

The Poetry of The "New Georgia Gazette" or "Winter Chronicle" 1819-1820

Introduced by I.S. MacLaren

It's an ambition of mine, which I never seem to get around to realizing, to spend at least one winter north of the Arctic Circle. Anyone can go there in the summer when the sun is up, but I want to go there when the sun is down, I really do, and so help me I'm going to do it one of these times.¹

Glenn Gould

While from the assailing climate, rigid grown,
The alter'd fibres lose each nicer tone,
Long is the torpid soul by want oppress'd,
And dawning Reason slowly lights the breast.²

Henry James Pye

Readers of Canadian exploration literature customarily think of Henry Kelsey's verse journal as the single, unremarkable poetic contribution to a genre dominated by narrative,³ and standard reference sources confirm this custom.⁴ Strictly speaking, they are correct to do so. However, during the early nineteenth century at least two British naval expeditions of exploration for a Northwest Passage yielded many poems by explorers, if not all concerning exploration. They appeared in shipboard newspapers and, later, in facsimile editions,⁵ the first poetry in English written both in and about the Canadian Arctic, more than a century before the Mackenzie River poems of F.R. Scott and Al Purdy's poems from Baffin Island.⁶ These newspapers, like the narratives of exploration, exploited recognizable cultural values, conventions, and literary forms to identify northern latitudes; thereby, the poetry made the north a recognizable portion of the globe to the British public during the half-century leading up to the discovery in 1859 of the fate of Sir John Franklin's lost voyage of 1845.

To a notable extent, the poetry printed during the winter of 1819-1820 in "The New Georgia Gazette" or "Winter Chronicle," the shipboard newspaper of the first of four voyages to the Arctic under the command of Sir William Edward Parry (1790-1855), was doing the work that Charles Dickens would image in 1857 as "making a garden of the desert wide."⁷ The Royal Navy, the British Government, and the Church of England are all celebrated formally in one or another of the poems, as, in the wake of the defeat of Napoleon and despite economic recession, a spirit of manifest destiny was being heard across Britain.

Parry's voyage in HMS *Hecla* and *Griper*, with Lieutenant Matthew Liddon commanding the latter, formed part of a two-pronged assault on the passage in 1819, the other prong being the first of two overland journeys by boat and canoe from Hudson Bay to the arctic coastline under Commander John Franklin (1786-

1847). The ambitious assault was the plan of Sir John Barrow, Second Secretary of the Admiralty from 1804 to 1806, and from 1807 to 1845. Barrow even hoped that a rendezvous might be made by Parry and Franklin once the two reached the continental coastline. (The post-Napoleonic world was England's oyster in the view of many of its institutional representatives if not of the Romantic poets.) The results of the assault were mixed: Franklin's expedition lost nine of its twenty men to starvation and cannibalism while nine hundred kilometres of coastline east of the mouth of the Coppermine River was charted, much of it along the shores of the frustrating dead end of Bathurst Inlet;⁸ Parry's ships made the remarkable discovery of a western exit from Baffin Bay, thereby encountering the arctic archipelago, scene of so much activity and disaster in subsequent decades, and reaching past 110° Long., a feat which earned his officers and men not only parliament's advertised 5000⁹ reward but also, as it turned out, the distinction of being the only expedition to manage that degree of western penetration from the Atlantic during the entire nineteenth century.

Following his remarkable summer's explorations, Parry found an excellent refuge from ocean ice, which he named Winter Harbour, on the south side of Melville Island, at 74° 47' 15" N. Lat., 110° 48' 00" W. Long. (approximately 650 kms. west of the modern settlement of Resolute Bay, N.W.T.). After his sailors spent several days cutting a canal 4080 yards (3.69 kms) through the ice, he anchored his ships near the shore and one another on 26 September (Fig. 1), secured as well as such wooden vessels could be in preparation for winter. Then he effected several precautions and commenced several routines of his own devising in an effort to preserve his ships and his crews' physical and mental health through ten months of freeze-up, including ninety-two days when the sun, "that cheering orb, 'of this great world, both eye and soul',¹⁰ would not rise above the horizon. These included dismantling the masts, roofing over the ships' decks "with a cloth, composed of wadding-tilt, with which waggons are usually covered" (pp. 101-02), and, by placing them in the boats on shore, ensuring that all ropes and sails remained frozen and, therefore, unable to rot. The weather being too cold to permit the fermentation of beer (one solution to scurvy employed by Captains Cook and Vancouver forty and thirty-five years earlier on the Pacific northwest coast), Parry issued daily rations of lime-juice mixed with sugar, which "with a proper quantity of water, was drunk by each man in the presence of an officer appointed to attend to his duty" (p. 105). As well, morning and evening inspections of men's skin and gums were conducted. Schedules and routines were followed religiously, especially during the sun's absence, which "made all activities more difficult and was psychologically very trying."¹¹

As for the preservation of morale, "amusement" had to be furnished and curiosity satisfied entirely by the sailors themselves, for this expedition, unlike Parry's next, met with no Inuit as long as it was in the archipelago. At least officially, amusement was created in two ways:

I proposed . . . to the officers to get up a Play occasionally on board the Hecla, as the readiest means of preserving among our crews that cheerfulness and good-humour which had hitherto subsisted In these amusements I gladly undertook a part myself, considering that an example of cheerfulness, by giving a direct countenance to every thing that could contribute to it, was not the least essential part of my duty, under the peculiar circumstances in which we were placed.

In order still further to promote good-humour among ourselves, as well as to furnish amusing occupation, during the hours of constant darkness, we set on foot a weekly newspaper, which was to be called

the *North Georgia Gazette and Winter Chronicle*, and of which Captain [Edward] Sabine undertook to be the editor, under the promise that it was to be supported by original contributions from the officers of the two ships: and, though some objection may, perhaps, be raised against a paper of this kind being generally resorted to in ships of war, I was too well acquainted with the discretion, as well as the excellent dispositions of my officers, to apprehend any unpleasant consequences from a measure of this kind; instead of which I can safely say, that the weekly contributions had the happy effect of employing the leisure hours of those who furnished them, and of diverting the mind from the gloomy prospect which would sometimes obtrude itself on the stoutest heart.

(pp. 106-07)¹²

While Lieutenant Frederick William Beechey (1796-1856), also one of the expedition's artists and son of the famous portrait painter, served as stage manager of the Theatre Royal, the editorship of the manuscript newspaper was entrusted to the astronomer, Captain Edward Sabine (1788-1883). During the voyage, this was known alternatively as the "Winter Chronicle" and the "New Georgia Gazette"; only after the voyage, upon his return to England, did Parry realize that New Georgia, his designation for all the islands that he had "discovered in the Polar Sea," had already been used to name a group of islands in the Pacific Ocean (today, part of the Solomon Islands). He announced the change of name with an imperial flourish in his book (p. 99), although, having died during Parry's voyage, George III was not alive to receive the compliment.

It is upon a manuscript copy of the "New Georgia Gazette" that the subsequent presentation of poems will be based; variations occurring in the versions published in *The North Georgia Gazette and Winter Chronicle* will be specified in notes.¹³ In order to avoid as much as possible any confusion between the manuscript and the publication, the former will henceforth be referred to by its alternative name, the "Winter Chronicle." The manuscript version is taken here as the authoritative one based on recent research, which indicates that what explorers wrote while exploring tended often to alter as it evolved, under their or another's hand, into published form. As the emphasis in the following presentation will be placed on the circumstances under which poems were created, it is logical that the version chosen for presentation be the one surviving that most nearly approximates original composition.¹⁴

Ten of the nineteen officers on the ninety-four-man expedition accounted for all of the one hundred and thirty contributions to the twenty-one numbers of the "Winter Chronicle," which appeared weekly on Mondays beginning on 1 November 1819 and concluding, rather prematurely since the ships did not leave their winter mooring until 1 August, on 20 March 1820.¹⁵ Of these ten, seven — Parry, Sabine, Beechey, purser William Harvey Hooper, and mid shipmen Joseph Nias, James Clark Ross (1800-1862), who would go on to gain fame in his own right as an explorer of the Arctic and Antarctic, and John Bushman — served aboard the *Hecla*, and three — Liddon, Lieutenant Henry Parkyns Hoppner, the other artist of the expedition, and clerk Cyrus Wakeham — sailed on the *Griper* (p. ii). All but three numbers (5, 11, and 12) contained at least one item in verse, which usually appeared near the end of the number, and which treated subjects that, as Parry stated of the paper's entire contents, were "generally applicable to our own situation" (p. 127). Only Hooper, Beechey, Ross, Parry, and Wakeham wrote in verse. These poets range from Hooper, who can be credited (blamed?) for most of the occasional doggerel verse in song and ballad meters and stanzas, to Wakeham, who was far and away the most prolific contributor, and, with the exception of a few, author of the best poems and songs for the Theatre Royal. It is all the

more regrettable, then, that almost nothing is known about him.¹⁶ All the poems, it is no surprise, retain an emphatic institutional awareness: their authors were naval officers *cum* poets, not poets on an adventure.

Following are eight of the two dozen poems from the manuscript. The selection criteria are novelty of subject, formalistic interest, and evidence of an awareness of poetic tradition, although all three do not always appear in the same work. A brief commentary follows each transcribed poem.

Address on the opening of the Theatre Royal,
New Georgia, written and spoken by M^r Wakeham
[5 Nov. 1819]

Reposed from war — triumphant in that field
Where rescued Europe's destiny was sealed,
5 No foe to combat on the rolling wave,
No injured monarch that her sword might save,
'Twas still our much-lov'd Country's glorious claim
To stand pre-eminent, unmatched in fame,
And in the paths of Science yet to find
10 The liberal plan to benefit Mankind.
Far in the North an unknown region lay,
Where growing ice congealed the liquid way.
Yet here it seemed Columbias bending shore,
Stretch'd Westward, heard Pacific Ocean's roar.
15 Full oft, in earlier days, had Britons tried
To force a passage through the arrested tide,
But tried in vain, tho with intrepid skill
Persisting long, in spite of every ill.
By happier fortune led, 'twas ours to prove
20 Thus far unchecked by land the waters rove,
And ice-encumbered here to win our way
Mid the long sunshine of an Arctic Day.
But now for coming storms and frigid air
Approaching Winter bids us well prepare.
25 The Sun retiring* scarce illumes the sky
Swift driving snows in circling eddies fly,
And soon no gladd'ning ray shall gild our noon
But from the radiant stars, or changing moon.
While thus inactive we are doom'd to stay
30 To cheer the ling'ring hours — behold a Play.
And tho' we boast not pow'r by scenic art
To warm the passions, or affect the heart,
Yet here secure we tread — no Critic's eye
Is bent, with eager gaze, each fault to spy.
35 Amusement all our aim, if that succeed,
Our wish is gained — nor ask we other meed.
But, when emerging from stern Winter's tomb'¹⁷
Reviving spring shall chace the dreary gloom
And genial warmth, expanding o'er the plain,
40 Pour melting snows in torrents to the main,
When rushing winds, with all-resistless sweep,
Unlock the fettered surface of the deep —
Then with new ardour will we onward hie
To seek a passage 'neath this polar sky,
45 Firm in our Leaders' care, who still have shewn
The great resolve, the daring deed their own.

Nor — if that Power, whose Providential sway
 The burning Sun and meaner Orbs obey,
 Approving smile — will we the task give o'er
 Till Southern Surges round our vessels roar;
 Then with glad sails we'll plough the foaming seas,
 Delighted listening to the swelling breeze
 That swift impels us to Britannia's shore
 To Love, to Friendship, & our Homes, once more.' [18](#)

* The day preseding that on which this address was spoken was the last that we had the Sun above the horizon for an interval of 96 days.

This address, which appeared in the newspaper's second number, Monday 8 November 1819, amounts to a proclamation. Structured in three parts, like most of Wakeham's verse, it begins by surveying history on two counts: recent naval and national history, including the defeat of the tyrant (Napoleon) who held Europe hostage (11. 1-8); and then the history of arctic exploration from a British perspective (9-16), the names of Baffin, Davis, Frobisher, Hudson, and others obviously implicit. The second part traces the expedition's comparative success, which Wakeham attributes to no more than "happier fortune" (1.17), a necessary choice, since he cannot argue that God shines more favourably on his century of Britons than on a preceding one. Thereafter, the second part, by explaining the need for "cheer" amidst a prolonged arctic night, brings the poem at its midpoint to its occasional and titular purpose, the opening of the theatre (11. 17-34). The last third of the poem, commencing at the turn effected by the co-ordinate conjunction, "But" (1. 35), looks forward to the "reviving spring" (1. 36) and further exploits with a degree of success equal to the previous season's. Parry's ships being beset at 110° Long., Wakeham was writing roughly at the mid-point of the passage, the west coast of Greenland lying at 55° Long., and Bering Strait at 168° Long. His mistake here, an understandable one, is to continue reasoning from such balanced logic, for it implies, as every officer without exception fondly thought, that the return of the sun would, as it tends to do farther south, herald a change of seasons; on the contrary, as Wakeham and his fellows would learn to their chagrin, February and March can be the coldest arctic months, spring and summer occur almost simultaneously, and the ocean begins to offer leads of water only in July, if at all. [19](#) But at the time of composition, such realizations lay ahead of Wakeham and his audience; nor did the occasion of his address call for anything other than a rallying of the *esprit de corps* in the face of the declining sun. Hibernation was not Parry's plan for the dark days; if Seasonal Affective Disorder had yet to acquire its fashionable late twentieth-century name, the officers knew intrinsically that it existed and needed to be combatted. And so the refulgence of the Tahitian sun, as well as the great achievements of their forbear, Captain Cook, are alluded to instead. Wakeham's not inconsiderable skill, by capitalizing on the sibilance of "Southern Surges," enchants his audience, calling up before them a seaman's fondest sounds and images: "Delighted listening to the swelling breeze" (1. 50). Hardly an arctic allusion, the line effectively transports the listener around "Columbias bending shore," and, almost before he realizes it ("swift impels us" [l. 51]), to England and poem's end. He has been diverted from Winter Harbour, amused, and not a little indulged by the pleasures of hope.

Reflections occasioned by seeing the Sun set for a period of
 three months, November 1819

Behold yon glorious Orb, whose feeble ray

5 Mocks the proud glare of Summer's livelier day!
His noon-tide beam, shot upward through the sky,
Scarce gilds the vault of Heav'n's blue canopy —
— A fainter yet, and yet a fainter light, —
And lo! he leaves us now to one long cheerless night!

And is his glorious course for ever o'er?
And has he set indeed — to rise no more?
To us no more shall Spring's enlivening beam,
Unlock the fountains of the fettered stream, —
10 No more the wild bird carol through the sky,
And cheer yon mountains with rude melody?

Once more shall Spring her energy resume
And chase the horrors of this Wintry gloom. —
Once more shall Summer's animating ray
15 Enliven Nature with perpetual day —
Yon radiant Orb, with self-inherent light,
Shall rise, and dissipate the shades of night;
In peerless splendour re-possess the sky,
And shine in renovated Majesty!

20 -----
In yon departing Orb methinks I see
A Counterpart of frail mortality!
Emblem of Man, when Life's declining Sun
Proclaims this awful truth, "thy race is run." —
25 His Sun once set, its bright effulgence gone,
All, all is darkness, — as it ne'er had shone!
Yet not for ever is Man's glory fled,
His name for ever 'numbered with the dead'!
Like yon bright Orb, th'immortal part of Man,
30 Shall end in glory, as it first began. —
Like Him, encircled in celestial light,
Shall rise triumphant midst the shades of night,
Her native energies again resume,
Dispel the dreary Winter of the tomb —
35 And, bidding Death, with all its terrors, fly,
Bloom in perpetual Spring through all Eternity!²⁰

Written by William Edward Parry for the newspaper's sixth number, on Monday 6 December 1819, this was his only contribution in verse.²¹ Perhaps as much as a month in gestation, this poem appears influenced by several sources. One certain source for Parry, regarded as one of the more devout of the officers who commanded expeditions of arctic exploration,²² was the Church of England's *Book of Common Prayer*. As well (see note 10) it appears that he was familiar with *Paradise Lost*.²³

This conventional poem of consolation, in couplets of iambic pentameter, turns on each of its five stanzas. Resonating with the familiar images of the sun as God's blessing on Man, it begins with the ominous observation of the departing orb, conveying powerfully the symbolic significance for a Christian of this natural phenomenon. Both irremediable desolation and forsakenness are adumbrated by the personification of lines five and six, certainly a powerful effort at registering the sense of deprivation that such latitudes can impart to one whose sense of nature and God derived from England and English landscape and climate. How could the heavens declare the "glory" of God if they were dark? the poem asks. Meanwhile, Parry soon determined that Melville Island itself failed

to offer him and his men the consolation that British poets like Cowper and Campbell had counselled could be derived in times of despair from the observation of nature:

there was but little to be met with in our walks on shore, which could either amuse or interest us. . . . the scene was such as to induce contemplations, which had, perhaps, more of melancholy than of any other feeling. Not an object was to be seen on which the eye could long rest with pleasure, unless when directed to the spot where the ships lay, and where our little colony was planted. (pp. 124, 125)

The sense of forsakenness would have been compounded but also refuted by the biblical readings appointed for the fourth day of the month, the day in November when the sun set.²⁴ Evening Prayer for the fourth day designated Psalm 22, better known as one of the Good Friday Psalms. It offers Christ's cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me" (22:1). Also proceeding through five parts, it works towards a faithful expression that "All the ends of the world shall remember, and be turned unto the Lord" (22:2-7). But the sense of forsakenness also resounds with the despair expressed, and, gradually, the inspiration gained by the blind poet in his invocation "Hail Holy Light," which begins *Paradise Lost*, Bk. III. The questions voiced in lines nine through twelve of Parry's poem seem in particular to follow from the blind poet's despair:

Thus with the Year

Seasons return, but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of Ev'n or Morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or Summer's Rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
but cloud instead, and ever-during dark
Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off. . . . (III, 40-7)

Obviously, however, the certainty of the blind poet's predicament differs from the situation of the explorer, so that the latter appropriately shapes his despair in questions rather than statements.

Still, the assurance in the third stanza of Spring and Summer's return to "dissipate the shades of night" has too easily solved the questions, since the same was conventionally and frequently supplied to the climate and meteorology of Britain by its poets. As if in an effort to search deeper, Parry begins again in the fourth stanza. For the conceit (Milton's "God is Light" is one likely source) upon which the first three stanzas were predicated, he substitutes the conceit of the declining sun as an "[e]mblem of man" (l. 23). The proclamation "'Thy race is run!' " now seems to invoke the despair of Milton's Samson Agonistes: "My race of glory run" (l. 597). In stanza five, this conceit is rather flatly contradicted than deftly worked out: "Yet not for ever. . ." (l. 27). This would seem a problematical resolution for the audience at whom the poem was directed, given their aims of secular exploration. With only "th'immortal part of Man" ending in glory and dispelling "the dreary winter of the tomb" (ll. 29,34), the consolation seems an excessively bleak figure for the situation in which Parry's men found themselves. Although it is clear from such contemporary publications as Edward Bickersteth's *A Scripture Help* that such consolation, derived from contemplating the transcendental, was fervidly counselled and adopted by early nineteenth-century Anglicans — indeed, several hundred kilometres to the south, on the mainland, Franklin's naturalist-surgeon John Richardson would read such a publication to Midshipman Robert Hood to console him as he lay dying on the tundra in October 1821²⁵ — it still seems a

less than apt figure for Parry to choose given his responsibility for keeping his men's bodies and souls healthy through the dark months. But this judgement doubtless pays too little credit to the power that constant darkness exerts on the mind, however devout the person; it may be that Parry's only effort of devotion in verse bears the marks of the environment in which and against which he wrote. At any rate, what need not be surmised is that Parry remained as dutiful to his God as to the Admiralty; his "Shall rise triumphant midst the shades of night" (l. 32) is faithful to the doctrine as expressed, for example, in *Surge, Illuminare*, one of the alternative canticles for the Church of England's service of Evening Prayer, or in Psalm 139:1-11, which was designated as one of the "Forms of Prayer to be used at Sea."²⁶ Thus have the night thoughts been transcended, if not profoundly investigated.²⁷

Reflections on the Morning of Christmas Day, 1819,
New Georgia

5 Rich from the blushing East no Glory darts
To chace the shadowy night — but all is gloom,
Save where the Moon's young Crescent o'er the snows
Emits a trembling radiance, faintly seen
Through Mists Obscure — or sparkling hung on high
The countless myriads of the Stars diffuse
Their distant, glimmering, scarce-enlightening rays!
10 Behind yon cloud a stream of paly light*
Shoots up its pointed spires — again immersed,
Sweeps forth with sudden start, & waving round
In changeful forms, assumes the brighter glow
Of Orient Topaz — then, as sudden, sinks
15 In deeper russet, and at once expires!
Here then we view, in Northern Isle immur'd
Midst ceaseless drifts & long-enduring ice,
The Wonder of His Pow'r, whose awful Voice
Spoke Earth into existence, and the Sun
20 That now, Brittannia! o'er thy favor'd Land
Lights up the day thro' Winter's cheerless reign.
Hail, sacred hours! that to my mind recal
His wondrous goodness — His, the Great Supreme!
Once was Thy Morn in other splendour drest
25 When to the Shepherd-trains' astonish'd eyes
Celestial Glory shone, and angel-choirs
Hymned the Messiah's Birth in Songs Divine!
And shall not Man prolong the wondrous strain
For whom His mightiest, greatest work was done?
30 Yes — whether bord'ring on the Icy Pole,
Or where the genial ray with fruits & flow'rs
Bedecks the pendant bough, or paints the vale,
Still let the Hymn of Triumph rise on high,
The Hymn of grateful Joy incessant rise
35 To Jesu's Name, our Saviour & our God!
Who laid his Glory by, and wrapt in flesh
Our Nature shar'd, exempt alone from Sin,
For purposes of Love, to save Mankind,
To raise us to a higher state of Bliss
40 Than, in primeval innocence, enjoy'd
Our great progenitor — fruition pure
Eternal, full, unmeasurable joy!
Still, as expiring years shall roll along,

45 Be this our theme, when Wintry skies proclaim
This sacred Day's return; and higher thoughts
Than sordid Pleasures fill our tongues with praise,
Our hearts with Love, our bosoms with desire
To live to Him who gave His Life for us —
While yet on Earth — and when the hour shall come
50 That frees th'imprison'd Soul — his terrors past,
Calm may we view the stern approach of Death,
But parting from a world of painful toil
To dwell for ever near Jehovah's Throne!
To whom be Glory, Pow'r, Dominion, Praise,
Ascrib'd for ever, and for evermore![28](#)

* Aurora Borealis

Composed by Cyrus Wakeham for the ninth number of the "Winter Chronicle" on Monday 27 December 1819, this hymn in blank verse celebrates a day when, according to Parry's narrative, "the weather was raw and cold, with a considerable snow-drift" (p. 128). Like an eighteenth-century topographical poem, it begins in contemplation of the poet's surroundings, dimly visible though they are. The lack of glory on Christmas Day, a lack that throws into profound doubt the symbolism of the Sun/Son conceit on which English-language Christians have long depended, initiates the series of wonders, and the Aurora Borealis' "paly light" continues it. But the opening negation ("no Glory darts"), and the caesura followed by the spondees in line two creates an elegiac tone, which is reinforced by the vague allusion in line three ("Save where the Moon's young Crescent") to Gray's "Elegy written in a Country Church-Yard" ("Save where the beetle . . .").[29](#) The turn out of the elegiac occurs at the end of the second verse paragraph and the poem's second part, and it occurs, interestingly, not by Wakeham's coming to terms with his setting, but by his seeking the sun in "Brittannia," where it does shine.

However unsatisfactory this shift is to readers interested in a poetic accommodation to environment, it permits Wakeham to move from topographical description and empiricism to spiritual inspiration and invocation, the aim of his hymn. The point is to "prolong the wondrous strain" amidst sundry other wonders "of His Pow'r," such as the continual night, and the aurora borealis. The consolation persists regardless of one's terrestrial surroundings (ll. 28-32). Thereby, and not unlike Parry's poem, does "the Hymn of grateful Joy" provide consolation for the sailor immured in a "world of painful toil."

The poem has neglected to come to terms with the birth of Christ in a realm where the Sun/Son symbol cannot obtain, and one regrets in particular that Wakeham, who might have had the ability, did not tackle the interesting conceit used by Milton in "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" about the sun's hiding at the birth of Christ.[30](#) But Wakeham may still be saluted for working his, one imagines, psychologically difficult way from darkness and elegy to glory and hymn of transcendent triumph on the Christian's great day of celebration.

Thoughts on New Year's Day A.D. 1820

5 The Moments of chasten'd delight are gone by
When we left our lov'd homes o'er new regions to rove
When the firm manly grasp, and the soft female sigh
Marked the mingled sensations of friendship & love.

That season of Pleasure has hurried away
When thro' far-stretching ice a safe passage we found*
That led us again to the dark rolling sea,
And the signal was seen, "On for Lancaster's Sound!" +

10 The joys that we felt when we pass'd by the shore
Where no footstep of man had e'er yet been imprest,
When rose in the distance no mountain-tops hoar
As the Sun of the evening bright gilded the West,**
Full swiftly they fled — and that hour too is gone
When we gained the Meridian assigned as a bound + +
To entitle our Crews to their Country's first boon,
15 Hail'd by all as an Omen the passage was found.

And past with our pleasures are moments of Pain,
Of anxious suspense, and of eager alarm —
Environ'd by ice, Skill & Ardor were vain
The swift-moving mass of its force to disarm.
20 Yet, dash'd on the beach, and our boats torn away,
No anchors could hold us, nor cables secure,
The dread & the peril expir'd with the day,
When none by High Heav'n could our safety ensure.

25 Involv'd with the ages existent before
Is the Year that has brought us thus far on our way
And Gratitude calls us, our God to adore
For the oft-renew'd Mercies its annals display!
The gloomy Meridian of darkness is past,
30 And e're long shall gay Spring bid the herbage revive,
O'er the wide waste of ice shall re-echo the blast,
And the firm-prison'd Ocean its fetters shall rive.
Now dawns the New Year! — but what mind can expose
The events that await us before it expires?
35 In the isles of the South to remember its close,
Or in regions of frost mourn our frustrate desires!
Yet Hope points the track that our vessels shall force
Nor the shades of Adversity open to view —
Those Hopes shall expand as we follow our Course
40 And the dangers we meet but our Courage renew.

The friends we have left, at this season of mirth,
Do their bosoms or Pleasure, or Anguish, sustain?
Do they deem us yet safe in these wilds of the earth
45 Or whelm'd in the surges that whiten the main?
No longer they now can expect our return,
No longer they mark ev'ry change of the breeze,
But the thought of despair fond affection will spurn,
And confident rest on Almighty Decrees!

50 With them we but share the proud hope of success
And look forward with joy to the days yet to come,
When, the heart overflowing warm tears shall express
How sincere is the welcome that greets us at home —
55 Be happiness theirs, while we sever'd remain —
Be Fortitude firm, & Exertion our own!
Till the shores of Old Albion again we regain
Again to enjoy every bliss we have known! [31](#)

* Our ships were the first that have succeeded in crossing Baffin's Bay in the Lat. of 72

+ Telegraphic Signal made by the *Hecla*, after breaking thro' the first barrier of ice.

** The evening was beautifully clear, when we sailed over the spot, assigned to Croker's Mountains.

+ + The Meridian of 110 West, which entitled us to the 1st Reward of 5,000.

Composed by Wakeham for the tenth number of the "Winter Chronicle," on Monday 3 January 1820, these seven octets of cross-rhymed anapestic hexameters cannot fail to bring to mind such traditional tunes as "Sweet Betsy from Clyde," (and, perhaps for the modern reader, such traditional themes as the "Northwest Passage," as composed and sung by the late Stan Rogers). The important optimism leant to the theme by the rising swell of the anapests is realized well in these "Thoughts."

The poem may be regarded as the middle one of a triplet, with Wakeham's opening and closing addresses for the Theatre Royal (the first and last poems offered here) flanking it. All are secularly inspiring, although they all, as usual, pay tribute to God, and all survey the past, describe the present state of the expedition, and look hopefully towards future success. Wakeham draws a not inept correspondence between the expedition's attainment of the longitudinal meridian (l. 14) and the passing of the winter solstice, "the gloomy Meridian" (l. 29). One lurking danger may be vaguely intimated in line 30 — "And e're long shall gay Spring bid the herbage revive." The first case of scurvy (James Scallon, gunner aboard the *Hecla*) had been reported on the first day of the new year (p. 132). Parry immediately "began . . . to raise a small quantity of mustard and cress in [his] cabin, in small shallow boxes filled with mould, and placed along the stove-pipe," but it was "necessarily colourless, from the privation of light," and probably did the spirits of his "scorbutic patients" more good than it did their bodies.

For the Winter-Chronicle

Wild scenes of Winter! what can ye disclose
To feast the sight or give the eye repose?
5 Can frozen grandeur, snows, or solid floods
Compete with Britain's fields, or waving woods?
Stern awe & horror ye may well inspire,
But not one pleasing thought, one soft desire —
No lover, wand'ring thro' the leafy shade,
10 In blissful converse with his charming maid,
Breathes in her ear the ardent vow of truth,
While she delighted hears the favour'd Youth —
No warbling bird attunes the evening lay,
If o'er yon rugged hills we chance to stray —
15 No distant light proclaims the social dome,
No lov'd relations wait us at our home! —
What pleasures then, from Scenes so dear apart,
Have pow'r with us to soothe the swelling heart?

20 Whatshall we deem the source of Happiness,
 When Nature wears no more her lovely dress,
 While, exiled from Society, we roam,
 Where tempests roar, & sparkling surges foam? —
 The Mind, unswayed by circumstance or time,
 Confesses still its origin sublime!
 25 Not lavish Nature, or the Charms of Art
 Contentment or Repose can e'er impart,
 If sense of error wound the feeling breast,
 By Conscience unrelenting deep imprest.
 True Happiness in Virtue must be sought,
 30 Ensur'd at once, performing what we ought,
 To others doing what we would receive,
 The grief too poignant seeking to relieve,
 To heal the wounds that Sorrow's shaft has made
 With point more anguish'd than the reeking blade,
 35 Each passion's sway restraining from excess,
 And making thus our daily errors less,
 Led by His Word, who made & still sustains
 This pendant Orb, & o'er Creation reigns!
 Roil on, ye wintry hours! no real woe
 40 Can all your stormy horrors yet bestow!
 A transient gloom ye may awhile impose
 Like yonder cloud, before the Moon-beam rose;
 But when the lamp of life shall feebly shine,
 When Youth's, & Manhood's fires alike decline,
 45 And when the last loud trump shall bid us soar,
 To hear our doom — when "time shall be no more —
 The Soul, relying on the Saviour's pow'r,
 Shall stand undaunted in that awful hour —
 His will on earth performed, — our God shall bless
 And clothe the Sinner with his Righteousness!³²

Wakeham wrote this poem of consolation for the thirteenth number of the "Winter Chronicle," which appeared on Monday 24 January. A home sick poem the outset of which owes not a little to Thomson's "Winter" (1726),³³ it begins conventionally with a catalogue of absences (the repetition of "No," for example), followed only by questions. At the conventional brink of despair, where neither nature nor art can fill the void, the poet turns inward (ll. 21-2) and retrieves the consolation of spiritual nourishment. Whereas Thomson's swain falls victim to Winter ("Lays him along the snows a stiffened corse" [l. 97]), this winter wanderer learns from his wealth of "Contentment or Repose" to improve himself. Here, a theme is presented that gains prominence in Upper Canada somewhat later — that of the North as maker and tester of virtue in a man.³⁴ Those who achieve the middle way (characterized as the golden rule of charity towards others [l. 29]) despite being surrounded by environmental extremes are the better for their test.

The lesson learned, the poet turns in the last third of his consolation to celebrate the achievement for the transcendence it guarantees him over his foes' (time and weather's) "transient gloom" (l. 39). Here, at his most didactic, Wakeham gives his fellow officers a spiritual pep-talk, which balances the heavily secular nature of most other items in the "Winter Chronicle."

Lines suggested by the brilliant Aurora Jan^y 15th 1820

High quiv'ring in the air, as shadows fly,

The Northern lights adorn the azure sky,
 5 Dimm'd by superior blaze, the stars retire,
 And Heav'n's vast concave gleams with sportive fire.
 Soft blazing in the East, the orange hue,
 The crimson, purple, and ethereal blue
 Form a rich arch, by floating clouds upheld,
 10 High pois'd in air, with awful myst'ry swell'd,
 From whose dark centres, with unceasing roll
 Rich Corruscations gild the glowing Pole.
 Their varied hues, slow waving o'er the bay,
 Eclipse the splendour of the dawning day —
 15 Streamers in quick succession o'er the sky
 From the arc's centre far diverging fly.
 is Pencils of rays, pure as the Heaven's own light,
 Dart quickly upward to the Zenith's height —
 Transfixt with wonder, on the frozen flood,
 20 The blaze of grandeur fired my youthful blood.
 Deep in th'o'erwhelming maze of Nature's laws,
 'Midst her mysterious gloom I sought the cause.
 But vain the search! inscrutable to man
 Thy works have been, O God! since time began,
 25 And still shall be — Then let the thought expire
 As late the splendour of Aurora's fire
 To dark Oblivion sank, in wasting flame,
 Like the dim shadows of departed fame!³⁵

The only one written by James Clark Ross, age 19 or 20, this poem appeared in the fourteenth number of the "Winter Chronicle," on Monday, 31 January. Parry (pp. 134-36), Alexander Fisher, and the anonymous author of letters to his brother concur that the display of the northern lights on 15 January was the only very brilliant one of the entire winter.³⁶ Interestingly, it fell to a man of science to attempt a poetic description of the display. Ross, who, in 1831, on his third voyage of discovery in the Arctic, would locate for the first time the North Magnetic Pole, conducts his reader through eight pedestrian couplets of observation before turning inward to describe the effect on his soul of the event. Not surprisingly for a man of science still in the age of Paley, rather than of Darwin, Ross experiences no difficulty in ascribing the meteorological wonder to God's "inscrutable" plan. That the poem's thought expires as unexpectedly as the aurora, seems gratuitous; certainly, the verses give the lie to the inductive view that the more one beholds the more one understands of "th'o'erwhelming maze of Nature's laws" (l. 19), but such problems lay beyond this poet's skill to set out. Moreover, it needs to be noted, this particular blind alley in the maze of Nature's laws had baffled men of science for centuries before Ross, and for another five decades after.³⁷ Finally, the poem takes on for the modern reader an eeriness not intended by its author. Time would tell that the aurora was only *one* of the most inscrutable works of God to escape man, in particular Englishmen, in the Arctic; the other was the maze of the North west Passage itself.

Lines on the re-appearance of the Sun, Feb^y 3^d 1820.

5 The splendid Sun, with re-ascending ray,
 Sheds o'er the Northern world the flood of day! —
 Lost in the blazing radiance, sable night
 Resigns her empire to the kindling light,
 Serenely clear the Heav'n's blue concave glows,
 And glitt'ring sunshine gild the Mountain-snows.

Precursive of the genial fire, a stream
10 Of reddish light shoots up its beauteous gleam.
The conscious skies the blushing tint extend
Till with their azure dye its glories blend.
Such was that infant Orb's primeval ray
That rose o'er fair Creation's early day.
15 Such was the beam that saw the deluge pour
O'er all the guilty world an Ocean's roar.
And such shall be its blaze thro' lasting time,
Till o'er the earth consuming fires shall climb,
Till That Almighty Voice that bade it rise
20 Shall blot its Glory from the burning Skies!
When day's returning light illumes the pole,
Life's crimson streams in swifter currents roll.
Nor Man alone the cheerful joy partakes,
The shaggy Bear his savage den forsakes —
25 The various beasts that haunt the piny wood —
The hardy people of the northern flood —
The sportive birds that skim aloft in air,
Or on the liquid surface seek their fare —
Return from milder climes, by instinct taught,
30 Where shelter from the Wintry blast they sought.
All Nature feels the life-inspiring ray,
The herbs revive — the ice dissolves away:
Its wonted spring the active mind regains
No gloomy scene its energy restrains,
35 But, as the renovated solar light
Impels the ling'ring shades to rapid flight,
More clearly shine the intellectual pow'rs
To loftier thoughts the Soul aspiring tow'rs!
Man with the Sun his upward course pursues
40 While vigorous youth his daily force renews,
Like him, when wasting age those fires consume,
Declining sinks to Death's untravelled gloom!
May we, like Him, before the final scene,
Enlarge our lustre, splendid, yet serene;
45 And, as his glowing disk with softened light,
Still paints the skies, when sunk beneath our sight,
In bright remembrance long unfading shine
By Sovereign Mercy sav'd, & Love Divine. [38](#)

As if intentionally a companion poem to Parry's, this set of "Reflections" was composed by Wakeham. It appeared four days after the reappearance of the sun, on Monday 7 February; however, had the poet been as inspired by the advent of the reappearance as his fellow seamen were, he would have begun writing it long before the actual occurrence of the event, for every day from 25 January onwards, sailors braved the cold and climbed the ships' masts in hopes of a sighting.

It will be quickly apparent that the chief reasons for including this poem are the novelty of its subject matter and the fact that it has a companion. Wakeham, although he demonstrates again his competent handling of meter in the iambic pentameter couplet, does not prove himself a match for the occasion; his figures are merely descriptive and his theme well worn. Moreover, he blindly invokes seasonal change as simultaneous with the sun's reappearance. But the shedding of a flood of sun "o'er the Northern world" (l. 2) does not herald birds' "[r]eturn from milder climes" (l. 27); nor is it the case that "[a]ll Nature feels the life-inspiring ray" (l. 29): herbs do not revive and the ice

does not melt. The day on which the poem appeared in the "Winter Chronicle" had a maximum temperature of only — 20癈 (p. 150). A charitable reading of this poem would credit it at least with figuring forth the exhilarated optimism felt by one left so long in the dark. Although the bear is awkwardly included in the general renovation (1. 22), one senses that the poet is experiencing, if he is not in fact harnessing in words, the sensation of rejuvenation after hibernation that only that animal knows. [39](#)

Farewell Address,
spoken at the close of the Theatre Royal, New Georgia,
March 16th 1820

Drear was the night that Nature's face o'erspread
When Light's last gleam this sadden'd region fled.
5 No active scenes disarm'd its torpid power,
Nor soft Society beguiled the hour.
The dark dull Season call'd for other aid,
Our comic talents then we each essayed —
Here Garrick's heroes mimic passions move
10 And list'ning ladies melt at tales of Love.
For Woman's semblance grac'd our Georgian Stage,
The strangest medley of the present age —
A paper bonnet oft her head embrac'd
Her canvas stays were by a Sailor lac'd,
15 The dress in which her Beauty sought to shine
Formed and arrayed by fingers masculine —
Her ribbons painted — tin her glittering fan —
Bright beads her diamonds — & herself — a Man!
The Drama's Beaux were not to be out-done,
20 Fox-hunting Squires in paper boot-tops shone,
And the plump Landlord, when he took a swig,
Concealed his blushes 'neath an oakum* wig —
Nay, old Sir Simon's hat was such an one
As Tars at Greenwich every day put on —
25 Tin spurs, & paper frills for Dandies made,
And bear-skin whiskers help'd the gay parade —
But jesting o'er — to-night the plays we close,
For passing Winter asks no more repose!

As the brave Soldier, on the martial field
O'er-borne by ten-fold odds, & forced to yield,
Press'd by the captive chain, feels not its weight,
When on the thunders of the nearer fight,
30 His fate suspended hangs, till Victory's tide
Proclaims the conquered, now the conqu'ring side,
Then free'd once more, he shines in radiant arms,
And mingling eager in the War's alarms,
Feels the new wrong within his bosom glow,
35 And bursts indignant on the embattled foe —
So we, secured by Winter's Icy Chain,
Awhile the Prisoners of its gloomy reign,
Hear in the blast that sweeps the frozen Sea
The friendly sound that soon shall set us free,
40 When, hasting forward with impatient force
Hope's cheering ray shall gild our Western Course.

If from the past our future scenes we trace,

The prospect wears an animating face,
For Providential Mercies open wide
45 And shew that favouring Heaven has been our guide.
When in our front the ice opposing Lay,
Still through the mass we found a devious way.
If humid fogs obscured the mid-day Sun,
From ev'ry danger safe, we still have run.
50 Unfaithful here the guiding Needle flies,
Now points to Northern, now to Southern skies,
But ever have we kept the path design'd,
And left the distant Eastern Shores behind.
What breast unconscious of the Heavenly Hand
55 That sav'd our vessels from the fatal strand,
When far-extended floes with headlong sway
Drove fiercely shore-ward in yon Western Bay!
Yet morning's light, tho' human help was vain,
Beheld us riding on the liquid main.
60 And still, I trust, That Hand which rules o'er all,
Which guides the motions of this whirling ball,
Will lead us onward through the icy road,
To where the Southern joins the Polar flood,
Until at length that happy morn appear
65 When Behring's Strait shall echo British cheers!

Sons of my Country! in her cause allied,
A Sailor's feelings are my bosom's pride!
Those feelings tell me that each brother-tar
Exults in cherished hope — advanc'd thus far—
70 The Hope that soon success shall crown our toil,
And Honor greet us on our native soil.
Brittannia's hopes are centered in our deeds,
To this emprise the path of Glory leads!
Her ancient Chiefs of ever-honored name,
75 Call on us now to emulate their fame!
Each tender tie that deep infixes here
Bids us our Country and ourselves revere!
Then, Sailors, thus I'll your resolve express,
80 "We can't command, but we'll deserve Success!"⁴⁰

* Tarred Hemp.

Apart from the editor's thanks to the paper's contributors, this address in verse by Wakeham marks the last item in the paper's last number, which appeared on Monday 20 March. Obviously, the poem is meant to serve several purposes, including the formal closing of the theatre, a review of the expedition's geographical progress to date, and a prayer for its future success. It regales the officers with compliments for their good-spirited undertaking of female r 齷 es in the theatrical productions⁴¹ before raising the tone markedly by means of an epic simile (11. 27-42). In it, Wakeham renders clearer than in any other verse the idea of struggle against the environment, for he likens the conquered soldier to the icebound sailor. The comparison seems an appropriate one only in so far as the conquered soldier seems to have no choice but to await a change in Victory's tide; that is, he cannot alter matters on his own, only take advantage of a change once it occurs.

Perhaps this martial simile is suggestive of the men's increasing impatience to set sail again. The early closing of the theatre and newspaper attests to the inexperienced arctic explorers' fervent hope (if not actual belief) that spring would occur at about the time of the sun's return; certainly, they had no expectation that another five months (almost as long again as they had already spent in Winter Harbour) would have to pass before their ships once again moved through water.

In appropriate order, the poem then proceeds to acknowledge Providence and national pride as the mainstays of future success, which cannot be commanded, only deserved. In the case of Providence (ll. 43-66), Wakeham's verse does nothing so much as contextualize in terms of his specific voyage (esp. ll. 55-60) one of the Collects of Thanksgiving from the "Forms of Prayer to be used at Sea," in the Church of England's *Book of Common Prayer*. In the edition of 1818, perhaps the one used by Parry's men, it reads in part as follows: "Even when we gave all for lost, our ship, our goods, our lives, then didst thou mercifully look upon us, and wonder fully command a deliverance; for which we, now being in safety, do give all praise and glory to thy holy Name... ." Moving on to a prayer for success in the next season (ll. 61-66), Wakeham deftly prepares the way for the patriotic theme with which he concludes the address.

In the final verse paragraph (ll. 67-80), a considerable weight is thrust on the expectation, for all "Brittannia's hopes are centered in [their] deeds" (l. 73). No doubt, following the remarkable success of their first year's explorations, and given, up until the time of the poem's presentation at least, that the first-ever overwintering of a ship of the Royal Navy had occurred safely, every officer felt comfortable with the burden of that expectation. It may seem inappropriate for Wakeham to close (l. 80) by paraphrasing a tragedy, but the point of his doing so is to allude not to the genre of Addison's verse drama, *Cato*, but to the British patriotism symbolized by that play throughout the eighteenth century, and by the character of Cato, symbol of undeserved banishment, chaste stoicism, and "the undoubted advocacy of a sane and ordered existence." Wakeham paraphrases the end of a speech by Portius, son of Cato, whose job, not unlike Wakeham's ("Sons of my Country!"), is to inspire the Roman Senate to overthrow the tyrant Caesar, and welcome Cato back:

I'll animate the soldier's drooping courage,
With love of freedom and contempt of life:
I'll thunder in their ears their country's cause,
And try to rouse up all that's Roman in 'em.
'Tis not in mortals to command success,
But we'll do more, Sempronius; we'll deserve it. (l.ii.40-6)

The justice of the cause in which the ships' men were patriotically engaged, banished to the Arctic and struggling against the tyranny of nature rather than man, occasions Wakeham's paraphrase. Also, however, he may have known that in 1713, Addison's drama, with the famous actor Booth as Cato, was performed "with unprecedented success" by "Their Majesties' Servants" at London's Theatre Royal.⁴² It is doubtful that every member of Wakeham's audience would have known and appreciated this additional allusion in an address closing the arctic Theatre Royal, but those of his Majesty's servants who did catch it would have been swelled all the more by the weight of British history that the coincidence of the allusion carried.

What they certainly could not have known was that their inspired optimism issued from their attainment of the high point of geographical exploration during the entire nineteenth-century British naval campaign in the Arctic.

Although explorers for the "Passage" left a legacy almost entirely in prose narrative, these verses from on high, distinctive and not undistinguished, are similarly exceptional. [43](#)

Notes

1. In Jonathan Cott, *Conversations with Glenn Gould* (Boston, Toronto: Little Brown, 1984), p. 104. [\[back\]](#)
2. Henry James Pye, *The Progress of Refinement: A Poem in Three Parts* (London, 1783). [\[back\]](#)
3. Henry Kelsey, *The Kelsey Papers*, ed. and introd. by Arthur G. Doughty and Chester Martin (Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada and the Public Record Office of Ireland, 1929). Two important recent essays that treat Kelsey's verse are D.M.R. Bentley, "'Set Forth as Plainly May Appear': The Verse Journal of Henry Kelsey," *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature*, 21.4 (Oct. 1990), pp. 9-30; and Germaine Warkentin, "'The Boy Henry Kelsey': Generic Disjunction in Henry Kelsey's Verse Journal," in *Literary Genres/Genres littéraires*, ed. by I.S. MacLaren and C. Potvin (Edmonton: Research Institute for Comparative Literature, 1991), pp. 99-114. [\[back\]](#)
4. For example, Germaine Warkentin, "Exploration in English," in *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature*, gen. ed. William Toye (Toronto, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 242-49. Warkentin emphasizes exploration by fur traders to the exclusion — save for Franklin — of British naval explorers. See also, Richard C. Davis, "Exploration and Travel Literature in English," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 3 vols. (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1985), I, 605; 2d. ed., 4 vols. (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1988), II, 735-36. Davis goes so far as to state that "the accounts of primary geographical exploration in Canada" are "innocent of literary ambition" (p. 735). [\[back\]](#)
5. Lieutenant Edward Sabine, ed., *The North Georgia Gazette and Winter Chronicle* (London: John Murray, 1821); and Captain Sherard Osborn and George F. MacDougall, eds., *Facsimile of the Illustrated Arctic News, Published on Board H.M.S. Resolute: Capt^N Horatio T. Austin, C.B. In Search of the Expedition under Sir John Franklin* (London: Ackermann & Co., 1852). Without mentioning that it included poetry, Victor G. Hopwood cites the former as "certainly the first literary magazine in the Canadian Arctic, but there is little to glean from its combination of youthful facetiousness and pious reflections" ("Explorers by Land to 1867" in *Literary History of Canada* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965], p. 36; 2d ed., 3 vols. [Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1976], I, 45.) [\[back\]](#)
6. FR. Scott, "Letters from the Mackenzie River, 1956," in *Signature* (Vancouver: Klanak, 1964); Al Purdy, *North of Summer: Poems from Baffin Island* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967). One other poem deserves mention if the terms of qualification are generously stretched. Eighteenth-century English knowledge of the Arctic west of Europe was slight; thus, all of it, including the island of Greenland, was often considered indiscriminately. From this standpoint, a translation titled "A Greenland Ode" might be included for consideration. The first Inuit literary work published in English, "A Greenland Ode" was edited in 1745 by Samuel

Johnson, who insisted on both a phonetic Inuktitut presentation and an interlinear English translation (*Gentleman's Magazine*, XV [1745], 376-77). [\[back\]](#)

7. Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins, *Under the Management of Charles Dickens. His Production of "The Frozen Deep"*, ed. by Robert Louis Brannan (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), "Prologue," 1. 17. Brannan attributes the Prologue to Dickens (p. 98). [\[back\]](#)
8. Of note regarding Franklin's expedition in the present context is a poem written about it at its conclusion by one of the surviving officers, Midshipman George Back. Comprising fifteen cross-rhymed, annotated stanzas, "Recollections of our unfortunate voyage" exists in two versions in the file, "Miscellaneous notes written during the first Arctic Land Expedition, 1819-1822," holograph, MS 395/71/1, Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge. A transcription of the annotated version forms one of the appendices in C. Stuart Houston's edition, "Arctic Artist: The Journal, Paintings, and Poetry of Midshipman George Back, 1819-1822," presently under consideration for publication. [\[back\]](#)
9. The division of the award (20% of it went to Parry) is given by A. G. E. Jones, "Rear Admiral Sir William Edward Parry: A Different View," *Musk-Ox*, 21 (1978), p. 5. [\[back\]](#)
10. Lieutenant William Edward Parry, *Journal of a Voyage for the Discovery of a North-West Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific: Performed in the Years 1819-20, in His Majesty's Ships Hecla and Griper...* (London: John Murray, 1821), p. 113. (Subsequent references to Parry's *Journal* will depend on this edition and appear following quotations in the text.) The quotation forming the appositive is from Adam and Eve's Hymn, *Paradise Lost*, Bk. 5, 171 (*John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed., with notes and introduction, by Merritt Y. Hughes [Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957]. All parenthetical citations and quotations of Milton's works depend on this edition.) [\[back\]](#)
11. C.S. Mackinnon, "The Wintering-Over of Royal Navy Ships in the Canadian Arctic, 1819-1876," *The Beaver: Magazine of the North* (winter 1984/85), pp. 12-21; qtd., p. 14. Mackinnon's essay provides an overview of the life on board a ship wintering over in the Arctic. [\[back\]](#)
12. Not everyone shared Parry's sanguine hopes for a salutary result from the newspaper. Alexander Fisher, assistant surgeon aboard Parry's ship, *Helca*, wrote in his unauthorized account that he had no doubt that the plays would realize their aim, but precedence suggested that the newspaper ran the risk of cultivating only ill will: "I have seen one or two instances, and have heard of many more, where newspapers on board ship, instead of affording general amusement, and promoting friendship and a good understanding amongst officers, tended in a short time to destroy both . . . at length the paper, instead of being the source of amusement and instruction, becomes the vehicle of sarcasms and bitter reflections. And should the conductor, or conductors of the paper have discretion enough to refuse admitting in their columns productions of this nature, yet they cannot repress the sentiments or opinions of the parties concerned, who, to make the matter worse, generally know one another; for, to be an anonymous writer on board of ship is but a thin veil to prevent a person from being known, for peoples' [*sic*] talents and turn of mind are soon discovered, when situated as people necessarily are, confined together at sea" (*Journal of a Voyage of Discovery to the Arctic Regions, in His Majesty's Ships*

Hecla and Griper, in the Years 1819 & 1820 [London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1820], p. 152.) Fisher did not contribute to the paper.

[\[back\]](#)

13. "New Georgia Gazette," 1 vol., 32.3 x 17.3 cm, MS 438/12; EN, Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge; qtd. by kind permission of the Archivist. This item is cited in *Manuscripts in the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge, England*, ed. by Clive Holland, Garland Reference Library of Social Science, vol. 123 (New York and London: Garland, 1982), pp. 459-60, 743. Written in an unknown hand, perhaps Sabine's or a clerk's, it is both a fair copy of the shipboard newspaper and a draft manuscript of *The North Georgia Gazette and Winter Chronicle*, containing a number of pencilled changes as well as notes of explanation, in ink (signed "WEP" [William Edward Parry]), required by the landlubber but obviously unnecessary for the paper's original readership. Although, Sabine states in *The North Georgia Gazette and Winter Chronicle* that "no alteration has been attempted in the respective papers, in preparing them for the press" (p. lv]), this is not the case; from changes of upper to lower and from lower to upper case letters, to the changes of words and the exclusion of whole items, extensive alterations were made, if not by Sabine then by the publisher, John Murray, before the paper appeared in book form. [\[back\]](#)
14. On the matter of discrepancies between explorers' field notes/log books and publications, see, for example, MacLaren, "Samuel Hearne's Accounts of the Massacre at Bloody Fall, 17 July 1771," *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature*, 22.1 (Jan. 1991), 25-51; and "Exploration/Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Author," *International Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue internationale d'études canadiennes*, no. 5 (Spring/Printemps 1992), pp. 39-68. [\[back\]](#)
15. A "General Index to the New Georgia Gazette or Winter Chronicle" is included at the beginning of the manuscript copy. Authorship of individual items is not, except by pen name, disclosed in *The North Georgia Gazette and Winter Chronicle*. A single copy of that publication does, however, contain the names of authors, pencilled in by an unknown hand (see S.M. Silverman, "The Authorship of the Newspaper on Parry's First Arctic Expedition, 1819-20," *Arctic: The Journal of the Arctic Institute of North America*, 30.1 [March 1985], pp. 65-7), but these attributions do not correlate exactly with those given in the "General Index," on which subsequent discussion will rely. [\[back\]](#)
16. Almost nothing is known of this officer, who sailed to the Arctic first with Captain Buchan, on HMS *Dorothea* in 1818, but whose name does not appear again among those of arctic explorers after Parry's voyage of 1819-1820. In the published account of the voyage of 1818, Wakeham's name appears only once, when he is identified in a list of officers as Clerk aboard the *Dorothea* (Capt. F.W. Beechey, *A Voyage of Discovery towards the North Pole, Performed in His Majesty's Ships Dorothea and Trent, under the Command of Captain David Buchan, R.N.; 1818* [London: Richard Bentley, 1843], p. 28). Neither the standard sources in naval biography nor the *Navy List* include entries for him, perhaps because there was uncertainty as to whether or not ships' clerks ranked as officers. Records of Officers' Services (ADM 196, Public Record Office, London) include entries on clerks beginning only in 1845; as Clerk, a man had no commission and did not necessarily even require a warrant. Wakeham's name, where it appears at all, occurs in the muster for the *Griper* (ADM 36-39, Public Record Office, London), which records that he had several six-month advances on his pay. This information is too slight to justify the inference that indebtedness

drove him out of the Navy, but the possibility cannot be ruled out. (I acknowledge with thanks the assistance received, in confirming and explaining the absence of information about Wakeham, from Ann M. Shirley, former Polar Research and Displays Officer, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich; from Clive Holland, former Archivist, Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge; and from Angela Ryan, research agent for the Public Records Office, London.) [\[back\]](#)

17. The image of winter as a tomb is sufficiently common to preclude the identification of it with a particular source. One that might be mentioned, however, is William Cowper's *The Task*, Bk. V, "The Winter Morning Walk." This book's extended simile, in which the ice palace of the Empress of Russia is compared to mortality, describes the traveller's, if not the explorer's, fate:

In such a palace poetry might place
The armory of winter; where his troops,
The gloomy clouds, find weapons, arrowy sleet,
Skin-piercing volley, blossom-bruising hail,
And snow that often blinds the traveller's course,
And wraps him in an unexpected tomb. (V, 138-43)

(William Cowper, *Poetical Works*, ed. by H.S. Milford, 4th ed., with corrections and editions by Norma Russell [London: Oxford University Press, 1971].) [\[back\]](#)

18. In *The North Georgia Gazette and Winter Chronicle* (pp. 10-11), this poem bears the following title: "Address on the Opening of the Theatre Royal, North Georgia, Written and Spoken by Mr. Wakeham." Discrepancies in the published version of the body of the poem are as follows (manuscript version in italics):

1 [Indentation for verse paragraph]
hat the
2 *rescued* rescu'd
sealed, seal'd;
4 *injured* injur'd
5 *Country's* country's
6 *unmatched* unmatch'd
8 *Mankind* mankind
10 *congealed* congeal'd
seemed seem'd
11 *Columbias* Columbia's
12 *Westward* westward
13 [Indentation for verse paragraph]
oft, oft
15 tho tho'
16 *every* ev'ry
18 *far* far,
land land,
Mid 'Mid
20 *Arctic Day* arctic day
21 [Indentation for verse paragraph]
22 *prepare*, prepare,
23 *sky* sky,
28 *Play* play
30 *heart*, heart;
31 *Critic's* critic's

32 *spy*. spy;
 34 *gained* gain'd
 35 *tomb* tomb,
 36 *spring* Spring
chace chase
gloom gloom,
 39 *rushing* rustling
all-resistless all resistless
 40 *fettered* fetter'd
 42 *polar* Polar
sky, sky;
 45 *Providential* providential
Sun suns
 46 *Orbs* orbs
 48 *Southern Surges* southern surges
 50 *listening* list'ning
Brittania's Britannia's
 51 *shore* shore,
Love Love
 52 *Friendship* friendship
Homes, homes
 * *preseding* preceding
address Address
had the Sun had seen the sun
 96 ninety-six
[\[back\]](#)

19. See Parry's *Journal* for 30 May 1820: "The sea still presented the same unbroken and continuous surface of solid and impenetrable ice, and this ice could not be less than from six to seven feet in thickness, as we knew it to be about the ships. When to this circumstance was added the consideration, that scarcely the slightest symptoms of thawing had yet appeared, and that in three weeks from this period the sun would again begin to decline to the southward, it must be confessed, that the most sanguine and enthusiastic among us had some reason to be staggered in the expectations they had formed of the complete accomplishment of our enterprise" (p. 179). [\[back\]](#)

20. In *The North Georgia Gazette and Winter Chronicle* (pp. 35-6) this poem bears a slightly different title: "Reflections on seeing the Sun set for a Period of three Months. November, 1819." Discrepancies in the published version of the body of the poem are as follows (manuscript version in italics):

1 *Orb* orb
 3 *beam*, beam
 3 *through* thro'
 4 *Heav'n's* Heaven's
 5 — AA
 10 *fettered* fetter'd
stream, — stream —
 12 *melody?* melody? —
 13 *resume* resume,
 14 *Wintry* wintry
gloom. — gloom —
 17 Orb orb
 18 *night*; night,

20 *Majesty!* majesty.
 21 Orb orb
 22 *Counterpart* counterpart
mortality! mortality.
 23 *Man, man!*
Life's life's
Sun sun
 24 "thy "Thy
run." — run!"
 25 *Sun* sun
 26 *darkness,* — darkness —
 27 for ever *for ever*
Man's man's
 28 *dead'!* dead' —
 29 *Orb* orb
Man, man
 30 *began.* — began, —
 32 *midst* 'midst
 34 *Winter* winter
 35 *Death,* death
 36 *through* thro'
Eternity! eternity!
[\[back\]](#)

21. Parry's principal creative artistic contribution to the voyage was "The North-West Passage, or Voyage Finished," a play staged in the Theatre Royal on 23 December 1820. See Daniel Claustre, "'The North-West passage, or Voyage Finished': A Polar Play and Musical Entertainment," *Polar Record*, vol. 21, no. 131 (1982), pp. 95-115. [\[back\]](#)
22. See Ann Parry, *Parry of the Arctic: The Life Story of Admiral Sir Edward Parry 1790-1855* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1963). Parry, the father of thirteen children later in his life, also wrote *Thoughts on the Parental Character of God* (London: J. Hatchard and Son, 1841). [\[back\]](#)
23. It is quite likely that at least one copy of the poem was on board. An anonymous collection of fifteen letters to a "Brother Thomas" quotes Satan's apostrophe of hate to the sun (Bk. IV:32-37) in order to contrast Milton's description of Satan's arrival, "[a]fter a voyage still more extraordinary than ours, . . . on the verge of the solar system" (*Letters written during the Voyage of Discovery in the Western Arctic Sea by an Officer of the Expedition* [London, 1821], p. 66). [\[back\]](#)
24. Unable to locate an edition published in 1819, perhaps the latest one available to Parry before he set sail in June of that year, I have consulted *The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, according to The Use of the United Church of England and Ireland; together with The Psalter, or Psalms of David, pointed as they are to be sung or said in Churches* (Edinburgh, 1818). For Morning and Evening Prayer, its Lectionary appointed Ecclesiasticus (the book of the Apocrypha that is known also as Sirach) 20 and 21, Luke 20, and Colossians 4 as the Lessons. None of these chapters dwells on God in terms of glory and light. (I acknowledge with appreciation the assistance provided by William H. Loos, Curator, Rore Book Room, Buffalo and Erie County Public Library, in making available to me a copy of this particular edition.) [\[back\]](#)

25. See *Arctic Ordeal: The Journal of John Richardson, Surgeon-Naturalist with Franklin 1820-1822*, ed. by C. Stuart Houston (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984), p. 148. [\[back\]](#)

26. In part, *Surge, Illuminare* reads as follows:

Arise, shine, for thy light is come,
and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.
For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth,
and gross darkness the people.
But the Lord shall arise upon thee,
and his glory shall be seen upon thee.
. . . .
The sun shall be no more thy light by day,
neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee,
But the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light,
and thy God thy glory.

In part (verses 10-11), Psalm 139 reads as follows:

If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light about me become night,"
Yet even the darkness is no darkness with thee, but the
night is as
clear as the day:
the darkness and light to thee are both alike. [\[back\]](#)

27. It seems appropriate to recall Edward Young's poem because it appears that Parry alludes to it, although it is difficult to know for certain. The single quotation marks around "'numbered with the dead'" (l. 28) indicate an indebtedness, and it may be to "Night 1" (1742) of *The Complaint, or Night Thoughts on Life, Death and Mortality*. Young contemplates the rich life of eternity enjoyed by the deceased in contrast to his own and concludes that the former thrive:

They live! they greatly live a life on earth
Unkindled, unconceived; and from an eye
Of tenderness let heavenly pity fall
On me, more justly numbered with the dead. (ll. 110-13)

(In *English Poetry of the Mid and Late Eighteenth Century: An Historical Anthology*, ed. by Ricardo Quintana and Alvin Whitley [New York: Knopf, 1963].) [\[back\]](#)

28. In *The North Georgia Gazette and Winter Chronicle* (pp. 53-4), this poem appeared under the title, "Reflections on the Morning of Christmas Day, 1819, North Georgia." Discrepancies in the published version of the body of the poem are as follows (manuscript version in italics):

1 *Glory* glory
2 *chace* chase
2 *night* — night; —
3 *Moon's* moon's
3 *Crescent* crescent
5 *Mists* mists
5 *Obscure* — obscure; —
 hung seen

6 Stars stars
10 & and
12 *Orient Topaz* orient topaz
12 *then, as sudden,* then as sudden
14 [There is a blank line before, rather than indentation of, this l
immur'd immured
15 & and
15 *ice,* ice
16 *Wonder* wonder
16 *Pow'r* pow' r
16 *Voice* voice
17 *Earth* earth
17 *Sun* sun
18 *Brittania* Britannia
19 *Winter's* winter' s
20 [There is a blank line before, rather than indentation of, this l
21 *goodness —* goodness.
22 *Thy Morn* thy morn
23 *Shepherd-trains'* shepherd-train' s
24 *Glory* glory
24 *angel-choirs* angel choirs
25 *Hymned* Hymn' d
25 *Birth in Songs Divine* birth in songs divine
26 [No blank line occurs between 11. 25 and 26.]
26 *Man* man
26 *strain* strain,
28 *Yes —* Yes,
29 & and
31 *Hymn of Triumph* hymn of triumph
32 *Hymn of grateful Joy* hymn of grateful joy
33 *Name* name
33 & and
34 *Glory* glory
34 *Nature* natures
35 *Sin* sin
36 *Love,* Love;
36 *Mankind* mankind
37 *Bliss* bliss
38 *innocence,* innocence
39 *pure* pure,
41 [No blank line precedes, and no indentation occurs in, this line.
Still, Still
along, along
42 *Wintry* wintry
43 *Day's return;* day' s return:
44 *Pleasures* pleasures
45 *Love* Love
46 us — us,
47 *While yet on Earth — and when the hour shall come* While yet we a
47 Earth; and when at length
That frees th'imprison'd Soul — his terro rs past, The hour that
48 th'imprison'd soul shall come,
49 *Calm* Calm,
49 *Death,* Death
51 *Throne* throne
52 *Glory, Pow'r, Dominion, Praise,* glory, pow' r, dominion, praise,
[\[back\]](#)

29. Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard" (1750), in *English Poetry of the Mid and Late Eighteenth Century*, 1. 7. [\[back\]](#)

30. This occurs in the seventh stanza of Milton's poem:

And though the shady gloom
Had given day her room,
 The Sun himself withheld his wonted speed,
And hid his head for shame,
As his inferior flame,
 The new-enlight'n'd world no more should need;
He saw a greater Sun appear
Than his bright Throne, or burning Axletree could bear. (11. 77-84) [\[back\]](#)

31. In *The North Georgia Gazette and Winter Chronicle* (pp. 58-60), this poem bears the identical title. Its presentation is somewhat different in that all even-numbered lines are indented. Other discrepancies in the published version of the body of the poem are as follows (manuscript version in italics):

1 *Moments* moments
 by by,
2 *lov'd* loved
 rove rove,
3 *sigh* sigh,
4 & and
5 *Pleasure* pleasure
 thro' through
6 *found** found*,
* *crossing* *Baffin's Bay in the Lat. of 72* effecting a passage t
 westward, through the ice which occupies the middle of Baffin'
 the early part of the summer.
8 *Sound!* " + Sound + ."
 Signal signal
+ thro' through
9 shore shore,
11-12 [These lines are italicized.]
12 *Sun* sun
 West west
** *clear,* clear
 spot, spot
14 *gained* gain'd
 Meridian meridian
 assigned assign'd
 bound+ bound+,
 West west
++ 1st *Reward of 5,000.* first reward of 5,000I.
15 *Crews* crews
 Country's country's
16 *Omen* omen
 the passage the passage
17 *pleasures* pleasures,
 Pain, pain;
19 *Skill & Ardor* skill and ardour

20 *swift-moving* swift moving
 21 *disarm.* disarm;
 22 *Yet Tho'*
 23 *cables* cable
 24 *secure,* secure;
 25 & and
 26 *expir'd* expired
 27 *by High Heav'n* but high Heaven
 28 *Involv'd* Involved
 29 *Year* year
 30 *way* way,
 31 *Gratitude* gratitude
 32 *Mercies* mercies
 33 *display!* display;
 34 *Meridian* meridian
 35 *bid* and
 36 *firm-prison'd Ocean* firm prison'd ocean
 37 *Year!* — Year!
 38 *South* south
 39 *Nor the shades of Adversity open to view* — Till Pacific's wid
 40 around us we view;
 41 *Those Hopes* Bright Hope
 42 *Courage* courage
 43 *Pleasure, or Anguish,* pleasure or anguish
 44 *breeze,* breeze;
 45 *Decrees* decrees
 46 *we but share* we but share
 47 *success* success,
 48 *come,* come;
 49 *home* — home;
 50 *theirs,* theirs
 51 *sever'd* severed
 52 *remain* — remain! —
 53 *Fortitude* fortitude
 54 & *Exertion* and exertion,
 55 *again* once more
 56 *regain* regain,
 57 *Again* Once more
 58 *known!* known. [\[back\]](#)

32. This poem took the same title in its published form (*The North Georgia Gazette and Winter Chronicle* [pp. 77-8]). Discrepancies in the published version of the body of the poem are as follows (manuscript version in italics):

1 *Winter* winter
 2 & and
 3 *soft desire* — fond desire.
 4 *shade,* shade
 5 Youth — youth.
 6 *stray* — stray;
 7 *lov'd* loved
 8 *home!* — home.
 9 *Scenes* scenes
 10 *pow'r* power
 11 *Happiness,* happiness
 12 *dress,* dress?

19 *Society* society
 roam, roam
 20 & and
 foam? — foam?
 20-21 [A blank line separates these lines.]
 21 *unswayed* unsway'd
 22 *sublime!* sublime;
 23 *Charms of Art* charms of Art,
 24 *Repose* repose
 26 *Conscience* conscience
 27 *Happiness in Virtue* happiness in virtue
 28 *ought*, ought;
 29 *recei*ve, receive;
 31 *wounds that Sorrow's* wound that sorrow's
 32 *blade*, blade.
 34 *less*, less;
 35 *Word* word
 & and
 36 *Orb*, & orb, and
 reigns! reigns.
 38 *bestow!* bestow;
 39 *impose* impose,
 40 *cloud*, cloud
 Moon-beam moon-beam
 42 *Youth's, & Manhood's* youth's and manhood's
 decline, decline:
 43 *soar*, soar
 44 *doom* — doom,
 more" — more, "
 45 *Soul*, soul
 pow'r power
 46 hour—hour.—
 47 *performed*, — performed —
 Sinner sinner
 48 *Righteousness* righteousness
 [\[back\]](#)

33. Compare to lines 5-6, for example, Thomson's description of the homeward bound swain:

The thoughts of home
 Rush on his nerves, and call their vigour forth
 In many a vain attempt. How sinks his soul,
 What black despair, what horror fills his heart, . . .

(In *English Poems: The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century (1660-1800)*, ed. by W.C. Bronson [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1908], 11. 64-7.) [\[back\]](#)

34. See, among others, R.G. Haliburton, *The Men of the North and Their Place in History; A Lecture delivered before the Montreal Literary Club, March 31st, 1869* (Montreal, 1869).

[\[back\]](#)

35. This poem appeared under the same title in *The North Georgia Gazette and Winter Chronicle* (pp. 82-3). Discrepancies in the published version of the body of the poem are as follows (manuscript version in italics):

2 *Northern* northern
 4 *Heav'n's* heav'n's
 5 *East* east
 6 *ethereal blue* ethereal blue,
 7 *upheld,* upheld
 8 *pois'd* poised
 myst'ry swell'd, mystery swell'd;
 10 *Corruscations* coruscations
 12 *Pole* pole
 14 *day* — day.
 arc's Arc's
 fly. fly;
 15 *Heaven's* heaven's
 16 *quickly* rapid
 Zenith's height — zenith's height.
 16-17 [A blank line separates these lines.]
 17 *Transfixt* Transfix'd
 wonder, wonder
 18 *blood,* blood;
 20 *gloom* gloom,
 cause, cause;
 23 *be* — be. —
 expire expire;
 25 splendour splendours
 Oblivion oblivion
 25 *flame,* flame;
 [\[back\]](#)

36. Fisher, *Journal of a Voyage of Discovery to the Arctic Regions*, p. 170;
Letters written during the Voyage of Discovery, pp. 68-9.
[\[back\]](#)

37. See Barbara Maria Stafford, *Voyage into Substance Art, Science, Nature, and the Illustrated Travel Account, 1760-1840* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984), pp. 223, 226-31; and Suzanne Zeller, *Inventing Canada: Early Victorian Science and the Idea of a Transcontinental Nation* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1987), pp. 129, 135, 138-39.
[\[back\]](#)

38. The date is not included in the title of the version printed in *The North Georgia Gazette and Winter Chronicle* (pp. 90-1). Discrepancies in the published version of the body of the poem are as follows (manuscript version in italics):

1 *Sun* sun
 ray, ray
 2 *Northern* northern
 day! — day.
 4 *light,* light.
 5 *Heav'n's* heaven's
 6 *Mountain-snows* mountain snows
 7 *genial* general
 8 *gleam.* gleam,
 9 *extend* extend,
 10-11 [A blank line occurs between these lines.]
 11 *Orb's* orb's

12 *day. day;*
 14 *Ocean's roar, ocean's roar;*
 17 *That that*
 rise rise,
 18 *Glory glory*
 Skies skies
 18-19 [A blank line occurs between these lines.]
 21 *Man man*
 Bear bear
 22 *forsakes — forsakes;*
 24 *Northern northern*
 25 *aloft along*
 26 *fare — fare,*
 Wintry wintry
 28 *sought. sought;*
 Nature nature
 29 *ray. ray*
 30 *away: away.*
 31 *regains regains,*
 32 *restrains, restrains;*
 35 *pow'rs powers,*
 Soul soul
 36 *tow'rs! towers*
 36-37 [A blank line occurs between these lines, but 1. 37 is not ind
 37 *Sun sun*
 38 *renews, renews;*
 Declining Declining,
 40 *Death's untravell'd death's untravell'd*
 41 *Him him*
 43 *softened light, soften'd light*
 44 *skies, skies*
 sav'd, & saved, and
 46 [\[back\]](#)

39. Although he offered no poetic response to the reappearance of the sun, Parry did not let the occasion pass uncelebrated by his pen. In the same (fifteenth) number as Wakeham's poem appeared, he acknowledged it in prose with a droll item titled "Fashionable Arrival in North Georgia," which has its way with the genre of society notes: "On Thursday last, about noon, after an absence of three months, arrived at his seat, Snow-Hill, in the Isle of White, the Earl of Sol, Viscount Caloric, well known as one of those distinguished luminaries which seem born to enlighten and adorn the world. His Lordship has been on his travels in the south, during the winter, accompanied by a numerous retinue of faithful adherents, who could not bear the thought of being separated for so long a period from their illustrious benefactor. Many of these are such fine bucks in their appearance, and have such fawning manners, that into whatever country they go, they are generally made game of; and yet, in spite of this, they are always deer to those who know them.

It is said that his Lordship's protracted absence has been severely felt in this neighbourhood, and that it has even produced a considerable degree of coolness between him and his tenants in this country; but as it is well known that his Lordship possesses the peculiar quality of imparting his own warmth of heart and melting disposition, to all who are fortunate enough to be placed within the sphere of his genial influence, little doubt can be entertained of a speedy reconciliation.

His lordship is already on his way to the metropolis, but intends travelling by easy journeys, not exceeding twenty miles a day. His noble sister, Lady Luna, has set out to meet him" (*The North Georgia Gazette and Winter Chronicle*, p. 88). As the son of a fashionable doctor in the Regency Bath of Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, Parry knew of what he spoke. [\[back\]](#)

40. In *The North Georgia Gazette and Winter Chronicle* (pp. 132-33), this poem appeared under an extended title: "A Farewell Address written and spoken by Mr. Wakeham in the character of a sailor, at the final close of the performances at the North Georgia Theatre." Discrepancies in the published version of the body of the poem are as follows (manuscript version in italics):

1 *o'erspread* o'erspread,
 2 *Light's* lights
 3 *fled.* fled;
 4 *Society* society
 5 *hour.* hour;
 6 *essay'd* essay'd
 7 *move* move,
 8 *Love.* love;
 9 *Woman's* woman's
 10 *grac'd* graced
 11 *Stage* stage
 12 *age* — age; —
 13 *embrac'd* embraced,
 14 *Sailor* *lac'd* sailor laced
 15 *Beauty* beauty
 16 *Form'd and array'd* Form'd and arranged
 17 *masculine* — masculine! —
 18 *ribbons* ribbons,
 19 *tin her glittering* tin, her glitt'ring
 20 — & ,and
 21 *Man* man
 22 *Beaux* beaux
 23 *out-done,* outdone, —
 24 *Squires* squires
 25 *shone,* shone, —
 26 *Landlord* landlord
 27 *Conceal'd* Conceal'd
 28 *'neath an oakum wig* — by an Oakum wig, —
 29-30 [These lines do not appear in any form.]
 31 & and
 32 *parade* — parade: —
 33 *Winter* winter
 34 *repose!* repose.
 35 *Soldier* soldier
 36 *O'er-borne by ten-fold odds,* & O'erborne by tenfold odds and
 37 *chain,* chain
 38 *fight,* fight
 39 *Victory's* Vict'ry's
 40 *conquer'd* conquer'd
 41 *side,* side;
 42 *free'd once more,* freed once more
 43 *War's* alarms, war's alarms
 44 *the embattled foe* — th'embattled foe.

37 *Icy Chain* icy chain
 38 *Prisoners* pris'ners
 39 *Sea* sea
 41 *When*, When
 42 *Course* course
 42-43 [A blank line occurs between these lines.]
 45 *Providential Mercies* open wide providential mercies open wide,
 46 *shew that favouring* show that fav'ring
 47 *Lay* lay
 48 *through* thro'
 49 *way.* way, —
 50 *Sun*, sun
 51 *run*, run: —
 52 *Needle* needle
 53 *skies*, skies;
 54 *Shores* shores
 55 *Heavenly* heav'nly
 56 *sav'd* saved
 57 *far-extended* far extended
 58 *shore-ward* shoreward
 59 *Western Bay!* western bay?—
 60 *main*, main:
 61 *That Hand* that Hand,
 62 *through* thro'
 63 *road*, road
 64 *Southern joins the Polar* southern joins the polar
 65 *cheers!* cheers.
 66-67 [A page break occurs between these two lines, and 1. is indent
 67 *Country* country
 68 *Sailor's* sailor's
 69 *pride!* pride, —
 70 *brother-tar* brother tar
 71 *cherished hope*—*ad vanc'd* cherish'd hope, —advanced
 72 *Hope* hope
 73 *Honor* honours
 74 *Brittania's* Britannia's
 75 *centered* centred
 76 *deeds*, deeds —
 77 *Glory leads!* glory leads! —
 78 *Chiefs* chiefs
 79 *honored name* honour'd name,
 80 *fame!* fame: —
 81 *here* here,
 82 *Country* country
 83 *revere!* revere:
 84 *Sailors* sailors
 85 *can't command* can't command
 86 *we'll deserve Success!* will deserve success. "[\[back\]](#)

41. Theatre Royal is the particular case of a theatre on ice that captures Mordecai Richler's fantasies ("a filigreed black suspender belt, several pairs of frothy garters, some silk panties, three corsets, two female wigs, and four diaphanous petticoats") in *Solomon Gursky was Here* (1989) (Markham, Ont.: Penguin, 1990), p. 50. Like his fantasies, Richler's seamen, Norton and Hoare, are (his note of warning at the novel's outset swears as much) his private creation.

[\[back\]](#)

42. Joseph Addison, "Cato: A Tragedy" (1713), in *Plays of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century as they were acted at the Theatres-Royal by Their Majesties' Servants*, ed. by Dougald MacMillan and Howard Mumford Jones (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1931), pp. 517-47. [\[back\]](#)
43. Together, these poems offer some early and intermittently memorable examples of themes that would recur and do recur in the response to the Arctic by non-native Canadians. In particular, the ideas of the north as a venue for the testing and for the replenishment of one's spiritual mettle are paramount. As well, the idea of the north less as a place than as an obstacle to elsewhere (the South Pacific, or England itself after a voyage round the world) arises here, following a tradition among seekers of the Northwest Passage. That view helps to account for the slighter adaptation to place in these poems than one finds in the poetry written at about the same time in the British North American colonies by poets such as Cary, Goldsmith, and Howe. Finally, though less consciously, there emerges the incipient idea of the north as a male preserve; the exploration of a Northwest Passage by large numbers of nineteenth-century seafaring Englishmen is the basis of that tradition.

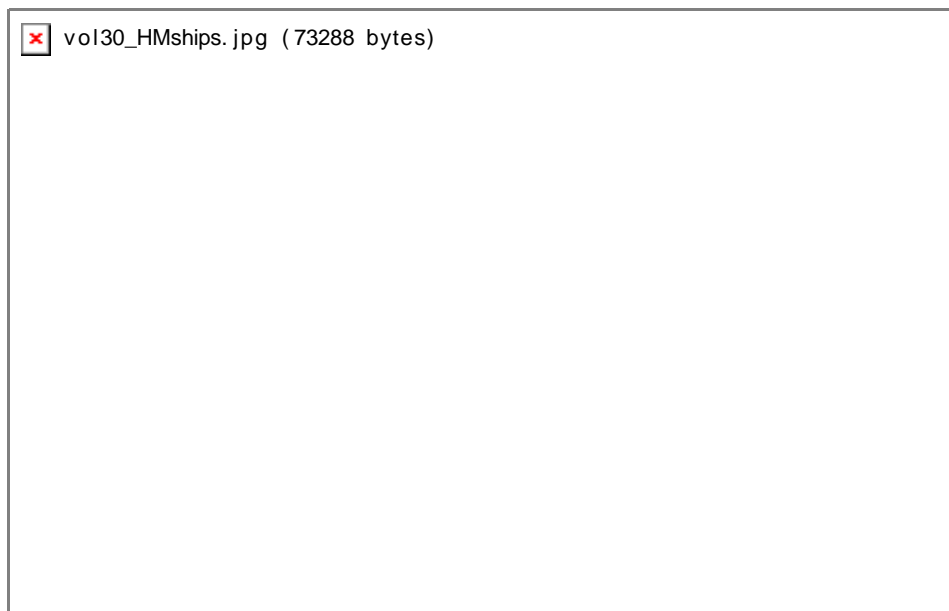


Fig. 1. *H.M. Ships Hecla & Griper in Winter Harbour. Drawn & Engraved by W [illiam] Westall A.R.A. from a Sketch made on the Spot by Lieut. [Frederick William] Beechey; in William Edward Parry, Journal of a Voyage for the Discovery of a North-West Passage, opp. p. 122. Reproduction courtesy of D.B. Weldon Special Collections Library, University of Western Ontario.* [\[back\]](#)