cause of civil and religious liberty: Lord Godolphin in 1712, when the doctrines of the Jacobite faction were chiefly favour'd by those in power: Lord Somers in 1716, amid the practices of the nonjuring clergy against the protestant establishment; and lord Stanhope in 1721, during the controversy with the lower house of convocation.* [Akenside's note].

It is not difficult to see why Akenside would have admired Hoadly, 'the

most political of the Whig bishops'[35]. His advanced age -- he was 79 when this poem was written -- meant that he could be viewed as forming a tangible link with the early part of the 18th century; a fact which evidently excited Akenside's easily roused nostalgia for his country's political past. Hoadly's broad Latitudinarianism also seems to have found favour with Akenside; his religious principles were in many respects strikingly similar to those of Shaftesbury, who had written approvingly of the bishop in his letters, as the poet would almost certainly have been aware[36] . The immediate impetus which lay behind the writing of this poem, however, seems likely to have been the fact that, in October 1754, Hoadly had come before the public eye by publishing *Sixteen Sermons Formerly Printed, Now Collected into One Volume. To which are added, Six Sermons upon Public Occasions, Never before Printed* (London, 1754)[37]. Although the poem contains no direct reference to the publication of this work, it seems highly probable that Akenside, who habitually composed in response to some specific event, was in this case stimulated by his reading of Hoadly's *Sermons*.

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35. Stromberg 91. Stromberg discusses Hoadly's contributions to the various controversies of the period (91-92, 132-133). The most complete twentieth-century assessment of Hoadly's life and work is Sykes; a more recent, though less full, account is Dickinson: *Hoadly*.

36. *Letters of the Earl of Shaftesbury* (London, 1746) 30-31, 36. For a full discussion of Shaftesbury's relation to the high/low church controversy, and of his attitude to Hoadly's religious beliefs, see A.O. Aldridge: 'Shaftesbury and the Deist Manifesto', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* N.S. Vol. 41, Part 2 (1951) 346-354. Aldridge also includes a discussion of Akenside and Shaftesbury (ibid. 346-347).

37. 'The Monthly Catalogue for October 1754', *LM* xxiv (1754) 479 . For a discussion of Hoadly's possible reasons for publishing at this time, see below, p. 243.

Akenside opens the poem formally, with a statement of precedent. When a man has performed some great service for his country, he says, it is customary to pay tribute to him; and, in order to silence the dissenting voices of envy and faction, the most effective way of doing so is by means of a faithful account of his achievements, put into the form of 'persuasive verse' (1-9). Turning to invoke the spirit of Britain, here, as so frequently in Akenside's poetry, presented in her most exalted guise as the 'nurse of freedom' and the 'tamer of despotic sway' (10-11), he asks if there has been any episode in her history more deserving of such praise:

> Than that where truth, by Hoadly's aid,
> Shines through the deep unhallow'd shade
> Of kingly fraud and sacerdotal night?
> (16-18).

These lines constitute Akenside's formulation of his reasons for wishing to bestow the palm of honourable praise upon Hoadly; they also refer to two of the major controversies in which the bishop had been engaged.

When the poet speaks of Hoadly shining the light of truth onto the darkness of 'kingly fraud', he is undoubtedly thinking of the period between 1705 and 1710 when Hoadly had come into conflict with Francis Atterbury (1662-1732), bishop of Rochester from 1713, as a result of the various occasions on which Hoadly had vigo rously attacked the doctrines of divine right and passive non-resistance. Since the revolution of 1688 it had been of crucial importance to the high-church Tory divines to reinterpret these doctrines in such a way that they could still form part of the ordinary teaching of the Church of England. As a leading high church Tory, Atterbury had, in such sermons as his 1701 *The Wisdom of Providence manifested in the*

Revolutions of Government (Atterbury: *Sermons and Discourses* i 243-275), propounded the view that, while God could intervene in the case of an unjust ruler, making men act as his agents, it was still a sin for men to take matters into their own hands. The low church Whigs, on the other hand, among whom Hoadly was fast becoming a prominent figure, argued forcibly against this view. One of Hoadly's most notable sermons on the subject was his *On Subjection to the Higher Powers* (1705) (*Sermons* 63-84; Hoadly: *Works* ii 18-25). Hoadly had preached this sermon on a text from St Paul which was frequently appealed to by the high church Tories who championed divine right and non-resistance. As quoted by Hoadly, the text reads:

> Let every Soul be Subject to the Higher Powers.
> (*Romans* xiii 1).

From this unpromising start, however, Hoadly had managed to develop an argument which fully justified Revolution principles. He had achieved this by, first of all, re-defining what was meant by a Governor:

> no Persons are possessed of any Governing Power for the Good of Humane Society, but by the Providence of God....so all Governours...may be said to be *ordained by God*...
> (Hoadly: *Works* ii 19).

This being the case, he continued, their 'sole End and Business...is to consult the Good of humane Society' (Hoadly: *Works* ii 19). From here he was able to move on to his final point, which was that if rulers:

> set themselves to contradict [that end] by Oppression, Violence and Injustice; by invading, and destroying the public Happiness, and by bringing on public Miseries; the *Apostle* seems not to think of recommending Submission to the Subject.
> (Hoadly: *Works* ii 21-22).

As a direct result of this sermon, on 19 February 1706, Atterbury had instigated the lower house of convocation to attack Hoadly, accusing him of 'charging [the established clergy] with *Rebellion* in the *Church* whilst he himself is preaching it up in the *State*' and requesting that 'some Synodical Notice be taken of the Dishonour done to the Church' by Hoadly's sermon[38]. Later that year, Hoadly had returned the attack in *A Letter to the Reverend Dr. Francis Atterbury. Occasioned by the Doctrine delivered by him in a Funeral Sermon on 1 Cor. XV.19. Aug. 30 1706* (1706). Bitter exchanges, in sermons and pamphlets, continued between the two men over the next few years. The controversy had reached its final stage in late December 1709 when Hoadly had published the work which had earned him a vote in the House of Commons acknowledging the 'Favour and Recommendation of this House' (*CJ* xvi 242), *The Original and Institution of Civil Government Discussed* (1710)[39]. In this treatise Hoadly had attacked Atterbury in vehement terms, promising:

> I will ever find Time and Leisure...to pursue you through every Winding of what You shall offer; to examine thoroughly every specious Word; to search after every false Colour, and every Inconsistency; and to set them all in as clear a Light as possible: that so, *fine Language* may not pass upon the World for *Truth*...
> (Hoadly: *Works* ii 372).

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38. [F. Atterbury]: *Some Proceedings in the Convocation, A.D. 1705. Faithfully represented. To which is prefix'd An Account of the several Ineffectual Attempts at divers times made by the Lower Clergy, towards Quieting all Disputes, and proceeding upon Synodical Business* (London, 1708) 25,35.

39. *The Original and Institution of Civil Government Discussed. viz. I. An Examination of the Patriarchal Scheme of Government. II. A Defence of Mr Hooker's Judgment, &c. against the Objections of several late Writers. To which is Added A Large Answer to Dr. F. Atterbury's Charge of Rebellion: In which the Substance of his late Latin Sermon is produced, and fully examined.* (Hoadly: *Works* ii 182-378). See also Hoadly's *A Second Letter to the Reverend Dr Francis Atterbury, in Answer to his large Vindication, prefixed to his Volume of Sermons. With a Postscript relating to his Doctrine concerning the Power of Charity to Cover Sins* (1708) (Hoadly: *Works* i 61-106).

Shortly after the publication of this work, however, in the course of the violent popular reaction against the low church which resulted from the trial of the high-church divine Dr Sacheverell, Hoadly's works were publicly burned by angry mobs[40].

With the reference to 'sacerdotal night' the poet is moving on to the controversy for which Hoadly is best remembered. The first contribution towards this had been Hoadly's 1716 publication, *A Preservative Against the Principles and Practice of Non-Jurors both in Church and State* (Hoadly: *Works* i 557-597). In this inflammatory document he had attacked Protestant sacerdotalism, asserting the absurdity of attributing infallibility to the clergy, who were, after all, only fallible men. On this basis he had argued that the claims of the state must ultimately take precedence over those of the church, since:

> it is absolutely necessary to the *Being* of the *Civil Power*, that any *Ecclesiastical Person* should be deprived of his Right to the Exercise of his *Office*, if that *Exercise* of his *Office* be inconsistent with the Safety of the State...
> (Hoadly: *Works* i 583).

Early in the following year, in the sermon preached on 31 March 1717, *The Nature of the Kingdom, or Church, of Christ* (*Sermons* 284-306; Hoadly: *Works* ii 402-409), the bishop had taken his argument a stage further, stating his view that the '*Church*' or '*Kingdom*' of Christ consisted of nothing more than a

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40. For a spirited, if somewhat anti-Hoadleian account of the Atterbury-Hoadly controversy, see Bennett: *Atterbury* 103-112. For the Sacheverell trial and the burning of Hoadly's works, see Holmes: *Sacheverell* 234, 235 and passim.

collection of those people who 'Sincerely, and Willingly' accepted Christ as their ruler (Hoadly: *Works* ii 408). Such a body, scarcely eligible to be called an established church, would by its nature have no rights of jurisdiction or legislation, nor, asserted Hoadly, should it rely on the state for support of its authority. It was the inability of many of the established clergy to accept this extreme position which gave rise to the so-called Bangorian controversy, 'one of the most intricate tangles of fruitless logomachy in the language'[41], in which approximately 200 tracts on both sides of the question were produced between 1717 and 1720[42]. The poet may also have been aware of Hoadly's last published work, *A Plain Account of the Nature and End of the Lord's supper* (1734) (Hoadly: *Works* iii 843-903), in which the bishop struck yet another blow at sacerdotalism, arguing that the Eucharist was not a mystical rite but simply a memorial feast, and that therefore the officiating minister needed no particular consecration to his office[43].

Akenside now moves on to a passage which depicts Hoadly at the beginning of his career receiving specific instructions from Christ ('the Teacher bless'd'[44]) (23-27). Here, having earlier stated the *content* of the

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41. Stephen: *English Thought* II x 31

42. For a list of the pamphlets published in 1717-1718, see Herne's *Account* (Hoadly: *Works* ii 381-401).

43. For a full account of these matters see Sykes 150-151.

44. This is Akenside's only recorded reference to Christ; the terminology which he uses ('the Teacher bless'd') is entirely consistent with his unitarian upbringing (see Houpt 4-6, 9). For unitarianism in England during the first half of the eighteenth century, see Earl M. Wilbur: *A History of Unitarianism in Transylvania, England and America* (Cambridge, Mass., 1952) 244-270.

bishop's contributions to the cause of 'civil and religious liberty', the poet is specifically delineating his *methods*: in a number of his works, Hoadly had taken as his starting point a biblical text which he considered to have been misinterpreted by his ecclesiastical or political opponents, and had re-interpreted it to demonstrate the views which he himself wished to propagate. As has already been seen, Hoadly had used this method in the 1705 sermon *On Subjection to the Higher Powers*, in which he had taken a text frequently used by high-church tories and reinterpreted in line with revolution principles, thus, it could be said, obeying Christ's 'behest' that his 'peaceful name' should not be made 'a lure/ The snares of savage tyranny to aid' (26-27)[45].

Christ is next imagined as giving the bishop a further instruction: '"Let not my words be impious chains to draw/"The free-born soul in more than brutal awe,/"To faith without assent, allegiance unrepaid."'(28-30). This is an equally specific reference to another frequently reiterated argument of Hoadly's, that: 'there is no *Slavery* so uneasy, and ignominious, as a forced *Religion*, or a *Worship* imposed on weak Men by the *Fear*, or Application, of outward Inconveniences...' (Hoadly: *Works* ii 113). This insistence on the prerogative of private judgment is one of the most characteristic features of Hoadly's writings. It not only formed the basis of the four sermons which Hoadly had delivered in 1713 under the general title *Concerning Impartial Enquiry into Religion: and the two Extremes of Implicit Subjection and Infidelity* (*Sermons* 134-217; Hoadly: *Works* i 152-179), but also tended to intrude even where it threatened to overturn Hoadly's primary argument[45]. This

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45. For other examples of Hoadly's use of this method, see also his first and second *Letter[s] to Atterbury* (1706, 1708) (above p. 228 and n.39).

occurs , for example, in his *Reasonableness of Conformity to the Church of England* (1703) (Hoadly: *Works* i 183-299) in which, despite the fact that he is attempting to persuade dissenters to conform to the established church in the interests of Protestant unity, he is forced to admit that in the final analysis the individual must judge for himself, since:

> if there be Persons who will be persuaded by no Arguments, that a compliance with these *Terms* is...*lawful*, I confess, it is my opinion, That, whilst they are thus persuaded, it is as much *their* Duty to separate from *us*, as it is *our* Duty to separate from the *Church* of *Rome*. For They, as much as *We*, are obliged, not to do what they judge to be unlawful...
>
> (Hoadly: *Works* i 282).

It was stated earlier that Akenside's admiration of Hoadly owed much to the fact that he saw the bishop as forming a tangible link with an earlier period of Britain's political history. This is clear from the lines which follow, in which William of Orange is shown 'on high', receiving reports of Hoadly's achievements from, successively, Locke, Godolphin, Somers, and 'valiant Stanhope'[46] (32-38). Once again, within his somewhat fanciful framework, the poet is being remarkably specific, as his own note to this passage explains:

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46. Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* (1690) had made a substantial contribution to Whig political theory (see Chapter Three above). Godolphin is Sidney, 1st Earl of Godolphin (1645-1712), Lord Treasurer from 1702. Godolphin had begun his political life as a Tory, and had become a Whig in 1705. He has probably earned his place in Akenside's poem and note because of the part which he played in the impeachment of Sacheverell (see above p.229 and n.40). For Somers, see Chapter Four above. Stanhope is James, 1st Earl of Stanhope (1673-1721), leader of the Whig opposition in 1712 and chief director of the suppression of the Jacobite rising in 1715. His specific link with Hoadly is perhaps the fact that both men worked to secure the repeal of the Schism Act in 1718 (see pp. 237-8 and n. 58 below). For background to this period, see Holmes: *British Politics* passim; for Godolphin see T. Lever: *Godolphin: His Life and Times* (London, 1952).

> *Mr. Locke died in 1704, when Mr Hoadly was beginning to distinguish himself in the cause of civil and religious liberty: Lord Godolphin in 1712, when the doctrines of the Jacobite faction were chiefly favour'd by those in power: Lord Somers in 1716, amid the practices of the nonjuring clergy against the protestant establishment; and lord Stanhope in 1721, during the controversy with the lower house of convocation.*

Despite certain minor inaccuracies which arise from Akenside's desire to make the major landmarks of Hoadly's career coincide with the deaths of these illustrious Whigs, it is clear that the poet had a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of the bishop's activities during this period. Locke, as the poem accurately states, would have been able at the time of his death on 28 October 1704 only to have reported on the 'rising hope of Hoadly's name' (36). Hoadly's first publication, in 1702, had been a letter to William Fleetwood (later Bishop of Ely) concerning Fleetwood's 'Essay on Miracles'[47]; but he could truly be said to have begun to 'distinguish himself in the cause of civil and religious liberty' in 1703 when he had entered the then current controversy over the practice of occasional conformity to the Church of England. This practice, which had arisen after the 1689 Act of Toleration had granted freedom of worship to dissenters who subscribed to the thirty-nine articles, allowed moderate non-conformists who were prepared occasionally to receive the sacrament in the established church to qualify for office. The practice had been consistently opposed by the high church clergy; and during the first sitting of parliament after the accession of Anne a Bill Against Occasional Conformity was passed in the Commons (*CJ* xiv 46). In the Lords, however, the Whig bishops managed, by means of a series of drastic amendments, to prevent

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47. *A Letter to the Reverend Mr Fleetwood. Occasioned by his Essay on Miracles* (1702) (Hoadly: *Works* i 5-18).

its being passed. Hoadly had defended the bishops who had voted for its rejection in *A Letter to a Clergyman in the Country, Concerning the Votes of the Bishops upon the Bill Against Occasional Conformity* (1703) (Hoadly: *Works* i 19-32), in which he had argued that occasional conformity was in the interest both of the state, since it would help to prevent the division of the country, and of the church, by abating 'Men's prejudices against those small Matters...' (Hoadly: *Works* i 28). At the same time, however, Hoadly began writing a series of pamphlets addressed to the non-conformist historian and biographer Edmund Calamy D.D.(1671-1730), in which he urged dissenters to conform. The first of these, *The Reasonableness of Conformity to the Church of England*, was published in 1703[48], and this was followed in 1704 by *A Persuasive to Lay Conformity*[49].

The pressure of making Hoadly's life history coincide with the deaths of these Whig notables forces Akenside to pass rather rapidly over the years between 1705 and 1712. During this period the bishop had published three more pamphlets addressed to Calamy[50], and had also come into conflict with

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48. *The Reasonableness of Conformity to the Church of England, Represented to the Dissenting Ministers. In answer to the Tenth Chapter of Mr Calamy's Abridgement of Mr Baxter's History of His Life and Times.* This work was originally printed in two parts in 1703, but thereafter both parts were reprinted together (Hoadly: *Works* i 183-299).

49. *A Persuasive to Lay Conformity; or the Reasonableness of Constant Communion with the Church of England represented to the Dissenting Laity* (1704) (Hoadly: *Works* i 316-332).

50. *A Serious Admonition to Mr Calamy, occasioned by the First Part of his Defence of Moderate Non-Conformity* (1705) (Hoadly: *Works* i 300-332); *A Defence of the Reasonableness of Conformity to the Church of England, in Answer to the Objections of Mr Calamy, in his Defence of Moderate Non-Conformity: with a Reply to his Postscript in Answer to the Serious Admonition* (1705) (Hoadly: *Works* i 333-394); and *A Brief Defence of Episcopal Ordination &c. To which are added, a Reply to the Introduction of the Second Part, and a Postscript relation to the Third Part, of Mr Calamy's Defence of Moderate Non-Conformity* (1707) (Hoadly: *Works* i 395-528).

Atterbury. At the time of Godolphin's death, which took place on 15 September 1712, Akenside goes on to say, 'the doctrines of the Jacobite faction were chiefly favour'd by those in power'. Certainly it is true that the Tories had been in the ascendant since 1710, when the unpopularity of the Whigs had come to a head over the combined issues of dissatisfaction with their handling of the war and public outrage at the impeachment of Sacheverell[51]; here, as elsewhere, Akenside seems deliberately to be blurring the distinction between Toryism and Jacobitism[52]. The confirmation of Hoadly's 'fame' which the poet imagines Godolphin passing on to William (39) would perhaps have been based not only on his *Original and Institution of Civil Government (1710)* which, although it contained little in the way of original thought[53], had earned Hoadly a resolution of thanks in the House of Commons, but also on the fact that he had been responsible, in the same year, for the anonymous publication of a series of twelve political tracts with such satirical titles as *The True Genuine Tory Address* and *The French King's Thanks to the Tories of Great Britain* .

The next epoch in the bishop's life which Akenside chooses to single out is the year 1716, when Somers died, according to the poet's note, 'amid the practices of the nonjuring clergy against the protestant establishment'. This

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51. See Holmes: *British Politics* 112-113.

52. See also Chapter Three above.

53. Sir Leslie Stephen treats this work dismissively ('Hoadly once more slays the slain', *English Thought* II x. 28). For a more balanced, though brief, discussion, see Dickinson: *Hoadly* 353-354.

was the year in which Hoadly published his *Preservative Against the Principles and Practice of Non-Jurors in Church and State*. Thomas Herne's *Account* places the writing of this document in the context of its time, which was the period immediately following the Jacobite rebellion of 1715, and states that Hoadly took as his starting point:

> the seizing of a considerable Number of Copies of...' A Collection of Papers written by the late R.R. *George Hickes* D.D. 1716'. In which the Church of *England* was charged with Heresy, Schism, Perjury amd Treason.
>
> These Papers were seized immediately after the ill Success of a Rebellion raised by the Joynt-Forces of Papists, Non-Jurors, and Church of *England* Men, who had sworn to the Government. Which Rebellion being not entirely quelled, but the Passions of the People still very much enflamed; the designed dispersing of these Papers could be with this only View, to inflame the People further, to rekindle the expiring Rebellion, and to overturn both our State and Church.
>
> (Hoadly: *Works* ii 381-382).

The 'Collection of Papers' which Herne speaks of as being seized was *The Constitution of the Catholic Church and the Nature and Consequences of Schism, set forth in a collection of papers* (1716), by the non-juror, and titular bishop of Thetford, George Hickes (1642-1715). Hickes, who had been Dean of Worcester at the time of William's landing in 1688, had been deprived of office upon his refusal to take the oath of allegiance. In 1693, he had visited the exiled James II in France and had been there appointed as one of several suffragan bishops, in order that the catholic episcopate should be maintained. By 1713, Hickes was the only surviving English suffragan, and he therefore brought to London two Scottish bishops, with whom he performed the consecration of three further catholic bishops in his own private chapel, in

order to maintain the due succession after his own death, which in the event occurred on 15 December 1715. When Akenside speaks of the 'practices of the non-juring clergy against the protestant establishment', he is presumably thinking of the publication of Hickes' papers, although it is possible he may also have intended a reference to the 1713 acts of consecration[55].

Finally Akenside moves on to 1721, the year of Stanhope's death, which he says occurred 'during the controversy with the lower house of convocation'. Here, his dating seems to have gone somewhat astray. Hoadly's controversy with the lower house of convocation of Canterbury, to which Akenside refers, in fact took place in 1717. It was the inflammatory arguments of the 'Bangorian Sermon', *On the Nature of the Kingdom, or Church, of Christ*, preached on 31 March 1717 and published immediately afterwards, which had led the lower house of convocation to vote on 3 May 1717 to appoint a committee to consider the implications of Hoadly's doctrine. The committee's report[56], on 10 May, had stated that the sermon, together with Hoadly's earlier *Preservative* of 1716,

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55. See Sykes 137-142 for a full discussion of Hoadly's *Preservative*; for a general discussion of the case of the non-jurors, see H. Broxap: 'Jacobites and Non-Jurors' in F.J.C. Hearnshaw (ed.): *The Social and Political Ideas of Some English Thinkers in the Augustan Age 1650-1750* (London, 1928) (97-111).

56. *A Report of the Committee of the Lower House of Convocation, Appointed to draw up a Representation To be laid before the Arch-Bishop and Bishops of the Province of Canterbury; Concerning Several Dangerous Positions and Doctrines, contained in the Bishop of Bangor's Preservative, and his Sermon preach'd March 31 1717. Read in the Lower House, May 10, 1717, and voted,* Nemine Contradicente, *to be Receiv'd and Entred [sic]upon the Books of the said House. Publish'd from the Original Report* (London, 1717).

had a tendency:

> (1) *First*, To subvert all Government and Discipline in the Church of CHRIST, and to reduce His Kingdom to a State of *Anarchy* and *Confusion*.
> (2) *Secondly*, To impugn and impeach the regal Supremacy in Causes Ecclesiastical, and the Authority of the Legislature, to inforce Obedience in Matters of Religion, by Civil Sanctions.
>
> (3-4).

Before the result could be passed to the upper house, however, the government, anxious to avoid a potentially embarrassing dispute involving a newly-elected bishop whom they themselves had nominated, obtained a royal sanction for the prorogation of the lower house[57]. This act led to accusations that Hoadly had acted deliberately to silence his opponents, to which the bishop replied in his *Answer to the Representations drawn up by the Committee of the Lower House of Convocation, concerning several dangerous Positions and Doctrines contained in the Bishop of Bangor's Preservative and Sermon, by Benjamin Lord Bishop of Bangor* (1717) (Hoadly:*Works* ii 448-582). This publication was followed by the flood of pamphlets over the next two years which constituted the Bangorian controversy; but by 1721, when Stanhope died, this was over.

Having by this point in the poem covered most of the bishop's major sermons and publications, the poet moves on to a passage in which he imagines that around William and his Whigs 'on high' now assemble a still more illustrious, though unnamed, gathering of Grecian 'lawgivers', who exclaim admiringly over the magnitude of Hoadly's achievements (40-48). Akenside's assertion that these amounted to the disengaging of 'a whole nation.../From the dread bonds of many an age', and the moulding of 'the public mind' to 'new habits' (46-48) is probably something of an exaggeration; although he may be

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57. See Dickinson: *Hoadly* 351, Sykes 148.

alluding in part to Hoadly's role in 1718 in helping to repeal the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts[58], which would have appeared to the poet as a considerable victory for religious freedom. The surprise and admiration of the 'lawgivers' is occasioned partly by the fact that Hoadly has managed to produce such great effects with only the most gentle of weapons, the poet goes on. He has used neither 'a conqueror's sword', not 'strong powers'(50), but only 'truth by faithful search explor'd/And social sense, like seed, in genial plenty sown' (51-52); the results of this mild and benificent practice have, however, been powerful and far-reaching:

> Not monkish craft the tyrant's claim divine,
> Not regal zeal the bigot's cruel shrine
> Could longer guard from reason's warfare sage;
> Not the wild rabble to sedition wrought,
> Not synods by the papal genius taught,
> Nor St. John's spirit loose, nor Atterbury's rage.
> (55-60).

Despite his convoluted syntax, the point which Akenside is making here is clear: none of the interrelated evils that stem from the combined forces of papism and regal tyranny has been able to withstand the assaults of Hoadly's sagacious reason. The 'wild rabble' (58) are presumably those members of the British people misguided enough to have been 'wrought' to 'sedition' by the blandishments of the Jacobites during the 1715 rebellion, and the 'synods by the papal genius taught' (59) the high church members of the lower house of convocation.

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58. See Sykes 127.

The reference to Bolingbroke ('St. John's spirit loose'[59] (60)) is highly topical, since David Mallet had brought out his five-volume posthumous edition of Bolingbroke's *Works* in March of the year in which the poem was written[60]. The public outrage which had greeted this publication, in no small measure as a result of what was seen as Bolingbroke's atheism, is well documented[61]. Although Akenside's opinion is not recorded[62], his well-established admiration for Plato and his interest in metaphysics in general make it an easy matter to guess how he would have reacted to such representative remarks as the following:

> when [Plato] sinks from [his] imaginary heights of enthusiasm and false sublime, he sinks down, and lower no writer can sink, into a tedious socratical irony, into certain flimsy hypothetical reasonings, that prove nothing, and into allusions that are mere vulgarisms and that neither explain nor inforce any thing, that wants to be explained or inforced.
>
> (Bolingbroke: *Works* iv 140-141);

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59. It is probable that Akenside's reference to Bolingbroke's 'spirit' as 'loose' alludes to the fact that, as his detractors were quick to point out, the quality of his personal and political life had been such as ill befitted a moral philosopher:

> having spent the vigour of his youth in every species of riot and debauchery that could gratify the appetites of a brute, he became the partisan of a cause which he condemned, and which could not be supported without deluging his country in blood, merely that he might gratify the vices of a man.
>
> (*GM* xxiv (Oct. 1754) 475).

60. See *Daily Advertiser*, 6 March 1754.

61. See for example Walpole to Mann, 1 December 1754 (*Corresp.* 20. 454-455); Boswell: *Life* i 268-269; *GM* xxiv (Oct. 1754) 475; *MR* X (Jan-June 1754) 185-189 and passim.

62. A letter from Thomas Birch to Daniel Wray, 24 Oct 1752, does, however, record Akenside's unfavourable opinion of Mallet's earlier *Memoirs of the Life and Ministerial Conduct, with Some Free Remarks on the Political Writings, Of the Late Lord Viscount Bolingbroke* (London, 1752); quoted Nichols: *Illustrations* iv 534.

or to the frequently reiterated assertions that all who engaged in ontological or metaphysical speculation were 'pneumatical madmen' or 'learned lunatics'(Bolingbroke: *Works* iv 474, v 374), or to his definition of metaphysics as 'delirium' (Bolingbroke: *Works* v 374). It seems clear, however, that Akenside had a highly specific reason for this particular reference; a reason which, moreover, provides a possible explanation for Hoadly's decision to reprint his *Sermons* in 1754. The first volume of Bolingbroke's *Works*, which is mainly devoted to his political writings, contains evidence of a controversy between Bolingbroke and Hoadly which was carried on between 1727 and 1729. During this period Bolingbroke, together with William Pulteney, was responsible for the opposition weekly *The Craftsman*, while Hoadly was employed by Walpole to write political pamphlets presenting the ministerial point of view[63].

The first of these pamphlets, containing a lengthy defence of Walpole's foreign policy, appeared in 1727 under the title *An Enquiry into the Reasons of the Conduct of Great Britain, with Relation to the Present State of Affairs in Europe* (1727) (Hoadly: *Works* iii 396-437). Although, as Hoadly later pointed out, the pamphlet was greeted with numerous 'personal Severities upon the *Author*', and although the 'Manner of Writing, and the Style, were the subject of much Wit and Pleasantry', it was a long time before 'the *main Facts* or *Reasonings*' were 'attaqued with any Appearance of Strength' (Hoadly: *Works* iii 438-439) -- a fact which Bolingbroke later remarked was 'often a very

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63. See Kramnick 115-116. It is interesting to note that Akenside has been forced to reverse his usual political direction in order to defend Hoadly, at this time working for Walpole, against Bolingbroke, at this time working with Pulteney.

equivocal proof of the merit of a book' (Bolingbroke: *Works* i 226). At the end of the following year, however, Walpole's own weekly, the *London Journal* (for which Hoadly had written a series of letters under the pseudonym Britannicus earlier in the decade) had published an article on foreign policy which, presumably because its arguments resembled those of the *Enquiry*, Bolingbroke had taken to be the work of Hoadly. This elicited his *Answer to the London Journal of Saturday, December 21, 1728* (1729) (Bolingbroke: *Works* i 189-220), which appeared in the *Craftsman* two weeks later. In the *Answer*, Bolingbroke asserted that he could 'plainly distinguish' that 'such a piece was writ by BEN', since he recognised the style and character, feeling himself 'lulled by a regular, mild, and frequently languid harangue; such as often descends upon us from the pulpit' (Bolingbroke: *Works* i 189). Further on in the work, he launched another personal attack on the bishop:

> I pass over all the Billingsgate with which he ushers in [the second] part...I shall leave him to his phrenzy, and proceed soberly to show you that he says nothing, or that which is worse than nothing, in every line of this performance; in which he seems to triumph with such vast complacency.
>
> (Bolingbroke: *Works* i 197).

In reply, Hoadly produced another long pamphlet, *A Defence of the Enquiry into the Reasons of the Conduct of Great Britain &c. Occasioned by the Paper published in the Country-Journal or Craftsman on Saturday, January 4 1728/9* (1729) (Hoadly: *Works* iii 438-452). At the end of this pamphlet the bishop strenuously denied the authorship of the *London Journal* article:

> I...declare, with all possible seriousness, That I have not writ, or dictated, or advised; or, directly or indirectly, had the least Part in the Writing or Publishing any *Paper* which had appeared in the World, in any Form, from the Time of Writing the *Enquiry*, and for some Time before that, to this Day, *January* 20 1728/9...
>
> (Hoadly: *Works* iii 452).

Although at this distance in time it is impossible to be certain, it seems probable that this disclaimer is true. Hoadly's *Works* contain no political journalism from this period; and Lord Hervey wrote a few years later that in the late 1720s 'the Bishops, Hare, Hoadly, and Sherlock, were the best writers for the Court, but none of these were concerned in the weekly papers' (Hervey: *Memoirs* i 263). Bolingbroke, however, although he ironically apologised to Hoadly in his own reply, *The Craftsman Extraordinary: containing an Answer to the Defence of the Enquiry into the Reasons of the Conduct of Great Britain. In a Letter to the Craftsman. By John Trot, Yeoman. Publish'd by Caleb D'Anvers* (1729) (Bolingbroke: *Works* i 221-270), made it clear that he disbelieved the bishop. Moreover, not only were these attacks on Hoadly published by Mallet in the posthumous edition of Bolingbroke's *Works*, but the *Answer to the London Journal*... actually carried a footnote stating that:

> This paper [the *London Journal*] was supposed to be then under the direction of BENJAMIN lord bishop of *****.
>
> (Bolingbroke: *Works* i 189).

It seems highly likely that Hoadly's decision to reprint his *Sermons* a few months later was a direct result of the revival of this attack. If so, this would explain the bishop's assertion, in his Preface, that he had never used his sermons as vehicles for political arguments:

> If Any shall judge, from some Discourses in this Volume, That I used to entertain my Parishoners, in my *Sunday-Discourses*, with *Political*, or *Controversial*, Points, they will be as much *mistaken*, as many others were heretofore *disappointed*, who came to hear me, with the same Notion...The only *Inferences* in my own Favor, which I wish to be drawn from what is now published, are, That I never omitted any One public Opportunity, in proper Time and Place, of defending and strengthening the true and only *Foundation* of all our *Civil* and *Religious Liberties*, when it was every Day most zealously attacked; and of doing all in my Power, that All the *Subjects* of this *Government*, and this *Royal Family*, should understand, and

> approve of, those *Principles*, upon which alone their Happiness is fixed; and *without which*, it could never have been rightfully Established, and must in Time fall to the Ground...
>
> (*Sermons* vii-viii).

Akenside now goes on to say that Hoadly's 'reason' had been proof also against 'Atterbury's rage' (60). This may refer to the 1705-1710 controversy which was discussed above; but Akenside may also have been thinking of the fact that the two bishops had come into conflict again in the early 1720s. In 1716, feeling with increasing despair that the strength of the Whig oligarchy was such that the Tories stood little chance of being able to restore the church's former authority, Atterbury had begun to consider what seemed the only viable alternative, and in 1717 he had begun to hold direct communication with the Jacobites. In 1722, after he had become involved in an attempt to restore the pretender, he had been arrested, imprisoned in the tower for seven months, tried, and finally condemned to deprivation of his ecclesiastical offices and to banishment[64]. During the trial, Hoadly had written a number of anonymous letters in the *London Journal* under the pseudonym Britannicus, attacking and dissecting Atterbury's defence (Hoadly: *Works* iii 1-395).

Akenside has now, with notable thoroughness, included in his poem all the most important episodes and controversies in Hoadly's career. He next goes on rhetorically to ask:

> But where shall recompence be found?
> Or how such arduous merit crown'd?
>
> (61-62).

He points out that it is a common characteristic of human life that a long and perhaps uncomfortable period frequently elapses between a man's youthful

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64. For this period of Atterbury's life, see Bennett: *Atterbury* 204-275.

achievements and his virtue's final reward (63-66); and he acknowledges that it is not unknown for death to intervene, in which case the 'bright heroine' (virtue) will not be able to display her 'expected spoils' (66-69). He reminds himself, however, that virtue's power is, after all, 'born to conquer' (70); and goes on to state that 'if that favourite hour/On earth arrive' when Hoadly receives the just reward for his 'early toils':

> with thankful awe
> We own just heaven's indulgent law,
> And proudly thy success behold...
>
> (71-74).

This passage is rather obscure. The poet appears to have some specific 'reward' or 'success' in mind which he hopes Hoadly will attain; but it is difficult to imagine precisely what this might be. It is certainly true that his preferment in 1734 to his final bishopric, that of Winchester, had been something of a compromise, since he and his supporters had hoped that he would be given the more coveted see of Durham four years earlier[65]; it is perhaps conceivable that the poet envisaged some further preferment for Hoadly. A letter written on 8 October 1754 by Edmund Pyle (1702-1776), one of George II's chaplains, gives a possible clue to what this might have been. Pyle tells his correspondent that he has just presented the king with Hoadly's newly-published *Sermons* ('the Old Cocks, that fought the battles of liberty in good Queen Anne's days...'). He then goes on to describe in some detail the extremely poor state of health of both the Bishop of London and the Archbishop of Canterbury (Pyle 217-218). If Akenside knew that both these men appeared to be

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65. See Hervey: *Memoirs* i 446, and Sykes 153.

at death's door, he might perhaps have hoped that Hoadly would be appointed as a successor to one of them. In the event, however, Thomas Sherlock, then Bishop of London, lived until 1761, and Thomas Herring, Archbishop of Canterbury, until 1757 (Pyle 220).

While Hoadly lives, says Akenside, his life will be attended 'with benediction and with praise', and he will be hailed: 'Like some great spirit fam'd in ages old' (75-79). When he finally departs this life and joins the 'heroic throng' who have preceded him, the poet hopes that his name will still be remembered as a friend and benefactor of Britain (80-84); and he ends his poem with the wish that the British may never be tempted, by any ignoble means, to disclaim:

> That heritage, our noblest wealth and fame,
> Which thou hast kept intire from force and factious guile.
> (85-90).

ODE TO SIR FRANCIS DRAKE (1754)

Internal references in the last poem to be considered in this chapter, the *Drake Ode 1754*, suggest that it was written at more or less the same time as the *Hoadly Ode*, in October 1754; not only does the poet refer to the rapid decline of 'the ballance' (the constellation Libra), which is 'in the sky' (1-2) until 22 October, but he also makes it clear that he is expecting Drake to return to London for the opening of the new session of parliament, which began that year on 14 November (*CJ* xxvii 13). The poem forms a complete contrast to the *Hoadly Ode*, however; where the tone of that poem had been serious and weighty, that of the *Drake Ode 1754* -- which was, after all, a

verse-epistle, and clearly not intended for immediate publication, although the poet did eventually revise it for inclusion in his collected works -- is relatively informal[66]. The text of the poem, as it appears in the original manuscript[67], is as follows:

Ode
to Sir Francis Drake, Bart.
M.DCC.LIV

1.
Behold; the ballance in the sky
Toward winter hastily declines:
To earthy caves the Dryads fly,
And the bare pastures Pan resigns.
Long-since the farmer's homely toil
Renew'd the twice-mown meadow's soil,
Tainting the year's remaining pride:
He whets the rusty coulter now,
And binds his oxen to the plough,
And throws his future harvest wide. [10]

2.
Now, London's busy confines round,
By Kensington's imperial towers,
From Highgate's rough descent profound,
Essexian heaths; or Kentish bowers,
Where'er I pass, I see approach
Some rural statesman's eager coach
Hurried by senatorial cares:
While rural nymphs (alike, within,
Preparing courtly power to win)
Debate their dress, reform their airs. [20]

3.
Say; what can yet the country boast,
O Drake, thy footsteps to detain
When peevish winds & gloomy frost

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66. When Akenside revised the poem for publication -- it appeared as Book I Ode xii in *Poems* (1772) -- he made a number of changes evidently designed to increase its formality and elevate its tone.

67. This manuscript, formerly in the possession of R.A. Meyrick, is now in the keeping of the Devon Record Office: Drake Papers 346 M f 17. A transcript, containing a few inaccuracies, was published by Lady F.E. Eliott-Drake (*FED* ii 271-3); but Lady Drake failed to notice that it differed from the published version, and it has not been noticed previously.

The sunshine of thy temper stain?
Say; are Devonian parsons grown
Friends to this tolerating throne,
Champions for George's legal right?
Hath general freedom, equal law
Won, to the glory of Nassau,
Each bold Wessexian squire & knight? [30]

4.

I doubt it much: & guess at least
That, when the day which made us free
Shall next return, that sacred feast
Thou better mayest observe with me.
Besides (since Parker's learned care
Bade the slow year its course repair)
No longer shalt thou now regret
That the vain pedant monarch's tale
Of plots & sulphur, dark & stale,
Should load the birthday of the state. [40]

5.

For, by our sires belov'd of old,
The fifth of chill November rose:
Whence rightly Orange, wise as bold,
For his great work that aera chose.
But, in the late-adjusted year,
That day, to please the public ear,
Transferr'd its honours with its name;
And thus too early, by eleven,
The church records, in thanks to heaven,
Old Stuart's luck & Nassau's fame. [50]

6.

So let her still: while thou, my friend,
A pattern to thy tenants due,
Dost, when the law directs, attend
Her rites in chancel or in pew.
But here with me be just, & pay
Thy duty to the genuine day,
Which leads November's latter train.
Thus shall great William be rever'd,
Nor any nauseous flattery heard
Of James or his dishonest reign. [60]

7.

And while the vintage of the Seine
With modest cups our joy supplies,
We'll truly thank the power divine
Who bade the just deliverer rise;
Rise from heroic ease, the spoil
Due for his youth's Herculean toil,
From Belgium to her saviour-son;
Rise with the same unconquer'd zeal

For our Britannia's injur'd weal,
For freedom -- wounded & o'erthrown.

8.

He came. The tyrant, from our shore,
Like a forbidden daemon, fled;
And to eternal exile bore
Pontific craft & servile dread.
There sank the barbarous Gothic reign;
New years came forth, a liberal train,
Call'd by the people's great decree ---
His name, my friend, let blessings crown.
--- Fill, to the demigod's renown,
From whom thou hast that thou art free.

9.

Then, Drake, (for wherefore should we part
The public from the private weal?)
In vows to her, who sways thy heart,
Fair health, glad fortune will we deal:
Whether Eliza's blooming cheek,
Or the soft qualities that speak
So eloquent in Dian's smile,
Whether the piercing lights that fly
From the dark heaven of Julianne's eye,
Haply thy fancy then beguile.

10.

For so it is. Thy stubborn breast,
Tho touch'd by many a slighter wound,
Hath no true conquest yet confess'd,
Nor the one fatal charmer found.
While I, a true & loyal swain,
My fair Dione's gentle reign,
Thro' all the varying seasons, own.
Her Genius still my bosom warms:
No other maid for me hath charms;
Or I have eyes for her alone.

Akenside's relationship with Drake has already been discussed in Chapter Four. In the earlier *Drake Ode 1750*, Akenside had invited Drake to miss a formal church service in honour of the 'martyrdom' of Charles I, and to join him at a dinner party instead. The purpose of this second poem is not dissimilar: here, the poet is writing to remonstrate with Drake for his failure to return to London from Devon in good time for the beginning of the new session of parliament, and to invite him to a celebration of the anniversary of

William III's ousting of James II, which falls on 5 November and thus coincides with that of the gunpowder plot.

The first two stanzas of the poem contrast the country, where Akenside assumes Drake is, with London, where he is himself. The opening lines present a somewhat formal, poeticised picture: the constellation of Libra is overhead, an indication that winter is approaching; the Dryads are taking refuge in 'earthy caves', while Pan is leaving the 'bare pastures' (1-4). The next six lines offer a more realistic view of the scene: the farmer, who has long ago ploughed up his fields, destroying the last vestiges of summer vegetation ('the year's remaining pride'), is now imagined as 'bind[ing] his oxen to the plough' and 'throw[ing] his future harvest wide' (5-10). In contrast with this deserted and bleak rural scene, the poet continues, London is becoming a hive of activity. Wherever he goes, he notices the coaches of country members of parliament hurrying into town over Highgate Hill from the wilds of Essex or Kent (11-17). Their wives and daughters, meanwhile, equally concerned to make a good impression, are presumed to be 'within', 'debat[ing] their dress' and 'reform[ing] their airs' (18-20).

Given the fact that London clearly has more attractions at this time of year than Devon, with its 'peevish winds and gloomy frosts', Akenside goes on to ask Drake what can possibly be keeping him there. Could it be, he enquires ironically, that 'Devonian parsons' have suddenly 'grown':

> Friends to this tolerating throne,
> Champions of George's equal right?
> (21-27)

Akenside is almost certainly thinking of a particular Devonian parson here, the Rev^{d} William Palmer, to whom Drake had referred in a letter to Hardwicke three months earlier as 'a Tory....[and] a very wrangling and litigious

Parson'[68]. At this period Drake was advising the Lord Chancellor, vetting for him the lists of nominees chosen by the Duke of Bedford as suitable candidates to act as Justices of the Peace. This activity was rendered especially necessary because Devonshire was traditionally a Tory stronghold -- hence the doubts which Akenside goes on to express about the changed political views of 'Each bold Wessexian squire & knight' (28-30) -- and many of Bedford's friends were said to be Tories. In the event, Palmer was not placed on the commission in 1754; but he was given a place in 1755[69]. In view of the fact that it is highly unlikely that Drake's neighbours have been won over to an appreciation of 'general freedom, equal law' (28), Akenside suggests that Drake would be wise to come back to London in time join him in celebrating 'the day which made us free'; that is, the anniversary of William's landing (31-34).

The mention of this anniversary now appears to remind Akenside of a special circumstance which had particular topical relevance when this poem was written. This was the result of the recent alteration of the calendar from Julian ('old style') to Gregorian ('new style') in 1752, mainly owing, as Akenside says, to 'Parker's learned care' (35); George Parker, 2nd Earl of Macclesfield (1697-1764), 'one of the greatest mathematicians and astronomers in Europe'[70], had been responsible for making the calculations necessary to

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68. Drake to Hardwicke, 25 July 1754, Add. MS 35604 f.234.

69. See Norma Landau: *The Justices of the Peace 1679-1760* (Berkeley, 1984) 134-5.

70. Lord Chesterfield to his son, 18 March 1751: B. Dobree (ed.): *The Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield* (6 vols.,London, 1932) iv 1699. Chesterfield had been responsible for introducing Macclesfield to the Lords and for explaining his calculations in layman's terms. In 1753, the year before the poem was written, Akenside had been elected Fellow of the Royal Society , and Macclesfield had become the Society's President (see C.R. Weld: *A History of the Royal Society with Memoirs of the Presidents. Compiled from Authentic Documents* (2 vols., London, 1848) i 525).

effect the change, and for the initial presentation of his findings to the House of Lords on 18 March 1751[71]. Parker's son, Thomas, Lord Parker, was a candidate at the contested Oxfordshire election of 1754, where 'he never appear[ed] but he [was] called upon by the country fellows to...restore the eleven days that he cheated the country of'[72]. This story highlights a problem which Akenside's poem goes on to describe. The issue first came before the public when the proposals for the bill were published in March 1751; according to the report which was printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine*:

> all fixed feast-days, holy-days, and fast-days which are now observed by the church of *England*, and also the solemn days of thanksgiving, and of fasting and humiliation, appointed by act of parliament, shall be kept and observed on the respective days marked for the celebration of the same in the new calendar, which are on the same respective nominal days on which they are now kept; but which, according to the alteration intended, will happen eleven days sooner than the same do now[73].

As a result of this ruling, celebrations such as that of the gunpowder plot and the arrival of William III were no longer held on the genuine anniversaries of the original events, but instead, 'to please the public ear' took place 'too early, by eleven' (46-50). As Akenside points out, however, this fact can be used to advantage, since not only will he and Drake no longer have cause to regret:

That the vain pedant monarch's tale

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71. *LJ* xxvii 513.

72. Edmund Pyle to Samuel Kerrich, 27 January 1753: Pyle 188.

73. '*Substance of the Bill brought into the H. of Peers, for regulating the Commencement of the Year, and Correcting the Calender*', *GM* xxi (March 1751) 105-106.

> Of plots & sulphur, dark & stale,
> Should load the birthday of the state.
> (37-40);

but also, despite Drake's late return to London, they will still be able to pay their 'duty to the genuine day,/ Which leads November's latter train' (that is, 16 November) without the problems which would otherwise arise from Drake's having to celebrate the event among Tories, who would be likely to lower the tone by expressing 'nauseous flattery.../Of James or his dishonest reign' (56-60). The poet was wrong, incidentally, in supposing that Drake had stayed in Devon in order to set 'a pattern to [his] tenants' by attending the thanksgiving service (51-54). He had in fact started out for London by way of Bridport and of Hursley near Winchester (the home of some family friends) as early as the first week of October; but had been taken ill at Hursley, and had remained there incommunicado until 12 November, causing great anxiety to his steward and friend Nicholas Rowe as well as to Akenside[74].

The poet now goes on to describe the pleasures which await Drake at the forthcoming celebration. Their 'modest cups' supplied with 'the vintage of the Seine'[75], they will give thanks to 'the power divine' which had caused William ('the just deliverer') to:

> Rise from heroic ease, the spoil

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74. See Rowe's increasingly anxious letters to Drake, Drake Papers 346 M ff. 285-294.

75. The Seine is not one of the wine-producing districts of France; presumably Akenside is using the phrase to mean simply 'French wine'. In his revised version of the poem he altered it to read 'the Gascon's fragrant wine' (41).

> Due for his youth's Herculean toil,
> From Belgium to her saviour-son...
> (65-67)[76]

and to apply the same 'unconquered zeal' to rescuing Britain's freedom, 'wounded & o'erthrown' (68-70). 'He came', continues Akenside; and he paints a somewhat predictable picture of James (the 'tyrant'), flying away from Britain like a 'forbidden daemon', taking with him the combined evils of a catholic religion and submission to an unjust ruler (71-74). With his disappearance 'sank the barbarous Gothic reign'; and the poet urges Drake to drink a health in honour of the period which followed, 'Call'd by the people's great decree', and to confer blessings on the name of William ('the demigod'), who has given him the state of freedom which he now enjoys (75-80).

Next, says Akenside, ('for wherefore should we part/The public from the private weal?'), he and Drake will drink the health of whichever young woman Drake happens to be in love with at the time, whether it be Eliza, Dian, or Julianne, each of whom clearly has her own particular charm (81-90). He has to be as unspecific as this, he goes on, because Drake, although he has often been 'touch'd by many a slighter wound', has not yet found the 'one fatal charmer' to whom he can make a clear commitment. Drake never did marry, in fact; but a few years after this poem was written he appears to have had an unhappy love affair which is said to have ended with the young woman's death. The facts are not easy to ascertain with any accuracy. Lady Eliot-Drake states that the woman in question was a Miss Knight, whose portrait, painted by

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76. William had earned his 'heroic ease' (65) between 1672 and 1674 when, as newly-elected stadholder and captain- and admiral-in chief of the Dutch forces he had freed his country from the invading armies of Louis XIV: see M.C. Trevelyan: *William III and the Defence of Holland, 1672-4* (London, 1930).

Reynolds, was in the possession of the Drake family at the beginning of this century. Miss Knight (her christian name is not known) was apparently the eldest daughter of Captain, afterwards Admiral Sir Joseph Knight, whose second wife was a friend of Reynolds[77]. In support of this family tradition, although scarcely more informative, are a series of cautiously-worded letters from Rowe to Drake written during the second half of 1759. Although the 'valuable person you have such a respect for' (Drake Papers 346 M f. 388) is never referred to by name, Lady Eliot-Drake asserts that Rowe is speaking of Miss Knight. It is clear from the letters that by 31 August her 'melancholy condition' is such that there is very little hope of her life; by 10 September the worst has happened, and Rowe is counselling Drake 'For God's sake compose yourself as well as you can' (Drake Papers 346 M ff. 388, 389). Despite this advice, and Rowe's urgings that Drake should consult Akenside, 'your good friend as well as Physician', who he hopes will:

> advise as well as prescribe, and what the one can't effect, I trust the other in some measure will, at least to bear everything prudently...
> (Drake Papers 346 M f. 389),

it is clear from the anxious tone of Rowe's subsequent letters that it was some months before Drake regained any degree of equilibrium (Drake Papers 346 M ff. 391, 392, 393, 394).

These unhappy events were, however, still five years in the future at the time of Akenside's composition of the *Drake Ode 1754*; and he ends the poem by contrasting Drake's relative flightiness with his own unvarying constancy:

> While I, a true & loyal swain,

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77. *FED* ii 294; the present whereabouts of the portrait are not known.

> My fair Dione's gentle reign,
> Thro' all the varying seasons, own.
> Her Genius still my bosom warms:
> No other maid for me hath charms;
> Or I have eyes for her alone.
> (95-100).

Unfortunately even less is known about 'Dione' than about Miss Knight. Akenside had used the name in his *Ode On Lyric Poetry*, which was first published in *Odes on Several Subjects* in 1745; in his revisions for *Poems* (1772) he changed the name in both poems to Olympia, a name which also occurs in *To the Muse*, *On Love*, and *To the Evening Star*. A number of other female names may be found elsewhere in the Odes and in both versions of *Pleasures*, however[78]; and apart from the undoubted fact that he never married, little can be deduced on this subject.

The *Drake Ode 1754* is not the last direct communication from Akenside to Drake which has survived; in 1757, the poet wrote a prose letter on the subject of the Seven Years War which is now among the Drake Papers, and will be discussed in the next chapter.

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78. Akenside refers to Parthenia, who appears to have died as he was about to be married to her, in *Pleasures* (1744) ii 190-201, and to Melissa in *Pleasures* (1772) i 367. Akenside also addressed a 'song' to Cordelia, an Ode ('If rightly tuneful bards decide') to Amoret, and referred to Eudora in *Ode on the Winter Solstice*. All these names were clearly pseudonyms.

CHAPTER SIX
1757-1758

The last two poems which were discussed in Chapter Five seem to have been composed at the end of 1754. The present chapter moves on to work which dates from 1757 and 1758. Akenside's activities during the intervening period are not well documented, but the existing evidence indicates that he was dividing his time between medical and literary pursuits.

In May and June 1755, he delivered the annual Gulstonian Lectures before the Royal College of Physicians (Dyce xliii): an extract from one of these was to initiate a controversy with Dr Alexander Monro after its publication in *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* in 1758[1]. In September 1756, again before the Royal College of Physicians, he delivered a second series, the Croonian Lectures (Dyce xlv). Also in 1756, he was acting as physician to the poet John Dyer (1700-1758); he is known to have 'recovered' the older poet in April, and subsequently, according to a letter from Dyer to John Duncombe

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1. Akenside's paper, read to the Royal Society on 10 November 1757, was entitled: *Observations on the Origin and Use of the Lymphatic Vessels of Animals: being an Extract from the* Gulstonian *Lectures, read in the Theatre of the College of Physicians of* London, *in June 1755. By* Mark Akenside, *M.D., Fellow of the College of Physicians, and of the Royal Society.* It was published in *Philosophical Transactions, Giving Some Account of the Present Undertakings, Studies and Labours, of the Ingenious, in Many Considerable Parts of the World*, Vol. 50, Part 1. For the Year 1757 (Royal Society, London, 1758) 322-328.

dated 24 November, appears to have helped him with his final revisions of *The Fleece* (1757)[2].

Akenside's major poetic endeavour during the period 1754-1757 lies outside the scope of this thesis. After the publication in 1754 of the 5th edition of *Pleasures of Imagination*, which contained a number of minor revisions, he decided to 'write the Poem over anew upon a different and an enlarged Plan'[3]. The first book of this substantially altered work, now entitled *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, is dated 1757, although it was not published until the posthumous editon of 1772.

During this period, he was evidently in close contact with Robert Dodsley, who was preparing the last two volumes of his *Collection* for publication. Dodsley wrote to William Shenstone on 25 March 1755 to say that Akenside had particularly liked his poems in *Collection* iv, on 20 September 1757 he reported that Akenside had been particularly struck with his *Elegy*, and on 13 December of the same year that Akenside 'forbears to give [him] anything to begin the 6th volume until he sees how [Shenstone] begins the 5th'[4]. When the two volumes appeared in March 1758, volume vi contained, in addition to a

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2. Thomas Edwards to Daniel Wray, 28 April 1756: MSS Bodl. 1012; Dyer to Duncombe, 24 November 1756: J. Duncombe (ed.): *Letters by Several Eminent Persons Deceased including the Correspondence of John Hughes Esq. (Author of the Siege of Damascus) and Several of His Friends, Published from the Originals, with Notes Explanatory and Historical* (3 vols., London, 1772), ii, 241. According to Johnson, Akenside said that he would 'regulate his opinion of the reigning taste by the fate of Dyer's *Fleece*; for, if that were ill-received, he should not think it any longer reasonable to expect fame from excellence' (*Lives* iii 347).

3. Jeremiah Dyson: 'Advertisment', *Poems* (1772) iv.

4. Add. MS 28959 f.40, f.76, f.81.

slightly revised version of the *Huntingdon Ode*, nine previously unpublished poems by Akenside: *Hymn to the Naiads*; the *Hoadly Ode*; an *Ode* 'If rightly tuneful bards decide'; and six *Inscriptions*. Also in March 1758, he published the *Ode to the Country Gentlemen of England*, which will be discussed below, as will his unpublished *Epode*, which seems to have been written as a dedication to the posthumous sixth edition of Thomas Edwards' *Canons*, which appeared in May of that year. The first poem to be discussed in this chapter is undated, but the evidence suggests that it was composed in late 1757 or early 1758.

ODE TO WILLIAM HALL ESQUIRE: WITH THE WORKS OF CHAULIEU

This poem, which was first published in *Poems* (1772), was said by Charles Bucke, in *On the Life, Writings and Genius of Akenside* (1832), to have been composed in 1750 (Bucke 111). He gave no authority for this dating, and I believe it to be another of the many inaccuracies which his work contains. An edition of the works of Guillaume Amfryie de Chaulieu (1639-1720), Abbé of Aumale, libertine, wit, and poet[5], was published in 1757 under the title *Oeuvres de l'Abbé de Chaulieu* , ed. M. de Saint Marc (2 vols., Amsterdam, 1757). This was the first complete edition of Chaulieu's works to appear since 1733, although a few of his fugitive pieces had been published in 1744 in a collection entitled *Receuil de poësies galantes du Chevalier de **, & quelques*

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5. For a full discussion of the life and writings of Chaulieu, see Gilbert Bouriquet: *L'Abbé de Chaulieu et le Libertinage au Grand Siècle* (Paris, 1972).

piéces fugitives de l'abbé de Chaulieu & autres[6]. Akenside's well established interest in, and history of response to new publications, together with other circumstantial evidence, suggests that this was the edition which he gave to William Hall with his ode.

William Hall (1705-1766) was 'an intimate friend from schooldays to old age'[7] of Nicholas Hardinge, and thus moved in the same circles as Akenside. Hardinge's son, George Hardinge (1744-1816), wrote an account of Hall for Nichol's *Literary Anecdotes* in 1813:

> Mr Hall was educated at Eton College, and was a Fellow of Kings College in Cambridge[8]. His political patron and generous friend was the amiable Brother of Horace Walpole, Sir Edward....he loved his chambers, loved his books, and the occasional society of the Benchers at the Middle Temple[9]....He had a serious and gentleman-like deportment, a good person, a mild and pleasing countenance. I do not think he had a powerful genius of any kind, or much compass of any learning; but he had a ready fund of good sense, propriety of manners, grace of thought and of expression, a poetical ear, and a most admirable taste. He was, under the rose, a little too fond of the fair sex. His fate (and I suspect it originated in his amours) was, perhaps, unexampled in the history of human decay. He became at first weak, then childish, then absolutely an ideot; and from that ideotcy emerged into the wildest paroxysm of delirium, in which he died.
>
> (*Lit. Anec.* viii 517-518).

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6. For details of previous editions, see Chaulieu: *Oeuvres* i, iv, and ix.

7. W.P. Courtney: *Dodsley's Collection of Poetry: Its Contents and Contributors* (London, 1910) 99.

8. Hall is recorded as being a pupil at Eton between 1718 and 1724, and Nicholas Hardinge between 1711 and 1718; thus, if the friendship began at Eton, it must have been during Hall's first year: see R.A. Austen-Leigh (ed.): *The Eton College Register 1698-1752* (Eton, 1927) 154, 159. Hall matriculated in Cambridge in 1725 and was elected Fellow of Kings in 1727. He received his B.A. in 1729, and his M.A. in 1732 (*Alumni Cantabrigienses* Part i vol. ii 289). This source also states that Hall held the posts of Deputy Master of the Exchequer, Solicitor to the Post Office, and Secretary to the Pipe Office.

9. Hall was elected to the Middle Temple in 1728 (ibid. 289).

Akenside would, doubtless, have disapproved of Hall's over-fondness for the fair sex, and his knowledge of this failing certainly forms the background to the *Hall Ode*. A more immediate incentive for the poem's composition, however, is likely to have been the poems which Hall contributed to Dodsley's *Collection*, volumes v and vi. Akenside's apparent involvement with the selection of poems for these two final volumes in late 1757, together with the fact that Chaulieu's *Oeuvres* had appeared in 1757, strongly suggest a composition date of the winter of 1757-8 for the *Hall Ode*. The text of the poem, as it appeared in *Poems* (1772), is as follows:

ODE
TO WILLIAM HALL, ESQUIRE:
WITH THE WORKS OF CHAULIEU

I.

Attend to Chaulieu's wanton lyre;
While, fluent as the sky-lark sings
When first the morn allures it's wings,
The epicure his theme pursues:
And tell me if, among the choir
Whose music charms the banks of Seine,
So full, so free, so rich a strain
E'er dictated the warbling Muse.

II.

Yet, Hall, while thy judicious ear
Admires the well-dissembled art
That can such harmony impart
To the lame pace of Gallic rhymes;
While wit from affectation clear,
Bright images, and passions true,
Recall to thy assenting view
The envied bards of nobler times;

III.

Say, is not oft his doctrine wrong?
This priest of pleasure, who aspires
To lead us to her sacred fires,
Knows he the ritual of her shrine?
Say (her sweet influence to thy song
So may the goddess still afford)

Doth she consent to be ador'd
With shameless love and frantic wine?

IV.

Nor Cato, nor Chrysippus here
Need we in high indignant phrase
From their Elysian quiet raise;
But pleasure's oracle alone
Consult; attentive, not severe.
O pleasure, we blaspheme not thee; [30]
Nor emulate the rigid knee
Which bends but at the Stoic throne.

V.

We own had fate to man assign'd
Nor sense, nor wish but what obey
Or Venus soft or Bacchus gay,
Then might our bard's voluptuous creed
Most aptly govern human kind:
Unless perchance what he hath sung
Of tortur'd joints and nerves unstrung,
Some wrangling heretic should plead. [40]

VI.

But now with all these proud desires
For dauntless truth and honest fame;
With that strong master of our frame,
The inexorable judge within,
What can be done? Alas, ye fires
Of love; alas, ye rosy smiles,
Ye nectar'd cups from happier soils,
--Ye have no bribe his grace to win. [48]

A careful reading of this poem quickly reveals it to have been written not simply as a reprimand for Hall's 'licentiousness of life', as Dyce suggested[10], but also as advice on suitable subject-matter for lyric poetry. That Akenside believed that the poet should 'aspire in public Virtue's Cause/To guide the Muses by sublimer Laws' (*Curio* 339-40) has been demonstrated many times[11]. The poetry which Hall submitted for publication in Dodsley's

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10. Dyce lx; Bucke and Houpt also failed to see Akenside's purpose in this ode.

11. Cf. for example *Huntingdon Ode* 1-10; *In the Country* 45-60. See also *Ode on the Use of Poetry* (Book i Ode vii): 'Not far beneath the hero's feet, /Nor from the legislator's seat/ Stands far remote the bard' (19-21).

Collection, though not without charm, in no way measures up to Akenside's stringent standards of moral seriousness. The fifth volume contains two poems addressed by Hall in 1753 and 1756 to a Miss Polly Laurence, who worked in the Pump-Room in Bath (*Collection* v 204-209, 308). Akenside would not, in all probability, have considered a Pump-Room girl to be a particularly suitable subject for a poem; and he would also, no doubt, have disapproved of the light-hearted way in which Hall treated the indulgences which led people to take the waters in Bath:

> Happy are the sons of earth
> Whom the goddess at their birth
> Shin'd on. Yet, her heavenly ray
> Numbers, not respecting, stray
> From her presence, and pursue
> LUXURY's paths, whose sordid crew,
> LUST inordinate, and SLOTH,
> And GLUTTONY's unwieldy growth,
> Lead them on to SHAME, and PAIN,
> And MALADIES, an endless train.
> Oft with pangs distracting torn
> They HYGEIA's absence mourn....
> They the queen of health implore
> Her wish'd presence to restore[12].

The sixth volume of the *Collection* contains three poems, *Vacation; To a Lady;* and *Anacreon Ode III* (*Collection* vi 148-157). The best of these, *Vacation*, is an imitation of Milton's *L'Allegro*, in which Hall celebrates his annual release from 'sage, mysterious law,/ That sit'st with rugged brow, and crabbed look/ O'er thy black-letter'd book...' (*Collection* vi 148). He looks forward to the delights of idling away his time in the countryside, and of observing, among

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12. *Hymn to Miss Laurence, in the Pump-Room. Bath, 1753*, *Collection* v 206-207.

more innocuous scenes, the seduction of an 'unregarded maiden' by 'a trav'ling 'squire/ Of base intent and foul desire' who 'Stops to insnare, with speech beguiling/ Sweet innocence and beauty smiling' (*Collection* vi 151). Later, he imagines himself taking part in a country dance:

> There nimble Marian of the green
> Matchless in the jig is seen,
> Allow'd beyond compare by all,
> The beauty of the rustic ball:
> While, the tripping damsels near,
> Stands a lout with waggish leer;
> He, if Marian chance to shew
> Her taper leg and stocking blue,
> Winks and nods and laughs aloud,
> Among the merry-making crowd,
> Utt'ring forth, in aukward jeer,
> Words unmeet for virgin's ear.
>
> (*Collection* vi 151-152).

It is clear that Akenside was well able to recognise the 'grace of thought and of expression' and the 'poetical ear' (*Lit. Anec.* viii 518) which Hall's poems demonstrate. Evidently, however, he was troubled by finding such a facility put to the service of what he would have considered to be immoral sentiments; and, seeing a parallel in the recently published poems of Chaulieu, presented Hall with a copy of the Abbé's works in order to demonstrate his point.

The dichotomy which Akenside feels to exist between the content and the form of Chaulieu's poetry is made clear in the first four lines of his ode. The Abbé's 'lyre' is described as 'wanton' (1), and he himself as an 'epicure' pursuing his 'theme' (4); but his mode of expression is compared, in its fluency, with the singing of the skylark at dawn (2-3). Listen to these poems, the poet exhorts Hall; are they not the finest music ever to come from France (5-8)? But while you are admiring the 'well-dissembled art', which can give

such unexpected harmoniousness to 'the lame pace of Gallic rhymes'[13] , the unaffected wit, the 'bright images' and 'passions true', which will readily remind you of the greatest poets of the past (9-16), continues Akenside:

Say, is not oft his doctrine wrong? (17)

He is troubled, as he goes on to demonstrate, by the quality of the offerings which Chaulieu undertakes to bring to the shrine of Terpsichore ('the warbling Muse' (8). If Hall wishes to continue in her favour, he must ask himself whether 'shameless love and frantic wine' (both of which are celebrated light-heartedly in Hall's own poetry as well as in that of Chaulieu) are subjects serious enough to please her (18-24).

Akenside does not intend to give the impression that he is recommending strict censorship, or the practice of stoicism; thus, he says, there is no need to invoke either Cato or Chrysippus (25-27): Marcus Porcius Cato, 234 BC-149 BC, known as 'the Censor', was known for his strictness and his austere policy of moral, social and economic reconstruction, and expelled the Greek philosohers and rhetoricians from Rome, while Chrysippus, 280 BC-207/6 BC, was the Greek philosopher who became head of the Stoic school in 232 BC and was responsible for systematising the Stoic doctrine[14]. It is only necessary to consult the oracle of pleasure in order to understand his point (28-29). He admits that if man had not been granted the faculty of sense (that is, reason),

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13. Compare the *Remonstrance*:

> Say; does her language your ambition raise,
> Her barren, trivial, unharmonious phrase,
> Which fetters eloquence to scantiest bounds,
> And maims the cadence of poetic sounds?
> (61-64).

14. Michael Grant: *Greek and Latin Authors 800 BC - AD 1000* (New York, 1980) 84-85, 90-91.

but had only been governed by those lower inclinations which are obedient to the commands of Venus and Bacchus (the 'shameless love and frantic wine' of the previous stanza) then Chaulieu's 'voluptuous creed' might have been enough for mankind (33-37). Several of the Abbé's poems celebrate Venus and Bacchus; see for example *Chanson XVIII. Sur M. le Duc de Vendôme*:

> De Vénus aux belles fesses,
> Du dieu Bacchus, du dieu Mars,
> Vendôme dès sa jeunesse
> A suivi les étendards.
> Vénus, quelquefois fripponne,
> Respecta peu sa personne;
> Et Bacchus l'enyvra...
>
> (Chaulieu: *Oeuvres* ii 59).

Several of Chaulieu's poems treat in a somewhat flippant way the inconvenient after-effects of over-indulgence; this would, of course, have enabled the Abbé to counter any charge of profligacy with the defence that he had, at least, pointed out the dangers. The poem just quoted is one example of this; another is the *Épître XXIX: A M. le chevalier de Bouillon en 1712*, in which he complains that his body is deteriorating rapidly, that he has problems with his eyes and is attacked by gout, which 'Me fait, depuis vignt ans, un tissu de souffrance', but that in spite of this he intends to go on trying to enjoy life (Chaulieu: *Oeuvres* ii 329-338). Akenside was obviously not convinced of the validity of including these details 'Of tortur'd joints and nerves unstrung' (40), even if they were intended as a warning. Since a similar tendency to make light of the destruction of health by over-indulgence has already been pointed out in Hall's poetry, it is not surprising that Akenside saw a parallel and wished to demonstrate it.

Indeed, the subject matter of Chaulieu's poems must have been so entirely foreign to the puritanical Akenside that it is surprising that he expressed his disapproval so mildly. In his *Ode XI: L'Inconstance*, the Abbé celebrates 'Des charmes de l'Inconstance/ Et de l'Infidélité' (Chaulieu: *Oeuvres* ii 136). He demonstrates several times that he takes a liberal view of homosexuality, as for example in *Ode IX: Les Poëtes Lyriques*:

> Mais, aimable Sapho, je t'entends, tu soupires;
> Tu cèdes à l'Amour qui possède tes sens...
> Tu sais que la raison s'égare
> En mille sentiers séduisans.
> (Chaulieu: *Oeuvres* ii 129).

He asserts in *épître XVII: A M. le comte Hamilton*, that, far from being ashamed of his 'libertinage', he believes that it has made him a better poet:

> Pour moi, de mon libertinage
> Qui toujours ai fait vanité,
> Dans les vers qui m'ont peu coûté,
> Quand Phébus m'a mis en goguette,
> J'ai chanté l'amour et le vin;
> Et, si j'étois moins libertin,
> Je serois plus mauvais poëte.
> (Chaulieu: *Oeuvres* ii 279).

Finally, he asserts a number of times that he has no fear of punishment for his actions, and no belief in an after-life; in *épître XXVII: A madame la duchesse de Bouillon*, he advises the duchess not to fear death or hell-fire, since:

> La mort est simplement le terme de la vie;
> De peines, ni de biens elle n'est point suivie.

C'est un asyle sûr, c'est le fin de nos maux,
C'est le commencement d'un éternal repos;
(Chaulieu: *Oeuvres* ii 319).

Akenside ends his poem to Hall with an appeal to his friend's better nature: the 'proud desires/ For dauntless truth and honest fame' which he firmly believes that every man possesses. He feels sure that Hall's conscience, 'that strong master of our frame/ The inexorable judge within' cannot be won over by 'ye fires/ Of love...ye rosy smiles,/ Ye nectared cups from happier soils...' (41-48). Unfortunately, as Hardinge's account of Hall's later deterioration makes clear, the poet's faith in his ability to resist temptation proved to be ill-founded.

EPODE

This poem was not published in Akenside's lifetime. Together with the *Drake Ode 1750*, it was discovered in the early 1940s by Ralph M. Williams, who published the texts of both poems in *Modern Language Notes* of December 1942. The manuscript, which is now in Amherst College Library, is in Dyson's hand, and is inscribed 'In the possession of Dr. Hardinge', as Williams notes (Williams 631).

EPODE

O parent of the Muses, who alone,
From Time's destructive might, hast pow'r to save
The works of man; O Memory, behold
This votive tablet, which the faithful hand
Of Cleophron suspends amid thy dome.
Accept the gift, propitious; & preserve
The record which it holds, the voice & prayer
Of jealous fame. For by ignoble feet
Soon will thy courts be trampled, & the tongues
Of Hippias & Thrax with sland'rous rites [10]
Affront thy altar. But permit not thou,

O queen, their unblest envy to impair
Thy servant's name; or from his duteous cares
To turn thy gracious notice. Long their arts,
Their snares distributed thro' vulgar paths,
Neglecting hath he scorn'd; secure of thee,
Secure that never thine eternal gates
The rude access of ignorance & rage
Would suffer. But behold; the favour'd bard
Who lately this heroic mansion trod,
Thy priest, with evil auspices to them
Hath left the charge his off'rings to present
Before thy footstool. Fierce with his commands,
E'vn now presumptuous up thy awful heights
They come; with mutual flatt'ry sounding forth
That honour much unhop'd; & fell revenge
To each gainsayer, & envenom'd wounds
To all who spurn'd erewhile their sordid toils,
Denouncing. But, immortal matron, say;
Wilt thou accept them? wilt thou stoop to hear
The worship of blasphemers? No. by all
The sacred Manes dearest to thy reign,
By all the praise of sages, patriots, kings,
Dash their foul homage; & let equal shame
Repay the profanation. So well-pleas'd
Shall purer votaries, throughout the bounds
Of Albion's land, to thy asserted throne
Do rev'rence. So shall my devoted song
Nor night nor day refuse to deck thy shrine
With trophies won from envy and from death.

This is a difficult poem; its references are obviously very specific, but at the same time very private. Whether Akenside ever intended it for publication is hard to say; I am inclined to think that it was written for circulation among his closest friends, which would explain Hardinge's possession of the manuscript. Williams made an attempt to explain the references:

> It is an appeal to Memory to protect her votary Cleoptron [sic] (Akenside) from the attacks of Hippias and Thrax....'The favour'd bard' (line 19) appears to be Thomas Edwards, who had died in 1757, seven years after his famous attack on Warburton in *The Canons of Criticism*. The date of the poem would seem...to be about 1758...
>
> (Williams 630).

This reading seems to me to be correct in part, although Williams misreads the manuscript, transcribing 'Cleoptron' instead of the correct 'Cleophron'. He makes no attempt to explain why Akenside refers to himself thus, perhaps because his own reading of the name makes little sense. Correctly read, however, it is obviously a compound (coined, presumably, by Akenside himself), of the Greek words κλειω and φρον (from φρονψμα). As a verb, κλειω means 'to tell of, make famous, celebrate, glorify'; as a noun (κλειω, ous, n), therefore, 'teller', or 'proclaimer' -- anglicised, it is of course Cleo, the name given to one of the Muses ('the proclaimer'). The second part of the compound, φρονψμα, is capable of a number of related meanings, of which the most relevant to the present context is 'presumption, arrogance, conceit'. Thus the whole compound almost certainly means 'the proclaimer of presumption, arrogance, conceit': the purpose, in other words, which Akenside proposes to himself in writing the poem.

Where Williams goes wrong, however, seems to be in his assumption that the poem 'apparently deals with the two main attacks made on Akenside in print during his lifetime' (630). He arrives at this conclusion by identifying 'Hippias and Thrax' (10) with Dr. Alexander Monro and William Warburton. In my view, he is right in taking one of these figures to represent Warburton; but the identification of the other with Monro appears to be an irrelevance when the poem is examined closely. Monro was the Professor of Medicine and Anatomy at Edinburgh University; and he did indeed attack Akenside in the postscript to a pamphlet published in 1758, suggesting that Akenside's theory on the functioning of the lymphatic glands, published in *Philosophical Transactions* in 1757, was derived from a treatise which Monro had published the previous

year'[15]. Akenside's reply, which appeared on 21 October (*LC* iv 284 p. 394), was written in the third person, and explained that his theory, 'which he had at first drawn out for himself', had been advanced for the first time in June 1755 as part of his Gulstonian lecture series at the Royal College of Physicians, while Monro's treatise, *De Glandulis Lymphaticus*, from which he insinuated that Akenside had borrowed his theory, had not been published until 1756'[16]. Apart from anything else, late 1758, when this controversy took place, is too late a date for the composition of this poem, if my reading of it is correct.

The crucial passage -- not included by Williams in his account -- is the one which follows the poet's reference to 'the favour'd bard':

> But behold; the favour'd bard
> Who lately this heroic mansion trod,
> Thy priest, with evil auspices to them [Hippias and Thrax]
> Hath left the charge his off'rings to present
> Before thy footstool.
> (19-23).

It is clear from these lines that the anticipated attack will, if it occurs, be the result of the fact that Akenside has been given a specific task to perform by his fellow poet: he is to present 'his off'rings' before the 'footstool' of Memory (the 'parent of the Muses' (1) to whom this poem is an invocation). An

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15. *Observations Anatomical and Physiological, wherein Dr Hunter's Claim to some Discoveries is examined* (Edinburgh, 1758) 69-74. Although according to the title of Akenside's pamphlet this was published in August (see following note), it was not announced in the *London Chronicle* until 12 October (*LC* iv 284 p. 360).

16. *Notes on the Postscript to a Pamphlet entitled 'Observations Anatomical and Physiological, &c', by Alexander Monro, Junior, M.D., Professor of Anatomy, &c., Edinburgh, August, MDCCLVIII* (London, 1758) 3-4.

examination of the 6th edition of Edwards' *Canons*, published 17 May 1758 (*LC* iv 284 p. 394) suggests a possible explanation of this puzzling statement. Edwards, who had died on 3 January 1757, had written a number of sonnets, many of which had remained unpublished during his lifetime[17]; these sonnets, 45 in all, had been collected together after his death and were published in the posthumous 6th edition of *Canons*. The 'Advertisment' which was prefixed to this edition explained that:

> The Canons of Criticism, and the Sonnets printed in Dodsley's Miscellanys were so well received by the best Judges, that it is presumed the Republication of them, together with the other pieces, which the Author left behind him, and which he had prepared for the press before his last illness, will be agreeable to the Public. The twenty-seven Sonnets, which now appear for the first time, are in the same taste with those in Dodsley's volume, correct, simple, not aiming at points or turns, in the phrase and structure rather ancient, for the most part of a grave, or even of a melancholy cast; formed in short upon the model of the Italians of the good age, and of their Imitators among us, Spenser and Milton.

No mention is made in the edition of Akenside's name in association with this undertaking; but the fact that he was obviously a close and trusted advisor to Dodsley at this time, and that he knew Edwards, strongly suggests that the 'charge' which he speaks of at line 22 of his *Epode* was that of preparing the collection of sonnets for inclusion in this volume. As three of the previously unpublished sonnets -- the Prefatory Sonnet, and no.s xxvi and xxxii -- are attacks on Warburton, this would explain Akenside's trepidation at being associated with the venture.

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17. Dodsley had published thirteen of Edwards' sonnets (no.s ii-ix, xi, xii, xv, xxxvii and xlv in *Canons* (6th edn.)) in the third edition of his *Collection* (vol. ii 322-334).

The poem begins by invoking Memory, in order that the poet may present her with 'This votive tablet' (1-4). His purpose is not simply to dedicate his poem to Memory, but to ask for her protection (6-8); soon, her 'courts' will be 'trampled' with the 'ignoble feet', and her 'altar' affronted with the 'sland'rous rites', of Hippias and Thrax (8-11). Williams' footnote to these lines conjectures that:

> The use of *Hippias*, the name of a famous sophist of Plato's time, suggests that Akenside thought Monro a pedant; *Thrax*, literally a *Thracian*, was also the name of a type of gladiator -- an appropriate idea when applied to Warburton.
>
> (Williams 630 n.8).

However, if the reading of the poem suggested above is correct, Monro does not enter the picture. In any case, if Akenside's *Epode* does refer to his preparation of Edwards' sonnets for publication, the poem must have been composed before 17 May 1758, when the 6th edition of *Canons* made its appearance.

Williams's suggestion that Thrax represents Warburton appears also to be wrong. The pedantry which Plato ascribes to Hippias was a characteristic which both Edwards and Akenside associated with Warburton: indeed, the 'Prefatory Sonnet' which begins the 6th edition of *Canons* addresses Warburton as 'Tongue-Doughty Pedant' (*Canons* 6th edn. 18). An examination of Plato's *Greater Hippias* and *Lesser Hippias* confirms this identification. In both these dialogues, Socrates questions the eminent sophist from Elis -- who prides himself on his 'wide learning' -- in such a way that Hippias condemns himself out of his own mouth; by publishing Warburton's own words in *Canons*, Edwards had of course used a parallel approach to Warburton. In the *Greater Hippias*, the sophist undertakes to define the 'absolute beautiful'; even more relevant, however, is

the *Lesser Hippias*, in which Socrates questions him closely on his interpretation of certain passages in Homer: Hippias defends his judgments of Homer's depiction of the characters of Achilles and Odysseus by asserting that he knows exactly what Homer meant[18]. Edwards' *Canons* had, of course, undertaken to show Warburton making the same assertion about Shakespeare[19].

If Warburton is Hippias, this leaves the problem of identifying Thrax. Williams is correct in stating that the name, which literally means a Thracian, was used to refer to a type of gladiator (one, in fact, who was armed with a Thracian buckler and sword); it is used twice in this sense by Horace[20]. Given the interpretation of the poem argued for here, it seems most likely that Akenside had in mind one of Warburton's supporters, who he thought would be likely to fly to the prelate's defence in the face of the new attack constituted by the hitherto unpublished sonnets.

Most of the 'Warburtonians' who had previously entered into the numerous controversies over Warburton's writings had done so in defence of his theological writings. His close friend Richard Hurd, D.D. (1720-1808), later Bishop of Worcester, for example, had defended Warburton's *Divine Legation* in his own edition of Horace's *Ars Poetica* (1749); since Hurd was said to have been circumspect and timid, 'an old Maid in Breeches' (see Evans: *Warburton* 188), however, he seems an unlikely candidate for the rôle of Thrax. John Towne

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18. Plato: *Cratylus, Parmenides, Greater Hippias, Lesser Hippias*, trans. H.N. Fowler, *Loeb Classical Edition* (1953). Especially relevant are *Greater Hippias* St.7.286.E.; and *Lesser Hippias* St.5.365.D. Plato's authorship of both the dialogues is open to question.

19. See for example CANON I: *A Professed Critic has a right to declare, that his Author wrote whatever he thinks he should have written, with as much positiveness as if he had been at his elbow.* (*Canons*, 1st edn., 12).

20. See *Epistles* i.18.36, and *Satires* ii.6.44.

(1711-1791), who was almost as devoted a 'Warburtonian' as Hurd, had made a close study of the prelate's writings, and had published six replies to Warburton's antagonists; but again his interest was theological rather than critical[21].

The most likely candidate, given the present context, would seem to be Dr. John Brown (1715-1766). Brown had first come to Warburton's attention in 1748 as the writer of *An Essay on Satire: Occasion'd by the Death of Mr Pope*, which was published in Dodsley's *Collection* iii (113-136). Brown's poem addressed the prelate as 'great WARBURTON' (p. 124), and contained several eulogistic passages of which the following is representative:

> But thou whose eye, from passion's film refin'd,
> Can see true greatness in an honest mind;
> Can see each virtue and each grace unite,
> And taste the raptures of a PURE delight;
> O visit oft [Pope's] awful page with care,
> And view the bright assemblage treasur'd there...
> Pleas'd, if from hence th'unlearn'd may comprehend,
> And rev'rence HIS and SATIRE's generous end.
>
> (pp. 113-114).

Warburton had, not unnaturally, been delighted with these compliments, and in 1751 had published Brown's poem in volume iii of his collected *Pope* (pp. v-xxx). The likelihood of this identification is increased by the fact that Brown had subsequently published an *Essay on the Characteristics of the Earl of Shaftesbury* (1751), a work intended to discredit Shaftesbury's philosophy, in which Warburton's name appears alongside those of 'Homer, Shakespeare, Milton, Demosthenes, Tully, Aristotle, Bacon, Locke, Boyle, Pascal, Newton, Hooker,

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21. For a full discussion of Warburton's principal defenders, see Evans: *Warburton* 183-203.

Berkeley' as a representative of 'that *boundless Penetration*, which so far surpasseth *mere Judgment*' (40), and which includes a lengthy attack (88-99) on Akenside's note to *Pleasures* (1744) iii 259-277 (the passage to which Warburton had objected, which deals with 'Ridicule as a Test of Truth'). Brown concludes that: ' 'Tis no difficult Matter to point out the Foundation of this Gentleman's Errors concerning Ridicule', and accuses Akenside of using 'new-fangled Expressions....In the Use of which he seems to have imposed upon himself new Phrases for Realities, and Words for Things' (97). The links between Brown, Warburton, the edition of Pope, and the attack on Akenside -- of which Williams was evidently not aware -- make this identification more likely than Williams' conjecture.

If these suggestions are accepted, the rest of the poem becomes a great deal more comprehensible. Akenside requests of Memory that she will not allow his reputation to be damaged by the 'unblest envy' of Hippias and Thrax (11-13); and that she will not cease to pay attention to his 'duteous cares' (13-14). For a long time, he has ignored their attacks, sure that she is on his side, and that she would not allow 'The rude access of ignorance and rage' to enter her 'eternal gates' (14-19). But now he has been charged by Edwards to present his offerings to posterity (19-23); and this instruction carries with it 'evil auspices' to Hippias and Thrax (21). Akenside's fear that the publication of Edwards' sonnets would act as an irritant to Warburton (and his supporters) is easy to understand. Edwards, although apparently not wishing to defend Pope publicly (see Chapter 4), had left three sonnets to be published in his posthumous collection which attacked Warburton mercilessly. Sonnet XXVI,

On the Edition of Mr. POPE*'s Works with a Commentary and Notes*, for example, reads as follows:

> In evil hour did *Pope*'s declining age,
> Deceiv'd and dazzled by the tinsel shew
> Of wordy science and the nauseous flow
> Of mean officious flatteries, engage
> Thy venal quill to deck his labor'd page
> With ribbald nonsense, and permit to strew,
> Amidst his flowers, the baleful weeds, that grow
> In th'unbless'd soil of rude and rancourous rage.
> Yet this the avenging Muse ordained so,
> When, by his counsil or weak sufferance,
> To thee were trusted *Shakespear*'s Fame and Fate:
> She doom'd him down the stream of time to tow
> Thy foul, dirt-loaded hulk, or sink perchance,
> Dragg'd to oblivion by the foundering weight.
> (*Canons*, 6th edn., 306).

The poet of the *Epode* imagines Hippias and Thrax -- understandably enraged by this and the other two sonnets -- to be approaching the 'awful heights' where Memory dwells (23-25). He sees them jointly flattering her in order to gain her good opinion, vowing to avenge themselves on anyone who contradicts them, and to inflict damage on those who had spoken slightingly of their 'sordid toils' (25-29). But, he appeals to her, will she accept such blasphemous offerings? (29-31). He urges her, in the name of the 'sacred Manes', and of the praise which she has received from great men in the past, to disgrace them in proportion to the 'profanation' of their approach (31-35). If she complies with this request, he promises her that she will earn the gratitude of 'purer votaries' throughout England (35-38); and that he himself will continue, through his own poetry, to 'deck thy shrine/ With trophies won from envy and from death' (38-40).

Even if the arguments about the occasion of its writing are accepted, the dating of the composition of *Epode* can only be approximate; it must have been

written sometime between Edwards' death in January 1757 and the publication of *Canons* (6th edn.) in May 1758. The next poem to be discussed in this chapter, the *Country Gentlemen Ode*, can be dated with a good deal more confidence, since it was obviously written in response to a specific political situation, and was published soon afterwards, in March 1758. Before moving on to this poem, however, it will be useful to examine a letter written by Akenside to Drake in October 1757, since both the letter and the poem are concerned with the events of the Seven Years' War. The text of the letter is as follows:

Bloomsbury Square.

Oct. 27 1757

My dear friend.

In answer to your inquiry I can only say that it is scarce possible to express the astonishment & dejection which the return of the armament occasion'd in all sorts of men. The publication of Mr Pitt's letter to the Admiral & General has effectually remov'd any doubt or ill-will from the King and his ministers; & at present the whole blame lies upon Sir J.M. & I have not yet met with or, in all the world, heard of one man who undertakes to justify him. I have read a very harmless ode attempting to joke upon Mr Pitt on account of this expedition; which, as it would also be smart upon the D. of N'castle & Ld. Anson, I take to be written by the quondam Secretary or some of his clients. Upon the whole, I do not find it apprehended that the present ministry is likely to be hurt by this public disappointment. Indeed the only way by which it can hurt them, must be by enabling their enemies to represent the expedition itself as ill-conceiv'd or impracticable: but the contrary to this, I think, is universally allow'd.

You see the D. of Cumberland has resign'd everything. 'Tis said the first regim^{t} of guards will remain undispos'd of: I could tell you several particulars not so proper for a letter, concerning his reception & treatment by the old gentleman, with whom Mr Pitt is said to have had, on one point, the honour of being his advocate: and his R.H. is said to have taken very particular notice of Mr P.'s spirit & nobleness on that occasion: so one would not imagine much intrigue or vexation like what we saw last session.

The Militia-letter which we sent you, I thought an admirable one, & worth the best of Swift's Drapier's letters. I am sorry for what you mention of the uneasiness of the Country-folks: indeed one cannot blame them -- but what do those deserve who gave them such a cause of alarm?

> Dyson has been very poorly almost ever since you left us, with a very troublesome sort of Arthritis vaga & other bad complaints. I hope he is in a way of getting & continuing better. He desires his love & that you would consider how near the meeting of parl. approaches.
>
> Farewell. I am ever
> your faithful & affectionate M.A.
>
> (Drake Papers 346 M f. 18).

This letter deals with three topics -- 'the return of the armament'; the Duke of Cumberland's resignation; and the 'Militia-letter' -- all of which were major issues at the time of writing. To understand the references, one needs to know something about the background of events; in particular, those of the few months immediately before Akenside's letter. Since 18 May of the previous year (1756), England had been engaged in what was to become the Seven Years' War with France, a war which was being fought on many fronts, in the Americas, in India, in Africa, and in Europe. George II was as concerned to protect his Hanoverian interests as his British ones; and so it was that on 17 February 1757 Pitt had presented to the House of Commons a message from the king stating the intended formation of 'an Army of Observation for the just and necessary Defence and Preservation' of 'His Majesty's Electoral Dominions, and those of his good Ally the king of Prussia' (*CJ* xxvii 717). The Duke of Cumberland , who had become a national hero as a result of his victory over the Scots in the Jacobite rebellion of 1745-6, had been summoned from his country retreat and sent to Germany to assume what a twentieth century historian has described as 'the captaincy of half-hearted Hanoverians and subsidised mercenaries to be pitted against the finest troops of France arrayed in a crushing superiority' (Charteris 245). Throughout the summer of 1757, Cumberland fought a brave but losing war, considerably outnumbered by the opposing forces. On 24 July, when the French caught up with his retreating

army at Hastenbeck, Cumberland was in command of between 30,000 and 40,000 men, while the French had 'no fewer than 65,000 and probably more than 70,000' (Charteris 274); and although the Duke resisted the attack to the best of his abilities, after two days' fighting he was forced to concede victory to the enemy. The news reached England at the beginning of August; and the king, who now saw continued fighting as prejudicial to his interests in Hanover, dispatched a series of notes to Cumberland, urging him to treat with the French, and insisting on the necessity for peace[22].

Undoubtedly lack of numbers contributed to Cumberland's defeat; and a shortage of trained troops was one of the considerations which had induced Parliament to pass the Militia Act, recently given the royal assent, on 28 June. The revival of the militia had long been a favourite object of 'patriot' politicians. It was supported both by Pitt and his friends among the Tory country gentlemen, as well as by 'country' Whigs. Nevertheless it met with widespread opposition. Despite the fact that a relatively small number of able-bodied men from each county (their names to be drawn by lot) was to be called upon to serve, and that such service entailed exercising for a total of less than 20 days in each year for only three years (see the terms of the bill published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in July (*GM* xxvii 301-5)), it was apparently believed at first by many that the Act would entail conscription for life (see Western 290). This is the 'uneasiness of the Country- folks' to which Akenside refers in his letter; and he was not alone in believing that they had been given 'such a cause of alarm' by (as he implies) opponents of

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22. See Charteris 244-299 for a full account of these events.

the bill[23]. Their uneasiness, indeed, had led to widespread rioting throughout the country in August and September; the 'Militia-letter' which Akenside and Dyson had sent to Drake was *A Letter to the People of England upon the Militia, Continental Connections, Neutralities, and Secret Expeditions* (1757), a pamphlet which had been published that same month (see *GM* xxvii 483) which urged forcefully:

> Would you not rather spare Twenty Days in a Year for the Exercise of Arms, though it were at the Price of your Days Work, than labour all your Life for a Tyrant [that is, presumably, the King of France] -- who -- would not only make you Fight for him when and where he pleased, but pay you what he pleased? Would you not rather give Three Half Crowns for insuring your Wives -- your Daughters from the Brutality of Tygers, yourselves from Death, and your Posterity from Popery and Slavery? (6-7)[24]

So far as the government was concerned, these problems at home must have seemed relatively minor in comparison with those they were experiencing

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23. The weekly *Monitor* suggested that perhaps 'they, who could not throw the bill out of the house [presumably Hardwicke and Newcastle, who seem to have been its chief opponents (see Western 131-4, 147-8)] are resolved to defeat its intentions, by influencing their tenants and dependents to oppose its execution...': *The Monitor: or British Freeholder* Vol. III no. 113 (17 September 1757) 83. Pitt apparently believed that the riots were attributable to a failure on the part of the Lords Lieutenant of the counties and their Deputies to explain the Act to the people. See Newcastle to Hardwicke, 10 September 1757, Add. MS 35417 f.55-6.

24. The pamphlet may have been the work of the political writer John Shebbeare (1709-1788), who wrote several other Letters 'to the People of England'. See Western 104-161 for a discussion of the political background to these events. It is interesting to note that Devon was one of the first counties whose militia was formed and embodied after the passing of the acts in 1757-8; as Western points out, this almost certainly reflected the fact that, being on the coast, the county was keenly conscious of the dangers of an invasion (Dorset, Norfolk and Kent also formed their militia soon after the acts were passed). See Western 124 and Appendix A 447-8.

overseas. In July, concerned at the success of the French in Northern Europe, Pitt decided to launch a surprise attack on the French town of Rochefort. The expedition was intended to be a diversionary tactic, which would reduce some of the intensity of the attacks on Frederick and Cumberland; but in order to put it into operation, Pitt was forced to withhold 10,000 much needed men who would otherwise have been sent to Germany to augment the Duke's army[25].

The overall command of Pitt's expeditionary force, which finally set sail for France at the beginning of September, had been given to Sir John Mordaunt. This appears to have been an unfortunate choice; according to Horace Walpole, whose first cousin and great friend Major-General Henry Seymour Conway was second-in-command of the expedition, Mordaunt:

> had been remarkable for alertness and bravery, but was much broken both in spirit and constitution, and fallen into a nervous disorder, which had made him entreat last year not to be sent to America, lest it should affect his head, and bring on disorders too familiar to his family.
>
> (*Mem. Geo. II* ii 274-5).

When the fleet arrived at the island of Oléron, off the French coast, on 23 September, the combined disadvantages of an ill-informed plan and an unstable commander immediately made themselves felt. Rochefort was several miles inland, which meant that an attack by the full force would have been impossible, and in addition a combination of indecisiveness and difficulty in putting in had led to the British fleet being in full view of the French coast for several days. In consequence, it was generally (though possibly mistakenly) felt that the French would be too well prepared to make a surprise attack

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25. Newcastle to Hardwicke, 25 July 1757; Add. MS 32872 f. 320. See also Charteris 270.

possible. Mordaunt 'appeared incapable of forming any opinion, and said he was ready to take any officer's advice' (*Mem. Geo. II* ii 276), and a council of war held aboard the *Neptune* on 25 September produced little apart from 'miserable vacillation'[26]. Finally, it was decided to head back to England without taking any action at all, much to the disappointment of Conway, who wrote to his brother Lord Hertford on 30 September: 'I am sorry to say that I think on the whole we make a pitiful figure in not attempting anything...'[27]. Thus the 'return of the armament' which, as Akenside says, occasioned 'astonishment & dejection...in all sorts of men', was the arrival of the fleet back at Spithead on 6 October (see *GM* xxvii 460). The October *Gentleman's Magazine* published a letter which Pitt had sent to Mordaunt and Sir Edward Hawke, the Admiral of the Fleet ('received by them on the 22nd [September]')(*GM* xxvii 459-60), which as Akenside says makes it clear that as far as the king and ministers were concerned, the orders had been 'to attack if practicable'. It was on the practicability of such an attack that the issue depended; and for a time, as Akenside states, 'the whole blame' did indeed lie 'upon Sir J.M.', who was court-martialled in mid-December for his part in the fiasco. Although Mordaunt was acquitted of the charge of disobedience, since he was found to have acted in good faith and according to his instructions, he was not, however,

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26. J.S. Corbett: *England in the Seven Years War* (2 vols., London, 1907) i 216. See ibid. i 197-222 for a full account of this expedition.

27. Quoted in Walpole: *Corresp.* 37. 508.

exonerated; he was permanently removed from the king's personal staff[28].

Not surprisingly, the failure of the expedition occasioned a number of satirical pamphlets. The 'very harmless ode' which Akenside read was *An Ode on the Expedition. Inscribed to the Right Honourable W---- P--t, Esq* (London, 1757)[29], a piece which has a good deal of fun at the expense of the grandeur of Pitt's plans and the bathos of their eventual outcome. As Akenside says, the ode also attempts to 'be smart upon' the Duke of Newcastle and Lord Anson; the relevant stanza reads:

> Obsequious bow'd *N--w---e's* grace,
> And for a moment -- more or less --
> He pauz'd, as if he thought;
> While *A---n* knew not what it meant,
> But gave his phlegmatic consent.
> As folks in office ought[30].

This ode has never, as far as I can discover, been attributed either to Henry Fox ('the quondam Secretary') or to 'some of his clients', if one takes this to refer to the writers most closely associated with him, Arthur Murphy

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28. See Middleton 43. See also *The Proceedings of a General Court Martial Held in the Council Chamber at Whitehall, on Wednesday the 14th, and continued by several Adjournments to Tuesday the 20th of December 1757, upon the Trial of Lieutenant General Sir John Mordaunt, by virtue of his Majesty's Warrent, bearing date the 3rd Day of the same Month* (London, 1758).

29. Other satires published on the occasion included: *The Secret Expedition. A New Hugbug Ballad. To the Tune of God Prosper Long our noble King* [London, 1757]; and *A New Historical, Political, Satyrical, Burlesque Ode, On That Most Famous Expedition, of all Expeditions, Commonly called The Grand Secret Expedition, As it was Performed By the Author, At a late High Borlace* (London, 1757).

30. For a recent, and more balanced, reassessment of the contribution made by Newcastle and Anson at this period, see Middleton 213-214 et passim.

and Dr Philip Francis[31].

Meanwhile, by early October, serious problems had arisen between George II and the Duke of Cumberland. The aging and unstable king had become alarmed by the fact that the Duke's peace negotiations had produced nothing but indignation on the parts both of his ally Frederick of Prussia and of his ministers at home. In mid-September, therefore, he had sent another series of notes to Cumberland telling him not to conclude the peace-treaty; but they had arrived too late. The Duke, convinced that he was carrying out his father's wishes, had signed the convention on 10 September. When the news reached the Court at the beginning of October, the king was 'beside himself'[32]; and when Cumberland himself returned to London and visited his father on 11 October, his reception was very bad. Although when he spoke to Henry Fox the following morning he apparently declined to enter into details[33], it was soon being rumoured that the king had refused to speak to him directly, saying instead to the assembled company 'Here is my son, who has ruined me and disgraced himself' (*Mem. Geo. II* ii 282) (these are presumably the 'particulars not so proper for a letter, concerning his reception & treatment by the old gentleman' to which Akenside refers). Feeling that he had been unfairly treated, Cumberland communicated his wish to resign all his commands. According to Henry Fox, Pitt's intervention at this stage -- which is referred to

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31. For Fox's association with Murphy and Francis see Lucy Sutherland: 'The City of London and the Devonshire-Pitt Administration, 1756-7', reprinted in A. Newman (ed.): *Politics and Finance in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1984) 83 n.3.

32. Newcastle to Hardwicke, 8 October 1757, Add. MS 32834 f.471.

33. Fox to Bedford, 12 October 1757; Bedford ii 276.

admiringly by Akenside -- took place when the king told Pitt that he had given his son no orders to sign the treaty, to which Pitt is said to have replied: 'I must, as a man of honour and a gentleman, allow every where that H.R.H. had full powers to do what he has done'[34]. The rumour that, as a result of the Duke's resignation, his command, the 1st Regiment of Foot Guards, would 'remain undispos'd of' proved to be unfounded; it was passed to General Sir John (later Viscount) Ligonier on 3 December 1757[35].

It is clear from the tone of this letter that Akenside was still taking a keen interest in current events. It is also interesting to find that he was privy to the more intimate gossip of the court; presumably this was owing to the close involvement with parliamentary and ministerial affairs which would have resulted from Dyson's Clerkship of the House of Commons. Above all, however, the letter is useful because it plainly indicates where his political sympathies lay in late 1757. His obvious gratification that the blame for the failure of the Rochefort expedition had devolved onto Mordaunt indicates that broadly speaking he supported 'the present ministry', which at the period in question was, of course, the uneasy coalition between Pitt and Newcastle which had been formed the previous summer. However, his dismissive reference to Fox ('the quondam Secretary'), the fact that he apparently attributed the

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34. Bedford ii 276. In expressing the hope that Cumberland's gratitude for this move on Pitt's part will prevent a repetition of the 'intrigue or vexation' of the previous parliamentary session, Akenside is referring to the fact that Cumberland was believed to have been instrumental in procuring Pitt's dismissal from office in April 1757: see *Mem. Geo. II* ii 246-7, and James, Earl of Waldegrave: *Memoirs from 1754 to 1758* (London, 1821) 98-9. See also J.C.D. Clark: *The Dynamics of Change: The Crisis of the 1750s and the English Party Systems* (Cambridge, 1982) 354-358.

35. See 'List of Promotions for the Year 1757', *GM* xxvii (December 1757) 578.

'uneasiness of the Country-folks' to behind-the-scenes machinations of, probably, Newcastle and Hardwicke, and the pleasure he took in reporting 'Mr P's spirit and nobleness' in defending Cumberland, all make it evident that his real loyalties lay with Pitt. This is scarcely surprising, not only because Akenside would almost certainly have been an admirer of Pitt's famous and formidable 'patriot' oratory in the House of Commons since the 1740s, but also because the enormous degree of confidence in his own abilities coupled with the very considerable political courage which Pitt was demonstrating during the current war meant that he was enjoying an extraordinary degree of popular acclaim[36].

A few months after this letter was written, Akenside engaged himself in public affairs more fully than he had done for many years: he published a poem which was specifically designed to stir up the dormant war-spirit of the British people much as the *Philippic* had been almost twenty years earlier.

ODE TO THE COUNTRY GENTLEMEN OF ENGLAND.

This poem, which appeared in pamphlet form on 23 March 1758 (*LC* iii 192 p. 280) and required a second edition only a week later (*LC* iii 196 p. 308) was published with Akenside's name on the title page. The text of the 1758

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36. For an interesting discussion of Pitt's popularity during 1757, see Marie Peters: *Pitt and Popularity: The Patriot Minister and London Opinion during the Seven Years' War* (Oxford, 1980) 83-97.

edition is as follows:

ODE

TO THE COUNTRY GENTLEMEN OF ENGLAND

I.

WHITHER is Europe's ancient spirit fled?
Where are those valiant tenants of her shore,
Who from the warrior bow the strong dart sped,
Or with firm hand the rapid pole-axe bore?
Freeman and soldier was their common name.
Who late with reapers to the furrow came,
Now in the front of battle charg'd the foe;
Who taught the steer the wintry plough t' indure,
Now with stern counsel check'd incroaching pow'r,
And bade the gen'ral weal her scepter'd vassal know.

II.

But who are ye? from Ebro's sluggard sons
To Po, to wanton Loire and boasting Seine;
From Rhine's weak progeny to Danube's thrones,
And the far bord'rers on the Cimbric main;
Abject and self-deserted? whose proud lords
Have baffled your tame hands, and giv'n your swords
To slavish ruffians hir'd for their command:
These, at some greedy monk's or harlot's nod,
See rifled nations crouch beneath their rod:
These are the public will, the reason of the land.

III.

Thou, heedless Albion, what, alas! the while
Dost thou presume? O inexpert in arms,
Yet vain of freedom, how dost thou beguile
With dreams of hope these near and loud alarms?
Thy splendid home, thy plan of laws renown'd,
The praise and envy of the nations round,
What care hast thou to guard from fortune's sway?
Amid the storms of war, how soon may all
The lofty pile from its foundations fall,
Of ages the proud toil, the ruin of a day!

IV.

No: thou art rich. thy streams and fertile vales
Add industry's wise gifts to nature's store:
And every port is crouded with thy sails,
And every wave throws treasure on thy shore.
What boots it? If luxurious plenty charm
Thy selfish heart from glory, if thy arm
Shrinks at the frowns of danger and of pain,
Those gifts, that treasure, is no longer thine.
A coward's golden heaps malignant shine,

Bribing rapacious force to work their owner's bane.

V.

But what hath force or war to do with thee?
Girt by the azure tide and thron'd sublime
Amid thy floating bulwarks, thou can'st see,
With scorn the fury of each hostile clime
Dash'd ere it reach thee. Sacred from the foe
Are thy fair fields. athwart thy guardian prow
No bold invader's foot shall tempt the strand --
Yet say, my country, will the waves and wind
Obey thee? Hast thou all thy hopes resign'd
To the sky's fickle faith? the pilot's wavering hand?

VI.

For let not -- O! thy surest bane beware---
O! let not danger's threats, nor rev'rence won
By virtuous kings, seduce thee to prepare,
In armies ever waiting round the throne,
A wretched safety. Then, farewell thy claims
Of freedom! Her proud records to the flames
Then bear, an off'ring at ambition's shrine;
Whate'er thy ancient patriots dar'd demand
From fierce Plantaganet's, or Stuart's hand,
Or what great William seal'd for his adopted line.

VII.

But if thy sons be worthy of their name,
If lib'ral laws with lib'ral hearts they prize,
Let them from conquest and from servile shame
In war's glad school their own protectors rise.
Ye chiefly, heirs of Albion's cultur'd plains,
Ye leaders of her bold and faithful swains,
Now not unequal to your birth be found:
The public voice bids arm your rural state,
Paternal hamlets for your ensigns wait,
And grange and fold prepare to pour their youth around.

VIII.

Why are ye tardy? what inglorious care
Detains you from their head, your native post?
Who most their country's fame and fortune share,
'Tis theirs to share her toils, her perils most.
Each man his task in social life sustains.
With partial labours, with domestic gains
Let others dwell: to you indulgent heav'n,
By counsel and by arms the public cause
To serve for public love and love's applause,
The first imployment far, the noblest hire, hath giv'n.

IX.

Have ye not heard of Lacedaemon's fame?
Of Attic chiefs in freedom's war divine?
Of Rome's dread gen'rals? the Valerian name?

The Fabian sons? the Scipios, matchless line?
Your lot was theirs. the farmer and the swain
Heard his lov'd patron's summons from the plain;
The legions gather'd; the bright eagles flew;
Barbarian monarchs in the triumph mourn'd;
The conqu'rors to their household gods return'd,
And fed Calabrian flocks, and steer'd the Sabine plough.

X.

Shall then this glory of the antique age,
This pride of men, be lost among mankind?
Shall war's heroic arts no more ingage
The unbought hand, the unsubjected mind?
Doth valour to the soul no more belong?
No more with scorn of violence and wrong
Doth forming nature now her sons inspire,
That, like some mystery to few reveal'd,
The skill of arms implicitly they yield,
And from their own defence abash'd and aw'd retire?

XI.

O shame to human life, to human laws!
The loose advent'rer*, hireling of a day,
Who his fell sword without affection draws,
Whose God, whose country, is a tyrant's pay,
This man the lessons of the field can learn;
Can every palm, which decks a warrior, earn,
And every pledge of conquest: while in vain,
To guard your altars, rights, paternal lands,
Are social arms held out to your free hands:
Too arduous is the lore; too irksome were the pain.

*e.g. two late marshalls of France [Akenside's note].

XII.

Meantime by pleasure's sophistry allur'd,
From the bright sun and living breeze ye stray;
And, deep in London's gloomy haunts immur'd,
Brood o'er your fortune's, freedom's, health's decay.
O blind of choice and to yourselves untrue!
The young grove shoots, their bloom the fields renew,
The mansion asks its lord, the swains their friend;
While he doth riot's orgies haply share,
Or tempt the gamester's dark, destroying snare,
Or at some courtly shrine with slavish incense bend.

XIII.

And yet full oft your anxious tongues complain
That lawless tumult prompts the rustic throng;
That the rude village-inmates now disdain
Those homely ties which rul'd their fathers long.
Alas, *your* fathers did by other arts
Draw those kind ties around their simple hearts,
And led in other paths their ductile will;

By succour, faithful counsel, courteous cheer,
Won them the ancient manners to revere,
To prize their country's peace and heav'n's due rites
fulfill. [130]

XIV.

But mark the judgement of experienc'd Time,
Tutor of nations. Doth light discord tear
A state? and outrage? and sedition's crime?
The pow'rs of warlike prudence dwell not there;
The pow'rs who to command and to obey,
Instruct the valiant. There would civil sway
The rising youth to manly concord tame?
Oft let the marshall'd field their steps unite,
And in glad splendour bring before their sight
One common cause and one hereditary fame. [140]

XV.

Nor yet be aw'd, nor yet your task disown,
Though war's strict votaries look on severe;
Though secrets, taught erewhile to them alone,
They deem profan'd by your intruding ear.
Let them in vain, your martial hope to quell,
Of new refinements, fiercer weapons tell,
And mock the old simplicity, in vain:
To the time's warfare, simple or refin'd,
The time itself adapts the warrior's mind;
And equal prowess still shall equal palms obtain. [150]

XVI.

Say then; if England's youth, in earlier days,
On glory's field with well-train'd armies vy'd,
Why shall they now renounce that generous praise?
Why dread the foreign mercenary's pride?
Yet Valois brav'd young Edward's gentle hand,
And D'Albret rush'd on Henry's way-worn band,
With Europe's chosen sons in arms renown'd:
But not on Vere's bold archers long they look'd,
Nor Audley's squires nor Mowbray's yeomen brook'd:
They saw their standard fall, and left their monarch bound.
[160]

XVII.

Such were the laurels which your fathers won;
Such glory dictates in their dauntless breast:
-- Is there no voice that speaks to every *son*?
No nobler, holier call to *You* address'd?
O! by majestic freedom, righteous laws,
By heav'nly truth's, by manly reason's cause,
Awake; attend; be indolent no more:
By friendship, social peace, domestic love,
Rise; arm; your country's living safety prove;
And train her valiant youth, and watch around her shore.[170]

Making allowances for the fact that its author was considerably more mature and sophisticated than the sixteen-year-old Newcastle schoolboy who had written the *Philippic*, the rhetoric of the *Country Gentlemen Ode* is not dissimilar to that of the earlier poem. One important difference between the two works, however, is the fact that the *Philippic* had been written before the declaration of war with Spain, so that the poet's aim had been to alert 'Britannia's dreaming sons' (26) to the need for extreme measures in the hope, presumably, of creating a situation in which Walpole's ministry would be forced by the demands of popular opinion to declare war. The *Country Gentlemen Ode*, on the other hand, was written in the context of a war which was already in progress, and, as its title indicates, was addressed to one particular section of the population in response to a highly specific, and most troublesome, situation.

When Akenside had written to Drake at the end of October of the previous year, the Militia Act had only recently come into being, bringing in its wake uneasiness and even rioting among the 'Country-folks'. In early September 1757, Pitt had felt that the riots were perhaps attributable partly to a failure on the parts of the Lords Lieutenant of the counties to explain the Act to the people (Add. MS 35417 f.55). As early as 17 September, however, he was being advised by one of his supporters, John, Lord Poulett (1708-1765), Lord Lieutenant of Somerset since 1744 and an ardent militia enthusiast, of a further dimension to the problem: Poulett reported that at a recent meeting he had 'found y^{e} Gentlemen of y^{e} county at present very averse to [the Act], unwilling to lend much assistance' (PRO 30/8 vol. 53 f.99). By the end of 1757, this aspect of the problem had become primary; while it was, of course, possible to practise compulsory enrollment among the common people and thus

to fulfil the need for rank and file, so few of the gentry had volunteered to serve as officers that the Act was in danger of foundering. On 1 December Royston reported to Newcastle that Pitt 'seemed to think the Militia Bill might have been executed, if the Principal Gentry had exerted themselves more...' (Add. MS 35351 f.432); later the same month George Townshend (1724-1807) -- elder brother of Charles and the original author of the Militia Act -- began preparing a bill which was designed to clarify the terms of the Act, to remove misapprehensions, and to increase the quota of officers by making the Deputy Lieutenants liable to serve[37].

By the early months of 1758, the Act seemed in danger of foundering owing to lack of support. Not surprisingly, the pamphleteers and the press were voicing their concern at the state of affairs. A pamphlet published in February 1758 stated unequivocally that the '*onus imperii*' rested with the 'property men' of the country, and argued that:

> whatever risque a nation, at any time, runs of being bankrupted...or of having its constitution overturned by foreign or domestic violence; on these must the odium, the disgrace, and the inconvenience light. It should seem, then, at first sight, that from these considerations we ought not long to be at a loss whom to apply to....
> ....by such mens being employed in the militia, as it is no reproach for gentlemen of rank and fortune to associate and act with in the capacity of Deputy-lieutenants, Majors, Captains, &c the name itself, as a by-word, or term of ignominy, shall cease to stink in our nostrils....
> It is beyond the reach of either House to convince a poor ignorant country fellow...that his wealthy neighbour...is not equally concerned with himself, or more so, to take up arms in such times of imminent danger, as threaten the destruction of both alike....In a word, that property-men are the fittest to be trusted with arms, for

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37. See Townshend's letter to Pitt, 28 February 1758, explaining what his bill is to do (PRO 30/8 vol.64 ff.151-152). The bill had its first reading on 3 March (*CJ* xxviii 116) and was finally passed by the Commons on 14 April (*CJ* xxviii 194).

> the security of a nation at home; the ablest to bear whatever charge the raising, the supporting, and the disciplining a militia, must, in course, be attended with, and...the last to be seduced from that duty, which is so intimately connected with their interest, is evident to common sense[38].

At the beginning of March, the weekly *Monitor* published a piece outlining the qualities needed in officers, and invoking a time when 'our battles were the glory of the British name' (*Monitor* ii No. 137 (4 March 1758) 302-303); this was followed up during the two subsequent weeks with a pair of articles under the heading 'With good advice make war: *Prov.* xx 18' which argued forcibly for the justice and necessity of prosecuting the present war (*Monitor* ii No. 138 (11 March 1758) 304-314, *Monitor* ii no. 139 (18 March 1758) 315-323). Given this context, it is not surprising to find the announcement, in the *London Chronicle* of 14-16 March that: '*Speedily will be published*. AN ODE to the COUNTRY GENTLEMEN of ENGLAND' (*LC* iii 189 p. 253). A second pre-publication announcement was made a week later (*LC* iii 191 p.269); and on 23 March the paper announced:

> *This day was published.* AN ODE to the COUNTRY GENTLEMEN of ENGLAND. By Dr AKENSIDE.
> (*LC* iii 192 p.280).

Akenside begins his poem with a question: 'WHITHER is Europe's ancient spirit fled?' (1). He pays tribute to the 'valiant tenants' of Europe's past, the landowners and farmers who, in time of war, had taken up their bows and

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38. *A Letter to the Right Hon. ******, Containing Hints of a Plan for a Militia, on a new and better Footing than any hitherto proposed: in the Course of which is shewn, in what Manner his Majesty's Fleets and Armies may be occasionally supplied without Pressing, consistently with the Nation's Security, and the Subject's Liberty* (1758); quoted *LC* iii 174 (7-9 February 1758) p.131.

pole-axes in order to defend their countries against invasion from without or tyranny within (2-10). This approach adds an interesting dimension to his usual xenophobia; taking his past form into account, it is surprising to find him admitting that there was ever a time when the European races were worthy of admiration. Predictably, however, the second stanza makes it clear that things are very different at the time of writing, when there is little to choose between the lazy Spanish ('Ebro's sluggard sons'), the Italians (of 'Po'), the immoral and conceited French ('wanton Loire and boasting Seine'), the 'weak progeny' of Germany, who are under the domination of kings ('Danube's thrones') and the Danish ('the far bord'rers on the Cimbric main'[39])(11-14). All these races are now found to be 'Abject and self-deserted', their weakness exploited by their rulers, who have hired 'slavish ruffians' to fight for them (15-17). Such mercenaries, in obedience to 'some greedy monk's or harlot's nod', are now oppressing 'rifled nations', and have become 'the public will, the reason of the land' (18-20). It is clear that Akenside's general attack on the Europeans has here become more specific; the 'greedy monk' is obviously Abbé François Joachim Pierre de Bernis (1715-1794) who had become Minister of Foreign Affairs to Louis XV on 29 June 1757, and the 'harlot' his close friend and associate Madame de Pompadour (1721-1764), who was known to have a powerful influence over the king and to play an important part in the conduct of foreign

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39. The Cimbrii are referred to in Plutarch: *Caius Marius* xi.3 as 'some of the German peoples which extended as far as the Northern ocean' (*Plutarch's Lives*, trans. B. Perrin, *Loeb Classical Edition*, vol. ix (1920) 489. Florus (i.38) gives an account of 'The War with the Cimbrii, Teutones, and Tigurini'.

affairs[40].

Having exposed the moral degeneracy of the enemy, Akenside turns his attention to the British people. He attacks them as 'heedless', presumptuous, unprepared in the arts of war, 'vain of freedom', taking refuge from the encroaching threat of conquest in dreams of false optimism (21-24). He accuses them of lack of concern for Britain's wealth, and for her justly admired constitution, and reminds them how quickly these hard-won gains could be eradicated (25-30). He points out that natural resources, the achievements of industry, the command of the sea, and great gains from foreign trade are of no use if they simply lull their possessors into a false sense of security, making them selfish and cowardly; indeed, the combination of wealth and cowardice offers an irrestistible -- and vulnerable -- temptation to unscrupulous thieves (31-40). With irony, he puts forward what he sees as the current complacent attitude of the British people: surrounded by the sea, and defended by a strong navy, they imagine themselves to be secure from the threat of an invasion (41-47). He questions the basis of that complacency, however, pointing out that it fails to take into account the potential treachery of weather conditions, or the fallibility of the naval commanders (48-50).

Presumably hoping that by now he has instilled into the British a real sense of the threat which they are facing from overseas, the poet goes on to

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40. For Bernis, see Marcus Cheke: *The Cardinal de Bernis* (London, 1958) 140. For Mme de Pompadour's rôle in foreign affairs, see John Lough: *An Introduction to Eighteenth Century France* (London, 1960) 163; see also Nancy Mitford: *Madame de Pompadour* (London, 1954).

warn them against what he sees as an equally dangerous response, that of the establishment of a standing army (51-54): this would mean the end of 'thy claims/ Of freedom', won for them at the time of the Magna Carta, the Civil War, and by William III (55-60). This view of the perniciousness of standing armies had been a cornerstone of Whig ideology since the late 1690s. It was argued -- by, for example, the 'strong Whig' political writers John Trenchard and Walter Moyle -- that nations which had lost their liberty had done so after establishing standing armies, and had regained it after disbanding them, since tyrants had used standing armies to enslave their subjects; and that such armies were in any case nuisances to their country, drawing on public funds to support idle men, and made up of a combination of rough, coarse men and oppressive and cruel officers[41]. In support of the only viable alternative, the establishment of a militia, it had been argued at this period that:

> a MILITIA of *Freeholders* is not only harder to be conquer'd than that of *Servants* or *Mercenaries*, but must be even superior to an Army wholly compos'd of *Gentlemen* under an Arbitrary Monarch: for the latter, notwithstanding their Honours and Priviledges, are not absolutely free, but retain'd on the behalf of Tyranny; whereas Men of Property being all disciplin'd...and having Arms in their hands for the Defence of *Liberty*, upon which from their Infancy they are taught to value themselves, and to prefer it to all other Conditions...FREEMEN...thus train'd, excel all others in Greatness of Soul and Courage: Nor are their haughty Spirits ever to be subdu'd, especially when they consider they are fighting for their own...,

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41. See Trenchard and Moyle: *An Argument, Shewing, that a Standing Army Is inconsistent with A Free Government, and absolutely destructive to the Constitution of the English Monarchy* (London, 1697) 4, 6-12, 28. See also Trenchard: *A Short History of Standing Armies in England* (London, 1698). For an interesting discussion of the arguments on both sides of the question, see E. Arnold Miller: 'Some Arguments used by English Pamphleteers 1697-1700, Concerning a Standing Army', *JMH* xviii (Dec. 1946) 306-313.

> their common Endeavours being to secure every Man's private Property[42].

Also, as another writer argued, in addition to the advantage to be gained from superiority of numbers, and the 'goodness of the English Cause':

> the Courage of the English is a part of our Strength...this seems to be the advantage of a free Government, that whereas in other Countries there is as true Valour to be found as any here, yet it is not national; if it be in some of the Nobless, yet the Peasantry is abject and quite out of Heart. It is true, the Nation is not so well exercised in Arms, as they were when Bows and Arrows were the Artillery of the World...: But in the mean time where there is sheer Courage in a Nation, Men are Soldiers by instinct, and as soon as they see an Enemy know how to kill him; and tho they cannot do it in manner, and form, and with address, yet if they do it any how it will serve turn[43].

Akenside would undoubtedly have been familiar with this famous seventeenth-century controversy, and versions of both these arguments appear in his poem.

He appeals to the British people to show that they deserve their reputation, and that they are sensible of the benefits of the liberal system of legislation under which they live, by rising up to protect their country against the threat of conquest and tyranny (61-64). In particular, he directs his appeal to the land-owning classes of the country: the inhabitants of the villages and the farms are waiting for their example -- which has been requested by 'the public voice' -- to take up arms and 'pour their youth

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42. John Toland: *The Militia Reform'd, or an Easy Scheme of Furnishing England with a Constant Land-Force capable to prevent or to subdue any Forein Power; and to maintain perpetual Quiet at Home, without endangering the Publick Liberty* (London, 1698) 22-23.

43. Rev. Samuel Johnson: *A Confutation Of a late Pamphlet intituled, A Letter Ballancing the Necessity of keeping a Land-Force in times of Peace; with the Dangers that may follow on it* (London, 1698) 19-20.

around' (65-70). He questions what lesser concerns could possibly be keeping them from their rightful places as leaders of these willing country-men (71-72); and points out (as Toland had done in his 1698 pamphlet) that it is their own interest to take part in the defence of their country (73-74). Every man, he argues, has his allotted place in the structure of social life; and their especial responsibility, by virtue of the position into which they were born, is to serve 'the public cause' both by 'counsel' and by 'arms' (75-80)[44].

In the stanza which follows, the poet adds weight to his argument by reminding his readers of precedents from the past in which bravery in defence of one's country had been displayed; in this case, his examples are drawn from classical sources. The first is that of Lacedaemon (81) (better known today as Sparta), whose inhabitants, commanded by law to regard war as their profession, were renowned for the courage and intrepidity with which they defended the honour and liberty of their country. The undaunted courage of the Spartans on the field of battle had enabled their most famous leader, Leonidas, with only a small band of men under his command, to resist the huge army of Xerxes at Thermopylae; a 'patriot' hero, and the subject of an opposition poem by Richard Glover in 1737, Leonidas is presumably one of the 'Attic chiefs' who, according to Akenside, engaged in 'freedom's war divine' (82)[45]. The poet

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44. The argument that each man had a particular role to play in life which was predetermined for him at birth by the divine will was evidently important to Akenside: cf. for example *Pleasures* (1744) i 80-108; the *Huntingdon Ode* (151-158); and in *In the Country* (31-50).

45. For the bravery of the Lacedaemonians, see for example Plutarch: *Lycurgus*. For an account of the battle of Thermopylae, see Herodotus vii 219-225.

also reminds his readers of equally famous Roman generals: the Valerii, members of a patrician family at Rome who were distinguished for their patriotism, their ardent love of liberty and their valour in battle; the Fabii, a noble and powerful Roman family of which all but one of the male line had lost their lives in one famous battle in 389 BC; and finally the Scipios, probably the most celebrated family in Rome, whose bravery in battle and conquest, as well as their reputation for virtue and liberality, persisted generation after generation[46] (83-84). In those far-off times, matters stood just as they do today, the poet continues: the country people were called to battle by their 'loved patron':

> The legions gather'd; the bright eagles flew;
> Barbarian monarchs in the triumph mourn'd;

and after the victory (suggested here with admirable sparseness and economy by Akenside) the conquerers returned to their country estates, perhaps to Calabria (a part of ancient Italy, probably cited here because it was associated with great fertility, and famous for its fruit, its cattle and its honey), or to steer 'the Sabine plough': the Sabines, another ancient people of Italy, won fame for taking up arms against the Romans to avenge the rape of their women (85-90)[47]. Have great achievements such as these of the past been

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46. For the Valerii, see Livy i-vii. For the battle of the Fabii, see Livy vi.1.11; see also Plutarch: *Fabius Maximus*. For the Scipios, see for example Plutarch: *Fabius Maximus* xxv-xxvii, Florus 22-33.

47. The best known references to Calabria and the Sabines are to be found in Horace. For Calabria, see *Odes* i.30.5; *Epode* i.27; *Epistles* i.7.14. For Horace's Sabine farm, and the soil and inhabitants, see *Satires* ii.7.118; *Epistles* i.7.77, and ii.1.25.

lost? asks the poet. Will no man go to war freely, to avenge what he sees as wrong? Do men now avoid engaging in arms, on the grounds that they are untrained, leaving others to defend them? (91-100).

'O shame to human life, to human laws!', exclaims the poet (101). Even a hired mercenary, with no loyalty to the oppressive government for which he is fighting, can learn the arts of war, can win honour for his bravery, can excel in conquest, while you yourselves refuse to take up arms to defend your religion, your freedom, and your property, seemingly on the grounds that 'Too arduous is the lore; too irksome were the pain' (102-110). The footnote which Akenside attaches to his reference to 'the loose advent'rer, hireling of a day' explains that he is thinking specifically of 'two late marshalls of France'. Almost certainly the two men he has in mind are James Fitz-James, 1st Duke of Berwick (1670-1734), and Maurice, Comte de Saxe (1696-1750).

The Duke of Berwick was the natural son of James, Duke of York (later James II) and Arabella Churchill. Born and educated in France, Berwick had shown great military courage at the age of 15, fighting under Charles, Duke of Lorraine. During a period in England between 1685 and 1688, he had held the commands of several regiments and had been made governor of Portsmouth. After his father fled to France, Berwick had joined him, and subsequently had visited Ireland to raise an army to assist James' return. Following the failure of this venture, he joined the French army as a volunteer, and, after becoming naturalised as a Frenchman in 1703, had been created Marshal of France in 1706. The following year he had distinguished himself at the head of the French army, fighting a great campaign against the Anglo-Portuguese army, which he defeated at the important battle of Almanza. Interestingly, he refused in 1715 to help the pretender's planned invasion of Britain, on the grounds

that he preferred the politics of France to those of England; and he met his death, in 1734, while in command of the French army in the War of the Polish Succession[48].

Maurice de Saxe, the illegitimate son of elector Frederick August I of Saxony (later also King Augustus II of Poland) had begun his military career at 14, when his father sent him to Flanders to serve under Prince Eugene of Savoy. In 1719, his father had bought him a German regiment in French service, and at its head he introduced innovations in military training which won him rapid recognition. In 1732, he wrote *Mes Rêveries*, a work which at the time was remarkable for the originality of its treatment of the science of war; it was not published until 1757, and so would almost certainly have been known to Akenside[49], who probably had it in mind when he spoke of his 'loose advent'rer' learning 'the lessons of the field' (102, 104). Between 1733 and 1738, Saxe served in the French army in the War of the Polish Succession (in which he

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48. Akenside could have read Guillaume Plantavit de la Pause: *Mèmoires du Maréchal de Berwick, Duc et Pair de France, et Généralissime des Armées de sa Majesté* (2 vols., La Haye, 1737); the work was translated as *The Life of James Fitz-James, Duke of Berwick, Marshal, Duke, and Peer of France, General of his Most Christian Majesty's Armies. Containing An account of his Birth, Education, and military Exploits in Ireland, Flanders, Spain, the Sevennes, Dauphiny, and On the Rhine: With the Particulars of the Battle of Almanza, and the Siege of Barcelona. Giving a General View of the Affairs of Europe, for these fifty Years past: The whole interspersed with Military and Political Reflections, and the Characters of Eminent Men* (London, 1738). For a twentieth century account of Berwick, see Sir Charles Petrie: *The Marshal Duke of Berwick: The Picture of an Age* (London, 1953).

49. *Mes Rêveries: Ouvrage Posthume de Maurice Comte de Saxe, Duc de Curlande et de Sémigalle, Maréchal Général des Armées de sa Majesté très-chrétienne: Augmentée d'une histoire abrégée de sa vie, & de différentes piéces qui ont y rapport, par Monsieur l'Abbé Pérau* (2 vols., Amsterdam and Leipzig, 1757). The work appeared in an English translation shortly afterwards, though without the biographical memoir, under the title: *Reveries, or Memoirs upon the Art of War* (London, 1757).

was opposing his own half-brother, King August III of Poland); and in 1741 led the army's invasion of Bohemia and capture of Prague in the War of the Austrian Succession. In 1744, Louis XIV made him commander of the force which was to invade Britain on behalf of the young pretender, but the project was abandoned after the invasion fleet was shattered by storms off Dunkirk. When Louis subsequently declared war on Britain, Saxe was created marshal, and went on to lead the French army to victory over the British (led by the Duke of Cumberland) at the battle of Fontenoy in May 1745. This, and other great victories, led to his being made Marshal General of France in 1747. In July of that year, he led the invasion of Holland, where he defeated the allies at Lauffield, near Maastricht. Soon after this, he retired to his chateâu at Chambord, where he died in 1750[50].

Akenside continues his attempt to shame his country gentleman into a realisation of where his duty lies by painting a vivid picture of the unhealthy and immoral existence which he imagines him to be pursuing in London, far from the fresh air of his country seat (111-114). While the first signs of spring are showing themselves on his estate in the English countryside, while his house and his workers are in need of his presence:

> he doth riot's orgies haply share,
> Or tempt the gamester's dark, destroying snare,
> Or, at some courtly shrine with slavish incense bend.
> (115-120).

In spite of the fact that you neglect your duties, the poet continues, you are only too often to be heard complaining about the 'lawless tumult' --

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50. See J.M. White: *Marshal of France: The Life and Times of Maurice, Comte de Saxe [1696-1750]* (London, 1962).

probably Akenside is thinking of the recent militia riots -- and the lack of proper deference and respect which are found in villages today (121-124); but your own fathers knew how to earn that respect. By taking care of their 'simple' and 'ductile' peasantry, by giving advice, and by setting an example of traditional good manners, they led the villagers to value England's peace, and the dictates of religion (125-130). The lessons of history, however, suggest that when a country is suffering from the effects of internal discord, it is a result of a lack of proper military discipline, which by its nature imposes a proper hierarchical structure (131-136). A government's most effective measure, therefore, will be to form the young men into regiments, where they will learn to perceive for themselves the value of uniting to defend the freedom and reputation of their country (136-140). Akenside warns his readers not to be disheartened, or deflected from their aim, if professional soldiers seem to disapprove of their activities, or refuse to impart the secrets of their military knowledge (141-144); even if, wishing 'your martial hope to quell', they describe the latest developments in military science or in weaponry, and mock the way in which wars were fought in the past (145-147). Soldiers quickly adapt to the demands of the time, and can still win honour if they fight bravely (148-150).

As his poem draws to a close, Akenside reminds his readers of the past glories of English armies (151-152). Why should they be any less admirable, or any more cowardly, today (153-154)? By way of illustration, he looks back to three great battles of the Hundred Years' War, when:

> Valois brav'd young Edward's gentle hand,
> And D'Albret rush'd on Henry's way-worn band,
> With Europe's chosen sons in arms renown'd:
> (155-157).

'Valois' is Philip of Valois (Philip IV), who had taken the French throne in 1328 despite the rival claim of Edward III. As the poet makes clear further on in this stanza, he is thinking specifically of two battles between Valois and Edward in the war which followed: the Battle of Crécy, and the Battle of Poitiers. Heading the English army in both these battles was 'young Edward' the Prince of Wales ('the Black Prince') who was only 15 when he took command of one division of the army at Crécy. The other occasion referred to here is the Battle of Agincourt in which the 'way-worn band' under the command of Henry V (a force of 15,000 men, who had been on the road, marching from Calais, for seventeen days) had faced the entire French army, led by Charles d'Albret, constable of France, who was among the 10,000 French killed at the battle. Akenside was not alone in his attempt to rouse the war-like spirit of his readers by reminding them of the great English victories of the 14th and 15th centuries; a few months earlier, for example, the *Gentleman's Magazine* had printed a piece entitled '*A plain Address to the Farmers, Labourers, and Commonalty of the County of* Norfolk'. The anonymous author of this address had expressed the hope that:

> we are not so much degenerated from what our forefathers were, in whose days our militia, (for it was no other) gave the *French* many a severe drubbing in their own country....The common people of *England* were then famous for their skill in the use of the long bow...this made our foot militia the best in *Europe*; and the great victories that were gained under *Edward* III. and *Henry* V. were entirely owing to them.
>
> (*GM* xxvii (Nov. 1757) 511)

The poet goes on to invoke the names of the English leaders in these victories: John de Vere, 7th Earl of Oxford (1313-1360); Sir James Audley (?1316-1386); and John Mowbray, 2nd Duke of Norfolk (1389-1432) (158-160). De

Vere had been one of the commanders of the first division in the Battle of Crécy. Audley, who had been in constant attendance on the Black Prince from 1346, had distinguished himself with many brave exploits, the most famous of which was his part in the Battle of Poitiers. According to Froissart, he had made a vow that if he engaged in battle with the king or his sons, he 'would be the foremost in the attack, and the best combatant on his side, or die in the attempt'. With the permission of the Black Prince, he had taken up a position at the head of the English army, with his four esquires ('Audley's squires' (159)) at his side. He 'never stopped to make anyone his prisoner that day, but was the whole time employed in fighting and following his enemies'; despite severe wounds in the body, head and face, he continued to fight until finally, overcome with exhaustion, he was carried out of battle by his esquires[51]. Mowbray had crossed to France with Henry V, had taken part in the Battle of Harfleur, and was believed to have fought in the Battle of Agincourt.

The names of Vere, Audley, and Mowbray were clearly introduced as examples of country-gentlemen of an earlier age, the ancestors, in other words, of his present readers: 'Such were the laurels which your fathers won...' (161). In a final attempt to spur his readers into action, Akenside ends by invoking those qualities which he values most, and believes to belong specifically to the British people -- freedom, just laws, truth, reason, friendship, social peace and domestic love -- to support his call to arms (165-170).

The *Monthly Review* of the following month greeted Akenside's Ode with

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51. The account of Audley's exploits at Poitiers is given in Froissart's *Chronicles*. The quotations are taken from *Sir John Froissart's Chronicles of England, France, Spain and the Ajoining Counties, from the latter Part of the Reign of Edward II to the Coronation of Henry IV*, trans. T. Johnes vol. ii (1805) 320, 322. See also ibid. 330.

rapturous acclaim, and gave what amounted to a digest of its arguments:

> our public-spirited Doctor well deserves to be stiled, *The Poet of the Community*....[his Ode] is spirited, manly, and sufficiently poetical for those to whom it is addressed;-- and, as in former times, the halls of our rural ancestors were adorned with passages from our old chronicles, so we heartily wish, that most of the stanzas of this patriot performance were to supply the place, in our modern mansions, of race-horses, Newmarket-jockies, and the trophies of the chace: for it is a melancholy reflection, that this island will, probably, one day, either fall a prey to foreign invaders, or her own soldiery, unless the body of the people are instructed in the use of arms. Did our farmers but know, that they are possessed of more wealth and freedom, than the peasantry of any other nation; and, above all, were our country gentlemen (for with them the chief *remora* lies) but sufficiently apprized of the superior advantages they enjoy, compared with what those of the same rank possess on the continent, -- we cannot think so meanly of either, as to imagine they would not gladly embrace the opportunity our laws have put into their hands, of becoming masters of the only art by which these invaluable blessings can be preserved to themselves, and transmitted to posterity.
>
> (*MR* xviii (April 1758) 336).

Unfortunately, however, the situation improved little over the next few months. On 29 July, Lord Poulett wrote again to Pitt, enclosing an advertisment which had been inserted in a local newspaper, which set out to:

> animate the Gentlemen of this County, to show themselves Englishmen, and with a Laudable Emulation to Exert their Endeavours & Improve the Opportunity obtained under the Influence of a Patriot Minister...

and invited them to a recruiting meeting in Bridgewater. Much to Poulett's chagrin, however, the meeting had proved to be:

> a most shamefull one, Not above Eight Gentlemen [offered] themselves for Commissions as Officers in the Militia in Consequence of the advertism^{t}...
>
> (PRO 30/8 vol.53 f.105, 103).

The following month, additional complications seem to have set in; it now appeared that there was a danger of the militia being dominated by Tories. As Newcastle wrote to White on 17 August:

> The Whigs don't like the Bill; nor the Tories; But the latter, finding the Whigs don't offer, have in many counties...all offer'd...and so must be appointed...
>
> (Add. MS 32882 f. 398)

Despite these difficulties, however, the militia did gradually grow in popularity with both the gentry and the lower classes, helped on its way by the alarming news which reached England in May 1759 that the French were planning an invasion. Although only five English counties had formed their militia by the end of 1758, all but a handful had joined them by the summer of 1759[52].

The *Country Gentlemen Ode* was the last new poem published by Akenside in his lifetime (the *Edwards Ode*, though not published until 1766, had been written in 1751). In 1760 he brought out a new edition of *Odes on Several Subjects* which, although it incorporated a number of revisions, contained the same poems as had been published in the original (1745) edition. The years which remained before his sudden death in 1770 at the age of 48 were spent on the extensive re-modelling of *Pleasures of Imagination*, and on revising and preparing his collected works for the edition which in the event became his posthumous *Poems* (1772).

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52. For a full discussion of 'The Making of the New Militia', see Western 146-161. See also ibid, Appendix A (447-448) for the dates of each county's formation and embodiment of its militia.

CONCLUSION

1759-1770

The one consistent characteristic to emerge from a study of the poems discussed in this thesis has been Akenside's unwavering adherence to Whig political ideology. It is therefore necessary to consider the fact that he was accused, posthumously, of having abandoned his Whig principles and become a Tory during the last years of his life. The charge of political apostasy was first made by Francis Blackburne (1705-1789), the dissenting clergyman, in his *Memoirs of Thomas Hollis, Esq.* (2 vols., 1780). Hollis, who was described by Sir Leslie Stephen as 'that quaint old seventeenth-century republican, born by some accident in the eighteenth century' (*English Thought* I viii 54), was evidently an ardent admirer of the poet, although not, apparently, known to him personally. In June 1761, according to Blackburne, Hollis:

> bought a bed which once belonged to John Milton, and on which he died. This bed he sent as a present to Dr. Akenside, with the following card: 'An English gentleman is desirous of having the honour to present a bed, which once belonged to John Milton, and on which he died, to Dr. Akenside; and if the Doctor's genius, believing himself obliged, and having slept in that bed, should prompt him to write an ode to the memory of John Milton, and the assertors of British liberty, that gentleman would think himself abundantly recompensed'.-- The Doctor seemed wonderfully delighted with the bed, and had it put up in his house.
>
> (Hollis i 111-112).

Blackburne goes on to allege, however, that Hollis's papers contain 'not the least memorandum of an acknowledgment' from Akenside, and points out that the

ode to Milton appears not to have been written. This, he suggests, was owing to the fact that:

> the Doctor might learn from his friend Dyson, that an economium of Milton, as an assertor of British liberty, at that time of the day, was not the thing.
> (Hollis i 112).

This 'sneering assertion' (Dyce lii) refers to the fact that, soon after the accession of George III, Dyson had become an adherent of Lord Bute. In May 1762 he retired from his office of Clerk to the House of Commons and became one of Bute's Secretaries to the Treasury, and in December of that year he was elected Member of Parliament for Yarmouth, Isle of Wight (Namier and Brooke ii 371). There is no doubt that from this point on he became what a twentieth-century historian has described as 'the most intractable of the King's Friends' (Brewer 128), whose opposition to the repeal of the Stamp Act in 1765 is noteworthy as the only occasion on which he voted against the administration[1]. Blackburne suggests that because Dyson had become 'worth a minister's purchase' it must necessarily follow that 'the learned Doctor submitted to be instructed by his friend the cofferer, for he died physician to Her Majesty' (Hollis 14 n.). However, Akenside's appointment as Physician to the Queen was made in September 1761[2], and thus preceded Dyson's appointment as Secretary to the Treasury by eight months, a fact which appears to weaken Blackburne's

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1. See Brewer 68, Namier and Brooke ii 371-2.
2. The appointment was announced in the *St James's Chronicle* on 5 September 1761.

allegations.

A similar mistake was made in a later account of the supposed change in Akenside's politics. This account, however, has the authority of having been written by George Hardinge, son of Nicholas and nephew to Caleb, who, in his youth, had known the poet personally, and who, in 1813, wrote a memoir of him for Nichol's *Literary Anecdotes*. After describing the closeness of the friendship which existed between Akenside and Dyson, Hardinge goes on:

> The misfortune of their politics (and I was the victim of it in some degree) was, that, upon the accession of this Reign, they entirely and radically changed them; for they became bigoted adherents to Lord Bute and the Tories, having at every earlier period been, as it were, High Priests of the opposite creed. Mr. Dyson was preferred, and was ultimately pensioned. His friend, whom he always bore in mind, was made Physician to the Queen...from that period both of them were converts, and zealots of course for the *New Religion*....I offended my admired friend the Poet by too open a disclosure of my political faith, insignificant, qualified, and perfectly unassuming, as it was. It made a coolness between us -- but I believe that his original friendship to me was never essentially impaired.
>
> (*Lit. Anec.* viii 523).

At the end of his memoir, Hardinge makes a point which requires consideration, since he presents it as an objective verification of Akenside's altered views. This is what he calls 'perhaps the most curious feature of his life....the partial but very awkward change which his new *Politics at Court* made in those of *the Poet*' (*Lit. Anec.* viii 525). The 'memorable proof' which he offers as evidence is the revision which Akenside made to a passage in *Pleasures of Imagination*. In the first (1744) edition, the lines read:

> Wilt thou, eternal HARMONY! descend,
> And join this festive train? for with thee comes
> The guide, the guardian of their lovely sports,
> Majestic TRUTH; and where TRUTH deigns to come,
> Her sister LIBERTY will not be far.
>
> (i 20-24).

In the enlarged *Pleasures of the Imagination*, first published in *Poems* (1772), the last four lines of the passage appear as follows:

> ...for with thee comes
> The guide, the guardian of their mystic rites,
> Wise Order; and, where Order deigns to come,
> Her sister, Liberty, will not be far.
> (i 38-41).

Unfortunately for Hardinge's theory, however, the first book of the remodelled *Pleasures*, from which this passage is taken, is dated 1757, at which time Akenside was expressing his ardent admiration of Pitt and had yet to write the *Country Gentlemen Ode*, which gives expression to many traditional Whig principles (see Chapter Six). In addition, as Dyce points out, there is nothing in this revision 'nor in others made by the author in his *Odes*...indicative of violent Tory zeal' (lix). The other alterations which Dyce has in mind are those pointed out by Kippis in a note to his entry on Akenside in the *Biographia Britannica*. Kippis's purpose is not, however, to show that Akenside became a Tory; his primary concern seems to be to defend the poet against accusations of republicanism. Thus, he concludes that:

> If there be any truth in the supposition, that Dr. Akenside and his friend [Dyson] entertained republican ideas in their youth; it is probable that they might afterwards soften the vigour of their sentiments. Two alterations in the Doctor's Odes have been taken notice of in this view[3].

The alterations which Kippis goes on to note occur in the *Ode on Leaving Holland* and the *Huntingdon Ode*. In the *Holland Ode*, presumably composed when

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3. Andrew Kippis: *Biographia Britannica* (2nd edn., 5 vols., 1778-93) i 105 note E.

Akenside left Leyden after taking his degree in May 1744 and published in *Odes* (1745), the first edition reads:

> I go where freedom in the streets is known,
> And tells a monarch on his throne,
> Tells him he reigns, he lives but by her voice.
> (26-28).

In the revised *Odes* (1760), the passage has been altered to read:

> I go where Liberty to all is known,
> And tells a monarch on his throne,
> He reigns not but by her preserving voice[4].

The second passage which Kippis offers as evidence of the softening of Akenside's republican sentiments is from the *Huntingdon Ode*. In the first (1748) edition, the passage reads:

> But here, where Freedom's equal Throne
> To all her valiant Sons is known;
> Where All direct the Sword she wears,
> And Each the Power, that rules him, shares;
> (131-134).

The next time this poem appeared in print, in the sixth volume of Dodsley's *Collection* (1758), the third line of the passage quoted above had been revised to read: 'Where all are conscious of her cares'. Neither in this edition, however, nor in the version which appeared in *Poems* (1772), had Akenside modified his prediction that 'long foretold, the People' would soon reign in place of a 'private Master' (167-168). He also left unrevised his attack on

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4. Blackburne also noted this alteration, commenting that in the later version 'dame Liberty is not so termagent a monarch' (Hollis i 14).

the Tories:

> that servile Band, who kneel
> To Freedom's banish'd Foes;
> That Monster, which is daily found
> Expert and bold its Country's Peace to wound;
> (176-179).

Since the revisions which were offered as evidence of Akenside's changed political views both by Blackburne and by Hardinge were made before this change was supposed to have taken place, their admissability is seriously undermined. Kippis's suggestion that the poet might have come to 'soften the vigour' of his republicanism in later life is more convincing, and is supported by other revisions which he made to *Pleasures of Imagination*. A passage from *Pleasures* (1744) Book One, which describes how, by means of imagination, the 'strenuous form' of virtue:

> Indignant flashes on the patriot's eye,
> And thro' the roll of memory appeals
> To ancient honour; or in act serene,
> Yet watchful, raises the majestic sword
> Of public pow'r, from dark ambition's reach
> To guard the sacred volume of the laws.
> (560-566)

is removed altogether from the remodelled poem. In Book Two, 'Where senates once the price of monarchs doom'd,' (*Pleasures* (1744) ii 748) becomes 'Where senates once the weal of nations plann'd,' (*Pleasures* (1772) ii 682). These two revisions have in common with the two from the *Odes* which were quoted earlier the obvious effect of removing the suggestion that the poet approves of regicide, while another change made to Book Two of *Pleasures*, by means of which 'the coward-rage/ Of regal envy' (*Pleasures* (1744) ii 736-737) is modified to read: 'Tyrannic envy' (*Pleasures* (1772) ii 671) is clearly related in its intention.

The poem which suffered most in revision for *Poems* (1772) was undoubtedly *An Epistle to Curio*. Johnson, who recognised the original version as having been written 'with great vigour and poignancy', noted that Akenside 'transformed it afterwards into an ode disgraceful only to its author'[5], an opinion with which it is impossible not to concur. Johnson conjectured that it was Akenside's 'love of lyrics' which led him to make this transformation; but it seems likely that the change was owing in part, at least, to a desire to modify the violence of the sentiments which he had expressed in the original. Among the many passages which was drastically revised in the later Ode was the eulogy of the British people (189-210); no longer said to possess 'native Strength of Soul/ Which Kings, nor Priests, nor sordid Laws control' (189-190), they are also deprived of their Lockean ability to perceive natural equality, by means of which they had been said to:

> The *Man* forget not, tho' in Rags he lies,
> And know the *Mortal* thro' a Crown's Disguise;
>
> (197-198).

Also removed is the ironic statement that, in order to win Pulteney's approval, Britain must 'renounce her Cause', and 'Bow the meek Knee and kiss the regal Rod;' (212, 214); while Pulteney's decision to 'act a Statesman's dull, exploded Part' (174) becomes in the Ode 'A poor deserter's dull exploded part' (96).

It is difficult not to see these last two revisions as having being made, at the very least, out of tact towards Dyson, who could certainly have been viewed as participating in the very activities which Akenside had deplored in

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5. *Lives* iii 419. Johnson's high opinion of the original version of the poem led him to publish it as part of Akenside's collected works for the first time: see his *The Works of the English Poets. With Prefaces, Biographical and Critical* (64 vols., 1779-1781) lv 333.

his earlier Epistle. Further than this it is impossible to go without any firmer evidence than is available. However, it should perhaps be said in conclusion that even if Akenside did follow Dyson in his attachment to Bute and the King, this does not necessarily mean that either of them abandoned Whig principles for Tory ones. For one thing, the accession of George III had seemed to many supporters of the cause of British liberty to promise just the reforms which they had been seeking; thus, it was possible even for such a convinced republican as Thomas Hollis to write in his diary, on hearing the news of the death of George II:

> May his grandson, a youth of fine dispositions, avoid his imperfections, and excel his virtues, and pursue and adhere to, unswervingly, every manly and regal accomplishment!-- May his pattern be that of ALFRED, as historiated by the incomparable John Milton! and may he be supported effectually in his counsels and undertakings throughout a long and glorious reign, by wise and faithful parliaments and ministers, and by the affections of his people, that the constitution may be preserved, the age reformed, science and art encouraged, posterity attended to, mankind in general benefited, and himself possessed, by these means, of that superior and noblest felicity that human nature can admit.
>
> (Hollis i 98-99).

Certainly, two of the constitutional changes which were made in the early part of George's reign, the Demise of the Crown Act, which allowed judges to stay in office after the death of the sovereign, and the Civil List Act, which placed strict controls on the amount of the royal allowance, did indeed appear to be indications that the royal prerogative was to be strictly limited. In addition, the old party divisions, which had already begun to break down under the administration of Pitt in the late 1750s, were swept away by George and his ministers. The Tories were welcomed back to court with open arms, and given

offices and peerages, as a deliberate policy on the part of the king, who later looked back on his accession as a period in which he:

> put an end to those unhappy distinctions of party called Whigs and Torys by declaring I would countenance every Man that supported my Administration & concurred in that form of Government which had been so wisely established by the Revolution[6].

Not surprisingly, however, this breaking down of distinctions made it possible for those who, for various reasons opposed the administration in the 1760s to call anyone who was considered to be a 'bad Whig' (by virtue of his support for the king and his ministers) a Tory[7]. This fact would appear to offer a possible explanation of the 'sneering assertion' made about Akenside and Dyson by both Blackburne and Hardinge. Perhaps if Akenside had avoided the 'putrid fever' which led to his sudden death in 1770, he might have gone on to write new poetry which would, perhaps have shed some light on this puzzling question. As it is, the fact that he was preparing an edition of poems which included so many of his powerful statements about 'Liberty and Laws' (in the *Huntingdon* and *Hoadly Odes*, among others) seems to suggest that, however much he may have modified his early republicanism he never abandoned his belief in the importance of British liberty and revolution principles.

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6. 'Memorandum' n.d. (1772?), Royal Archives, Windsor, RA 15672, quoted Brewer 47.

7. See Brewer 50; and, for a full discussion of these matters, ibid. 39-54.

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