

MS Protestant Association¹

While Roman Catholics were officially tolerated, or allowed to hold their own worship, after the Elizabethan settlement, they suffered under a number of economic and political restrictions. These restrictions were based on the fear that Catholics were bound to follow the direction of the Pope in civil matters, as well as the connection of Catholicism to the deposed Stuart line and to France and Spain, long-time enemies of England.

The Catholic Relief Act of 1778 was one of the first moves to set aside these restrictions. It allowed Roman Catholics to purchase and inherit land, and to join the army, if they swore an oath against the Stuart claim to the throne and the papal claim to civil jurisdiction. This move came as Britain was enmeshed in battle with their colonists in North America, who were supported by the French. There were also growing strains with Spain. The British army was stretched thin and one purpose of the act was to provide a new source for recruits.

Many Protestants had misgivings about the Catholic Relief Act, which were heightened when Spain declared war on Britain in June 1779 and began to plan a naval invasion. Lord George Gordon (1751–93) took the lead in organizing this concern, forming the “Protestant Association” in late 1779, with the explicit purpose of repealing the Relief Act. On June 2, 1780, he led nearly 60,000 persons to petition Parliament against the Act. As Gordon was presenting their petition, the crowd outside became riotous. Over the course of a week they burned many Roman Catholic chapels and homes in London. They attacked several prisons and freed the inmates. They stormed the Bank of England and burned the house of Lord Chief Justice Mansfield (an old school friend of Charles Wesley), destroying his vast library. Order was restored by the army only after arresting 450 persons and hanging at least another 25. Lord Gordon was tried for high treason, but gained an acquittal through the efforts of his lawyer, Thomas Erskine.

While Charles Wesley was an ardent Protestant, and shared concern about the loyalty of Roman Catholics in Britain to the Hanoverian throne, he was even more committed to the rule of law and respect for public property. His outrage against the mob and its leaders, as well as his gratitude when peace was restored, birthed this set of sarcastic poems, which he would publish as *Protestant Association* (1781).²

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²For an equally passionate response, see Maria de Fleury, *Unrighteous Abuse Detected and Chastised, or a Vindication of Innocence and Integrity, Being an Answer to a Virulent Poem entitled “The Protestant Association”*, 2n edn. (London: R. Denham, 1781).

Table of Contents

Canto I	1–5
Canto II	5–8
Canto III	8–15
Canto IV	15–20
Address to the City, June 1780	21–24
Advice to the City, June 1780	25–31
Second Address to the City, [June 1780]	32–35

**The Protestant Association,
June 1780.**

Canto I.

Arms, and the good old Cause I sing,
Which threaten'd vengence on¹ our King,
Brought down the storm so long a brewing,
And Britain to the brink of ruin;
While all her foes intestin join
To execute the dark design,
And glut the patriotic zeal
Of France,² America, and Hell.

An Army of Associators,
Of rebels, regicides, and traitors, [10]
(With here and there a warm dissenter,
Geneva-Jack, and John the Painter)
Of real, or pretended zealots,
Of Scots, sworn enemies to Prelates,
Of Patriots a countless throng
Their banners rear, and pour along;
Strangers and Frenchmen in disguise,
Americans, their sworn allies,
With all the friends of Congress meet,
To make th' infernal Host compleat. [20]

¹Ori., "to."

²Ori., "Rome."

See, where the Protestant Crusade,
With Masaniello³ at their head,
March from the fields, with mild intent
T' address, and *purge* the Parliament.
With loud huzzas their friends they greet,
And safe escort them thro' the street:
But woe to those they can't *confide* in!
Unfit their carriages to ride in,
They drag them out, and thrust, and bruise them,
And most *papistically* use them: [30]
Commons and Lords alike they shake,
Compel'd the tender'd Oath to take:
Judges and Ministers of state,
On these they wreck their bitterest⁴ hate:
Or roll with Oliverian⁵ sport
Their Legislators in the dirt,
Or Bishops⁶ o're the houses fright,
Right glad to save their lives by flight.

Less fierce the Saints of Forty One [40]
With Prentices their work begun,
And carrying on the reformation,
O'return'd at last both Church and Nation.

But now the Dupes of meek condition,
Who blindly follow'd their Petition,
Shock'd at the madness of their Fellows,
While Masaniello blows the bellows,
Wisely escape from hell broke loose
And slip their necks out of the noose.

³*Protestant Association* (1781) adds a note: "Of Naples." Masaniello of Naples, whose original name was Tommaso Aniello, was a fisherman who led a revolt in 1647 of the lower classes, burdened by high taxes, against the Spanish Habsburg's rule.

⁴"Bitterest" has "keenest" written above it as an alternative.

⁵Reference to Oliver Cromwell, leader of the Puritan forces in the civil war of the last century.

⁶*Protestant Association* (1781) adds a note: "B[isho]p of L[ondon]."

Meantime the resolute Crusaders,
(No longer peaceable Paraders) [50]
From outrag'd Senators returning,
Begin their work of Chapel-burning,
The choicest Imps of hell employ
To tear, demolish, and destroy,
(Themselves at a convenient distance
To give their instruments assistance)
“Courage, my lads, ’tis now or never!
“Down with the Mass-houses for ever!”^[7]
Tis said: tis done; in⁷ half a minute
The Chapel’s storm’d: the Foe within it, [60]
With Gothic, or with Scottish feelings
Batter the walls, and mar the cielings,
Compassionate as stones and stocks
And gentle as Reforming Knox.⁸
Altar and Cross their Fury feel,
On Pictures they let loose their zeal,
On Organs they discharge their rage,
On Books, nor spare the sacred Page,
Bibles must help to feed the fire,
Till Popiry all in smoak expire. [70]

Flush’d with success, without their Head,
The sons of anarchy proceed;
Satan anew their violence rouses
To gut, and then to burn, the houses

⁷Ori., “it.”

⁸*Protestant Association* (1781) adds a note: “In Scotland”; i.e., John Knox (1514–72).

And first they an example make,
And vengeance on the wretches take
(All vile informers to deter)
Who did against their comrades⁹ swear:
And next the Men that dared commit them
And like atrocious villains treat them [80]
They justly to destruction doom,
And burn them out of house and home.

Of neither evidence, nor warrant
Afraid, as an outrageous torrent,¹⁰
They now the dams and banks o'reflow,
And menace every Popish foe,
Down with the Mass-houses, they cry,
And Walworth's¹¹ Successor stands by,
The City's meek Administrator, [90]
A tame, not unconcern'd, Spectator,
Quakes, as the conflagration rages,¹²
And pays the devil's slaves their wages,
With, "Come, my lads, enough is done,
"Take this, and quietly be gone."
The aldermen in corners hide,
And wisely for themselves provide;
The Shrieves¹³ an awful distance keep
Or sometimes venture at a peep;
The Justices aghast¹⁴ look on,
While¹⁵ their own houses are pull'd down, [100]
Content, the Mob shall burn their hives,
If they will only spare their lives.

⁹Ori., "~~fellows~~."

¹⁰"Torrent" has "current" written above it as an alternative.

¹¹*Protestant Association* (1781) adds a note: "Wat Tyler's Mayor." William Walworth, Lord Mayor of London, who struck Wat Tyler, leader of a peasant revolt in 1381. CW is criticizing the current Lord Mayor of London (Brackley Kennett) for not similarly resisting the revolt.

¹²Ori., "~~wages~~."

¹³I.e., Sheriffs.

¹⁴Ori., "~~with dread~~."

¹⁵Ori., "~~Fill~~."

The generous Mob too brave to martyr
Meek citizens who beg for quarter,
Or storm the houses mark'd for burning,
Without a fair, sufficient warning,
Seeing the gallant City yield,
Th' acknowleg'd Masters of the field
To all their Victims send advise,
And scorn to take them by surprize. [110]

Canto II.

And now from street to street they roam,
And ruin spread, where'er they come,
The tutor'd boys without dismay
Pursue their work in open day,
As lords of the surrendred town,
As hired to pull old houses down:
Young Allen's¹⁶ fate untaught to fear
From men enur'd to massacre,
They smile to see the troops draw nigher
With no authority to fire, [120]
As sent to mark¹⁷ how they go on,
And guard them till their work is done.

When nothing can their force resist,
Allow'd to do whate'er they list,
They next the welcom word obey,
And to the prisons march away;
But promise first at morning-light,
To burn and pillage them at night,

¹⁶*Protestant Association* (1781) adds a note: "A rioter killed in St. George's Fields." William Allen was killed by a soldier while participating in a protest in St. George's field in 1768, calling for the release of John Wilkes from prison. The incident became symbolic of military response to popular uprisings.

¹⁷Ori., "see."

Set all the lawful captives free,
And make a Gaol-delivery:¹⁸ [130]
A principle of Self-compassion,
Of Self-defence and preservation,
To loose th' opprest their heart engages,
Let the birds fly, and burn the cages,
Desperate, in case of a defeat,
Thus to cut off their last retreat.

The Keepers warn'd in time prepare
And send for Succour to the Mayor:
But is the Aid they ask refus'd?
He only begs to be excus'd [140]
“From raising the combustion higher,
“From pouring oil upon the fire,
“Provoking the mad multitude,
“And rashly shedding Christian blood.”

As lovers at th' appointed hour,
True to their word, with wasteful power,
Dread executioners of fate,
They fire the house, and burst the gate,
The fortress storm, their fellows seize,
And with triumphant joy release. [150]
Who can describe the mutual greeting
Of friends at such an happy meeting!
As brethren and companions dear,
Redeem'd from bonds and death so near,

¹⁸Ori., “Goal-delivery.”

They gladly their Deliverers join,
To carry on th' *humane* design,
The business of Association,
And break the shackles of the nation.

Behold them rush from gaol to gaol,¹⁹
Resolv'd their promise shall not fail [160]
To set imprison'd *Virtue* free,
Erase the marks of tyranny,
Afford the frailer Sex protection,
Burn all the houses of correction,
Destroy the *scourges* of mankind,
Nor leave one Whipping-post behind.

The threatned Gaols,²⁰ an hour before,
The magisterial Aid implore;
But cannot gain what they require,
But sink, like Newgate,²¹ in the fire; [170]
While issuing from their burning hives
The Vermin that by plunder thrives,
Augments the Gang of public Spoilers
With a fresh regiment of Tylers.

One glorious Enterprize remains,
To recompence the Heroes pains,
Th' unguarded Bank by storm to take,
A bonfire of the books to make,
Assist the insufficient state,
And pay at once the Nation's debt. [180]

¹⁹Ori., "goal to goal."

²⁰Ori., "Goal."

²¹A London prison that was burned by the rioters.

Fired with the hope so rich a treasure
To seize, and then to take their pleasure,
They²² run, they fly, where Booty calls,
And force the gate, and scale the walls;
Ready th' important fort to win,
When answer'd by a Guard within,
Repuls'd, o'rethrown, on heaps they lie,
And in the bed of honor die.

(Yet on the point of being sack'd,
The Bank, they say, was ne'er attack'd: [190]
And three months hence the Cits will tell us,
No accident at all befel us,
No Popish Chapel was pull'd down,
And not an house was burnt in town.)

Canto III.

Baffled for once, the Mob retreat:
Yet conquerors still in every street,
The prostrate citizens²³ they see,
And haste t' improve²⁴ their victory,
The List of the Proscrib'd make known
For lives and fortunes are their own. [200]

“The Chapels were a good beginning,
“An hint to signify our meaning;
“But Protestants, or Papists, all
“Shall now without distinction fall,
“Whether of high or low condition,
“Whoever sign'd not the Petition,

²²Ori., “Thy”; an error.

²³Ori., “magistrates.”

²⁴Ori., “~~carry on~~” changed to “haste t' improve.”

“The foreigners by labour fed,
“Who rob our²⁵ people of their bread:
“Bishops and Lords and Gentlemen,
“Who proudly o’re the people reign, [210]
“And all the men on gain intent,
“And all the tools of government
“The government o’return’d shall see,
“And mourn its sad catastrophe.

“But O! what death doth He require,
“Who cast our names into the fire
“Repuls’d and treated us with scorn?
“He, and his house, and church shall burn;
“That Rogue Romaine,²⁶ we soon shall have him;
“Nor Mence’s²⁷ tuneful voice shall save him—^[b’] [220]
(Who woud not the Associates join,
Or list beneath a Madman’s Sign.)
“Old Wesley too, to Papists kind,
“Who wrote against them—for a blind,
“Himself a Papist still in heart,
“He, and his followers shall smart.
“Not one of his fraternity
“We here beneath our Standard see,
“To which whole regiments resort
“Both from the Locke²⁸ and Tottenham Court,^[b’][230]
(Who rave, like Patriots disappointed,
And roar, and curse the Lord’s Anointed.)

The Rabble speak, and spread their bands,
To execute their own commands,

²⁵“Our” has “the” written above it as an alternative.

²⁶William Romaine, a prominent evangelical Anglican clergy person in London, who was sympathetic to the Calvinist Methodists.

²⁷The Rev. Benjamin Mence, supposed to be the finest counter-tenor in England. He was Minor Canon at St. Paul’s.

²⁸The Lock hospital chapel was served by Martin Madan, a Calvinist Methodist.

²⁹Chapel built by George Whitefield, belonging to the Calvinist Methodists.

Impetuous, as the torrent pours,
Resistless, as the flame devours,
And scattering ruin far and wide,
While Terror is on every side,
With blasphemies they rend the sky,
And both their King and God defy. [240]

But chiefly Those they hate and fear,
Who bear th' Exalted Character:
The hoary Guardian of our laws,
Most adverse to Rebellion's Cause,
Most faithful to his King and true,
Most zealous for his Country too,
On Him with keenest rage they fly,
As Justice woud with Mansfield³⁰ die.
The feeble Guards stand by, and see [250]
The basest Tools of anarchy,
Our Age and nation's foul disgrace,
Who set his mansion in a blaze:
Pictures, and monuments of art,
The utmost Genius could exert,
Compilers of th' historic page,
The bard, and lawgiver, and sage,
Writings for general use, design'd
To teach and to improve mankind,
With Manuscripts of price unknown [260]
Upon the flaming heap are thrown,
More than a Vatican contains
Is lost, and not a wreck remains!

So when ferocious Omar comes,
And Learning to destruction dooms,

³⁰William Murray, 1st Earl of Mansfield (1705–93), currently Lord Chief Justice. His house was destroyed in the riots, including his immense library. Murray had been a fellow student of Charles at Westminster School and Christ Church, Oxford.

Ptolemy's stores³¹ erect the pyre,
His Volumes all in smoak expire,
And the barbaric flames devour
The work of ages in an hour.

What hinders now the fell³² Banditti
From plundering the devoted City? [270]
Boldly they cast the mask away,
And stand confest in open day,
Hourly with fresh recruits increas'd;
The cry of Pop'ry now is ceas'd;
They threaten general desolation,
A fire to purify the nation,
A fire impartial to consume
The friends and enemies of Rome:
"Thoroughly to purge is our intent,
"Is, to blow up the parliament, [280]
"The rich to level with the poor,
"Unbounded freedom to restore;
"To pull the courts and churches down,
"And all the palaces in town,
"Demolish every public place,
"Set all your records in a blaze,
"And warm you with the glorious sight—
"Expect a Specimen to night!^[?]

O what a night was that! the croud
As congregated waters loud, [290]
Tremendous as the sea in storm,
Their promise terribly perform!
Fierce flames on every side aspire,
And vault the firmament with fire!

³¹*Protestant Association* (1781) adds a note: "The Alexandrian library."

³²Ori., "fierce."

The clash of arms, the thundring sound,
The Pierc'd, who fall and bite the ground,
The roaring of Abaddon's sons,
The shoutings, and the dying groans,
The shrieks of anguish and dismay,
(A picture of that final day) [300]
Horrible sympathy impart,
And thrill with fear the boldest heart.

Where'er we turn our blasted eyes,
The torrent roars, the flames arise,
The old, the sick, the women fear,
Or die thro' dread of death so near!
Swiftly the catching fire proceeds,
From house to house destruction spreads,
And streets³³ intire are doom'd to fall,
And Vengeance vows t' o'rewhelm us all. [310]

Unhappy Langdale!³⁴ who can³⁵ see
Unmov'd his mournful tragedy,
Enough to mollify the nature
And heart of an Associator!
His numerous babes, an helpless throng,
They deprecate the cruel wrong:
The father sad, with fruitless prayer
Intreats the Savages to spare,
(Whom wine inflames, and avarice blinds)
Talks to the waves, and courts the winds; [320]
In vain to magistrates applies,
Before his house in ashes lies,
To Aldermen most humbly suing,
While trembling on the verge of ruin,

³³*Protestant Association* (1781) adds a note: "Newgate-Street, &c."

³⁴Roman Catholic owner of a large distillery in Holborn that was destroyed in the riot.

³⁵"Can" has "coud" written above it as an alternative.

He instantaneous aid requires,
Or to prevent, or quench the fires.
Compassion steals into their breast,
And Wilkes³⁶ assents to the request,
That Hero in tumultuous fights,
That Champion for the City's rights! [330]
"Let's save him then,^[37] he cries, ^[4]from murder:
"But all things must be done in order:
"Let's save him from the mob so 'curst—
"But let us call a council first!^[38]

Vain help alas, which never came!
Consum'd by the voracious flame
His all is lost! and numbers more
His ruin, and their own deplore,
Recalling oft with fresh affright
The havock of that dreadful night. [340]

At morn we see the fiery void,
And glorying o're their foes destroy'd
We shrink from the assassin band
Possess of absolute command.
The nation's scum together rise,
To swell their host with new³⁷ supplies:
From smoaking gaols³⁸ a desperate crew,
Who rob the gibbet of it's due,
Vile instruments of depredation
Let loose on a devoted³⁹ nation, [350]
Incendiaries from every side
Heighten⁴⁰ the wild tumultuous tide,
Hibernians join to rend and tear,
And Papists flock,⁴¹ the spoils to share,

³⁶John Wilkes (1725–97).

³⁷Ori., "fresh."

³⁸Ori., "goals."

³⁹"Devoted" has "abandon'd" written in the margin as an alternative.

⁴⁰Ori., "Increase."

⁴¹"Flock" has "last" written below it as an alternative.

(As vulturs to the Carcase⁴² fly,
Smelling the bloody banquet nigh,
Flock to⁴³ the City of confusion
Giv'n up to mobbish execution.

Who can against the ruffians stand,
Or dare deny their just demand? [360]
Religion's friends, our faith's protectors,
Our guards—an army of collectors,
May they not maintenance require,
As workmen worthy of their hire,
And lay us under contribution,
And bring us to a good conclusion?

“That good and full Conclusion's come,
“Your sure, inevitable doom,
“Th' exterminating word is past,
“And the next night shall be your last: [370]
“Tis fixt: the hellish Murderer cries;
“A thousand fires at once shall rise,
“Your aqueducts cut off shall fail,
“And flames unquenchable prevail,
“(Strange flames, which never can expire,
“A compound of Tartarian fire)
“Destruction shall your City sweep;
“Burnt down into a ruinous heap,
“Your proud Metropolis shall lie,
“And London's boast for ever die.^[b] [380]

What can their purpose fell defeat,
Or snatch us from the gaping pit?

⁴²“A Battle” is written in the margin, most likely as a rejected alternative to “the Carcase.”

⁴³Ori., “They throng” changed to “Flock to.”

We shudder on the brink of fate
And for our sure Excision wait:
Let but another night pass o're,
And England's glory is no more,
Triumph the Luciferian host,
Abaddon reigns—and all is lost.

Canto IV.

But lo! at the appointed time,
On his eternal throne sublime, [390]
The Lord, who o're all nature reigns,
And holds rebellious Powers in chains,
Who sets the raging sea its bounds,
HE looks—and all our foes confounds!

He calls the Man of his right hand,
His Image, in the gap to stand,
Inspir'd with wisdom from above,
Cloth'd with authority and love,
Deputed by the Lord most high
To deal the vengeance of the sky, [400]
Root out the sons of wickedness,
And save a most unthankful race.

His faithful troops from every side
Are brought to turn the rapid tide,
To scatter the wild beasts of prey,
The felons and destroyers slay,
To seize th' appointed heirs of death
And pluck the prey out of their teeth,

The brands half-burnt out of the fire,
And pay th' Incendiaries their hire. [410]

Compel'd at last the loyal bands
To execute their King's commands,
(Their King by heavn's Almighty Lord
Intrusted with the Nation's sword)
No more they *tenderly* forbear,
No more with *cruel* pity spare,
Nor slaughter *all* with fury blind,
But where the *active* fiends they find
In their infernal work *employ'd*
The hell-hounds are at once destroy'd! [420]

The pale, remaining sons of riot,
Atrocious foes to public quiet,
Quaking before their swift pursuers
Terrible⁴⁴ now to evil-doers,
Into remotest corners fly,
(Their badges and their arms thrown by)
And⁴⁵ wish in the deep dungeons gloom
To screen them from the death to come,
And⁴⁶ long to hide their guilty head
In ruins which their hands had made. [430]

But vain your hope of a reprieve
You see the sad alternative,
Mercy itself is forced to cry,
"The innocent, or you must die."

What streams of blood already shed!
Heaps of intoxicated dead,

⁴⁴"Terrible" has "A Terror" written in the margin as an alternative.

⁴⁵"And" has "Or" written in the margin as an alternative.

⁴⁶"And" has "Or" written in the margin as an alternative.

Beneath the flaming ashes found,
And carcases without a wound
(While many a slaughter'd parricide
Is drag'd away, their loss⁴⁷ to hide) [440]
Patricians here in rags remain,
There⁴⁸ female fiends and furies slain
To every shock'd spectator show,
There is a God that reigns below!
But now fulfil'd his dread design,
The ministers of wrath divine
Behold the public peace restor'd,
And gladly sheath the vengeful sword.

Extinct we see the fatal blaze,
Saved by a miracle of grace, [450]
Our national escape we view,
And scarcely dare believe it true.
Yet now beginning to respire,
We anxiously the Cause inquire,
Whence our calamities began,
Or who contriv'd the burning plan.
Too evident th' accurst design
We see; but where's the Catiline?⁴⁹
The wisest grant, we are not got [460]
To the dark bottom of the plot,
The least acute, methinks, might smell
The counsel of Ahithophel.⁵⁰
Or is there no resentment rankling
In the unnatural heart of Franklyn?⁵¹

⁴⁷"Loss" has "names" written in the margin as an alternative.

⁴⁸Ori., "Their."

⁴⁹Reference to Lucius Sergius Catilina (108–62 BC), a Roman politician who led a conspiracy to overthrow the republic.

⁵⁰Ori., "Ahitophel." A counselor who deserted King David to support his rebellious son Absalom (see 2 Sam. 15).

⁵¹Benjamin Franklin, whom some accused of encouraging the riot.

Does nothing treasonable lurk,
 Nothing American in B—?⁵²
 No depths of Luciferian art
 In F—’s⁵³ foul, infernal heart?
 (That son of Vice and dissipation,
 Implung’d in debt and desperation, [470]
 For each flagitious purpose fit,
 A Fiend in malice and in wit!)⁵⁴
 No hope in the Ejected Race?
 No mischief hatching in his Grace,
 So forward to defend the Crown,
 And turn the Soldiers out of town,
 So ready,⁵⁵ in the last extream
 Our safety shoud be left—to Him!
 How came Mynheer our doom to know,
 And publish it two months ago? [480]
 French prophets—whence coud they foresee
 Our swift-approaching destiny?
 Or Congress from across th’ Atlantic
 Behold th’ Associate Mob so frantic,
 And *promise* the destruction near
 Of London and of Westminster?

In answer to these choaking questions,
 Or ministerial⁵⁶ Suggestions,
 The Patriots say “No harm was meant,
 [“No Plot—but all was Accident!”] [490]
 By *accident*, the people came
 Together, in Religion’s Name:
 By *accident*, without a Plan,
 They with the Mass-houses began:

⁵²This was surely a reference to Edmund Burke (1729–97). William George Legge, Earl of Dartmouth objected to the mention in a letter to CW of Feb. 8, 1781, and CW removed the initial letter in the published version of the poem.

⁵³Charles James Fox (1749–1806), supporter in Parliament of American independence.

⁵⁴Lines 467–72 above incorporate an expansion and revision that CW supplies on the bottom of page 31 of this manuscript. There is an arrow in the margin showing where to insert the revision. The original lines 467–68 on this page read as follows:

~~In mongrel patriots, or well-born?
 In F— or R—m, and Sh—?~~

They are followed immediately by what is now line 473.

“~~Mongrel~~” in line 467 has “dunghill” written in the margin as an alternative.

The abbreviated references in line 468 are to Charles James Fox; Charles Watson-Wentworth, 2nd Marquess of Rockingham (1730–82); and William Petty, Earl of Shelburne (1737–1805). William George Legge, Earl of Dartmouth had objected to the mention of Rockingham in a letter to CW of Feb. 8, 1781.

⁵⁵“Ready” has “willing” written above it as an alternative.

⁵⁶Ori., “~~pure conjectural~~.” Next changed to “~~sly political~~,” and finally changed to “ministerial.”

They then⁵⁷ suppress'd all evidence,
And all who justice could dispense
The Statesmen to destruction doom'd;
By *accident* the gaols⁵⁸ consum'd:
(While water we in vain require
To quench the hell-compounded fire) [500]
By *accident* the people's lees
Concur'd⁵⁹ our wealth and arms to seize;
From step to step, by measures just
To lay our Cities in the dust;
Our Name and nation to erase,
And build⁶⁰ their Empire in its place,
To reign yet still without intent
To reign—for all was Accident.

So, as the sons of Epicurus
With modest confidence assure us, [510]
Atoms did into order dance
And formed an Universe—by *Chance*!

“But why is no discovery made?
“We see the Tail without the Head.”
Our Rulers may know more, and see
Farther, perchance, than you or me,
And, at the time that best befits
To bring the Patriots to their wits,
Unravel the compleat Design,
And show the *Face* of Catiline. [520]

⁵⁷“Then” has “next” written above it as an alternative.

⁵⁸Ori., “goals.”

⁵⁹Ori., “Conspir’d.”

⁶⁰“Build” has “plant” written under it as an alternative.

Meantime, in spite of all your Covers,
And sly, political manoeuvres,
This Inference the Public draws,
Th' effect must presuppose a Cause,
The mischief point at the Contrivers,
The headlong Herd detect the Drivers.

**Address to the City,
June 1780.⁶¹**

Ye Citizens of London, why
So coy, and diffident, and shy,
Who shou'd with open arms receive
The Instruments thro' whom ye live?
Why shun the soldiers company,
And wish the valiant City free,
And call for arms yourselves at last?
Is it, because the danger's past?

Shoud bloody arms intrusted be
With men of your *temerity*?* [10]
Who, when ye in the ground[†] assemble
Your Bands, bid⁶² all the Council⁶³ tremble?
Who,⁶⁴ firing but with powder, make
Yourselves, and the whole City quake?
What woud become of us, if all
The Livery-men shoud fire with Ball?
The fright we never coud endure:
Nor woud his Lordship be secure
Within the wind of such commotion
But death *again* woud be his *portion*![‡] [20]

* His Lordship's word instead of *timidity*.

† Artillery ground.

‡ Another of his expressions, meaning *portion*.

⁶¹CW restarts numbering pages with this new poem, but we have retained continuous number [now in brackets] for ease of references between the poems.

⁶²Ori., "make."

⁶³Ori., "City."

⁶⁴Ori., "And."

Can ye so suddenly forget
Those ragged ministers of fate,
All law and order's Over-turners,
The furious Mob⁶⁵ of Chapel-burners,
The scum and refuse of the nation?
The panic dread and devastation,
The ravage and the flames they spread,
With King Apollyon at their head?

Aghast ye stood, nor dared oppose
Your feeble, despicable foes, [30]
Boys, women, chimney-sweeps! collected,
To act, as wiser heads directed,
With horror every heart t' inspire,
To burn with stately domes⁶⁶ with fire,
Your shackled felons to release,
Your wealth and arsenals to seize,
And gaul you with the triple chain
Of France, America and Spain.
No need of hostile *Fleets combin'd*,
To execute what Hell design'd, [40]
Suffice the miscreants most base
Your proud Metropolis to rase.

So if Almighty Wisdom will,
The meanest Instruments of ill,
Vermin, out of the dust shall rise,
To deal the vengeance of the skies.

⁶⁵Ori., "Mop."

⁶⁶Ori., "dooms."

What Angel in that darkest hour
Saved you from the Destroyer's power?
Whose arm did the deliverance bring?
Was it the patriots, or the King? [50]
From George the timely rescue came,
And pluck'd the brands out of the flame.
Swift to your help his legions flew,
And crush'd the desolating crew,
The authors of your woes and fears,
Your slaves—and executioners.

But do ye King and Soldiers thank
Or for the mansion-house, or bank,
With joy the kind Preservers see
Both of your lives and property? [60]
Rather the benefit to own
Ye scorn, and urge them to be gone,
Your friends impatient to exclude:
Such is the City's Gratitude!

So R~~em~~⁶⁷ from rabble's threats
To rescue him, a guard intreats;
Threatned, their succour he implores;
But *rescued*, turns them out of doors:

Fresh for⁶⁸ the fight, ye breathe anew,
And who so warlike now as you? [70]

⁶⁷A reference to Charles Watson-Wentworth, 2nd Marquess of Rockingham (1730–82).

⁶⁸“Fresh for” has “After” written above it as an alternative.

Recover'd from the recent Squall
Which threatned to o'whelm us all,
Ye plead your right to guide the helm,
(The City is your proper realm)
And but your own Militia need
With dauntless Kennett⁶⁹ at their head.

So Sailors, when the storm is o're,
Look up, and think of it no more,
Forget their fears, and, what is stranger,
Deny they ever were in danger.

[80]

⁶⁹Ori., "Kennet"; i.e., Brackley Kennett, Lord Mayor of London.

**Advice to the City,
June 1780.**

What means this melancholy ditty,
Resounding thro' the ransom'd⁷⁰ City?
Why do our Alderman exclaim,
So lately pluck'd out of the flame?
"Because his Majesty defends
"Our lives, for his own private ends;
"For spite, his Courtiers interpose
"Their help, to screen us from our foes;
"The arbitrary ministry
"Refuse to leave our City free, [10]
"And the officious Soldiers kill,
"By saving us—against our will.

"What need of Government's assistance,
"When mob and danger's at a distance?
"What need of military care
"To guard, when Kennett⁷¹ is our Mayor?
"When all the rioters in town
"Are govern'd by the Scarlet Gown,
"And see our Livery in array,
"Prepar'd to fight—another day! [20]

"Besides, ourselves the City guard,
[^c]And hunt the rogues thro' every ward:
[^c]Intrepid Wilkes⁷² appears our Chief;
[^c]And who so fit to catch a thief?

⁷⁰"Ransom'd" has "rescu'd" written in the margin as an alternative.

⁷¹Ori., "Kennet"; i.e., Brackley Kennett.

⁷²John Wilkes.

[“]His old vagaries he forgets,
[“]Lives honestly, and pays his debts,
[“]Resolv’d immortal fame to win,
[“]And die a Royalist, like Prynne!⁷³

“Why send us troops, who cannot need ’em?
[“]Only to rob us of our freedom, [30]
[“]Debar us of our native right,
[“]And dearest privilege—To fight,
[“]And standing on our own defence
[“]Again to drive the rebels hence.

“Deny us arms? we cannot see
[“]The meaning of his Majesty:
[“]Does he suspect his faithful Leiges,
[“]Because he knows our skill in Sieges,
[“]In party-clubs, and coalitions,
[“]Address, Remonstrance and Petitions? [40]
[“]Our conduct past must have convinc’d him
[“]We cannot turn our arms against him.
[“]He knows our bold trainbands for valor
[“]As famed and dreadful—as a tailor!⁷⁴
[“]Nor are our Aldermen such fools
[“]To meddle rashly with edg’d tools,
[“]Since not a Crow that flies is shyer
[“]Of gunpowder, when soldiers fire,
[“]Which makes us first the redcoats⁷⁵ order
[“]To shoot—and hang them then for murder! [50]

⁷³William Prynne (1600–1669).

⁷⁴Ori., “taylor.”

⁷⁵*Protestant Association* (1781) adds a note: “In St. George’s Fields.”

["Unless the King his troops withdraw,
["He means to rule by Martial law,
["And for our most unfeign'd affection
["Dragoon us into tame subjection,
["At last to change the Constitution
["By military execution,
["Accomplish his despotic plan,
["And as the Swedish⁷⁶ Monarch reign.

["How can we now preserve⁷⁷ the nation,
["But by a new Association? [60]
["Put arms into our hands, and see
["If we can fight for Liberty,
["If each will not his Castle guard;
["Plenty of muskets be prepar'd,
["Let every householder have one,
["And teach him to let off his gun.
["Then, when the bridle you withdraw,
["Which keeps the rioters in awe,
["No longer when the troops restrain,
["The rabble freed may rise again [70]
["And let them rise, a desperate herd
["To take us lions by the beard,
["Let every boy—and girl—come on,
["And all the chimney-sweeps in town,
["They to their own destruction come,
["They rush upon their instant doom!

⁷⁶Ori., "Sweedish."

⁷⁷Ori., "~~the Patriots save~~" changed to "we now preserve."

[“]Or, if the Beast will be but civil,
[“]Committing only *useful* evil,
[“]Let loose their prowess on our foes,
[“]Who all our patriot-schemes oppose, [80]
[“]Their rage on North⁷⁸ and Sandwich⁷⁹ vent,
[“]And the vile tools of Government;
[“]Pity the troops shoud keep them under,
[“]Or rob them of their lawful plunder,
[“]Pity the troops shoud tear and rend them,
[“]For want of arms—which we coud lend them.

“If Mob is totally supprest,
[“]How can a grievance be redrest?
[“]Or how reviv’d the good old cause?
[“]Or how supplied defective laws? [90]
[“]But rabble-government, we see,
[“]With soldiers never can agree:
[“]Unless we then the redcoats chace,
[“]The Mob can hardly show his face,
[“]Or pull a courtier’s mansion down,
[“]Or strip a bishop of his gown.
[“]But when the people’s reign is o’re,
[“]Freedom and property’s no more,
[“]With the Mob’s power religion fails,
[“]And Pope’ry over all prevails.^[2] [100]

⁷⁸I.e., Lord Frederick North (1732–92).

⁷⁹I.e., John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich (1718–92).

Ye gentle Citizens, attend
The cooler counsels of a friend:
Let not your hasty courage rise,
Or blind self-love put out your eyes;
Let not a spirit of opposition
Conceal from you [your]⁸⁰ own condition;
But learn, in time, yourselves to know,
Nor triumph o’re an absent foe:
Your fortitude, a reed so weak,
Will play you still a slippery trick. [110]
To fight ye never were intended,
Only to be yourselves defended:
Witness the absolute defeat,
Which now ye labour to forget,
When fearing goods and lives to lose,
Your hearts sunk down into your hose!
Ye did not then the mob⁸¹ defy,
But piteously for mercy cry,
Panting, and pale, and out of breath,
And quash’d, as in the arms of death! [120]

But now your courage is return’d,
The foe suppress, the danger scorn’d:
Yet, if the army stand aloof,
He still may put you to the proof:

well. ⁸⁰*Protestant Association* (1781) included “your” here, which CW likely meant to do in the manuscript as

⁸¹Ori., “mop.”

And when the En'my re-appears,
O'rewhelm'd with stupefying fears,
Ye may for help cry out again,
And wish the soldiers back, in vain.

Be caution'd then by good advice,
And learn your happiness to prize, [130]
Your *rage* for liberty repress,
Nor turn it to licentiousness;
No more your gracious King mistrust,
So mild, and merciful, and just;
No more by cruel insults wrong,
Because he suffers you so long,
With pity your perverseness sees,
And saves you in your last distress.

And if ye wish in peace to live,
No credence to your leaders give, [140]
But every demagogue dismiss
Those worst of all incendiaries,
Boldly break down rebellion's drawbridge,
F— and W— and B— and S—,⁸²
Who foes to King and Country dare
Usurp the patriot's character,
Pleaders for liberty and laws,
Supporters of rebellion's Cause,

⁸²The initial letter looks like a "T"; but CW almost certainly had in mind:
F[ox] and W[ilkes] and B[urke] and S[andwich].

They set the nation in a flame,
And on their Monarch cast the blame. [150]

All counsels to sum up in one;
Do, what so few of you have done,
Poor, guilty worms, your Maker fear,
And then ye *must* your King revere.

**Second Address to the City,
[June 1780].**

Ye Londoners, with smiles regard
The homage of a nameless bard,
(Ambitious, had the power, to raise
A lasting monument to your praise)
Who reads you with a lover's eye,
Exalts your virtues to the sky,
Admires your zeal and public spirit,
In strains unequal to your merit,
And with astonish'd Europe sees
Your truly wonderful Police!

[10]

All-wise, omnipotent creators
Of senates, kings, and legislators,
Creators, and deliverers too,
Our safety we ascribe to you,
Whose magnanimity so late
Redeem'd us on the edge of fate,
And from a general conflagration
Preserv'd the City and the Nation!

Yet having your dear country freed,
Ye lessen the heroic deed,
The plot your valor has defeated
By you is as a nothing treated,
Who now with confidence maintain
"The mob had no concerted Plan,

[20]

“No thought, or previous consultation
“For burning, or for desolation.
“But simply meant to do no more
“Than all the mischief in their power;
“No counsel was in the destroyers.^[b]
But was there none in their employers? [30]
Here, gentlemen, we issue join;
The mob, *you* say, had no design:
The mob had no design, *we* say,
Only for plunder, and for pay:
The instruments ostensible,
Actors howe’er of every ill,
Contrivers they were not, that’s certain:
But were there none behind the curtain?
No Heads, or Counsellors more able
To influence the thoughtless rabble? [40]
To teach them what and how perform?
To manage, and direct the storm?
Were *none* of the Associators
American, or English traitors?
It cannot now be doubted whether
They help’d to bring the mob together:
But could it not be once suspected
The rabble might be ill-directed?
Or would the multitude increase
To myriads, and then part in peace? [50]

We grant it the Associate host
The bulk of them were Dupes at most:
But might not *some* be hir'd t' advance
The Cause of Congress and of France?
A knave behind a madman lurk?
A Gordon⁸³ be the tool of B—?⁸⁴
America might seize th' occasion,
And use the blind Association,
Amidst our national confusion
To put their scheme in execution, [60]
To perpetrate their hellish plan,
And kings by our excision reign.

Why woud ye then, ah, tell me why,
Thro' modesty the truth deny,
Ye Rulers of the gallant town
That still subsists, to your renown?
Your fame, which fears no more eclipses
From boys, or chimney sweeps, or gipsies,
In spite of all your foes designs,
Illustrious, and immortal shines. [70]

If bards on those who greatly dare
Can immortality confer,
Your patriotic deeds shall blaze
Brilliant, in everlasting lays.
But stand it, far above the rest,
In England's chronicles confest,

⁸³Lord George Gordon.

⁸⁴Edmund Burke.

That when our foes had laid the train,
And ripen'd their pernicious plan,
Rebels with Regicides conspir'd,
And London was already fired; [80]
Then all who wore the Scarlet gown,
Stood up—and trod the ruffians down;
A Wilkes⁸⁵ did on our side appear,
And charg'd the rebels—in the rear;
A Bull⁸⁶ preserv'd the City's right,
And put the soldiery to flight,
A Second Walworth⁸⁷ graced the chair,
And KENNETT⁸⁸ was our GLORIOUS Mayor!⁸⁹

⁸⁵John Wilkes.

⁸⁶Short for “John Bull,” which was colloquial in CW’s day for “a typical Englishman.”

⁸⁷See page 4, note 12 above.

⁸⁸Ori., “KENNET”; i.e., Brackley Kennett.

⁸⁹At the bottom of this page CW has some rough notes in shorthand for a possible addition to the poem. He is not even sure where to make the addition, for his first line of shorthand simply asks “Where to be inserted?” Two further lines of shorthand give text, but in unpolished form in terms of poetic metre or rhyme:

Again he tries for prayer to assuage [/] The rebels' patriotic rage, [/] For we to violence pressed [/] Ere
gentle love can do the deed

Advertisements should need to write [/] In which “He begs them to be quiet [or quit?] [/] Nor block
[break?] the persons or the peace [/] their friends in durance to release, [/] For we, their ring leader[s] are
released by order of the Mayor!”