Revised 23-27 June 1924
" 8 July 1924

Revised 20-23 June 1927
Revised 24-July-5 August 1929
Additions 3- March 1930
Revised 4 to 10 March 1932
Additions up to 25 ditto
Revised 3-8 April 1933
Revised 14-16 June 1933
Revised 15-18 July 1933
Revised 3-4 May 1942

1778 Enumerated with the Publick of Law
952-4/18
5
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CHAPTER III

ENCUMBERED WITH THE RUBBISH OF LAW

1788 Aetat. 17

How long ~~the interval~~ it was ~~between the time when~~ after Brown left Proud's school ~~and the time~~ when he began the study of the law is not definitely known. It has been generally stated that he left school when about sixteen and Allen has said that he began the law study when sixteen. From the verses already given we would conclude ~~that~~ he was at least sixteen when he left school but Proud's book of accounts for the years concerned affords specific evidence that he

was no more than fourteen. We shall find actual evidence to show he was more than seventeen when he engaged in legal studies in a real law office. He appears to have studied law privately before then so that the high position he later attained in the law society was undoubtedly due not so much to his precocity as to the probability that during the three year interval he was reading the standard legal text-books of the day.

Be the interim what it may we have a statement of Brown's that this time of his life was a critical one for him. If his early marriage is true, and we cannot question the repeated evidence of his own words, it was indeed critical; but aside from affairs of the heart which are common to most boys in their adolescence the three years from fourteen to seventeen were critical for the further reason that he was seriously attempting to become a poet. According to the Rising Glory of America he had hoped for the patronage of no less a man than Benjamin Franklin, though that hope, probably founded partly on the early verses addressed to him and partly on the acquaintance of Charles Brockden with the great statesman, had

proved a vain one for, with the possible exception of James Ralph, Franklin never became a patron to any person smitten with a literary ambition. Brown's verses of sixteen, especially those on himself under the signature of Aretas show how he was spending some of his time. Health, ease and wealth were his but ~~even all of~~ these were insufficient ~~for him~~ for, ~~though he knew the necessity of a competence~~ he well understood the folly of self-satisfied idleness. He ~~therefore~~ had selected poetry as the means of launching himself on a literary career. How long he ~~enjoyed~~ led this life of literary endeavor we do not know, probably it was not much more than three years. Evidently what was sufficient for his heart's desire soon proved unsatisfactory in the opinion of some of his relatives and intimates.

but it was not the only medium he tried

extended over

gave him practice in composition and

As he tells us in his

× ~~According to the~~ 19 May 1792 letter he also wrote ~~during this summer~~ working out ~~a~~ synopsis ~~for~~ of a novel ~~which~~ for thirty days. When ~~the story~~ we come to that letter we shall see ~~that~~ the story was inspired by Rousseau's Héloïse and written for his unidentified friend Henrietta G——.

~~They practised on him the Quaker custom of reprehension and advice because he appeared to be~~ ~~It appears that it was a Quaker doctrine that~~ all who observed ~~one apparently~~ undirected as Brown appeared to be had the right and duty to advise and correct him. ~~whenever they thought they saw cause for it.~~ In those days no man was supposed seriously to select the career of an author, least of all a poet. No matter how strong an inborn impulse he felt no one should pretend to possess literary ambition. If he ~~seriously~~ believed himself endowed with literary ability the world demanded that he hide his ~~light~~ intention under the camouflage of a profession, perhaps ~~ministerial~~ clerical, perhaps medical, perhaps educational, at all events legal. The inborn instinct and the man's own knowledge of his desires for literary fame were ~~supposed~~ believed to be merely the ~~impractical~~ beguiling dreams of an uncallowed youth. Therefore his friends, totally ignorant ~~as are we~~ how an author should live ~~being~~ and fortified by an inconsistently brazen doctrine, ~~felt free to~~ like their Quaker silence ~~and~~ to join the parents and brothers in proffering advice. They brought all the gross and worldly stock arguments of wealth, ~~and~~ ambition and social position to bear on the boy, and tried to ~~make~~ convince him ~~believe~~ he must choose some avocation other than the unsocial, unsubstantial and ~~misunderstood~~ unknown one of a ~~poet~~ author, they advanced

their ignorance

their stupid ~~but well-intentioned~~ and selfish advice and drove him to ~~decide~~ ~~to~~ read law under a master, not because he had any strong desire to, but because he had tired of the arguing. To him it appeared to be the least objectionable and promised an opportunity to carry on additional experiments in a literary line. Brown was too intelligent not to know what is evident to any student of the lives of ~~great~~ real literary men. The lawyer-author has always been disowned as a lawyer by lawyers and as an author by authors. He is a hybrid like all similar blends of business or profession and authorship and rarely if ever attains a reputation of consequence; ~~for~~ because the work that demands the keenest intellect ~~is not to be~~ cannot be done advantageously in the idle hours of a profession or business; though it is true that some kinds of superficial literary work can be so done. As a very remarkable evidence of his intelligence, as well as of his kindliness, the determining cause for the selection or sacrifice was never during his whole life touched upon by him. ~~But~~ His silence is ominous.

Law and literature being slightly related in a purely mechanical way his choice, if his, is not surprising.

There is no reason why we should believe Brown was compelled to enter any occupation merely for money. Like many another young man he

probably entered it because it may be made useful if not harmless as a basis for any literary activity into which he afterwards launches. The autobiographical touches in the 1786 Aretas poem and in the 1802 Dialogue on Painting are conclusive that he did not have to work for subsistence. His wife Elizabeth Linn in the memoir of the 1827 Boston Wieland also takes the view that he was not entirely dependent on his avocation for his living expenses. His parents were well-to-do, his mother having an income from her mother and his father being no ordinary owner of productive real estate. The tradition of his brother supplying money to him opens up the discussion of his relation to his brothers' business which in another place we shall consider at greater length, it here being only necessary to say that his 14 April 1795 letter implies that he was studying law to assist his brother James in business. While doing the legal work for the firm he would have time to try his hand at literary work.

At that time there were no law schools in Pennsylvania--there was only one in the whole country and that was at Litchfield Connecticut--and it was the custom in preparation to enter an office of a practising lawyer and read law under his direction.

add to note on Wilcocks

355A

In the Tryals of Thomas Walcot, William Horne, etc. London 1683 f. 12 we learn that West became acquainted with Walcot through Some Wilcocks. Was he any relation of Alexander of Philadelphia?

Each court was empowered to admit attorneys to its own bar. Being a minor he would have to read law for three years, up to 1791. If, as appears to be the case, he planned to practise in all courts including the Supreme he should have been compelled to read two years more, up to 1793. After he had finished his three year articled clerkship with Wilcocks, the two additional years probably were to have been spent reading with Wilkins. His examination for admission would have to be before a committee. Such a course of law study was fairly simple when compared with the present day training; instead of having an enormous volume of decisions to study his principal task was the reading of Blackstone's Commentaries, and possibly Coke.

Accordingly Brown was placed with Alexander Wilcocks,[1] who practised

1 The name is sometimes spelled Wilcox but the above is according to his signature reproduced in D.P.Brown: Forum, Philadelphia 1856 Vol.I, at the end of the appendix on page 4 (of eight pages of signatures of Philadelphia lawyers and judges). The directory for 1785 gives the name the same and the address on Arch street; in 1791 the address was given 105 Mulberry (Arch) street. The residence of some Wilcox shown on the Raspe Nurnberg 1778 map may have been his father's if not a country home of his own. At the time of the 1797 yellow fever he went to Wilmington county from where he contributed forty dollars for relief of the poor. See Short History of the Yellow Fever Philadelphia 1798, second edition.

as a counselor at law in the Middle District of the city at 105 (Mulberry) Arch street between Third and Fourth streets. Brown may have been indentured to Wilcocks but more probably was a voluntary apprentice, living in the home of his preceptor.

(+A)

Wilcocks, when he died 22 July 1801 was Recorder of Philadelphia[1], ~~in fact~~ having served in that ~~important~~ capacity under seven different mayors from 1789 to 1801, and a short notice[2] of his death gives ~~this account of him.~~ says:

> "The character of this gentleman is so universally known and highly appreciated, as to render almost unnecessary a delineation of his virtues and his talents. To the urbanity of a gentleman he united the accomplishments of the scholar."

~~He had for~~ His wife[3] was Mary Chew, one of the prominent beauties of the day. He was a man of great energy and extensive legal knowledge, so that he was a commendable choice to educate a pupil in the intricacies of the law. (in the foregoing)

For our purpose (At the time of the first views of Arch (No. 5) of Arch street with the Second Presbyterian Church shows ~~the~~ Wilcocks' location looking East from Fifth street. Apparently the house was the three story gabled one pictured as just to the left of the lamp post to which the horse is tied. Later it was occupied by Madame Crelaud.

1 The 1790 Census, Washington 1908, p.227 gives his family as two males over 16, 3 under 16, 5 females, 2 others and no slaves.

2 ~~This article appears in the~~ Portfolio ~~for~~ 25 July 1801, ~~with an opening that states he died on the 22nd~~.

3 Wharton: Through Colonial Doorways, Philadelphia 1893, p.214, and Elizabeth Drinker: Journal, p.232, the latter recording her burial 23 July 1794.

add to note on date

357a

If Elijah Brown meant the fifth month ~~[illegible]~~ in the old style—March being the first—the 7th of June, Saturday, should be August, Thursday, ~~and four months should be seven.~~

to previous page

According to the extract from Brown's diary to be presently given he seems to have gone to work in Wilcocks' office on Saturday the seventh of June,[1] when he was about half through his seventeenth year ~~, four months and twenty one days old~~.

In Ormond[2] he has ~~probably~~ given some account of his life at Wilcocks'. He puts the condition on the father of Constantia Dudley and gives a picture of a law clerk which though not to be considered ~~as~~ true in all its details, is undoubtedly autobiographical.

> "His servitude was intolerable. He was associated with sordid hirelings, gross and uneducated, who treated his age with rude familiarity, and insulted his ears with ribaldry and scurril jests. He was subject to command, and had his portion of daily drudgery alloted to him, to be performed for a pittance no more than would buy the bread which he daily consumed. The task assigned him was technical and formal. He was perpetually encumbered with the rubbish of law; and waded with laborious steps through its endless tautologies, its impertinent circuities, its lying asservations, and hateful artifices. Nothing occured to relieve or diversify the scene. It was one tedious round of scrawling and jargon; a tissue made up of the shreds and remnants of barbarous antiquity, polluted with the rust of ages, and patched by the stupidity of modern workmen, into new deformity."

our prospero to paint a ~~his~~ characteristic

However accurate that may be--and we must allow ~~for a possible exaggeration~~ a caricature for our amusement in a work of fiction--it is undoubtedly true that he found the work uncongenial. That he therefore did not labor entirely at law in Wilcocks' office as ~~is to~~ will be presently seen should cause no surprise. Apparently Brown was not the kind of youth to

1 In the ~~diary~~ extract he says the 13th was the sixth day ~~at Wilcox's~~ and accordingly ~~is sent~~, if the days were successive and Sunday omitted as are probable, the figuring would make the 7th. the first day, ~~of his work~~.

2 Chapter II. ~~That in 1782~~ Chancellor Kent, ~~found the study "encumbered with voluminous rubbish"~~. Memoirs Boston 1898, p.16.

3 Any lawyer who finds this severe should ~~know~~ read

study only law—he had distinctly imbibed the English ideal of becoming something more than a mere lawyer.

Elijah Brown's blue paper-covered note-book dated 1794 contains a copy of "a part of my son C.B.Brown's diary". It is very important for several reasons and gives a picture of our Pegasus in the harness of the law. The whole passage reads:

> "6mo 13,1788. 10 0 Clk.A.M. 6th Day at Wilcocks--A. Wilcocks went out of Town to Buck Court on third day last and expect him back perhaps to night but more probably to morrow night--It is a very gloomy day and even cold for the season—It has for some weeks past been dry and pleasant—
>
> I went home on seventh day last--my father had gone to Wilmington that morning,and therefore I found my Company very acceptable--the next day was wet but brother Armitt came down in the morning,brother Elijah gave me a 20d piece which he had gotten that morning for Cherries which he laid claim to upon the merit of having picked them—I have tought the Death of Abell with it for him,though I now repent having done so as my Mother[2] may think it thrown away--however it is now done--and I shall take it down with me,if I go to morrow or next day,we came up together in the Evening,tho' very raw & cold,but I think I have felt no disadvantage from it.
>
> I took the resolution next day of writing a poetical Epistle[3] to my brother James,and by way of an Enchyridion Armitt procured me the second Vol. of Johnson's

1 By Gessner. Three editions translated by Mary Collyer from the German into English had been already published in one volume at Philadelphia. One other had been published at Boston and two others at New York.

3 This is the verse entitled "Epistle I" which we shall presently quote and criticise.

2 Blades includes women among the enemies of books and booksellers who tell you that they very rarely become bibliomaniacs. Possibly there is something instinctive in their natural opposition to an interest which too often results in the broken wealth of the student.

Pope which contains his satires and imitations of Horace--I strove to catch some of his spirit,and the success that attended my Endeavor has at the same time pleased and discouraged me,the facility with which I wrote has revived the former good opinion I entertained of my own talents,but my ambition looks higher than the Musa Pedestris of such poetry--But when I reflect upon my haste in other Instances,and the several serious and pathetic strokes which I have indulged in this piece which I thought to render sacred to humor only,has encouraged me a little to think of something more elevated. Wilcocks being out of Town, I have been at liberty to indulge myself in those studies--and have written at least one hundred lines a day for these two or three days past--as I shall not insert those parts that bear a serious complexion in this letter at least I will put what I can recollect here that it may not be entirely lost as they are in danger,if on loose pieces of paper--

I(n) Praise of Schuylkill.

Each muse her Incense to thy banks shall bring
To thee the Genius of my natal spring
For thee each heavenly stranger leave her Skies
And new Sabrinas from thy bosom rise
No precious sands thy torrent floods withold
To thee belong no mountains ribb'd with Gold
No sulphurous flames obscure the ray serene
No fierce Tornado's blast thy Smiling scene
No ---- ---- ---- desolate thy shore
No Arcanl Storms within thy caverns roar
Whenever thy Daughters make their cool retreat
The humid grotto and the mossy seat."

In that fragment save for the metre the only trace of Pope is the similarity of "obscure the ray" to Pope's "obscure its rays"[2] in both instances the reference being to the sun.

Before continuing with Brown's relation to the law,a few significant details of that diary extract should be noticed. For Brown to select from all the possible purchases in a bookstore

1 "Loud as the wolves,on Orcas' stormy steep" Pope:Imitations of Horace,Book II,Epistle I,line 32*. Orcas was the extreme northern promontory of Scotland,opposite the Orcades.
2 Essay on Criticism,line 471.

of those days such a work as Gessner's is no passing matter of merely buying a book. Among the vast number of literary men there are few who at seventeen bought that kind of a book. Byron, according to the preface to Cain, reading it at the tender age of eight is a rare exception. The stirring story of the contest between brothers was not only appropriate for Brown to buy for his brother--it was an impressive evidence that the boy who made the selection had an unusual mind and judgment. The reference to the rising of Sabrinas is of course to the undine of Milton's Comus (line 890 et seq.), which is another excellent recommendation of Brown's taste. His study of Greek would give him an interest in any Circean story so that the Miltonic masque celebrating the protection of virgin chastity would naturally appeal to any youth who was virtuous minded.

The relation of Brown to his family is somewhat made clear. The reference to his father is an exaggeration common to youth and should not be taken seriously. His map study in the parlor had been encouraged by his father who found his proficiency useful. Evidently his mother did not entirely approve of his longing for books. His brother Elijah would trust his twenty penny piece in Brown's hands, and probably knew what

kind of a book he would buy with it. As in other instances to be shown later, his elder brother James had come to appreciate the peculiarity of his mind and was encouraging him in the absence of Joseph. The whole extract is noted at the end by his father as "copied from a loose slip of paper in his own handwriting, accidentally found". To have such a paper so lost when he realized it was liable to be, seems particularly unfortunate; but to have this particular paper fall into the hands of his father was worse, for with its recommendation of his literary taste it also ~~had its sting and may have~~ may have caused his parents some pain when they saw in black and white the expression of their precocious boy's opinion of them. However, they probably made allowance for juvenile exaggeration — and Elijah Brown copied the record and preserved it for us.

Another important detail of that diary extract is the passage which refers to the poetic ~~Epistle~~ addressed to his brother James ~~In our consideration of the early verses written during and after his schooling by Proud casual reference was made to~~ "Epistle I" ~~which we have found~~ and copied in the 1783 note-book but which was written 6m ~~14~~ 8, 1788. Like others it makes use of autobiographic hints, notably those on lawyers and the business man. It contains some caustic criticism of the times and deserves to be read.

June or August.

x See our note to the month in which he entered Wilcocks's Office.

— — — —. See our note on The Times variant of the Rising Glory of America in the previous chapter. Except for published instead of Tuneful and who for of, the couplet is a repetition from the earlier verse.

"Wouldst thou my honor'd Brother & my friend
The joys of Poesy with Business blend,
Amuse thy leisure with my idle lay
Nor judge too hardly what the muse shall say
When we are free from sickness & from pain
You'l hear the Doctor of the times complain
The times are bad the wrangling lawyer cries
If no destructive Lawsuits should arise
When hostile neighbors come to buy his voice
You'l find him only at the time rejoice
How mean and sordid is the Lawyer's mind
Thatl joys from others woes can only find,
Are tennants scarce,or is it a low rent,
The Landlord then shall at the time lament
But are they high are Tennants yet in plenty
And for a shed--instead of ten give twenty
The times are pretty good--I can make shift
The Landlord cries and give a friend a lift,
Thus ev'ry one a diff'rent mark pursues,
And his own Lot in each the other views
One owes his rising to another's fall
And all contribute the support of all
A part complains but partial and unjust
And for the gen'ral safety ever must
But ev'ry bosom Virtues Loss shall feel
Save those whose bosoms' harden'd vices steel
At the foundation vice directs her force
That giving way the fabric falls of course
Then shall she Triumph o'er the conquer'd mind
And no opposer in her passage find.
No,the Indignant muse shall boldly rise
The wicked's wrath and scorn of fools despise
Rouse sinking Virtue from a Dying Bed,
Banish the vices from her ruins bred.
Toward Ambition with an empty name
And giddy folly with a Crown of shame,
To merit give the name that ne'er decays
And teach mankind the only way to praise
To scan the manners of a vicous age
With partial envy or satyric rage,
To paint in colors gross,the power of vice
The wants of honesty and gains of dice
I leave the humbler Bards and wishing rise
Higher than Pindar or the lofty skies
To stand the horror of an age of night
And shine as bright as Pope or e'en as bright
As polish'd Flaccus2who the times have sung,
And lash'd the vices that from greatness sprung.
Virtue with man first trod this new found shore

1 Carelessly written as the.
2 Quintus Horatius Flaccus,Horace. The name may have some connection with Brown's Alcuin for Alcuin the educator assumed it in Charlemagne's court academy.

And learning brought to light fair Wisdom's lore
Justice and moderation sway'd the soul
And public freedom did cement the Whole..
Fair Commerce fled Tyrant's hostile chains
And sought where Freedom valed these happy plains
The noble merchant strong in honesty
Anon to greatest wealth by due degrees
His losses doubtful but his gains were sure
From willing friends his wounds could find a cure
Then commerce bloom'd in all the pride of Youth
And found new graces from the strictest truth
T'was thou she saw her first best-Patron rise
Morris the bounteous noble and the wise
Cautious in council foremost in the fight,
The firmest Patriot, Subject most upright,
Beloved by those who seek their country's good
Who for her cause 'gainst Tyrant's family stood
Beloved by those who love a gen'rous deed
But who perhaps like thee reject a breed
Who to the greatest thought their souls awake
And follow virtue e'en for virtue's sake,
'Twas in this favor'd Land that Franklin dwell'd
'Twas in this age of Gold that men beheld
Fathers of nations leave their native skies
And Washington & greater Penn arise
Thy eye great Franklin o'er these scenes shall range
And sorrowing view the sad lamenting change
When the blind fury of an Impious age
Not even thy God-like virtues can assuage.
Simplicity and plain religion Fall
Yielding to empty Form or none at all
With public slav'ry public spirit died
And Brittain's power with Britton's genuine 1 pride
Depravity now proudly domineers
O'er virtue fallen and Liberty in tears.
Commerce, her patrons, Truth and honor, dead,
Prospers no more but drooping hangs her head
The sober sons of thrift, have long ago,
Giv'n up their place to outward form & show
A spurious race of Brittish upstarts rise
Of small importance but of small size
The grossest vanity and impudence
Make up for what they want in common sense
The Brittish 'prentice Clerk or spruce outsider
Between whose States and merchants none are wider
Whom to these shores their wiser masters send
And dub them merchants for some sordid end.

The reference to Robert Morris ~~is important when we~~ recall~~s~~ ~~that~~ the appeal ~~it was~~ to him ~~that~~ Brown's father ~~had appealed~~ when he was an exile

1 Doubtful. Probably Pope's *Windsor Forest* (line 415) gigantic pride.

had won the whole

in Virginia. The passage would suggest Morris served Elijah Brown

family by his service; though of course he

~~in his day of trouble~~. ~~However Morris~~ was noted for his public service

and well deserving of Brown's eulogy.

the moral Essays and others,

title inspired by the Essay on Man, the

Except for the metre and a few doubtful instances of the same

adjectives applied to nouns there are no ~~real~~ stronger traces of Pope's influ-

ence on those lines. "And follow virtue e'en for virtue's sake" is

a particularly happy line but is not the only one worthy of being

known. Some of the couplets are ~~equally~~ as quotable as many of Pope's.

After the verses given the connection is broken and with a frag-

mentary line the continuation branches off to some further develop-

ment.

~~42~~

355 E

Add to note

The death of a Thomas Micklethwaite by a fall from his horse appears in the Columbian Magazine of Sept., 1788, p. 646 and in the American Museum for October.

....."Bloom
Can we discern between a fool and merit
Tell pride from sense or impudence from spirit
Cease to deceive us with your specious lies
A mere outside can ne'er mislead the wise
A vain importance & a power'd Pate
Shall ne'er deceive us in a Micklewaite 1
Thro' all the Pomp of vanity and dress,
A son of low vulgarity we guess.--
Shall we not wonder why thy sordid soul
Should in a higher sphere aspire to roll--
Yet well we know when fickle fortune rules
Depressing Heroes and exalting Fools
She can with ease bestow her smiles on one
Or make a merchant's of a Curate's son
Those Brittish vices not Brittish virtue bring
And teach to rev'rence not despise a King
Encrease our troop of vices to an Host
And triumph o'er our ancient manners lost.
Industry once obtain'd the prize of wealth
The poor by Labor lived and not by stealth
But now alas,the strange reverse behold
And ev'ry virtue see contain'd in Gold
The early rising Tradesman wakes to Care
And fortifies his doubting mind to Bear
The daily insults of a sordid train
That clothe in friendships guise the love of gain
Behind his counter naked and forlorn
I saw him sitting on each rising morn
Rememb'ring once the offers of a Friend
In vain he call'd he now refused to lend
Dear Jack says he it is my greatest grief,
I cannot now afford you some relief
To tell the Truth tho' Irksome is the Task
I must for what you long have owed me ask
My present wants can suffer no delay
And as a friend you cannot but repay
Round wealth alone now friendships pleasures flow
The Lot of Poverty is friendless woe.
His breach of friendships & compassions Laws
He palliates with this sufficient cause
A friend to him I long enough have been
And Charity at Home should first begin
Tis true he sav'd me from a jail or worse
To save a Thief's no blessing but a curse
Besides he knew or surely might have known
I would in time return him all his own
And what he owes I'l give him which I think
Tho' small enough,& therefore let him sink
Thus he returns more helpless than before,
And sees the usual Crowd surround his door
Why sir,cries impudence I've call'd in vain
These ten days past and must I call again
Indeed you must I'l wait till after dinner
And wait no longer still or I'm a sinner

1 We have been unable to find any person of Brown's possible acquaintance to fit this character.

His noble spirit my misfortune Broke
I, forced to cringe beneath the servile yoke
Of low bred Impudence or wealthy Pride
That modest Anguish manly woes deride
He lost the joys of being Competent,
By villainy or an oppressive Rent
Driven to the lowest from the highest Rank
By merciless Creditors or merciless Bank
And but delays in flying to a Bail
To die in want, or languish in a Jail
An happy policy affords him Time
To 'scape destruction only by a Crime
But let him not lament his own sad Fate
He groans with all as well as with the State,
Bankruptcy is a Monster now so rare
That were even that to brake we should not stare
Nurs'd in the lap of Luxury and Pride
Stinted too much in every thing beside
Taught to revere the Worth, that riches give
From brutish Manners learn the Art to live
Young Bubo 1 starts at once upon the Town
A Man of Fashion, pleasure & Renown
Fair Science never rais'd his Clouded view
Above the Sordid ends that men pursue
Ne'r taught to feel the pleasures of the mind
Or seek in more than Riches bliss to find
Was it O Bubo was it Love of Self
That rob'd thy country or the love of pelf
No riches was to him the End of Life
And Gold the object when he took a Wife
His to Laugh at Heaven & scorn her ways
To pass in sensual Joys thy listless days
Would you believe? A miser and a Sot
The wealth of Bubo, first together got
Extortion's gains, and gains of cent per cent,
As hardly gather'd, as profusely spent
Pious old man! forsake thy silent Grave 2
At least a portion of thy Wealth to save
Thou would have enjoyed 3 to own a public Square
A gaudy Bauble, see erected there
What would have paid thy house rent or thy Maid 4
See lavish'd on a Stone, or Palisade
Where thou hads't built a compensative shed
With Admiration view a Garden Bed
Restrain thy Sorrows at the sad Reverse
And from thy offspring, if thou cans't a Curse
Shall sacred Liberty, dispense her Joys
Where grov'ling 5Vice, her blest Effect destroys
On him all 6 one, her gifts should Freedoms 7 shower
Whom pleasure taints not with her baneful power

1 The name was undoubtedly derived from Pope's Moral Essay, IV, l. 20 though it is also to be found in Prologue to Satires, l. 280 and Epilogue to same, I, l. 12 and l. 68.
2 From this line, inclusive, to the end of this part of Epistle I we shall find repeated--with a few changes in punctuation-- in the continuation.
3 Later form, joy'd. 4 Later this is man changed to Maid.
5 Later, grovelling. 6 Old form for alone. 7 Later, freedom.

add to note on Bubo.

3597

It is Latin for an owl.

On him whose heart is noble and sincere
Unknown to rash Temerity or Fear
And scorns1 to add new vices to his own
For States, to Virtue,owes their Strength,alone
Is2 women turn'd to Ladys3 by a Fan
Or is it travel,Bubo,makes the Man?

Epistle I is continued on another page thus:

Is it the Empty infidel or rake,
A true fine gentleman of thee can make
When gout and age his youthful spirits rust
In Jacksons4present fame shall sink to dust
Good only sires the good,base fathers base
And see old Stamper5 living in his race6
. . . . . .
Think not O Bubo tho' you visit France7
To learn to sputter French or learn to dance.
Brittain to taste the pleasures of the stage
Corruption's school avoided by the sage
To boast a feeling and enlightened heart
From the great monuments of human art,
Thy wondering countrymen8 shall never bow.
With rev'rent fear beneath thy scornful Brow
Tis he who never wished abroad to roam
But satisfied sees all the world at home
And seeks improvement only from above
Deserves his country's praise,his country's love."

1 Later,scorn. 2 Later corrected to are.
3 Later corrected to ladies.
4 General James Jackson.
5 John Stamper was an executor of Joseph Armitt's will dated 12 July 1747. He was a wealthy English merchant,lived at 224 Pine (Cedar) street south side near Second street where an alley was named after him,and was Mayor of the city in 1760.
6 The twenty lines following,here omitted,are with changes in the punctuation a duplication of the lines given in the first part of this epistle.
7 Joseph visited France,but it is doubtful if he used the name of Bubo for him as Pope [illegible] it for George Bubb Dodington, [illegible] plain-dealer.
8 Admiring, scr'ded.

This epistle is among the most promising couplet verses Brown wrote and while toward the end it falls short of the excellence of the earlier part it contains not a few lines that are peculiarly felicitious hits and make good aphorisms. Obviously it is not completed and so far as we know never was published.

While he was in
~~Contemporary with his half hearted~~ attendance at Wilcocks' office
he and some of his friends (what they called
~~was the~~ establishment of) a Law Society.
Allen and others who have followed ~~him~~ have so written their
accounts of ~~two distinct clubs,~~ this Law Society and the Belles
Lettres Club, to be noticed later, that the reader is confused and
may look upon them as if they were one and the same. In the Wieland
Boston 1827 memoir written by Brown's widow the two are distinguished
~~and there is no confusion~~.

The Law Society was the earlier, ~~It~~ met weekly ~~and debated a~~
~~question that had been previously proposed for discussion~~. ~~We have~~
We have no list of the members. James Milnor and William Wood Wilkins and
probably Walter Franklin his old Proud schoolmate were among them.
~~Probably Joseph Bringhurst was another~~ and ~~of course~~ there were more.
Allen says that among them "may be mentioned the names of several
who have since shone amongst the brightest ornaments of the bar,"
but he does not ~~mention one of them by name~~. It was ~~the~~ duty of the

1 P.12.

President, who held his office for a period of five weeks, to act as the judge of a "moot court", ~~pronouncing his judgment and giving his reasons for it at length. The decisions rendered by Brown in that capacity were said to have been delivered in becoming judicial style. The society was fashioned after the English Inns of Court.~~

~~The same authority sums up his role in the law society thus:~~

Though young Brown was well able to maintain an impressive gravity and to present the magisterial dignity of the bench better than any of his fellows, even those who actually knew more law than he did, little realized what a severe test of his vanity and character he was about to undergo. ~~submit to when he put on the dignity of a judge and sat upon the bench.~~

Four of his judgments were printed by Allen and ~~also by~~ retained by Dunlap. In criticism ~~for literary purposes~~ of them the law as it was at ~~the~~ that time must ~~be considered~~ determine the decision; what the statutes now provide and the courts uphold cannot only be brought into the matter. For their merely legal aspects we ~~may~~ might depend on the opinions of others but the layman can easily understand the force of the greater part of the arguments. The only technical side is in the meanings of a few words that may be learned from Blackstone.

No. II

We assume that Allen numbered them as he found them so that Case I is the earliest. It happens to be the most elaborated and shows best by its details Brown's legal method.

Case I is where "A advertises a reward for recovery of goods lost: B finds them; can B retain those goods until the reward is paid?" Brown explains this problem had not had the benefit of judicial examination so that he renders his decision with doubt and hesitation. In his opening he takes the opportunity to inform the society that he suspected the advocates of setting a trap for him. His high opinion of himself if not conceit may have tempted them to try but they must have been sorely disappointed if that was their purpose. Brown went directly to the root of the matter when he touched on the intent of the law. His reasoning follows from which he gives in the text and notes authorities, and after due consideration of the general law, which he finds inadequate, he cites an opinion of chief Justice Sir John Holt in a parallel case which he finds

From that ~~decision~~ he forms a clear opinion ~~and~~ in judgment & the case.

Of course if he had delivered his strongest argument, the Judge's opinion at first, the ~~discussion of the case~~ decision would concern the question of the cases being parallel, and to us it seems that it could have been made a more profitable one if he had done so. ~~In his opinion he takes the opportunity to inform the society that he was tested the advocates & nothing a block for him.~~

Aside from the ~~careful~~ weighing of the complications of the act of retaining as well as the logical structure of the case it appears to be of little importance as to showing any exceptional legal strength in Brown's mind; in fact some details which escaped him would indicate that he was not ~~scrupulously~~ careful. It is summary is defective but his decision would probably be sustained in any appeal when consulting his authorities

Case II, ~~is of~~ concerns the legality of the acts of a woman who erroneously supposes her husband ~~is~~ dead.

It would seem that here Brown might find a field for an extensive survey of possibilities with almost unlimited ~~and their~~ complications, but he does nothing of the sort. He ~~here~~ adopts the method that we have suggested he ~~should~~ might have done in Case I, thereby demonstrating that he had something of a legal mind.

An interesting ~~side~~ phase of this case is ~~the fact~~ that he cites the respective arguments of ~~each side~~ the advocates, so that we have here internal evidence of the character of the law society. If he could have forgotten his all sides of law to ~~each~~ client gives us a piece of fiction something. ~~A~~ In the line of Balzac's La Cousine he would have better spent his time and energies.

Case III is not a legal decision at all, although it states the fact that the judge decides ~~that~~ in legal jargon the attachment cannot be maintained.

which is founded on the idea of Case II

The case is as follows:

> "A merchant in England consigns goods to a merchant in America, he afterwards draws bills of exchange which are endorsed by a third person, he then becomes bankrupt. But prior to his bankruptcy he assigns the goods in America to another in England: the goods in America are attached by the endorser, as the property of the drawer. We are to pronounce upon the validity of the attachment."

Here appears to be a chance for even greater length and variety than we have had before and one's expectations are enlarged. But the whole matter is turned from a legal argument to one that relates to the club, its members and its precedents, and is worthy of entire quotation. It reads thus:

> "I shall make no observations upon the propriety of the circumstances here alledged, what measure of probability they possess, or whether viewed in a real or fictitious light, any question can arise from them worthy of serious discussion. It is I own in general, incumbent upon those who decide to assign the reasons of their decision. But every general rule is liable to some exceptions. That the present case may reasonably be deemed an exception, is the firm persuasion of him whose duty it is to decide concerning it. If such is my opinion, it matters not what the sentiments of others may be. The peculiar right of decision in such cases is a privilege annexed to my station, which notwithstanding the endeavours of the selfish and opinionated, I will not suffer to be weakened by a formal appeal to the common sense of others; I am content to wave the privilege of my seat no otherwise than by abdicating the seat itself; and though in opposition to violence and clamour, I am tenacious of my right as judge, yet as a member I am content to yield to an opinion, which however unwarrantably urged, is avowed by a majority of my fellow members. Thus much I think it my duty publicly to declare, in order to ascertain the privilege annexed by law, as well as reason, to the office of judge of this society; and by explaining the reason, why I have dispensed with my privilege on this occasion, thereby to remove the danger of its growing into a precedent. For I am well aware that had I not made this public declaration, length of time and the confusion of events would have rendered my conduct in this particular, an indisputable evidence of what is or is not a privilege: but I even blame myself for the sacrifice I have already made, and as long as I have the honour to preside in this chair, will be cautious

again of furnishing the like pernicious example to a predecessor, of sacrificing the dignity of his office to the unwarrantable views of a factious and imperious member. Party and division in this society shall in future meet with my discouragement, and I will no longer countenance the exertions of one who is perpetually usurping an undue authority over those who are his equals by membership, as well as those whom their station has for a time rendered his superiors. If the question is void of doubt or barren of argument with respect to the advocates, it is certainly so with respect to the judge. With the same ease and facility therefore, with which the case before us was argued, I determine that the attachment cannot be maintained."

Evidently the argument had caused too heated a debate and Brown saw some danger to the very existence of the club if any party division was passed uncensured.

Case IV states the question "Is falsehood necessary to constitute a libel against the chief magistrate of the state?"

The best part of this case is the non-legal;the historical. When Brown finds the arguments aiming at the Star Chamber's decisions he has something that is much more of interest to him than the law,and might well be quoted in explanation of that misunderstood body.

In the close of this case as in the preceding one there seems to be a suggestion that all had not gone well in the law society,that there was too much personal animus and petty bickering among his fellow members.

Though given in another place--in connection with the Belles

example to a predecessor
change to
— — — successor ×

× Given by Allen and Lindahl as predecessor, but apparently an error.

Lettres Society,where it is confusing and does not belong--the debate by Brown on the sacredness of promise obtained by fraud or violence undoubtedly belongs to the same law society. It is described by Allen[1] as follows:

> "Roused by competition he displayed uncommon brilliancy in debate. When compelled to play the Sophist he laid his premises so deep that they were difficult to detect. On so plain a question as this,whether promise extorted by fraud or violence are binding, he labored to prove that the mischiefs arising to society from the validity of a promise so extorted, do not form the standard by which it is to be measured. If the party intended deception at the time when this obligation was entered into,in consequence of compulsion,and if this is justifiable in morals,it furnishes a plea for the absolution of all contracts whatever. We can scarcely conceive of an instance where promises are made without some sort of compulsion. A man who stipulates to pay a debt for example acts under coercion,for he anticipates a longer forbearance. Hence if such engagements may be violated,because extorted, what degree of extortion will justify the violation? Can it be said that a man whose family is starving in the depth of a severe winter,and who promises a repacious creditor that he will punctually discharge perhaps an unjust debt at a future day,if he is preserved from a dungeon now,is not as much the subject of extortion as if the same engagement was made with a loaded pistol pointed at his breast?
>
> From hence he drew the inference,that the validity of a promise was founded on an immutable basis;that when once the words were uttered they were sacred,and that nothing but a punctual performance could extinguish the obligation. Not satisfied with this,the argument is pushed still further,and he boldly encounters the objection,that if extorted promises were binding on the party they might lead to the perpetuation of the blackest crimes,and the peace of society be put in jeopardy. This he undertakes resolutely to deny,and to prove that the only consequence would be;that people would be more guarded in entering into such engagements. A promise would then be as precious as life,and would be wantonly sported with as seldom,if nothing but the performance would acquit the obligation.

1 P.14. It is not included by Dunlap.

He further labors to prove that the light esteem with which such pledges are now regarded results from the adoption of this pernicious principle, that compulsory promises are not binding in law.

With such ingenious sophisms Charles was able to foil his antagonist in debate, and it may be generally noted, that in these controversies, he usually bent his force against the very point which was deemed the strongest, and the truth of which was considered too obvious for argument. Thus while his opponent was careful only of the superstructure, he found to his surprise, the foundation giving way."

Taking these ~~cases~~ as a whole our interest ~~in them~~ is ~~not~~ legal and ~~not~~ ~~only~~ ~~so~~ ~~far as~~ is ~~not~~ biographical ~~and~~ at a later time when Brown came to abandon the law they will serve as ~~an example~~ to show how ~~the~~ veritable practise ~~of law~~ appeared to our author. It is ~~improbable~~ likely the Society meetings were held in ~~the~~ Wilcocks's office so that they might be on hand for any business that came that way — for actual ~~benefit~~ ~~lay~~ advancement Brown might better have attended court. For he was not of the type to benefit by his misplaced dignity on the bench. ~~Could he have~~ Had he got on his feet as an advocate as Wilkins did he might have found the society of some value.

The fact that he never mentioned any court proceedings and ~~probably~~ possibly never saw one is as a matter of training astounding.

The assembling of fictitious circumstances to bring out the legal ~~striking~~ ability of these law students would seem to be an early instance ~~of the wisdom~~ of the method of teaching by ~~actual~~ cases. The only impracticable side ~~of Brown's cases~~ is that the club had no authoritative decision not even Blackstone for an answer to their problems.

~~From~~ The sequence of two of the cases ~~it seems as if~~ shows there ~~must have been~~ was considerable internal friction in the society. The third case presents the cause for it and the fourth is of such a character as to suggest that there was something personal in it. Whether they ~~society~~ dissolved at this time or continued with another member on the bench we do not know. Probably our Prospero having created the machine - shows merely ~~Despite his prominence and interest in this law society and the possibility that his position in it was unpleasant Brown's~~ his waned interest and he wanted to end it heart was already yearning for other ~~fields~~ pursuits and it was in his journal, written after he had escaped from the law and society and the Tents of Shem, that he recorded his hopes and aspirations of literary improvement. Allen[1] says:

> "Directly after he had disposed of the question, as appears from his journal, he gave vent to his fancy in a poetical effusion, as much distinguished by its wild and eccentric brilliancy, as the other composition was for its plain sobriety and gravity of style. They are perfect opposites; and any one who perused them, would with difficulty be

1 P.16.

> persuaded that so much eccentricity,and so much regularity,were the productions of one man;much less would he believe them to have proceeded from the same source, with the interval of a few moments only."

Naturally this state of affairs could not last long without some definite result and it soon ended in the formation of a literary club.

The plan for this society seems to have arisen from Brown's correspondence with an old^school friend of the Philological Club, Proud John Davidson.[1] Allen explains it thus:

> "The mere negligence of a friend,in returning an answer to a private letter,gave birth to an institution,which enlarged the theatre of Charles' ambition. The question on which the opinion of his correspondent was demanded was this,<u>the relation,dependence,and connection of the several parts of knowledge</u>. This question remaining unanswered,Charles thus undertakes to answer it himself."

The answer is taken from Brown's journal and reads:

1 P.18.

"The relations, dependencies, and connections of the several parts of knowledge, have long been a subject of [illegible] inquiry with me. In my late commenced correspondence with Emelius[1] this was the question upon which I demanded his opinion: he has not yet returned an answer to my letter, though from his expressions at the meeting at Franklin's,[2] I judge he had some serious intentions of answering it. The carrying into effect this scheme of a society, will I am afraid be to him a sufficient excuse for omitting it. I now intend to try what my unassisted capacity can do towards classing and separating the several departments of knowledge. However, to my task.

The general, and I believe the true division of science is into moral and physical. The object of moral science is mind, the object of physical, matter; this is sufficiently plain. I understand the distinction between matter and mind, or spirit (for they are synonymous) without the trouble of a definition.

Mind and matter are the two grand divisions of science, but we cannot have any object of moral science, but that portion of spirit within ourselves; while in this life mind perhaps can never be considered in any other way than in conjunction with matter. That science which considers mind in its essence, which considers spirit distinct from, and as much as possible indepen-

1 Later the name of Emilius is used for Wilkins. The distinction is clear but liable to be overlooked because of the deplorable similarity of the names.

2 Undoubtedly Walter Franklin of the Proud school. ~~This may be the source of David Lee Clark's statement (C.B.B., N.Y., 1923, p.28) that Brown frequently visited Benjamin Franklin's home. Brown was not the kind of man to refer to the famous old gentleman in this style.~~

dant of matter, is I think called metaphysics. Is there not a difference between the consideration of the mind in its essence or being, and the consideration of the mind, as it acts with relation to something else, just as we consider man in the several lights of a rational creature, and as a member of society? We know that our minds are continually employed in the exercise of apprehension, reason, and will: but we know that these operations of the mind are employed upon things outward and foreign to itself. When we view it in these operations, I think we do not view as metaphysicians, we must give another name to the science; perhaps it is logic. Man may be considered in a variety of lights; the distinction between physical and moral science take their rise in him; he is a creature of matter and mind, composed in newly organized matter; he is superior to the brutes only in degree, and he is equally with them, the object of physical science; but in mind he differs from them originally and in kind. He is therefore the only subject of moral science: as an animal he is the subject of natural history. What is anatomy? Is it not natural history? It examines his internal structure and formation: what is this but natural history? all animals are the subjects of anatomy, perhaps all substances: the dissection of a rabbit and the resolution of a metallic substance, are they not equally anatomy, only the instrument made use of is fire in one, and the lancet in the other? However, chemistry is only a more exact and thorough anatomy. Chemistry and anatomy therefore are nearly allied, their object is the same, their difference consists only in the different nature of the things on which they operate, and they are both ranked under the science of natural history. Man as an animal is the subject of the science of medicine, which is nothing more than the art of curing diseases incident to the human body. But there are diseases incident to the mind also; is the cure of these the province of the physician, when the mind is affected by the disorders of the animal system, or when its diseases may be cured, by application of external remedies? It is thus the province of the physician. It is necessary for a physician to be an anatomist, that is, the natural historian of man: because the knowledge of his interior formations may lead him to the

source or cause of the diseases incident to him. It may be a question whether the experimental mode in physic, that is, the theory of disease drawn from anatomy, is equally advantageous to the cause of true science, as the same mode in the other part of natural philosophy. But I am not physician enough to know whether I speak properly.

Man, as I said before, as an animal, is the object of medicine; but there are other animals besides; the science of medicine therefore is not confined to him only. But why is the cow doctor, the horse doctor considered so meanly of then? 1, because the diseases of other animals are less numerous and complicated: 2, because the life or health of a brute is of much less importance in the eye of man than the life or health of his fellow creature, and the diseases of men are more new and difficult, because of the connection between his mind and his body, and the mutual influence they have upon each other.

The consideration of the internal structure of man, with reference to the internal structure of other animals, or vice versa, is called comparative anatomy.

Man possesses five senses or inlets to his mind. Of these the sight is the most useful, extensive and delicate in its formation. Optics is that science which explains the theory of light and colours, and describes the manner in which outward objects affect the sight. The science of the occulist consists in the knowledge of the cure of the diseases incident to the eye. The importance of sight to men, and the exquisite organization of that matter in which it is centered, demand and have a separate theory. The teeth also, though none of the senses, from their usefulness in mastication, but principally from the addition, which when perfect, they are supposed to contribute to the beauty of the human face, employ, though undeservedly, a separate profession. Man may be considered as one and alone; or he may be considered as a member of a community, and connected with others."

Though Blair's Rhetoric Lecture XXXIV may have somewhat inspired this effort it is original. Being only a fragment it does not call for criticism but it shows the trend of his mind and is good evidence that for a boy of seventeen he had no ordinary one. Like Francis Bacon,he had taken all knowledge for his province.

It seems that his old Proud schoolmate John Davidson had proposed to him the formation of a literary society. For fear that it might interfere with his usual method of study he did not entirely approve of the idea as advanced by Davidson;but he discussed it and learning he had formed the wrong idea of it he agreed to join and to assist had pledged others to join. They were about to begin meetings when Davidson abandoned the idea and asked for a renewal of their literary correspondence,to which Charles agreed though he also decided to go on with the projected society. In his journal[1] he wrote this reprimand for Davidson:

> "I cannot help blaming his instability in this design, especially to relinquish it after going so far in it. I exerted myself more than common,solely depending upon his apparent ardors;and now it must be my lot to inform those whom I engaged of my disappointment. My friend has great and splendid virtues but amongst his faults, for faults he certainly has,is the caprice and instability of his conduct."

Ultimately Davidson saw his error and joined the club.

1 Allen,p.13.

They called themselves the Rhetorical Society, the Literary Society and finally the Belles Lettres Club.[1] There were nine members,[2] James Milnor, Joseph Bringhurst, William Wood Wilkins, Charles Evans, John Davidson, Brown and three others ~~unknown~~ unidentified but probably Armstrong, Russell Bader and Ferris. ~~Its~~ The object was to improve in composition and eloquence for which purpose literary subjects were debated and essays read. ~~It~~ The club was an early instance of a Philadelphia author's club, at least it was as like to that sort of an organization as the times afforded. Brown formed ~~and wrote out~~ the ~~rules of organization and procedure, and with some modification—probably of no importance or it would have been recorded—they were accepted by the members.~~ constitution and by-laws;

He was naturally chosen the President, and at the first meeting delivered the following address on the object of the club.

They were not restricted to students of any profession, as the Law Society had been.

1 ~~The 1 April 1795 Minerva of New York gives a notice of a Belles Lettres Club's new library in Nassau street.~~

2 We shall give more details of Wilkins and Bringhurst, ~~as we proceed.~~ James Milnor's life is recorded in a Memoir by John Stone, New York, American Tract Society, (1848) in which on page 17 mention is made of a Ciceronian Society strikingly similar to the law one to which Brown belonged. ~~Of Charles Evans and John Davidson we know very little. These were apparently three the members Armstrong, Russell Bader and Ferris the~~ it may have been the same.

Amidst the various subjects of disquisition which naturally present themselves upon this occasion, inquiries into the genius and design of this Institution are those, from which most immediate instruction may be derived, and the talents of the writer most beneficially employed. As the laws and constitution of this country will justly claim a principal share of every good citizen's attention, so it is also incumbent on us, who are members of a smaller community, to acquaint ourselves with the nature and reason of that association to which we are united. But although this is a duty from which none of us can suppose himself entirely exempted, it more peculiarly belongs to him who is destined to begin the career of literary improvement, and to enter immediately upon that theatre which to others still remains in distant and imperfect prospect. With what fear or diffidence he prepares to discharge the duty imposed upon him he need not mention. When his defects in style or sentiment are perceived, his fellow members will forgive the inexperience of the writer, and some apology may be indulged to the circumstances in which he writes. Great will he esteem the honour if he is permitted to appear foremost on the records of this society, though for that distinction he sacrifices every benefit to be derived from example and experience. The subject he has chosen will throw some little lustre on his composition, and some of his defects may reasonably be ascribed to the warmth with which he expatiates in a field so congenial with his inclination.

In this essay I shall attempt to sketch the leading features of our constitution, and to unfold the most obvious relations between the laws and those whose conduct they are designed to regulate; the more minute and imperceptible lines in which its specific nature consists may be reserved for future and more accurate investigation. To give a general idea of the spirit of laws as they are peculiar to this institution, is a task of no small labour and importance. The time indeed will not admit of that proper and complete discussion which the nature of the subject requires. This society is in its infancy; the vital principle is scarcely roused into action. At a more advanced period, when its operations shall have gained some degree of sta-

bility, when conjecture is ripened into fact, and when the views and reasonings of mistaken foresight have yielded to the certain, and more obvious conclusions of experience, this subject will find employment for abler pens, and deservedly receive a thorough investigation.

Literary improvement is certainly the object which every one proposes to himself in becoming a member of this society, however uninformed he may be with respect to the manner in which his talents will be called forth. He is already convinced that his mental powers only are the subjects of intended cultivation, but when he has once fixed the boundary in his mind, he is apt to think no farther division is necessary: he gives his imagination full liberty to range without controul through the whole circle of human knowledge, in the belief that whatever calls for the exertion of his mental faculties is already within his reach and may reasonably be appropriated to his own use. He confides in propects which present an endless gradation of improvement. The road to knowledge is open before him, the prize of literary excellence is displayed in his sight, and personal assiduity and attention only are required to remove every impediment between him and the object of his ambition. In short he believes it impossible to form a wish too sanguine for the occasion. That such are really the expectations of some, no one can doubt, whose own feelings are an evidence of the fact with respect to himself. It may seem impossible in those, the poverty of whose imagination confines them to limits even narrower than those of matter of fact. But the case is otherwise with those who find an interest in yielding to the persuasions of fancy, even in opposition to the sober dictates of their judgment. Whether the hopes of such be in truth fallacious and extravagant, I shall not presume to determine. I will not even deny that this society will fully answer his idea, but I am perfectly convinced of the possibility of framing a system which shall gratify every propensity to enlarge the circle of his faculties, of which the human mind is capable; a system calculated to employ at once the reason, memory, and imagination of man.

An idea of perfection incompatible with the present state of

things, is generally the object of contemplation with philosophers. In the bosom of retirement and leisure we are apt to pour forth a visionary beauty and proportion upon the scenes around us, which vanish away when we come to examine them more nearly, and to try them by the unfailing test of experience. Hence the faultless pictures of manners and of government so frequent in their writing; pictures, which it is acknowledged, afford conspicuous proofs of goodness of heart, and vigour of intellect in the contriver; but it is denied that they contribute any thing to the happiness of society. This in general may be true. But though I am sensible that dreams of absolute perfection, can be realized only in another world; that plans of government without defect, and men whose spirits have been rendered perfect, can appear only in a future and unknown stage of being; yet I cannot help thinking but that success in every pursuit will be commensurate to the ideas of perfection which we entertain concerning that pursuit. When we set before our eyes an object, as the end of our endeavours, however exalted and far beyond our reach, and lend our exertions solely to that object, our continued struggles will at length raise us to that elevated pitch of knowledge or of virtue, in which the imperfection of our nature is capable of supporting us. In contemplating the designs of a Raphael or Angelo, it is impossible to produce a picture totally devoid of grandeur or of grace. An attempt to fashion according to an imaginary standard in our own minds, the habits and dispositions of men, when their faculties have attained their full vigour, and when education can no longer have any influence over their conduct; may meet with obstacles not to be surmounted, but by a being of superior power and capacity. But education claims an unbounded dominion over the separate provinces of infancy and youth, whether she employs precept and authority as the instruments of her purpose, or engages the passions of youth on her side by means of example and emulation, she is able to instil into the uninformed minds of her pupils, whatever sentiment or disposition she pleases.

Of the noblest species of education, an institution like the present will furnish a complete example. We may justly be de-

nominated pupils, since our design is to learn, or at least to improve what we have already learned; but we are pupils to whom the pedantic character of a preceptor, and the servile forms of scholastic discipline are unknown. Reason is the authority which exacts our obedience; and emulation the principle that promotes our improvement. On this subject therefore theory can scarcely be exhausted. Here at least the hand can execute what the head is able to contrive. The idea of a perfect commonwealth is not the same extravagant thing in education as in politics. The settled depravity of mankind, will never yield to the gentle admonitions of the wise, and the stubborn and inveterate prejudices of the vulgar, will be always hostile to the kindly influence of good government.

But the manners of youth are fresh and pliant, their deviations from the path of rectitude and duty may more easily be recalled, and it is by no means difficult to accelerate their steps in the pursuit of knowledge. Were it required of me to make the experiment, and to produce a system, simple in its construction, but calculated to answer the purposes of its formation, with the utmost precision and success; I should demand nothing but that the circumstances of time, and place, should be favourable to my design. A demand which by no means implies an impossibility of introducing my system into general use. No formed design is always consistent with the present appearances of things, and little credit is due to his sagacity, who ushers every invention into light at the moment it receives a form in his own conception. If he wishes success to his own undertakings he must wait the proper opportunity to disclose them, when the things around him wear a favourable aspect, and are prepared to smile upon his purposes. Though an opportunity may not at present offer, I may safely trust to the natural course of events, and am under no necessity of impressing laws upon matter, or on mind different from those by which they now exist.

Such are my sentiments of the possible excellence of literary association among youth. For I must confess this society falls somewhat short of that perfect plan which presents itself to my imagination. A plan for which I cannot help contemplating with

pleasure, though the situation of myself as well as others will not suffer me to indulge a hope of seeing it carried into effect. It is not a matter of serious concern, but a matter of rational amusement only, that we thus associate together. Our die is already cast, the path which his steps are to occupy is already pointed out to each of us; we are soon to throw aside that subordinate character in which we have hitherto been trained, and to step forth upon the theatre of life, supported only by our own talents and address. It behoves us to make preparation for that awful crisis in choosing our future parts. Due caution and circumspection should undoubtedly be used. But when our choice is made, vigour and celerity alone, are required to demand the applause of our fellow citizens. But though a principal share of our attention is already appropriated, we must not suffer one object to engross the whole; various accomplishments are requisite to make any single character complete; whatever his profession may be (I speak of those of the liberal kind) he will soon feel the absolute necessity of devoting some of his time to the study of polite literature. If the native beauty of the liberal arts be found unable to allure him, his interest alone will incite him to the pursuit. Thus he may owe the most valuable of intellectual treasure to motives the most sordid and interested. To those who testify a relish for such studies, no argument is necessary to attach them still closer to their favourite object; few of them indeed can resist the strong attraction which they feel towards it. Totally overcome by the bewitching charms of this their favourite pursuit, they become regardless of the voice of reason, and are totally immersed in the soothing pleasures of intoxicated fancy. The enthusiasm of poetry is no less strong and violent than that of religion; they flow in separate channels, but are derived from the self same fountain. Abhorring equally the noise and clamour of the forum, they fly to solitude and silence, to musing, and to contemplation, frequenters of the shade, and accustomed to indulge the airy flights of a fancy vigorous from use, and bold from the absence of constraint, they are equally governed by imaginary inspiration. They turn their eyes from the insipid scene without, and [illegible] prospect, and a visionary happiness in a world of their own creation. But those who are superior to the strong attraction of their genius, whose

imagination is awed and corrected by their judgment, will still preserve an intimate acquaintance with the liberal sciences in their passage through life.

The whole circle of human knowledge is indeed bound together by a strong and indissoluble chain; they mutually receive and impart strength and lustre. The several and distinct sciences which are derived from the reason, the memory, and the imagination, are as intimately connected with each other, as those powers are in the human mind. The traits of resemblance for example between moral and physical science are so many, so various, and so complex, that it is a task of no little labour and ingenuity properly to separate them. Philosophy owes its precision to history, and history is enlightened by the beams of rational philosophy. The presence of the muses softens the severer genius of the law, and without their kindly influence, even the study of nature becomes harsh and unpleasing. The pleasures of taste on the contrary, are often carried to a vicious extreme, unless corrected by a seasonable mixture of philosophical severity.

The connection is not more exquisite between the spiritual and material worlds, than between the several provinces of imagination and reason. As matter separate from mind would be totally devoid of life and motion, so reason deprived of the invigorating influence of the fancy, would be a caput mortuum, to the last degree lifeless and insipid.

To obviate the inconvenience of such an unnatural separation, to ornament the mind as well as to improve the understanding, is, I think, the business of this society. With this view we have entitled it the society of Belles Lettres. This is a term of very peculiar signification. It does not denote any specific division of the sciences logically arranged; it even comprehends science and art, within the same circle. It has been generally understood to signify a combination of the most popular studies, and those which are best suited to the free and easy strain of conversation. If this definition be admitted as a good one, fashion alone must be admitted as the standard of decision. Different parts of the world, as well as different ages of it, may entertain different notions concerning the particular objects of study, which should be ranked under this denomination; one people may be totally absorbed in mathematical inquiries, and the abstrusest spe-

culation in that science may become the theme of every literary circle. In another country he is the politest man, and most distinguished of the respectable band of the literati, who comes into the company of the learned fraught with profoundest erudition. The standard of taste is with them the dry discriminating spirit of the metaphysician. An enormous lexicon, or tedious commentary upon an inconsiderable classic, is placed upon a level with the most admired production of genius. Among a third people, a softer genius may prevail, captivated by the melody of sound, and the mimic creation of the pencil. The glory of a Handel or a Rubens, will be the sole subject of their refined conversation. The tribute of applause and admiration will be due to him, who best unfolds the hidden soul of harmony, or transfers nature into his pictures without blemish or defect. So great a diversity of tastes, cannot be conceived to be impossible; they have even actually appeared at different periods in the same nation. But a moment's reflection will convince us, that nothing is impossible to the restless caprice of fashion. Fashion may affix what stamp she pleases to the term of Belles Lettres, and this stamp must of consequence be in perpetual change. But it is needless to be very curious in defining the exact import of the word. Polite learning sometimes under the name of humanity, and sometimes of Belles Lettres, has long been the subject of academical education in the universities of Europe. Its nature and boundaries therefore must have been long since fixed, and determined with a precision sufficient for our purpose. According to my own observation, and in the main agreeably to the method adopted in a celebrated publication[1] on this subject, Belles Lettres may be generally divided into three great departments—grammar, rhetoric, and poetry.

By grammar, I mean not the prosody of a verse, or the resolution of a sentence, but an extensive science, which considers the metaphysical properties and the mechanical formation of language; a science whose object is the theory of speech, which describes it as general or particular, investigates its origin, deduces its history and progress, and delineates its structure, in all the variety of forms it has assumed in the different regions of the

1 Brown's note refers to the Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres of Dr. Blair of the University of Edinburgh. There was a Philadelphia 1784 edition, ~~and from it Brown may have [illegible] many of his ideas.~~

globe. It is the doctrine of signs, and its importance and extent is evident from this, that it divides with logic one third part of that immense field of speculation in which the understanding is conversant.

The provinces of this extensive empire are many and various. Amidst so boundless a variety, objects may be found suited to the genius and capacity of every one; the careless or the delinquent, the profound or the superficial inquirer, may here find employment for his indolence, activity, dullness or sagacity. Should he, for instance, confine his researches within the pale of one language, even this comparatively narrow field will supply him with a copious fund of pleasing information. He may examine its etymology, or review the various periods of its history. He may trace the various changes it has undergone to their respective causes, determine whether they have been produced by the lapse of time, the confusion of events, or by foreign colonization. He may set forth the variety of its dialects, for the specific, as well as generic difference in languages, point out the difference or resemblance between them, and survey them, accompanied with all their appendages of causes, contrast and consequence. Is the language of its poetry distinct from that of its prose, in what do they severally consist? Compare its present state with any period past or future, and thereby discover whether it be yet in its progress towards perfection, or stationary, or in its decline. These inquiries when they are confined to our native tongue, are no less useful than amusing. I need not mention the respect paid to the study of their own language by the politest nations of antiquity. The writings of Quintillian and Tully, bear ample testimony to the fact. In modern times, no less attention has been paid to this favourite branch of study. Witness the societies instituted for that purpose in France, Italy, and Spain. Besides the local or provincial dialects of a language, another variety must also arise founded upon the difference in manners and education of those who speak it. This distinction can only take place in a living tongue; in such, a certain elegance of phrase, as well as of manner, is the criterion of politeness. The dialect of the vulgar, differs as essentially from the mode of speaking among men of letters, as the style of the poet differs from that of the

philosopher. The structure of a language which has ceased to be spoken, is infinitely more uniform and regular than the diversified dialects, and even varied pronunciation of a living tongue. Written monuments are very imperfect vehicles of speech; they can indeed unfold the orthography of language with great strictness and accuracy; but experience will teach us, that orthography is a very uncertain guide to the true pronunciation of a tongue. A variety of dialects often proceeds from a difference of pronunciation, though the same orthography be adhered to; and differences imperceptible in spelling or arrangement, are rendered obvious and remarkable in the utterance. These I cannot but consider as strong motives, why attention should be paid to the study of our own language in preference to that of any other; I may therefore recommend it as a subject of useful and ingenious disquisition, nearly connected with the common experience of youth, and allowing always an immediate appeal to our own personal judgment and sagacity.

Hitherto we have looked no farther than a single language, let us now extend our view to an assemblage of many. Subjects of inquiry will multiply upon us in proportion to the number of distinct idioms which are separately or relatively considered. Besides the consideration just mentioned, their genealogy, their comparative excellence, their mutual dependence and relations, are all departments in the immense edifice of grammar worthy of the nicest scrutiny.

Knowledge may be considered emblematically as a vast temple; the avenues to which are guarded by the several languages in use among men. Languages may be valued in proportion as the avenues over which they preside are easy in their entrance, and expeditious in conducting the adventurer to the prize of which he is in quest. It may be worth inquiring, at which of these imaginary portals may we gain our purpose with most speed and convenience. Is there hitherto any thing neglected or unknown, which may furnish an easier passage to the foot of the altar of science. May we judge from the grace and beauty of the architecture, whether the gate which it adorns is preferable to another more rude or unembellished? Or (to speak without a metaphor) is not the information to be derived from the knowledge of an unknown tongue, always proportionate to the strength

and beauty of its idiom? Imagination revolts at the dialects of barbarians, the poverty or hardship of whose sounds suit not with the soft and refined utterance of a civilized people. But cannot reason find a treasure concealed beneath this rude and unfinished curtain, worth the labour of drawing it aside?

But let him still enlarge the circle of his studious observation; let him step from particular to general grammar. Is there not any thing in this new region worthy his attention? Will his reason be improved or his fancy gratified, while he occupies his talents with this new object? The smooth and level path which he has hitherto traversed, was productive of little uneasiness; but that in which he is now about to enter, presents nothing but a rugged prospect. Grammar thus abstractedly considered, lies within the bounds of pure metaphysics. The language of man is the intercourse of spirits; it is not the feeble and involuntary respirations of pain and pleasure, but the perfect and pathetic picture of every fixed or transient emotion to which his mind is subject. By one happy faculty is man capable of giving form to spirit, and of rendering his soul visible to man. The pictures which words exhibit are even more perfect than those produced by the hands of nature. Things when they act by their own powers, act upon the mind according to laws pre-established by the Deity, in the inviolable observance of which consists the pledge of their existence. But when we would transmit our feelings to the minds of others by means of words, there is submitted to our choice an unlimited variety of modes of doing it. The treasury of language is literally inexhaustible: it will afford sufficient for the purposes of every one. Hence the study of the metaphysical properties of language has been ranked among the number of abstruser sciences. Into this recess, the careless or superficial inquirer must not presume to intrude; it is sacred to philosophy and contemplation: he may wander in the maze of poetical expression, or ascend the summits of aspiring eloquence. He may fix the unstable edifice of language on a firmer basis, he may add grace and dignity to its present structure. These are employments suited to his capacity, they demand not the toil of a vigorous intellect, but yield to the feeble and remitted efforts of imagination.

"But I have too long imposed upon the patience of my hearers; this subject is extremely diffuse, and though I profess to consider it in a very contracted point of view, it will furnish matter for many future essays. Style and composition with the propriety of the mode adopted to accelerate our improvement therein, will come next under our observation. Eloquence will then be considered not as the object of senseless applause, or the topic of empty declamation; but as a necessary ingredient in the composition of those characters we are about to assume, to a certain degree of which this society will furnish the means, and every member may improve the opportunity of attaining. With some reflections upon the circumstances which constitute the peculiar excellence of this institution, we shall finish a picture possessing the requisite boldness and dignity in the design, however lame or imperfect in the execution."

From the sentence in which he speaks of waiting for a favorable opportunity to launch the project it would appear that the idea of the society had long been in his mind. How long it was we do not know precisely but it could easily have been for at least a year but by no means as long ago as his attendance at Proud's.

In that address there is a deal of the autobiographic. The speaker's hope for such a scheme of continuing his studies, the expectation of entering on the theatre of life by choosing a profession, the visionary happiness in a world of their own creation, the presence of the muse appeasing the severer genius of the law and the greater attention to English than to all other languages: these are personal notes already touched by Brown in his own life.

add note on Rochefoucauld[x]

[x] This follows the text of the English translation, 1775.

As an opening address delivered in a young man's club it is not original but remarkable and considerably in a class of its own. Though the language and the subjects sound as if they came from Hugh Blair's Rhetoric they cannot be traced directly. There are many works assiduously studied by young men that cannot offer such favorable instruction as Blair and that Brown was inspired by him is to be commended.

The reference in the closing paragraph--to the development of the ideas that have occured to him--should be noticed. In the Literary Magazine[1] there is an essay on Juvenile Eloquence which is unquestionably one of the essays there promised by Brown. It is worthy of complete quotation not only as an example of Brown's able development of Blair's ideas but also as an exposition of the sort of author's club he was conducting.

" I HAVE been much pleased with perusing an essay or oration, delivered, if I mistake not, by a juvenile orator, and in a juvenile society in this city, which has chanced to fall into my hands. A lively descant upon those motives which should impel young minds in the pursuit of knowledge is closed in the following judicious manner.

"In directing the tendency of our inquiries and researches," says the orator, "it will no doubt be useful, and indeed necessary, always to keep in view one of the maxims of the celebrated Rochefoucault, and to act coincidently with it. "There are," says he, "*two* kinds of curiosity. One of them, arising from interest, instigates us to learn what may be useful: the other, arising from pride, makes us eager to know what others are ignorant of." Let us, therefore, be governed by the nobler

1 Vol.V,pp.301-2,"For the Literary Magazine".

principle, whose effects he here delineates, our true interest: it will lead us to know those truths whose dissemination will be productive of utility to others, and highly honourable to ourselves.

"Where the influence of knowledge is directed by the voice of wisdom, man reigns uncontrouled monarch over the powers of darkness and terror; the specious seducements of vice are not suffered to claim an unworthy pre-eminence over the products of virtue; and by attending to our highest interests, subjugating all our attainments to the dominion of real utility, and reducing them to this strict criterion, we advance nearer by imitation to our Divine Original, and approach that SOURCE, in which all perfection is centered, although placed at an infinite distance from our highest ascent!

"Who would not, then, be a votary of science? Who would refuse to follow whither she invites, and gently leads us on, when she declares, that the paths of knowledge are the paths of glory; and that the recesses of the temple of literature can be explored by industry, unfolded by genius, and illustrated by study? But we must learn which is the most important point. We will be compelled to see, that the centre of wisdom[1] is the accurate knowledge of that deceitful hypocrite, the human heart! There let us direct our eye; there let us form our analysis; examine, weigh, decide. Then, and then only, can we feel in its full force, and see in its most comprehensive extent, that *knowledge is power!*

"As an institution, therefore, which tends in some degree to rear us into men, and qualify us for these excellent attainments, I can behold this society with a peculiar interest, with an unaffected pleasure. For the advancements we may make, fostered by our *united* care, may mark with decision the future direction of our lives. And we must remember, that as the formation of our characters is placed in our own hands, we must stand or fall by our individual works; and every endeavour that we may use to subject our passions to the dominion of reason, to rectify our judgments by the grand regulating principles of truth and virtue, and to cause each emotion of our hearts to act in harmony with science and religion, will demand from our fellow men, that deference, honour, and respect, which, however vicious and depraved the spirit of the world may be, *is always paid to rectitude.*

1 Brown's note:" "Man, know thyself! All wisdom centres there."--Young, N.4." In the London 1774 edition, Vol.IV, p.85.

"Let us not, however, in our progress, be vain of our advances. This is a weakness unworthy of men, and as such, ought surely to be repressed and despised: so that I can, with great propriety advise you, *be too proud to be vain!* Vanity tarnishes the pure lustre of real greatness, and deprives it of its highest glory. And when we reflect, that not only all our knowledge, but also all the talents and faculties that we possess, and which are necessary for its attainment and preservation, have been derived from a source, superior to human aid, of what can we justly boast? Surely there is more reason for the exercise of pious gratitude, than for the indulgence of vanity. And we must also recollect, that although the man of science may glory in his wisdom, and the strong man may rejoice in his superior strength, a time will come, when these things will be no longer in their possession. Humility is a precious gem, and it shines the brightest of all those that decorate the diadem which crowns man with his most valuable praise! For it is under its sacred influence, that we endeavour to repose on Him, who ought to be considered by every rational being, as "the haven, and the sabbath of all the contemplations of man."

"From these considerations, I can fondly anticipate that day, when, on reviewing the intimate connection which subsists between the various portions of the life of every individual, looking around on your different situations, and marking the separate and combined tendency of your past exertions as unfolded by the hand of Time, all of you will be enabled to hail with pleasure and with rapture, *these hours*, which you now devote to the cultivation of morality and literature."

Perhaps two others Remarks on Style and Ease in Style found in the same periodical[1] belong to the same time and source of inspiration. Though they have not the conclusive internal evidence of the one accepted they are sufficiently characteristic to be read but add very little if anything to what we otherwise know of Brown's intense

1 Literary Magazine Vol.V,p.100 and VI,p.304.

study of literary art and expression.

Besides Blair the most evident characteristic of the essay Juvenile Eloquence is the influence of Milton's Paradise Lost which Brown was apparently reading at this time. The appreciation of the dignity of science (Latin scio=knowledge) which he claimed while he was a scholar in Proud's school is also there elaborated.

While throwing off numerous verses and essays or addresses and reading widely in the standard novelists and poets he did not neglect that journal of his. After the day spent in the office in Wilcock's

house he went to his own room--in the same house or some other--and recorded the incidents and thoughts of the day. If he had written letters or received them he made copies in the journal adding comments. If for any reason he was unable to do so daily,when the next opportunity occured he took up the journal from the point where he had left off; even if as sometimes happened the interval had been a whole week. Apparently he was more methodical than most diary writers.

According to Allen,[1]

> "In his journal we behold him entering into a grave soliloquy and examination of himself! questions are asked,and answers given,where to all appearances,two persons are present. He is in the midst of all these occupations severely taxed with idleness. The criminal bends before his inexorable judge,acknowledges the justice of the sentence,promises amendment and craves mercy. The judge rigorously reviews his former protestations,and declares that little reliance is to be placed on the repentance or reformation of so old a sinner and dismisses him with a frowning reproof and remonstrance on his indolence. This journal acquired, in his estimation,from such causes an importance almost unprecedented. The time which he devoted to it when released from his master's office was not sufficient:he carried it about with him;and while the clients were busy in stating their cases,and soliciting advice from his preceptor,or his fellow students in diverting themselves with conversation on different subjects,he employed these hurried moments on the page."

How long he kept up the journals we do not know--but it is probable he did not continue them very late in life. With them he trained himself in literary expression and argument and memory and gradually saw an improvement in his style.

1 P.16. Not in Dunlap.

As we have seen from the extract from his diary he did not spend all his time studying law even when in the office. The same as Scott later found the law distasteful and took to editing ballads when the opportunity offered just so Brown seized on his spare moments to write for his diary or to compose verse. He found lawyers and the law as he pictured them when writing of John Blair Linn in the memoir which he wrote for that author's Valerian of 1805. The passage,[1] written of Linn, is precisely as true of Brown, and reads:

> "When his academical career was finished, he was eighteen years of age; and it being necessary to adopt some profession, his choice, and that of his family, fell upon the law. The law leads more directly and effectually to honour, power, and profit, in America, than any of what are termed the liberal professions. As we are strangers to all hereditary distinctions, the road to eminence is open to all; and while the practice of the law is extremely lucrative, it tends to bring forth talents and industry into public notice, and to recommend men to offices of profit and honour. A young man who, though meanly descended, shows some marks of genius, and has received some degree of education beyond that of mere reading and writing his native tongue, seldom thinks of pursuing any mechanical trade, and if he has some ambition, he is generally educated to the bar. He is thus placed in the direct road of that profit and honour, which waits on political popularity, and may put in his claim, with more success than the followers of any other calling, for a seat in the national councils, and for any official station. The children of persons who are raised above others, by their riches or station, are, of course, whether qualified or not, destined to a liberal profession, and the law is generally preferred, because it affords the best means of building up a name or a fortune. Mr. Linn was probably influenced in his choice of this path, more because it was honourable and lucrative, than because it was particularly suited to gratify any favourite taste. He does not appear, therefore, to have applied with much assiduity or zeal to his new pursuit: his favourite authors continued to engage most of his attention; and his attachment to poetry acquired new force, by the contrast which the splendid visions of Shakespeare and Tasso bore to the naked abstractions and tormenting subtleties of Blackstone and Coke."

1 P.vii.

Brown was not to be long "encumbered with the rubbish of law" for some time just before 1789, after he had had less than a year of the office work, he disappointed his friends and relatives, and abandoned it. It has been usually said that he stopped just previous to his examination for admission to the bar. Dunlap in his short memoir prepared for the National Portrait Gallery says distinctly that he did not take the examination for admission. Allen,however,says[1] "at the expiration of the allotted time Charles left the office of Mr. Wilcox,and presented himself as a candidate for the bar. He was regularly admitted." This testimony of Allen was not used by Dunlap when he took over Allen's work and should not be preferred to Dunlap because we have Brown's letter of 14 April 1795 to corroborate Dunlap that he was not even then qualified to practise as an attorney. Possibly Brown was apprenticed for at least a year but that he could prepare himself in so short a time is very doubtful though some previous private study as suggested by us would make it possible.

1 P.4C.

Perhaps his father looked forward to a legal career for him just as Mr. Saunders Fairford of Scott's Redgauntlet.[1]

> "The whole pleasure of this good old-fashioned man of method, besides that which he really felt in the discharge of his own daily business, was the hope to see his son attain what in the father's eyes was the proudest of all distinctions--the rank and fame of a well employed lawyer. He would have shuddered at his son's acquiring the renown of a hero, and laughed with scorn at the equally barren[2] laurels of literature; it was by the path of the law alone that he was desirous to see him rise to eminence; and the probabilities of success or disappointment, were the thoughts of his father by day, and his dream by night."

Allen continues:[3]

> "In characters thus compounded of romance and adventurous curiosity, of ardent dealings and deep scrutinizing sagacity, no pursuit is more cold and uninteresting than law. Precedent forms a definable barrier to all further inquiry, to such as are willing to acknowledge no other than what their own reason establishes. Law, while it was merely a study, had with Charles all the enticement of other studies, and he labored assiduously for its mastery. The subtle distinctions that prescribed the boundaries between right and wrong, were sufficient to monopolize attention, and to stimulate inquiry; but when this ground was to be trodden over again; and the same dull succession of objects were presented to him for the remainder of his life, he was terrified by the contemplation. It may therefore be said without a paradox, that his intimate knowledge of the law created an insurmountable disgust to its practise. To these he added other objections, and could not reconcile it with his ideas of morality to become indiscriminately the defender of right and wrong.

1 Quoted in Lockhart's Scott, Vol. I, chapter VI.
2 Scott hardly found them barren. The present writer has seen a statement made by Ballantyne which shows Sir Walter's share in Redgauntlet as £3000.
3 P.40.

Against this he entered a solemn protest,and pursuing the principle to its extreme point,would ask,what must be the feelings of a lawyer if he had become auxiliary to a decision of injustice? If the widow and the orphan were by a legal robbery deprived of their just and righteous claims,enforced by the superior artifice or eloquence of the advocate;was he not as criminal as he who committed such felony without the sanction of a court of justice,and for which the very same court would pronounce the punishment of death? He would ask,whether a fee so obtained was any remuneration for such an act, or whether it was not rather an aggravation of the guilt? Against such speculative objections as these,fame and fortune with Charles weighed but little,and he looked upon both as dishonorably acquired,as decisive evidence of the wrongs which he had done,and the miseries he had inflicted on his fellow men. Strange as it may appear, he thought that unless a lawyer could reconcile his mind to do all this,there was little prospect of his succeeding in his profession at all,and none at all for him. His friends labored with much earnestness to overcome such imaginary notions;but unhappily they only served to confirm him in the opinion which he first entertained. At every succeeding contest he was more and more convinced that he was right in the first instance....Charles' friends found at last that conviction was a hopeless task,and that they were in fact only multiplying those antipathies which they were laboring to abate. It was at length urged that men of irreprochable characters who stood in the front ranks of honor,had acquired all their celebrity at the bar. Here again they were brought into a premunire;Charles would maintain that the opinion of the world was always equivocal,sometimes suspicious, and often beyond all question wrong. The favorable regards of the world were conferred indiscrimintaely on virtue or vice,innocence or guilt, as all history evinces. Would this,or did it ever in a single solitary instance counterbalance the remorse of their own consciences when such good opinions were paid for services which they never did,or to merit which they had no pretensions? Was it not rather the severest of all satires,when we were applauded for virtues which we never possessed,and as unjust as it would be to violate a neighbor's property, and to claim it as our own? Did not the evil extend even further than this,and was it not productive of more moral injury by appropriating the rewards of virtue,and the good opinion of the world,to vice,and thus make a common property of what ought to belong exclusively to one, and confound all distinctions between right and wrong? In the present case he denied the validity of the evidence produced,and contended that whether these men were justly entitled to such celebrity could only be known by themselves. Their motives to conceal their real characters from the world were obvious and palpable,and if they were monopolizers of the fame of better and more deserving men,this was of itself an argument why he should not add another name to their list. The universality of such an evil might be a consideration to reform such

> abuses, by stronger and more incessant exertions; but was clearly none why it should be rendered more diffusive, inveterate, and consequently more alarming by his individual participation in the guilt. From these and many such considerations, he finally determined to renounce all ideas of gaining a subsistence by law."

In the midst of this argument, which has many of the characteristics of Brown and probably was copied practically verbatim from the journal, Allen interjects the opinion that "probably Charles himself advanced such arguments as matters of mere speculation." Any one who wishes to believe that is free to do so, and may be correct; but ~~it is not the belief of the present writer, and~~ the whole consideration of the matter we believe will hardly bear Allen out in ~~his~~ the opinion.

~~In~~ The Weekly Magazine,[x] ~~to be noticed later, we shall find~~ contains a Series of Original Letters, which we can prove to be by Brown. ~~In them~~ there are several pictures of the principal character as a law student, indentured to Beckwith. Beckwith is undoubtedly Brown's preceptor Wilcox; Henshaw with whom he lived is Wilkins and the hero is Brown.

The first picture is in Letter II and is from Mary the sister of the hero. In writing to her brother she refers to a usher ~~at a school~~ thus:

> "Yet I think a learned and conscientious usher may, at least, rank as high on the scale of utility as he whose business it is, instead of enlightening, to perplex and

[x] Vol. I, pp. 364, 389, Vol. II, pp. 8, 46, 69.

bewilder the human understanding--as he who makes a trade of weaving together subtleties and sophisms calculated to mislead that consciousness of justice implanted in the mind of every rational being."

This is followed by another that reads:

"So! you are a judicious comforter! I had much ado to reconcile myself to my profession. I never thought it eligible in itself;it was the best however,that in my present circumstances,I could choose;but now my sister is good enough to inform me that my contempt is entirely misplaced;that instead of bestowing it on tailors and ushers,I ought to confine it to myself and my trade. Lawyers,according to you,are merely the coiners of iniquitous sibtleties and plotters against the majesty of truth. To puzzle the sagacity,and contaminate the rectitude of mankind is,it seems,the scope of all their labors.

Did you forget that this was my trade,1 and that, though,as yet,merely on the threshold of it,I have disabled myself from recalling my footsteps? I always placed, as was just,considerable reliance on your judgment. In no action of my life,much less in a deed of so much moment as the choice of a profession,have I held myself at liberty to act independently of your advice. It was the road to honor,you said. Men annex different degrees of respect to different occupations. The highest degree has been annexed to the law. The qualifications and exercises which it requires from its pupils are wholly intellectual. It is a science,and the investigation of truth is always delightful to ingenious minds. It was the regulator of the claims and conduct of men in society. It was the instrument of wealth,and wealth was not to be despised by us whether we be studious of our own happiness or that of others. It is the shortest and safest road to the possession of power,and power must be desirable by bad men for its own sake,and by good men for the sake of the beneficial employment of it. Nothing more common than the transition from the province of interpreting to that of enacting laws. This then was the suitable road whether reputation,riches,or power were the object of our search.

You were pleased to compliment me on my talents. You have,a thousand times,professed to admire my rhetoric. You gave me credit for a tunable voice,a fertile fancy, dexterity in argument,and promptitude in speech. These were qualities eminently subservient to the lawyer's purposes. Summing up all these advantages I thought it prudent to become one. But now my sister insinuates that the path I have chosen is contemptible,that my business is merely to weave quibbles into a net by which I may entangle justice. Perhaps I have mistaken your meaning. Pr'ythee explain thyself. It is common to rail

1 It appeared to him to be nothing more than a trade.

against lawyers,and I listen to ordinary railers with contempt or indifference;but my sister is another sort of being. Her assertions are not rash. She seeks not the repute of a censurer. She takes no limited or momentary view of the objects that present themselves. Her knowledge is of that rare kind which includes the character and constitution of the studious person himself,among the objects of successful scrutiny. No wonder that,from her lips,censures are heard with anxiety and reverence. You must make haste to set me right on this head,and fortify or remove the uneasiness which these intimations have excited.

How momentous a thing is the choice of a trade! How much does it behoove us to deliberate with accuracy and decide with caution! I thought I had fulfilled my duty in this respect. It will be in a great measure in your power to subvert or corroborate this belief.

I cannot as yet appeal to my own experience. A fortnight's reading can give me no information as to the merits or demerits of the trade. It shews me,in a slight degree,of what materials the science is composed. They are sufficiently refractory and rugged. Wrapt up in barbarous jargon,a spurious and motley compound of obsolete French and Latinized English. My poor head has been honored by you,with the epithet of metaphysical; but as skillful a dissecter as I am of complex ideas, and as nice a weigher of abstruse distinctions,I fear I shall never untie legal knots or disenvolve from this maze my already bewildered understanding.

I rise at the dawn;walk an hour in the fields;and after breakfast,immure myself,till noon,among folios time-beslurred,and tables dust-besprent. So likewise is employed the afternoon till dusk. As yet I have no society. My evenings I must spend in musing at my chamber window, or in lonely rambles. This life is uniform,and,I was going to add,insipid. There is time enough for meditation, which,however,I,for the most part,misapply....

My room for observation and adventure is extremely limited. I may mark the aspects and guises of the people I meet with in my daily rambles:I may notice buildings and their tenants as I pass. My scrutiny is necessarily superficial with regard to these.."

All this bears the touch of Brown's hand and is autobiographical.

Let us add to this a few other passages from Letter V. After he has given a picture of lawyers as protectors of mankind,etc.,he launches out:

" A charming picture this! I would not for the world do anything to mar its beauties. I will believe,if I can,

that for such a destiny am I reserved. I will shut out every token that would persuade me that the science I study is a jumble of iniquities and crudities. That instead of employing my faculties in pursuit of that which will at once secure me the means of subsistence, and promote the happiness of mankind, I have engaged in the study of that in which there is no end and no certainty; which is beset with temptations to abuse, which no one has hitherto been able to resist; in which success can be purchased at no price but that of our sincerity and honor; and which, in fine, is universally stigmatised as fradulent and corrupt....

....This indolence of mine is very wrong. I never open a book out of my profession, nor take up a pen, but to count or to plead, except when I write to you. I find vigorous efforts are necessary to keep my attention from straying from a page, which seems to me replete with frivolous subtleties and injurious distinctions. When my task is finished with the day, it leaves me listless and melancholy. I perceive that I have retained little of the day's reading, and am haunted by a kind of presentiment that what is wearisome to-day will be still more so to-morrow, and will at length become insupportable.

Overpowered with fatigue, I am prompted to seek relief in walking, and my mind, untuned and destitute of energy, is lost in a dreary confusion of images...."

~~This is not the only instance when Brown expressed in his fiction his opinion of the law~~. A passage from Ormond has already been quoted as autobiographical. In Wieland, chapter V., there is another slap at the law "for who knows not that the law is a system of expense, delay, and uncertainty." all of which

~~This~~ leads us to call attention to the fact that the appearance in his fiction of these expressions ~~of his~~ shows that his early objection to law was not a whim of the hour but a belief that remained with him ~~at least eleven~~ many years. His advice to John E. Hall in the letter dated 21 November 1806 when he needed a regular income to support a growing family was that ~~Hall~~ he should stick to ~~the law~~ it and refuse to have his attention diverted to any other pursuit, ~~especially~~ if the law paid well. If he had had the acquaintance of some of the distinguished New York lawyers he came to know in 1795 his opinions of the profession might have been entirely different.

~~This leads to another important fact~~. From the expressions used and the arguments presented it seems ~~to be evident that~~ some of his ideas were derived from Blackstone.[1] ~~and~~ Some may also have been found in Cadwalader Colden's Reflections.[2] Possibly he ~~also~~ had read Edmund Burke's Vindication of Natural Society (1756) with its exposure of the tricks of the lawyer, ~~and~~ ~~surely~~ he knew of his namesakes experience, ~~with the world~~. The ~~experience~~ he had ~~had~~ in the law society undoubtedly had great influence ~~on him for there he saw the practical working out of law practice~~. However, his opinions on the law are not so important in themselves; for the most part they ~~may be~~ erroneous judgments on the profession and though highly doubtful they may ~~be~~ as Allen says merely matters of speculation. Right or wrong the important thing is that he attempted an ~~honest man's~~ argument against the profession as a ~~means of~~ justifying his intended change of ~~avocation~~. Had he been clever he would have ~~camouflaged, opened~~ a law office--and written poetry instead of briefs.

1 Sections 32-33 Book I.
2 1770 (?). Cf. Riley: American Philosophy, New York 1907, p. 332.

Of course the return argument of his friends was as much at fault as his was lacking in cleverness. They appealed to him on the ground of wealth and fame.[1] For the former he had no desire and even as late as in Wieland he did not hesitate to express his independence of it. Grub street had no fears for him. To live in a garret,where poor peddlers and rich idlers seldom climb,where there is the best outlook to the sky,where romance may be found in the dormer windows or even in the pattering of the rain on the roof;to have good ink and pens and paper was far preferable to all the beauties of Lake Geneva or any other paradise. Fame he undoubtedly saw more clearly before him in the paths of literature.

At the time Brown of course could not know the wide significance of this decision of his. Undoubtedly his abandonment of the law was a sign of the ideality of his nature, a trait underlying his character

1 C.W.Thomson in his Robert Proud read before the Philadelphia Council 16 August 1826 cites the "spell over the whole" of Brown's life as an example of a "species of professional disgust" such as he says Proud also had. The spell,as well as the spelling,which Brown may have learned from Proud is one of the foundations of the present work. Had Brown become a rich and prosperous lawyer we should have had no occasion to disturb his ashes.

which was to develope even into dreams of Utopian commonwealths. At the same time it was to give him the unique position of being the first professional man of letters in the United States of America.

It seems to be generally claimed by Brown's friends that he would have made an exceptionally successful lawyer,but at best the evidence is not conclusive. Any one somewhat familiar with legal procedure and the usual master strokes of great lawyers can see the cases given as examples do not show anything more than average ability such as any young man of his age could display. Not knowing the requisites of an author his friends and relatives may easily have misjudged the field for his facility.

Judged by the result,which we are able to comprehend where none of his friends,his relatives or even himself could,Brown made a wise choice. The passing of a century and a quarter is a potent alms for oblivion. With the rare exception of Kent,whose Commentaries have kept his name alive, no lawyer of his day is now known unless he has made it so by his political activities. Even those who rose to the Federal Supreme Court are forgotten. Brown's namesake though known to all in his day never passes the lips of a lawyer of to-day.

So far as we are able to judge from the facts it seems that Brown did not give himself whole-heartedly to the work. That he failed to appreciate the greatness of Blackstone may be due to the same blindness that causes the school-boy to fail to esteem

other ~~great~~ classics. We have found the law student was dreaming of other things,writing a journal or composing verse when he could ~~filch~~ find a few moments, ~~from the~~ To office hours. While he may have been doing all that his duty called on him to do,he was not doing all ~~that~~ he could have done.

The English opinion[1] is probably the true one. It is expressed thus:

> "Had we,however,been allowed to judge of his probable success in this logical pursuit from his subsequent writings,we should certainly have believed him to have been so singularly unqualified to excel in it.....we should have been persuaded that the mind of the novelist could never be disciplined into that of the lawyer."

However if he had taken up the practise of the law at the same time that he was making attempts at writing he undoubtedly would have found,as Scott did,that his success at literature would have ultimately compelled the abandonment of the law.

The truth of the matter probably lies in the fact that,though superficially related in a mechanical way so as to be ignorantly confused,and though one may be made a harmless forerunner of the other,the two callings are really incompatible. The fact that many lawyers have made successful authors has probably been so in spite of their legal training.

That Brown benefitted extensively in any way from his study of

1 Monthly Review,Oct.1822 in review of the English edition of Dunlap's book.

law is not to be seen in his work, ~~or his life.~~ In some of his later or minor work in which there are references to law, ~~but they~~ are not technical and may easily have been ~~"picked up" by him~~ acquired in the course of his ~~work~~ studies, if he had never suffered an hour ~~in Wilcocks office.~~ in Wilcocks' office. Some real benefit may, however, have resulted for his brothers' business and his grandmother's estate. That he made no will of his own may be his tribute to the wisdom of the ~~State~~ heritance laws of Pennsylvania.

True it is that a great part of his prose fiction ~~especially Wieland, Ormond, Edgar Huntly and Arthur Mervyn~~, was strongly legal in origin if not in the interest in homicide: Wieland with its murders by the insane, Ormond with its manslaughter in self-defense, and Edgar Huntly and Arthur Mervyn with its first-degree murders; but all these instances like ~~it~~ justifiable

It was while he was ~~studying~~ in Wilcocks' office that Brown met [redacted] and became intimately acquainted with William Wood Wilkins. This chance acquaintance with a very astonishing man was as we shall see an important one; ~~for Brown and~~ like his other early intimacies it was full of ~~poignant~~ pain as well as ~~the~~ pleasures of youth ~~and youthful companionship~~. ~~Just how intimate Brown became with Wilkins~~

In the course of ~~the~~ our study ~~of 1786~~ we shall see Brown in Philadelphia writing letters to Wilkins ~~as a new acquaintance which he had made in Wilcock's law office;~~ and from his speaking of ~~Wilkins~~ him as "my ~~fellow~~ tenant of this chamber" it is reasonable to conclude ~~that~~ they ~~were then~~ had become room-mates; ~~in fact it will be seen that Brown received him as a great chance giving him a Philadelphia home which was convenient to the~~ as the hero and Henshaw were represented to be in the Series of Original Letters

X Allen p. 42.

X Allen p. 42 refers it to the time previous to Brown's abandonment of the law.

Wilkins was the son of John and Rachel Wilkins born at Woodbury, New Jersey, 3 March 1773. His schooling was obtained at Schenck's school at Pittsgrove and at Thomas Johnson's in Woodbury. His mother died of consumption in 1787. 6 April 1788 he entered John Todd's at Philadelphia with the intention of becoming a lawyer.

two months before Brown op

6 July 1789 he first attended Brown's Belles lettres Club, he had previously been a member of the Dialectic Society, and 18 June 1790 was admitted to the Society for Attainment of Useful Knowledge.

(afterwards Governor)

nineteen months before the legal age

In August 1792 he was examined for the bar at Philadelphia; 19 September he was admitted to practise. His legal career was meteoric: 23 October he went to Trenton to read with Richard Stockton, so as to practise in the New Jersey Supreme Court; Samuel Leake also tutored him; 8 April 1793 he became an Attorney, practising at Woodbury; 1 August he visited Brown in December (or January 1794) at the invitation of Dolly Payne Todd, who returned to Philadelphia to take charge of her deceased husband's business and 1794 he became a Pennsylvania examiner of candidates for Supreme Court attorneyship.

(afterwards Dolly Madison)

He was taken sick 3 December, was removed to his married sister's home, at Gloucester and died there of tuberculosis 15 February 1795.

(Sarah Wickliffe's)

Though

~~Wilkins was~~ two years younger than Brown, he had had experiences equally as exceptional ~~as~~ in [other places] than Philadelphia. The death ~~by consumption~~ of his mother ~~in 1~~ in the year ~~previous to his meeting with Brown~~ showed the sensitiveness of his nature ~~had affected~~ him more than it usually does boys of his age. He was ~~recalled~~ taken from this school at Woodbury, New Jersey and was practically, though not literally, thrown upon the world # his father marrying again ~~— and was entered to study law in Todds' office about the same time as Brown had entered Wilcocks'~~. He became a tremendous worker, a Balzac type of personality, one who knew exactly what his goal was and could not be diverted by any one or any thing. His advantage over Brown was in his supernatural concentration, his isolation from friends and family and his robust health which he finally ruined by seven years ungoverned activities. From a shy simple country boy he became in a short time a fearless, mature, powerful personality answerable to no one.

had written poetry when only twelve years old and could read it at any time

when in Philadelphia

when he met Brown

At this time it is unnecessary to give more details, Wilkins' contact with Brown will continue up to the last months of 1794 with emotional waves, with separations caused by Wilkins' meteoric career, with reunions as charms, with rivalries of other growing friendships, with almost a total estrangement and with Brown's disappointment and loss in Wilkins' his premature death.

~~Be~~ The friendship with Wilkins ~~what it may, it~~ made a great impression on our author. ~~It appears that he did not write on a certain notable memoir of his friend probably because he was considerably depressed by his unexpected death.~~ So far as we know ~~the friendship~~ never became so strong as to lead to such confidential relations as ultimately ~~existed between Brown and Bringhurst and Smith.~~

~~However, in due time~~ Some years later Brown did not hesitate to use ~~the~~ character ~~of that remarkable young man~~ in his works of fiction and there is a ~~fine~~ amusing, though naturally exaggerated picture of him ~~which Brown made a part of~~ in his Series of Original Letters.[X] Henshaw is the fictitious name he uses for Wilkins; ~~and the passage reads:~~

> "What is it that modifies the temper of an human being? Henshaw, the clerk, though his toils are far greater and more unremitted than mine, is endowed with an inexhaustible fund of cheerfulness. It is scarcely extravagant to say that his waking hours are wholly divided between singing and laughter. He is always heard before he is seen. Even while eating, and his appetite is remarkably keen, he interposes between every mouthful, some sprightly catch. He prefaces whatever he himself says, and accompanies whatever is uttered by another, with a loud laugh. He is shallow, illiterate, and self-conceited. He neither knows anything, nor appears to imagine that there is anything to be known. I know not in what terms to describe his conversation. He never argues; he never describes; he never relates: yet his tongue is perpetually busy. A score of times, after listening to his effusions, I have inquired what he has talked about. The whole is reducible to nothing; much of it is absolutely without a meaning. It is on a level with the chattering of a monkey: It is noise from which nothing can be collected but that the animal is delighted with

X Weekly Magazine, ~~Vol. I, p. 364, 389, Vol. II, p. 8, 46, 69.~~ Vol. II, p. 11.

himself and with all around him.
He appears to have no associates without his lodgings. He will spend a whole evening in the porch, by himself, drumming with his fingers, and humming some simple air. If any one stop, it is well. The visitant is hailed with glee, chattered to without cessation, and dismissed without reluctance."

Though hiding the identification under the dark cloud of an initial

Allen ~~in the same place continues~~ adds[X] to the picture of the contrast

"Their characters were in most points essentially different, but composed of such contrarities as never came into serious and repulsive collision."

As we shall see at a later date they did collide.

"In profound erudition depth and extent of inquiry, various and accurate intelligence, even on those points with which W. himself was most familiar, Brown was preeminent.
In boldness and originality of fancy, the palm was yielded to Charles without reluctance. Still he was perfectly safe on the ground which he occupied. He had a ready, persuasive, and fascinating eloquence at command; a fancy more prompt and lively than vigorous, with a prompt wit which amused and delighted even those at whose expence it was executed. The forces such as he brought into the field were ever at his command, and in light skirmishes he was often successful. His prompt and easy eloquence rendered him a valuable acquisition to the law society of which they both were members. Whatever subject W. was unable to investigate he was ever able to adorn, and was heard with delight, if not conviction. Possessing a warm and suceptible heart, he early attached himself to Charles, and an acquaintance formed in the first instance by the casual meetings of the society, soon consolidated into a permanent friendship; a friendship which in fact existed until the death of W. When W. was present they were almost inseperable companions; when absent, they punctually corresponded. Amidst these testimonies of affection, some characteristic, may be selected. In one of these Charles remarks, that the most perfect and refined misery is the price at which we buy just conceptions of propriety and duty, by acting in opposition to them. The miseries of vice and the blessedness of well doing, are attestations equally strong of the value and dignity of virtue; but the sense of this persuasion is proportioned to the extent of those opposite consequences. Actions, he continues, are not the just criterion of sentiments. He proceeds to set before his correspondent the pleasures derived from the indulgence of virtuous love, a smiling family, and all the tender delights of honorable intercourse, the acquisition of riches and honors. He goes on to assert that his friend will hereafter realize the scene which his fancy is painting now; that he himself is only acting the character of

[1] Alden does not leave one always in doubt as Dunlap. He used the W. for abbreviation after having given his full initials.

X P. 42.

> the prophet,and dwells with peculiar delight in the indulgence of the visions which fact and not fancy discloses. The elegance of this reproof will be better understood, if we resort to the character of W. as it was drawn by Charles himself after the death of that gentleman."

revised and fifteen years later [1]

This ~~character~~ was published in Brown's Literary Magazine under the title "A Student's Diary--Letter Writing", ~~and was~~ introduced by ~~this~~ a new paragraph.

> "We are often told that we may read an author's character in his works,and that of all modes of composition,letter writing is the most characteristic and descriptive. Are these assertions true? In what degree and respect are they true? It is plain enough that books and letters are sufficient,and indeed,the only proofs of a capacity for writing books and letters,but this seems to be all that they prove. They seem to let in but little light upon the actual deportment of the writer,upon his temper, his favorite pursuits,and his habits of talking and conversing."

It differs considerably from Allen's ~~account~~ version and we here follow the magazine appearance and note the revision. ~~alterations.~~

> "I am led to these remarks [2] by reading over the letters of my deceased friend W..... What a difference [3] between his actual deportment and any notion of that deportment to be collected by a stranger,from his letters. His letters to me are as unreserved [4] and confidential as letters can be,yet they form a picture totally the reverse of his conversation and his conduct. He had no small portion of wit,and this power was [5] in incessant exercise in company. (He could very seldom be prevailed upon to discuss any subject soberly,to reason or speculate,or to moralize, but his whole social life was one invariable effort to be witty,to excite laughter:some good thing was forever in his mouth,and like all men who are habitually witty, he was nine times out of ten,extremely trite and dull,

1 Vol.I,No.2, ~~1 Nov.1803~~

2 Allen: ~~adds~~ had "he continues".

3 Allen: ~~gives~~ "contrast".

4 ~~Omitted by~~ not in Allen.

5 Allen:"was in part exercised in company;but"

yet this man,)1the moment he took up the2pen to write a letter or essay,3 forgot all his mirth and jest,and4 became pensive,sentimental,and poetical. To hear him talk, one would think he never had a serious moment in his life... He literally sung himself to sleep and awoke in a burst of laughter. To see the effusions of his pen,one would imagine that he was a stranger to smiles,that he was forever steeped in tears and wrapped in melancholy.

In this,there was nothing that deserved to be called affectation or5 hypocrisy,since he corresponded only with those with whom he was occasionally in the habit of conversing;and his tongue regaled them with unceasing jests, with just as much facility6 as his pen saddened them with its austerity or melted them with its pathos.

His sonnets and letters talk almost altogether of love, and on this topic no Petrarch was ever more refined,tender and pathetic.7 The youth was forever in love,and was all impassioned eloquence at the feet of an adored fair one; but his love was merely the exuberance of health and an ardent constitution. Consequently his devotion8 was always bestowed upon the present object,and never stood in the way of the most licentious indulgences.9

After receiving a letter full of the most doleful eulogies of some divine but refractory creature,and hinting at4 his resolutions10 to "shake off the yoke of inauspicious stars,"11 I have hastened to his chambers10 to console him,and found him at a log-table,12 presiding with marks of infinite satisfaction,and keeping the motly13 crew that surrounded him in a constant ~~war~~.14 Such was my friend,and such were his letters;his tongue and his pen,his actions and his written speculations were as opposite to each other as the poles."

~~This is followed by~~ after a reference to Cowper's letters ~~and~~ it ~~the~~ is a closing ~~conformity~~ title ~~the whole evidently remodelled to suit the "letter writing" heading~~.

as an example of Brown's mystifying exaggeration ~~the~~ it is not to be surpassed.

thereby making it a libel on Wilkins.

1 All in brackets ~~not in~~ Allen. 2 His. 3 Add, he.
4 ~~Omit a~~ Allen. 5 And. 6 Sincerity. 8 Love.
7 Order of the adjectives reversed. 10 Singular number.
9 Dunlap ~~without reason~~ gives this paragraph of exaggeration in italics. 11 No quotation marks. 12 Table.
13 Worthy. 14 Errone~~ous~~ war. This is an early if not the earliest Brown echo of Shakespeare. The clause of course came from Yorick of infinite jest, Hamlet v.i.

To resume:[1] ~~Allen continues:~~

"This early correspondence with his friends, although honorable to the character of Charles, must for obvious reasons be touched with a light and sparing hand. It turns principally on local and temporary matters, and involves the names of parties now living, which it would be a violation of delicacy to develope."

Such a matter of "delicacy" was all very well when Allen wrote, but time has not made it to be respected in ours. ~~Brown needs not~~ ~~eulogy~~ ~~but the truth.~~ That he thought he was not welcome at home and the exaggerated picture of his room-mate's character do not appear very commendatory of his conduct, but ~~this~~ is not the ~~whole~~ of the story and ~~presently it~~ will be ~~treated at length.~~

~~Allen's~~ account continues:

"The following serves to illustrate the character of this correspondence, and the names are only fictitious in the parties interested. Emilius,[2] the friend of Charles, demands his opinion on the following question: he had reason to believe himself beloved of Arabella, a lady

1 P.44.

2 Emilius is of course Wilkins. Formerly Brown had used Emelius for John Davidson. The distinction must be noticed. The name, ~~may have been taken from Eliza Haywood's Rash Resolve but more~~ probably was ~~from the Roman censor Aemilius Lepidus~~ derived from Rousseau's Emile.

for whom he entertained every sentiment but that of love. She was young,beautiful and accomplished,and possessed every qualification to ensure happiness to a lover. His connection with this lady was perfectly honorable. He had beguiled her with no promises,nor had he ever in a single instance encouraged her to cherish the belief that he was bound by a stronger tie than that of friendship. On the contrary it had been his study to be particularly circumspect and guarded. In short whatever motives she might have to persevere in her addresses,he had supplied her with none;and the blame if any must be attributed to the indulgence of an unfortunate passion, equally ardent and hopeless. If the passion of friendship on his part would be requited by love on the part of Arabella,he maintained that he was perfectly justified in giving no countenance to her importunities. Now comes the delicate reverse of the story. It seems that this dispairing swain,who so nobly resisted the sway of female blandishments where he was sure of a conquest,became himself the slave of such blandishments where he was not. In short he was himself violently enamoured with the charms of a lady whom it is proper to designate with the name of Ophelia. His candor obliged him explicitly to confess that she likewise possessed every quality to ensure happiness to a lover. He acknowledges that her connection with him was perfectly honorable,that she had neither beguiled him with promises, or had ever in a single instance confirmed his belief,that she was bound by a stronger cord than that of friendship. He confesses that she was peculiarly guarded and circumspect,and that however hopeless his passion might be,she had not supplied him with materials for its indulgence. Now the question submitted for the opinion of Charles was this,whether in the case of a lover thus pursuing and pursued,it was his duty to encourage the addresses of Arabella,or to persecute Ophelia with his own. These two cases were widely distinguishable to the mind of his correspondent, and he stated the argument in his own favor so strongly that he seemed rather to dictate than to ask the opinion of his friend. Probably to a man more zealous to preserve friendship than truth and justice,it would have been justifiable to have encouraged the addresses of his friend, and to have slighted those of the lady. To Charles however every argument urged by his friend in behalf of himself,was decided and convincing in favor of the adverse party. If Arabella,he answered,in the midst of so many embarassments,still preserved her constancy in her affections,what might not be expected when she was in possession of his individual heart. She now maintains her fidelity while destitute of hope,and while she knows her passion hopeless;what constancy then,what fidelity may not be anticipated,when a passion at once so hopeless and so vivid,is suitably requited? Every argument advanced on this subject,founded on the hopelessness of the lady's passion,clearly proved her disinterestedness and constancy. A stronger proof of the fidelity of her attachment it was impossible to urge,and no other question now remained

than whether he should remunerate a passion so disinterested. On the other hand, his friend's own example was urged to show that the indulgence of his present passion would insure future vexation and disappointment. He felt the miseries already of his unfortunate attachment, or he would not have applied to a friend for advice on such an emergency, all these arguments he urged in favor of Arabella. His friend was able properly to appreciate her sufferings by his own. He was a living evidence of the pain which he had inflicted; a living evidence both in his affection and aversion of the justice of Arabella's claim upon his heart. But he asked, was his friend perfectly confident that he had never encouraged this passion? Was it not easy for the human heart, while under the influence of so powerful a passion, to deceive itself, and might he not in a thousand instances have mistaken for friendship what this unfortunate lady might have denominated love? Even if he had contemplated nothing more than friendship, and had been innocently the cause of such misapprehension on the part of Arabella, was he not bound in honor to repair the injury? But if on the other hand his friend would allow that it was barely possible that he might have been deceived, if he had in a single instance encouraged the hopes of Arabella, there was an end of the argument and no alternative remained but a faithful compliance. These arguments it must be confessed were strong and forcible, but it will excite no surprise in the reader, to learn that they fall far short of convincing a lover that he was bound in duty to renounce the object of his love."

Allen here goes on to relate that this situation Brown later seized upon as an inspiration for ~~motive when later he came to write~~ Clara Howard, in which it was elaborated and developed. ~~His notes explaining it we shall use in our study of that work.~~

~~According to Allen,~~ Brown had received a letter from Wilkins

"conveying some gentle reproaches, couched in a phraseology peculiarly wild. Almost any other person would have thought this nothing more than a casual thing, utterly beneath his serious regard."

The reader will by reading the ~~following letter~~ answer which all except the final paragraph was suppressed by Dunlap. be able to judge of the unusual strength of Brown's early friendship with Wilkins. As time passes it will prove to be characteristically exaggerated.

(To William Wood Wilkins.)

No date (Philadelphia, 1788.)

Allen, 1 P.50 ff. This and the next letter may have been sent to Wilkins near Woodbury, N. J., when he was visiting his father in the fall of the year ~~It does not seem they are probably written~~ later than early 1789.

I have read your letter. It is short. I wish to answer it with equal liberty. Have I not reason to suppose that long letters from me, if they ever were, have now ceased to be acceptable? But a brief answer is impossible; excuse therefore my prolixity.

But why do I begin thus austerely? Am I not writing to my W.? My friend? My fellow tenant of this chamber? the one of all the world whom I love most? Why then do I write thus in a style so different from the warmth and tenderness of friendship? Because though he is still all this to me, I am no longer any thing to him.

How unpleasantly was I affected by the coldness and solemnity of your letter? How strongly did it verify my gloomy apprehensions: but why do I attempt to proceed? Were you present I should be utterly incapable of speaking. Though absent I scarcely find less difficulty in writing to you. What is the matter with me? A very extraordinary sensation? Something in my head--or stomach--I think it rises to my breast--my throat--a secret growing--inquietude--a stifling, suffocating sorrow. How shall I describe it? Look there W. What are his emotions you ask? Those of a man whom heaven has cursed with excessive sensibility, and who finds in the letter which lies before him, that he has lost his only friend. Forgive me; my mind and body are distempered. I will talk with you again to-morrow.

I have read again your letter; what an extraordinary question do you ask? Whether by maintaining on all occasions your real sentiments, you have forfeited my regard? Is this really a doubt with you? It is, or you would not have asked the question. If so, how despicably low have I sunk in your opinion? That my friend should suppose me capable of such stupid arrogance, such puerile presumption!

Ah W.! Widely have you erred from truth. Far different was the cause. Far different the effect. It cannot be denied that I have been some times visibly affected by our little disputes: but why should you imagine me offended, merely because you held an opposite opinion? Surely this was an hasty supposition. Your sagacity, if suffered to exert itself must have taught you very differently. This however is your conjecture, and you have failed to discover that it is not the expression of your sentiments, but the manner of expression, that has ever given me uneasiness.

The end of disputation is the discovery of truth. Disputation is frequently the bane of friendship, because it is natural for men to suppose those in the wrong who differ from them in opinion, and to regard every antagonist with indignation or contempt. Such men ought assiduously to avoid disputes with those for whom they have any esteem or affection; for is not contempt as incompatible with friendship as hatred? Shall I rank my W. among those? Be not angry if I answer yes. I am sorry that there are so many proofs of the propriety of this answer.

Instead of expecting or demanding that others should conform to my opinions, I do not even wish it. How audacious and presumptious would be even the wish? I undoubtedly have formed opinions, but these opinions I am far from thinking certainly and infallibly true. Others may reject

them upon good reasons,and when these reasons are known to me,and I find them to be valid,I shall not scruple to follow their example;but till this happens,who shall condemn me for adhering to my first positions. I do not think myself infallibe,but I think myself highly and unquestionably justified in adopting and defending opinions which I think right. The privilege which I myself claim, I shall always allow to others. Have I deviated from this principle in my intercourse with you? We rarely agree in sentiments on any subject. Did I ever impute this disagreement to hypocricy or stupidity in you? Did I ever seriously accuse you of denying "first principles"? of having arrived at the "height of absurdity?" of reasoning with a "fixed determination not to be convinced?" of being a monument,&c.&c? If I did not love you with the strongest affection I could listen to such insinuations with less impatience and regret. I can bear to be despised by the foolish or malicious,but the contempt of my friend,the object of my love and reverence,is insupportable. You may perhaps observe that contempt is offensive only to those who are conscious of deserving it. I will not deny the justice of your observations nor assume the province of determining whether it be applicable to me; but my sincerity will not suffer me to conceal the fact.

I have now explained the cause,but what is the effect? How very much mistaken are you,when you suppose that I think you unworthy of my regard? What is the evident, the unavoidable conclusion? Surely it is that I am no longer honored with your regard. You ask what are the opinions to the heart? I answer,of very great importance. I want not your love unaccompanied with your esteem,if indeeed it be possible to separate them, of which indeed I am very dubious. Esteem is the daughter of the understanding,and not the offspring of the heart. If your understanding reject,your heart will very quickly cease to love!

Your delicacy forbids the unnecessary exhibition of its own sincere warmth. I admire your delicacy,but cannot imitate it. In converse with my friend, I do not regulate the expressions of my sentiments by motives of necessity. I am studious only of sincerity, and leave the practise of delicacy to others of a more equable temper,and of juster conceptions. If I love my friend,I shall often tell him so on occasions perhaps when such a declaration is not absolutely necessary. Any degree of reserve is incompatible with genuine friendship,and since I feel the utmost esteem and affection for you,delicacy shall not hinder me from avowing it. I am utterly a stranger to that delicacy which rigidly prohibits the spontaneous effusions of the friendly heart,and makes the converse of friends resemble the intercourse of common men.

I know not whether I exhibit in my conduct any tokens of vanity,but do me the justice to believe me when I assure you that I and vanity have long since parted. The errors of my childhood are not to be imputed to my manhood. I was some years ago vain,pragmatical and supercilious;but how great has since been the revolutions? and what are now my pretensions? Even my ambition is extinguished,and all my views and wishes terminate in darkness and death. I desire only to glide through life

in obscurity and insignificance, and to end my ignoble career in a speedy death. Why would you mortify me, by calling me your learned friend? Learned! Alas! I am doubtless an adept in some ten or twenty languages or sciences. I have traversed the universe of intellect; wonderous exploits have I performed, though unluckily unknown to myself. Do not mistake me W. I am not angling for a compliment; spare your praises I beseech you, if you wish me to confide in your sincerity. What effect can you expect that they will have on one who feels his mind totally engrossed by one idea, without room for others, or leisure to collect others. The prospect of my mind is the prospect of a desert. A scene of horror and insanity, growing hourly more desolate and gloomy. O, W.! dearest of men! for thou still art and ever will be so to me "Nox ruit." The night of phrenzy or of death--no more.

But from what appearances do you deduce that my regard for you is diminished? I know of none that could warrant that conclusion; but I know of many which might have confirmed my belief that I had lost your friendship. Is my behaviour less affectionate than formerly? My attachment to you in preference to every other, I have confessed to yourself and B.;1 and has my conduct been in any respect inconsistent with those professions? The longer we live together, the stronger will be my attachment. I daily receive greater pleasure from your company. When disengaged, we are never seperate. Is there any coldness or disgust in my words, my air, my manners? No, impossible! I laugh only in your company. When I weep I weep alone. Is there any thing improper or illaudible in that? I know your situation; no inauspicious star presided at your birth. You will never attempt by impious violence to shake off the disastrous yoke. The past, the present, and the future, are to you equally sources of satisfaction; equally to be beheld with complacency. A generous ambition actuates you; an ambition to exalt yourself to affluence and honor; to benefit yourself, your friends, and your country. Your whole soul is absorbed in a rational and honorable pursuit. Shall I dare to intercept your progress or divert your thoughts by fruitless lamentation? To darken your gaiety by my unseasonable sorrows? The dearest purpose of friendship is to alleviate affliction, by participating in it; and O heavens! thou knowest that thy pure light is not dearer to those eyes than such sacred sympathy is precious to my soul! But where is such celestial friendship to be found? Where is he, whose faithful bosom I could safely deposit all my melancholy secrets? That soul of sensibility which not itself a stranger to distress, could infuse the balm of consolation into the wounds of a kindred soul, of whose love and esteem I could equally and undoubtingly assure myself? Alas! Where indeed?

But what is all this to you? My employment consists in the recollection of joyless and disastrous scenes; in brooding over woes which the soothing influence of friendship might possibly alleviate, but which nothing can radically cure. But what is your employment? You are floating in a sea of joyful expectations; wealth and honor, the gratifications of friends, the applause of mankind,

in/

1 Joseph Bringhurst.

are the gay phantoms that glitter in your sight. What cruelty and folly to disturb so ravishing a scene! to entreat your attention to a tale of personal calamities;; the story of another's woes. No W. I will endeavor to make my company as little irksome as possible to you. If I cannot laugh,I will at least forbear to weep in your presence. I will derive some degree of comfort from contemplating your felicity,and from contributing my humble efforts to promote your success. The day will,I doubt not,arrive, in which if I were alive,I should possibly boast of your early regard for me. Talk not of flattery,my W. Rather believe me stupid than insincere. I cannot bear the imputations of hypocricy. I could not forbear to speak thus though fully aware that your modesty will rank this among the other proofs of the want of penetration which you hourly discover. I most sincerely love you; nor will the loss of your affections or esteem in any degree diminish mine. I see clearly that an irreconcilable contrariety of views and dispositions will ever distract that holy and entire union,that sympathy of soul and sentiment which only merits the name of friendship. That my attachment to you will never become mutual,I see with grief and regret;but I am not so absurd and unjust as to demand,or even wish the sacrifice of your propensities to mine. Such a sacrifice would indeed be impossible. I am incapable of such malignant selfishness. I do not wish you other than you are. In whatever qualities we differ,the difference is advantageous,not to me,but to you. And what motive should induce you to endeavor at conformity. In proportion to the exactness of your resemblance to me,you would grow uncouth and unamiable in the eyes of others. My love of you cannot be stronger than it is at present. It might indeed be made a source of greater benefit and pleasure,but that is not a sufficient consideration,since you already know the pleasures of friendship,since you have already a friend whose soul is more congenial to your own;who is infinitely more worthy of your confidence;who has none of my weaknesses,caprices and singularities. O most amiable B! 1 How do I shrink into nothingness before thee! Let him alone be your friend, the partner of your bosom.

2 As for me,I long ago discovered that nature had not qualified me for an actor on this stage. The nature of my education only added to those disqualifications,and I experienced all those deviations from the center,which arise when all our lessons are taken from books,and the scholar makes his own character the comment. A happy destiny indeed brought me to the knowledge of two or three minds which nature had fashioned in the same mould with my own,but these are gone. And, O God! enable me to wait the moment when it is thy will that I should follow them."

1 We shall later see Brown writing the same sort of letters to Bringhurst.

2 From here to the end was the only part retained by Dunlap.

add to note on 1788 (2d) l. to WWW

+ See our note to the ~~date~~ address of the previous letter.

It is more than probable that the receipt of such a letter brought a speedy reply. That Brown was becoming desperate and melancholy is quite evident. The Censure of his friends and family was evidently being carried to a dangerous extremity.

It was not long before he wrote another letter to Wilkins as follows::

(To William Wood Wilkins:1)

No date (Philadelphia,1788)

> What, my friend, art thou certainly awake? Or is it that I am dreaming? No, I believe you incapable of adulation: and yet there are some parts of your acceptable epistle, which are extremely suspicious. But your motives do not only excuse, but justify you; When a friend is sinking into a quicksand or struggling with a suffocating stream, there is nothing can betide him which is so dangerous as despair; and one, who, though near at hand, is unable to afford him any personal assistance, cannot be more serviceable to him, than by cherishing his hopes, and keeping him from yielding to despair; and if in the ardour of our exhortations, and the precipitancy of our zeal, we chance to deviate from rigid truth, and facilitate his escape, by invigorating his efforts with flattering representations of his power, and delusive promises of triumph, is it not more to be commended than censured?
>
> I have not been deficient in the pursuit of that necessary branch of knowledge; the study of myself. I will not explain the result, for have I not already sufficiently endeavoured to make my friends unhappy by communications, which though they might easily be injurious, could not

1 From Allen p.56 ff. Also given by Dunlap. From Allen we see that the scheme of running these two letters together is not warranted.

be of any possible advantage. I really, dear W. regret that period when your pity was first excited in my favour. I sincerely lament that I ever gave you reason to imagine that I was not so happy, as a gay indifference with regard to the present, stubborn forgetfulness with respect to the uneasy past, and excursions into lightsome futurity could make me: for what end, what useful purposes were promoted by the discovery? It could not take away from the number of the unhappy, but only add to it, by making those who loved me participate in my uneasiness, which each participation, so far from tending to diminish, would in reality increase, by adding those regrets of which I had been the author in them, to my original stock.

"I have a brother,[1] whom I am bound by innumerable ties to revere and love. I have not seen him except for a few days, these eight years. He has gained wisdom by experience, a bitter series of experiments; but though there has subsisted no personal intercourse between us for so long a time, we have talked frequently and copiously to each other by the assistance of the pen. His letters are lessons, lessons of prudence, and there are no maxims which he has so frequently inculcated, as that of covering from the eyes of others, with an impenetrable mask, whatever fears or anxieties may agitate us.

This precept I have broken only with regard to you and B. The propriety of this rule, I have frequently experienced from the advantages resulting from adhering to it; and may I not add that its propriety has also been evinced by the inconveniences which I have felt by deviating from it? For no man ought to act, but in pursuance of some rational motive, and what useful purpose could be answered by making C. B. B.

1 Which one is doubtful, but probably it was Joseph who by May 1786 had gone to live in North Carolina. The 14 April 1795 letter will show us James recalled from there and Joseph again at Edentown. From the moral and religious character of the mention above Joseph is probably the one referred to.

better known to his friends? What but their unhappiness could be produced by it?

"Forget me, my friend, as soon as possible. At least, forget that any latent anguish or corroding sorrow, is concealed under that aspect of indifference which has become habitual. Why should I any longer talk to you of myself? Why should my letters be the busy and malicious witnesses of my faults and follies? You are too young to be my father confessor. I wonder you have not declared your disapprobation of the usual strain of my epistles. I smile (though it must be owned, with less gaiety than seriousness) at the foolish part which I have acted so long, unreasonably and unnecessarily imparting sorrow to those whom I must wish happy in proportion as I love them, and calling out for consolations, which I know to be impossible to be obtained.

For shame, thou idiot or thou madman! cease thy lamentable croakings. Reserve gloomy meditations and useless complaining for thy chamber, and show at least thy magnanimity by concealing that which thou canst not cure. Here drops the curtain. The catastrophe of the drama if acted openly, will only diffuse a melancholy gloom over the audience. All that remains shall be transacted in secret, and behind the scenes.

Had I never had friends and relations, I am convinced that before this time I had ceased either to exist, or to exist as an inhabitant of America. I know from experience the strength of that obstacle to the direful schemes of despair, which results from possessing friends who would be, at least for a time, inconsolably afflicted by the loss of the sufferer. It is indeed my interest, perhaps, to add to the number of my friends, because in proportion to their number, will be the obstacles to any rash design.

I have indeed sincerely lamented—I must lay down my pen till my thoughts flow in a less uneasy channel. Your letter has made me extremely serious. Why did you not comply with my request, and forbear to expatiate on this theme? but I flatter myself that you will pay more regard to it in future.

I expected that I should give you pleasure by the information relating to your father; that good, worthy, hospitable man, whom I shall always remember with affection and respect both for his own sake, and that of his son. You cannot imagine how highly I am pleased with myself for my seasonable recollection of this interview, and my seasonable relation of it.

It was my vanity, perhaps, that was pleased in your father's approbation of the friends which his son had chosen: and yet may I not reasonably believe that my friendship was useful to him? Will any one be made worse, will his understanding be depraved, or his heart be corrupted, by associating with me? Will his love of learning and of virtue be impaired? I think not; for I am neither incorrigibly stupid, nor remorselessly wicked. I am a lover and admirer of all that is good and fair in the physical and moral universe. No one gazes at genius with more enthusiastic delight and admiration, or at virtue with greater love and reverence. No, I am determined to believe that W. might have chosen a more pernicious and unprofitable friend.

This part of my letter will require no answer. I know not indeed why it was written. I indeed find so much reason to censure and despise myself, that I expatiate with more pleasure, and consequently at greater length, on any circumstance of self-applause. I seize any thing,

however weak and dubious, by which I can hope to raise myself from that profound abyss of ignominy and debasement, into which I am sunk by my own reflections. And that a man of so much experience and discernment as your father, approves the choice of his son of me as a friend, is too pleasing an idea to be easily relinquished, and is a counterbalance for many anxieties.

Do you read the books which you mention? Is your reading altogether legal? Surely such constant and invariable legality is not indispensably necessary. I, indeed, am inclined to think that, so far from being necessary to adhere so strictly to the case, it is absolutely necessary sometimes to deviate from it; but it is likely that I am mistaken. If my own experience, were to determine my opinion, I should rather think that he only can derive pleasure, and consequently improvement, from the study of the law, who knows and wishes to know nothing else. As a student, I believe you have always acted in the most prudent and reasonable manner, and a method of which (abstractedly considered) the propriety should appear dubious to me, would be sufficiently vindicated by your practice."

Surely, no one can read those two letters to Wilkins and not feel the air overcharged with sentiment and self-condemnation. They are hardly the kind of letters to amuse. For a young man of seventeen they are too grave and suggest tragic consequences. As he himself said later in life this period was indeed very serious to him.

add to text – serious to him; but no biographer, who has any conception of what a biography should be, can justify ~~the~~ its suppression ~~of~~ in whole or in part. As we continue we shall see Brown's life full of mysterious enchantment, full of obstacles to his progress which his exaggerations, his disappointments, his suffering and his determination enabled him to overcome. When he abandoned ~~the~~ dukedom of the ~~law~~ the whole world joined in ~~the~~ chorus that he was going to be wrecked on a desert ~~of~~ isle and while ~~the~~ tempest raged he trembled in fear, ~~he~~ and doubt ~~almost fell~~ but wrapped in a ~~his~~ magic mantle he took up his art. ~~as another Prospero had done.~~ Caliban ~~would~~ forgot all. his power to cause ~~strike~~ ~~no~~ terror when Prospero ~~he~~ had learned to ~~listen~~ hear Ariel's song in ~~the~~ air.