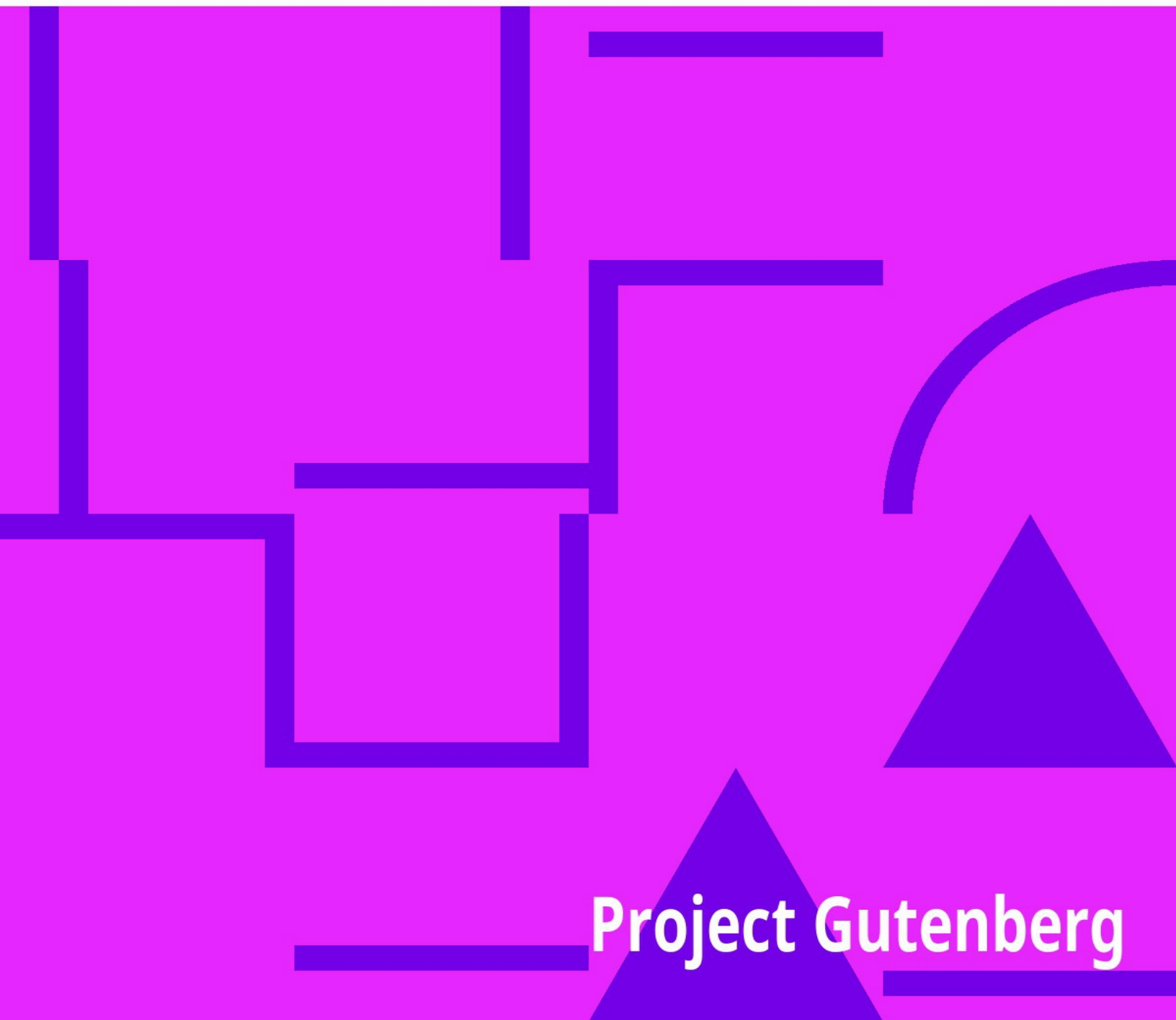


The Group: A Farce

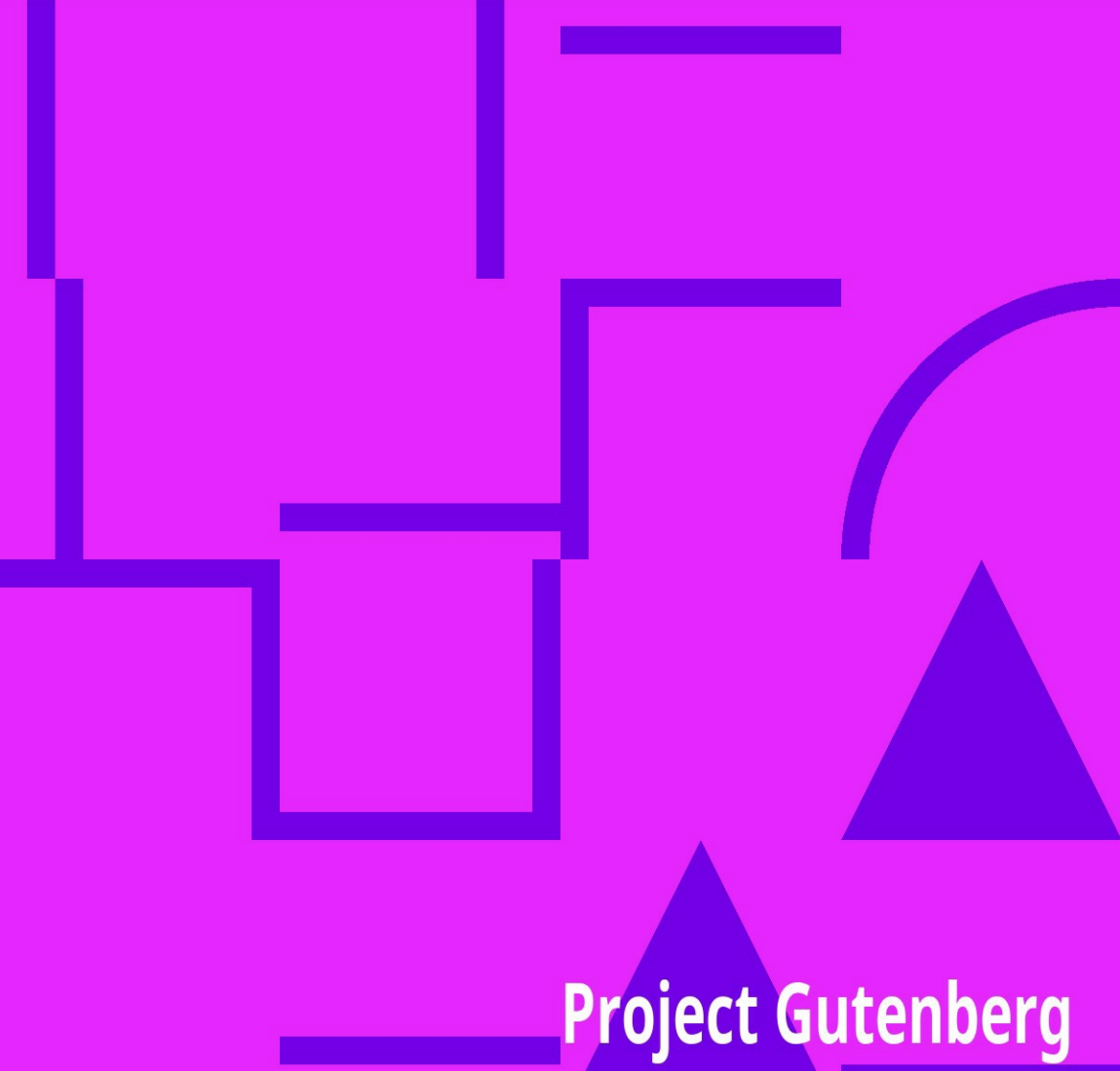
Mercy Otis Warren and Montrose Jonas

An abstract geometric pattern composed of various purple shapes and lines on a black background. The pattern includes several vertical and horizontal lines of varying lengths, some forming right angles. There are also two solid purple triangles, one pointing upwards and one pointing downwards. A large, thick purple arc is visible on the right side. The overall effect is a complex, layered geometric design.

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The Group: A Farce

Mercy Otis Warren and Montrose Jonas



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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE GROUP: A
FARCE ***

Transcriber's Note:

This e-book contains the text of *The Group*, extracted from **Representative Plays by American Dramatists: Vol 1, 1765-1819**. Comments and background to all the plays, and links to the other plays are available [here](#).

For your convenience, the transcribers have provided the following links:

[**Mrs Mercy Warren.**](#)

[**Prologue**](#)

[**Dramatis Personæ**](#)

[**ACT I.**](#)

[**ACT II.**](#)

Spelling as in the original has been preserved.

THE GROUP

By **MRS. MERCY WARREN**



Mrs. Mercy Warren

MRS. MERCY WARREN

(1728-1814)

Most of the literature—orations as well as broadsides—created in America under the heat of the Revolution, was of a strictly satirical character. Most of the Revolutionary ballads sung at the time were bitter with hatred against the Loyalist. When the conflict actually was in progress, the theatres that regaled the Colonists were closed, and an order from the Continental Congress declared that theatre-going was an amusement from which all patriotic people should abstain. These orders or resolutions were dated October 12, 1778, and October 16. (Seilhamer, ii, 51.) The playhouses were no sooner closed, however—much to the regret of Washington—than their doors were thrown wide open by the British troops stationed in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. A complete history of the American stage has to deal with Howe's players, Clinton's players, and Burgoyne's players.

Of all these Red-Coat Thespians, two demand our attention—one, Major André, a gay, talented actor; the other, General Burgoyne, whose pride was as much concerned with playwriting as with generalship. The latter dipped his pen in the satirical inkpot, and wrote a farce, "The Blockade of Boston." It was this play that drew forth from a woman, an American playwright, the retort stinging. This lady was Mrs. Mercy Warren^[1] who, although distinguished for being a sister of James Otis, and the wife of General James Warren, was in her own name a most important and distinct literary figure during the Revolution.

So few women appear in the early history of American Drama that it is well here to mention Mrs. Charlotte Ramsay Lennox (1720-1804) and Mrs. Susanna Rowson (1762-1824). The former has the reputation of being the first woman, born in America, to have written a play, "The Sister" (1769).

The author moved to London when she was fifteen, and there it was her piece was produced, with an epilogue by Oliver Goldsmith. She is referred to in Boswell's Life of Johnson.

Of Susanna Rowson, whose Memoir has been issued by Rev. Elias Nason, we know that, as a singer and actress, she created sufficient reputation in London to attract the attention of Wignell, the comedian. (Clapp. Boston Stage. 1853, p. 41.)

With her husband, she came to this country in 1793, and, apart from her professional duties on the stage, wrote a farce, "Volunteers" (1795), dealing with the Whiskey Insurrection in Pennsylvania, "The Female Patriot" (1794), "Slaves in Algiers; or, A Struggle for Freedom" (1794), and "Americans in England" (1796). All of these were produced. Her literary attainments were wide, her most popular novel being "Charlotte Temple, a Tale of Truth" (1790). She likewise compiled many educational works. (See Wegelin.)

The picture conjured up in our mind of Mrs. Warren is farthest away from satire. To judge by the costume she wore when she sat to Copley for her portrait, she must have been graced with all the feminine wiles of the period. Behold Mrs. Mercy Warren, satirist, as the records describe her:

Her head-dress is of white lace, trimmed with white satin ribbons. Her robe is of dark-green satin, with a pompadour waist, trimmed with point lace. There is a full plait at the back, hanging from the shoulders, and her sleeves are also of point lace. White illusion, trimmed with point lace, and fastened with a white satin bow, covers her neck. The front of the skirt and of the sleeves are elaborately trimmed with puffings of satin.

But however agreeable this picture may be, Mrs. Warren, on reading Burgoyne's farce, immediately sharpened her pen, and replied by writing a counter-farce, which she called "The Blockheads; or, the Affrighted Officers."^[2] It was in the prologue to this play that the poet-dramatist wrote:

Your pardon first I crave for this intrusion.
The topic's such it looks like a delusion;
And next your candour, for I swear and vow,
Such an attempt I never made till now.
But constant laughing at the Desp'rate fate,
The bastard sons of Mars endur'd of late,
Induc'd me thus to minute down the notion,

Which put my risibles in such commotion.
By yankees frightened too! oh, dire to say!
Why yankees sure at red-coats faint away!
Oh, yes—They thought so too—for lack-a-day,
Their gen'ral turned the *blockade* to a play:
Poor vain poltroons—with justice we'll retort,
And call them *blockheads* for their idle sport.

Unfortunately, we cannot test the comparative value of satire as used by Burgoyne and Mrs. Warren, because the Burgoyne play is not in existence. But, undoubtedly, our Revolutionary enthusiast knew how to wield her pen in anger, and she reflects all of the bitter spirit of the time. Not only is this apparent in "The Blockheads," but likewise in "The Group," a piece which holds up to ridicule a number of people well known to the Boston of that day.

Mrs. Warren was the writer of many plays, as well as being noted for her "History of the American Revolution" (1805), and for her slim volume of poems (1790), which follow the conventional sentiments of the conventionally sentimental English poetry of that time.

In "The Group" we obtain her interesting impressions, in dramatic form, of North and Gage and, from the standpoint of the library, we regard with reverence the little copy of the play printed on the day before the battle of Lexington—a slim brochure, aimed effectively at Tory politicians.^[3]

In fact, mention the name Tory to Mrs. Warren, and her wit was ever ready to sharpen its shafts against British life in America. That is probably why so many believe she wrote "The Motley Assembly," a farce, though some there be who claim that its authorship belongs to J. M. Sewall. Dr. F. W. Atkinson asserts that this was the first American play to have in it only American characters.^[4]

The satirical farce was a popular dramatic form of the time. Mrs. Warren was particularly effective in wielding such a polemic note, for instance, when she deals with the Boston Massacre in her Tragedy, "The Adulateur" (Boston: Printed and sold at the New Printing-Office, /Near Concert-Hall./ M,DCC,LXXIII./). On the King's side, however, the writers were just as effective. Such an example is seen in "The Battle of Brooklyn, A farce of

Two Acts: as it was performed at Long-Island, on Tuesday, the 27th of August, 1776, By the Representatives of the Tyrants of America, Assembled at Philadelphia" (Edinburgh: Printed in the Year M.DCC. LXXVII.), in which the British ridicule all that is Continental, even Washington. This farce was reprinted in Brooklyn, 1873.

Jonathan Mitchell Sewall's (1748-1808) "A Cure for the Spleen; or, Amusement for a Winter's Evening" (1775) was another Tory protest, which carried the following pretentious subtitle: "Being the substance of a conversation on the Times, over a friendly tankard and pipe, between Sharp, a country Parson; Bumper, a country Justice; Fillpot, an inn-keeper; Graveairs, a Deacon; Trim, a Barber; Brim, a Quaker; Puff, a late Representative. Taken in short-hand by Roger de Coverly."

Mrs. Warren was the intimate friend of many interesting people. It concerns us, however, that her most significant correspondence of a literary nature was carried on with John Adams, afterwards President of the United States. This friendship remained unbroken until such time as Mrs. Warren found it necessary to picture Adams in her History of the Revolution; when he objected to the portraiture.

The student of history is beholden to Mr. Adams for many of those intimate little sketches of Revolutionary and early national life in America, without which our impressions would be much the poorer. His admiration for Mrs. Warren was great, and even in his correspondence with her husband, James Warren, he never allowed an opportunity to slip for alluding to her work as a literary force in the life of the time. I note, for example, a letter he wrote on December 22, 1773, suggesting a theme which would "become" Mrs. Warren's pen, "which has no equal that I know of in this country."

In 1775, after "The Group" was written, and, according to custom, submitted by Warren to John Adams for criticism and approval, we find him praising Mrs. Warren, and quoting from her play. So poignantly incisive was Mrs. Warren's satire that many people would not credit her with the pieces she actually wrote, and there were those who thought it incredible that a woman should use satire so openly and so flagrantly as she. The consequence is, many of her contemporaries attributed the writing of "The Group" to masculine hands, and this attitude drew from Mrs. Warren the following

letter written to Mr. Adams:

My next question, sir, you may deem impertinent. Do you remember who was the author of a little pamphlet entitled, *The Group*? To your hand it was committed by the writer. You brought it forward to the public eye. I will therefore give you my reason for naming it now. A friend of mine, who lately visited the Athenæum [a Boston Library], saw it among a bundle of pamphlets, with a high encomium of the author, who, he asserted, was Mr. Samuel Barrett. You can, if you please, give a written testimony contradictory of the false assertion.

This letter was written long after the Revolution, when she was not loath to let it be known that she was the creator of this little play, and is clearly indicative of the general attitude the public had toward Mrs. Warren as an author. Her appeal instantly called forth a courteous rejoinder from Mr. Adams, who wrote:

What brain could ever have conceived or suspected Samuel Barrett, Esquire, to have been the author of "The Group"? The bishop has neither the natural genius nor the acquired talents, the knowledge of characters, nor the political principles, sentiments, or feelings, that could have dictated that pungent drama. His worthy brother, the Major, might have been as rationally suspected.

I could take my Bible oath to two propositions, 1st. That Bishop Barrett, in my opinion, was one of the last literary characters in the world who ought to have been suspected to have written "The Group." 2d. That there was but one person in the world, male or female, who could at that time, in my opinion, have written it; and that person was Madam Mercy Warren, the historical, philosophical, poetical, and satirical consort of the then Colonel, since General, James Warren of Plymouth, sister of the great, but forgotten, James Otis.

According to Adams, he immediately went to the Boston Athenæum, where his nephew, W. S. Shaw, was Librarian. He drew from the shelves a copy of "The Group", which had been bought from the collection of Governor Adams of Massachusetts, and forthwith, on looking it over, wrote down the original names of the people satirized therein.^[5] This copy is still a valuable possession of the library.

While Mrs. Warren was writing "The Group," she sent it piecemeal to her husband, who was on the field of battle. He, being proud of the literary attainments of his wife, sent it around to his friends, under seal of secrecy. And his appeal to these friends was very significant of the pride he felt in the manuscript. Here is what he wrote to Adams, on January 15, 1775:

Inclosed are for your amusement two Acts of a dramatic performance composed at my particular desire. They go to you as they came out of the hand of the Copier, without

pointing or marking. If you think it worth while to make any other use of them than a reading, you will prepare them in that way & give them such other Corrections & Amendments as your good Judgment shall suggest.

It gradually became known among Warren's friends who the real writer of the satire was, much to the consternation of Mrs. Mercy Warren. She was modest to the extreme, usually being thrust into writing on particular subjects by the enthusiasm of her friends. For example, she wrote a poem on the Boston Tea Party, and, in sending it to her husband, she confessed that it was a task

done in consequence of the request of a much respected friend. It was wrote off with little attention.... I do not think it has sufficient merit for the public eye.

By the same post, she sent him another scene from "The Group."

Whatever you do with either of them [meaning the manuscripts], you will doubtless be careful that the author is not exposed, and hope your particular friends will be convinced of the propriety of not naming her at present.

Mrs. Warren was the author of several other plays, among them "The Adulateur" and "The Retreat," which preceded "The Group" in date of composition, and "The Sack of Rome." The latter was contained in a volume of poems issued in 1790, in which "The Ladies of Castile" was dedicated to President Washington, who wrote the author a courteous note in acknowledgment.

In the preface to this volume, Mrs. Warren gives her impressions of the stage, which are excellent measure of the regard Americans of this period had for the moral influence of the playhouse. Thus, she writes:

Theatrical amusements may, sometimes, have been prostituted to the purposes of vice; yet, in an age of taste and refinement, lessons of morality, and the consequences of deviation, may, perhaps, be as successfully enforced from the stage, as by modes of instruction, less censured by the severe; while, at the same time, the exhibition of great historical events, opens a field of contemplation to the reflecting and philosophic mind.

But Mrs. Warren was not entirely given over to the serious occupations of literary work. We find her on intimate terms with Mrs. Adams, the two of them in their daily association calling each other *Portia* and *Marcia*.

Who actually played in "The Group" when it was given a performance is not recorded. We know, however, from records, that it was given for the delectation of the audiences assembled "nigh head quarters, at Amboyne." This evidence is on the strength of Mrs. Warren's own statement. Sanction for

the statement appears on the title-pages of the New York, John Anderson, issue of 1775,^[6] and the Jamaica-Philadelphia, James Humphreys, Jr., edition of the same year.

I have selected this play, "The Group," as being an excellent example of the partisan writing done at the time of our American Revolution, and no one can afford to overlook it, although its actable qualities, according to our present-day judgment, are doubtful.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Mrs. Warren was born at Barnstable, Mass., September 25, 1728, and died at Plymouth, Mass., October 19, 1814.

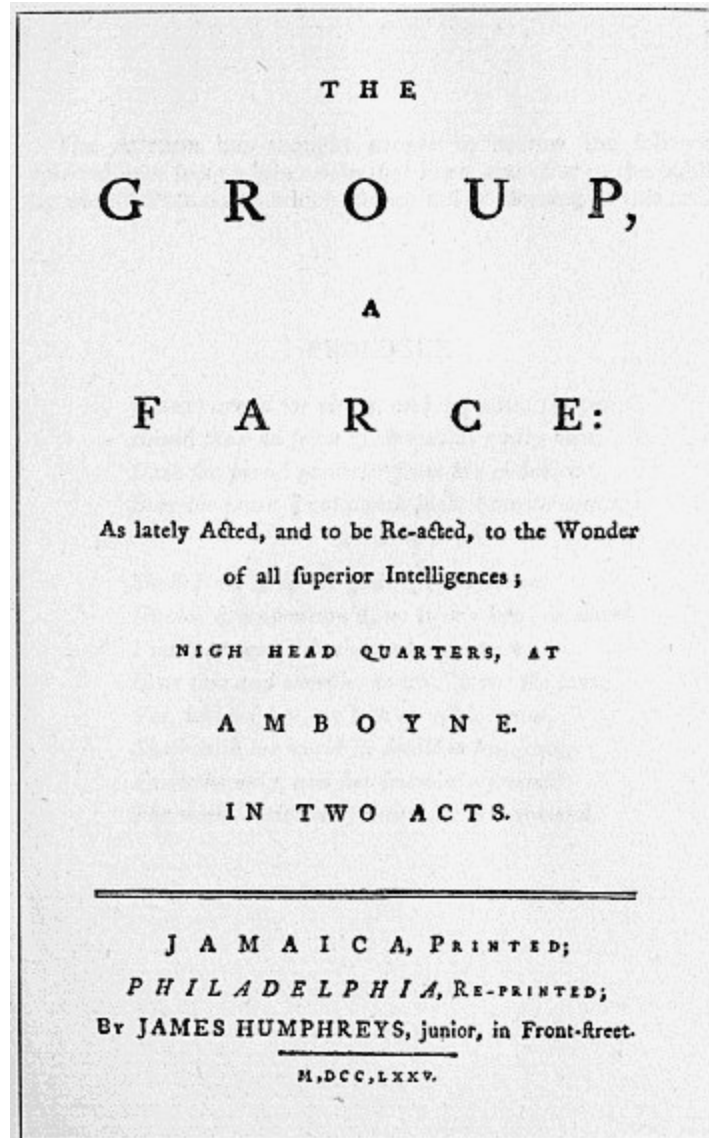
[2] The/Blockheads:/or, the/Affrighted Officers. /A/Farce. /Boston:/ Printed in Queen-Street,/M,DCC,LXXVI./

[3] On the title-page of the Boston edition there appears the following proem: "As the great business of the polite world is the eager pursuit of amusement, and as the Public diversions of the season have been interrupted by the hostile parade in the capital; the exhibition of a new farce may not be unentertaining."

[4] The /Motley /Assembly, /A /Farce. /Published /For the /Entertainment /of the /Curious. /Boston: /Printed and Sold by Nathaniel Coverly, in /Newbury-Street, /M,DCC,LXXIX./

[5] Mrs. Warren's biographer, Alice Brown, quotes the list, as follows, the persons satirized being in parentheses: Lord Chief Justice Hazlerod (Oliver); Judge Meagre (E. Hutchinson); Brigadier Hateall (Ruggles); Hum Humbug, Esq., (Jno. Erving); Sir Sparrow Spendall (Sir Wm. Pepperell); Hector Mushroom (Col. Murray); Beau Trumps (Jno. Vassall); Dick, the Publican (Lechmere); Monsieur de François (N. R. Thomas); Crusty Crowbar, Esq. (J. Boutineau); Dupe,—Secretary of State (T. Flucker); Scriblerius Fribble (Leonard); Commodore Bateau (Loring). The significance of these names will be apparent to student of local Colonial history.

[6] The /Group,/ A / Farce: / As lately Acted, and to be Re-acted, to the Wonder/ of all superior Intelligences; /Nigh Head Quarters, at/ Amboyne. /In Two Acts./ New-York: / Printed by John Anderson,/ at Beekman's-Slip./ [The Boston edition was printed and sold by Edes and Gill, in Queen-Street, 1775.]



FAC-SIMILE TITLE-PAGE OF THE FIRST
EDITION

The AUTHOR has thought proper to borrow the following spirited lines from a late celebrated Poet, and offer to the public, by way of PROLOGUE, which cannot fail of pleasing at this crisis.

PROLOGUE

WHAT! arm'd for virtue, and not point the pen,

*Brand the bold front of shameless guilty men,
Dash the proud gamester from his gilded car,
Bare the mean heart which lurks beneath a star,*

** * **

*Shall I not strip the gilding off a knave,
Unplac'd, unpension'd, no man's heir, or slave?
I will, or perish in the gen'rous cause;
Hear this and tremble, ye who 'scape the laws;
Yes, while I live, no rich or noble knave,
Shall walk the world in credit to his grave;
To virtue only, and her friends, a friend,
The world beside may murmur, or commend.*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Lord Chief Justice HAZLEROD,
Judge MEAGRE,
Brigadier HATEALL,
HUM HUMBUG, *Esquire*,
Sir SPARROW SPENDALL,
HECTOR MUSHROOM,—*Col.*
BEAU TRUMPS,
DICK, the Publican,
SIMPLE SAPLING, *Esquire*,
Monsieur de FRANÇOIS,
CRUSTY CROWBAR, *Esquire*,
DUPE,—*Secretary of State*,
SCRIBLERIUS FRIBBLE,
Commodore BATEAU,
COLLATERALIS,—*a new-made Judge*.

Attended by a swarm of court sycophants, hungry harpies, and unprincipled dangles, collected from the neighbouring villages, hovering over the stage in the shape of locusts, led by Massachusettensis in the form of a basilisk; the rear brought up by Proteus, bearing a torch in one hand, and a powder-flask in the other. The whole supported by a mighty army and navy, from Blunderland, for the laudable purpose of enslaving its best friends.

The

GROUP

A

Farce

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A little dark Parlour in Boston:*

GUARDS *standing at the door.*

HAZLEROD, CRUSTY CROWBAR, SIMPLE SAPLING, HATEALL, *and* HECTOR
MUSHROOM.

SIMPLE.

I know not what to think of these sad times,
The people arm'd,—and all resolv'd to die
Ere they'll submit.—

CRUSTY CROWBAR.

I too am almost sick of the parade
Of honours purchas'd at the price of peace.

SIMPLE.

Fond as I am of greatness and her charms,
Elate with prospects of my rising name,
Push'd into place,—a place I ne'er expected,
My bounding heart leapt in my feeble breast.
And ecstasies entranc'd my slender brain.—
But yet, ere this I hop'd more solid gains,
As my low purse demands a quick supply.—

Poor Sylvia weeps,—and urges my return
To rural peace and humble happiness,
As my ambition beggars all her babes.

CRUSTY.

When first I listed in the desp'rate cause,
And blindly swore obedience to his will,
So wise, so just, so good I thought Rapatio,
That if salvation rested on his word
I'd pin my faith, and risk my hopes thereon.

HAZLEROD.

Any why not now?—What staggers thy belief?

CRUSTY.

Himself—his perfidy appears—
It is too plain he has betray'd his country;
And we're the wretched tools by him mark'd out
To seal its ruins—tear up the ancient forms,
And every vestige treacherously destroy,
Nor leave a trait of freedom in the land.
Nor did I think hard fate wou'd call me up
From drudging o'er my acres,
Treading the glade, and sweating at the plough,
To dangle at the tables of the great;
At bowls and cards to spend my frozen years;
To sell my friends, my country, and my conscience;
Profane the sacred sabbaths of my God;
Scorn'd by the very men who want my aid
To spread distress o'er this devoted people.

HAZLEROD.

Pho—what misgivings—why these idle qualms,
This shrinking backwards at the bugbear conscience;
In early life I heard the phantom nam'd,
And the grave sages prate of moral sense
Presiding in the bosom of the just;
Or planting thongs about the guilty heart.
Bound by these shackles, long my lab'ring mind,
Obscurely trod the lower walks of life,
In hopes by honesty my bread to gain;
But neither commerce, or my conjuring rods,
Nor yet mechanics, or new fangled drills,
Or all the iron-monger's curious arts,
Gave me a competence of shining ore,
Or gratify'd my itching palm for more;
Till I dismiss'd the bold intruding guest,
And banish'd conscience from my wounded breast.

CRUSTY.

Happy expedient!—Could I gain the art,
Then balmy sleep might sooth my waking lids,
And rest once more refresh my weary soul.

HAZLEROD.

Resolv'd more rapidly to gain my point,
I mounted high in justice's sacred seat,
With flowing robes, and head equip'd without,
A heart unfeeling and a stubborn soul,
As qualify'd as e'er a Jefferies was;
Save in the knotty rudiments of law,
The smallest requisite for modern times,
When wisdom, law, and justice are supply'd
By swords, dragoons, and ministerial nods,
Sanctions most sacred in the Pander's creed,

I sold my country for a splendid bribe.
Now let her sink—and all the dire alarms
Of war, confusion, pestilence, and blood,
And tenfold mis'ry be her future doom—
Let civil discord lift her sword on high,
Nay, sheath its hilt e'en in my brother's blood;
It ne'er shall move the purpose of my soul;
Tho' once I trembled at a thought so bold;
By Philalethes's arguments, convinc'd,
We may live Demons, as we die like brutes,
I give my tears, and conscience to the winds.

HATEALL.

Curse on their coward fears, and dastard souls,
Their soft compunctions and relented qualms,
Compassion ne'er shall seize my steadfast breast
Though blood and carnage spread thro' all the land;
Till streaming purple tinge the verdant turf,
Till ev'ry street shall float with human gore,
I Nero-like, the capital in flames,
could laugh to see her glotted sons expire,
Tho' much too rough my soul to touch the lyre.

SIMPLE.

I fear the brave, the injur'd multitude,
Repeated wrongs, arouse them to resent,
And every patriot like old Brutus stands,
The shining steel half drawn—its glitt'ring point
Scarce hid beneath the scabbard's friendly cell,
Resolv'd to die, or see their country free.

HATEALL.

Then let them die—*The dogs we will keep down—*
While N——'s my friend, and G—— approves the
deed,
Tho' hell and all its hell-hounds should unite,
I'll not recede to save from swift perdition
My wife, my country, family, or friends.
G——'s mandamus I more highly prize
Than all the mandates of th' etherial king.

HECTOR MUSHROOM.

Will our abettors in the distant towns
Support us long against the common cause,
When they shall see from Hampshire's northern bounds
Thro' the wide western plains to southern shores
The whole united continent in arms?——

HATEALL.

They shall—as sure as oaths or bond can bind;
I've boldly sent my new-born brat abroad,
Th' association of my morbid brain,
To which each minion must affix his name,
As all our hope depends on brutal force,
On quick destruction, misery, and death;
Soon may we see dark ruin stalk around,
With murder, rapine, and inflicted pains;
Estates confiscate, slav'ry, and despair,
Wrecks, halters, axes, gibbeting and chains,
All the dread ills that wait on civil war;——
How I could glut my vengeful eyes to see
The weeping maid thrown helpless on the world,
Her sire cut off.—Her orphan brothers stand,
While the big tear rolls down the manly cheek.
Robb'd of maternal care by grief's keen shaft,
The sorrowing mother mourns her starving babes,

Her murder'd lord torn guiltless from her side,
And flees for shelter to the pitying grave
To screen at once from slavery and pain.

HAZLEROD.

But more complete I view this scene of woe,
By the incursions of a savage foe,
Of which I warn'd them, if they dare refuse
The badge of slaves, and bold resistance use.
Now let them suffer—I'll no pity feel.

HATEALL.

Nor I!——But had I power, as I have the will,
I'd send them murm'ring to the shades of hell.

End of the First Act.

ACT II.

The scene changes to a large dining room. The table furnished with bowls, bottles, glasses, and cards.—The Group appear sitting round in a restless attitude. In one corner of the room is discovered a small cabinet of books, for the use of the studious and contemplative; containing, Hobbs's Leviathan, Siphthorp's Sermons, Hutchinson's History, Fable of the Bees, Philalethes on Philanthropy, with an appendix by Massachusettensis, Hoyl on Whist, Lives of the Stuarts, Statutes of Henry the Eighth, and William the Conqueror, Wedderburne's speeches, and acts of Parliament, for 1774.

SCENE I.

HATEALL, HAZLEROD, MONSIEUR, BEAU TRUMPS, SIMPLE, HUMBUG, SIR SPARROW,
&c., &c.

SCRIBLERIUS.

——Thy toast, Monsieur,
Pray, why that solemn phiz:—
Art thou, too, balancing 'twixt right and wrong?
Hast thou a thought so mean as to give up
Thy present good, for promise in reversion?
'Tis true hereafter has some feeble terrors,
But ere our grizzly heads are wrapt in clay
We may compound, and make our peace with Heav'n.

MONSIEUR.

Could I give up the dread of retribution,
The awful reck'ning of some future day,
Like surly Hateall I might curse mankind,
And dare the threat'ned vengeance of the skies.
Or like yon apostate——

[*Pointing to HAZLEROD, retired to a corner
to read Massachusettsis.*

Feel but slight remorse
To sell my country for a grasp of gold.
But the impressions of my early youth,
Infix'd by precepts of my pious sire,
Are stings and scorpions in my goaded breast;
Oft have I hung upon my parent's knee
And heard him tell of his escape from France;
He left the land of slaves, and wooden shoes;
From place to place he sought a safe retreat,
Till fair Bostonia stretch'd her friendly arm
And gave the refugee both bread and peace:
(Shall I ungrateful 'rase the sacred bonds,
And help to clank the tyrant's iron chains
O'er these blest shores—once the sure asylum
From all the ills of arbitrary sway?)
With his expiring breath he bade his sons,
If e'er oppression reach'd the western world,
Resist its force, and break the servile yoke.

SCRIBLERIUS.

Well quit thy post;——Go make thy flatt'ring
court
To Freedom's Sons and tell thy baby fears;
Shew the foot traces in thy puny heart,
Made by the trembling tongue and quiv'ring lip
Of an old grandsire's superstitious whims.

MONSIEUR.

No,——I never can——
So great the itch I feel for titl'd place,
Some honorary post, some small distinction,
To save my name from dark oblivion's jaws,
I'll hazard all, but ne'er give up my place,
For *that* I'll see Rome's ancient rites restor'd,
And flame and faggot blaze in ev'ry street.

BEAU TRUMPS.

——That's right, Monsieur,
There's nought on earth that has such tempting charms
As rank and show, and pomp, and glitt'ring dress,
Save the dear counters at belov'd Quadril,
Viner unsoil'd, and Littleton, may sleep,
And Coke lie mould'ring on the dusty shelf,
If I by shuffling draw some lucky card
That wins the livres, or lucrative place.

HUM HUMBUG.

When sly Rapatio shew'd his friends the scroll,
I wonder'd much to see thy patriot name
Among the list of rebels to the state,
I thought thee one of Rusticus's sworn friends.

BEAU TRUMPS.

When first I enter'd on the public stage
My country groan'd beneath base Brundo's hand,
Virtue look'd fair and beckon'd to her lure,
Thro' truth's bright mirror I beheld her charms
And wish'd to tread the patriotic path
And wear the laurels that adorn his fame;
I walk'd a while and tasted solid peace

With Cassius, Rusticus, and good Hortensius,
And many more, whose names will be rever'd
When you, and I, and all the venal herd,
Weigh'd in Nemesis, just impartial scale,
Are mark'd with infamy, till time blot out
And in oblivion sink our hated names.
But 'twas a poor unprofitable path,
Nought to be gain'd, save solid peace of mind,
No pensions, place or title there I found;
I saw Rapatio's arts had struck so deep
And giv'n his country such a fatal wound,
None but his foes promotion could expect;
I trim'd, and pimp'd, and veer'd, and wav'ring stood,
But half resolv'd to shew myself a knave,
Till the Arch Traitor prowling round for aid
Saw my suspense and bade me doubt no more;—
He gently bow'd, and smiling took my hand,
And whispering softly in my list'ning ear,
Shew'd me my name among his chosen band,
And laugh'd at virtue dignifi'd by fools,
Clear'd all my doubts, and bade me persevere
In spite of the restraints, or hourly checks
Of wounded friendship, and a goaded mind,
Or all the sacred ties of truth and honour.

COLLATERALIS.

Come, 'mongst ourselves we'll e'en speak out the
truth.

Can you suppose there yet is such a dupe
As still believes that wretch an honest man?
The later strokes of his serpentine brain
Outvie the arts of Machiavel himself,
His Borgian model here is realiz'd
And the stale tricks of politicians play'd
Beneath a vizard fair——

——Drawn from the heav'nly form
Of blest religion weeping o'er the land
For virtue fall'n, and for freedom lost.

BEAU TRUMPS.

I think with you——
——unparalleled his effront'ry,
When by chican'ry and specious art,
'Midst the distress in which he'd brought the city,
He found a few (by artifice and cunning,
By much industry of his wily friend
The false Philanthrop——sly undermining tool,
Who with the Syren's voice——
Deals daily round the poison of his tongue)
To speak him fair—and overlook his guilt.
They by reiterated promise made
To stand his friend at Britain's mighty court,
And vindicate his native injur'd land,
Lent him their names to sanctify his deeds.
But mark the traitor——his high crimes gloss'd o'er
Conceals the tender feelings of the man,
The social ties that bind the human heart;
He strikes a bargain with his country's foes,
And joins to wrap America in flames.
Yet with feign'd pity, and Satanic grin,
As if more deep to fix the keen insult,
Or make his life a farce still more complete,
He sends a groan across the broad Atlantic,
And with a phiz of Crocodilian stamp,
Can weep, and wreathe, still hoping to deceive,
He cries the gath'ring clouds hang thick about her,
But laughs within——then sobs——
——Alas! my country?

HUM HUMBUG.

Why so severe, or why exclaim at all,
Against the man who made thee what thou art?

BEAU TRUMPS.

I know his guilt,—I ever knew the man,
Thy father knew him e'er we trod the stage;
I only speak to such as know him well;
Abroad I tell the world he is a saint,
But as for int'rest I betray'd my own
With the same views, I rank'd among his friends:
But my ambition sighs for something more.
What merits has Sir Sparrow of his own,
And yet a feather graces the fool's cap:
Which did he wear for what himself achiev'd,
'Twould stamp some honour on his latest heir——
But I'll suspend my murm'ring care awhile;
Come, t' other glass——and try our luck at Loo,
And if before the dawn your gold I win,
Or e'er bright Phœbus does his course begin,
The eastern breeze from Britain's hostile shore
Should waft her lofty floating towers o'er,
Whose waving pendants sweep the wat'ry main,
Dip their proud beaks and dance towards the plain,
The destin'd plains of slaughter and distress,
Laden with troops from Hanover and Hess,
It would invigorate my sinking soul,
For then the continent we might control;
Not all the millions that she vainly boasts
Can cope with Veteran Barbarian hosts;——
But the brave sons of Albion's warlike race,
Their arms, and honours, never can disgrace,
Or draw their swords in such a hated cause,
In blood to seal a N——'s oppressive laws,
They'll spurn the service;——Britons must recoil,
And shew themselves the natives of an isle

Who sought for freedom, in the worst of times
Produc'd her Hampdens, Fairfaxes, and Pyms.

But if by carnage we should win the game,
Perhaps by my abilities and fame:
I might attain a splendid glitt'ring car,
And mount aloft, and sail in liquid air.
Like Phaëton, I'd then out-strip the wind,
And leave my low competitors behind.

Finis.

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MRS. MERCY WARREN

(1728-1814)

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