

The
FRANTICK LOVER



by *Major* JOHN ANDRÉ

An Effusion
Now for the First Time
Printed from the Original Manuscript
Preserved among the Papers of
SIR HENRY CLINTON

THIS POEM was found among the military papers of Sir Henry Clinton, commander-in-chief of the British forces in north America from 1778 to 1782. As it relates the defeat of a British officer by a provincial, it bears some military character, but it stands forth distinctly unlike the rest of Sir Henry's archives. The verse is not signed or dated, but it is unmistakably in the handwriting of Major John André, Clinton's aide and later adjutant general in America.

For several reasons the poem appears to be an original composition by André. It has not been identified as the product of any known eighteenth century writer, and it is clearly amateurish. Moreover, no one else on Clinton's staff indulged himself in writing poetry (or in fighting, either). Finally, it is the type of poem André would write and could write.

To enlarge on this last consideration, be it remembered that tradition pictures John André as something of a gallant with the ladies. He is supposed to have cut a dashing figure with the Tory belles of Philadelphia while the British troops occupied the city during the winter of 1777-1778. He was then twenty-seven years old, handsome and talented. He appeared in plays which the officers produced that winter, he sang and sketched, and he organized the farewell pageant and ball—called the *Mischianza*—in honor of Sir William Howe. He also drank and gambled and was otherwise a typical "officer and gentleman" of his period.

When the British army returned to New York, André joined the staff of Sir Henry Clinton and quickly became his favorite. In 1779 and 1780 he handled the delicate correspondence with Benedict Arnold. He also found time to turn out three or four poems in ballad style, the most famous of which is an amusing parody about an unsuccessful expedition led by General Anthony Wayne, entitled *The Cow Chase*. André was devoted to his military career, however, and doubt-

less regarded his talent for verse-making as only the mark of a cultivated mind.

André's fate is well known. He was captured after he penetrated the American lines to arrange with Arnold the details for the mock attack on and surrender of West Point. Because he was in disguise and carried papers of military intelligence, he was rightly judged by a board of officers to be a spy. Although Arnold escaped down the Hudson to the British lines, André was executed by hanging on October 2, 1780. This dramatic termination of his career and the circumstances of his capture prompted the British to honor him as having suffered a martyr's death. He is buried in Westminster Abbey—but not in the poet's corner.

That André was seriously frantic when he wrote *The Frantick Lover* seems improbable. The poem appears rather to be in the vein of mock despair. Much as we should like to know the girl to whom he addresses his jealous lament, she defies identification. The name Sally, as he calls her, is circumstantial but unrevealing. Presumably she was a hospitable damsel of New York, belonging to the Tory U.S.O. Similarly, André's successor in arms (hers) is obscure. All we know is that André considers him clumsy; which leaves us wondering how *he* knew. Doubtless André's poem was passed around headquarters for the enjoyment of the staff, and eventually Clinton kept it. The manuscript is now in the William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, with the Clinton papers. It is here printed for the first time, preserving André's capitalization, but improving his punctuation and spelling.

Oh yes, the Latin quotation at the beginning is an excerpt from Virgil's *Aeneid*, implying that the author's heart is filled with shame and madness mixed with frenzied love.

HOWARD H. PECKHAM

The FRANTICK LOVER

Aestuat ingens

*Imo in Corde pudor—mixtoque Insania Luctu
Et Furiis agitatus Amor.*

And shall then another embrace thee, my Fair!
Must Envy still add to the pangs of Despair!
Shall I live to behold the reciprocal Bliss?
Death, Death is a Refuge, Elysium to this!

The Star of the Evening now bids thee retire;
Accurs'd be its Orb and extinguish'd its Fire!
For it shews me my Rival, prepared to invade
Those Charms which at once I admired and obey'd.

Far off each forbidding Incumbrance is thrown,
And Sally, thy Beauties no more are thy own.
Thy Coyness, too, flies as love brings to thy View
A Frame more ecstatic than Saint ever knew!

And yet I behold thee, 'tho longing to die,
Approach the new Heav'n with a Tear and a Sigh!
For oh! the fond Sigh amidst Enjoyment will stray,
And a Tear is the Tribute which Rapture must pay.

Still, still dost thou tremble, that pleasure to seek
Which pants in thy Bosom and glows in thy cheek;
Confusion and shame thy soft Wishes destroy,
And Terror cuts off the weak blossom of Joy.

Oh! had I been blest with thy Beauty, my fair,
With fondest attention, with delicate Care,
My heart would have tried all thy fears to remove
And pluck'd every Thorn from the Roses of love.

My Insolent Rival, more proud of his right,
Contemns the sweet office, that Soul of delight;
Less tender he seizes thy lips as his prey,
And all thy dear limbs the rough Summons obey.

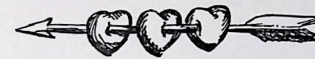
E'en now more licentious—Rash Mortal, forbear!
Restrain him, O Venus! Let him, too, despair!
Freeze, freeze the swift Streams which now hurry to
join
And curse him with passions unsated like mine.

How weak is my Rage his fierce Joy to controul.
A Kiss from thy Body shoots Life to his Soul;
Thy frost, too, dissolv'd in one Current is run
And all thy keen feelings are blended in one.

Thy limbs from his limbs a new Warmth shall acquire,
His passions from thine shall redouble their Fire,
'Till wreck'd and o'erwhelmed in the Storm of delight,
Thine Ears lose their hearing, thine Eyes lose their
Sight.

Here Conquest must pause, tho' it ne'er can be cloy'd,
To view the rich plunder of beauty enjoy'd:
The Tresses dishevelled, the Bosom display'd,
And the Wishes of years in a moment repaid.

A Thousand soft thoughts in thy fancy combine,
A Thousand wild Horrors assemble in mine;
Relieve me, kind death, Shut the Scene from my View,
And Save me, oh save me, ere madness ensue!





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