

ODE TO HALIFAX*

He that would look upon thee, Halifax,
In all thy fair and gentle beauty;
Let him seek, in June's bright morn
Yon summit crowned by Needham's now deserted fort;
And oft pausing as the hill ascends,
Drink in sweet perfumes from the thousand flowers
That gem its banks; or list to the soft bird-notes
From the neighbouring groves where oft times parties seek
Its grateful shade, and spread the banquet
For the social meal. And now the summit reached
There let him mark the world of beauty
Spread beneath his gaze.

The City lies before him, its busy Commerce
Noising forth in mingling sounds;
The din of workmen and the noise of wheels,
The cheery sound of labourers as they load
The waiting Ships; and time their motions
To rough Music strains.

Its well formed buildings mark the dweller's ease,
And ruder homes are scattered here and there
Of sturdy Yeomen who in comfort live;
And stores, and public works along the shore
Where liv'rey'd servants pace the appointed round
In neat ranged stations there are seen.
Its ordered streets, re-crossing through the mid'st,
Till rising not ungracefully it meets
The embattled height; where George's Towers
Keep ward upon the Port.

On his right the eye wanders o'er green blooming fields
And meadows, and shady groves, and catches glimpses
There of neat white Cottages half hid by trees, while pastur'd
flocks
And lowing herds, are browsing in the soft green verdure:
And the view is bounded by the thickening woods
Which fringe the meadows with their frowning shade.
And on his left sweet Dartmouth lies
In all its quiet beauty;
Its banks are dotted here and there with dwellings,
And its shore is shaded by low wood

*From the Halifax Morning Post of September 24, 1844. Probably by Angus M. Gidney. (D.C.H.)

Even to the water's brink, beneath whose shade
Is seen the light Canoe as it glides along,
Plied by the lone Indian who views the depth beneath,
And now the spear is poised to strike destruction to the finny
tribe,

While farther on, small tiny boats, bearing each a freight
Of young light hearts, are making for the beach,

Whose sandy surface woos the bathers there—
To Dartmouth comes the plodding Cit, who leaves behind
The bustle of the trading crowd
And seeks at even-tide its calm retreat.
Here the city dame of high degree, sated with pleasure,
Is fain to seek a further lease of life,
And now would rusticate a little time
Amid its genial skies and health inspiring scenes;
Here too the thrifty housewife comes to save.
The air is fine, the neighbours pleasant, and the taxes small,
And here in the summer's heat do parties come
To taste the luscious fruit—Acadia's pride,
Or spend a social hour, or take a throw
Of Rip Van Winkle's Game, and then, perhaps imbibe.
O 'tis indeed a pretty spot,
With all its pleasant walks,
And fresh green fields, its clear calm lakes
And streams, its mazy woods and beautiful retreats,
Where one may pass a life of quiet hapiness.

Then at his feet rolls the glorious harbour,
In all its untamed magnificence;
It is and ever will be fairest of all waters,
Our country's glory and her pride.
Scarcely anchored here the labouring ship
Defies the gale that ruffles now the mighty waters,
While running north it opens out
Into broad Bedford, and there calmly lies
A sleeping giant until stirred by winds,
It rages then and dashing on the shores
Its foaming billows, destruction threatens now
To all who tempt its maddening waves.
Along the city now it glides

Bearing full many a freight of costly merchandise,
From foreign climes; or speeds along
Beneath the keel of the outward bound
Until it mingles with the broad ocean,
And laves the distant shores of many lands, far, far away,
Now its cheek is felt in gentle ripples at the small sailboat's bow
Where the precocious youth apes older hands
And times his vessel for the coming breeze,
Now its voice is heard in the shore harbours where the Fishers
 dwell,
A hardy race of toiling worthy men.

The broad expanse of water is studded here and there,
With vessels of all sizes; from the dull Collier
Who plies his lazy way, to the stately Barque,
Who gallant bears exulting on her course;
The coasters here are seen, freighted
With rich produce to exchange for foreign stuffs,
While far at sea a gallant ship is seen becalmed,
Rolling in the long swell, her idle sails are lying by the masts
Here she must lie until the sun's last rays
Retiring bring the wind to fill her wings,
And waft her safely to the destined Port.