American Register

1927-1981

48

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THE

AMERICAN REGISTER,

OR

GENERAL REPOSITORY OF

HISTORY, POLITICS, & SCIENCE,

FOR 1806—7.

VOL. I.

PUBLISHED BY

C. & A. CONRAD & CO., PHILADELPHIA; CONRAD, LUCAS, & CO., BALTIMORE; SOMERVELL & CONRAD, PETERSBURG; BONSAL, CONRAD, & CO., NORFOLK; ANDREWS & CUMMINGS, BOSTON; BEERES & HOWE, NEWHAVEN; & CUSHING & APPLETON, SALEM.

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1807.

(Illustration to be placed

to face page (927)

AMERICAN REGISTER

1807-9

The American Register, or, General Repository of History, Politics, and Science ~~was launched by the first volume~~ began about November twentieth 1807 and ran regularly for seven semi-annual volumes until in 1811 the first part for the year 1810 was ~~sent out~~ issued. ~~as will be explained later~~ Brown edited only five of the seven volumes.

C.& A. Conrad of Philadelphia were the publishers of the whole set. ~~seven volumes.~~ T.& G. Palmer printed the first three volumes; John Binns, the fourth; A. Small, the fifth, ~~and~~ sixth and, though no printer's name appears ~~on~~ probably the seventh ~~its printer was apparently the same~~ on it.

~~Though~~ The issues occured about the twentieth of May and November ~~they were not made at any such~~ but there was no stated time. According to the preface of volume one the material was ready before the end of July, but ~~by~~ ~~its~~ the date ~~the volume~~ shows it must have been published ~~shortly~~ after 21 November 1807. Volume two was issued before 17 May 1808 according to the date of a letter, in the preface of volume three, which was ~~said to be~~ too late to be ~~inserted~~ in volume two. Volume three was issued some time before the Select Reviews for February 1809 which contained ~~an~~ its announcement ~~of it.~~ Volume four was issued after

20 May 1809 the date of the preface. Volume five was issued about 21 November 1809 for the preface opens with a reference to the magazine being two years old. The two remaining volumes not ~~being~~ edited by Brown are not to be ~~considered by us~~ studied at length though some ~~of the~~ essential details will be given ~~during the course of the present study.~~

~~Just~~ How many pages were to be ~~supplied~~ in each volume is not ~~definitely~~ known because ~~of our lack of a~~ we have not seen the prospectus ~~of the work.~~ From the statements that volume one had over fifty, and volume two over sixty pages more than ~~was~~ intended and from expressions of surprise concerning the size of the volume, it appears ~~that~~ about 480 pages were originally planned for. Not being numbered consecutively none of the readers, unless he had ~~a numerical~~ the curiosity and a ready pencil, could have known how many pages he was receiving ~~in return for his money.~~

In the January 1807 number of the Literary Magazine[1] in the ~~department of~~ Literary Intelligence a notice of the prospectus ~~of this work~~ appeared which read:

> "John Conrad and Co. have issued proposals for publishing a semi-annual work, on the plan of the British Annual Registers, to be entitled The American Register. In our next number we shall publish the prospectus at length."

1 Vol.VII, p.80.

~~Unfortunately~~ This promise of the prospectus which was written by Brown was never fulfilled~~, and we have not been able to find even a copy of it,~~ ~~as~~ though it probably was issued and sent broadcast[1]; so we are compelled to study the work without having its purpose outlined, collecting ~~what~~ the details ~~we can~~ from the prefaces.

The ~~actual~~ plan of changing the Literary Magazine and American Register into a semi-annual~~, we have seen,~~ was mentioned by Brown as early as 21 November 1806, when he wrote to John E. Hall in part as follows:

> "Whether it will lose, by this change, or gain, in any other respect than in intrinsic value I cannot forsee. Conrad thinks it will benefit, as to vendability, and his opinion is sufficient to influence me tho' my labour, especially the labour of reflection, will be greatly augmented. The work is, as nearly as possible, to take the shape of the British Annual Registers, and to consist of the various departments to be found in them. I am just going to prepare a prospectus, which, when published, you will see, of course:...."

~~In that letter a very noticeable~~ An important thing about the plan ~~for the periodical~~ is the absence of a reference to Burke~~, which, as we shall see, is a matter of the greatest importance~~.

We should not be deceived into believing ~~that~~ the idea of the new publication was first thought of and hastily accepted when his publisher suggested it. As far back as the preface to the American

1 Possibly it appeared on the original wrapper of the February 1807 number of the Literary Magazine which we have never seen.

Review Brown had in mind a collection ~~mostly~~ of ~~the~~ material ~~which~~ ~~found a place in~~ like the contents of ~~this~~ the Register. Evidently he had become acquainted with the English Annual Register at least six years before he wrote to Hall ~~about~~ of it. As we go on it will be ~~evident~~ seen ~~that~~ the work is ~~to be considered as~~ one of the steps in the logical development of its editor's mind.

That there was ~~somewhat of~~ a demand for an American periodical of the kind is evident from a letter of Jeremy Belknap's[1] to Ebenezer Hazard in 1782 in which it seems ~~that an annual register on the plan of the English one~~ it was a long-felt want of the American historian.

A Portfolio notice ~~states that Brown's Register~~ says it supplied ~~such a~~ the want. ~~The~~ literary intelligence of the Analectic[2] ~~also~~ says it supplied the desired features more than any other publication, ~~of the kind~~.

1 Belknap Papers in Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, Series V, Vol.I, p.165.
2 Vol.IV, pp.172-3, August 1814.

The idea was not ~~at all~~ original with Brown. ~~Despite the fact that~~ Cataloguers often state it was the first American magazine of its kind ~~we find that~~ but Matthew Carey, whose American Museum had begun as a monthly in 1787, changed ~~his publication~~ it to an annual in 1798 and made its character somewhat similar to the English one, though the proportion ~~ate space~~ given to ~~different~~ the departments was about the reverse. Likewise Noah Webster in 1788 had attempted something of the kind in the

short-lived monthly American Magazine. ~~Another,~~ In 1797 the American Annual Register, or Historical Memoirs of the United States for the year 1796 edited by ~~the acrimonious~~ J.T.Collender, ~~E~~ had died as soon as born, the first volume being ~~the only one.~~ enough.

~~So that when Brown came to cultivate the "field" for his countrymen it was not by any means a virgin one.~~

The bibliographers seem ~~to have been~~ unable to avoid errors concerning this work, ~~for~~ and they ~~it has never been our good fortune to~~ have ~~found~~ never given a correct description of it. As a marketable ware it is ~~not~~ somewhat scarce but not rare; it used to appear~~s~~ in the auction sales ~~on an average of once a year.~~ often.

The most obvious error which runs through all accounts ~~of it~~ is the date. Because it is lettered on the backs of the volumes, and contains material for 1806 to 1810 the ~~dating~~ date is usually given the same. The ~~published~~ ~~dates on the~~ title-pages are dated 1807 to 1811. Brown is invariably stated to be the editor, ~~when of course~~ though an examination of volume six would show ~~that~~ he only lived long enough to edit the first five volumes. No one ~~really~~ knows who edited the last two. The usual note is that Brown "supplied almost the entire contents, including original poetry, essays, memoirs, etc.," which is ~~, as will be seen, a~~ ~~the~~ a conclusion hastily reached by an over-worked imagination.

The Monthly Anthology for November 1807[1] had a notice ~~to the effect~~

1 Vol.IV, p.629.

that

> "Messrs.Conrad & Co. of Philadelphia have in the press The American Register,Volume 1,edited by C.B. Brown. This work is to be continued semi-annually."

The Boston Emerald[1] for November 1807 slightly altered the ~~same~~ notice:

> "J.Conrad and Co. Philadelphia,have nearly ready for publication the first volume of the American Register, edited by C.B.Brown to be continued semi-annually."

These formal notices,supplementary to Brown's letter to Hall, establish the fact of Brown's editorship. Besides his own efforts which were mostly confined to the Annals ~~we find that~~ faithful John E. Hall helped with prose and verse contributions. Other than this in the case of some articles[2] Brown goes out of his way to deny any part of the authorship of them.

If the word "supplied" is used literally it is perfectly obvious in its meaning and its application to Brown. What an editor of a periodical is for,if not precisely for ~~just~~ this,is unknown to us. But the meaning generally intended ~~accepted~~ by cataloguers is that ~~the word~~ is the same as if they had said he wrote "almost the entire contents"etc.

So far as any one may estimate the various departments ~~which~~

1 Vol.III,p.83.
2 Especially the article on the Political Character of Dr.Franklin, (Vol.II,p.175) the note to which is to be given presently.

~~comprise the contents~~ it is ~~overwhelmingly~~ conclusively ~~evident~~ certain that "almost the entire contents" is ~~assuredly~~ impossible as Brown's; for the simple reason that by far the greater part ~~of them~~ ~~is made up of~~ confuses selected news ~~notes~~ and government documents.

Of the poetry there are only two items which are distinguished as "original". One is clearly not by Brown ~~and~~ but the other appears to be his; in fact it has ~~such~~ conclusive internal evidence, ~~as to lead us to use it as a part of our study of the year in which it is signed and where we shall offer our proof of the assertion.~~

The "essays and memoirs" and the "etc." which are suggested as Brown's will in due course ~~of time~~ prove to be any one's but his.

When we say ~~that~~ Brown edited ~~this~~ the periodical the reader can by examining ~~the work~~ its~~elf~~ readily come ~~very~~ near the correct conclusion as to ~~just~~ what he wrote for it. At the same time the ~~fact should be considered that the~~ character of most of the material ~~such as he collected~~ tends to bury the characteristics of an author[1], for it is mostly an impersonal relation of facts. When, however, Brown did break through the barriers ~~the glimpses of him~~ his appearances are more than interesting because we are assured that ~~any~~ the opinions expressed are sincere and not only sincere but ~~by reason of the time~~ are the result

1 The Analectic August 1814 p.173, under the editorship of Washington Irving, speaks of this same characteristic in reference to T.H.Palmer's Historical Register published at Washington.

of his whole experience. They are also not ~~at all~~ obtrusive, such as they often are in works of the imagination.

The Philadelphia Gazette ~~of~~ 2 January 1808 contained an advertisement which ~~appears to have been~~ probably was first inserted 9 December. It reads in part as follows:

> "The publication is edited by Mr.C.B.Brown and is modelled on the plan of the British Annual Registers. It will be continued semi-annually, and contain an accurate and impartial history of all national and political events of the passing time, whether relating directly or indirectly to our own country--a register of all public papers; all official and diplomatic documents relative to military, fiscal or civil transactions and official papers of individual states, which are of general importance--a chronicle of all memorable events which happened in private life and are generally interesting, or reflect a light on the actual condition of society and manners--an abstract of the literary history of the times, with a view of British publication, and a sketch of American Literature--Poetry--an abstract of all the laws passed in the first session of the 9th.congress--a register of deaths, &c.&c."

From its style this appears to be extracted from the lost prospectus and is therefore of considerable ~~present~~ importance. ~~to us.~~ But it has a further value.

This notice is only one among several which tell us ~~that~~ the model was ~~undoubtedly~~ the Annual Register begun in London in 1759. According to the advertisements of the importers H. & P. Rice of Philadelphia it was ~~made~~ accessible to Brown ~~as far back as~~ in 1800. At New York it had been read by Smith and Brown in 1798.

How far Brown followed the model ~~and wherein he departed from its example~~ is ~~an~~ interesting. ~~study.~~ The titles differ in significant

details. ~~Being~~ Conscious of the imitation, wishing to distinguish ~~his work~~ it, ~~and undoubtedly compelled by~~ the fact that his was to be a semi-annual, ~~Brown entitled the magazine the American Register~~ helped him to ~~the~~ the essentials of the title Collender had used in 1757. ~~instead of the Annual Register~~. So as not to make a slavish imitation he uses the "general repository" as a minor title though it seems as if the "view" ~~as~~ used in the English ~~case~~ title should have appealed to him ~~most~~ more forcibly inasmuch as he was familiar with its use in the title to his translation of Volney in 1804. But a change ~~the~~ most important and not traceable to any desire for singularity is ~~in~~ his substitution ~~in the subject matter~~ of "Literature" for "Science". In this ~~particular~~ we have the personality of the author asserting itself, the spot that will not out, no matter how determined he be to cast off the muse and take on the forensic mistress. The attitude of the Englishman toward the literary department that "those that do not deserve to be well spoken of, do not deserve to be spoken of at all,"[1] was all very well in an ~~long established~~ ancient country where the germ of the art did not need encouragement. In the new land the slightest indication of ability was ~~not~~ to be ~~dis~~encouraged. In this respect Brown wisely did not follow the model.

1 Annual Register, London 1759, Vol. I, p. vii.

~~However,~~ In the general plan of the departments, it seems as if ~~Brown~~ he could not have done better than to stick to his model. It had done ~~but~~ little experimenting, it had been carefully planned before its first issue in 1759 and it had lived almost half a century. With the exception of several insignificant details the departments of the English publication were now stable though in its early volumes it had gone through ~~various~~ some changes.

~~In a~~ A Portfolio notice to be quoted ~~presently~~ later says ~~we shall find suggested~~ ~~the~~ were to be modelling ~~of~~ led Brown's accounts entitled Annals on the historical introductions written by Edmund Burke for Dodsley's Annual Register. Such a modelling ~~obviously~~ leads ~~us~~ to a comparative study of the ~~characteristics of the~~ two men's historical editing; a study in which it is not necessary to depreciate the ability of one in order to exalt that of the other.

~~Had the biographers of Burke taken the trouble to thoroughly examined and critise those minor early works of the man who ultimately became one of the greatest of English political writers, any such comparison would be unnecessary. especially because the characteristics of Brown's work along the~~ ~~same particular lines may be surmised from~~ ~~without~~ ~~such difference~~ ~~other documents which we shall duly present to the reader's attention.~~

When he introduced the Annual Register Burke was about twenty-nine. Brown was thirty-six when he launched the American Register. One came to the task with a mind occupied by literary ambition the other with about twenty years experience and fruition of literary accomplishment.

Burke here at first wrote history flavored by a love for theatrical declamation;with an egoism that afterward proved his political strength, never for long forgetting himself;with the arts of a young politician well at his command;with the same method as if making a public speech theatrical in its best sense;in a style well suited to the mass of mankind. After the first volume he forgot himself and adopted the more modest editorial "we".

Brown wrote history with a personal appearance sometimes in the notes and rarely in the text;he makes continual reference to his authority for the material;continual observations on human nature in individuals and in the mass with the mature judgment of a man of his years,always making allowance for the foibles and weaknesses of human nature;his purpose is pure elucidation; he endeavors to teach his readers to acquire,by use of the materials at hand,an understanding of all the transactions related;he only once[1] uses the "I" of the

1 Vol.II,p.76.

politician; his style is the better one of his maturity, the sentences being carefully constructed with no ~~theatrical~~ dramatic intention, flowing along with ease, so fluent ~~that~~ the reader feels no ~~need~~ effort to acquiesce in an argument.

On the whole Burke uses his knowledge of the mob to convince by his own authority. Brown knows human nature ~~just~~ as ~~well~~ ~~and~~ thoroughly but avoids ~~all~~ use of his knowledge ~~except as~~ unless explanatory. Each in his own way used the best method for his purpose.

Whether one did the better is not clear. It all depends on the intention. Burke never acknowledged this work of his--perhaps he was ashamed of it. However, ~~we have~~ there is nothing to show ~~us~~ what he would have accomplished had his ambition been purely literary, and we likewise do not know what Brown might have accomplished had he aimed at holding a political office. What Burke did accomplish we all know and admire. What Brown did will be seen presently.

The plan and scope of the <u>American Register</u> can be ~~briefly~~ easily comprehended by tracing the various departments through the five volumes. ~~Thus we find that~~ The <u>Annals of Europe and America</u>, the <u>American Foreign State Papers</u>, and the <u>Register of Deaths</u> are the only ones

which remain throughout. The Chronicle (of memorable occurences) and the Miscellaneous Articles appear in all except volume three. The Abstract of Laws and the Poetry run through only three volumes, British and American Literature and Publications appear in the first two volumes and afterwards only in the fourth, because ~~the reson being that~~ lists at all complete could only be furnished once a year and not semi-annually. British and Foreign Intelligence chiefly Scientific becomes in volume two Literary and Philosphical and dies without the deletion of the subject on the title-page. In several instances ~~occur where~~ a special article is given a section of its own.

Such a view of the work should make it apparent that the greatest obstacle to ~~its~~ success, ~~the obstacle~~ which Brown ~~seemed~~ for some time was unable to perceive, was ~~the simple one~~ that he was attempting not only an American Register but also an English and European one as well. In confining itself to papers and parts of papers which related solely to its own country the English periodical set Brown an example ~~that~~ he failed to appreciate. ~~But that virtue undoubtedly would have resulted had Fate been kinder to him.~~

The Annals of Europe and America[1] are the most important in that

1 In volumes II and III the type used is larger than in ~~the~~ others. Cf. the same change in the ~~case of the~~ preface to Vol.IV.

they are ~~undoubtedly~~ the one department on which Brown did original work. In our whole collection there probably is not a better example of Brown the realist. ~~To the sordid man of the world, the man who judges of the importance of things by the number of dollars concerned,~~ To the man who only knows Brown as a dreamy youth with a head full of extravagant and fanciful ideas, ~~to this sort of a man, of whom the world is largely composed,~~ these annals ~~should come as~~ might be a revelation. There is no speculation and dreaminess here. The facts are cold of heart and barren of fancy as fate made them. They are common and practical and ~~just~~ so far as they are practical and every-day and fact and not fiction, they strike loudest the new note in Brown's life and work.

The division into chapters seems to have been ~~ostensibly~~ made to give the Annals an ~~external~~ semblance of relationship, and for the most part, ~~Brown~~ he was justified in so doing; nevertheless the truth is ~~of the matter remains~~ that in some cases one or more chapters are not logically connected with the others. In this respect the English model was not any better.

To resume the departments of the magazine. We have seen ~~that~~ the Annals were partly personal and partly historical. In the case of

the American and Foreign State Papers the material is mostly historical, the slightly personal side is ~~in the fact~~ that some of it is probably condensed. So far as Brown is concerned we are here principally interested ~~in the facts~~ that he did the translating and that later collections of historical material published by, and in the archives of the different governments concerned have entirely superceded the Register. So ~~that~~ it is doubtful whether the average historian consults the work at all not to mention such an important matter as going to it for facts or documents. ~~However,~~ Whether there is anything of value ~~that has been~~ overlooked in their haste, may be seen when we consider each department.

The American Register of Deaths, which runs through the seven volumes, is one of the most useful departments and ~~in some cases~~ may contain material not to be found elsewhere. For this purpose the magazine should be of continuous and lasting use as a reference book of obituaries and when the lack of an index is some day supplied, the research student may here find ~~something of more than passing value.~~ welcome material. ~~Possibly~~ If these obituaries were selected from the daily newspapers, ~~and if they were,~~ the department will of course not have the value for us ~~that~~ it ~~undoubtedly~~ had in the days of its publication.

The Chronicle of Memorable Occurences which Brown spoke of[1] as the "private or internal history of the nation" is divided into two parts in volume two and is omitted in volume three. Its contents resemble those of the "yellow journals" of to-day,the subjects running the gamut of news:fires,the weather,shipwrecks,floods, incendiaries,counterfeiters,accidents,up-risings of the Negroes and prisoners,duels,suicides,discovery of mines,erection of light-houses, drownings,murders,infant desertions,surgical operations,trials, hangings,elections,robberies,the breaking up of the ice,and dramatic, military,religious,diplomatic and scientific news. As he said in the preface to volume five this chronicle rescued from oblivion the facts of every-day that appeared in the daily and weekly news-papers,and,as the matter has been proven of value by the present-day scarcity of files of old newspapers the department should assume an importance for us that was entirely absent when the work was issued.

The Abstract of Laws was a work done with scissors and paste though a department valuable to his subscribers. The only thing that has an interest for and bearing on our study in this connection is the statement of Brown that he made the abstract with considerable

1 Preface to Vol.II,p.iv.

care. Undoubtedly his legal training ~~made him just so much better~~ fitted him for it. ~~for the editing of this part of his periodical~~. In this department ~~particular~~ he ~~Brown~~ added a temporary value to his periodical which his model did not touch at all.

In the departments entitled Miscellaneous Articles and Poetry the material supplied was not all new. When there was ~~a pressing~~ need for a "filler" he ~~Brown~~ did not hesitate to turn to the first repository that came to ~~his~~ hand, his own Literary Magazine, from which he extracted the ~~several~~ articles now to be noticed.

The Character of Dr. Franklin[1] is a reprint of the same article "For the Literary Magazine"[2] and the opening paragraph was undoubtedly written by Brown. It reads:

> "A JUST view of the character of Dr. Franklin has probably never been given by any of his countrymen. While living, the world was divided into passionate friends and rancorous enemies, and since his death a kind of political tincture still adheres to all our sentiments concerning him. Among his own countrymen, prejudice and passion, which used to be enlisted wholly on his side, has, in some respects, become hostile to him, and an impartial estimate of his merits can perhaps only be looked for among foreigners. The following portrait is taken from a foreign publication, and seems to be altogether dispassionate and equitable."

The article ~~is the same that~~ when in the Literary Magazine called forth a foot-note by the editor concerning the existence of

1 Vol.I, p.150. 2 Vol.VI, p.367.

Franklin's letters which should be published and which we have noticed in our study of that periodical.

Facts relative to the present state of the City of Tripoli; by Jonathan Cowdery, Surgeon of the late American Frigate Philadelphia[1] is a reprint of the same "For the Literary Magazine."[2]

On the death of a young lady[3] is a reprint of Stanzas on the death of a young lady "For the Literary Magazine".[4] It has four corrections of punctuation and in the earlier appearance was signed "Philadelphia" but whether or not it is Brown's is not clear.

On the Discoveries of Captain Lewis[5] by Joel Barlow is copied from Stanzas on, etc., "For the Literary Magazine".[6]

Written by a Lady, on reading a manuscript journal, of the celebrated little prodigy, J.H.Payne,[7] is the same as Lines, written by a lady, on reading a manuscript journal, written by the celebrated little prodigy, J.H.Payne "For the Literary Magazine".[8] Both appearances differ considerably from that given by Harrison in his life of Payne.[9]

Philadelphia, an elegy. Written during the prevalence of the yellow fever, in 1797[10] is a reprint of that "For the Literary Magazine".[11]

1 Vol.I, p.189. 2 Vol.VIII, p.191. 3 Vol.I, p.197. 4 Vol.VI, p.240
5 Vol.I, p.198. 6 Vol.VII, p.159. 7 Vol.I, p.199. 8 Vol.VI, p.239.
9 Phila., 1885, p.33. 10 Vol.I, p.200. 11 Vol.VI, p.239.

There are three changes in punctuation and two in diction, along for adown and the for thy, but they are possibly typographical errors and can not be used to suggest the work as Brown's, though the subject and the metre, which is only a variation of the couplet, warrant a suspicion ~~that it~~ the poem may be his.

The Remonstrance of the Poplar worm[1] by J.E.Harwood is the same as "For the Literary Magazine"[2] except that in the earlier appearance there was added Non usitarâ nec tenui ferar|Pennâ|Hor. Harwood was an actor and his poems ~~were~~ published in New York in 1809. ~~This one could not be found by the authorities in the copy of the Harris collection at Providence~~ do not contain this one, so ~~that~~ it appears to have been left buried in Brown's periodicals.

To Charlotte[3] is the same as To Charlotte. Not by Moore, "For the Literary Magazine."[4] In this case the signature is "J.L." in the other "I.L." --a common variation of those days.

Account of the profit and loss upon a flock of sheep wintered at Clermont in 1806-7[5] is a reprint of Account, ~~of the profit and loss upon a flock of sheep wintered~~ ... at Clermont, in the state of New York, in 1806-7. Published, by order of the Agricultural Society of Duchess County, N.Y., by the proprietor, Robert R. Livingston, "For the Literary Magazine".[6] In the earlier appearance the signature "Robert Livingston"

1 Vol.I, p.201. 2 Vol.VI, p.80. 3 Vol.I, p.204.
4 Vol.VII, p.79. 5 Vol.II, p.113. 6 Vol.VIIIp.124.

was not given at the end.

In the cases of Louisiana[1] and Sketch of Peru[2] Brown found the same source of information suggestive but did not give the same material.

The most interesting appearances of Brown's hand are to be found in the literary departments. Comprising as they do all the various lines of literary endeavour both abroad and in the United States, the difficulty is to select from rather than to find Brown's opinions.

The Review of Literature opens with the British Publications and the Editor's bow[3] reads as follows:

> IT is the object of the following sketch to give a summary account of contemporary British literature, and to do this rather by classing and enumerating the various publications that appear within a given period, than by entering into any particular estimate[4] of their merits, or any analytical detail of their contents. A particular review of each work might be easily given, carefully abstracted from the numerous critical journals issuing from the British press, and this abstract would doubtless be useful, but it would occupy the greater part of the present work, and exclude matter of much more relative importance. A small space must necessarily be assigned to it, and our duty will, we presume, be fully performed, if we compress into this space as much useful and important information on this subject as its narrow limits will admit.
>
> English literature, beyond that of any other nation, may be represented as that of the whole world. The curiosity of that nation is such, that no work of general importance can make its appearance in any part of the civilized world without being speedily translated into English, and even the literature of our native country becomes English, by the republication[5] of all important and valuable productions in Great Britain.
>
> All publications have an absolute as well as relative value. Many of them, in all countries, relate to local occasions and temporary topics, and the interest they are calculated to excite, and the instruction they are adapted to convey, is small in one place, exactly in proportion as they are great at another. We are so intimately united with Great Britain in language, manners, law, religion, and commerce, that,

1 Vol.IV,p.49. 2 Vol.V,p.348. 3 Vol.I,p.153.

4 The review of the Columbiad given in volume one is the most significant exception. As will be seen, this plan was not carried out.

5 Brown's novels and romances had already been republished in England.

in a literary point of view, we may justly be regarded as members of the same society, as a portion of the same people. Many English publications which may be described as strictly local and temporary, excite as much curiosity in America as in Scotland or Ireland; and the whole annual produce of the British press being regularly transported to our shores, and furnishing almost the whole employment of our readers, British literature may truly be considered, so far as books are the property of their readers as well as of their writers, as likewise American. These considerations will justify the present design, and require us to make our catalogue as simple and minute as possible.

A mere catalogue of books, digested with a due regard to method, will serve at least as a guide and index for the information of the learned and inquisitive. Critical opinions are so much biassed and modified by the personal habits and prejudices of the critic, that they are seldom of any use to readers in general.[1] No man, who is interested in the author or subject of a book, will be satisfied with the sentence of another. This sentence, indeed, considering the materials which must necessarily compose a professed critic, can hardly ever conform to the standard of abstract justice, but this conformity, even when it does take place, can be rarely of any practical utility. Each man reads what his own judgment, right or wrong, disposes him to approve, and what his own curiosity, formed and guided by accidents peculiar to himself, and generally, in some respects, different from that of all other men, renders interesting and important in his own eyes. To such readers all that is necessary is the guidance of a rational or analytical catalogue, and such we may venture to promise them, for, indeed, such only is consistent with the limits of the present work."

Thereupon he inconsistently proceeds to demolish the dream of the encyclopaedia maker, which is especially interesting in view of the fact that twenty-four volumes of the Philadelphia edition of Rees' Encyclopaedia were among the books in the appraisal of Brown's estate. Then follows the various departments such as natural philosophy, medicine, theology, law, agriculture, etc., through the whole list, each with an interesting paragraph, and contrary to his promise the whole foreign department is wound up with a review in which a few words place a valuation on the works in the list. On most publications Brown's opinions are the result of a just estimate and the surprise

1 In general Brown could speak authoritatively on this subject but the next sentence shows only a hastily formed opinion on reviews. As we have seen Brown's practise was different.

is that in so few cases his judgment erred.

He has something[1] to say on some ~~of the publications~~ in giving them in the list, it others ~~his opinion~~ is ~~given~~ at the beginning or reserved to the paragraph at the end of the class.

In view of the character of his ~~Brown's~~ work in prose fiction one sentence[2] is especially striking:

> "The castle, abbey, and forest, and barons, monks, and pilgrims are not yet entirely out of vogue with the dealers in fiction."

Had he kept to the plan ~~as promised~~ of the introduction, ~~which we have extracted,~~ this department would have been only ~~nothing but~~ a list of publications and would call for no remark. ~~But such was not the case.~~ Evidently the experience he had had with reviewing ~~had~~ taught him to dogmatise on the subject; but, when he came to actually make the list he was unable to pass unnoticed certain works with which he was well acquainted, so that it is, after all his preaching, almost what he said it would not be, though it is not at all like the English model which gave ~~is distinctly a~~ formal reviews such as he had published in his other periodicals.

The second part of the literary review is a Sketch of American Literature and what is lacking in length of publications is more

1 Vol.I, pp.169-172. 2 Vol.I, p.171.

than made up by Brown's opinions on the state of literature in America. This part opens[1] as follows:

"LET us suppose a stranger to be merely informed that the American states composed a nation of five or six millions of persons, enjoying all the ordinary benefits of civilization and refinement, unattended with that poverty and ignorance in the lower classes, and with that sloth, pride, and luxury in the upper ranks, commonly met with in other nations, and as generally enlightened by an elementary and useful education, as the people of European states. Such an observer would probably conclude that there was annually a considerable harvest of original literary and scientific productions among us. He would imagine that in so large and thriving a community, a few hundreds of persons would be found, to whom the industry of their fathers had secured a decent competence, and whom a liberal education or inquisitive temper would lead to employ their leisure in some favourite course of study. The habit of writing is so natural and serviceable to the studious, and the vanity so general that leads us to publish what we write, that it might naturally be suspected that a few of this class would publish their learned and ingenious labours. There are some propensities too, so strong, that neither want will extinguish, nor drudgery divert the mind from them. Of this kind is a poetical spirit, and a stranger might suppose that, among a people so numerous and enlightened, the lapse of ten or twenty years would produce a few poets, sufficiently ambitious and popular to produce a few annual volumes. As necessity, however, is the strongest impulse to literary, as well as all other kinds of invention and industry, it might be supposed that book-making would in some few cases be pursued merely as a trade, as a method of subsistence, and that some few original works might be produced, from the same humiliating yet salutary impulse

1 Vol.I,pp.173-175.

which made Johnson, Goldsmith, and Dryden authors. How far are these expectations and suspicions justified by our experience? how far does the harvest of American literature agree with those views which arise merely from the consideration of our numbers, our wealth, and our means of knowledge?

This point is not easily settled, because our previous expectations would be different, according to the choice we should make of the standard of comparison. A great many original works annually appear in Britain and in northern Germany. A much smaller in France, and a smaller still in southern Italy, southern Germany, Portugal, and Spain: with which of these shall we compare the American nation. We certainly produce fewer original works than the five first mentioned, but the superiority is probably on our side, proportional numbers being duly considered, if we compare ourselves with the four nations last mentioned.

Ill-informed persons might draw many erroneous inferences from the scarcity of original books among us. In the first place, it might be hastily supposed that we were very imperfectly supplied with books, and that we wanted either the faculty, the inclination, or the opportunities to read; and yet this is by no means true. America is probably as great a mart for printed publications as any country in the world; the proportion of readers is probably not exceeded even in Germany or England. The press is no where more extensively employed, nor knowledge more widely and equably diffused. Nay, paradoxical as it may seem, though there are few <u>books</u> of original speculation among us, there is an enormous quantity of original <u>publication</u>. A vast number of pens are constantly busy, but circumstances oblige them or incline them to be satisfied with brief essays, in daily newspapers and gazettes.

Our notions on this head will be more accurate by reflecting, that the American states are, in a literary view, no more than a province of the British empire. In these respects we bear an exact resemblance to Scotland and Ireland. Our language, manners, and pursuits are even more English than those of the two last mentioned countries. Our commercial intercourse, including the trade in books, is not less extensive, easy, and frequent. Books flow in upon us from the great manufactory of London, in the same manner as they make their way to Bristol, York, Edinburgh, and Dublin. As the inhabitants of these cities get their books from London, their cloths from Manchester, and their hardware from Birmingham, so do those of Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, and the importation and consumption in all these articles is such in the American towns, as to place them by no means in a rank below that of the British provincial capitals, in refinement, luxury, and knowledge.

If we were to estimate the genius and knowledge diffused throughout a nation by the number of its original publications, we should commit an egregious error. We are led into this error by not sufficiently reflecting on the nature of the common publications which appear in a book-making nation. The literary harvest in such nations

consists almost entirely of *translations*, in which of course there is nothing but a manual or mechanical vocation; of *inventions* either in verse, or prose, that obtain only momentary regard, and to write or read which is mere trivial pastime; of *systems* and *methods* in which there is nothing absolutely new, unless it be the order in which particulars are placed; and of *history* thrown into new forms, but very rarely gaining any thing, in light or perspicuity, by the new arrangement. We shall indeed be astonished, in examining a catalogue of annual publications, in Great Britain for example, to perceive how little there is truly original; and of that which is truly original, how much is trivial, or dull, or local, or temporary, and how small a display is made, upon the whole, of either eloquence, imagination, genius, or judgment.

With regard to American publications, however, most enquirers are wholly unacquainted with their real amount. The theatre is, indeed, so wide, and the manufacture, if we may so speak, is pursued in so many places, that it is extremely difficult to collect or frame a correct catalogue. In Great Britain, almost all publications of any value appear in London. In America, there are twenty or thirty towns,1 maritime and inland, and some of them situated at opposite corners of the empire, in which books are occasionally printed. New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, carry on the chief trade, but they are perhaps nearly equal to each other in the extent to which this trade is carried by them. It is found, even in Great Britain, extremely difficult to obtain a full and accurate list, but this difficulty must, for the reasons just mentioned, be much greater in America. Under any omissions of this kind, however, we are consoled by reflecting, that it cannot extend to any work of much importance or wide circulation. In the following pages we shall endeavour to form a short list of American publications, which have appeared within six or eight months prior to the month of June, in the present year. A particular2 account or analytical display of each work could only be attempted by one whose vanity should grasp at the praise of universal knowledge, and whose industry was equal to the careful perusal of so many volumes.

We have seen in several places ~~that~~ there was no one of the time who could speak on the subject of book making and authors in America with more authority than Brown, and we have considerable here which

1 This estimate, as one who has had any interest in the matter knows, is by far too small.

2 Brown seems to take an extreme view of the matter. While all could not reasonably be noticed, some could have been selected for brief notice, ~~but~~ as he had done in the first part of this department

expresses his matured opinion. He says:[1]

> "In investigating the state of book-making, in any country, and the causes that encourage or depress it, we are apt in general to refine too much, and to seek the causes of appearances, rather in the constitutional genius of the people, than in the common and obvious circumstances on which the fruits of literary genius and industry, like all other commodities, depend for their abundance and scarcity. Authors will, in fact, be always found, and books be written, where there is a pecuniary recompence for authors, and a ready sale for books, but where any circumstance denies them this reward, or reduces the sale of books, there will necessarily be few authors."

At the end[2] he presents the situation of the American author and thereby gives his opinion of his own literary times, as follows:

1 Vol.I, p.184. 2 Vol.I, pp.185-6

"When an American student has completed a laborious work, he carries it to the bookseller, and offers it for sale. He puts a price upon it somewhat equivalent to the time employed in writing it, but the offer is very properly and prudently rejected by the bookseller, for, says he, here have I a choice of books from England, the popularity and sale of which is fixed and certain, and which will cost me nothing but the mere expenses of publication; whereas, from you I must purchase the privilege of printing what I may, after all, be unable to dispose of, and which therefore may saddle me with the double loss of the original price and the subsequent expenses. If the disappointed author abates in his demand, and even finally is willing to make a present of his work to the publisher, the uncertainty of the sale still remains, and renders the project a hazardous and precarious one. His reluctance increases in proportion as it is extensive and voluminous. This will probably be found to be the true cause why original works are so rare in America. There are very few in any country who write books without any prospect of pecuniary recompense, or, when their books are written, can afford to publish them at their own expense. The ingenious, therefore, are obliged to spend their time in desultory reading, or to turn their attention to the walks of plodding but lucrative business.

This state of things may appear to some like a heavy disadvantage, and as a matter of great regret; and yet, if the appetite for useful and valuable books be amply supplied at present, of what consequence is it whether the supply come from home or from abroad? The capital of booksellers is at present fully employed in importing and publishing. If more of their manufacture were of domestic materials, an equivalent diminution must take place in the materials of foreign growth, and upon the whole we are more likely to be well supplied as things are at present. At any rate, the evil, if it be one, seems to be irremediable. As long as England, France, and Germany continue to produce books, and America is at liberty to chuse among them what she will import, and what she will republish, it will always be most prudent to pursue a great and certain, in preference to a small and precarious gain. Thus, we see at present an American bookseller undertake to republish a work in twenty volumes quarto, and demanding a capital of an hundred thousand dollars, who will refuse to give fifty dollars for a pamphlet written by his neighbor, or even to publish at his own expense, from the risk of loss which attends it; and this caution it is impossible for an impartial man to censure, though he may applaud the generosity, which of its own accord will put something to hazard, or voluntarily abridge its own gains for the sake of cherishing or relieving genius in despair, or learning in beggary."

After volume one this department follows the plan he had promised and confines itself to a list of publications. In volume two the American list closes with a lengthy discussion on the seat of government, the only excuse for which is the political activity on the subject formerly treated in a pamphlet. Of course the inclusion of the subject here was a mistake probably due to haste. In volume four the old promise is forgotten and the British list closes with a general review of the publications.

On the whole this department has undoubtedly increased in value as the years have passed. What was formerly mostly a gratuitous advertisement for the booksellers is to-day of value bibliographically, if in both valuations we omit the obvious relation of it to Brown.

The British and Foreign Intelligence in volume one is called "chiefly scientific" and follows the Chronicle. Though given a half-title and heading, the running-title continues as Chronicle. The use of the two titles explains the nature of the material, which undoubtedly was extracted from foreign periodicals. In volume two this department became "literary and philosophical" in title but did not differ in the character of material. Thereafter the department was wisely not continued, for it really was out of the domain

of an American publication of this character. Though not clearly perceived by Brown, the abandonment of the Foreign Intelligence was an indication that, had he lived to carry it on, the magazine would have been worked out so as to take a place in American affairs corresponding to that taken by his English model.

Seven articles were considered of sufficient importance to be given headings of their own and indexed separately instead of being included in the departments to which in some cases they properly belonged. Whether they were Brown's or selected by him from other publications is to be here considered.

Volume one[1] has an announcement and notice of Barlow's Columbiad introduced by the following foot-note:

> "We have been favored with the following by a friend, and, though this work does not undertake to give an account of unpublished works, the importance of the performance here mentioned will, perhaps, justify us in inserting this brief notice."

The statement about the friend indicates that Brown did not write this notice. However the facts connected with it are significant. The publishers of the Columbiad were the same as those of this magazine. The mention of the proof-sheet copy indicates either that the author saw it in the publisher's office or that the author

1 P. 217 ff.

supplied it to him, probably the latter. The general plan of the notice is characteristically Brownish. But, be it ~~Brown's~~ his or not, it is of no importance as a review. ~~and the less said of it the better.~~

The Statistical view of the Prussian Monarchy in volume two[1] is a table probably extracted from some publication ~~of the day~~ and has no value ~~at all~~ for ~~our purpose.~~ us.

On the Political Character of Dr. Franklin in the same volume[2] is introduced by ~~the following~~ a foot-note:

> "The editor was favored with these remarks by a venerable friend and compeer of Franklin. He inserts them with pleasure, though, at the same time, he requests the reader not to consider him as implicitly concurring in the justice of these strictures. He leaves them to have their due and unassisted weight with the candour of the reader."

The statement is effectual and ~~apparently~~ conclusive ~~that~~ Brown did not write the article. At the same time it is of value ~~as indicating~~ to show his ~~spirit of~~ toleration.

The Report of a committee of the House of Representatives on the memorial of certain merchants of Philadelphia in volume three[3] may have some relation to the interests of the Brown family in shipping, but it has none to Brown in particular. ~~In the former case~~ It would seem to indicate ~~that Brown~~ he had no sympathy with the family ~~commercial~~ transactions, ~~of his nearest of kin.~~

1 P.105-6 2 P.175 ff. 3 Pp.133-6.

The Journal of a voyage between China and the North-western coast of America, made in 1804[1] in the same volume is of sufficient value to warrant ~~the editor in giving~~ its prominent position. His personal interest in such matters was usually strong.

The collection of documents on Louisiana in volume four[2] are of interest in connection with ~~view of the fact that~~ Brown's ~~had published more than one~~ pamphlets on the purchase. ~~relative to the subject.~~ After the introductory letter from Sibley to General Dearborn and a few statistics of distances on the Red river both of which are additions supplied by Brown we come to An Account of Louisiana at the time of its transfer to the United States. An asterisk on page 67 refers to a note signed "Ed." ~~which reads as follows:~~

> "This account carefully abstracted from a work, which was itself an abstract of the documents, in the offices of the Governments of state and of the treasury, published by the government in 1803. The substance of that work is here delivered with all possible conciseness."

The work referred to is An Account of Louisiana, being an Abstract of Documents in the Offices of the Departments of State, and of the Treasury, Philadelphia 1803, to which there was an Appendix to an account, etc., Philadelphia 1803.

1 P.137 ff. 2 P.43 ff.

Though the government was said to be, the title pages merely stated that William Duane was the printer. The Conrads republished both pamphlets in November.[1] Heaton of Providence, R.I. also reprinted it.[2]

The abstracting of the abstract was done by Brown who had enough interest in the matter to reprint the first of the two pamphlets and the tabular statistics of the Appendix. However the American Register appearance of the text of the Abstract differs considerably from the Conrad reprint of the pamphlet and it is unquestionably made up, or abstracted as Brown says, from not only the pamphlet noticed in the note but also from its Appendix.

As editor Brown certainly took what may be thought unwarranted liberties with the material. He omitted, added, corrected, and changed sentences and paragraphs; he added notes of explanation of names; in fact he made every revision possible in its English, its wisdom of presentation and even its complimentary reference to the "gentleman of great respectability and correct information". Remarkably he called his friends Red men not Indians and outcasts rather than "vagabonds" who had emigrated.

1 Sabin 42177. 2 Sabin 42179.

An additional interest ~~it has for us~~ is ~~in the fact~~ that it made up a special department, ~~or more correctly, it was~~ given a place of its own ~~in this periodical~~. It thus becomes an astonishing and important part of his editorial work. Why he thought it necessary to reprint a work more than five years old is not clear.

It seems the author of the original pamphlet was no less a man than Brown's old political target of his Louisiana purchase pamphlets of 1803--Thomas Jefferson, whose letter to William Dunbar 13 March 1804 practically decides the authorship.[1] But whether Brown knew Jefferson was the author is not known. It seems as if he should have known for there was no reason to hide the fact ~~but perhaps he did not~~. His merciless blue-pencilling of ~~the work~~ it may have given some offence ~~we must assume heroic patience if it did not.~~ Whether it had anything to do with the fortune of ~~Brown's~~ the periodical also cannot be determined. To Jefferson's friends if not to Jefferson himself it ~~can~~ could hardly be thought non-partisan, it ~~can~~ could not be condoned, and it was probably Brown's greatest editorial blunder.

1 State Papers and Correspondence bearing upon the Purchase of the Territory of Louisiana Washington 1903, p.275. Curtis M. Geer: The Louisiana Purchase Philadelphia 1904, opposite p.192 gives a reproduction of the title-page of the Duane edition and a statement that it was Jefferson's.

To summarize the departments: ~~we find~~ all of them readily ~~ranging~~ falls ~~themselves~~ into two classes; the original and irreplaceable and the compiled and superceded. As a storehouse of historical material the Register has ~~of course~~ been ~~long ago~~ largely superceded ; for volumes have been written on or compiled from the materials Brown used. Reports, ~~and~~ treaties[1], ~~and~~ Acts of Congress, ~~and~~ trials, ~~and~~ laws, ~~and~~ state papers and miscellaneous articles have had their own

1 Six 1805 treaties given in volume one are omitted from the index. Possibly some of them may be important and they should be noticed. I-Between the U.S. and the Bashaw of Tripoli; II-VI-Between the U.S. and the Delaware, Shawnee, Pottawotamie, Miami, Eel River, Weas, Cherokees and Creek Indians.

historians who may have passed Brown in their search for their material at the sources, but if they did it was unconsciously. On the other hand the Register like all other similar publications has never had the attention ~~given to it that~~ it deserves. For the personal side of its Annals, its literary department, its obituaries, its special articles,[2] and its chronicle, it is of value and should be ~~at least~~ consulted by all workers in those particular lines.

The prefaces[3] to the volumes which Brown edited are ~~not only~~ interesting ~~as~~ for showing the career of the magazine. They give considerable biographical material and are worth reprinting; therefore we ~~here~~ collect and ~~slightly~~ annotate them.

2 The voyage Vol. III, pp. 137-175 was used by H.H. Bancroft for his California (Vol. II, p. 23 and note, p. 144 and note, p. 164 and note), North-West Coast (Vol. I, pp. xxxi, 318) and for ~~the name~~ Oregon (Vol. I, p. 25 note, not listed in authorities). Vol. II (pp. 85-103(4) supplied material on early Texas and Louisiana for New Mexico (Vol. II, p. 53 note); Vol. V (pp. 348 ff.) listed as authority on Peru for Central America (Vol. I, p. xxvi, not in notes); Vol. V (pp. 275(3)-311) on Pike for North-West Coast (Vol. I, p. 615) and (pp. 311-348) on travels of Lumbar and Hunter for North-West Coast. The Native Races lists the Register as authority (Vol. I, p. xviii) but not given in notes. California Past 757 says of Shaler, he "was the first American visitor whose narrative appeared in print in the U.S."

3 There is none to the seventh volume.

1961

The preface to volume one reads:

WE at length present to the public the first volume of THE AMERICAN REGISTER. The Editor dismisses it from his hands with no small degree of diffidence and apprehension. He is sensible that the work will be justly chargeable with many omissions and errors, and is conscious that some of these may be owing to his own incapacity or ignorance. There are some objections, however, to which he may have exposed himself, without any demerit on his own part. In extenuation of these, he trusts to the candour and forbearance of the reader, who will duly reflect upon the difficulties unavoidably attending the commencement of a work entirely new in this country. In properly distributing and proportioning the materials of a work of this nature, the compiler can only be guided by experience, and he must make several trials before his collections completely settle and adjust themselves to the mould designed to receive them.

The Editor had made much larger collections, for every department of the present volume, than he afterwards found it possible to provide room for. The progress of the press, which he was obliged to feed, in some degree, at hazard, left him the power of curtailing, but not of selecting. As it is, in order to admit some of the departments, he has been obliged to extend the volume upwards of fifty pages beyond the number properly belonging to it. In the Chronicle of Memorable Occurrences, and in the Register of Deaths, he was obliged to stop short of the proper period, and reserve a considerable quantity of matter for the ensuing volume. He had carefully translated and digested, with much pains, from genuine originals, a complete series of French bulletins, detailing the war in Prussia, as likewise several official accounts of the same transactions published by the Russian and Prussian governments: documents that are omitted or deplorably mutilated and perverted, through ignorance or haste, in the common papers of the day. He had likewise drawn up a narrative, and prepared the illustrating documents, relative to Miranda's expedition, but all these he has been obliged to omit for want of room, and confine himself to a summary narrative of the affairs of Europe, and with a view of those of America, merely preliminary to a narrative of passing events. A very ample account which he had drawn up of the operations on the frontiers of Louisiana, the latest transaction of this kind in our own country, he was, on the same account, obliged to compress into a small compass. The historical portion of the present volume the reader must, indeed, regard as merely designed for a preliminary essay. The Abstract of the Laws and Public Acts of the United States was made with peculiar care; and he hopes that it will be found of some value to the lawyer and political enquirer. The session of the legislature in which *these* were passed, was the latest of whose acts an authentic copy had been published, when this abridgement was made.

It may be necessary to remind the reader, that this compilation was made before the end of the month of July last, and, consequently, before any intelligence had arrived of the latest contests, and of the peace between France with Russia and Prussia. This will explain many passages in which we

1 It has been practically a year since the plans were made for it.
2 As we have seen there were several other attempts along the same lines.
3 Selecting a model <u>may</u> be included under "experience" but the word is and was not usually understood so broadly.
4 Brown did not hesitate to force them into the mould.
5 So far as we may judge 480 pages were planned for. 6 It made up 19 pages.
7 These are probably the ones ultimately used in volume two.
8 No narrative appears in the <u>Register</u>.The Expedition of Miranda is mentioned in Vol.II,p.87 note,and an extended study,taken from a British publication is given in Vol.V.pp.380ff.,in which case there are unsigned notes,probably by the author,and others very interesting signed "E" and "Edit.," undoubtedly by Brown,as well as the introductory paragraph.
9 Whether this refers to the Louisiana pamphlets used in Vol.IV,p.49ff. or to his pamphlet of 1803 is uncertain. The use of the word "drawn up" would seem to suggest the latter. If such an expression referred to the former we would thereby have another point by which to prove it Brown's.

speak of events as pending, or future, which are now past.

In the ensuing volume the Editor hopes to profit by the experience he has already gained, and to make a more judicious distribution and selection of his materials than he can boast of on the present occasion. He will then have an opportunity of discussing our domestic history in a more ample and satisfactory manner.

C.B.B.

Philadelphia, November 1, 1807.

It is clear ~~from this preface that~~ ~~Brown~~ he did no little amount of work to supply the most important departments. ~~of the magazine.~~ In some cases it was translation of French, in which we have found him proficient, in others he "draws up", a particularly characteristic phrase of his, and prepares, selects, or abstracts the material. But in all cases of articles noticed ~~in detail in this preface~~ it is significant ~~that~~ he does not state that the material was furnished by any one else, neither does he give any one thanks. From which it is ~~more than probable that~~ likely he wrote the greater part of anything original in them.

The preface to volume two reads:

THE second volume of the AMERICAN REGISTER is now presented to the public. Its contents are designed to relate to the last half year of 1807. The Editor hopes the impartial reader will not find it inferior to the former volume in any material circumstance.

In his historical career, the Editor has endeavoured to proceed with the utmost vigilance and caution, particularly with regard to domestic affairs.

1 This recalls his letter to Hall in which he speaks of his necessity for greater reflection in doing the work.

His own zeal and impatience would have carried him much farther onward in our domestic history than he has as yet gone, and have plunged him at once into the history of factions and intrigues; but he has been checked by reflecting on the extreme difficulty of managing these topics with impartiality, and the necessity of waiting till time has in some degree unfolded the true nature of public measures. In some respects he may disappoint the reader's curiosity, by still deferring his entry upon subjects which may seem to be in a finished state, and of which the materials are fully in possession of the public. We must beg him, however, to reflect, that the true state of our transactions with the British government was not known till we had somewhat advanced into the year 1808, and that we are not yet in possession of such a full and authentic history of Aaron Burr's trial as merits the attention of a faithful historian; of one who aspires, with whatever reason, to deserve the attention of the next generation as well as the present. Such a history is promised us, and will enable us, when it comes, to bring the history of Burr to a legitimate close.

The writer is sensible how little hope of present popularity can be reasonably entertained by him who does not enlist under the banners of a faction, and set out on a systematic plan of praising or condemning public measures, merely on account of the persons who perform them; of assigning to one political party all manner of wisdom and excellence, and to the other the simple and unmixed meed of wickedness and folly. He is sensible that this spirit extends to the transactions of foreign nations, even between themselves; that almost every reader is the warm and zealous advocate of either France or England. What indulgence, therefore, can be hoped for a work which bestows censure and praise without respect to persons or nations; which considers political events merely in relation to justice and truth, and distributes blame sometimes to one party, and sometimes to the other, and sometimes to both in the same page? who, in writing the history of a war between France and England, never forgets that he is neither Frenchman nor Englishman, nor is bound to shut his eyes upon the faults or merits of either?

Of those, therefore, who are dissatisfied with his history, he can only cherish the hope that they will forgive the faults of this part of his volume for the sake of the manifest utility of the rest. A collection of public and official documents in this convenient form, together with what we may call the private or internal history of the nation, in the Chronicle, is no where else to be found, and may hope to gain consideration from the enlightened part of the community.

Such is the extensive supply of matter which the circumstances of the times afford to a work of this kind, that the present volume has unavoidably extended more 2 than sixty pages beyond the limits which were assigned to it by the original plan. This circumstance would almost justify us in adopting a plan of greater simplicity, and reducing our work to a mere depository of history and politics, were not the former year particularly rich in historical and political materials, and could we expect the same bustling scene to continue long on the theatre of Europe or America."

It is perfectly evident that the readers, to whom he "appealed",

would not give the time and attention necessary for a fair examination

1 Brown's attitude toward parties and party spirit is consistent throughout. In several other places we have touched on this side of his life.

2 Brown's model found the same difficulty of uniformity. Though the first had about 500 some volumes of the Annual Register extended to 1100 pages. In Brown's case the two semi-annual volumes that corresponded to the one of the English totaled about one hundred pages less.

of the materials from which he had chosen. In this particular the work undoubtedly served a useful purpose. There is always a place ~~in the~~ esteem ~~of readers and in the affairs of the world~~ for the person who collects in one volume what would have to be sought in many.

The preface to volume three reads:

> "The public are now presented with the third volume of the American Register. We are not without hopes that its value may be deemed superior to that of either of the preceding volumes. The public papers, both foreign and domestic, relate to the most critical and interesting transactions which have occured for many years, and such a selection and arrangement have been made as was best calculated to display them.
>
> When this work was undertaken, it was impossible to ascertain the quantity and proportion of the matter by which it would be supplied. Its chief use was justly considered as arising from its being a depository of state papers and of contemporary history; but it was not imagined 1 that these would demand any large proportion of a thousand compact octavo pages annually. We have, however, since discovered that these departments alone would amply occupy the limits to which we have confined ourselves; but a regard to our original proposals 2 compels us to adhere to our present more miscellaneous arrangement till the public shall permit us to contract it. Some trivial 3 deviations from this plan will, however, be occasionally indispensable. This deviation may most allowably be made with regard to our literary reviews of foreign and domestic literature. Of the former, the proper materials seldom come to hand with punctuality; nor is it possible to form even a correct catalogue of British publications for any period, till half a year or a year has previously elapsed. The present state of national intercourse increases this difficulty.
>
> With regard to domestic literature, the number of original publications is so scanty, and intelligence concerning them to be collected from so extensive a field, that a tolerably correct or comprehensive view cannot be obtained or afforded for a less period than a year. We have, therefore, deferred this review to our next volume on this account, and because of the unusual abundance of political matter.

~~o imagination was necessary.~~ A consultation of the English Register would ave made the fact evident.
rom this ~~statement~~ we must conclude ~~that~~ the departments ~~as supplied~~ followd the plan as ~~laid down~~ in the ~~lost~~ prospectus. In accordance with his ustom in conducting periodicals this would have been the place where he ould have mentioned any change. ~~in plan.~~
Trivial deviations" undoubtedly refer to the substance of the departments, ot to the departments as a whole, except in the case mentioned.

1965

The public papers laid before congress during their last session have been lately published in six octavo volumes. This fact will show the voluminous extent to which this department of useful literature is liable occasionally to extend. All the matters of these volumes are, of course, not equally important, and we have therefore selected those which are entitled to our principal attention. The selection, however, is sparing, notwithstanding the extent to which it has carried us; and it is our purpose to collect, from the public documents, for the period during which the Register has subsisted, the materials of an entire extra or separate volume, which our subscribers are, of course, at liberty to purchase or not. 1 In this period, many curious details have been communicated by the president to congress, respecting the situation of the interior of the United States, abstracted from the journals of Messrs. Dunbar, Hunter, Sibley, Pike, Lewis, and Clarke. These form a body of what may be called American travels, and are highly curious and important. Some of these are preparing for publication on a large scale; but 2 some of them can scarcely be said to be extant to any useful purpose, mixed up, as they are, in the journals of congress, with so much bulky, expensive, and uninteresting matter. It is presumed that a separate and entire collection of these will be highly acceptable to persons inquisitive into the state of their native country. 3

We have been favoured by Mr. Shaler, of New York, with a valuable manuscript journal of a voyage to the western coast of North America and the South Sea islands. The importance of this work seemed to us to merit an early publication. 4

The editor deems it proper to publish the following letter, received by him too late for notice in his last volume.

Philadelphia, May 17, 1808.

SIR,

It was not until lately that I had the pleasure of perusing the first volume of "The American Register, for 1806-7," published by you in this city, wherein you republish 5 a paper headed "Account of the Massacre in St. Domingo, in May, 1806," with the following editorial annotation:

"The above narrative is an anonymous performance, originally published in the American newspapers. Its only claim to credit must arise from the probable nature of the incidents contained in it. Imperfect as this kind of testimony is, it is, in general, the only kind accessible to a minute historian of contemporary events, where official intelligence is wanting." 6

The compliment paid to the writer of that piece, by a republication in your respectable miscellany, appears to be nearly done away by that part of your note, in which you place the credibility of it, because it did not appear in an official form, upon a very unsure and slender ground. As this piece may be read with some interest at a distant period of time, and as it is a very great matter of doubt with me, whether any other gentleman who was present at the time of that distressing event will ever take the pains to commit it to print, I have thought proper, in order that its future existence, as a relation of a historical fact, may be placed upon as firm a basis as my veracity will allow, to acknowledge that I was the author of the publication in question.

My presence in Cape Français at the time, enabled me to inform myself fully of every particular that I have stated, and I pledge myself on its correctness, as to date, particularity, and truth, as far as human investigation can extend.

Yours, &c.

CONDY RAGUET. 7

1 This was probably never issued, for the six volumes noticed would be more acceptable to any one who would buy this one of Brown's. No copy is known to us.

2 Pike's, Dunbar's and Hunter's travels in part were published in Vol.V among the miscellaneous articles and some of the others are also common among auctioned books, but Brown undoubtedly here refers to book publication of them

3 Search for such a volume has been made in vain.

4 On pages 137-175 of Vol.III. ~~Whether this Mr. Shaler is~~ William Shaler 1773-1833 ~~author of Sketches of Algiers, Boston 1826, is not certain.~~ See D.A.B.

5 The article appeared in Vol.I, p.138. 6 Of course written by Brown.

7 Condy Raguet was of French descent, b.Phila., 1784, d.1842. Educated at University of Pennsylvania and spent four months in Santo Domingo. Cf.p.160, Vol.V. Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography.

Evidently Brown was restrained by his publisher so ~~that he was compelled~~ as to keep the number of pages within reasonable limits of the number promised in the prospectus. It is ~~hardly to be assumed that~~ unlikely the separate publications ~~suggested~~ were entirely according to Brown's wish and judgment. The natural thing for him to do ~~seems to be for him~~ was to publish <u>in the Register</u> what he thought worth issuing in a separate publication. However, it is ~~of course~~ possible ~~that~~ he ~~here~~ erred.

The preface[1] to volume four reads:

> THE fourth volume of the American Register is now presented to the public. The editor indulges the hope that it will be found to contain materials of more value and variety than any former volume.
>
> The brevity of the historical introduction will require no appology with those who reflect upon the actual state of political transactions, both foreign and domestic, at the close of the year one thousand eight hundred and eight. The great and interesting scenes opened on the theatre of Spain, had made too inconsiderable progress, and the materials of a legitimate narration, which had reached America at that period, were too few and scanty to justify the editor in entering into that topic.
>
> With regard to domestic trasactions, they were at the close of that year, to which the present volume must be considered as relating, in a state of extreme uncertainty, nor was it till the present year had somewhat advanced, that the negociations and disputes with Great Britain had reached a full termination. The proper time therefore for detailing the history of Spanish affairs till the embarkation of the British auxilary troops at Corunna, and of continuing the history of our domestic transactions, till the restoration of our commercial intercourse with Great Britain, will have arrived at the publication of our next volume. Mean time the way has been prepared for this

1 In this preface the type was larger than that used in the others.

by explaining the state of Europe in general, during the interval betweeen the peace of Tilsit and the attack of the French emperor on Spain.

In the copious report to congress, on the hostile decrees of France and Britain. published in this volume, will be found some few documents which have been inserted in a former volume.[1] The repetition was admitted by the editor, from the persuasion that it was best to preserve the series entire, especially as these copies are completely authentic.

The laws enacted by the national government, being published annually, do not allow of our giving an abstract of them more than once a year.[2]

The intrinsic value of the narrative of the proceedings of the friends in relation to the Indians, and of the geographical sketches respecting Louisiana, will, the editor believes, be evident to every judicious reader. He thinks his work would be entitled to no small share of public regard, if it were merely a general depository of papers so valuable as these.

Though difficult, it would not have been impracticable to give something more than a catalogue of American books; but the falacy and misrepresentation of reviews, are so notorious, and the number of those whom censure would mortify or irritate is so considerable, that the editor assures himself of the approbation of every considerate reader, for having confined himself to a well digested and perspicuous catalogue.

Those who are aware of the imperfect intercourse[3] and mutual distance of the great literary marts in the United States, will be more disposed to applaud the fulness than to censure the omissions of this catalogue.

Philadelphia, May 20, 1809.

~~By this time~~ The reader must have observed ~~that~~ there was too much of an apologetic attitude. ~~of mind in the editor.~~ Although he ~~is able to~~ gives good reasons for the short-comings, the absence of any self-confidence in ~~the wisdom of~~ his conduct of the magazine, is to be deplored. This is all the more so when we see ~~stop to consider that~~ the apology was not always necessary; ~~as~~ for instance in this case

1 A repetition of this character does not demand any apology.
2 This is only one of several details that show the haste with which the original plan was made.
3 Having already noticed this handicap in his opening of the department in volume one, it seems hardly called for here.

of the fourth preface. If he had ordered the printer ~~had~~ to use~~d~~ for the Annals the large type of volumes two and three ~~Brown~~ he would not have had to offer any apology whatsoever. ~~for the bulk.~~

The preface to volume five reads:

> TWO years have now elapsed since the publication of the American Register, a work previously unattempted[1] in America. The experiment, so doubtful at first, the Editor has had the satisfaction to believe, has not been unsuccessful. Experience has likewise instructed him in the best form for such a publication, and enabled him gradually to mould the plan of it, in conformity to the judgment of the public.
>
> This work is particularly designed to be a repository of American history and politics. These topics are, in themselves, so copious, that the extent of this publication, amounting to 1000 closely printed octavo pages, in a year, is scarcely sufficient for a comprehensive view of them. Public and official papers, both foreign and domestic, relative to American affairs, are found, upon experiment, to be very voluminous, and a selection of them to be absolutely necessary, in order to bring them within reasonable limits. We have hitherto contracted these limits beyond what was expedient, for the sake of matters of less intrinsic consequence. Hereafter,[2] we shall consider public and official papers connected with American affairs as of the first importance.
>
> An impartial and well-digested history of American affairs, and of foreign transactions, so far as they illustrate and are connected with those of our native country, will be given in this work. Public documents are the only legitimate bases of history. These, in our times, are so copious, so circumstantial, and so authentic, that they almost supersede the business of the historian, and will ever obtain, with all judicious inquirers into history, their principal attention. In this work the original materials are inserted, and the facts, authenticated by them, methodized and illustrated in a regular narration.

1 As we have seen, similar undertakings had been made. Brown cannot even "hedge" on this point in regard only to the name.

2 Brown here comes to the conclusion that was inevitable. A closer study of the methods of selection of the English periodical should have suggested it to him earlier. It should be noted that by this time the departments had been reduced to the Annals, the Chronicle, the State Papers, the Miscellaneous Articles and the Register of Deaths. Is it too much to expect that another volume would have shown him the wisdom of lopping off the Miscellaneous Articles?

The Register includes a comprehensive abstract of all the laws[1] passed by the general government. This is not introduced for the benefit of the lawyer, to whom the originals only are of any service, but as the most important historical documents. The laws of the United States, from the nature of the government, relate almost wholly to the levying and collection of a revenue; to the formation, distribution, and maintenance of a military force by land and by sea; to the modelling and government of frontier territories; to the public intercourse with the Indian tribes; and to modes of conduct with regard to foreign nations. Regulations on these points are closely connected with the current history of the nation, and are absolutely necessary to be known by those who would be acquainted, not with the municipal law, but the political condition of their own country.

There are a great many brief and fugitive notices, of high importance in reflecting light upon the actual condition of the country, but scattered far and wide, and doomed to speedy oblivion in the weekly and diurnal papers. A collection of these, under the title of The Chronicle, forms a part of this work, being abridged or extended according to the abundance of the articles already described.

In like manner, a list of the deaths of eminent or remarkable persons of our own country, with all the information concerning them, is a necessary branch of our domestic history, and will be rendered as full and copious as circumstances will permit.

Such is the plan of the American Register, a work which has hitherto not advanced under unfavorable auspices. The Editor claims the public attention on the score merely of the utility of the plan, and persuades himself that the plan needs only to be generally known, in order for its utility to be generally acknowledged, and its patrons multiplied."

~~For our purpose~~ The opening paragraph ~~of this preface by Brown~~ is most valuable. Surely no one could judge of the magazine's success better than he, and the statement though not positive is material. A magazine that is "not unsuccessful" in its childhood, is at least "keeping its head above water" and time alone is needed to make it more than self-sustaining. Unfortunately the tide was ebbing to the lowest for Brown. It is his last preface.

1 This is inexplicable. The fifth volume does not contain the abstract of laws. The last appearance of that department was in volume III.

The contemporary reception of the Register will ~~best serve the purpose of~~ show~~ing~~ what Brown accomplished with ~~this publication~~.

What a reviewer of Boston thought of the work is readily at hand. The Boston Ordeal for April 15,22, and 29,1809[1] contained an extended review of volume three. J.T.Buckingham was the publisher of the periodical but his Memoirs[2] says ~~that~~ Benjamin Pollard was responsible for the editorial conduct ~~of the periodical~~ so ~~that~~ in all probability this article was by Pollard. It is significant ~~in considering the tone of the review~~ to note ~~that~~ the author was a staunch federalist,while of course Brown was not wholly a party man and only partly federalist.

The review praised the intentions of Brown but found that when he departed from being a chronicler he drew conclusions ~~that were~~ not only dangerous but "lapses of correctness and deviations from authority",especially in the study of the affair of the ship Chesapeake that embroiled the United States with Great Britain. ~~As a whole~~ The review is a puzzling mixture of censure and praise probably due to political rancour. When Brown goes into detail and discussion the

1 Vol.I,Nos.15,16 and 17.
2 Personal Memoirs,Joseph T. Buckingham,Boston 1852,Vol.I,p.61.

Ordeal finds him in error, when he expresses no opinion and draws no conclusion the Ordeal criticises him, ~~for doing so.~~ Its praise is hardly formulated when its political bias leads ~~it~~ into patriotic ecstacy. The closing paragraph is characteristic ~~of the whole~~ and ~~is~~ interesting as an example of the reviewing of the day. ~~It reads:~~

> "We have now finished our contemplated review of the American Register, and we confess, we entertain some prejudice against the affected sensibility and croaking of our author, and indeed against many of his peculiarities of style; but we are much pleased with the publication on the whole. We consider it highly useful in its nature; it seems unexampled in this country, for industry and general accuracy of information, and though we recommend to our author not to show so evidently the democratic impulses of his feelings, in the historical narrative; yet we cannot but consider that his book may be rendered an important acquisition to the literature as well as politics of the country."

Of course to please the Ordeal Brown should have had no democratic impulses: he should have had federal ones. And of course his career was only waiting upon his declaration of Federal principles. ~~However Brown's political belief has been considered by us in other places, and it is not necessary to review it here.~~

Between the Ordeal and Brown's Register we are happily able to judge by results. The former, like all inquisitorial bodies with a bed of Procrustes, did not prove a lasting or paying affair. According to Buckingham[1] who should have known, Pollard received no pay,

1 Op.cit., Vol.I, p.62.

and after twenty-six numbers the Ordeal could not survive its own torture and died. The public found the Register, ~~with all its Boston-judged lack of perfection in the form of federal politics,~~ much more tolerable.

Besides the Ordeal other publications[1] contained notices, varying in character, ~~of the work,~~ but it is not necessary to consider ~~each one of them,~~ more having in the Ordeal a very fair representative of the fault finders. Some Important faults, not noticed by others, ~~have been suggested by us during the course of the present study but some~~ remain to be noticed. ~~here.~~

As Brown admitted in one of the prefaces, the erratic career of the departments ~~of the magazine~~ caused by his experimenting makes it evident ~~that~~ he did not do ~~any~~ thorough studying of the experiences of editors of similar ventures. ~~Evidently~~ He trusted too much to ~~his~~ remembering his English model; the model that he might here have followed to advantage.

The Annals of the fourth volume show a lag in ~~his~~ interest, as if the subject palled on his spirit. Doubtless this was due to the breaking down of ~~Brown's~~ his health.

1 The United States Gazette for January 5, 1809 reprinted an interesting notice of Vol. III from Poulson's American Daily Advertiser.

In ~~our study of~~ the 1809 political pamphlet ~~we find that~~ Brown showed a lack of what is termed diplomatic sense. In the fourth volume[1] we have a hit at the weaknesses of diplomatic practise which in the minds of the uninformed persists even to-day. All great statesmen have been only too conscious of the defects ~~of diplomacy~~ but in view of the great service rendered by that part of every civilized government they are tolerated uncomplainingly ~~just~~ as all human weaknesses should be. The only real fault of the system is that human beings have to put it into effect.

The pagination is a clumsy device and the table of contents should have shown the absurdity of having three or four sets of numbers. His model had part of this fault after the second volume and Brown ~~probably~~ followed it, the excuse being that some parts of the publication were put to press before the early part which had to be held open until just before ~~the~~ publication.

As we have found in several other instances the Portfolio came out with a notice which is the best ~~sort of an~~ example of the favorable reception. ~~of this work.~~ It introduces an extract from the American Annals as follows:

1 Annals, p.6.

" CARDS' AMERICAN REGISTER.

The enterprising booksellers of this name have in a state of great forwardness for publication a valuable work, entitled, " The American Register." This performance is upon a similar plan with Dodsley's Annual Register, and has long been wanted in this country, as none of the ephemetal productions of the press can possibly preserve all the valuable historical, state, and miscellaneous papers, to which every year gives birth. The useful repository which we have now in review, is edited by Mr. C. B. Brown, who has already distinguished himself in various walks of polite literature. The first part of his Register includes annals of Europe and America. This portion of his performance is entirely original; it is modelled after Burke's historical introductions, and it is written with great ability, and in a temper of the utmost moderation. In the form of a summary, a concise chronicle succeeds. A review of domestick and foreign literature, a copious collection of state papers both foreign and domestick, and various essays scientifick and classical, together with many other valuable articles, either useful or elegant, make up the volume.

From " the Annals of America" we select the exordium of the authour's tenth chapter. The style is honourable to him, and the sentiments will be extremely agreeable to his countrymen. " [1]

The statement concerning the original character of the Annals is the most important ~~part of the~~ information given. Dennie knew Brown personally and undoubtedly had learned at first hand what ~~Brown~~ he intended to write for the periodical.

This knowledge of Dennie's is further emphasized by the statement that Brown had used as the model for this part of the periodical Burke's historical introductions--another important detail which we have ~~already~~ elaborated. ~~in the present study.~~

1 Vol.IV,p.279.

1875

Later[1] the Portfolio added to its praise a number of interesting suggestions as follows:

BROWN'S AMERICAN REGISTER.

In a recent number of the Port Folio, having *announced* The American Register, by Mr. Brown, we perceive by the publick papers, that the 1st volume of this general Repository of History, Politicks and Science, is now published, and on a day so early as to afford a sufficient proof of the prompt talents, and persevering industry of the editor. It contains an accurate and impartial history of domestick and foreign politicks ; a collection of diplomatick documents, a chronicle of all memorable events which happen in private life, and are generally interesting or reflect, a light on the actual condition of society, and manners ; an abstract of the literary history of the times, with a view of British publications, and a sketch of Columbian literature, poetry, mortuary, and an abstract of all the laws passed in the first session of the Ninth Congress.

If we mistake not, Mr. B. is an admirer of the genius and eloquence of EDMUND BURKE. We honour both the taste and judgment of any man, who is an enthusiast in his partiality towards that calumniated statesman, who was one of the wisest as well as one of the most brilliant of those generous spirits, who have trolled the tongue, or exercised the pen, in support of doctrines, hostile to the factious humour of mankind. In particular, we honour Mr. Brown for his admiration of Burke, because we know that his partiality is of the purest kind, as in many political opinions we presume they are by no means in unison.

We cannot render Mr. Brown a more substantial service than by proposing to him to take for his model the Annual Register, as it was conducted for many years by Burke, with so much glory to himself, with so much emolument to his bookseller, and with so much instruction to his readers. Thus the first section, or historical department of the work might be devoted to a bird's-eye view both of domestick and foreign scenes Here would be a fine opportunity for an artist with the genius of Mr. B. to

1 Vol.V,New Series,27 Feb.,1808,pp.140-1.

employ the liveliest tinting, to dash *like Savage Rosa*[1] or *draw with learned Pousin.*

The next department, *The Chronicle of remarkable Events*, instead of being, like many meagre annals, a repulsive skeleton, composed of the dry bones of old gazettes, might be rendered remarkable for vivacity. The editor should be in the habit of preserving in his portfolio, curious or conspicuous incidents, sketches of extraordinary characters, narratives of memorable events, and in short, everything remarkable, occurring in the vicissitudes of the times. To these crude materials an editor, who disdained the vulgar track, might give both a body and soul. He might display not only industry and accuracy but genius and taste. In a neat and laconick style he might show all the adroitness of abridgment and much skill in the classing and grouping of objects, which a timid artist might despair even to sketch.

The next point, to which the eye of the editor should be directed, is the *collection and arrangement of state papers.* Here selection would be indispensably necessary. Much of the *tape-tied trash* of the American bureau might be thrown away as mere trumpery, but certain conspicuous acts should be religiously preserved.

Another department should exhibit *a gallery of the portraits of great men.* Than biography, nothing is more fascinating, nothing more instructive, nothing that is perused with greater avidity, or that excites a stronger interest. The lives of the illustrious in our own country, and. in particular, the mighty mass of British biography would always furnish excellent entertainment to the most fastidious reader.

Characters well pourtrayed would challenge a fixed attention ; and our country as well as Europe contains a multitude of *originals.*

Remarkable Trials and Law Reports, of a peculiarly, entertaining, or interesting nature, would not only edify the gentlemen of the bar, but might be selected with so much taste and judgment, as to amuse the mere miscellaneous reader.

The *Epistolary Correspondence* of men, eminent for their genius, would form a very interesting article.

Papers on topicks of Physical science or rural economy, useful Pro-

1 An obvious error for Salvator Rosa. The general ignorance of the work and name of the remarkable etcher whom Brown knew and admired is not dissipated even at this late day; a fact which is inexcusable after the two editions of Lady Morgan's biography of him and the beautiful portfolio of his etchings which was made from the plates bought by the Roman government.

jects, Miscellaneous essays, Romantick adventures, Foreign and Domestick Literature, Criticism, and Poetry.

To fill this comprehensive outline, perhaps, many pencils are requisite. Mr. B. has ably executed his department, but it should seem that to his genius and industry, there should be superadded a wide correspondence, both foreign and domestick. This we hope to see accomplished.

After this general praise and comment it is fitting ~~that we should~~ to give ~~some~~ attention to certain admirable details.

If it were necessary to quote any passage as an example of Brown's best method we should use the very beginning of volume one. It starts ~~out~~ with a general statement of the reader's attitude, proceeds along several logical steps and at length develops the peculiar position in world politics of the United States of America. As an example of his grasp of the situation it is excellent.

A very characteristic detail of the Annals is the suggestion[1] that topographical maps ~~were to~~ should be used. ~~in any such work~~. With his love for geography and maps this side of the editing is autobiographically interesting.

In writing these Annals, as he many times expresses it, he considered himself a distant but impartial observer of the events transpiring in Europe. So far as we can judge this department is original. It

1 Vol.II, p.27 n.

has been said[1] that in his surveys he was the pioneer American historian in the modern manner. He did not depend on the accounts given out by the combatants but rather he went to unprejudiced eye witnesses. Its astounding facility of language and argument and acute acquaintance with facts should not escape any reader. As in the Embargo pamphlet of 1809 and in spite of his brazen and unwise revision of Jefferson's pamphlet Brown had no strong party bias in his interpretation of political measures. Possibly the neglect of his best contribution to history is due to his fearless expression of the truth, truckling to no nation or race or creed, exactly the same as he had laid bare the motives and lives of the characters in his prose fictions. Many times he unpopularly tears off pride's mask of false glory.

His discussion of the neutrality of the United States,[2] his uncanny knowledge of human nature,[3] the studied care of the full expression of his thought even in the errata, his battle descriptions in the old style of the staccato sentence, the delicacy of the handling of the

1 F.L.Pattee: Wieland New York (1926) p.xxiv.
2 Vol.I, pp.74 ff. 3 Vol.I, p.6 note.

account of Aaron Burr's trial for conspiracy,[1] the note to the section of Poetry[2] and the full and impartial account of the Chesapeake-Leopard affair:[3] all are appropriate, excellent and worthy of ~~the especial~~ notice ~~of~~ by the general or historical reader.

1 Vol.II,pp.84 ff. 2 Vol.I,p.205.
3 Vol.II,pp.181-211 and Vol.III,pp.10 ff.

1979

An interesting ~~side~~ light on the success of the magazine ~~is to~~ may be found in a comparison of its destiny under another editor. As we have seen Brown edited but five out of the seven volumes. ~~Just~~ Who edited the other two x is not ~~clear~~ known but it is probable ~~that~~ T.H.Palmer, ~~who~~ In 1814 he was the editor and publisher of the Historical Register, was called on from Washington and given his first taste for work of the kind. x

~~Brown's success may be somewhat suggested by the facts.~~ After ~~his~~ Brown's death the new editor kept the magazine going for ~~but~~ two more volumes. He had no ~~any~~ part of Brown's ability; he wrote a stilted and lifeless preface to the sixth volume, his historical account was ~~only~~ of the usual dead character and he allowed the periodical to die without the customary funeral sermon or even the inevitable complaint of lack of patronage. As negative testimony the fate of the American Register under the new editorship is eloquently conclusive ~~as to~~ of the satisfaction rendered by Brown.

~~When we come to study the whole work and its career under Brown's editorship one fact stands out prominently.~~ The fifth volume, with the exception of the Miscellaneous Articles which seemed to be an "old love" and a survival of all of his editorial experience, was

x Robert Walsh was the editor of the two 1817 volumes of Another American Register but not the last two of Brown's.

composed of well selected material. The Annals had been "settled in the mould" as Brown would say, and ~~became~~ were only American; the Chronicle had become one of its best departments and remained; the American and Foreign State Papers were selected with keener judgment; and the Register of Deaths, though having temporarily gone a little out of ~~the~~ bounds by becoming general, would ~~undoubtedly have~~ again come around ~~to being confined~~ to the plan ~~followed in~~ of the first four volumes. ~~So that~~ On the whole it may be said ~~that~~ its initiation had been completed, its experiments had been ~~mostly~~ made, and despite what happened through no choice of his to be his last appeal, an appeal for more patrons, its prospects were bright.

To-day Brown's Register stands half way between two extremes either of which ~~opportunely~~ results in a certain amount of fame: it is too bulky and overloaded with actual material for the general reader and it is not bulky enough to take the place of later publication of original material. In its day the greater part of it undoubtedly served to direct attention[1] to the material but one step in the direction it pointed merely lead to another and meant no return of the reader. When most of the experimental obstacles had been removed and the general plan ~~of the magazine had been~~ settled and the war of 1812.

1 A copy was owned by Ebenezer Seaver of Roxbury, Mass., a Democratic representative in Congress from 1803 to 1813 and who was in favor of the Embargo

Brown's connection with it and with all earthly affairs ceased. ~~Volume six was therefore delayed in its appearance.~~ It is not quite clear just when in 1810 ~~it~~ Volume six was issued and Brown could not have written much if anything for it because he was struck down ~~just~~ after the issue of the fifth volume (November 1809) though the illness did not terminate fatally until the following February. A new editor ~~had to be hastily~~ was supplied, and the magazine having lost its real guide and creator lived along by the mere force of momentum until two more volumes were issued.

Brown had made his last periodical venture.

x J.G. Palfrey: North American Review October 1834, p. 295 says it was issued a few weeks before his death. ~~If so, it would have been three months earlier before~~ It was not due until May.