

STORIES of New Jersey

Captain Hanson of Santa Cruz, owner of a large plantation, and sailed for the West Indies late in November. For almost three years, while the country he had encouraged to

...Disdain unmanly fear
And swear no tyrant shall reign master here

was following his angry advice, Freneau remained in the Indies. His new-found, idyllic life inspired some of his best poetry. *The Beauties of Santa Cruz* and *The Jamaica Funeral*, both drawn from his experiences there, were especially significant, and *The House of Night*, a fantasy describing how Death died, was written during this period. The last stanza of *The Beauties of Santa Cruz*, composed in his first year away from home, is addressed to those who will not be lured from America by the scenes which he has described. It is an indication, too, of the conflict in his own conscience. He was mindful that he had dedicated his pen to his country's service, but he was loath to leave the beautiful islands:

Still there remain--thy native air enjoy,
Repel the tyrant who thy peace invades,
While, pleas'd, I trace the vales of Santa Cruz
And sing with rapture her inspiring shades.

His fury at the British had cooled, and in the spring of 1778, while the Americans were starving at Valley Forge, he had so far forgotten his earlier feeling that he spent several weeks as a guest of the British governor in Bermuda.

On June 15, almost three years after he had left America, Freneau began his homeward voyage to take up once more the barbed pen which had lain idle so long. The ship was captured by a British man-of-war off the Delaware Capes, but Philip was permitted to continue home. In January 1779 Brackenridge began publication of the *United States Magazine*, to which Freneau contributed the poems written at Santa Cruz and earlier descriptive essays on the West Indies, and newly written poetical attacks on the British, such as *George the Third's Soliloquy* and *A Dialogue between His Britannic Majesty and Mr. Fox*. Both of these picture George III as a disappointed, beaten man, led by false advisers to the near destruction of his kingdom.

Until September 1779 Freneau stayed at Mount Pleasant, working on his contributions for the *United States Magazine* but irked by the dullness of country life. The beauties of Captain Hanson's estate at Santa Cruz called him, and in one of his published letters he said that the idea of it so far away made him feel "much the same anxiety . . . as Adam did after he was banished from the bowers of Eden."

He shipped as supercargo on the *Rebecca* late in September. Several times before they reached their destination in the Azores British ships pursued them, but they managed to outdistance the enemy. The *Rebecca* sailed for home after two months, and Philip returned to Mount Pleasant.

On May 25, 1780, Freneau sailed as a passenger on the ship *Aurora*, bound from Philadelphia to St. Eustatius in the West Indies. Just outside Delaware Bay the *Aurora* was captured by the British frigate *Iris*, after a thrilling battle. All those on the *Aurora* were taken prisoner and interned in the hold of the *Iris*. Freneau as a passenger expected special treatment, but his baggage was kept from him and he would have been handcuffed with the American crew if he had not been recognized by a former acquaintance who vouched for him. He remained with the "gentlemen" until the *Iris* reached New York. Promised a par-