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1808-James Ogilvie's Lectures

~~43~~

1852-1861 A

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~~22~~

James Ogilvies Lectures
#1
1808

~~He senior~~ father's

In ~~Elijah~~ Brown's note-books there are three newspaper communications ascribed to Brown ~~and~~ with the dates of their composition. That they were by him would ~~also~~ seem to be ~~confirmed~~ confirmed by the statement, in his 1809 ~~summer~~ letter to Mary Linn, that he was acquainted with ~~an~~ Ogilvie, who must have been none other than the noted lecturer James Ogilvie. Of course it is possible ~~Elijah Brown~~ he was now in error ~~in supposing them Brown's, but~~ though it is not ~~probable~~ likely ~~for on some he knew the very date of composition. But,~~ The three ~~supplied by Brown's father~~ ascribed items ~~thus~~ ~~given~~ ascribed (numbers 1, 4 and 5, below) should be supplemented by three others (2, 3, 6) on the same subjects ~~which appeared~~ in the same newspapers. The whole six are signed with ~~[redacted]~~ initials or pseudonyms ~~the intention being~~ to hide the authorship; ~~but whether~~ probably ~~they were~~ devised by Brown ~~or~~ though the publishers may have supplied the ~~is not known~~. Their style is uniform and the material tells a

whom ~~Brown~~ he spoke of as an oddity.

1	Aurora	18	October	signed	A. B.
2	Advertiser	"	"	"	Z.
3	"	20	"	"	E.
4	"	"	"	"	Pictor
5	Aurora	22	"	"	A. B.
6	Advertiser	"	"	"	Philologus

consistent story which shows ~~that~~ Brown made Ogilvie's acquaintance ~~on the strength of~~ through his recommendation of the ~~Scotis course~~ When he referred to Ogilvie in the 1809 letter to Payne he called him his friend ~~of~~ lectures. ~~In Alexa Brown had said he hated a lecturer~~ ~~so that these articles have an interest they would otherwise not have.~~

~~To understand these communications we should have our attention called to the lecturer and his lectures.~~

James Ogilvie[1] (1760-1820) was born in Aberdeen, the son of Rev. John Ogilvie a descendant of the Findlater family, and possibly was graduated at King's college, Aberdeen, 1790. ~~He came to~~ When in the United States ~~and~~ he conducted a classical academy at Richmond ~~and~~ and lectured ~~ing~~ ~~extensively~~ mostly ~~through~~ in ~~out~~ Virginia and sometimes in other Atlantic States. ~~His lectures being finally stopped~~ Because of ~~their~~ his religious scepticism he later lost his ~~appeal to the~~ public, returned to Scotland where he made claim to the earldom of Findlater but losing his suit, ~~and being~~ Brown's 1809 letter to Mary Ann mentions his wife. constitutionally sensitive and worn out with narcotics, ~~He has~~ he was said to have been committed suicide, but there is no confirmation of these statements.

According to Sabin (c56837) he was the author of a Speech delivered in Essex Co., Va. in support of a Memorial on the subject of the Alien and Sedition Laws, Richmond, 1798; and Cursory Reflections on Government, Philosophy and Education, Alexandria, 1802. His philosophical Essays, one of which had a section on the abuse of moral fiction in novels, were published at Philadelphia 1816. His lectures

1 We are indebted principally to the Dictionary of National Biography; Analectic Magazine, VIII, 486, IX, 1; ~~and~~ Southern Literary Messenger, XIV, 534, and the Boston Spectator 19 February 1814. According to Irving's letter to Brevoort 28 August 1817 he was then lecturing in London and ~~[illegible]~~ 27 September 1818 he was heir of the Scotch estate of Dunnydeen.

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~~were~~ are not known to have been published. In his general interests he was particularly of the character to find a response in the mind of Brown. One authority, ~~the Southern Literary Messenger,~~ says he eulogised Godwin's Political Justice, but another, ~~the D.N.B.~~ says he rebutted the theories of Godwin of which he was enamoured when a youth. ~~Be that as it may, either one would appeal to Brown. One of his essays also had a section on the modern abuse of moral fiction in the shape of novels, which also undoubtedly had more than an ordinary interest for Brown.~~

~~Just~~ How many of his lectures Brown attended is not known. It is perhaps sufficient to find that three of them lead to the writing of this series of communications. A fourth is mentioned as having been heard but apparently Brown did not write any account of it. ~~has not yet been found, despite.~~

The Philadelphia Aurora and the Daily Advertiser of 8 October, in ~~their~~ advertisements, ~~gave~~ supply the dates and subjects for a summary of the lectures. ~~Attention should be called to the fact that all of them are peculiarly of interest to Brown. The list follows:~~

In the Portfolio for August 1811 there is a long criticism, ~~of Ogilvie and his lectures. Probably it was~~ of which probably written by ~~Joseph~~ Dennie.

text

Thursday 13 October--Discourse on Duelling with a passage from the Lay of the Last Minstrel and from Surrey's vision of Zanda and Alcanzor.
Friday 14 October--Gaming.
Tuesday 18 October--Suicide:Death of Cato and recitations from Pleasures of Hope and the Botanic Garden.
Thursday 20 October--Education. "Mr.O. will endeavor to exhibit in a new and interesting light the importance of female education."
Saturday 22 October--Progress and Prospects of Society.
Saturday 29 October--Discourse on Luxury. (On the 25th. advertised for Tuesday 29--an error.) On the 26th. O.advertised to repeat Progress and Prospects of Society on this date but it was not given.
Tuesday 1 November--Final appearance--subject Duelling.

The lectures were given in the evening at the Hall of the University in North Fourth street and began at 7 o'clock. The admission charged was fifty cents. The first lecture was attended by Brown as stated by him in the communication sent to the Advertiser and signed Z, but he wrote nothing on it.

The communication which follows is the second of those in the yellow wall-paper-covered note-book of Elijah Brown's and was published in the Philadelphia anti-Federalist Aurora for 18 October, where it was signed A.B., though not so given by Brown's father.

As we may see in the Literary Magazine the initials appear

to have been used formerly by Brown. It concerns the lecture of Friday 14 October on Gaming, was evidently written the next day and reads::

"Communication (by C.B.Brown)

I had the good fortune to attend an Oration upon gaming last evening delivered by Mr.Ogilvie at the Hall in fourth street. My feelings were so powerfully affected by the exhibition that I witnessed that I cannot help giving them way in a few remarks on the subject. Most sincerely do I condole with those whom accident or ignorance prevented from attending, for a more eloquent and powerful dissuasive from gaming was surely never before delivered to a public assembly.

Those who are in no danger of falling into that vice, could not fail of having their moral views strengthened and enlarged by the sound distinctions and luminous details of the orator; while those who were 1 exposed to that danger would be rescued from it, if the union of eloquence and reasoning, such a union as has certainly never before been exhibited in this city, will avail anything to their rescue....

On such an occasion it is almost frivolous to say that the taste of every judicious hearer would in the highest degree be gratified. Mr. Ogilvie's merits as a public speaker, are of the highest order; but the moral effects of such a discourse are so transcendentally important as to swallow up all other considerations. When I looked round upon the audience, I was pleased to observe that it was composed of persons of the highest reputation and influence in the city, and flattered myself that their report would draw together a much larger assembly hereafter.

It is so rare a thing to see eloquence enlisted on the side of Morality, any where but in the pulpit, that I must own I was much dazzled by the novelty, as by all the other merits of the exhibition. Tho' the subject of Mr.Ogilvie's future discourses are in the highest degree useful and important, I sincerely hope he may be induced to repeat 2 this particular one a second time. October 15"3

The American Daily Advertiser for 18 October contained a communication signed Z--another of the initials probably Brown's.[4] It concerns the same lecture of Friday 14 October and

1 Are, in the Aurora. 2 It was not repeated. (dated.
3 This is the date of composition. It should be signed A.B. as well as
4 Brown used most of the letters of the alphabet in the Monthly Magazine and Literary Magazine.

reads:

> "When the writer of this article attended the first lecture delivered by Mr.Ogilvie,he was struck with the elegance of language and eloquence of manner which distinguished the speech,while,at the same time,the vein of pure morality which pervaded the whole discourse, rendered it no less salutary than pleasing. But,on Friday evening,when the subject of Gaming occupied the attention of the Lecturer,he was peculiarly interesting and impressive;his description of its fascinating power,and his representation of its direful consequences, were taken from the life;and the arguments which he employed against it were such as sophistry could not elude;--they were such as bespoke the man of sensibility;the son of genius and the friend of virtue.
> What pity that every lover of play had not been present:--what pity that the young and inexperienced,the credulous and incautious,could not have listened to arguments so cogent,to counsels so salutary;delivered too in such a captivating manner. But to do justice to the union of genius and eloquence requires the possession of this rare combination. To the friends of virtue here is a rich repast. Here,the man of genius may hail a kindred spirit;here the votary of politeness and elegant literature,the orator and the poet,may enjoy "the feast of reason and the flow of soul."

At the opening it should be noticed that Brown speaks of attending the first lecture--the one on Duelling.

The Advertiser on 20 October has a hint of quite a different character--this time signed E. It reads:

> "Many of those who have attended the elegant and instructive Orations of Mr.Ogilvie,have regretted,that, owing to the partial illumination of the Hall,the features and countenance of the Orator,were but very imperfectly discernible. Every one knows how essential it is when estimating the abilities of a public speaker to witness that expression of soul depicted,in the countenance,without which eloquence has not half its effect.
> It is hoped that this hint,which is thus publicly given,because the writer has not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with Mr.Ogilvie will meet the early attention of this interesting stranger."

As we shall see in the sequel--this lead to Brown's meeting with Ogilvie.

The communication given first and ascribed by Brown's father to Brown is taken from the 1808 note-book of which the cover is the same as the inside. The notice concerns the 20 October lecture on Education, was contributed to the American Daily Advertiser and is signed by the pseudonym "Pictor"[1] which we have never before considered Brown's. It reads:

> "For the American Daily Advertiser.
>
> by C.B.B.
>
> Mr.Poulson
>
> ....It is not easy to express the pleasure I derived,in common I may venture to say of every individual of a most brilliant audience,from Mr.Ogilvie's oration on Thursday night. The subject was education; a subject so often,so copiously,and so variously discussed by writers of all sexes nations and ages,that it would,one would think,surpass the powers of human genius to endow it with novelty. And yet Mr.Ogilvie's sentiments,besides being luminous and instructive,were either wholly new, or invested by his magic powers of fancy and elocution,with an air of surpassing novelty—Absolute novelty indeed, is of little consequence on such occasions. Truth is the grand point,while in a mixed audience,there must always be some to whom the tritest sentiments,on speculative subjects must be new...
>
> This oration was, in every respect,a banquet of the richest kind. The strain of the Orator was lofty and magnificent. The connection between public manners and education;the insufficiency of every other agent to guide the national spirit,the powerless and abortive exertions of government and political liberty itself without this aid,were explained with a force and perspicuity that stamped conviction,a vivid and lasting conviction in every mind....
>
> This person's discourses contain so refined a chain of reasoning,that the general approbation he meets with is highly honorable to the discernment of a mixed audience. Whether,however,some part of this approbation may not be placed to the account of his elocution

1 The form of the communication shows it was sent as a letter to Poulson who may have supplied the pseudonym.

may perhaps be doubted--That elocution has certainly charms that make their way to every heart. Those who have only eyes and ears, must be pleased; those whose fancy and taste are their only active powers must be gratified; those who are beings of pure intellect, must be delighted with the Orator, whose tones and gestures have an energy not bought with the sacrifice of the graces; whose imagination teems with splendid images; whose views are in general eminently profound and just, and when their solidity is questionable, are, at least, commended by their virtuous and noble tendency....

This panegric may seem extravagant to those who were not present. But (to) those who were its warmth will hardly be condemned. Pictor."

The communication given third by Brown's father was published in the Aurora of October 22nd but our copy is from Elijah Brown's 1808 note-book which has the cover the same as the inside. It is also signed A.B., though not so given by Brown's father and concerns the Saturday October 22 lecture on the Progress and Prospects of Society. It was evidently written on the 18th and reads:

"For the Aurora

October 18th. 1808
(by C.B.B.)

This evening Mr. Ogilvie, it seems, proposes to entertain the public with a discourse on the progress and prospects of civic society. This is a grand theme, to which I have no doubt, after hearing his previous performances, his extraordinary powers will do ample justice. A subject rendered to all enlightened minds, so deeply interesting, by the events of the present period, cannot fail of fully obtaining its due, both in reasoning and in rhetoric, from the hand of this Orator. From those who have heard the same discourse delivered in Virginia and Maryland, I am informed that he takes a clear and strong view of the effects produced on the happiness of mankind, not only by those more ancient agents, the revival of Literature, and the invention of printing, but by the modern revolutions of America

and France. He likewise traces with a bold hand the influence of that memorable change which is[1] now moulding[2] not only the destiny of the French nation by building an imperial military and despotic throne out of the wreck and fragments of preceding systems, but controlled the fate of almost all civilized nations by the power of conquest. He likewise tells us what reason and experience enable us to hope or compel us to fear, from the potent interference of Great Britain."

Again the Advertiser for 22 October contained a communication--signed Philologus[3]--about the same evening's lecture. It shows that these public expressions of approval and attention had lead Brown to a personal acquaintance with Ogilvie. ~~In 1809 we shall find Brown recommending Ogilvie to John Howard Payne~~. The communication reads:

"Mr. Poulson.

The truly modest and unassuming manner in which Mr. Ogilvie, has presented himself to the public, begins now to experience the just reward of genuine merit, in the unsolicited, voluntary, meed of public patronage and general applause.

The superior state of elegance in which his orations are expressed, the graceful and impressive manner with which they are enforced, and the pure precepts of morality which they inculcate, render his addresses equally interesting and instructive, to the youthful Belles Lettres student, as they are to the man of confirmed taste, and the liberal and accomplished scholar.

Of the orations already delivered, those on Duelling and Gaming, have obtained the loudest and most unqualified approbation. That, however, which will be offered to the public This evening on the progress and prospects of society, is in the estimation of its author, far superior to any of the course, with respect to brilliancy of diction, variety of representation, cogency of argument, and energy of thought and action. It is that on which he wishes to rest his merit as a writer and as an orator, having bestowed upon its execution the utmost exertion of his various talents.

1 Has, in the Aurora. 2 Moulded, in the Aurora.
3 Like the earlier one the form shows it was sent as a letter to Poulson who may have supplied the pseudonym.

> Having casually elicited from him this opinion, in the course of a recent conversation, I consider it a duty, both to the public and to Mr. Ogilvie to communicate it to the friends of science and polite literature, through the medium of your gazette."

There we find Brown adopting the method of the present day reporter of "interviewing"--certainly a very early example of the practise in United States journalism.

In the Aurora for November 3rd. there is a communication signed Philanthropist which may be a variation of the Philanthropos of the Weekly Magazine but that it is Brown's is quite doubtful. This is further enforced by the fact that it takes Ogilvie to task for some of his ideas, but has no cumulation of internal evidence to show it Brown's. ~~though its desire for argument seems familiar~~. On the plea that he could not spend the time ~~in replying~~ Ogilvie, ~~in the issue for~~ 4 November, refused to argue the question.

~~Sden~~ ~~A to affiliate~~ 1861 A

~~James~~ Ogilvie, the orator, ~~who was a personal friend of Brown's~~ ~~1608~~ ~~having become acquainted in the Nineties when he was delivering a course of lectures in Philadelphia,~~ ~~&~~ Part of a letter of ~~Ogilvie's~~, dated 23 April (?1813) shows him interested to return his homage to Brown for the publicity he gave the lecture by securing subscriptions to Allen's biography,* ~~by an appeal to his correspondent (unidentified and only addressed as Tart Esqr., Charleston) as follows:~~

"You have not I hope forgotten the conversation I had with you relative to the proposed (~~life~~) memoirs of Charles B.Brown deceased.

When a man in every respect eminently qualified to execute a biographical work with fidelity & ability, proposes to write the life of a man so great & gifted as Charles Brown,& to devote the profits of the work,to assist his disconsolate widow in providing for his children the means of comfortable subsistence & liberal education,it is impossible not to feel the deepest interest in the success of the design. I must think,that no biographical work has ever yet issued from the American press,with so many powerful claims to the patronage of persons endowed with intelligence & benevolence. I regret bitterly,I even review with some degree of remorse, the having permitted so auspicious an opportunity (as the delivery of my last Oration on Beneficence in Charleston) to pass without inviting the attention of my auditers to this interesting subject. I shall endeavour to expiate my recent apathy by future & speedy activity. Meanwhile if you can do any thing to procure subscribers in Charleston,you will greatly oblige

Your sincere friend

James Ogilvie."

* Addressed to Tart Esqr., Charleston - Unidentified. William McDowall Tartt?