Revised 26-8 July 1924

revised 1- August 1927

added to 1-3 October 1927

Revised 14-22 October 1929

Addition 19- March 1930

Revised 2- May 1933

Revised 20-3 June 1933, 21-2 out

Revised 3- July 1933

Revised 3-4 August 1933

Revised 17- May 1942

retype
~~817~~

P06-837

13

1797- Struggle for Control of His Medium

11

# THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OF HIS MEDIUM

## 1797 Aetat.26

The daily intercourse,the free and easy because simple life,the full friendship and fraternity,the stimulating intellectual and literary atmosphere,are graphically presented in the Memoirs kept by Elihu Hubbard Smith. The entries continue:

> Monday 2 January:"Ch.B.Brown came in while we were at breakfast....Found Brown here,when we came home."
> 4 January:"Alsop and Ch.B.Brown here."
> 6 January:"Ch.B.Brown breakfasted here."
> 7 January:"Alsop here,several times,and Brown and Dingley1 ....The evening,being Club night--Dunlap's turn--at his house--a thin meeting. Present,Brown,Dunlap,Smith,the Woolseys. Two alarms of fire which proved to be only from chimneys did not contribute to our amusement. Trifling conversation,for the most part."
> Monday 9 January:"Ch.B.Brown breakfasted here...Alsop here....Dr.Mitchill,Mr.Miller,Brown and Alsop all here, in the afternoon."

The next day's record finds our author in Smith's and Johnson's apartments reading as well as breakfasting or calling or writing. It seems that Mrs.Lovegrove had sent to Smith a lot of books to be sold at auction and the three intimates of 13 Cedar street took advantage of their presence to read what appealed to them. Dunlap, Alsop and Brown had been in for visits and when Smith returned from the professional calls which took him out for a short time he found Mrs.Lovegrove's copy of Wieland's Don Sylvio lying on the floor.

1 Amasa Dingley the physician and surgeon of 42 Gold street,whom Smith frequently assisted professionally. Dunlap's diary 4 October 1798 speaks of him only as Johnson's friend. 21 September he was reported dead of the yellow fever,denied on the 23rd and confirmed on the 24th.

A study of Brown's Wieland will show some details which may have echoed from Wieland's Don Sylvio but when the real sources which we have found are studied it is probable Brown was not indebted to that work. Don Sylvio may have directed his attention to Scudery's Grand Cyrus, it may have suggested the finding of the portrait used in Arthur Mervyn, it may have strengthened in his mind the fascination for trap doors and the supernatural especially as material for prose fiction. If he did read the book it must have been to him more than a passing interest.

The record goes on:

> Wednesday 11 January: "Ch.B.Brown breakfasted here....It rained this evening and Ch.B.Brown spent it with us. Discourse on the idea of God. Theism and atheism."

Tuesday's reading of that book by Wieland and Wednesday's discussion of the idea of God are not very far from part of the foundation of Brown's Wieland.

Smith's entries continue:

> Thursday 12 January: "Ch.B.Brown here. Dunlap came in, and, with him, James Brown--Charles' brother, from Philadelphia. He sat here an hour....Dingley here....before he went away, Charles and James Brown came in, and the last stayed till 7, in the evening; the former till 9."

It appears that Brown's brother James, in spite of his business life was not at all an uncongenial spirit at Cedar street; he was ~~taken in~~ heartily received by the group and must have ~~been able to~~ take back to the old home in Philadelphia a ~~faithful~~ favorable picture of the New York life of our author. Brown had never yet been so happy and healthy and busy.

> Friday 13 January: "Ch.B.Brown and James Brown breakfasted here. Dunlap came in, after breakfast. It was 11 when I sat down to labor...I went to Dunlap's. He, Charles and I walked out of town, and it was after 4 when we returned. Dunlap came home with me. James Brown came in; and sat till 6, when he and Johnson went to the Theatre."
> 14 January: "Ch.B.Brown and James Brown were, also, here. The former, in the afternoon...This being Club night, and Johnson's turn, the members were to meet here. It has been rainy, all day; and rained hard, in the beginning of the evening. Present, Brown, Dunlap, Johnson, and Smith. Johnson read the three first lectures from the second volume of David Williams1--much to our pleasure. Dunlap read us some passages from his play, on which he has been employed, at intervals, so long--and which, I believe, he designs to call "The Fall of Robespierre"2--what he read was pleasing."

1 David Williams was the founder of the Royal Literary Fund. His book may have been brought to the attention of Brown and his friends by the fact that during a crisis in 1774 Franklin had found a refuge in Williams' house. The work referred to is apparently the Lectures on the Universal Principles and duties of Religion and Morality which appeared 1779 in two volumes. The character of the work was appropriate to this time of religious debate. An interesting detail of Williams' life is that he organized a club to which Franklin belonged. The members were remarked for their neglect to attend church.
2 Usually given by the name alone and said to have been unacted.

15 January:"Ch.B.Brown and James Brown here. William and I called at H.Johnson's;and dined,and spent the afternoon with James Brown at S.Johnson's...I went to W.W.Woolsey's. I found Ch.B.Brown there. Soon after Dr.Dwight[1] came in. We had--all of us--a long,various,and interesting conversation;and parted at 10."
Monday 16 January:"Ch.B.Brown breakfasted with us...James Brown came to see us. He goes to Philadelphia to-day."

That little five days visit of James Brown to New York and Brown's circle meant more for our author than mere social delight. It should be remembered that James was an elder of his brothers.[2] He was the financial and directing head of the family affairs. That he found his younger brother,the author,in a set of gentlemen of serious mind and industrious habits,that they were not as may have been thought,a set of jovial dandies lolling in the arms of luxury or much worse,was probably a great force for the continuance of our author in the line of action he had chosen for himself. From this time forth we can count on James Brown as a zealous supporter of Brown in all that he would undertake.

Though that entry of Smith's only mentions James Brown as planning to return to Philadelphia,it is more than probable that Brown himself went there with him,or else that he shortly after followed him. The gap in Smith's Memoirs is however filled by another sort of material.

2 In 1797 James lived at 119 South Second street.
1 Timothy Dwight,whose preaching in 1801 we shall find displeased Brown.

On Monday 16 January 1797 at the John Street Theatre in New York John Blair Linn's Bourville Castle;or the Gallic Orphan was played for the first time.[1] So far as we know the work has never been published and there is no trace of the manuscript which may have been destroyed.[2]

To us the notable part of this otherwise unimportant play is in the manuscript,for Brown assisted Dunlap in correcting it and writing out the parts for the players.

The 14 January Minerva announced it thus

> "Bourville Castle;or the Gallic Orphan. Written by a young Gentleman of this City,music composed and compiled by Carr,--accompaniments by Pelisier.[3] A serious drama. First presentation Monday evening January 16. By Old American Company.
>
> Characters.
>
> Charles Bourville - Mr.Hodgkinson
> Guthrum - Mr.Crosby
> Bernard - Mr.Jefferson
> William - Mr.Macgrath
> Strabo - Mr.Munto
> Huntsmen,Messrs.Seymour,Lee & c.
> Alfred - Mr.Tyler
> Marcia - Mrs.Tyler
> and Julia - Mrs.Hodgkinson
>
> Box 8s Pit 6s Gallery 4s 6:30 interspersed with songs."

The same newspaper,which we should remember was one anti-slavery

1 The first production was succeeded by a farce called Modern Antiques. The second was on Friday evening 20 January. It had a prologue spoken by Mr.Martin and the farce following was All the World's a Stage. The third production was author's night Wednesday 25 January, with the prologue and the farce Two Strings to Your Bow.
2 Smith read it 28 February.
3 Pelisier was evidently popular with the young playwrights of Brown's circle. We have seen Smith's Edwin and Angelina also had his assistance.

organ in which Elihu Hubbard Smith had an interest, also contained a critical notice of the production as follows:

> "On Monday night was performed a Serious Drama, interspersed with songs, called Bourville Castle, or the Gallic Orphan. It is said to be written by a young Gentleman of this City, when not more than sixteen years of age. Whether it was owing to the title or to some other cause, is unknown, but it drew a far more crowded house than generally happens in this city on the first performance of an American production.--Its reception was warm and flattering.--And in fact it justly deserved all the applause that was bestowed upon it. The plot is simple, but interesting.--The circumstances attending it are supposed to have taken place in the days of comparative rudeness; when Europe had not yet emerged from the gloom of Barbarous ignorance; and unfolds one of those solemn and affecting scenes which so greatly abound in Gothic story. It is the tale of injured innocence and murdered greatness, and is told with great beauty, affecting simplicity, nay often with uncommon pathos. Not one incident is redundant; but all are more or less connected with the subject and seem naturally to flow from it. The characters are such as the plot naturally suggests--They are happily selected, finely executed and supported in an admirable manner.--Charles Bourville the Hero of the Drama is an amiable, and exalted Youth. How does his soul melt with tender pity at the tale of murder, and how terribly does it swell with indignant rage at the discovery of damning villiany--He is one of those chef-d'oeuvres, in dramatic composition, which excite admiration for their majesty and dignity, but do not disgust for their overwrought and unnatural construction. The style is elegant and highly musical in some parts; tho by no means deficient in manliness and vigor. The sentiments are noble and grand, but mixed with tenderness and delightful melancholy. They breathe the spirit of Christian philanthropy and morality--Upon the whole, tho it would be "outstepping the modesty of nature"[1] to call Bourville Castle a production equal to Shakespeare's, yet it is but the just tribute of merit to say that considering the author's years, it is a masterly dramatic composition; and contains every requisite, both as to sentiment as well as to music and scenery, to excite the feeling approbation of an audience.
>
> It would be unjust not to say something about the acting of Bourville Castle: all the praise must not be lavished on the composition, for the performance calls also for its justly merited share. The actors in general performed their parts admirably well. Hodgkinson was excellent in Charles; in scarcely any

1 Hamlet, Act 3, sc. ii: "o'erstep not the modesty of nature."

> character has he shone much more conspicuous. Crosby, in Guthrum,was generally just and sometimes masterly—one thing,however,it will be well for him to keep in memory:"That he did not know his part sufficiently accurate". Munto in Strabo excelled himself. The expression of his countenance,however,was not sufficiently characteristical. He ought to have assumed a more grim and dark appearance. It ws unnecessary to mention more names:suffice it to say,that all the actors performed their parts in such a manner as deservedly acquired the warmest and loudest applause."

While not of importance it is interesting to notice that Brown may have written that criticism of the play. Besides the external evidence,which points to this conclusion,if we remember that Dunlap had once asked him to write his opinion of one of his plays,the fact that the Hamlet quotation is incorrect,and all the familiar characteristics of style,diction and construction would indicate Brown as the probable author..

According to Smith's Memoirs (I) Brown must have been out of town for some days after his brother left New York on the 16th. The next we hear of him is on Saturday the twenty-first, when Smith makes this entry:

"In the evening, received a short letter from Ch.B.Brown."

Just when Brown returned to New York we do not know. The next entry of Smith's shows us our author back in his old haunts of Cedar street.

Smith's records go on:

> Sunday 29 January: "Ch.B.Brown breakfasted with us."
> 30 January: "Ch.B.Brown here and Dunlap twice. The former read me some pages of his journal; the latter, read me some passages lately written, from his "Fall of Robespierre"; and left with me his little opera of "Sterne's Maria"[1]--which I went over with great pleasure. These friends were here in the afternoon--and W.W.Woolsey."
> 31 January: "Ch.B.Brown here, in the afternoon, and Dunlap."
> 1 February: "Ch.B.Brown here, most of the day; and quite sick in the evening, from indigestion, and consequent cholera--induced by clams for dinner."
> 2 February: "Ch.B.Brown was much better to-day....Ch.B.Brown; as usual, spent most of the day here. We conversed, two hours, in the evening."
> 4 February: "Found Ch.B.Brown here when I returned--Conversation....Found Charles here, reading "Camilla" when I came home."

1 Sterne's Maria; or The Vintage, played two years later, 14 January.

Camilla[1] is not the only ~~one of Miss~~ Burney's epistolary novel which we know Brown read but this record ~~of his reading it~~ is ~~as~~ the earliest ~~an~~ acquaintance with her work. ~~as we have found him to have had~~. It is interesting because it may have had an influence on Jane Talbot to the extent ~~of the action~~ of Lionel and Camilla suggesting the supply~~ing~~ of funds to the brother of Jane. Possibly one name, Westwyn, ~~as~~ used in Ormond, may have lingered in Brown's memory, ~~from this novel.~~ But the most important effect ~~of it~~ ~~the novel~~ is probably to be found in ~~the fact~~ that Brown appears to have taken warning from the preposterous length of Miss Burney's novels so that when he came to write ~~an~~ in the epistolary form ~~novel himself~~ he ~~started off with at least the negative virtue of not~~ avoided tiring his reader.

1 A copy of the N.Y. John Bull 1797 edition in five volumes contain~~ing~~ the names of E.L.Boyd and Nan Beusechem (?) ~~is owned by the present writer. The~~ Boyd may be Smith's friend mentioned 19 February. Vol.I has the name Camilla on the front fly-leaf ~~and~~ in a handwriting which appears to be Brown's.

5 February:"Ch.B.Brown here...William and I left Charles here,reading Camilla...Charles had departed."
Monday 6 February:"Ch.B.Brown(here) much of the day."
7 February:"Ch.B.Brown here and Dingley."
8 February:"Ch.B.Brown breakfasted with us...Charles here in the afternoon."
9 February:"Ch.B.Brown here."
10 February:"Ch.B.Brown,in the afternoon,and evening till near 10. He read us,from his journal,of Carlovinga &c."

~~That reading~~ Carlovinga was probably the ~~same~~ work ~~as~~ we now know as the Carrils and Ormes ~~of which we shall hear more in another place in this work. That it was from Brown's journal is a welcome detail.~~

Smith's ~~entries~~ continues:

Saturday 11 February:"Brown here,forenoon and afternoon. We read together,with new admiration and delight Milton's Hymn on the Nativity[1]and his two best Sonnets "The Great Emathian conqueror";[2]and"I waked,she fled,&c."[3]....We have had no regular Club for some weeks;owing to various circumstances;but are to meet,in due form,at our house,next Saturday evening."
12 February:"Ch.B.Brown here. We walked on the Battery. The day was unusually fine. We then called at Mr.Riley's. Johnson met us there and we all dined at S.Johnson's. After dinner we walked out of town."

The next entry shows ~~us~~ our author, forgetting the dread he had expressed to Dunlap in his 28 November 1794 letter, now attempt[ing] entering the dramatic field.

when he perceived Brown's capacity for dramatic exaggeration

Having ~~seen~~ Dunlap ~~do it so successfully it is quite natural that he~~ encouraged it, not suggested ~~that Brown should write a play~~, he ~~should attempt it~~. The story is complete so far as this trial goes and we shall allow Smith to tell it.

Monday 13 February:"Ch.B.Brown breakfasted with us and has been here most of the day. He began to dramatise "Hermsprong"--a task which I had alloted for myself,but which,since he has undertaken it,I shall be spared the execution of. So much the better--I shall have the more time for other purposes....Charles has,also,recommended his Philadelphia novel,so fiercely undertaken in the autumn of 1795."

1 On the Morning of Christ's Nativity.
2 Sonnet VIII:When the assault was intended to the city.
3 Sonnet XXIII:On his deceased wife.

We have seen Johnson--and probably Brown and Smith--reading Bage's Hermsprong on 5 November 1796. Later it seems Smith intended to dramatize the story as a comedy. According to the details previously noticed, when dramatized by Brown it was to be a tragedy, but how that could have been done is not clear. Tragedy or comedy it has too many characters, several important incidents that were impossible to the stage in Brown's days and because it is distinctively a novel of manners it lacks much if not all dramatic effect. Brown's ultimate abandonment of it probably indicates that he soon found it was not within his powers to remold it for dramatic presentation. Like a combination of Farquhar's Stage Coach and Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer, in the hands of some genius better versed than Brown in the drama, it might be staged but if it were, Bage would not recognize his own child. So far as the records go apparently it has never been done and Brown and Smith are the only ones who ever attempted it.

What Smith calls Brown's Philadelphia novel is probably Sky Walk. Whether he at this time had thought of the new title, Edgar Huntly, is not clear or suggested.

The usual tenor of life goes on:

> Tuesday 14 February: "Ch.B.Brown here most of the day, and all the evening....Charles has been all day, writing verses. He read them to us--after a sad manner, this evening. He also read what he has composed of his novel. William read what he has written in his journal; and I the contents of mine, from the time of my setting off for Litchfield. We conversed."

In his endeavor to gain possession of his medium Brown essayed verses as well as all the other forms of literary effort. So far as we know the verses mentioned here by Smith have not been identifed.

> Wednesday 15 February: "Ch.B.Brown here, all day, writing."
> 16 February: "Ch.B.Brown has been here most of the day--writing."
> 17 February: "Ch.B.Brown here, all day writing."
> 18 February: "No club...Ch.B.Brown here, most of the day, writing."
> 19 February: "Brown here and Boyd and Dr.Mitchill. Charles and I walked."
> 20 February: "Ch.B.Brown writing here, most of the day."
> 22 February: "Ch.B.Brown here writing."
> 23 February: "Brown here, as usual."
> Friday 24 February: "Brown here, writing."
> 25 February: " Our Club, seems nearly annihilated. Yet I still encourage a belief, that when Kent and Dunlap return, we shall, once more assemble; and proceed with, at least, our usual spirit."
> 26 February: "Brown slept with me. We had multifarious and interesting conversation."
> 27 February: "Ch.B.Brown here, most of the day, writing.....This critique[1] on Mrs.D'Arblay's "Camilla" perfectly corresponds with my sentiments, and those of friends Johnson and Brown."

1 All our attempts to find it have been in vain.

Smith's records go on but not in the usual manner.

> Tuesday 28 February:"Brown here. Spent the evening at S.Johnson's. Mrs.Lovegrove,Mrs.and Miss Wilkinson,Miss S. Morton,Miss Sedgwick,Stillman,Howland1&c.,Mr.Gahn,Morton, W.Johnson and I there. We accompanied some of the ladies home;and sat half an hour at Mrs.Morton's."

Whether Brown was of that party is not clear. From the company it will appear later that he may have been.

> Wednesday 1 March:"Ch.B.Brown here."
> 2 March:"Ch.B.Brown here,as usual."
> 6 March:"Ch.B.Brown breakfasted here. A reverie,after breakfast,which idly occupied my mind till I was called out."
> 8 March:"Ch.B.Brown spends great part of every day here--writing,&c."
> 11 March:"Charles tells me he is going to Philadelphia this next week. This resolution is sudden--but fortunate... The Club was revived this evening and convened at our house. Present,Brown,Johnson,Kent,Smith,and the Woolseys."
> Monday 13 March:"Ch.B.Brown breakfasted with us.

With so many breakfasts eaten together that entry of the 13th. falls into insignificance. Probably the greatest event of the day was the fact that Smith's and Johnson's landlord served notice on them that they would have to vacate the lodgings they occupied at 13 Cedar street. It was great in that it lead up to an event of the utmost importance to our author,an event which we shall not anticipate.

Smith's Memoir continues:

> Thursday 16 March:"Charles determined to set off for Philadelphia to-day. I called ineffectually,on Miss Collins, and then went to Dunlap to assist Brown in his preparations.... I wrote a few lines to Joseph Bringhurst--Charles took his leave. He went away,apparently,not with the best spirits. I fear he will effect but little,in Philadelphia."

1 Abigail Howland later wife of G.M.Woolsey.

Though several young ladies had come into the life of his New York friends Brown's errand to Philadelphia had no relation to them. On the 11th. Smith spoke of his plan to go as sudden, but fortunate--which we know did not mean that he was glad to have him go. Now when he actually does go and is not in good temper Smith's idea of the departure changes so that he thinks Brown will effect but little. What all this babling means is unknown ~~impossible~~ ~~From the later reference, 17 April, to the explanation~~; it is as strange a maze as e'er men trod with no Prospero to ~~explain~~ solve it. ~~clerk of a counting house it may be that Brown was thinking of actively joining his brothers in business~~. ~~On the other hand a~~ The only reasonable explanation ~~of his trip~~ is that ~~it related to his writing. Probably~~ efforts were being made to find regular and fair literary employment.

From Brown's letter to Dunlap, dated 1 January 1798, it would appear he parted from Dunlap about February of 1797, after having lived with him at New York and Perth Amboy ever since about September 1796; but from Smith's memoir we must conclude that it was at least late in March when he went back to Philadelphia to visit his family.

As soon as Brown had gone Smith found time idle on his hands so he returned to the dramatization of Hermsprong. Of course our author had given the diarist the idea that he would never attempt to complete it so the theme was again Smith's own to do with it as he saw fit.

Smith received a letter from Brown on the 23rd of March and on the 28th. he recorded:

> "Mr. Gahn saw Ch.B.Brown in Philadelphia and Mr. Laffert. Both were well."

On the 17th. of April Smith wrote and transcribed the following letter to Brown.

To Charles Brockden Brown

Did you think a mere note of business more worthy of the clerk of a counting-house than of a benevolent friend, sufficient for those you left behind, that you have neither solicited the continuance of the correspondence of either, or replied to him who snatched a few minutes from the pressure of accumulating occupations to write to you? I say nothing of myself, because, ignorant as you are of the causes of my silence, you may think me equally reprehensible--but what will you answer respecting the Dunlaps and Roulet? He, the last, has called here, repeatedly, in the vain expectation of hearing from you, of receiving the promised but neglected letter. He even forgets the philosophy of his character, and the gestures of his surprise proclaim him, not a Swiss, but a Frenchman. If you have any good reason for this delay, let us have it. I long to be able to justify you to myself and to our friends. If you have employed your time better than in writing to us, I shall rejoice. But, pardon the sincerity of my friendship, I fear it.

Now for information which may be more pleasant to you than this reproof. Dunlap and I shall be with you in about a fortnight; i.e. we shall be in Philadelphia. We expect to spend a week or ten days there. I wish you may impart this intelligence, seasonably, to Joseph; so that, if possible, he may continue to meet us. To see him, will greatly enhance the pleasure of our stay.

You may have heard of the revolutions in our theatre. I fear they are likely to affect our friends' welfare. At present, all is confusion and uncertainty. He has lately received a letter from Holcroft;--and such a letter--but you will see it, when we meet. There are pretensions in it which make me tremble. I see nothing like it; and dread lest he impose upon himself and us.

Remembrances to all friends. How are they? I purpose to send this by Rev'd Mr. Miller.

E.H. Smith.

Monday April 17 1797.
Pine Street No. 45. N.Y. 1

1 Smith had moved from 13 Cedar street on the 13th. of April.

The plan of Dunlap and Smith to go to Philadelphia was made because they had been selected as the New York society delegates to the fourth convention for the abolition of slavery.[1] Brown at this time did not have a house of his own where he could offer them rooms but stopping at his father's home he could receive their calls. As will presently be seen the three spent much of their time together there.

The letter of Holcroft mentioned in such cryptic language is of importance to Brown and at the same time is so full of literary wisdom and worldly intelligence it must be drawn from its obscurity[2] and quoted at length as an example of the interests of Brown and his friends.

1 In Poulson's publication of the Proceedings they were listed as two of the five delegates and attended all the meetings. Samuel Latham Mitchill was another of the delegates, being present May 5,8,9. Thomas P. Cope was the secretary and made his report at the latest session. The meetings were held in the Senate chamber as follows: May 3 (Wednesday)--10 A.M.; 4--10 A.M.; 5--3 P.M.; 8 (Monday)--3 P.M.; 9--10 A.M. The Philadelphia membership was 591. Brown was probably a member but he did not attend the convention.

2 Dunlap published it in his American Theatre pp.159-60. It is apparently unknown to Holcroft's editors and biographers.

Holcroft was an intimate of Godwin, he was interested in ideals of society, was a well known novelist as well as dramatist; in fact was a professional man of letters. His play the Road to Ruin, which established his fame and still preserves his immortality, as we have related, had been seen by Brown and his friends, 3 October 1796.

The letter reads:

"To Mr. Dunlap.

Dear Sir,

I received your last letters dated May and October; as I had done others some months ago, in which you wished me to read your manuscripts. Your friend, Mr. Brewer, offered to put these manuscripts into my hands; this I declined, and I will state my motives.

The reading of manuscripts I have found to be attended with danger. I once read two acts of a manuscript play, and was afterwards accused of having purloined one of the characters. The accusation had some semblance of truth: latent ideas floated in my mind, and there were two or three traits in the character drawn by me similar to the one I had read; though I was very unconscious of this when I wrote the character.

A still more potent reason is the improbability of good that is to result from reading manuscripts. To read carefully, examine conscientiously, and detail with perspicuity the errors which the judgment of a critic might think deserving of amendment, is a laborious task: it devours time and fatigues the mind, and but seldom to any good purpose. Books of criticism abound, and may be consulted by an author who is anxious to improve. I grant that the critical remarks of a friend may be of great service. If a man have attained that elegance of diction, depth of penetration, and strength of feeling which constitute genius, to criticise his works before they are presented to the public, may be a useful and a dignified task. Men acquire these high qualities gradually, when compelled by that restless desire which is incessant in its endeavours after excellence; and for these gradations the books already written are, in my opinion, sufficient. Your friend gave me William Tell to read: it proves you have made some progress: but it likewise proves, as far as I am a judge,

add note to Genoa[x]

~~170~~
818 B

[x] Error for Geneva?

that much remains for you to accomplish. Common thoughts, common characters, and common sensations 1 have little attraction: we must soar beyond them, or be contented to walk the earth and join the crowd. Far be it from me to discourage those efforts of mind in which I delight: but far be it from me to deceive. If you would attain the high gifts after which you so virtuously aspire, your perserverance must be energetic and unremitting. I consider America as unfavorable to genius: not from any qualities of air, earth, or water: but because the efforts of mind are neither so great, so numerous, or so urgent as in England or France.

You wish for an independence. That man is independent whose mind is prepared to meet all fortunes, and be happy under the worst; who is conscious that industry in any country will supply the very few real wants of his species; and who, while he can enjoy the delicacies of taste as exquisitely as a glutton, can transfer that luxury by the activity of his mind and body to the simplest viands. Every other man is a slave, though he were more wealthy than Midas..

I send you my narrative, 2 but am surprised that there should be any difficulty in procuring it at New York. To a bookseller, the conveyance of such things is familiar and easy; to an individual it has the inconvenience of calling his attention to trifles, and disturbing his ordinary progress. I am not certain that the man of literature is not benefitted by these little jolts that awaken him, or rather endeavours to awaken: but I know from experience he is very unwilling to notice them, they therefore easily slip his memory. This is the reason that I did not send it before as you desired.

With respect to the stage, it is a question which cannot be effectually discussed in a letter: but I have no doubt whatever of its high moral tendency. Neither, in my opinion, was Rousseau right relative to Genoa; for that, which is in itself essentially good, will, as I suppose, be good at all times and in all places.

T.Holcroft.

London, Newman-street,
December 10th.1796."

After reading the letter Dunlap's wounded vanity distorted any judgment he had and nullified any knowledge of the meaning of Holcroft's words so that he missed its greatest value. What Brown

1 The play only has to be read to perceive the truth of the criticism. Instead of taking offense Dunlap should have admitted that he was content to cater to the popular taste.

2 A Narrative of Facts relating to a Prosecution for High Treason, etc., 2 parts, London 1795.

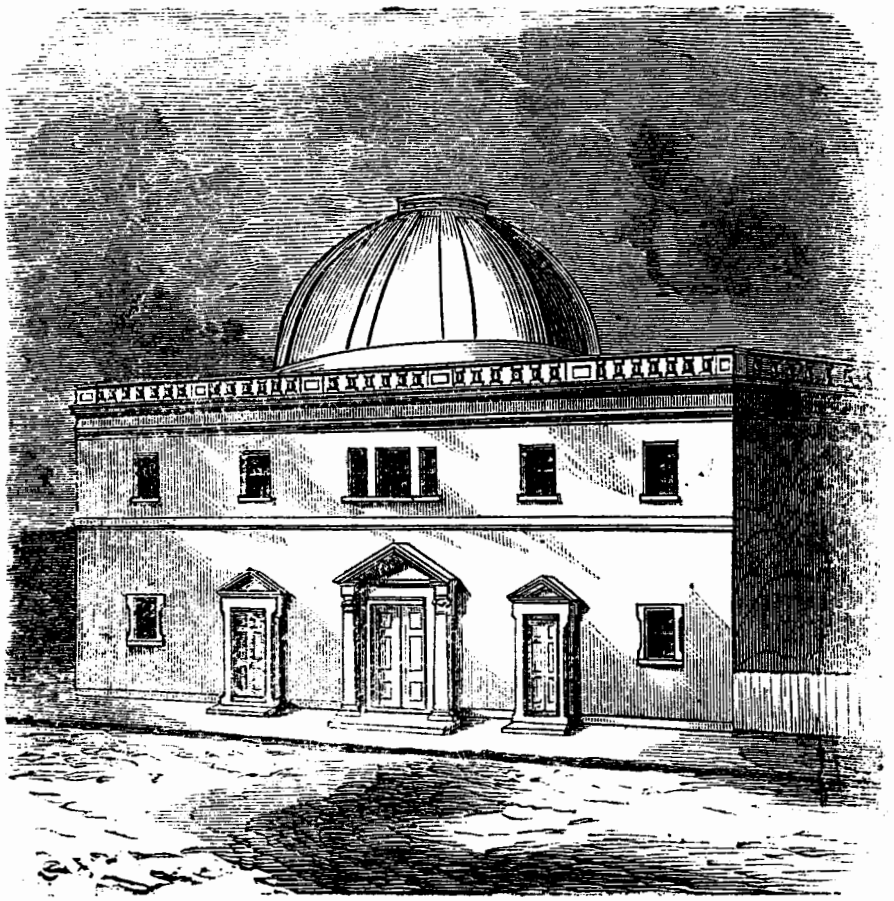
thought of it Smith does not tell us but ~~it demands~~ a very 818 C slight acquaintance with his character ~~to~~ will perceive ~~that~~ he could ~~not~~ have thought it ~~anything~~ nothing less than remarkably valuable. Coming from a man who had worked his way from the lower ranks of society to the heigths of literary fame the letter must have given Brown ~~no little~~ courage and confidence. Its absolutely sound literary ethics is enough to recommend it to any writer.

Ten days after Smith's letter to Brown an answer from Brown was received by Smith. The day following he ~~and Dunlap~~ went to Princeton and the next day on to Philadelphia. The memoir gives the details of the visit:

> Saturday 29 April:"(Afternoon) We called on C.B.Brown. He spent the evening with us--till 10. We sat up late--conversing."
> 30 April:"Brown called in the morning. Afternoon I was at his father's....In the evening called on C.B. Brown...wrote a few lines to Bringhurst."
> 1 May:"Called on Ch.B.Brown. We went to Cope's--to see Mrs.Robinson--formerly Miss Atmore;and Mr. and Mrs.Paxon. He was not at home....dined with Charles and read Joseph's letter."

The account of Brown as given by Smith is for the next week to be supplemented by some notes by Dunlap, who, In his History of the American Theatre,[1] ~~he~~ gives a few glimpses of our author. ~~which we shall fit in with those given by Smith.~~

1 Pp.168-9.



LAILSON'S CIRCUS 1797

(Illustration to be placed

opposite page 814 )

For Tuesday 2 May, Dunlap says:

> "Charles Brockden Brown was now at home in his father's houselin Philadelphia...Went by appointment and drank tea with Charles. He showed me a letter from Joseph Bringhurst, in which he gives his reason for being a Christian; the latter is highly pleasing and lovely. We walk in the state-house yard, and thence into the library. Here I read with much pleasure a translation of Leonora.2..We leave the library to see the circus and exhibition of a French equestrian(Lailson.)3 Smith joins and goes with us. The coup d'oeil of the house, lights, and company were pleasing, but a pleasure fleeting in the extreme. Compare the pleasures of yesterday ( a day the writer had passed in the place of his nativity, Perth Amboy), rambling over meadows and clover fields, amid orchards whose blossoms filled the air with fragrance, while birds of every kind warbled or whistled their expressions of happiness. To-day encircled in a huge enclosure from which the light and air of heaven is excluded, surrounded by beings like myself, pretending to rationality, yet sitting hour after hour to see men and women, in fool's coats, display the gambols of the monkey as the highest attainment of their perservering industry. We did not stay the show over..."

Smith says:

> "At Charles'—went with him to Joseph Bringhurst, and Armitt Brown's...Dunlap arrived; and I with him and Ch.B.Brown went to Lailson's Amphitheatre."

For 3 May Dunlap writes:

> "Smith and self call on Brown. Bringhurst came hither from Wilmington yesterday; we cannot yet find him..Volney is not in town, so we are disappointed in our expected introduction to him..We now find Bringhurst at Brown's, and pass a very pleasant hour with him. Evening, Bringhurst and Brown called on us and staid until the hour appointed for the meeting of the Convention."

Smith gives the day briefly, thus:

> "Dunlap and I called on Brown..We returned to Brown and found Bringhurst. Brown and Bringhurst with us, in the afternoon."

1 117 South Second street. 2 Leonora; a Tale, translated from Bürger, (London, 1796.
3 The brakets are Dunlap's. The Monthly Magazine, Vol.I, p. 162 in a Portrait of an Emigrant, which we shall ascribe to Brown, mentions an actress in Lailson's pantomimes. M.Lailson came from Boston with a French troup and opened up at the corner of Fifth and Prune streets, on 8 April.

For 4 May Dunlap records:

"Dine at Brown's,with Smith and Bringhurst."

Smith gives us something more of the day:

"We went to see the Federal Frigate,now building here,with Mr,Tracy and Brown....(noon)Then I went and dined at Brown's with Dunlap and Bringhurst...Brown here."[1]

~~For some unexplained reason~~ Dunlap did not make any record for Sunday 7 May,but Smith does,in the following manner:

"Dunlap and I went to see Ch.B.Brown--where we fell into animated discussion on "Courage,Fortitude,Intrepidity &c." "

~~Similarly~~ Dunlap omits the 8th. of May,while Smith says:

"Mitchill,Dunlap,Brown and myself &c. &c. went to see the Jail--and spent two hours,with great satisfaction...Brown and I visited Strong...I then (8 P.M.) called at Ch.B.Brown's Mr.McLane's (the brother in law of Dr.Miller) and at the Paxson's. The last not at home. I follow then to a Mr. Thompson's where were Joseph Bringhurst and Mrs.Robinson. Stayed till near 10. Joseph came home with me. Bedded at 12."

For Tuesday 9 May Dunlap gives us some of their doings that Smith does not.

"Rise about 5 o'clock,and join Charles Brockden Brown about 6,for the purpose of walking to Bartram's Botanic Garden. We breakfasted at Gray's Gardens,and then continued our walk. Arrived at the Botanist's Garden, we approached an old man,who,with a rake in his hand, was breaking the clods of earth in a tulip bed. His hat was old and flapped over his face,his coarse shirt was seen near his neck,as he wore no cravat or kerchief; his waistcoat and breeches were both of leather,and his shoes were tied with leather strings. We approached and accosted him. He ceased his work,and entered into converstaion with the ease and politeness of nature's noblemen. His countenance was expressive of benignity and happiness. This was the botanist,traveller,and philosopher we had come to see. He had pointed out

1 The ~~President,~~ United States, one of six authorized 1794,when completed was of 44 guns,1576 tons, ~~and cost $220,910.~~ It was launched in July.

> many curious plants. He said there was in New-Jersey a third species of azalea, somewhat like the viscosa; that at Passaic falls, his father John Bartram and himself had found in a shady hollow, near the cascade, a species of geranium; and in the neighborhood, the larch tree. He had heard of, but had never seen Wangenheim's book."[1]

Bartram's Gardens were reached by walking up to Schuylkill Front street or Assheton street, thence along the Gray's Ferry Road and crossing the Schuylkill at the old ferry. They must have returned shortly after for Dunlap attended the Abolition convention meeting at 10 o'clock.

Smith gives the happenings of the rest of the day:

> "Dunlap and I visited the library--Ch.B.Brown and M. Cope were there...From this (Mrs.Levy's) we visited Mr.Cope. Charles was there."

1 F.A.J. von Wangenheim published 1781-1787 two volumes relative to American forests and shrubs.

After this there are no more records of Brown until we come to Wednesday 7 June when he received a short letter from Brown. This letter Smith answered on Saturday 10 June, writing and transcribing it on the same day. It reads:

To Charles Brockden Brown

I should have written to you before, and without waiting for a letter from you, had I possest any information worthy to be communicated. Beside the want of such information, I have been occupied with my father, who has lately made me a visit; have had many letters to write to others; and have been much engaged in various little matters connected with my profession, and with the Hospital. Hence you will perceive that, how methodical soever my pursuits may be, they can afford but little whereon usefully to comment. I have made no new discoveries; have lighted on no new works; have composed nothing new myself.

Neither of the novels you mention are to be found in New York; nor, were they to be found, have I leisure for their perusal. Dr. Moore's "Edward" which I might have read, is yet unexamined. Instead of works of fancy, I am laboriously deciphering Hippocrates and his Commentators, and tracing the history of Medicine under the auspices of Le Clerc. Have you read "Edward"? and if you have, what is it?

Mr. Roulet has long designed answering your letter. Indeed, he has already commenced his reply; but he composes slowly, in English and has not much leisure to devote to it. I do not recollect Dunlap's number nor is it of the least consequence. A letter directed to him, can not fail of being received.

E.H. Smith.

June 10

There is enough evidence to warrant venturing an affirmative answer to Smith's query in regard to Brown's reading of Dr.Moore's Edward. The motto viresque acquirit eundo is only one of several Brown might have taken from this book though he probably got it from the original. Of especial interest to our author is the opinion of law as an honorable calling and means of wealth and the convictions expressed of West Indian negro slaves. The similarity of names of Montpellier,Caroline Huntly, Morton and Mrs.Neville may also be found here. Arthur Mervyn may have derived the portrait incident from Mrs.Anguish's portrait of Edward; the same work of Brown's may also have its origin of the hero forcing his entrance into the bagnio from Edward's forcing himself into Miss Barnet's presence;and Medway may have found its situation of the two young men in the similar one of Clifton and Edward.

Smith's letter was evidently left unanswered by Brown until his patience with our author was exhausted. On the first day of July he wrote another letter, as follows:

To Charles Brockden Brown

I have expected to hear from you, till I have become sick of expectation. Were I of a careless or revengeful temper, I might let you go on in silence, and with like indifference on my part cease all communication. But I have something to propose, which may be worthy your attention, and I can not find in my heart to hold my tongue.

You saw, while here, several numbers of a paper, published by a Mr. Dennie, in New Hampshire. He has some pretension, you know, to literature; and these are communicated to his Journal. By the kind offices of a common acquaintance, a correspondence has been generated between us. You saw my first letter; and may well suppose that a stranger who could take it kindly, could not be an altogether ordinary man. Well—this same Mr. Dennie (heaven help him!) has conceived a prodigious notion of my learning, and taste, and judgment—and all that—which is well enough, you know, to begin with, and is continually pressing me to commence dabbler and scribbler in his paper; as likely to be much for the improvement of the people of his state &c. Now this paper has acquired much reputation; and there are about 3000 copies circulated every week; and it gains subscribers constantly. Here is an opportunity for an adroit dispenser of the truth; if he be careful to make his approaches with gentleness, and to intermix the lighter picture of fancy, and the delicate effusion of literature. What think you of contributing a weekly essay to this miscellany? It is impossible for me to do anything; but I have a project, which I hasten to explain. I think it very probable that Dennie would willingly make pecuniary remuneration for assistance of this kind, regularly afforded, especially if the compensation were moderate, and within his means. I think to propose the matter to him, as in behalf of a friend, concerning whom such aid is probably, with mental reference to you. Would it comport with your plans to engage in such design, on any terms? I consulted Dunlap about it, and he has engaged to give me several Scraps, to be sent to Dennie, gratis, as specimens of that sort of moral Philosophy, which he may expect from this quarter, if he receive any. If you like the scheme, and should be willing to further it, will you not send some little Fragment also? Beside, give me some intimation on what terms you will write—if you write at all. This on this subject—it may be important to the success of virtuous principles in others as well as yourself, and let me soon hear from you, in reply.

Love &c. to all friends

E.H.Smith.

Tuesday July 11 1797
Pine St. No.45.N.Y.

That matter of Brown's writing for Dennie's paper proved to be rather a lengthy affair that never resulted in any immediate employment of our author. The details are gradually unfolded by Smith and it is just as well that he tell the story.

The letter to Brown was not sent immediately. It was not transcribed until the 14th., an answer was received on the 18th, another letter was written to Brown on the 24th. which was transcribed on the 26th, and Smith's letter to Dennie was also written on the 24th. The passage of it that relates to our subject reads as follows:

> "I have, however, one thing to propose to you, which may merit your consideration. I have a friend, not in New York at present, but with whom I could readily communicate, who is very capable of enriching your paper by original compositions. He has both taste and learning, and is accustomed to compose. But he is poor; absolutely destitute. His pen is his only support; and he chiefly employs it mechanically.[1] I am certain that if you could afford him a very moderate compensation for his labors, you might so far command his assistance as to be certain of one or two weekly essays, critical, literary, or moral; either in a continued series, or under different titles, and signatures as you should deem best. To this proposition I wish a speedy answer, if you accede to it, as it will take several weeks to establish the intercourse with you and him regularly."

Besides the obvious interest of that letter in the Dennie matter there is another detail in that passage which we wish to call to the attention of the reader. Smith represents Brown as being absolutely dependent on his pen for his living. So far as we know we have no cause to doubt the statement if it is understood to be true only of

1 There is no evidence to show that he was a clerk.

the time when the statement was made. The financial affairs of Brown have never been clearly decided,and certain suggestions will at different times be given, and they can be implicitly relied on. At best his financial matters were no different than any other person's, at one time he had money,at another he was obliged to get any work he could to support himself. So far as we are concerned the essential fact is that his case was not decidedly poverty or comfort.

The second letter to Brown,written on the same day as the one to Dennie,the 24th.,reads as follows:

> To Charles Brockden Brown
>
> I am tired of assigning want of leisure as a reason for not writing sooner,though it is really the true cause of my delay. The Superintendent of the press,which is now in travail with the first number of the Medical Repository, has held my pen silent.
>
> I rejoice at the readiness with which you adopt the suggestion of my last letter,and only wish your performance may be as great. I have just written to Dennie,and shall probably be able to send you his terms in the course of a month or three weeks.
>
> In respect of my letter to which you refer,you do me wrong. It was short;but the causes of that brevity were obvious. Nor was it more brief than yours frequently are. In general I am much the most copious. It was only by comparison that this was short;not by comparison with yours, but with my own. I was busily employed,in a professional way,at that time. In any reasonable return of a letter,you would have found me differently engaged;for I shortly after took up,and have read through,the second edition of Political Justice. Do not be so hasty,therefore,in future,to draw inferences favorable to your aversion to epistolary composition. If my views had been different,they could scarcely be so important,at least,it would be well to intermix moral ones. Whose duty was it,then,to insinuate these sublime and inestimable considerations. You know too well how easily I forego professional enquiry,to listen to other topics. Nor can you be ignorant how great,and how seducing the influence of friendship is over my bosom. These might be reasons for some delay in writing to me,but they do not appear to have

been your reasons. You were out of humor with the brevity of my letter;and the causes of it. One would suppose,from your reply,that superstition,and not medicine,were the subject of my studies at that time. Your impatience,then, would be intelligible. You speak of my being "absorbed in tracing the pedigree of Hippocrates". I do not wonder that you thought the philosophy of Godwin would ill agree with an employment so "sublime". Did you mean a pun? If so,it was not quite so apt as his who called the tower of Babel, the tower of Babble.

Seriously,and in earnest,I both doubt the sincerity of Mr.Dennie's praise;and was more mortified than pleased with it. He is in the careless 1 habit of extravagant commendation and blame--with no bad intent,I believe,but certainly without himself believing all he says to be justly merited. Where there is so little judgment,or so little discrimination,it is possible only for the most gluttonous desire of praise to find delight. Still,it is very true,and I lament it,that "Praise finds in me a faulty degree of sensibility to her charms." We think somewhat different on this subject, I know. You have too low a sense of the value of reputation. You do not seem to regard how great may be its instrumentality in promoting the cause of truth. You are therefore faultily negligent to obtain praise;and your powers slumber unemployed. There is error on either hand. But mine is, perhaps,the more dangerous. I can not therefore but regret that you have so long delayed an attempt to correct this vicious propensity in me. And I still hope that you will collect sufficient perspicuity to state it fairly. I am the more earnest,because I shall have your own view of the subject,which will be always important to me--whether it be the just view,or not. Nor can any remarks,on this topic,be altogether without their use. Sensibility to praise implies an equal sensibility to blame;and here are principles to operate upon;so as to generate right conduct,even on erroneous motives. If I know my own heart,how apt soever it may be to be captivated and led astray by praise,how much soever it may pant to obtain commendation,the motive is really benevolent. I may deceive myself;even here;but I hope not;and this hope,induces me to believe your counsels will not be wasted on me.

Love to all friends. Dunlap &c. are at Amboy.

E.H.Smith.

Monday July 24 1797
Pine St.No.45.N.York.

On the same day Smith also wrote to Dunlap and in his letter he says:

1 A superfluous "of" is here.

"I had a short letter from Charles, some days ago. As usual, it is difficult to learn from it what he is about. He, however, relishes the proposal of writing for the New Hampshire paper. I have written to Dennie on the subject."

~~That passage is important~~ aside from the matter of Brown and Dennie's paper. Unless a very bad error has been made in copying and taking notes it appears that Dunlap in his manuscript journal[1] under date of 31 July takes credit for this very same expression. The two passages are exactly alike with the exception of a clause in the first sentence, Dunlap says "a few days ago" Smith says "some days ago". So far as we know the real author of the passage and therefore the actual writer of the letter to Dennie, is Smith. Unless the records are faulty we have no knowledge that Dunlap knew Dennie at this time, while we are sure that Smith did. Dunlap was a slovenly writer and may have given the passage in his letter to Hodgkinson as his own when he intended ~~to state it as Smith's.~~

~~Be that as it may~~ Smith's letter appears to have ~~made no result~~ accomplished nothing so far as Brown was concerned. ~~A careful search of the file of the~~ the Farmer's Museum ~~in the New Hampshire Historical Society failed to show anything that could possibly be identified as Brown's.~~ Probably nothing was ever supplied by him for ~~that paper of Dennie's~~ and save for a mention of the matter in a letter of Smith's to be given later the

1. In the New York Historical Society, under date 31 July says "a few days ago" (Dunlap's journal

effort is abandoned.. ~~never again referred to.~~

~~matter is undetermined.~~ If at this time Brown wrote and sent to Dennie his Dialogues on Music and Painting they must have been left in the editor's desk ~~five~~ four years for they were not published until he had started his Port Folio at Philadelphia in 1801. By that time Brown had established a literary reputation ~~higher than either Smith's or~~ without Dennie's help.

add to text 828

forty pages, ~~sixteen~~ 16 mo.

Smith's memoirs now turn from ordinary affairs to one of the most important in Brown's life. We have seen in the account of the year 1796 that the advertisement to the first edition of Alcuin stated the date when Smith received it as some time in the spring of 1798. Here,on the other hand,we have under date of 7 August 1797 the earliest recorded mention of it by Smith. He says:

> "Received a letter from C.B.Brown containing "Alcuin a Dialogue--which I have read twice,with much pleasure, and some approbation."

On the next day,Tuesday,he goes on:

> "Dunlap spent most of it (the forenoon) with me....I read him C.B.Brown's "Alcuin"...."

Later in the day he read it to Miss Alsop and finished it--having begun the night before. When he came to list the reading he had done for the month he enters it as "Alcuin=20 pp.8vo--Ms.Dialogue by C.B.B." which identifies the original manuscript. The only manuscript now in existence is a fair copy in Elijah Brown's handwriting comprising forty pages.

The detailed story of the Alcuin as recorded by Smith will be told presently.

Soon after Smith's receipt of the Alcuin manuscript we have a letter of Brown's to Bringhurst, opening with some ~~religious~~ Brown's subtilities of the isle on his religion. It is

(addressed Joseph Bringhurst,Junr. Wilmington. Capt.Milnor.)

(Philadelphia,Saturday,) August,19,1797.1

I arrived safely in town at 2 o'clock. Ira.Biddle was my companion. I found him,I assure thee,most agreably sociable;much more than I had reason to expect. Both his capacity and his knowledge seem to be respectable. I had several times an inclination to remind him of former transactions,to say to him,"John;thou and I,when we have formerly met,have treated each other with....great coldness. I will not desire thee to explain the reason of thy reserve,but I will frankly tell thee what I believe to have been the reason. Thou art religiously disposed. Thou deemest me to be otherwise,to be blinded by a very terrible delusion. What benefit could flow from intercourse with one whose sentiments were so little akin to thy own? Those who are guilty in

1 Dated from the end of the letter. It was originally written 18 and changed to 19.

the sight of God, cannot be accounted blameless in the opinion of an upright man. The most valuable of all privileges is that of choosing our associates. Thou exercisest this privilege discreetly, when thou cleavest to the wise and good and shunnest the depraved and the erring. Thou mightest have reasonably imagined, likewise, that the disinclination was mutual. A rash thinker like me, must have held thee in as little esteem, as thou did me. In this last opinion thou wast not perfectly right. From any difference between us, of which I was at that time apprised, I was far from inferring that thy friendship and society were of no value. That sympathy, however, is strong in me which shrinks, with every shrinking of another. In the article of reserve, I believe, I was always even with thee, but, I believe, no more than even."

Is any claim, dear Joseph, more irresistable than candor? I was, more than once, during this journey, on the verge of uttering my thoughts: Such as were suggested by the recollection of former incidents 1 relative to him and me, but I could get no farther than the verge. I betook myself to the cowardly resource of general topics, and joined him in analysizing the surrounding prospects, in settling the boundaries between instinct and reason, and drawing parallels between the point of honor among coach horses and soldiers.

Soon after my arrival I saw thy brother.2 He seems to think and dream of little else than the yellow fever. I think he may be charged with timidity, and this principle has somewhat tinctured his reports of the Condition of this City. Thou knowest, from the nature of this subject, the incurable defects of rumor. Reports are infinite and contradictory. From the number of carriages we met loaden with families and furniture it was evident that something was the matter. The true state of this matter is to be found, if any where, in the answer of the College of physicians to
3 the Governor.3 Thou may'st see it, with other particulars relative to this subject, in Porcupine's Gazette. It was a strange mistake in us to imagine that the papers had been silent on this topic. They have canvassed it abundantly.

From this medical report we collect that a contagious disease exists in Penn Street, and that some victims have been sent to the hospital. Whether it will extend its reign beyond these precincts cannot be ascertained. How far it will proceed and when and where it will stop, time alone can determine. Alarums are prevalent and removals into the country numerous and incessant. The obnoxious vicinity is a desert.

Mary Atmore 4 is more indisposed than I have ever

1 What all this is about is not certain. ~~It is of no importance anyway for what Brown lived is his religion rather than what he debated.~~

2 This is not ~~the~~ Edward mentioned in the letter of 22 May 1793. It probably was James b.1766;m.(1) Rachel Bettle,(2) Ann Carroll;d.1818. John and Jonathan were also living at this time.

4 The same as mentioned in the letter for 11 July 1796.

3 Proofs of the Origin of the Yellow Fever, Philadelphia 1798.

> seen her. We are well:that is our own family;Armitt and his,are at Burlington. Best regards to Laura and her sister,and,if decorum forbid not,to J.D.1--
> Fare thee well.
>
> C.B.Brown.2

From his having gone to his father's house for a long visit it is clear that some sort of adjustment was working out a tolerable life in the home circle. The passage of time,his prolonged absence in New York and his persistence in following an author's career made the family tolerant of what they undoubtedly little understood—if at all--and considered a waste of the opportunities that promised to be his in the profession of the law.

A second point of importance is that relating to the yellow fever.[3] Brown was not in fear of it and not only considered it cowardly to flee but also had imbibed the heroic idea of serving as a nurse,which Smith 9 January 1798 calls his "wild project". It will not be long before we shall see him in the midst of the sickness and determined to stay.

1 The J. may be I. Who it is we do not know.
2 Originally C.B.B. but added to.
3 According to the second edition of the Short History of the Yellow Fever Philadelphia 1798,"By hand of Joseph Bringhurst,Jr.,a bundle of new clothes for women" was sent to Philadelphia for the poor afflicted by the 1797 pestilence.

The letter received by Smith on the 29th. reiterates that Brown had reason not to fear the yellow fever, the details of which he then informed him. Brown said the accounts generally given were decidedly contradictory and exaggerated.

On August 25th. Smith wrote to Brown as follows:

> To Charles Brockden Brown
> My letter must be a thing of shreds and patches. I have no leisure to make it otherwise. I wish to reply more at large to your letter, which is full of topics for discussion. But on what topic might not one usefully enlarge?
> The reason why I have not written before is, I have been waiting an answer from Dennie. He is in Boston, I suppose, and I was desirious of communicating something certain to you when I did write. I hope to hear from him next week.
> "Alcuin" is still with us. I have read it repeatedly, with pleasure. Dunlap and I have also read it and I have permitted two ladies to peruse it, whose minds I thought equal to the subject. It is now in the hands of Roulet; and as Mrs. S. Johnson returned it two days since, she will have an opportunity of seeing it. I can not go into particulars, at present--and, perhaps, may never be able to--but I may remark, in general, and in this all who have read concur with me,--that the Dialogue is well written, (those who know your style, say more correctly than any thing of yours they have seen) and the sentiments interesting. Some difference of opinion exists, as to the merit of the respective arguments; some doubt of the soundness of your conclusion.
> The following note from my journal is all I have to say to you concerning "Political Justice" "June 20--Finished P.J. I have read this excellent book too hastily and with too many interruptions to pronounce decidedly upon it. Certain parts, particularly in the 5th and 6th. Books, failed to carry conviction of their soundness to my mind, as I read them over. It may be that this was only from want of attention to the author. I must read it again."
> I have this day completed the perusal, the hasty perusal of the "Enquirer". It deserves what you say of it; but there are sentiments contained in it which should be well considered before they are acted upon. His remarks (Godwin's) are too general to be altogether satisfactory. A very unpleasant circumstance is, that, while he batters down everything before him, he erects nothing on the ruins. He is aware of this objection; but he evades instead of obviating it.
> I must repeat it--we have not the novels you recommend. They are not to be found in the city. Have you seen a late

Johnson returned it
Delete it and add note *

* There is an "it" here, apparently superfluous. ~~slip~~

---

Add to text
Exaggerated. They certainly were.

novel, in two small volumes, by Mary Hays, entitled "Emma Courtney"? If not--find and read it. If so--your sentiments.

Dunlap is now here, and sends love to you. You do wrong not to write to him. Summon your courage to the attempt. The longer delayed, the more difficult. Is this tardiness becoming a disciple of truth? Think of it!

Johnson is still busy. He remembers you. He leaves on Monday for Connecticut, where he will stay a fortnight. All well. Write me of the health of your city; immediately, what true--; what false.

Remembrances as usual

E.H.Smith.

Aug.25 '97
Pine St. 45.

Samuel Miller, the clergyman, truthfully represents[1] Mary Hays as a follower of Mary Wollstonecraft and says that in her novels she presented the romantic ideas of a mischevious school of fiction which was based on the ideal of equality of the sexes. The Memoirs of Emma Courtney (1796) is not a common book even though it was reprinted at New York in 1802. Perhaps it was never read by Brown; for the Rousseau, Godwin and Wollstonecraft ideals he used were derived, not through such works as these, but at first hand from their originators.

Smith made his last attempt to secure literary employment for Brown by writing another letter to Dennie in which he repeats the request that was in the former one. It was dated 7 September.

1 Miller: Retrospect of the Nineteenth Century, Vol.II, pp.284 ff. N.Y., 1803.

Smith's next letter to Brown was dated the 16th. of September and transcribed the following day. It reads:

To Ch.B.Brown

Your engagement to write to me soon again has restrained my pen for some days. As the Fever appears to be on the increase,I feared that you might have left town,and that my letter,should I write,would remain in the Post office instead of reaching the place of your retreat. But my anxiety to learn how you are,and where you are,overcame other considerations. "It is but writing a second letter,when his retirement is discovered" said I and I took up the pen.

In the first place,where are you? and how do you do? If still in Philadelphia--whither I now direct--what is the condition of that unfortunate city? To this question,you may be able to make a sufficient answer;even though you may have gone into the country,for you will probably remain in the neighborhood.

The account you have given me of your labors has raised in me a very lively curiosity to see their fruits. Is there no way of gratifying my desire? Can you not safely transmit the copy of this precious Romance?1Send it--and make your own stipulations. It shall be returned when you please. It shall be shown to as many and as few as you shall direct. It shall receive general,or particular criticism,or none at all,as is most agreeable. But you do not so much as inform me of the nature of this performance:whether it be something altogether new,or the continuation of some one of those plans which occasionally occupied your mind while here. Be more communicative.

I have a similar desire to see your continuation of "Alcuin". In this,at least,I am not singular. Mrs.S.Johnson has read the first and second parts,and is anxious to know how all this is to end. She commends the performance,on the whole--particularly the style;thinks there is much truth delivered on either side of the debate;but is at a loss to know what is the writer's ultimate design. From what she has seen,she infers his object to be to render women satisfied with their civil condition. I can not pretend to enlighten her.

I do not hear any thing from Dennie. I do not know that my first letter ever reached him. I have written again;and shall communicate the result as soon as known. Meantime "Alcuin" rests with me.

You speak of the works of the author of "Emma Courtney". Did you misapprehend me,or do you know of others by the same hand? If you do,what are they? I presume you have seen this novel,or the Review of it,before now. I shall omit, of consequence,any further account of it,than that it is written by a woman who appears to have studied Godwin, Holcroft &c. with assiduity;and who has produced a fine exhibition of the miseries of an improper indulgence of love in a mind not otherwise far remote from what it ought to be. To say more,if you have read a criticism on it, is

1 Sky Walk.

useless;and if you have not,may weaken the effect of the novel upon your mind. Enquire after and read it.

Your love-project cost us some tears--from laughter. It will perish where it was engendered.

I do not think indolence a sufficient justification of your silence towards Dunlap. The longer its duration,the more difficult the remedy.

My sister Mary has a daughter. She was in fine health, with her new relation and all her family,a month since. The same is true of all friends at Lichfield,Hartford, Middletown,and here.

Love and respects to those with you. Adieu

E.H.Smith.

Sept 16--1797
Pine St 45

The love project mentioned is ~~probably not a serious matter.~~ an unfortunate loss to us. Brown had evidently had some sort of a dream ~~of love~~ and afforded his friends hilarious amusement by narrating it ~~somewhat~~ after the manner of the imaginary love scene in one of his letters to Bringhurst,[1] probably with some incongruous climax. The man had real fun in his nature.

Under date of Sunday 1 October Smith gives this:

> "William and I went to S.Johnson's--where we remained till near 9. The time was chiefly spent in conversation only interrupted by the reading of "Alcuin--a dialogue." "

The Friendly Club was going on at New York almost regularly and on Saturday 21 October Smith records a meeting thus:

> "Club night and my turn. Present,Dunlap,W.Johnson,Smith, G.M.Woolsey. Dr.Miller and Dr.Mitchill visitors. I read Ch.B.Brown's "Alcuin" Conversation various but interesting and instructive."

Smith's record for Thursday 9 November reads:

> "I found that the Circulating Library Proprietors had sent me "Barham Downs"--one of the novels recommended by Ch.B. Brown."

1 16 May 1792.

Brown recommended Robert Bage's old-fashioned favorite because it taught him a deal of English manners and was an example of the epistolary novel. In the light of the subsequent events of Brown's life the story of the quaker and the adventure of Kitty may have had its appeal for him. Of autobiographical interest to him is the neglect by Davis of his mercantile duties for his literary inclination which could not help but make our author think of his own opportunity in the business of his brothers. The lawyer William Wyman's hatred of the profession should likewise have caused Brown to rejoice that others agreed with his opinion and to quote passages from the book to his friends whenever they referred to his abandonment of the law. Otherwise interesting to Brown may have been Hunt's imprisonment for debt a subject which somehow or other he seems to have had deeply impressed on his memory. The opening of Bage's novel which gives the situation of Henry Davis may have been the origin of a similar detail of Brown's Man at Home. The idea of Montpellier as a place for cure of tuberculosis, like the names of the Cocoa Tree and the Pays de Vaud, may have also been found here. Perhaps the position and the rescue of Kitty[1] or the determination of Miss Whitaker to kill herself or Lord Winterbottom[2] may also be the origin of the final scenes of Ormond.

1 Dublin 1789, Vol.II, p.37 ff. 2 Ibid., Vol.II, p.138.

Brown did not write to Smith for some time and the patience of his friend was sorely tried. On the last day of November he made this ~~entry:~~ Comical Irish-bull:

> "wrote a single line--"Charles are you dead?"—to Ch.B. Brown."

~~As we shall see when we come to the study of Brown's Alcuin~~ Smith was henceforth to take considerable pains to further the interests of our author. What he did for Alcuin will be gradually unfolded by the records in his memoir (II)

> Saturday 9 December:"I opened my subscription for"Alcuin" to-day."
> 19 December:"Read Mrs.W(oolsey).1"Alcuin"."

On the 20th.[2] in writing to Richard Alsop, Smith says:

> "Now for a more serious piece of literary intelligence. I am about publishing,by subscription,a performance of our friend Ch.B.Brown. Do you wish to subscribe? It is a dialogue,in the manner of the ancients,on questions relative to the intellectual equality of the sexes. It is eloquently and I believe inoffensively written. When I say inoffensively, you will understand me as referring to religious prejudices. The price of each copy is 50 cents."

1 Mrs.W.W.Woolsey,née Elizabeth Dwight,sister of Timothy Dwight.
2 The date given at the end is the 18th.

It appears probable that Adini so-called, though a fragment unnamed by Brown, was written during 1797. It is what has been called one of his Utopian studies. Henry Colden and Medway likewise fragments unchristened by Brown also apparently were fruits of his pen of this year.