

Radical exposure: religion, masculinity, and politics in the William Bengo' Collyer scandal

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Abstract

This article considers a hitherto neglected sexual scandal involving the Congregational minister William Bengo' Collyer and two young men at a public swimming baths in Camberwell (then in Surrey) in the spring of 1823. It explores the relationships between Congregationalism, and Evangelical Dissent more generally, and the cultures of contemporary masculinity and political radicalism. In so doing, it reveals how radical political figures, notably Thomas Wakley, constructed a masculine identity as upright, honest, and rigidly heteronormative, and shows how this was counterposed to the imagined masculinity of their opponents, who were often figured as effeminised, secretive, and sexually non-normative. Central to this process of rhetorical opposition was an emphasis on openness and public accountability, and this article demonstrates how the scandal that enveloped Collyer in the summer and early autumn of 1823 was framed by concerns over what should be secret, hidden, or exposed and what implications this had for contested notions of the public good.

Keywords

Congregationalism; religion; sexuality; masculinity; radicalism; politics

Introduction

The Congregational minister, William Bengo' Collyer (1782-1854), if he is remembered at all, is now perhaps best known as a hymnist. His near-one-thousand-page *Hymns Partly Collected and*

Partly Original (1812) was intended as a supplement to the works of his celebrated Congregational predecessor Isaac Watts (1674-1748) and included fifty-seven of his own compositions. These were ‘short descriptive or didactic poems, religious or moral essays in verses’.¹ For instance, ‘The World forsaken: or, the Young Man’s Hymn’, cautions youths against the ‘forbidden food’ of earthly pleasure, the final stanza declaring that, with faith in God, young men might be ‘preserv’d from fatal wiles’ and learn to fear ‘temptation’s power’.² Eleven years later, however, Collyer’s own ability to resist the temptations of the flesh was publicly called into question in a scandal centred on his behaviour at Addington Square Baths in Camberwell, Surrey. This incident inspired verse of a rather less elevated variety than Collyer’s pious hymns; the anonymous ‘doggerel’, *Dr Collyer, Piper, and the Baths*, recounted, in ribald terms, the events that are the focus of this article when:

From this said Bath he took away -
 A man. - For what? I hear you say [...].
 Merely to take him to a Room.
 Privately situated near,
 Free from the gaze of others there [...].
 He orders then his ----- down,
 Poor Piper stares, but soon ‘tis done;
 Then with his pious thumb and finger,
 (While Piper nearly bursts with anger)

¹ Quoted in [Anon.] and David Huddleston, ‘Collyer, William Bengo’ (1782–1854)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) [hereafter *ODNB*].

² William Bengo’ Collyer, *Hymns Partly Collected and Partly Original, Designed as a Supplement to Dr Watt’s Psalms and Hymns* (London: Longman, Hurst, Ress, Orme, and Brown, 1812), 877-78.

Takes hold of what we dare not name [...].³

The scandal that consumed Collyer in 1823, and which has been entirely neglected by historical scholarship, was part of a broader phenomenon of the 1820s whereby gender and sexual identities were mobilised for political ends. Once seen as a period of relative political calm between the tribulations of the immediate post-war years and the reformist upheavals of the early 1830s, the 1820s have attracted increased attention from historians.⁴ This is especially true for contemporary sexual scandals, which, as Anna Clark contends, illuminate the contested cultural politics of identity, authority, and public and political morality. The importance of sexual scandal in this period is epitomised by the Queen Caroline Affair of 1820.⁵ Louise Carter argues that gender and politics were indivisible in shaping ideas about public authority and that the Queen's trial counterposed two competing notions of masculinity: the aristocratic libertine and a sober, chivalric manliness, often associated with the respectable classes.⁶ Libertinism was not an exclusively elite trait of course. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries it had also characterised popular radical masculinity. But by the 1830s a more moral, domestic style of masculinity had come to define radical moral politics.⁷ And yet, despite this general trajectory,

³ Cornell University Library, Rare Books and Manuscripts Collections, PR3991.A6 F91 Broadside box, *Dr Collyer, Piper, and the Baths* (London: W. Cubb, 1823.).

⁴ For example, see Malcolm Chase, *1820: Disorder and Stability in the United Kingdom* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 1-3.

⁵ Anna Clark, 'Queen Caroline and the Sexual Politics of Popular Culture in London, 1820', *Representations*, 31 (1990), 47-68; idem, *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), chapter 8. See also, Thomas W. Laqueur, 'The Queen Caroline Affair: Politics as Art in the Reign of George IV', *Journal of Modern History* 54:3 (1982), 417-66; Iain McCalman, *Radical Underworld: Prophets, Revolutionaries and Pornographers in London, 1795-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 162-77; Tamara L. Hunt, 'Morality and Monarchy in the Queen Caroline affair', *Albion* 23:4 (1991), 697-722; Dror Wahrman, '"Middle-Class" Domesticity Goes Public: Gender, Class, and Politics from Queen Caroline to Queen Victoria', *Journal of British Studies* 32:4 (1993), 396-432; Louise Carter, 'British Masculinities on Trial in the Queen Caroline Affair of 1820', *Gender & History* 20:2 (2008), 248-69.

⁶ Carter, 'British Masculinities'.

⁷ For radical libertinism see, McCalman, *Radical Underworld*, 208-13. For radical sexual liberty in the 1820s-30s and a more austere morality thereafter, see Tom Scriven, *Popular Virtue: Continuity and Change in Radical Moral Politics, 1820-70* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 32-38, 82-90. See also Anna Clark, 'The Rhetoric of Chartist Domesticity: Gender, Language and Class in the 1830s and 1840s', *Journal of British Studies*

there were numerous styles of masculinity that were in play in this period, some residual, some inchoate, shaped by changing moral and religious ideals as much as political ones. The public attack on Collyer, for example, shows the enduring power of a third type of masculinity that was still deployed to political effect: the effeminate popinjay who spent too much time with women.⁸ Critics linked this identity to Collyer's status as a minister with a predominantly female congregation. Meanwhile, the masculine performance of his detractors forcibly demonstrates the ways in which notions of manliness were increasingly shaped by concepts of openness, honesty, and what contemporaries defined as 'plainness' of conduct and character.

As the reporting of Collyer's case reveals, these idealised forms of masculine identity were elaborated in explicit contrast to other subordinate and imagined forms, such as secrecy and effeminacy, which were often linked with illicit sexuality and non-normative gender performance, especially same-sex desire. For Collyer, these dual associations of effeminacy and sexual non-normativity coalesced in the scandal of 1823. In this context they had particular power because, as Charles Upchurch has shown, the 1820s saw a surge in the press reporting of cases of sex between men, often involving elite figures of authority and working-class, or otherwise subordinate, youths and young men. These sexual acts were highly politicised, and were configured by radicals as a critique of the established social and political order and of elite

31:1 (1992), 62-88. For the importance of the domestic and personal sphere to male radical activists, see Simon Morgan, *Celebrities, Heroes and Champions: Popular Politicians in the Age of Reform, 1810-67* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021), chapter 5.

⁸ Clark, *Scandal*, pp. 11-12; Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660-1800* (Routledge, 2001), chapter 4; Dominic Janes, *Oscar Wilde Prefigured: Queer Fashioning and British Caricature, 1750-1900* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 7-8, 28, 89-90.

men's abuse of power.⁹ As we shall see, it was this hyper-masculine culture of radical critique to which Collyer was forcibly subjected.¹⁰

In this article, we seek to deepen the historical understanding of the interrelationship of gender and sexuality in the political sphere by highlighting the place of dissenting religion, particularly in its evangelical configuration, within such debates. As we demonstrate, the events of 1823 offer rich insights into numerous interconnected themes: political, medical, and moral reform; professional, social, and epistemological authority; relations between religion, the state, and the military; as well as masculinity, sexual scandal, and the body. To recount the events of 1823, we use the frame of exposure, recounting the story as it was revealed in the press. We begin by establishing the biographical, religious, and political context, and by highlighting the place of exposure within Collyer's own contentious efforts to police public and literary morality. We then explore Collyer's exposure of the bodies of young men, viewed through a telescope and physically manipulated under the auspices of a nominal medical and moral authority, ending with Collyer's own exposure to an almost forensic scrutiny by the radical medical press and their political allies. Our narrative and analytical structure evokes the ways in which the hidden dimensions of events at the baths were gradually revealed, as ever more detail was divulged to the public, and we argue that attacks on, and defences of, Collyer were defined by concerns over what should be secret, hidden, or exposed and what implications this had for contested notions of the public good.

⁹ Charles Upchurch, 'Politics and the Reporting of Sex Between Men in the 1820s', in Brian Lewis (ed.), *British Queer History: New Approaches and Perspectives* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 17-38. See also Upchurch, *Before Wilde: Sex Between Men in Britain's Age of Reform* (Berkeley: California University Press, 2009), chapter 5; Upchurch, *"Beyond the Law": The Politics of Ending the Death Penalty for Sodomy in Britain* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2021), chapter 3.

¹⁰ Upchurch, *"Beyond the Law"*, chapter 3. For the broader history of politics and masculinity see Matthew McCormack, 'A Man's Sphere? British Politics in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', in Christopher Fletcher, Sean Brady, Rachel E. Moss, and Lucy Riall (eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of Masculinity and Political Culture in Europe* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 247-64.

Congregationalism, charisma, and controversy: the early history of William Bengo' Collyer

William Bengo' Collyer was born in Deptford, Kent, in 1782.¹¹ He was initially educated at the Leathersellers' Company School at Lewisham before attending the Independent Homerton Academy for Dissenters in 1798. In 1800 he began preaching to the small congregation 'of an old established Meeting house' in Peckham, Surrey, receiving a call to be its minister the following year.¹² Congregationalism lacked a firm denominational identity prior to the formalisation of the Congregational Union in 1832.¹³ Even so, at the turn of the nineteenth century it was a growing force in the world of Dissent, second only to Methodism in terms of membership.¹⁴ Indeed, Timothy Larsen observes that the 'nineteenth century was a very good century for Congregationalism in England and Wales' and its members were confident and successful enough to be exercising 'leadership on behalf of Protestant Dissenters generally'.¹⁵ This was especially true in relation to the vexed relationship between church and state.¹⁶ Congregationalists were the heirs of the Puritan and Independent traditions within English Protestantism, in that they vigorously opposed the Erastian authority of civil power in religious

¹¹ [Anon.] and Huddleston, 'Collyer'. *The Sunday News* (31 August 1823), 108 claims his place of birth as Blackheath.

¹² *The Sunday News* (31 August 1823), 108.

¹³ Roger H. Martin, *Evangelicals United: Ecumenical Stirrings in Pre-Victorian Britain, 1795-1830* (London: Scarecrow Press, 1983), 73; Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters Volume II: The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 226.

¹⁴ Stephen Orchard, 'Congregationalists', in Andrew Thompson (ed.), *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions, Volume II: The Long Eighteenth Century, c.1689-c.1828* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 31; Timothy Larsen, 'Congregationalists', in Timothy Larsen and Michael Ledger-Lomas (eds), *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions, Volume III: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 40; Watts, *Dissenters Volume II*, 27.

¹⁵ Larsen, 'Congregationalists', 39, 42-5, 54

¹⁶ Watts, *Dissenters Volume II*, 453-458; Michael A. Rutz, *The British Zion: Congregationalism, Politics and Empire, 1790-1850* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2011), chapter 5; idem, 'The Politicizing of Evangelical Dissent, 1811-1813', *Parliamentary History* 20:2 (2001), 187-201.

matters, and rejected all forms of ecclesiastical hierarchy. Moreover, they had been galvanised by the intense spirituality of the eighteenth-century Evangelical Revival, a movement that had not only produced Methodism, a group with whom they were closely associated, but which had also revived Anglicanism.¹⁷

Like other Evangelicals, both within and without the Established Church, early nineteenth-century Congregationalists were noted for their associational activity. Indeed, missionary work, both foreign and domestic, was one of the key foundations upon which Congregationalism's rise to prominence was founded.¹⁸ Collyer was no exception to this and was a leading member of a number of philanthropic and morally reforming organisations including the Religious Tract Society, the London Missionary Society, the London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews, and the British and Foreign Seamen's Friend and Bethel Union.¹⁹ However, his interests also extended to societies of a medical nature, such as the Royal Humane Society, which was concerned with the resuscitation of the apparently drowned, and the City of London Truss Society, which provided treatment for the poor suffering from hernia.²⁰ This latter involvement transcended the conventions of associational benevolence, since Collyer actively sought to acquire medical and surgical knowledge and experience, attending the Borough Hospitals of Guy's and St Thomas', witnessing operations, attending lectures and dissections, and studying anatomical preparations.²¹

¹⁷ Orchard, 'Congregationalists', 31, 43-4; Larsen, 'Congregationalists', 40, 43, 54. Watts, *Dissenters Volume II*, 1-2.

¹⁸ Orchard, 'Congregationalists', 49; Larsen, 'Congregationalists', 40-2; Susan Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in Nineteenth-Century England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Rutz, *British Zion*.

¹⁹ [Anon.] and Huddleston, 'Collyer'; Martin, *Evangelicals United*, 179, 208.

²⁰ [Anon.] and Huddleston, 'Collyer'.

²¹ *Bell's Life in London* (24 August 1824), 621.

The missionary impulse of early nineteenth-century Congregationalism included an extensive programme of chapel building and in this regard Collyer was a most successful minister.²² He grew his initially small congregation in Peckham so rapidly that his chapel had to be enlarged several times, reopening in 1816 as Hanover Chapel. He also preached to a number of other congregations, including at Salters' Hall Chapel in Cannon Street, a well-established centre for dissenting activities. Indeed, so active was Collyer in his preaching that the high church *British Critic* referred to him sardonically as a 'Ubiquitarian' whose name was 'printed in extra-atlas-elephant capitals on our lamp posts, and left in long-primer under our [door] knockers'.²³ Such self-promotion was, in a sense, customary. As Congregationalists selected their own ministers, Collyer was financially and socially dependent on his continued appeal to his flock, an appeal which, as with the 'heart religion' of New Dissent, often took the form of personal charisma.²⁴ In the early nineteenth century, Congregational membership could be somewhat socially diverse. Still, Helmstadter claims that after the Unitarians and Quakers, 'Congregationalists were considered the most wealthy and best educated among the nonconformists' and by the middle of the century its profile was resolutely middle class, especially in London and among its leadership.²⁵ Indeed, for Helmstadter, 'London Congregationalism and the ministry' in particular, 'offered promising opportunities to young men who sensed there was room, if not at the top, at least several rungs higher up the social and economic ladder'.²⁶ Doubtless, this presented valuable opportunities for the socially ambitious

²² Orchard, 'Congregationalists', 49; Larsen, 'Congregationalists', 42.

²³ *The British Critic* 13 (1820), 542.

²⁴ Larsen, 'Congregationalists', 43-4. On the cultures of entrepreneurship and its links to contemporary industrial capitalism, especially among Congregationalists, see R. J. Helmstadter, 'The Reverend Andrew Reed (1787-1862): Evangelical Pastor and Entrepreneur', in R. W. Davis and R. J. Helmstadter (eds), *Religion and Irreligion in Victorian Society: Essays in Honour of R. K. Webb* (London: Routledge, 1992), 7-28.

²⁵ Helmstadter, 'Andrew Reed', 13; Watts, *Dissenters Volume II*, 304-305; Larsen, 'Congregationalists', 48-51.

²⁶ Helmstadter, 'Andrew Reed', 13.

son of a builder, and Collyer seems to have been inclined to secure his class credentials through marriage, in 1813, to Mary Hawkes (d. 1828?), the only daughter and coheir of Thomas Hawkes, a gentleman farmer of Lutterworth, from ‘whom he received considerable landed property in Leicestershire’.²⁷ This middle-class identity was likewise reflected in Collyer’s Peckham congregation, which was often remarked upon for its social respectability.²⁸ Collyer even enjoyed the patronage of royalty, notably the brothers of George IV, Prince Augustus Frederick, Duke of Sussex (1773-1843), and Prince Edward, Duke of Kent (1767-1820). This had its personal advantages; in 1808, for example, Sussex had recommended that Collyer be made a Doctor of Divinity by Edinburgh University.²⁹ But it also had political consequences. Both princes had a reputation for liberalism and for being sympathetic to reforming causes, such as anti-slavery and the relief of restrictions on Dissenters.³⁰ These were issues closely associated with Congregationalists, who, despite having eschewed their early enthusiasm for the French Revolution, continued to advance the cause of personal liberty, albeit within relatively moderate parameters.³¹ However, their resolute opposition to the state regulation of religious matters, and to the spiritual authority of the Church of England, made them the target of suspicion from ultra Tories and other staunch defenders of the ecclesiastical establishment, who feared the influence of men like Collyer within the royal family, the nominal ‘Defenders of the Faith’.³²

²⁷ *The Sunday News* (31 August 1823), 108; [Anon.] and Huddleston, ‘Collyer’; *Nottingham Gazette* (5 November 1813), 3; *Northampton Mercury* (29 September 1810), 2.

²⁸ *The Sunday News* (31 August 1823), 108.

²⁹ [Anon.] and Huddleston, ‘Collyer’.

³⁰ This was particularly true of Prince Augustus Frederick. T. F. Henderson and John Van der Kiste, ‘Augustus Frederick, Prince, duke of Sussex (1773–1843)’, *ODNB*; Elizabeth Longford, ‘Edward, Prince, duke of Kent and Strathearn (1767–1820)’, *ODNB*.

³¹ Orchard, ‘Congregationalists’, 47-8; Watts, *Dissenters Volume II*, chapters III and IV; Rutz, ‘Politicizing of Evangelical Dissent’.

³² Larsen, ‘Congregationalists’, 54-5.

Such sentiments are given clear expression in George Cruikshank's satirical print *Royal Methodists in Kent and Sussex - or, The Dissenters too powerful for the Established Church!!* (1815/16) (Figure 1). Here we see the sleek Collyer ascending 'Jacob's ladder' to attack Lambeth Palace, exclaiming, in reference to his ascent both of the tower, and of the social hierarchy, 'Huzza! my boys you see I am almost at the Top'. He approaches a terrified Archbishop of Canterbury, who drops a sheet of paper on which are inscribed the words: 'Thoughts on the overgrown Strength of ye Dissenters that threaten the total Annihilation of the Established Religion, & a revival of ye Puritanical Days of Oliver Cromwell'. Collyer is literally supported in his endeavour by the Duke of Kent, who is flanked by another of Collyer's allies, the Lord Mayor of London, Matthew Wood (1768-1843). To the right, the Duke of Sussex and the noted reformer John Russell, Duke of Bedford (1766-1839), sing from Isaac Watts' hymnal, while Dissenters attack and disrobe the bishops. Kent tramples on the Act of Settlement, while Sussex stands on 'The Thirty-nine Articles of Religion', the latter atop the tomb of Charles I 'sacrificed by the Puritans AD 1648'. Meanwhile, on the hill to the right of Lambeth Palace we can see the almost-completed Hanover Chapel, its very name a public declaration of royal patronage.³³

Cruikshank's image was intended to be humorous, and it is unlikely that the majority of the public were as offended or concerned by such cross-denominational sociability as some members of the high church and Tory right. Nevertheless, what this print does demonstrate is the close imaginative association between Congregationalism and Puritan religious 'bigotry', as well as that between Congregationalists and Methodists, which, in the public mind at least,

³³ British Museum, George Cruikshank, *Royal Methodists in Kent & Sussex - or the Dissenters too powerful for the Established Church!!* (1815/16), Museum number 1862,1217.320. For broader visual and textual cultural attacks on evangelicalism, see Vic Gatrell, *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century London* (London: Atlantic Books, 2006), 447-54, 459-67.

transcended their profound soteriological differences.³⁴ This latter link is further hinted at in the Duke of Kent's question: 'Who is so Worthy of Royal patronage, as the man that is the admiration of ye Ladies, the popinjay of Methodism & the Ornament of the Print Shops'. The appeal of male Methodist preachers to their female followers had long fuelled suspicions of sexual impropriety. John Wesley (1703-91) and George Whitefield (1714-70) were both thought to exude a powerful sexual charisma, something which their opponents used to attack them.³⁵ The same was true of Congregational ministers like Collyer. As Larsen notes, although often invisible from the movement's contemporary accounts, as well as from its historiography, women formed around two-thirds of the church's membership, organised its social life, and were active in its charitable endeavours. While they were not permitted to preach, they had voting rights and thus were crucial in the selection of their chapel's minister.³⁶ Even if beneficial to these women, this stoked longstanding fears of 'petticoat influence', which was used throughout the long eighteenth century to discredit or undermine men's economic, social, and political independence.³⁷

Such associations between masculinity and dependence were especially problematic for Dissenters, who, as we have heard, were often financially reliant upon the support of their congregations. But the charge of religious fanaticism made in Cruikshank's print could transcend the boundaries of Dissent to censure Evangelical Christianity more generally. After all, though increasingly denominationally factional, the mission community of which Collyer was part

³⁴ These associations also reflect the established, though increasingly unstable, ecumenicism of contemporary evangelicalism. Martin, *Evangelicals United*. For radical attacks on modern 'Puritans' see Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, 468-470.

³⁵ William Gibson and Joanne Begiato, *Sex and the Church in the Long Eighteenth Century* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 137-50.

³⁶ Larsen, 'Congregationalists', 45-8, idem, *Contested Christianity: The Political and Social Contexts of Victorian Theology* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2004), chapter 1.

³⁷ Clark, *Scandal*, 6-8.

encompassed Calvinist Anglicans as well as Dissenters and gave expression to a shared religious zeal and moral high mindedness that many opponents viewed as little more than bigotry and cant.

In this way, Collyer came under attack not only from opponents on the Tory right, including publications like *John Bull*, but also from those on the radical left. In 1820, Collyer co-founded a moralising literary periodical entitled *The Investigator*, to which, in 1822, he contributed a lengthy review called ‘Licentious Publications in High Life’. The particular focus of this review was George Gordon, Lord Byron’s (1788-1824) *Don Juan* (1819-1824), and, to a lesser extent, Percy Bysshe Shelley’s (1792–1822) *Queen Mab* (1813), both of which he condemned for their blasphemy and libertine licentiousness.³⁸ This elicited the anger of Byron and Shelley’s friend, the radical publisher Leigh Hunt (1784-1859), who published a strident response, entitled ‘Canting Slander’, spread across several issues of his journal, *The Examiner*.³⁹ In their respective publications, both Collyer and Hunt used exposure as a tool of moral critique. Collyer claimed that his desire was ‘to detect and to expose’ the ‘general spirit of licentiousness, immorality, and irreligion, [that] has pervaded our literature’, in part by publicising and castigating the two poets’ notoriously unconventional personal lives.⁴⁰ In turn, Hunt sought to do the same thing for Collyer, drawing particular attention to his ambiguous gender identity:

You are what is called “a nice man” among the pious ladies, - a clerical fop. Your smooth-tongued discourses in the pulpit draw crowded congregations. You are surrounded in the vestry-room with ladies anxious to pay attention to so silken and

³⁸ *The Investigator* 5:10 (October 1822), 315-71.

³⁹ For criticism of cant in the period 1790s to 1830s, see Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, chapter 15.

⁴⁰ *The Investigator* 5:10 (October 1822), 317, 357-8, 368.

fashionable a preacher [...] and you can boast, I believe, no small share of favours from the same pious hands in the shape of *rings* and other presents.⁴¹

For political radicals like Hunt, Collyer's odiousness as a self-appointed guardian of public morality was doubtless enhanced by his close association with, and obsequious flattering of, the royal family. Indeed, in 1820 Collyer had combined these positions in a published pair of lachrymose sermons that used the coterminous deaths of his friend, the Duke of Kent, and Kent's father, George III, to reflect on public moral turpitude.⁴² Hunt's accusations therefore centred on the charge of hypocrisy, claiming that there were 'some stories in circulation - to the effect that you are not always the grave and decorous person you are taken for - which might shock the aforesaid feminine nerves'. At this point, Hunt's ammunition was limited to the suggestion that Collyer sang 'pleasant songs to *psalm tunes* in private companies'.⁴³ As we shall see, however, far worse rumours were to surface for Collyer than the suggestion of profane singing, and the lens of press exposure would soon focus on far more salacious details.

Collyer and the Camberwell baths: rumours and response

In the Spring of 1823, Collyer was living in Addington Square, Camberwell, a relatively recent development next to the Grand Surrey Canal. This had been built in 1810 and terminated at the north side of the Square. Adjacent to the canal, and directly opposite Collyer's home, were the

⁴¹ *The Examiner* (22 December 1822), 806.

⁴² William Bengo' Collyer, *The Double Bereavement: Two Sermons Occasioned by the Death of His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent, and of His Late Majesty George the Third* (London: Black, Kingsbury and Co., 1820).

⁴³ *The Examiner* (22 December 1822), 806.

public swimming baths, which had opened in 1820 and which were seemingly being extended between 1822 and 1825.⁴⁴ These baths were an early private example of an institutional trend more generally associated with the municipal public health movement of the mid-century.⁴⁵ They often combined, in one place, facilities for physical exercise, medicinal bathing, and personal bodily cleanliness.⁴⁶ Contemporary descriptions of the Addington Square baths suggest that they took a similar form to later institutions that combined larger ‘plunge’ or swimming baths with individual ‘slipper’ baths.⁴⁷ The social profile of these early baths seems to have been more mixed than the mid-century municipal institutions, being targeted at both working- and middle-class customers, albeit generally segregated into ‘common’ and ‘select’ baths. It is difficult to establish Collyer’s quotidian use of these facilities, but he appears to have been a not infrequent visitor. Indeed, in ‘midsummer’ 1823, Collyer left his house in Addington Square and relocated to Deptford, a move which some attributed to the property’s ‘increasing dampness’ and others to a ‘mysterious transaction’ at the baths.⁴⁸

In the course of his philanthropic activities, Collyer was given to assisting young labouring men in finding employment, which included an assessment of their state of health and physical robustness. He was especially concerned with the detection and treatment of hernias,

⁴⁴ *Morning Chronicle* (25 August 1823). *The Sunday News* (31 August 1823), 109 refers to the baths as being ‘under repair’ in 1822, while William Harnett Blanch, *Ye Parish of Camerwell [sic]: A Brief Account of the Parish of Camberwell, its Histories and Antiquities* (London: E. W. Allen, 1875), 342 states that they were ‘built by Mr John Day in 1825’. Presumably this refers to their enlarged form.

⁴⁵ Clare Parker, ‘Improving the “Condition” of the People: The Health of Britain and the Provision of Public Baths 1840-1870’, *The Sports Historian* 20:2 (2000), 24-24; Tom Crook, ‘Schools for the moral training of the people’: Public Baths, Liberalism and the Promotion of Cleanliness in Victorian Britain, *European Review of History* 13:1 (2006), 21-47.

⁴⁶ For the health aspects of bathing in the nineteenth century, see A van Tubergen, S van der Linden, ‘A Brief History of Spa Therapy’, *Ann Rheum Dis* 61 (2002), 273–275. For the development of swimming communities, see Dave Day & Margaret Roberts, ‘Swimming Beyond the Metropolis: The Kent Street Baths in Victorian Birmingham’, *Midland History* 46:2 (2021), 192-206.

⁴⁷ Crook, ‘Public Baths’, 23.

⁴⁸ *The Sunday News* (31 August 1823), 109; *The Lancet* 1:1 (5 October 1823) 12; *Morning Chronicle* (26 August 1823).

referring relevant cases to either a surgeon or the Truss Society. It was in this capacity that, in May 1823, Collyer happened to physically examine two young men at the baths, Robert Piper, an eighteen-year-old labourer and plasterer of Havil Street, Camberwell, and Richard Povey, a twenty-year-old stonemason of Artichoke Place, Camberwell, who were, at least periodically, employed by John Day, the baths' proprietor.⁴⁹

Initially, nothing much came of this incident beyond Collyer's relocation. However, some three months later, he and his wife took their annual trip to Leicestershire to visit the tenants on their estate. On the day of his planned return to London, Thursday 14 August, a 'friend' arrived in Lutterworth bearing news of a breaking scandal relating to his earlier conduct at the baths. On hearing this, Collyer instructed his friend to return immediately to London to carry out an investigation, while he and his wife followed shortly behind, arriving in Deptford that evening.⁵⁰ Having charged his friends with pursuing their inquiries into the source and nature of the allegations, Collyer went about his normal business, first preaching at Adelphi Chapel in the Strand, accompanied by his wife, then inspecting Hanover Chapel, which was closed for repairs. However, on Saturday 16 August, the Committee of Salters' Hall Chapel expressed their concern about the reports and asked him to hold off preaching on the following day until the facts of the case could be established.⁵¹

By contrast, Collyer's Peckham congregation rallied around him, declaring on Tuesday that Hanover Chapel would reopen the following Sunday.⁵² Meanwhile, the inquiries of Collyer's friends led to a solicitor taking depositions from Piper, Povey, and their workmate, William Towsey. These were subsequently sworn before a magistrate on Saturday 23 August,

⁴⁹ *The Sunday News* (31 August 1823), 109.

⁵⁰ *Morning Chronicle* (26 August 1823).

⁵¹ *Morning Chronicle* (26 August 1823).

⁵² *Morning Chronicle* (26 August 1823).

Collyer having prepared a written statement the day before.⁵³ By the Saturday evening, both the Committee of Salters' Hall and that of Hanover Chapel had received these documents. However, while the latter declared themselves satisfied at the rectitude of their Minister's conduct, the former reiterated their position.⁵⁴

This case first entered the public domain of print on Sunday 24 August when the morning papers carried a short item entitled DOCTOR COLLYER, which stated:

A most unpleasant and, we trust, unfounded, report is abroad respecting the moral conduct of a Reverend Divine, well known as a favourite Evangelical Preacher. The charge against him is said to be of a most revolting description; and, it is added, that he has felt it necessary to absent himself from his usual place of residence on the Surrey side of the Thames.⁵⁵

Bell's Life in London published this paragraph together with Collyer's 'Vindication of his conduct', which they claimed to have received the previous night at 11pm.⁵⁶ In this statement, Collyer made reference to his philanthropy and medical training, asserting that this was 'well known to the lower classes of society, some of whom have availed themselves of my influence'. He made particular reference to his knowledge of hernias, which, he maintained, many of his 'brethren in the ministry' had 'recommended to my attention'. As he stated, 'Many a poor boy, almost naked in the streets, have I directed to my house, and placed under the care of the Marine Society'. He also testified to his having helped to save a drowning person, and his attempt to

⁵³ *Bell's Life in London* (24 August 1823), 621.

⁵⁴ *Morning Chronicle* (26 August 1823).

⁵⁵ *Bell's Life in London* (24 August 1823), 621.

⁵⁶ *Bell's Life in London* (24 August 1823), 621.

save another at Addington Square Baths. Furthermore, he sought to quell a further, if somewhat nebulous, rumour that he had taken a warm bath ‘with some other person - respecting which also, improprieties were affirmed’, stating that he had merely taken a bath ‘in the presence of a *medical* gentleman’ who had attended ‘for the purpose of regulating its temperature and observing its effects’. ‘These points’, he asserted, in a clear reference to insinuations about his character, ‘all bear upon the case, as illustrative of my *known habits*’.⁵⁷

Having made their way into the papers, the events of May took on greater substance as the nature of the charges against Collyer became the subject of increased scrutiny. In his ‘manly and decisive vindication’, Collyer declined to expand on the ‘malignant’ reports or to publish the depositions of the parties involved, although he claimed that copies could be obtained from his solicitors.⁵⁸ However, this failed to satisfy public curiosity, which had already been stimulated by hearsay, to the extent that his morning service at Hanover Chapel was attended by ‘an immense and highly respectable’ congregation, ‘a large proportion of which consisted of females’. Indeed, it was claimed that ‘not less than 500 persons were unable to obtain admission’.⁵⁹ The extent to which all of these attendees were sympathetic is uncertain, since, on Tuesday 26 August, one newspaper suggested that the source of the charge had emerged from within his own congregation at Hanover Chapel.⁶⁰

At this point, the case against Collyer remained, in the words of *The Times*, ‘vague and unpleasant’.⁶¹ Returning to Collyer in *The Examiner*, Hunt demanded openness, stating that Collyer’s vindication ‘proves nothing either way’ and suggesting that the matter be brought to

⁵⁷ *Bell’s Life in London* (24 August 1823), 621.

⁵⁸ *The Sunday News* (31 August 1823), 109; *Bell’s Life in London* (24 August 1823), 621

⁵⁹ *Morning Chronicle* (25 August 1823); *Morning Chronicle* (26 August 1823).

⁶⁰ *Morning Chronicle* (26 August 1823).

⁶¹ *The Times* (25 August 1823), 3.

court as ‘the only manly, decisive, and satisfactory procedure’.⁶² On 1 September *The Times*, together with other papers, published Piper, Povey, and Towsey’s depositions. Who instigated this is unclear, but if Collyer imagined it would dispel the rumours, he was mistaken. In part, these depositions corroborated Collyer’s claim that he had inspected the men for purely medical reasons, suggesting that both Piper and Povey had consented to the examination and that there was no ‘improper motive’ for his actions.⁶³ And yet they gave tantalising additional details, notably that it was Piper’s groin that had been subject to Collyer’s inspection for ‘weakness’ and that Povey had ‘exposed his person’ to Collyer. They also revealed that Collyer had given Piper ‘half a crown’ as well as some ‘religious advice’, and that these examinations had taken place in a private room adjoining the baths. The reaction of Piper and Povey’s workmates was also suggestive, as they had apparently told Povey that he ‘ought to be thrown into the canal for submitting himself to be so examined’.⁶⁴

Of all the depositions, William Towsey’s was perhaps the most damaging, for he reported that, having observed Povey enter the room with Collyer, he had climbed on to the roof and spied on them through a hole in the ceiling. What he saw was Collyer, ‘dressed in a great coat’ and holding ‘a stick and a telescope’ standing in front of Povey whose ‘person [...] was exposed’. Towsey testified that ‘the Doctor [...] [stood] in the front of [...] Povey, and did not at any time place himself in any other position about [...] [his] person’. In the light of the increased press reporting of same-sex activities in the 1820s, Towsey’s account may have raised suspicions in the public mind that his purpose in spying on them was to determine whether an act of what

⁶² *The Examiner* (31 August 1823).

⁶³ *The Times* (1 September 1823), 3.

⁶⁴ *The Times* (1 September 1823), 3.

contemporary law termed ‘sodomy’ had been committed.⁶⁵ Certainly, it is notable that some of his defenders claimed that the fact that both men ‘stood face to face’ provided ‘conclusive evidence of the absence of any criminal act’.⁶⁶

The potential damage to Collyer’s reputation can be gauged by the fact that three days later a provincial Exeter newspaper reported that a ‘great sensation has been excited in the Metropolis’ respecting ‘a crime of the most disgusting nature’. Even while it stated that there were no grounds for believing ‘these surmises’ the language and reach is telling.⁶⁷ It is perhaps no surprise, therefore, that on 12 September *The Times* published four testimonials from Collyer’s ‘medical friends’, asserting the ‘uprightness of his motives’ and the ‘purity of his conduct’. Among these was no less a figure than Thomas Joseph Pettigrew (1791-1865), surgeon to the Duke of Sussex, Duchess of Kent, and the future Queen Victoria, who attested to Collyer’s medical training. Furthermore, one of these friends, Dr Thomas Cox (d. 1828), answered the rumours that Collyer had bathed with another man, claiming that he was the individual who had attended Collyer, and that he had done so purely to monitor his treatment as it was ‘only necessary to appeal to the medical world for instances of the dangerous effects of a protracted continuance in the warm bath’.⁶⁸

For the rest of the month, the scandal simmered. According to Collyer’s supporters, ‘his heart was bleeding from a keen sense of the injury he had sustained’ as he sought to clear his name.⁶⁹ He even requested a convocation of the Dissenting clergy to investigate the rumours;

⁶⁵ *The Times* (1 September 1823), 3. For the British legal regulation of sex between men in this period, see Upchurch, *Before Wilde*, chapter 3.

⁶⁶ *The Sunday News* (31 August 1823), 109.

⁶⁷ *Trewman’s Exeter Flying Post* (4 September 1823).

⁶⁸ *The Times* (12 September 1823), 3.

⁶⁹ *The Sunday News* (31 August 1823), 109.

nonetheless he continued to be the focus of great public attention.⁷⁰ Thus, when he spoke at the Fourth Annual Meeting of the British and Foreign Seamen's Friend and Bethel Union at the City of London Tavern on 17 September, the venue was 'crowded to excess, in great part with the fair sex'.⁷¹ Moreover, the radical press took a greater interest in the case from the latter part of September onwards. On 20 September, for example, William Cobbett's (1763-1835) *Weekly Political Register* reported that a Peckham tailor, William Davies, had broken the scandal. Given his residence, it is possible that Davies was one of Collyer's own congregants, as suggested by earlier rumours. According to Cobbett, Davies challenged Collyer to '*prosecute me [and] bring me into a court of justice where the whole will come out upon oath*'. In addition, Cobbett also claimed that two of the deponents wished 'some contradiction to be published' respecting their affidavits and that Povey denied 'a part of the statements which were published'.⁷²

Enter Thomas Wakley: revelations and acts of exposure

However, the task of full exposure fell not to Cobbett but rather to his friend and collaborator, the radical surgeon Thomas Wakley (1795-1862), who covered the case in the first few issues of his newly founded reforming medical journal, *The Lancet*. There are numerous explanations for why Wakley took a particular interest in Collyer's predicament. After all, he had a new journal to promote, and this was a case of growing public interest. This is what Collyer's supporters alleged, at any rate.⁷³ But, in reality, his motives went much deeper than this. For one thing,

⁷⁰ *Morning Post* (16 September 1823).

⁷¹ *Morning Chronicle* (18 September 1823).

⁷² *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register* (20 September 1823), cols 751-55.

⁷³ George Packwood, *The Razor, And Not The Lancet, Or Dr. Collyer Triumphant Over His Malignant Enemies* (London: Plummer and Brewes, 1823).

Wakley was a champion of the Romantic literary radicals Byron and Shelley, whom Collyer had publicly castigated. A resolute defender of the free press, including against accusations of seditious blasphemy, Wakley was doubtless enraged by the fact that, as a Congregationalist, Collyer demanded freedom from state regulation while simultaneously expecting the mechanisms of state authority to assist him in his moral crusade against literary licentiousness.⁷⁴ Given his pious grandstanding and royal toadying, Collyer's perilous predicament was a gift to political radicals like Wakley, who were happy to expose the questionable sexual morality of what he called 'Tract Hypocrites'.⁷⁵ For another, Collyer had made claims to medical expertise, something which the self-consciously professionalising *Lancet* was inclined to challenge. And yet Wakley's objection to Collyer's brandishing of his medical credentials transcended mere professional gatekeeping. Rather, Collyer's leveraging of his spurious medical expertise, combined with his very real social and political authority as a respected minister with royal connections, underscored what radicals like Wakley saw as the exploitation of power in pursuit of nefarious ends. And in Collyer's case, as in other contemporary examples of sexual scandal, illicit sexuality served as the moral expression of wider political and social corruption. In the rest of this article, we therefore want to explore how Collyer's exposure at the hands of the radicals went to the very heart of contemporary ideas about masculinity, sexuality, power, and authority.

Wakley initially trailed the Collyer case in the first issue of *The Lancet*, on 5 October 1823, stating that they had received 'a variety of communications', which they believed had 'not hitherto been sufficiently investigated'. He further titillated his readers by stating that the next

⁷⁴ *The Investigator* 5:10 (October 1822), 316. For Wakey and literary radicalism, see Michael Brown, "'Bats, Rats and Barristers': *The Lancet*, Libel and the Radical Stylistics of Early Nineteenth-Century English Medicine", *Social History* 39:2 (2014), 182-209.

⁷⁵ *The Lancet* 1:5 (2 November 1823), 165.

issue would report more details, or ‘*at least such parts as will admit of publication*’.⁷⁶ The second issue contained new, extended testimonies from Piper, Povey, Towsey, and a fourth statement from an entirely new deponent, Timothy Keates, a fellow workman. These new testimonies were nothing less than explosive and provided a much clearer sense of the course of events; in particular, they revealed graphic hints of sexual contact, albeit partially complicated by the redacting of the most explicit details and also by Piper and Povey’s continued desire to defend their own masculine identities and reputations.

Piper deposed that Collyer had approached him on New Church Road when he was walking to Addington Square Baths and asked him if he felt pain in his groin when he walked fast. On Piper affirming that he did, Collyer asked if he had any objections to being examined. Piper ‘ultimately consented’, though ‘he previously hesitated about it’. The baths consisted of the ‘Common Bath; in which the lower order of people bathe’ and a ‘Select Baths’ separated by a field of 80 yards in length. Collyer led Piper to the Common Baths where they entered a private bath, Collyer asking ‘Can anybody see us?’ Having locked the door and put down his telescope and stick, Collyer asked Piper to unbutton his breeches, at which request Piper felt ‘abashed’. Collyer palpated his groin, claiming that Piper had two lumps and must take care of himself otherwise he would fall ‘into a decline’, a standard contemporary euphemism for the consequences of onanism.⁷⁷ Collyer ‘then laid the thumb and fingers of his right hand upon the ***** [presumably ‘penis’ or equivalent]’ asking Piper ‘if he felt any sensation’. Piper responded that he did not, and ‘Dr. Collyer then practised a continuance of such treatment repeating his former question till at length there was a ***** [emission?]; that

⁷⁶ *The Lancet* 1:1 (5 October 1823), 12.

⁷⁷ *The Lancet* 1:2 (12 October 1823), 46-7. For onanism and ‘decline’, see Joanne Begiato, *Manliness in Britain, 1760-1900: Bodies, Emotion, and Material Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 79-80.

examinant was in a great perspiration and tremor; that he was alarmed thereat, when Dr. Collyer observed, “this shows you have got a free passage”’. Collyer then recommended that Piper bathe four times a week, and drink camomile tea every other morning, before giving him 2s 6d, a reasonable sum of money for a young labourer.⁷⁸ This exchange of money might well have appeared suspicious to some, though one of Collyer’s defenders claimed that he ‘had been in the habit of relieving [Piper] with money for some years’.⁷⁹

Following this, Collyer headed to the Common Bath, while Piper spoke to Keates and Towsey ‘who were both at work at the door of the Select Baths’, telling them what had just occurred. According to Towsey’s testimony, Piper told the two men ‘that he never would go in there again’ with Collyer and that he ‘appeared to be considerably agitated, was in a great sweat, and looked very pale’. The new deponent, Timothy Keates, added that Piper ‘appeared as if he were about to shed tears in consequence of what had passed between him’ and Collyer. It is at this point that Povey joins the story, when the three men see him entering the baths with Collyer.⁸⁰ However, as with Piper, it transpired that this was not Povey’s first encounter with Collyer. In his testimony, Povey revealed that he had previously visited Collyer at home, where he had examined Povey’s groin with the promise of securing him a post with the East India Company. Collyer stated: ‘there appear to be some lumps in your groin. I have studied medicine, and can relieve you, therefore let me see, as I cannot recommend any body to the India House unless I recommend them perfectly sound’. Even so, Povey continued to declare that he ‘did not

⁷⁸ It is not clear if the asterisks correlate with the number of letters in the redacted word as they vary in number. However, the meaning is generally quite clear and would have been easily inferred by readers especially in context. *The Lancet* 1:2 (12 October 1823), 46-7.

⁷⁹ *The Sunday News* (31 August 1823), 109.

⁸⁰ *The Lancet* 1:2 (12 October 1823), 48.

consider the said examination at all indecent or wrong' and 'would never have consented' to it 'had not the said Doctor Collyer stated he had studied medicine'.⁸¹

On the day of the incident, Povey was working at the Common Baths; these were enclosed by a wall from which extended what Povey described as a 'temporary erection of a description of a shed' under which the boys and young men attending the baths would undress. He also revealed that Collyer entered the Common Baths and took a seat there, which he '*never saw any other gentleman do*'.⁸² Whether this was a habit or not is unclear, but it may explain why Collyer carried a telescope when he visited the baths. His purpose for doing so was never explicitly stated. It may have been for natural philosophical enquiry, Susan Vincent observing that instrument makers were making telescopes for private individuals from the last quarter of the eighteenth century. However, Vincent also notes that such optical instruments, particularly quizzing glasses, were associated in satirical print culture with other less enlightened forms of viewing, namely scopophilia and voyeurism.⁸³ A contemporary satirical poem in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, for example, mocks the pretensions of the rationalist foot soldiers of the contemporary 'March of Intellect' thus: 'Look through thy telescope - what dost thou 'spy? / Nay, jade, behave thyself, and smooth thy cheeks'.⁸⁴ Furthermore, while quizzing glasses might connote domination of the colonised subject of the gaze when depicted in more serious visual culture, such monocular looking in satiric prints was increasingly associated with effeminate display by the early nineteenth century.⁸⁵

⁸¹ *The Lancet* 1:2 (12 October 1823), 48.

⁸² *The Lancet* 1:2 (12 October 1823), 48. Italics in original. William Benbow cynically commented that 'to a man of sensibility and delicate feelings' watching 'boys undress' should have been 'extremely disgusting'. *The Rambler's Magazine* 2:2 (1 November 1823), 505.

⁸³ Susan Vincent, 'Ogling, Quizzing, and Spying: The Eyeglass', *Fashion Studies* 1:1 (2018), 1-40.

⁸⁴ 'April Nonsense', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 17:99 (April 1825), 415.

⁸⁵ Vincent, 'Eyeglass', 21, 34, 35.

While sat in the Common Baths Collyer called out to Povey, asking whether he had ‘noticed the boy Piper lately’, adding, in what was almost certainly a reference to masturbation, “‘he don’t seem very well: do you think he ***** himself?’” Povey replied that he did not know, to which Collyer ‘rejoined “because it is a common thing amongst boys at school”’. Povey repeated that he did not know, and Collyer left. However, a ‘short time only had elapsed’ before Collyer returned and enquired after Povey’s own health. The latter responded that he did have ‘a slight weakness upon him’ to which Collyer asked ‘whether it arose from the ***** complaint’, probably implying venereal disease. Povey denied this, claiming it arose from a sprain ‘caused by his being accustomed to do, among other feats of agility and strength, that of [...] holding his hat with his right hand perpendicularly about seven feet in height, and [...] kicking the same with his right foot’.⁸⁶ Collyer’s questioning of Povey is suggestive. Without wanting to ascribe undue instrumentality to his actions, it could be imagined that the diagnosis of hernias provided a relatively innocuous opportunity to inspect and physically manipulate the groins of young men. However, by shifting the focus to masturbation and venereal disease, Collyer, deliberately or otherwise, intruded a more explicitly sexual dimension into the conversation, encouraging these men to discuss intimate sexual practices with him.

Perhaps due to his groin strain, Povey, like Piper, agreed to accompany Collyer across the physical and class divide between the Common and Select Baths. As with Piper, he entered one of the private baths, Collyer shutting the door and exclaiming ‘now, Povey, let me look at you’. On this occasion, Collyer retained his stick and telescope under his left arm, examining Povey’s person with his right hand. In the published account three lines of asterisks follow

⁸⁶ *The Lancet* 1:2 (12 October 1823), 49. Collyer’s defenders did not dispute his moral and physical interest in the two young men. *The Sunday News* (31 August 1823), 109 claimed that he perceived them ‘to be sinking into a premature grave, one from natural delicacy of constitution, and the other from the effects of disease, brought on by vicious indulgencies’.

before the text resumes with the claim that Povey never looked Collyer in the face, ‘feeling abashed and ashamed’. Indeed, he maintained that he had a ‘great desire’ to leave the room, but that Collyer asserted that he had studied medicine and that, in order to assist him, he must examine him thoroughly. Towsey and Keates’ accounts, based on their observations through the spyhole in the ceiling, corroborated Povey’s. Both confirmed that he did not look directly in Collyer’s face, and in Towsey’s words ‘appeared desirous of getting away [...] by turning himself in the direction of the door’.⁸⁷ Povey asserted that it was only Collyer’s claims to medical knowledge which had induced him to ‘submit to such examination’ albeit with ‘great reluctance’. Nonetheless, he exposed his genitals to Collyer a second time, the whole incident lasting, according to Towsey, ten minutes, or possibly ‘much longer’. Upon leaving the private room, Povey stated that he ‘told his fellow workmen of the circumstance, observing, “I am ***** [damned] if I have any more doctoring”’, to which another workmate, Thomas Barton, responded, as we have heard, that Povey ‘ought to be thrown in the canal’ for allowing himself to be examined in this way.⁸⁸

Boy’s bodies, men’s power: authority and exploitation

Collyer’s intimate encounter with these two young men had immediate consequences for all their masculine reputations. Masculinity is forged in the realm of social performance and male peer networks.⁸⁹ Thus, Povey claimed that he was ‘indignant and in a rage, at the suspicion that existed in the minds of, and was expressed by, his fellow workmen’. He justified his involvement

⁸⁷ *The Lancet* 1:2 (12 October 1823), 52, 53.

⁸⁸ *The Lancet* 1:2 (12 October 1823), 49, 50, 52.

⁸⁹ For the performance and evaluation of masculinities in peer groups, see Ben Griffin, ‘Hegemonic Masculinity as a Historical Problem’, *Gender & History* 30:2 (2018), 377-400.

by deferring to Collyer's social authority and medical expertise, stating that 'any man in his situation would have acted in the same way'. On the other hand, he asserted his class-based masculine honour through the spectre of violence, maintaining that had he known that Piper had already been subject to a similar examination, he 'should have known what [Collyer] meant' and that "he'd be ***** [damned] if he [...] would not have knocked him into the bath' adding 'that he should have gone in for a certainty'.⁹⁰ Such appeals to honour-based violence would have resonated with radical opponents of tyranny and corruption, including socially-superior men like Wakley, whose youthful prowess as a boxer illustrate the shift to a more 'plain' and 'robust' model of manliness that emerged in the early nineteenth century.⁹¹

Having said this, Povey's appeal to his youthful force and vigour, also evident in his public displays of athletic prowess, had ambivalent connotations. While these qualities advertised his conformity with, and performance of, dominant notions of embodied working-class manliness, they also rendered him the subject of the desirous middle-class, male (telescopic) gaze. The emotionalised manly body of the nineteenth century that disseminated gender ideals was, after all, often working-class, muscular, handsome, and youthful, exactly the same attributes that could attract the erotically charged male gaze.⁹²

If Povey appealed both to his social deference and stout, physical sense of self-respect, then Collyer's initial defence of his masculinity centred on his claims to social and epistemological authority, as well as to his philanthropic largesse. In response to his fellow workmen's suspicions, Povey fetched Collyer to explain his actions. Collyer stated that 'if his conduct was to be construed in a criminal light he must leave off doing good for poor people'.

⁹⁰ *The Lancet* 1:2 (12 October 1823), 50.

⁹¹ Begiato, *Manliness in Britain*, 40. On Wakley and boxing, see Samuel Squire Sprigge, *The Life and Times of Thomas Wakley* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1897), 21-2.

⁹² Begiato, *Manliness in Britain*, 4.

This paternalistic defence failed to satisfy his accusers, however, with Keates pointing to Piper and asking Collyer, ““WHY DON’T YOU SPEAK TO THAT BOY?””. The use of the term ‘boy’ to describe young men between eighteen and twenty years old is not unusual in the reporting of such scandals. For example, at around the same time as the Collyer furore was brewing, William Cobbett published an account of the trial of the Reverend Thomas Jephson for sexually propositioning one James Welsh, entitled ‘The Parson and the Boy; or, the fire-shovel hats in a bustle’ (1823). At both the trial itself, and in Cobbett’s commentary, the twenty-year-old Welsh was consistently referred to as the ‘boy’.⁹³ This emphasis upon the youth of these men is extremely suggestive, because, as Upchurch’s work on press reporting of ‘unnatural sexual assault’ in the 1820s reveals, most cases involved older, socially elite men and younger, working-class youths. Such language therefore served to highlight the vulnerability of these young men and their relative powerlessness compared to those who had allegedly assaulted them. The political significance of these sexual scandals was doubtless enhanced by the fact that many of the most infamous concerned the exposure of clerics and church leaders. As such, they were appealing to men like Cobbett, Wakley, and, most notoriously, the publisher and pornographer William Benbow (1787-1864), whose anti-clericalism was rooted both in a political critique of the establishment and, as we have heard, a desire to expose the hypocrisy of the self-appointed guardians of public morality, particularly among the Evangelicals.⁹⁴ But where the radical critique most fully overlapped with popular opinion was with regard to wealthier men’s capacity to exploit their social privilege and escape punishment for their supposed crimes.⁹⁵

⁹³ Cobbett’s *Weekly Political Register* 47:5 (2 August 1823), cols 257-320.

⁹⁴ McCalman, *Radical Underworld*, 215-19, 221-2; Gibson and Begiato, *Sex and Church*, 228-30, 279-281; Upchurch, *Beyond the Law*, 80-85.

⁹⁵ Upchurch, ‘Politics and the Reporting of Sex’, pp. 18-19; Upchurch, *Beyond the Law*, 74-80.

This context serves to explain Collyer's shift to another register in defending his reputation, for he then asserted his social and economic superiority over the men, responding to Keates in 'very high language' saying that 'if he heard any more of it, if it cost him 10,000l. he would have the law of them'.⁹⁶ As Upchurch has shown, the years between 1822 and 1825 saw a peak in attempts to blackmail propertied men through accusations of sexual impropriety, as well as legal efforts to protect the interests of these men.⁹⁷ Indeed, in the very month that this incident occurred, a Bill was on its way through Parliament, eventually becoming law in July, that sought to punish by transportation or imprisonment those who 'shall maliciously threaten to accuse any other Person [...] of any infamous Crime, with a View or Intent to gain Money [...] or Merchandize, from the Person so threatened'.⁹⁸ Upchurch argues that such legislative changes made it far easier for men accused of same-sex acts to launch a countercharge of extortion against their accusers and may help to explain Collyer's reference to his formidable financial and legal resources.⁹⁹

Collyer's tactic worked, at least to a degree. Towsey ostensibly declared himself 'satisfied' with Collyer's explanation, but, as soon as Collyer had left, subverted his earlier statement by claiming that he was satisfied not with Collyer's justification, but rather that 'the said Doctor Collyer had acted shamefully and indecently'. However, in spite of their braggadocio, both Towsey and Keates were plainly mindful of Collyer's power, the former deposing that 'but for the threats held out, he would have told everybody of the circumstance'.¹⁰⁰ For both these young stonemasons, and for Collyer himself, not only was the nature of what

⁹⁶ *The Lancet* 1:2 (12 October 1823), 54.

⁹⁷ Upchurch, *Before Wilde*, chapter 3; *Beyond the Law*, chapter 4.

⁹⁸ 4. Geo. IV, cap. LV (1823).

⁹⁹ Upchurch, *Before Wilde*, chapter 3.

¹⁰⁰ *The Lancet* 1:2 (12 October 1823), 52, 54.

happened in that private room under dispute, so too was their view of what ought to be opened up to wider scrutiny.

Enter George Packwood: masculinity and the contested politics of exposure

This tension between secrecy and disclosure would come to define the public reception of the Collyer case. For radicals like Wakley, the case was ‘one of the most extraordinary that ever excited public attention’.¹⁰¹ By printing these new depositions, he claimed, ‘the *poor men* engaged in this transaction have had an opportunity of publishing *their statements* as well as the *rich man* his’.¹⁰² However, making meaning from the Collyer scandal was not simply the preserve of the radical press. In October 1823 the well-known, and somewhat eccentric, shaving entrepreneur George Packwood entered the fray, publishing a short pamphlet entitled *The Razor And Not The Lancet*. Packwood’s intervention was, ostensibly at least, supportive of Collyer, arguing that ‘the virtuous, the decent, the moral, [and] the pious part of society’ had sought to ‘suppress the report [of Collyer’s actions], even if true, that it might not appear with its filthy details to pollute the mind and affect the whole system of society at large’.¹⁰³ Yet Packwood was not an unqualified defender of Collyer’s actions. He acknowledged that what Collyer had done was ‘evidently wrong, but not criminal’.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, he believed that public morality was best served through silence, and that any reform in Collyer’s character, or any moral recalibration on the part of the clergy more generally, should be achieved through private

¹⁰¹ *The Lancet* 1:2 (12 October 1823), 54

¹⁰² *The Lancet* 1:2 (12 October 1823), 56-7.

¹⁰³ Packwood, *Razor*, 13.

¹⁰⁴ Packwood, *Razor*, 11.

reflection rather than public excoriation.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, Packwood alleged that *The Lancet* was little better than the blackmailers and extortionists ‘who in St. James’ Park, or in the public streets at night, have accosted the innocent man, whom necessity calls aside, and have accused him, by a Devil’s whisper in the ear, of the most abominable crime’.¹⁰⁶ For him, *The Lancet*’s ‘needy adventurers [...] atheists and votaries of sin’ were exploiting Piper and Povey for their own nefarious political ends, just as surely as Collyer was exploiting them for his sexual gratification. Packwood accused Wakley of using these ‘poor men who seemed the innocent cause of it’ to ‘revive the whole affair’, despite the ‘public mind’ having been ‘tranquillized’ and any moral lessons already learned.¹⁰⁷

While these opposing perspectives were rooted in different conceptions of the public good, both spoke to contemporary gender ideologies concerning the implications of openness. Collyer’s opponents and supporters alike shared the view that such matters must by necessity be hidden from the purview of women. ‘Did not every man of family, of common decency, hide the circumstance from his family?’ Packwood asked.¹⁰⁸ But, for Collyer’s opponents, these concerns went beyond the risk of undermining female and familial morals through publicity, to encompass broader issues about women’s social and political agency and its implications for masculine authority. The *Times* contrasted women’s emotionality and sympathy with the manly reason required to judge conduct and character in public life, declaring ‘The generosity of the female sex to persons in distress is too well known to require any fresh illustration’. Like Packwood, they judged Collyer’s conduct ‘too loathsome for female ears [...] polluting both mind and heart’, but they also questioned the very character of his female defenders, stating that the

¹⁰⁵ Packwood, *Razor*, 14.

¹⁰⁶ Packwood, *Razor*, 18.

¹⁰⁷ Packwood, *Razor*, 13-16.

¹⁰⁸ Packwood, *Razor*, 13.

‘woman who puts herself forward in such a case is not so much kind in spirit as loose of principle; she is not generous but shameless’.¹⁰⁹

As discussed earlier, Collyer’s masculine identity had long been compromised by his popularity with his female congregants and he was accused of self-regarding vanity: ‘a popinjay of Methodism & the ornament of the print shops’.¹¹⁰ Moreover, in November 1823, further allegations were made against Collyer’s masculine authority by William Benbow. It was suggested that Collyer had abandoned his suit to a ‘young woman in humble life’ in favour of ‘an antiquated lady’ of fortune and had sought to defend his actions by reference to the ‘consent’ of his congregation, who maintained that he ‘ought to rise in the world by any means’.¹¹¹ If the accusations of vain self-regard called on eighteenth-century configurations of effeminacy, then the charge that he ‘married himself to wrinkles and £15,000’ was sharpened by emergent notions of masculine independence that would see women formally excluded for the first time from public political life by the Reform Act of 1832.¹¹² Collyer’s status as a Congregational minister made him particularly vulnerable to the charge of dependence on women. Evangelical Dissent offered an ambivalent space for women, for while they rarely held formal authority or office, these movements could provide an opportunity for the exercise of agency.¹¹³ It is perhaps suggestive that, in attacking Collyer, and Evangelical Dissent more generally, Cruikshank’s satirical print (Figure 1) includes references to Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon (1707-

¹⁰⁹ *The Times* (16 October 1823), 2.

¹¹⁰ Cruikshank, *Royal Methodists*.

¹¹¹ *The Rambler’s Magazine* 2:2 (1 November 1823), 503-4.

¹¹² *The Rambler’s Magazine* 2:2 (1 November 1823), 504; Matthew McCormack, *The Independent Man; Citizenship and Gender Politics in Georgian England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005); Kathryn Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens: Women, Gender and Political Culture in Britain, 1815-1867* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), chapter 5.

¹¹³ Catherine Hall and Leonore Davidoff, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London: Routledge, 2002 [1987]), 76-148; Sue Morgan and Jacqueline de Vries (eds), *Women, Gender and Religious Cultures in Britain, 1800-1940* (London: Routledge, 2010); Larsen, *Contested Christianity*, chapter 1.

91) and Joanna Southcott (1750-1814), both of whom flourished, albeit in very different ways, outside the boundaries of religious conventionality. To be dependent on women for professional and economic success was the very antithesis of manly independence. Hence, in denouncing Collyer's support by a 'phalanx of ladies', radical and reformist opponents challenged his masculinity and rendered his position and popularity questionable.¹¹⁴ Moreover, allegations of effeminacy and dependence coalesced in suspicions of sexual non-normativity. For example, in reference to his supposed financial ruin at the hands of the Duke of Kent, who had flattered his vanity, Benbow claimed in his *Rambler's Magazine* that the 'Doctor's haughty spirit was humbled, his pride met a severe fall, his fine carriage and establishments were all laid down, and he retired to tramp on foot amongst the bricklayer's boys, and wade through the dirty baths about Addington Square'.¹¹⁵

In contrast to Collyer's alleged effeminacy, radicals positioned themselves in hypermasculine terms as plain speaking, open, and morally unimpeachable. *The Lancet* stated that Collyer's behaviour was 'revolting to every feeling of manhood' and 'must excite in every manly bosom, feelings of disgust and horror'.¹¹⁶ Likewise, the *Rambler's Magazine* declared that 'if a prosecution does not follow these charges, any thing is possible in the case that is contrary to nature, decency, religion, morality, and honest fame'.¹¹⁷ His opponents therefore demanded that he answer the charges in an open arena, either the court of law or the public domain of print, both of which were spaces for manly performance.¹¹⁸ In actual fact, however, Collyer's ultimate

¹¹⁴ *The Times* (16 October 1823), 2.

¹¹⁵ Benbow claimed that the Duke had 'put his hand into the Doctor's canonical repository, and eased it of the whole of his wife's fortune, by way of loan'. The 'foolish' circumstance by which he was relieved of money conveyed by his wife, only served to further undermine Collyer's masculine independence. *The Rambler's Magazine* 2:2 (1 November 1823), 504.

¹¹⁶ *The Lancet* 1:4 (26 October 1823), 123-4.

¹¹⁷ *The Rambler's Magazine* 2:2 (1 November 1823), 506.

¹¹⁸ For example, see Katie Barclay, *Men on Trial: Performing Emotion, Embodiment and Identity in Ireland, 1800-45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019).

response, in November 1823, was to attempt to shut down opportunities for free discussion by proceeding by indictment against the publisher of *The Lancet* under the terms of the 1819 Criminal Libel Act.¹¹⁹ Crucially, as his opponents in *The Times* and other journals noted, a criminal charge of libel did not require the truth of the matter to be established, as it would in a civil case.¹²⁰ This ran contrary to Collyer's consistent claim that he had 'not shrunk from scrutiny'.¹²¹ For radicals, in particular, Collyer could thus now be seen to be hiding behind the tyranny of the state, as much as the skirts of his female congregants.

Ultimately, nothing came of Collyer's threat. Even if taunting letters occasionally appeared in *The Times* seeking news of the progress Collyer's libel case against *The Lancet*, giving the latter cause to reprint the affidavits in full, the case petered out during the course of 1824.¹²² Even as it did so, however, Collyer's masculine reputation continued to be bound up with broader political issues, notably the relationship between church and state. Just as his royal connections had raised concerns, so too did his relations with the army. When Collyer spoke at the Orange Street Chapel Religious Tract Society in November 1823, the large audience included 'several soldiers, chiefly of the Guards, both in the gallery and the platform' among the latter of whom was Trumpet Major Rawlins of the Life Guards.¹²³ A number of publications expressed their surprise and consternation at this eventuality.¹²⁴ As Gareth Atkins has argued, the fervent nationalism of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars had a powerful religious aspect, as Evangelicals in particular articulated a providential understanding of Britain's ultimate

¹¹⁹ *Morning Chronicle* (29 November 1823).

¹²⁰ *The Times* (28 November 1823), 2.

¹²¹ *Bell's Life in London* (24 August 1823), 621.

¹²² *The Times* (9 July 1824), 4; *The Lancet* 2:48 (28 August 1824), 257-65.

¹²³ *Morning Chronicle* (6 November 1823).

¹²⁴ For example, *The Times* (7 November 1823), 3; *John Bull* (10 November 1823), 357.

victory.¹²⁵ The years following Waterloo saw Evangelical Protestants forging a closer relationship with the military, engaging in proselytising activities that provoked concern about their influence on an institution inseparably bound up with the Church of England.¹²⁶ This particular revelation of Dissenting Evangelism within the army thus raised the ire of ultra-Tories and radical reformers alike, *The Lancet* pronouncing, somewhat melodramatically in recollection of the Cromwellian New Model Army, that ‘if this infamous system of intrigue be permitted to continue, at no distant period a bigoted and fanatical soldiery will overthrow all our institutions [...] and spread terror and desolation throughout the land’.¹²⁷

At another level, however, this condemnation tapped into the broader landscape of sexual scandal, prompted in particular by the infamous case of Percy Jocelyn, Bishop of Clogher (1764-1843), who was caught in a compromising sexual position with a young guardsman in the back room of a London alehouse in 1822.¹²⁸ Thus, in commenting on Collyer’s company at Orange Street, Wakley pointedly declared: ‘This union of *parsons* and *soldiers* brought to our recollection many recent events’.¹²⁹ The parallels between Collyer and Clogher’s cases are evident in this print attributed to George Cruikshank’s brother, Isaac Robert Cruikshank (1789-1856) (Figure 2). Entitled *The Arse Bishop Joslin-g a Soldier* (1822), it depicts the moment of Clogher’s arrest, the constable declaring that ‘I’ll make a full exposure’ while Jocelyn appeals to his wealth and status, beseeching ‘Do let me go, I’ll give you £500’. Meanwhile, onlookers demand punishment, one man demanding that ‘They must not live to disgrace the Church and the

¹²⁵ Gareth Atkins, ‘Christian Heroes, Providence, and Patriotism in Wartime Britain, 17931-1815’, *Historical Journal* 58:2 (2015), 393-414.

¹²⁶ Gareth Atkins, *Converting Britannia: Evangelicals and British Public Life, 1770-1840* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2019).

¹²⁷ *The Lancet* 1:7 (16 November 1823), 246. On *The Lancet* and melodrama, see Michael Brown, *Emotions and Surgery in Britain, 1793-1912* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), chapter 4.

¹²⁸ McCalman, *Radical Underworld*, 206-7; Upchurch, *Before Wilde*, 136-7; Janes, *Oscar Wilde*, 165-66; Gibson and Begiato, *Sex and the Church*, 226-28; Upchurch, *Beyond the Law*, 74-82.

¹²⁹ *The Lancet* 1:7 (16 November 1823), 243.

Army'. Clogher's case became a *cause célèbre* in a way that Collyer's perhaps did not, in large part because Clogher had previously had a man flogged for making accusations of sexual impropriety. Even so, Clogher and Collyer both demonstrated the general hypocrisy of clerical moralists, Dissenters and members of the Established Church alike, who 'under the mask of holy orders, perpetrate unhallowed sins'.¹³⁰ After all, Clogher, like Collyer, was a prominent campaigner against licentiousness and a member of the Society for the Suppression of Vice (1802).¹³¹ Both cases also epitomised the exploitation of working-class youths by elite men of power and authority and troubled contemporary understandings of masculine identity. For, just as soldiers and labouring men were coming to embody an idealised physical manliness, Clogher's and Collyer's case brought into stark relief the ambivalences of embodied masculinity and hinted at the permeable boundary between the alluring and the erotic.¹³²

Conclusion

Collyer's dalliances with 'bricklayers' boys' in the 'dirty baths' of Addington Square did him little long-term personal or professional damage. While he did not retain the public profile he had previously enjoyed, the records suggest that he continued preaching until his death in 1854.¹³³ Even so, the moral conflagration that briefly engulfed his public reputation between 1823 and 1824 reveals several important features about public and spiritual authority in the age of reform.

¹³⁰ *The Rambler's Magazine* 2:2 (1 November 1823), 505. This quotation refers specifically to Collyer.

¹³¹ McCalman, *Radical Underworld*, 206.

¹³² Joanne Begiato, *Manliness in Britain*. For the sexual charge of guardsmen, albeit for a later period, see Matt Houlbrook, 'Soldier Heroes and Rent Boys: Homosex, Masculinities, and Britishness in the Brigade of Guards, circa 1900-1960', *Journal of British Studies* 42:3 (2003), 351-88.

¹³³ *The Congregational Year Book for 1854 containing the Proceedings of the Congregational Union for 1853 and General Statistics of the Denomination* (London: Jackson and Walford, 1854), 273.

Although there has been considerable focus on Anglican clergy subjected to sexual scandals, such as Percy Jocelyn, Collyer's case reveals that his status as a dissenting minister configured his social and religious authority in particular ways. While accusations of sexual non-normativity and effeminacy could be levelled at all clergymen, the fact that he, like other dissenting ministers, especially Congregationalists, relied upon the financial and personal support of women rendered him especially vulnerable to attacks on his masculinity through claims of petticoat influence, and lack of manly independence. The question of Collyer's sexuality and his motives in examining the young men remains open. The complex interpersonal motivations and issues of consent that the case raises are ultimately unanswerable. What is clear, however, is that, in the case of men like Collyer, whose masculinity was already compromised by their female associations, such scandals were a gift to radical, anticlerical figures who constructed their own public, political identities through attacks on moral and clerical hypocrisy. In so doing, they crafted personae as morally upright bastions of middle-class authority. Although sexual liberty and libertarianism were part of the radical tradition, by the 1820s men like Wakley were articulating a proto-Victorian moral worldview in which middle-class men were required to protect women and the domestic sphere from illicit and non-normative sexuality. Integral to this process was heteronormative masculinity and the creation of a hyper-masculine public sphere in which true, upstanding (middle-class) men should be open to public scrutiny, because they were morally unblemished and had nothing to fear from exposure. By contrast, reformers cast their opponents, whether corrupt politicians or hypocritical parsons, as secretive, deceitful, and thus inherently unmanly.

If the effect on Collyer was ultimately limited, the broader social impact of radical critiques of clerical, particularly evangelical and dissenting, masculinities was profound. As

Michael R. Watts, Timothy Larsen, and others have shown, the middle decades of the nineteenth century would see Dissenters endeavouring to shape their own identities as unimpeachably respectable bastions of middle-class virtue, including in sexual and family matters.¹³⁴ On the basis of the Collyer case, and of other similar scandals, this drive for moral respectability might be seen as a response not only to specific critiques, but also to broader shifts within the moral sensibilities of radical reform.¹³⁵ And yet the charge of secrecy, effeminacy, and non-normative sexuality was one that would continue to haunt the practice of religious heterodoxy. However, by the middle of the century it was not those in the sphere of Protestant Dissent, or even those on the Evangelical wing of the Church of England, who would be caught in the glare of middle-class moral scrutiny. Rather, it was the high church Tractarians of the Oxford Movement, notably John Henry Newman (1801-1890), whose celibacy and embrace of monastic tradition was configured by his critics, including Charles Kingsley (1819-1875), as threats to the sexual, moral, and even national order.¹³⁶ In this sense, the gendered rhetoric and cultural configurations articulated by anti-clerical political radicals in the age of reform would have a considerable afterlife.

¹³⁴ Watts, *Dissenters Volume II*, chapter V; Timothy Larsen, 'Sex, Lies, and Victorians: The Case of Newman Hall's Divorce', *Journal of the United Reform Church History Society* 6:8 (2001), 589-596.

¹³⁵ Scriven, *Popular Virtue*.

¹³⁶ Oliver S. Buckton, "'An Unnatural State': Gender, 'Perversion', and Newman's *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*", *Victorian Studies* 35:4 (1992), 359-383; Dominic James, 'The Oxford Movement, Asceticism, and Sexual Desire', in Joanne Parker and Corinna Wagner (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Victorian Medievalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 353-369; Harry Cocks, 'Homosexuality between Men in Britain since the Eighteenth Century', *History Compass* 5:3 (2007), 737-1061, 877-878.

Appendix

Figure 1 - George Cruikshank, *Royal Methodists in Kent & Sussex - or the Dissenters too powerful for the Established Church!!* (1815/16), British Museum (1862,1217.320).



Figure 2 - Isaac Robert Cruikshank, *The Arse Bishop Joslin-g a Soldier* (1822), British Museum (1868,0808.8554).

