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1621-1649

Translation of Volney - 180.

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN

His life and works
by
Daniel Edwards Kennedy

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C R I T I C A L S T U D I E S

of the works of

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN

by

Daniel Edwards Kennedy

#

Illustrated

In three volumes

Vol.III

#

Somewhere

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A VIEW
OF
THE SOIL AND CLIMATE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

WITH SUPPLEMENTARY REMARKS
UPON FLORIDA; ON THE FRENCH COLONIES ON THE MISSISSIPPI
AND OHIO, AND IN CANADA; AND ON THE ABORIGINAL TRIBES
OF AMERICA.

BY C. F. VOLNEY,
MEMBER OF THE CONSERVATIVE SENATE, &c. &c.

TRANSLATED, WITH OCCASIONAL REMARKS,

BY C. B. BROWN.

WITH MAPS AND PLATES.

PHILADELPHIA,
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.....
1804.

(Illustration to be placed

to face page 1621)

BROWN'S TRANSLATION OF VOLNEY

1804

In 1804 Brown published his translation of Volney's Tableau du Climat et du sol des Etats-Unis d'Amerique which had appeared in two¹ volumes at Paris in 1803. ~~As usual~~ The Conrads of Philadelphia were the publishers.

The Boston Monthly Anthology in the August number announced the book as in the press; on the thirtieth of August the Philadelphia Gazette did likewise, and on September first carried the following advertisement.

"Volney's View of the United States | In the press and speedily will be published, by | John Conrad, & Co No. 30. Chestnut | street, Price 225 cents. | A view of the climate and soil of the United States of America; to which | is subjoined an account of Florida, of the French Colony on the Sciota, | and of certain colonies in Canada; with remarks on the Indian tribes | translated from the French of C.F. Volney | Member of the Concervative Senate, and of the French National Institute, | Honorary Member of the American Philosophical Society, &c. | By C.B. Brown. | With a preface and occasional remarks by the | Translator.

This work may be safely pronounced the most ample and accurate view of the physical condition of the United States that is extant. The errors into which the author as a foreigner, and a temporary observer could not fail sometimes to fall, have been carefully amended."

The ^{order} transposition of the words "climate and soil" should be especially noted. ^{It follows the French edition.} The book when announced for publication and

¹ P. 222 of Brown's translation ~~corresponds to the ends of~~ Vol. I.

transposed.

when published had them ~~in the reverse order, but the above is as~~
~~they appear in the French edition of 1893.~~ *French order was*
~~not worded as it is in Brown's book and it appears to be a hurried~~
advance announcement, the actual title-page not yet being composed.

no P

In the September number the Monthly Anthology listed the book
as publishing by subscription, and Brown's Literary Magazine¹
gave it in the October list of publications.

no P

On October 22d. the Philadelphia Gazette *gave the* ~~contained its copy-~~
right ~~legal~~ notice dated the eighteenth, with Conrad as the
proprietor and, ^{an} ~~the~~ following advertisement^e announced its publication.

on the same date.

"Volney's View of America. Just published, and for sale
by John Conrad & Co. (Price 2 dolls 25 cts in boards, or
2 dolls, 50 cents neatly bound) with maps and plates. A
View of the Soil and Climate of the United States of
America; with supplementary remarks upon Florida; on the
French colonies on the Mississippi and Ohio, and in
Canada; and on the aboriginal tribes in America. By C.F.
Volney. Member of the Concervative Senate, &c. &c."

~~Here we must notice that the title reads the same as that on
the title-page, and the difference between this and the former
notice is due to the fact that Brown was then literally translating
from the French, whereas, now, he has revised according to a method
to be noticed later.~~



VOLNEY.

Engraved by J. Smith, 1801. Published by J. Smith, 5, Pall Mall, London.

(Illustration to be placed

to face page 1623)

Among Brown's works this is the only one ^{with} ~~in which~~ his name appears on the title-page, ~~as the author. In other instances we have had to prove them either by circumstantial evidence, by his use of a pseudonym or by his initials.~~

As far back as 1791¹ Volney had travelled in the United States and he was also at Philadelphia a great part of the time from October 1795 to June 1798.² Brown in his 24 October 1795 letter speaks of ^{his} Volney's arrival. Griswold in his Prose Writers of America³ says Brown was acquainted with him and Rosengarten's French Colonists⁴ listing the book gives it as translated "by his friend", both being uncorroborated statements which the translator's preface, to be quoted presently, causes us to believe could not have been more than a casual introduction ~~if it were anything at all~~. Brown on 3 May 1797 had not been successful in seeing him at Philadelphia so ~~that~~ there are no authentic records of any acquaintance or intimacy of Brown and Volney. Of course a ~~casual~~ meeting may have been the motive for assuming the work, ~~if~~ though it hardly seems a necessity, ~~if~~ but the fact that Conrad held the copyright as proprietor would suggest he introduced the subject to Brown. In this

1 Todd: Life and Letters of Joel Barlow, New York 1886, p. 152.

2 De Mery: Voyage aux Etats-Unis, New Haven 1913, pp. 215 and 263. He travelled with Lord Lyndhurst in 1796, see Theo. Martin: Lyndhurst London 1883, p. 55.

3 P. 110.

4 Philadelphia 1907, p. 212.

connection it is of interest to notice ^{Brown} ~~our novelist~~ had ~~made one of~~
~~his characters~~, ^rMatinette_^ in ¹Ormond, speak of Volney as her actual ac-
quaintance as well as known through his books; which may have been the
origin of Griswold's and Rosengarten's uncorroborated statements.

Brown's interest in the work was ^{very much like that} ~~undoubtedly based on such an~~

~~idea~~ ^{by} Volney himself expressed ~~of the work and which may be found~~

in a letter to James Madison, then Secretary of State, dated 28 April

^{which}
1805 ~~and~~ reads in part:

"....Vous devey à ce moment avoir reçu Mon tableau du climat et du sol des Etats-unis dant j'eus l'honneur de vous adresser un exemplaire (2 vol 8°) par Mr. Lee de Bordeaux en Nivose. Cest afin juges tels que vous Monsieur qu'il appartient de prononcer sur ce travail; et ce sera de pareil jugemens que j'attendrai le rang que doit prendre dans les Bibliothèques et dans l'opinion un livre plus dirigé vers l'instruction que vers l'amusement, et plus inspiré par le desir d'être utile que d'être applaudi; la flatterie plait; mais la verite seule est amie...."

~~Whether Brown had translated other works by Volney is not known and cannot at present be proven. ^{The} His lectures on History, published ~~(Ea)~~ ¹⁸⁰¹ at Philadelphia and printed by the printer of Clara Howard for Brown's publishers the Conrads, has long been under our suspicion but no conclusion ^{Can be reached.} ~~on the matter is yet warranted. In this connection we should~~ ¹ ~~notice that Dunlap speaks of Brown's translations. That plural~~ ^{but} ~~it may not be, is probably an error.~~~~

From a notice, which we shall presently quote in full, in the Portfolio for 1804 we learn the London edition preceded this one of Brown's, appearing about April first, ^{so that} ~~and~~ it is possible

he had access to a copy of it, ^{the fact that the extension of Romans' quotations which the English editor could not do because he was unable to obtain the book} ~~and its appearance~~ may have been another reason for the American edition. However, ^{that} ~~he~~ ^{did not} make any use of it ^{has his translating} is highly improbable, can be easily proven from internal evidence, ¹ and will so appear as we proceed, ~~in this study.~~

^{but it is} ~~Though~~ adequate, ^a Brown's equipment for the translation of a French author ^{may be} is not all that it should have been, We know well that he studied the language when about sixteen years old but his proficiency ^{does not} never appears to have been great, ~~and he had had~~ ~~no instruction in the niceties of the language,~~

^{his} The 1783 note-book has a study of the various forms of the verb s'en aller which was probably written by Brown and which is all very well and correct but the study of one verb, though an uncommon one, ^{not much of a} is ~~hardly a satisfactory~~ recommendation.

^{An} ~~His~~ idea of what he later considered simple French is ~~to be~~ seen in John Davis' Souvenir d'un sejour a Bombay ~~to be found~~ in the second volume of his Monthly Magazine ² and would suggest that he knew enough of the language to ~~be able to~~ enjoy reading it; but

1 By details the English editor did not understand such as the paragraphs noticed p.138 and gelives, p.283.

2 February 1800, p.106.

this also is no recommendation of a translator, ~~and does not~~
~~necessarily imply any knowledge of French.~~

ho TP In ~~one of his~~^a letters, dated October 1801, ~~we have found him~~ he
 referring^{ed} to the difficulties of French study. It is significant
 that the letter was addressed to Anthony Bleecker to whom we shall
 have cause to refer again in ^{later} connection with this same book. The
¹
 extract reads:

"Pray, how do you come on, in your study of French? have you wound yourself into the vitals of the language, and are you familiarised to that labyrinth of exceptions and anomalies which gave you so much trouble when I was with you. A man must have the patience of more than one Job to untwist and unknot such a tangled maze. It was a task to which my perseverance never was equal"

Such a statement cannot entirely be accounted for by a real or

assumed modesty. Brown was never overburdened with that virtue!

FF In ~~our study of~~ the Louisiana Purchase Address 1803 the quoted part was a translation
~~but he was undoubtedly the best judge of his ability in any~~
 from the French but no copy of the original has been ~~found~~^{accessible} to us so we cannot know
~~intellectual affair.~~ how well or ill he did it.

ho TP ~~However, that is not all.~~ In the American Register in the review
 of literature he speaks of translations "in which of course there
 is nothing but a manual or mechanical vocation"; so ~~that~~ it is
 evident he did not consider such work ~~as seriously~~^{||} ~~as his attempts~~
 1 Dunlap, Vol. II, p. 103.

~~in other lines and was not so well fitted for it as we would wish a translator to be in order to be satisfactory.~~

But ^{an} ~~the~~ most important point about this matter is ~~to be found~~
¹
 in one of Volney's notes, which Brown almost caricatures. ~~by trans-~~
~~tation. In the original it reads:~~

"Je fais cette remarque, parce que la seule bonne méthode que je connaisse, consiste à traduire d'abord le plus littéralement et le plus près possible du sens et de la valeur des mots.--Or, comme dans cette opération, il arrive ordinairement que les expressions et les constructions de la langue étrangère écartent celles qui sont propres à notre langue naturelle, il faut laisser reposer ce premier jet, et ne le reprendre que lorsque l'on a presque oublié l'original; alors relisant ce mauvais français, les formes naturelles du style viennent se présenter d'elles-mêmes, et l'on peut faire un excellent travail. Ce serait déjà beaucoup d'en faire un bon, car il est bien peu de traductions qui méritent cette épithète."

The sum and substance of which can be said to consist in translating literally, forgetting the work, and revising. Doubtless this method of Volney's is the one Brown followed; but it is not to be

²
 recommended. ~~That he had the literal translation ready when the Philadelphia Gazette notice of 1 September 1804 was written seems to be evident and he followed it up by his forgetting and revising in time for publication on October 22nd.~~

The fairest way ^{to present} ~~of explaining~~ the defects of his method is by

~~a comparison of Brown's translation~~ with the original, but we shall

1 French edition, Paris, 1803, Vol. II, pp. 379-80.

2 In some respects this method is the same as that detailed in the American Review Vol. I, p. 97 and II, pp. 294-5.

add the version of the English edition, not because it is preferred to Brown's but because it makes a strong contrast. From the three the reader who understands French may form a just idea of the merits and demerits of the work.

1

The passages selected are of no importance whatever--they are merely average ones--not by any means the worst or best; in fact it makes little difference whether the reader takes them as we give them or opens the book anywhere and selects them at random. The chance that he will thereby happen on the worst or best is so slight that it may be ignored.

The first passage reads:

"Pendant les cours de mes divers voyages dans les Etats-unis, j'ai attaché un intérêt et un soin particuliers à recueillir des échantillons des bancs et couches de pierres que j'ai trouvés les plus dominans et les plus répandus: me trouvant quelque fois à pied plusieurs jours de suite, je n'ai pu me charger que de petits volumes; mais ils ont suffi à mon objet; et tous ces morceaux réunis ou comparés à ceux que les voyageurs étrangers m'ont communiqués ou donnés à Philadelphie, m'ont servi à déterminer à Paris, avec le secours de quelques minéralogistes, le genre et les dénominations de leur conches--mères, et à mettre en ordre une espèce de géographie physique des Etats-unis.

En jugeant d'après ces moyens d'instruction, je crois pouvoir établir avec assez d'exactitude que le grand pays compris entre l'Atlantique et le Miss-sipi est divisé en cinq régions ou natures différentes de sol classés comme il suit."

2

Brown translates the passage:

"During my different voyages in the United States

I was careful to collect specimens of those mineral substances which appeared to prevail most extensively. Being frequently obliged to travel, for many days together, on foot, I was able to procure only small masses, but such however, as sufficiently corresponded with my views. These specimens, arranged and compared, at Philadelphia, with others, possessed or presented to me by other enquirers, has enabled me, with the aid of some learned mineralogists, to draw up, at Paris, a kind of physical geography of the United States.

With these materials, I have been able to distribute, with sufficient certainty, the region comprised between the Mississippi and the Atlantic Ocean into the five following districts:"

1

which the English had given:

" DURING my various journies in the United States I was very attentive in collecting specimens of the strata and shelves of rock, that I found most predominant, and most widely diffused, as it was a subject that I felt particularly interesting. As I sometimes travelled on foot for several days together, I could not load myself with large pieces; but those I collected were sufficient for my purpose, and all taken together, or compared with those which foreign travellers showed me or gave me at Philadelphia, enabled me to determine on my return to Paris, with the assistance of some mineralogical friends, the genus and species of their parent strata, and to methodize a kind of physical geography of the United States".

Judging from these documents, I think I can affirm with sufficient precision, that the extensive country comprised between the Atlantic and the Mississippi is divided into five regions of different nature, which may be classed as follows: "

2

The second passage which shows more of a variation than any of the three we select, reads:

"C'est à de telles causes qu'il faut attribuer ces épidémies dont l'invasion est si brusque en certains

constitutions de l'atmosphère et en certain pays: et quant aux affections fébriles, spécialement celles avec frisson et avec retours périodiques, si l'on remarque que dans ces retours réguliers de 12, de 24, de 36 heures, etc., elles suivent une marche semblable à celle de plusieurs fonctions essentielles de la vie, telles que le sommeil, la faim, etc., l'on sera porté à croire que le foyer de perturbation n'est ni dans les premières voies, ni dans le sang, mais, dans l'organe immédiat de la vitalité, dans le système nerveux: c'est par une action quelconque sur le fluide qui abreuve la pulpe des nerfs, que la fièvre en général se déclare si subitement, qu'elle n'a besoin que d'un coup de soleil, d'un coup de vent frais, d'une onde de pluie, d'une transition brusque du chaud au froid, et même du froid au chaud. Si l'on ajoute qu'elle se déclare de préférence dans les saisons et dans les lieux sujets aux vicissitudes de froid et de chaud; qu'elle-même n'est qu'une sensation alternative de chaud et de froid; que la sueur qui suit le paroxysme est un symptôme spécial de toute crispation des nerfs; le foyer que j'indique acquerra une nouvelle vraisemblance; et alors le mécanisme des contagions deviendra évident, simple, puisque le poulmon et les parois du nez mettent d'immenses faisceaux de nerfs en contact immédiat avec les miasmes flottans dans l'air respiré, et l'on concevra pourquoi les drogues et les remèdes bûs et mangés pendant plusieurs mois, ont moins d'efficacité à guérir les fièvres, sur-tout automnales, que le changement d'atmosphère et la respiration de l'air oxygéné de Vitzavona et de Vivario."

1

That passage Brown marks by a note of censure which he had no right to make. It reads:

"In what immediately follows, I have been puzzled to extract a clear and distinct meaning from Volney's obscure and verbose phraseology."

As his version will show the truth of the matter is Brown was

1

not able to translate the passage intelligently. It reads:

"To the action of such fluids must be traced those epidemics which prevail in certain countries, and in certain states of the weather. Fevers accompanied with shivering, and with alternate increase and decrease, have, in their periodical returns, something analogous to the great functions of hunger and sleep, and may therefore suggest a belief, that the source of the disease is rather in the nervous system, than in the

stomach or blood. The sudden appearance of fever, on exposure to the sun, to wet, or to extremes of cold and heat, may be owing to the action of some gaseous principle on the fluid which pervades the nerves; especially since those effects are chiefly experienced in places liable to great vicissitudes of heat and cold; since perspiration always bespeaks a contraction of the nerves, and febrile paroxysms usually terminate in perspiration. My opinion will acquire new strength, and we shall thus be supplied with a plain and satisfactory theory of contagion, when we recollect that the lungs and nostrils bring a great body of nerves into contact with the external respirable air, and that internal medicines are much less beneficial in those cases than a change of residence, like that from the coast of Corsica to Vitzavona and Vivario."

This excellent exposition of the "forgetting" method is far

¹
better rendered by the English edition which reads:

"To such causes must be ascribed those epidemics, the attack of which is so sudden in certain constitutions of the atmosphere, and in certain countries: and as to febrile diseases, particularly those accompanied with shivering fits and periodical accessions, if we recollect, that in their regular returns of twelve, twenty four, thirty six hours, &c., they pursue a course similar to that of several essential functions of life, as sleep, hunger, &c., we shall be led to believe, that the focus of perturbation is neither in the first passages, nor in the blood, but in the immediate organ of vitality, the nervous system. It is by some unknown action on the fluid by which the medullary part of the nerves is moistened, that fever in general displays itself so suddenly, requiring only an exposure to the fervent rays of the Sun, a current of cold air, a shower of rain, or a sudden transition from heat to cold, or the contrary. If we add, that it manifests itself particularly in seasons and in places subject to vicissitudes of heat and cold; that itself is nothing but a sensation of alternate cold and heat; that the sweat following the paroxysm is a particular symp-

tom of every contraction of the nerves; the focus I have pointed out will acquire an additional degree of probability: and then the mechanism of contagions will become evident and simple, since the lungs and interior part of the nose bring an immense body of nerves into immediate contact with the miasmata, that float in the air inhaled in respiration; and we shall understand why drugs and remedies, swallowed in a liquid or a solid form, are less efficacious in curing fevers, particularly of the autumnal kind, than change of air and the respiration of the oxygenated atmosphere of Vitzavona and Vivario."

1

The third and final passage selected for comparison is from the *eclaircissements--sur les sauvages*, thus:

"Telle fut ce jour-la la substance de notre entretien, qui me frappa d'autant plus, qu'il etait le resultat d'une experience de douze a quinze ans. Je voulais, par contre-partie, m'informer des motifs qui empechent les Sauvages d's'etablir chez les blancs, et qui ont determine en plusieurs rencontres ceux que l'on y avait eleves a preferer le retour a leurs habitudes natives; le temps et la convenance me manquerent; mais plu de jours apres, je fut plus heureux, et ce fut Petite-Tortue lui-meme qui m'en developpa les raisons."

2

Brown's translation reads:

"Such was the sum of Mr. Well's information, which was the more valuable, as being the result of twelve or fifteen years experience. I was curious to know the reasons that withheld the Indians from settling and incorporating with the whites, and why many of them, though educated in colleges and on farms, so eagerly reverted to the habits of their countrymen. A few days afterwards, I had an opportunity of making these enquiries of Little Turtle himself, and obtaining his answers."

3

In the English edition this becomes

"Such was the substance of our conversation this day, which struck me the more, as it was the result of twelve or fifteen years experience. I was desirous on the other side of learning the motives, by which the savages are prevented from settling among the whites, and which on several occasions had induced those, who had been educated among them, to prefer resuming their native habits. On this occasion time and opportunity were wanting; but a few days afterward I was more fortunate, and it was the Little Tortoise himself, who explained to me the reasons."

~~Besides these three passages the details of the work are to be noticed for the purpose of making clear what some may not trouble to find for themselves.~~

The "forgetting" that Volney recommended and Brown disastrously followed shows itself in several ways; namely, in errors, alterations, omissions, and additions, all of which detract from the value of the work as a faithful translation.

~~The greatest error is that the method pursued~~ often defeats its intention. What is obvious to assist in a transference of the original into the English idiom ~~too often results in what~~ does not express clearly or all of (the French) completely. ⁷⁰⁰ ^{it}

~~In this connection it seems hardly necessary, though it can do no harm, to call attention to what is supposed to be so generally known; that the French language is peculiar in that there are many of its commonest idioms that have no corresponding ones in English.~~

ho 77

~~Usually~~ Volney's method gives the translator too much freedom with his author's text, so that the result is as disastrous as has just been, and can be further, seen by studying the note explaining the method and comparing it with Brown's translation of it. However, the case of this same note should not be pressed too far, for we find it is an exception.

so that

As a rule, while the text suffers ^{Curiously} by the method, the notes do not; but ^{possibly} in most cases that is due to Brown's not forgetting as freely, as he does in the former case.

Besides the ^{method} greatest there are minor errors to be found in the note on p.222 which is not Volney's but Brown's and should have been marked "trans.," and on page 212 which is indicated as all Brown's when in truth it is half Volney's. Even the erratum is an error; it should delete the word for which a substitute is offered.

Of course when the translator takes the attitude that his original is verbose, and that the verbosity is to be suppressed, it is but natural that he would take other liberties that Brown did.

~~The English translation has an obvious characteristic in that~~

~~it is literal with no omissions such as Brown made.~~

Alterations we find ~~all~~ through^{out} the work, and the notable ones are as follows. In the half-title and title-page "climate and soil" is transposed, Eclaircissements is clumsily rendered as supplementary remarks, the Scioto and sur les sauvages are pedantically elaborated; in the table of contents the clear and intelligent explanatory additions are omitted; chapters III, IV and V are made sub-sections of chapter II; chapter IX becomes two chapters, VI and VII; and the Letter sur les vents de la Suède becomes I in the supplement. Headings become paragraphs, quotations lose their designating marks, tabulations lose their form and become sentences and notes are given the type and become a part of the text. Most of which are unwarranted liberties and ~~cannot be allowed~~^{should not} to pass uncensured.

The omissions are the ^{description} ~~mention~~ of the plates on the title-page, Volney's various titles as given there, ^{especially his American Philosophical Society membership} parts of some notes, with a few exceptions the reference to works consulted, a lot of text ~~that~~ is necessary on page 93, a reference to a plate on page 271 and the whole appendix as it appears in the French edition. Here again they are unwarranted and they only tend to unfairly detract from ~~the English edition follows the French exactly~~
 X Vol. II, pp. 359-63.

the scholarly value of Volney's work.

Finally ~~we find that~~ the whole section at the end entitled additional notes which is Brown's addition, though not his own composition, may add enough to warrant its inclusion but hardly presents Volney's book as it should be. On page 273 we have this note:

"In the following pages, the translator has extended a little the quotations of Volney, as B. Romans' information on the soil and diseases of those provinces is very curious and authentic, and, at the same time, his book is out of print, and extremely rare.—
TRANS. "

This extension consists of all the material from this point up to the end of the chapter—some forty odd pages. ~~Needless to say~~ This is rather an unusual proceeding in translations and is ~~to be~~ *questionable as an improvement.* ~~severely disapproved.~~

~~On the other hand~~ ^{plenty of} there are ~~many~~ good points. Brown's criticisms are sound. He does not miss the opportunity to fling at Volney that he draw ¹ "large inferences from a trivial circumstance"; to note that the work he uses was full of errors; ² or to hit ³ at a cheap pun. Volney's notes ~~are~~, with rare exceptions, translated more literally than the body of the text, those that merely explain what is familiar to every American reader are well omitted; in fact, Brown's notes as a whole are illuminative, interesting and valuable. They show
1 P.18. 2 P.80. 3 P.319 and 349.

a wide range of information, a desire for ~~accuracy in regard to~~
 facts, an enthusiasm for our country and its possibilities and a
 prophecy of the extension of Louisiana territory. ~~Incidentally they~~
~~are evidence that Dunlap¹ was wrong about Edgar Huntly and that Brown~~
~~knew the Indians at first hand and did not get his information from~~
~~his fancy.~~

~~Thus~~ Most of the notes are authoritative—Brown did not give ~~what~~
~~he knew by~~ hearsay but ~~by~~ actual experience and first-hand inform-
 ation. When he is not sure he asks the question or suggests it as
 a subject for ~~further~~ investigation, ~~by others.~~ He argues ~~about~~
 the use of the word America for the United States as a communication²
 to one of our newspapers might do to-day. ~~His opinions of the~~
~~Indians, their character, institutions and probable doom to extinction~~
~~seem a natural result of the knowledge of one who wrote such a work~~
~~as Edgar Huntly. Even his Utopian ideas find an echo in this work.~~³

~~Probably~~ The most striking notes ~~in the whole book~~ are those
 that have ~~for us~~ an autobiographic interest. Several of such
 very interesting touches are ~~to be found in a~~ passage which is

a part of Brown's note on Volney's statement ^{on} ~~about~~ the siesta.

¹ Page 5 of the National Portrait Gallery article.
² P. 338. ³ P. 257. ⁴ P. 108.

" Strangers, from the torrid zone, especially from the islands, complain exceedingly of the heats of Philadelphia, when the mercury reaches 85 degrees, though natives of that city read, write, or pursue their mechanical vocations, without sensible inconvenience, in a heat of from 86 to 89. The writer of this note has been sitting at his ease, in a spacious room, in an airy situation, surrounded by trees; at six o'clock, P. M., observing the noon-day heats remitted, he has looked at the glass, and found it 89 degrees. This happened several days together, during the present summer, 1804. He has often observed men working diligently in the field, in a heat of 87, and has himself walked five miles, in a dusty, shadeless road, at noon day, with a black beaver hat on his head, when the heat was 91, in the shade of an adjacent wood. Pennsylvania farmers frequently drive the plough and the wain, when the hand would be blistered by touching the iron work of these machines. At Lichfield, in Connecticut, at nine o'clock in a July morning, the writer's hand has literally been *burnt*, by laying it by chance on the tire of a cart-wheel, before a blacksmith's shop. "

~~While interesting, that burn Brown received is not all that it seems. Doubtless he could have produced the same result in even cooler weather, the friction more than making up for any number of degrees of temperature. But if such slips are not to be found the work would have to be other than Brown's, and slip and all the note is most welcome.~~

¹
~~Another note refers to what may be applicable to Brown himself.~~

~~"The terror of lightning, which prevails greatly, especially among the female sex, is a genuine and formidable evil in America."~~

²
Another expresses Brown's opinion of alcoholic abuse thus:

¹¹
A conformity to the American regimen was the most effectual method of shortening and destroying life that our author could have adopted. An infinite proportion of the diseases which exist in the world are owing to absurd modes and vicious habits, and the dress and diet of Europe are

assiduously copied in America, where it is far more injurious, from the nature of the climate. The great curse of the country, and the source of ninety-nine hundredths of the maladies which ravage it, is the abuse of spirituous liquors. If the influence of evil moral and pernicious physical habits were subtracted from the causes of disease, the climate would be next to nothing."

1

And another admirable one on drink adds a hit at the politicians of those days.

"In this case, the rulers are just as much depraved as the subjects, and we can have little hopes of the child, when the parent glories in his sottishness, and thinks the happiness and dignity of manhood connected with the quantity he drinks. The whole purpose of government is vulgarly supposed to consist in repelling external enemies, and restraining the fraud or violence of individuals when immediately directed against the person or property of each other. The first end is effected by a revenue, to create or augment which the introduction and diffusion of inflammatory liquors are studiously promoted. The health or morals of the people, so far as these arise from the regulation of the passions and discipline of the manners, form no part of a politician's views."

2

In one place we find him reverting to one of his old interests-- the water supply of Philadelphia, which he had gladly given space to in his Literary Magazine.

It has been customary in mentioning this work to speak of it from a superficial knowledge; but that is excusable in those who have only studied Brown's magazines with the same degree of attention. It is, however, hardly to be excused in those who have had cause for turning the pages of those interesting repositories.

In several instances we have had articles signed with the

initials A.B., which we have suggested as obviously for Anthony
 Bleecker, but this work of Volney's shows one instance at least¹
 where they are used by Brown.

Now comes the curious coincidence. In the Literary Magazine²
 for August¹⁸⁰⁴, we find the following:

(1) VOLNEY'S TRAVELS IN AMERICA.

To the Editor, &c.

I SEND you a translation of the most material passages in Volney's preface to his Travels in America, which have just appeared at Paris. A work of this nature is of great importance to our national reputation abroad; it must therefore be universally interesting to know in what colours we have been drawn by one, whose portrait, whatever be its absurdities and blemishes, will undoubtedly be more multiplied, farther diffused, and generally credited than the work of any other painter. I shall make no comment on any of its lines or shades, but leave your impartial readers to view the scene, uninterrupted and unbiassed. Yours,

A. B. "

This is followed by nearly five pages of Volney's preface being in the exact words of the translation as published and claimed by Brown. The only changes are the omission of the criticism of John Adams on pages viii and ix and the insertion of "says Mr. Volney" after the three opening words, three changes of punctuation and one change of the singular number for the plural: all of which make it certain that the A.B. who was so thoughtful for the Literary

1 The introducing note to the Account of the Dutch East Indian Settlements, (Literary Magazine, Vol. III, p. 105) also signed A.B. may be profitably compared with this one.

2 Vol. II, p. 332.

3 It had appeared in 1803.

Magazine was none other than our esteemed author. Notice, however, ~~that~~ this was in the August number of the magazine. And it was not all.

In the September number we ¹ ~~also~~ are treated to the fourth chapter--on earthquakes and volcanoes--only omitting the final paragraph which is of one sentence ~~and~~ refers ^{now} to what is to be supplied in the following chapter.

~~Thus we are driven to face this dilemma.~~ We must conclude the A.B. to be Brown or we must bring against him the serious charge of appropriation of another man's work without the customary acknowledgment. From ^{an} ~~the~~ ascription by ^{his} ~~Brown's~~ father and from ² our knowledge of Brown the former seems ^{more} ~~the most~~ probable and we have accordingly ascribed to Brown ^{several} ~~not only this~~ use^s of the A.B. initials, ~~but also some others.~~

A strange coincidence ^{is that} ~~here comes up to bother us still further.~~ Anthony Bleecker was about this time ^{struggling} ~~probably well acquainted~~ with French; ^{as related in} ~~at least we must assume so from~~ the October 1801 letter of Brown to him, ~~in which letter the difficulties of French are referred to.~~

1 Vol. II, pp. 452-3.

2 Ascribing the Ogilvie lecture communication of 1804 to Brown though signed A.B.

~~From the nature of the work it seems as if we should expect no~~
~~more, but such is not the case.~~ Brown did not stop at a translation,
(and ^{all the rest;} additions) etc., he could not resist the opportunity to supply
a translator's preface which is ~~not only~~ valuable as an explanation
of his attitude toward the work and deserves full quotation. It reads:

" THE author of the following work first acquired distinction, in the reading world, by publishing Travels in Syria and Egypt. In many respects this work far exceeded, in accuracy and comprehensiveness, every former work on the same subject. It was, however, secretly pervaded by a bias against the natives of these countries, by a disposition to view them in the worst light, and by a general persuasion that these countries ought to be possessed by France. With this view he was led to dwell more upon the misery of the people, whom a revolution might benefit, and more particularly on the folly and depravity of their government, which would render them an easy prey to invasion, than former travellers, who had none of these prepossessions, had done. With all the science and method, therefore, which that work displays, are combined a great deal of error and mistake, and they that wish to be acquainted with these celebrated provinces, ought indeed by no means to overlook, but still less ought they wholly to confine their attention to Volney's account of them.*

After a lapse of ten or fifteen years, Volney conceived the design of visiting another hemisphere. The rising states of America offered him not only an object worthy of his curiosity, but a place of secure asylum in a time of danger and distress. America was, to him, pretty much in the same situation.

as Syria and Egypt had been. Former French travellers had brought back the most flattering pictures of the people, their climate, and their government, and the *splendid* success (as he himself styles it) of his former work inspired him with new zeal to apply the test of his wonderful sagacity to their fond delusions, and reduce their exaggerated dreams and glowing fancies to the standard of truth and good sense.

Fortunately for Volney, circumstances have prevented him from publishing his observations on the government and manners of the people.¹ These are topics, on which his prejudices as a Frenchman, and as a vain and captious mortal, would have abundant opportunity to show themselves, and in which he would have been in perpetual danger of shocking the prejudices of the people he described. He has merely

confined himself to a review of the physical condition, as to surface and climate, of the United States, and to some remarks on the character and situation of the aboriginal tribes.

Considered as a picture of the physical condition of the country, as far as respects its surface and climate, it would by no means be its due praise to say that it is the best and most complete that has hitherto appeared, because there has hitherto been no general description of the country in these points of view: particular provinces have been described with a philosophical accuracy, which is highly honourable to the genius of our country, but the whole, and especially that portion of it which lies upon the Mississippi and the lakes, had not been before subjected to the same analysis.

There is, perhaps, no part of this work which will be thought to be more inaccurately and superficially executed, than that which relates to yellow fever and the other diseases of America. By stepping into a circle foreign to his own, and in which his education and experience, notwithstanding his own opinion to

¹ According to De Mery, *Voyage aux Etats-Unis*, p. 263 he was politely invited to leave the country.

the contrary, by no means qualified him to walk, he has exposed himself to much critical censure from professional men. On this subject, indeed, he would, for obvious reasons, have found it impossible to please all: but, as it is, it is much to be suspected that he has failed to please any.

The merit of a work ought to be estimated, not only by comparison with what has been already done, but by considering the means and situation of the author; and surely uncommon praise is due to Volney, for having produced a work so accurate and scientific, almost wholly from the funds of his own observation, with so little assistance from former publications, in relation to a country of such vast extent, and so much in the state of wilderness, and during so short a residence. Instead of reproaching him for the mistakes committed, we should grant him liberal applause for the truths he has attained.

But, while we pardon his errors, and deem them amply atoned for by his merits, it is a duty which we owe to the enlightened world, to our country, and even to the writer himself, to point out his mistakes. The present translator has not only done this, as far as his limited knowledge would permit, but he has obtained, from one or two learned and ingenious friends, some additional remarks upon the text. On this head he is particularly indebted to Dr. B. S. Barton, who has made the natural history of this part of America, and the manners and dialects of the aborigines, the objects of great and successful study. This gentleman's remarks are given in the form of additional notes.

He has taken the liberty of somewhat extending ¹ the quotations of his author from the work of Bernard Romans upon Florida, because this writer may be deemed almost unknown to the present age, because

¹ Beginning at the second paragraph of p. 273. For some reason or other the editor of the English edition had also tried to obtain Romans' book but was unable to do so. See his note p. 340.

his remarks are extremely judicious, and because the country he speaks of is rapidly growing into an object of extraordinary interest and curiosity to the people of the United States.

As to the manner in which this translation has been conducted, the writer has endeavoured to give the meaning of his author, in the clearest, most faithful, and most distinct manner. For this purpose he has not thought it necessary to transfer the remarkable verbiages of his original into his own performance. In two instances only he has more materially deviated from the text of his original. In detailing the history of Swedish and Norwegian winds, he has omitted the parade and incumbrance of a private letter, with which M. Volney thought proper to connect his observations on that subject, and in all thermometrical statements, he has turned the calculations of Reaumur into the corresponding ones of Fahrenheit, the latter being the only current and intelligible system in Great Britain and America.*

Some of this is again explained in the notes he gave but the greater part is necessary as an explanation of the peculiarities which we have condemned.

The reception of this work was equivocal. It did not go into a second edition and seems to have not only supplied whatever demand there was, but ever has been, for in the United States so far as we know no other edition has ever been made by any other translator.

2

Dunlap says:

1 The Boston Evening Transcript 18 October 1926 extracted from the New York World an article on the Indian Summer by S.K. Pearson, Jr., wherein Brown's note from page 210 is quoted.

2 Vol. II, p. 85.

" Of Mr. Brown's translations from the French, it is needless to speak. To give an English dress to the crude and often unfounded opinions of Volney respecting this country, was neither congenial with the talents nor feelings of Charles Brockden Brown."

That of course appeared all that was necessary to Dunlap. It does not seem to have occurred to him that Brown could have allowed some one else to do it, and the work itself ^{does not} ~~hardly bear~~ ^{Warrant} ~~him out in~~ the statement about its congeniality.

~~Brown's friend~~ Dennie in ^{the} ~~his~~ ¹ Portfolio hailed it with approval.

The celebrated author of Travels through Syria, has very lately published at Paris *Tableau du Climat et du sol des Etats Unis, &c.* For the honour of our country, we are happy to learn that a translation of this interesting work is now in a state of great forwardness, by Mr. CHARLES B. BROWN, of this city, whose talents as an author in various walks of literature have been long advantageously known to the public, and whose scrupulous purity of style, industrious habits, and knowledge of the French idiom, render him fully adequate to the task of a translator. We have had the double opportunity of seeing a portion of Mr. Brown's translation, and that published for Mr. Johnson, the British bookseller. It gives us pleasure, to add, that the domestic version is fully equal, if not superior, to the foreign; and, for the reputation of a very ingenious man of letters, and the emolument of one of the most respectable booksellers in America, we sincerely wish that these travels may be purchased with avidity, and criticised with candour.

This of course is not criticism but it is what passed for ^{it} ~~criticism~~ in those days. ~~It is at least enthusiastic.~~

^{Woff} But Dennie did not allow this ~~notice~~ to pass as his only expression of interest, ~~in Brown's book~~. The number for 3 November of his 1 Vol. IV, p. 269 (25 August 1804.).

Portfolio contained an extract from pages 256 to 258 introduced¹ by a punnical note, so that it was not a fault of his if Brown's book was not extensively read and appreciated.

The over-rated Boston Anthology published a so-called review of this work. It was assigned 13 August 1807 to Robert Hallowell Gardiner, was read by him 9 August 1808 and published in the August 1808 number. It is characteristic of the reviews of the day and does little criticism. Gardiner apologises for his delay which was due to his waiting to procure a copy of the French edition-- which he never did. Therefore with no real guide, he only concerns himself with the obvious details of it and devotes most of his article to a consideration of Volney's book, which he did not have, instead of Brown's translation, which he did have. Save for a few phrases, which he repeats, his ideas of Brown's work he sums up thus:

"The notes of the translator point out many innacuracies in Mr. Volney's work. Some of them are judicious and others of little importance; but we should not have supposed Mr. Brown would have required the aid of two learned friends to have composed them, had he not informed us of the fact. The translator is not always particular in his use of words."

1 In 1801, p. 587 some Ohio person contributed a criticism of the book as Volney's. It has no mention or criticism of the book as a translation by Brown, though it may have intended to, being indicated as "to be continued"--which it never was.

Such is Gardiner's Anthology review! Of course it is no criticism of Brown at all. If he had to wait twice as long as he did he should have procured the original, for, without it, no one can qualify as a critic of Brown's work. The pleasantries he introduces about Brown and his learned friends is partly Gardiner's blunder. The specified help which Brown acknowledged applied to the additional notes at the end of the volume, not to those throughout the work. The other learned friend who we are to consider as assisting with the other notes gave him so little assistance Brown did not consider it necessary to mention his name. Who he was we do not know. Perhaps he was Anthony Bleecker.

~~The Oxford Dictionary reader in the Supplementary volume apparently took no interest in the respective merits of the book as a translation in comparison with the English edition. Brown's text and notes supplied some Americanisms for his purpose so he used it ^{together} with the French. Some of the words that got in the Dictionary have been noticed in the dictionary study of our Introductory volume so we here only need to refer the reader to it and to ^{say} repeat that Brown's work has been respected in a way he probably never realized.~~

In relation to Brown's life his Volney stands as something more than "hack work." The method used in translating it, the editing of it and the alterations are peculiar to our author. Of course he missed the French idiocyncrosies and lost Volney's style but inasmuch as there was no particular virtue in the original he did not deprive the world of what it might have treasured. Personally he did not learn anything from his translating the book. It did not increase his vocabulary or help him to attain greater

precision in his own language. He knew Volney's philosophy of life, his other works, his technical merit and ~~merit~~ as an observer of strange lands, and he did not intentionally represent him unfaithfully. On the whole, Brown was though far from perfect, as capable a translator as Volney could have found in his day. ~~Together with his competitor the English editor of the Johnson edition, he has not been remembered in the collected edition of Volney's works, which he at least deserved to be.~~

If in translation the subject is the principal if not only consideration the work was all it should be.

1 Oeuvres Completes de Volney, Paris, 1846.

Oxford Dictionary lists it as used by its reader.

The Supplement to the