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THE FIRST COMMENCEMENT

A Satire by Lewis Morris, Jr.

1748

Few records survive of the events of November 6, 1748 when the College of New Jersey (Princeton) first convened to award degrees and commence operations under its corrected Royal Charter. The sole news account, an "advice" (probably prepared by Thomas Arthur, clerk of the College Trustees), appeared in the Boston News-Letter of December 1. The brief paragraph testified that the College of New Jersey adhered to the forms of British collegiate institutions and implied that it was not another informal evangelical Academy, such as the Log College at Neshaminy. After the 1741 schism of the Presbyterian Church into Old Siders (critics of the Great Awakening) and New Siders (supporters of evangelical religion), the training of ministers and the inculcation of right doctrine had become matters of intense controversy. Jonathan Dickinson and the New Side partisans who founded the College of New Jersey in 1746 wished to invest their ministerial trainees with legitimacy as well as ability. The public debut of the Trustees, Faculty, and student body on November 9, 1748 was represented in the "advice" so that it seemed a model of British collegiate regularity.

"We have Advice, That on Wednesday the 9th of last Month, was held at Newark the first Commencement of the College of New-

Jersey; when the Rev. Mr. Aaron Burr was unanimously chosen President of the said College by the Trustees; and Six young Scholars were admitted to the Degree of Batchelor of Arts. After which, His Excellency Jonathan Belcher, Esq; Governour and Commander in Chief of that Province, having declared his Desire to accept from that College the Degree of Master of Arts; the other Trustees in a just Sense of the Honour done the College by his Excellency's Condescention most heartily granted his Request, and the President rising uncover'd address'd himself to his Excellency; and according to the Authority committed to him by the Royal Charter, after the Manner of the Academies in England, admitted him to the Degree of Master of Arts" (Boston News-Letter 2433).

That the College possessed a royal charter, that it exercised that cherished charter right of practicing self-government, that it granted legally-recognized degrees, and that it enjoyed the active support of the chief executive of the province should have gone a long way toward silencing Old Sider critics of the enterprise. In truth, the demonstration had little immediate positive effect. In 1745 the Old Siders had erected their own academy around Rev. Frances Alison at New London, Maryland. Obdurately they attempted to make the institution viable despite the suspicion of foreign Reformed Christian bodies and the indifference of native dissenting denominations (Miller 64-65).

The Old Siders were not alone in their frustration at the spectacle in Newark. A Churchman (communicant of the Church of England) in the crowd of notables gathered at commencement also

viewed the proceedings with a jaundiced eye. That perturbed witness, Lewis Morris, Jr., had sufficient wit to fashion his misgivings into a 218 line doggerel parody of the Commencement. It survives as the longest, funniest, and most informative account of the day Princeton inaugurated public exercises.

In a way the poem may be seen as an exquisite piece of revenge. The author's father, Gov. Lewis Morris, had been during his administration the principal opponent of the plan to establish a dissenting College in New Jersey. A Churchman and an old-style Whig, the Governor did not wish to disturb the balance of power by granting the New Light Calvinists so great a favor. Both Quakers and Churchmen exercised substantial political influence in the province. So, despite the importuning of old allies such as James Alexander and William Smith, and despite the pleas of his second son, Justice Robert Hunter Morris, the Old Governor went to the grave in 1746 saying nay. The Governor's first son and principal heir, Lewis Morris, Jr., echoed the demurral in satiric verse.

Lewis Morris, Jr. could well appreciate the zest with which the Trustees brandished their Charter during the ceremonies--the Charter denied to them by the deceased Governor. The poet had witnessed from afar the tremendous energies expended by his father's old friend, William Smith, to procure the document--how he and James Alexander persuaded the William Hamilton, the senile interim governor, to forget his Church of England scruples and grant legal authorization for a College of dissenters. Furthermore, the poet saw the College's backers quash a legal

challenge to the grant by irate Churchmen. The legal coup was as ingenious as it was ambitious. The Trustees and their allies managed to engineer the appointment of the royal governor, a governor who would regrant the Royal Charter in an unimpeachable form (Wertenbaker 25). They chose their prospect well. Jonathan Belcher, a native of New England and son of Harvard, had distinguished himself as champion of unadulterated Calvinism. He had known and supported George I when still the Elector of Hanover and had inspired such good will among English dissenting circles that Rev. Isaac Watts composed an ode celebrating Belcher's appointment as Governor of Massachusetts. During his governorship in the 1730s he took pains to ease Harvard's financial difficulties (Shipton 44-57). Shortly after assuming office in New Jersey Belcher turned attention to correcting Hamilton's flawed Charter. The College had assembled on November 9, 1748, to exhibit the new constitution. If we are to judge by the satirist's representations, the speakers' allusions to the precious charter were repetitive to the point of compulsion. Activities commenced with oaths of loyalty to the Hanoverian succession and enmity to popish recusants "as charter did Declare." And we are led to believe all subsequent events from the order of march in the academic procession to ceremonial dram-drinking were animated by charter mandates. So all-encompassing was the document's wisdom that the clerk of the College "hoped That Every spark/ should take it as his creed."

In the clerk's desire, Morris indulges in a witty coup. Jonathan Dickinson and other of the moving spirits behind the college first came to notice during the subscription controversy

of the 1720s, the debate which heralded the Old Side/New Side schism. At issue was whether the Westminster Confession of Faith (in effect, the Presbyterian creed) should be deemed the necessary constitution of the Presbyterian Church requiring absolute subscription by any minister or member. Dickinson and his allies argued the negative, holding that the scriptures constituted the only absolute constitution of the Church (Miller 10-12). Morris's joke: that the New Siders who denied credal constitution of their faith were transforming their Charter into a holy creed.

The satirist had the perspicacity to identify the deeper strategy behind Belcher's grant of the charter and service as president of the Trustees:

The Standers by Declared
They Knew why he was Sent
To Make a coalition
Twixt Calvin and old Knox
for it was his ambition
To Ape The wily fox (ll. 39-44)

The Governor's participation would, Morris suspected, repair the breach between the New Lights (Calvin) and Old Siders (Knox). His presence on the dais promised the consolidation of a reformed Christian interest, a prospect feared by Quaker and Churchmen. While this may have been Belcher's fond ambition and the hope of many in attendance, no compromise was reached until 1758 and then only because the Old Siders saw the potency of the evangelical interest increase weekly as they themselves

diminished. The prophetic Morris did not doubt who in the confederation would gain the upper hand if and when it came about: the New Siders. They ruled the College at its birth and would rule in any future consolidation.

The poet characterized the directors of the College as "Itinerant Trustees from Every Shore" (l. 13). He intended the phrase to trigger associations with the controversy over evangelical itinerancy that raged during the latter days of the Great Awakening. The harrowing of congregations by wandering preachers such as James Davenport had prompted conservatives to charge the irrational destruction of church order by "enthusiasts." Many of the accused had been trained by William Tennent at the Log College. Since the principal directors of that institution were absorbed into the governing council of the College of New Jersey upon the death of Tennent in 1746, the mantle of itinerancy now rested on the shoulder of the Trustees (Craven 308-14). That the "Itinerant Trustees" came "from Every Shore" registers Morris's awareness of the ambitious scope of the enterprise. The College had been designed and history would prove it to be a cosmopolitan institution, attracting students from the south and West Indies as well as the middle colonies. The make up of the Trustees reflected the fact that the College looked beyond the boundaries of New Jersey in its ambition.

Though Morris recognized the cosmopolitan scope of the enterprise, he did not doubt that in terms of doctrine the plan of the institution was restricted. The poet understood the College to be a nursery of religious non-conformity. Despite affirmations of religious liberty in the College's charter, the

Trustees intended to conduct a partisan institution. Indeed, Morris would have us believe that the Trustees believed their Charter to prohibit admission to members of the Church of England.

pursuant To Their charter
Each one Did Roundly Swear
That They would give no Quarter
To Those That Dont Declare
No churchman Ere shall Enter
within their colledge gate
and should he Dare to venture
Expulsion is his fate (ll. 45-52)

Morris's caricature contains a tincture of truth. Though the College's agents would declare that "all protestants, of every denomination, who are loyal subjects to our MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN . . . are admitted to the enjoyment of all its privileges, and allowed the unlimited exercise of their religion" (Tennent & Davies 180), Churchmen, Arminians, Socians, and Quakers would find little welcome at Nassau Hall in the decades to come (Humphrey 79).

On the morning of November 9, 1748, Rev. Aaron Burr was elected guardian of the nursery of Nonconformity. Burr had been de facto president during much of the College's operation under the questionable charter of 1746, succeeding president Jonathan Dickinson who expired after four months' tutoring of the College's first class. The Burr of Morris's portrait is an audacious distortion of the energetic, young minister known to

posterity. In the poem Burr's theatrical piety and humility serve as counterparts to Belcher's bumptiousness and pride. A parody prayer (a congeries of favorite petitionary formulae) supplies an ironic example of the young prophet's renowned fervency of address. The onlookers' moaning at prayer's end, it is suggested, comes more from being startled from their soporific stupor than from the rending of the spirit. The poet also paraphrases the president's prefabricated Latin address (that it was written beforehand suggests that the President's Latinity was too shaky to permit extemporaneous speech and twits the New Light preoccupation with spontaneous prayer and sermonizing). Its conventional expressions of humility Morris takes at face value--

And Aaron said beside
he wanted Sense and Weight
Such matters To Decide

Surpassed his Shallow pate (ll. 177-80)

And Burr's hopes for the growth and profit of his enterprise are literalized into an intention "To amass great gain" (l. 176). The most curious of Burr's instructions is that administered to the graduating class. "Strictly he commanded/ They Never should Drink Water" (ll. 211-12). The inebriation of the Trustees suggests the preferred substitute was "rumbooze."

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Lewis Morris, Jr. learned the techniques of satire at the elbow of his father, one of the more prolific political poets of British America (Cook 100-13). Governor Morris had learned polite letters as a boy from his tutor, George Keith, reputedly

the most brilliant intellectual in the Delaware Valley during the 17th century. He matured during that moment in British literary history when poetry developed its greatest potency as a political tool. In 1714 he collaborated with Governor Robert Hunter of New York (himself a friend of Swift and literary correspondent of Addison and Steele) in the composition of Androboros, a political farce attacking New York Tories and High Church partisans. During the 1730s in conjunction with William Smith, James Alexander, and Cadwallader Colden he mounted an effective literary assault on the regime of Gov. Cosby in New York, a campaign which resulted in the Governor's great unpopularity. The principal compositions of this campaign, "The Mock Monarchy; or, The Kingdom of the Apes" and "The Dream; A Riddle" survive as manuscripts in fair copies prepared by his son, Lewis Morris, Jr.

The elder Morris practiced most of the forms of verse satire that came into popularity during the political turmoil of the late 17th century: court ballads, satiric fables, parody speeches, parody petitions, mock elegies, and verse epistles. He did not, however, try his hand at the form of his son's commencement poem, the doggerel descriptive narrative. The genre, which represented in low linguistic garb important events or ceremonies, coalesced from several earlier forms: the doggerel narrative of Butler's Hudibras, the satiric urban eclogue, and the newspaper dispatch. The genre came to full fruition during the reign of Queen Anne, encouraged by events such as the public procession of Dr. Secheverall and the political ceremonies of the mug clubs--portentous public demonstrations. In British America provincial wits quickly

embraced the form. Joseph Green, New England's foremost wit, won his laurels with a series of satires of masonic ceremonies, one of which, Entertainment for a Winter's Evening, must have been the most emulated satire produced in British America. Green's literary rival, Rev. Mather Byles, pioneered the parodic description of collegiate commencements with his famous satire of a Harvard commencement of the 1720s. Byles has the additional interest for our purposes of being the son-in-law of Jonathan Belcher.

Much of Byles's "Commencement" concerns the diversions of the society attracted to Cambridge for the ceremonies. Yet the passages depicting commencement itself provide some foretaste of Morris's portrait.

And now the time approaches when the bell,
With dull continuance tolls a solemn knell.
Numbers of blooming youth in black array
Adorn the yeard, and gladden all the day.
In two strait lines they instantly divide,
While each beholds his partner on th' opposing side,
Then slow, majestick, walks the learned head,
The senate follow with a solemn tread,
Next levi's tribe in reverend order move,
Whilst the uniting youth the show improve.
They glow in long procession till they come,
Near to the portals of the sacred dome;
Then on a sudden open fly the doors,
The leader enters, then the croud thick pours,

The temple in a moment feels its freight,
And cracks beneath its vast unweildly weight.

* * * *

The work begun with pray'r, with modest pace,
A youth advancing mounts the desk with grace,
To all the audience sweeps a circling bow,
Then from his lips ten thousand graces flow.
The next that comes, a learned thesis reads,
The question states, and then a war succeeds.
Loud major, minor, and the consequence,
Amuse the crowd, wide-gaping at their sence.
Who speaks the loudest is with them the best,
And impudence for learning is confest.

The battler o'er, the sable youth descend,
And to the awful chief, their footsteps bend.
With a small book, the laurel wreath he gives
Join'd with a pow'r to use it all their lives.
Obsequious, they return what they receive,
With decent rev'rence, they his presence leave.
Dismiss'd, they strait repeat their backward way,
And with white napkins grace the sumptuous day.

The description evince^s a student's concern with what students
are doing at commencement. (Morris makes no mention of the Latin
oration delivered by student Daniel Thane.) The butt of Byles's
satire is not the faculty, or student body, but the mob who come
to gawk at the ceremonies. The worthiness of this subject for

satire is attested by Matthew Adams "The Sequel of Commencement" which administers a poetic lashing to the disrupters of social order on their ways home from the ceremony (New England Weekly Journal #15).

Morris's neglect of the crowd in his satire can be explained variously. First, care was taken to constrain the celebrations attending the commencement at Newark. Gov. Belcher wrote Aaron Burr, "I much approve of a wise frugality at the Solemnity you mention more Especially in our Infant dayes for I think the too common Extravagancies and Debauchery at such times can do no honour to what may Laudably pride itself in being called a Seminary of Religion & Learning" (Belcher 116). Second, the political animus of Morris's distrust of the college, dictated that the rulers and projectors of the institution be the objects of his attention. Thus, it is the Trustees who take the place of the crowd as extravagant debauchees, besotted with rum and royal cider.

Whether the Trustees were in fact drunk is indeterminable. Dram-drinking occurred as a "seal" of nearly every public transaction in early America. Yet it is difficult to conceive that the principal men of the evangelical interest in the middle colonies drank to extravagance. The conventions of doggerel permitted great leeway concerning the accuracy of one's representations; indeed exaggeration was the rule.

Morris employed all those abrasive techniques which Butler perfected for English poets: feminine end ~~rimes~~, short line couplets, familiar tone of address, the employment of low diction for exalted matters, slang, and puns. A twenty-six line prologue

set the scene. The bulk of the description took the form of a "ditty," a lengthy sung narrative in trimeters or tetrameters. True to the species, Morris was cavalier about the order of his remarks or their comprehensiveness. So long as the targets of the satire were recognizable and their dignity subverted, the satire ^{was} ~~is~~ successful. The end of doggerel is to create a sense of apposite ridiculousness. Lewis Morris, Jr. accomplished this at least in his ditty about the first commencement.

Nonetheless, one suspects that when Mather Byles, Jr., dispatched his verse epistle on November 5, 1747, "To His Excellency, Governour BELCHER," congratulating his grandfather upon his appointment to the executive of New Jersey, that the young Harvard undergraduate's prophecy that

Rapt to your Banks shall Science be convey'd,

And Poets sing in ev'ry sacred Shade.

As Watts to Belcher bid the Muses sing,

And tunefull Byles wak'd ev'ry vocal String;

In lofty Sounds, high-swelling to the skies,

Shall other Watts's, other Byles's rise:

would be fulfilled by the doggerel musings of the one Jersey poet who bothered to acknowledge the Governor's appearance on the scene, Lewis Morris, Jr.

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Lewis Morris, Jr.

[The Commencement, 1748.]

Ill tell You a Story Most odd in its Kind
If you cant understand Ile Sweare you are blind
Tis not of bears Salamanders or cattts
Nor yet The Strange Sight of Devouring Ratts
but This when you hear pray do Remember 5
That It came To pass The Ninth of November
It was a commencement at Newark Town
Then Present one Delegate from the crown
The commander in chief a Man of renown
besides he was president of the Trustees 10
who hummed about him Like so many Bees
The charter had Named 16 gentlemen more
Itinerant Trustees from Every Shore
whose principles Ime Told in Days of yore
greatly Divided The babylonick whore 15
And if histories only Truth Relate
In Solemn Judgment They Told Charles's fate
first They swore and signed The Declaration
ordained by The Statutes of The Nation
and Then They swore as charter did Declare 20
how these sixteen Trustees should act and swear
These Things being done oh Then with great Respect
a Doughty President They did Elect
On Aaron's head The weighty choice came Down
which Pleased him more Than if he'd got a crown 25

So Took a Dram To Save him from a Swoon

On Wednesday The famous forty Eight

Come Listen To my ditty a strange Thing Ile Relate

The Ninth Day in The morning

About The hour of Ten 30

To make a Shew of Learning

There met Some Dozen Men

In order for The founding

a colledge of Non cons

To Make Their fame more Sounding 35

They summond all Their Dons

Old Jonathan appeared

The Trustees president

The Standers by Declared

They Knew why he was Sent 40

To Make a coalition

Twixt Calvin and old Knox

for it was his ambition

To Ape The wily fox

pursuant To Their charter 45

Each one Did Roundly Swear

That They would give no Quarter

To Those That Dont Declare

No churchman Ere shall Enter

within their colledge gate 50

and should he Dare To venture

Expulsion is his fate
and Then again They swore
To do The thing so Just
and what could They do more 55
in fullfiling of Their Trust
The President was Next
To gain The Publick voice
for They were not Perplext
on whom To fix Their choice 60
on Aarons head it fell
By Nemini con vole
The Trustees praise To tell
oh how he straind his Throat
They Then in order formed 65
a grand procession Made
It seemed Like a funeral
with Decent Pomp arrayd
The candidates first Marchd
bareheaded two and Two 70
Their cravates stifly starchd
and of a Dingy hue
The Trustees being coupled
pursued The candidates
both Ruffled and beruffled 75
yet covered all Their pates
Old Jonathan came Last
That is brought up The Rear
he rushed very fast

and much upon the Queer 80
with Aaron on his Left
They Jogged on To The Door
of Charity Bereft
They over looked The Poor
but when They did arrive 85
at The appointed place
To shew They could contrive
And had True show of Grace
The order was Invested
To right and Left They flew 90
The lookerson all Strested
To think what They would do
When Jonathan advanced
with Aaron by his side
and seemed To us he Danced 95
With arrogance & Pride
The Trustees two and two
as charter did Direct
having made Their Reverend bow
and paid Their Just Respect 100
The bell Then ceased To Ring
Th'assembly was composed
Nere Thought of anything
but Seemed as if They Dozed
When Aaron he began 105
as he was bred To pray

Oh Lord assist The Man
And Teach him what To Say
Oh tell me how To Praise
great George our glorious King 110
And this in English Lays
for I in That must Sing
Then hemming once or More
as he was wont To Do
Gods mercy did Implore 115
for Every Turk and Jew
oh Then says he good Lord
To Jonathan grant Sense
That he at bed and board
may Equity Dispencc 120
Thy Infant college Then
Neglect Not if its Thine
for we are mortale men
but Thou are all Divine
In praising of Your Name 125
Give Aaron but your grace
Increase my growing fame
with Proffitt To my Place
Trustees and candidates
protect oh god Likewise 130
with knowledge fill Their pates
with virtue guard Their Eyes
Then fetching a Deep groan
he waked The Composed

Some made a hedeous Moan 135
While others Lookt Quite Dead
When Arthur did arise
and with Extended Lung
he spoke unto The wise
all in The English Tongue 140
That as The chosen clerk
Their Charter he would read
And hoped That Every spark
should Take it as his creed
The charter then was Read 145
with high and Thundring voice
Oh Lord let us Rejoice
Then Tommy Turned it ore
And on its Rough Backside
Indorsements Then were more 150
Then would The Test abide
but what can't Fish Do
when under hand and Seal
Tho false yet They are True
as Time will Sure Reveale 155
Thus Morning being Spent
In fasting Drams and prayer
They Return'd with president
And Thanked him for his care

So much for The Morning-- 160

The afternoon Procession
The morning Did Surpass
for Those That gain Th'Election
will Never baulk Their glass
I can not well Declare 165
What Tipple They did choose
but by The bill of fare
I took it for Rumbooze
Th'assembly being Seated
Composed were of course 170
while others overheated
by spewing became hoarse
when Mr President
In Latin made it plain
That he had no Intent 175
but To amass great gain
And Aaron said beside
he wanted Sense and Weight
Such matters To Decide
Surpassed his Shallow pate 180
but as This Same oration
was penn'd and got by heart
the Noisy Declaration
made Every member start
Each action To Recount 185
would far Surpass my Skill
yet Take The whole account
and you will have your fill

my Ditty is Just finished
and you are tired Too 190
Some Things I have Diminished
which I must tell To you
Aaron in The Latin
Addressed The Trustees
To Know if T'was a Sin 195
for To confer degrees
And These young men had Shewn
Good Learning Sence and parts
And Then were Never known
Such Ba(c)helors of Arts 200
The Trustees overtaken
and Each one in a Doze
They haveing all mistaken
Royal Syder for Rumbooze
Old Jonathan Stood up 205
And answered for them all
he having baulked his eyes
or choose The Rumbooze Small
Then Aaron he Depended
and Dubbed Them by The charter 210
and Strictly he commanded
They Never should Drink Water
Old Jonathan Next came
Demanding his Degrees
T' Immortalize his Name 215

for given without fees

Now cease my Muse Till brunswick is thy Rest
and till That happens Prithee Let me Dream

[Morris's Textual Corrections]

Lines

1-2 [cancelled]-- Tis Jersie Now may boast of Learned Men
In Arts and Science They have began

8 of-- from

10-14-- a President Trustees Some men of Note
who attended <The Commencement> there by Land and by Boat
besides Sixteen More in The charter Named
<who for Their Principles have always been famed>
Chosen Trustees and for Loyalty famed

22 done oh-- over They

28-- A Strange Thing happened which I'll Now Relate

56 fullfiling-- performance

69-70-- Like hounds The grave Trustees
in couples marched on

80-- Tho really very Queer

85 but-- And

89 was-- then

90 flew-- wheeled

93 advanced-- Stept on

95-96-- And as a True Non con
were both Just burst with pride

134 Composed-- standers by

136 Lookt Quite Dead-- They did cry

137-- Litte Arthur Standing by <he stood up>

142 Their-- The

143 And hoped That-- And That

147-- [a] The <Churchmen> [illegible] They all fled
[b] <The literati Said> Then all Non cons Lrd Rejoice

150-151-- he <ever> was <seen> heard before
how many folks had Lived

157 prayer-- beer

163 Those That gain Th'Election-- he Thats in possession

164 Their-- his

171 while others-- but others to

ANNOTATIONS

- 7 Newark Town] Though the College of New Jersey conducted its initial year of classes in Elizabeth, the first commencement was held at the stone meeting house in Newark on Nov. 9, 1748.
- 8 Delegate from the crown] Governor Jonathan Belcher whose appointment to the executive of New Jersey in 1748 was greatly facilitated by English allies of the Trustees.
- 9 commander in chief] The other title by which the College Charter of 1748 denominates Belcher.
- 10 president of the Trustees] The governor held the presidency ex-officio, though certain Trustees feared the automatic investment of future governors with this post might endanger the college, if they were secularists, Arminians, or Deists.
- 12 16 gentlemen more] Actually the Charter named twenty-three Trustees besides the governor: John Reading, James Hude, Andrew Johnston, Thomas Leonard, John Kinsey, Edward Shippen, William Smith, Peter Van-Brugh Livingston, William Peartree Smith, Samuel Hazard, John Pierson, Ebenezer Pemberton, Joseph Lamb, Gilbert Tennent, William Tennent, Richard Treat, Samuel Blair, David Cowell, Aaron Burr, Timothy Jones, Thomas Arthur and Jacob Green. The Charter of 1746 had specified 12 Trustees, to which five members were added in 1747; one of these additional members, Samuel Finley, was dropped at Belcher's insistence in 1748. The sixteen were supplemented by several lay appointments by Belcher. The author of the satire assumes that 16 Trustees are legally designated by the Charter.
- 13 Itinerant Trustees] The author is twitting the identification of the Trustees with the evangelical spirit of the Great Awakening. The issue of itinerant ministers splitting congregations and inspiring uncontrolled religious enthusiasm provoked an Old Light backlash. Mssrs Gilbert

Tennent, William Tennent, Samuel Blair, and Richard Treat in particular were linked with itinerant evangelism.

- 15 The babylonick whore] The unreformed Church. Though the term first was applied to the Roman Church, Puritan radicals attached it to the Church of England under Bishop Laud.
- 16 Charles's fate] The spiritual ancestors of the Trustees, the Puritans, presided over Charles I's execution.
- 21 act and swear] The Charter specified that the Trustees would "at their first meeting . . . before they proceed to any business take the oath appointed to be taken by an act, passed in the first year of the reign of the late King George, the First." After swearing loyalty to the Hanoverian succession, the Trustees further swore to abide by "An act for preventing dangers which may happen from popish recusants." Finally, before three Justices of the Peace, the Trustees swore to execute their duties to the college faithfully.
- 24 on Aaron's head] Aaron Burr, who took over practical administration of the college upon the death of Jonathan Dickinson in 1747.
- 34 Non cons] Non conformists: dissenters from the ecclesiastical polity and theology of the Church of England.
- 37 Old Jonathan] Jonathan Belcher, a graduate of Harvard, was known for his dissenting zeal.
- 42 Twixt Calvin and old Knox] Between the Calvinist Congregationalists and the Presbyterians. The College was founded in great part to repair a split between the two most potent reformed Christians bodies in the middle colonies.
- 49 churchman] Member of the Church of England. The author's father, Gov. Lewis Morris, had denied a Charter to the College because he recognized the political offense it would give Anglicans and Quakers in New Jersey. The Charter granted by Gov. Morris's successor, Gov. Hamilton, stressed that the College would be founded in accordance with the principles of religious liberty set forth in the fundamental Concessions of the New Jersey Proprietors of 1664.
- 137 Arthur] Thomas Arthur, Trustee and Clerk.
- 142 Their Charter he would read] The second Charter, granted by Governor Belcher in 1748. The legality of the Charter of 1746 had been questioned since it had been granted by an interim governor suffering from senility. The charter, a grant of legal authority, permitted incorporated bodies to govern their own affairs and have legal standing in courts.
- 151 would the Test abide] More than the sixteen Trustees which

the author deemed legal had endorsed the Charter.

210 Dubbed Them by The charter] The first recipients of the Bachelor of Arts degrees were Enos Ayres, Benjamin Chesnut, Hugh Henry, Israel Reading, Richard Stockton, and Daniel Thane.

214 Demanding his Degrees] Belcher was dubbed Master of Arts, the Colleges first honorary degree.

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