

could hardly spy the main from its shores. This couplet, however, drew down upon the head of the author very severe rebuke from the British press in after years. The poem was first published complete in America in 1782. Some years afterward it was reprinted in London. In the meanwhile Lord North, who was always near-sighted, had lost his sight entirely, and the critics unfairly imagined that these two lines were intended as a cruel insult. In a subsequent edition, the name of the king was inserted in place of that of North. A few years afterward, the king also was afflicted with blindness. So, to later readers, the unfortunate poet still appeared cruel.

¹⁵⁸ This refers to the confederacy of the Northern European powers against England, commenced in 1780 by the Empress Catharine, of Russia. The ostensible object was to protect the rights of neutrals in time of war—the real object was to cripple the maritime power of England. Catharine issued her proclamation in February. In the course of the summer, Prussia, Denmark, and Sweden, became parties to the policy declared by the Czarina, namely, that no port should be considered blockaded, unless there was sufficient force present to maintain a blockade. In November the States-General of Holland joined the confederacy. France and Spain also acquiesced in the new maritime code, and a general Continental war against England appeared inevitable. This was