

Revised 3 October 1924
Revised 1-2 September 1927
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Addition D's plays 31 May - 2 June 1942

DOMESTIC FELICITY

1805 Aetat. 34

However thriftless Brown may have appeared to be when spending his money freely to give the usual home comforts to his family he was distinctively in character; perfectly consistent with the tradition of the money ground to pulp in his boots. His improvidence was a sure sign of his hopeful expectation--in health and wealth--now that he was joined to a woman who gave exceptional promise of being a proper helpmate. So the year 1805 appears to be mostly a scene of domestic felicity--Brown's own expression--pictured in two letters written to and preserved by William Dunlap. As a development of the theme comes the entrance of children into the happy home in Philadelphia.

The earliest ² extant letter ^{of the year} recalls the ~~misfortune~~ ^{Dunlap's mis}

~~of Dunlap~~ as manager and producer in the theatrical speculations ^{leading} on which he had entered ~~at this time~~ and which eventually led to bankruptcy ^{1 had} and drove him to give more attention to the writing of plays.

~~The original of the letter is not known to be in existence and it is supplied by Dunlap.~~

To W(illiam) Dunlap.

Philadelphia, 1805.3

My dear friend,

When I recognised your hand in the superscription of your letter, I opened it with pleasing expectations of an intended visit from you. Little did I imagine the kind of information it contained, and yet after a little reflection my surprise in a great measure abated. The difficulty in which men of business have been lately involved, could hardly fail of affecting you in the midst of your unprosperous establishment more severely than most others. Your letter, is as usual, too brief for my wishes. I wish you had dwelt a little more upon your prospects and plans for the future. You doubtless have formed some scheme besides the literary one your letter mentions. I am sorry I cannot give you any satisfactory answer on the points you mention. When your letter arrived C.4 was out of town. I

Life of Brown,

1 Arts of Design, Vol. I, pp. 268-9.

2, Idem, Vol. II, p. 112 ff.

3 The date of this letter should be about March first (Friday).

4 Conrad. Dunlap appears to have hoped for literary employment by him through Brown's influence.

shall apply to him as soon as he returns, but the application is almost superfluous, as I know pretty well already the state of his affairs. You may rely upon my seizing the earliest and every opportunity of answering your wishes with regard to the matter in this city. Before that time I hope you will get into some other occupation more lucrative and permanent, than any thing of this kind can be. I ask you to write to me pretty soon, if not immediately, and let me know more of your present situation, and especially your prospects. Though my counsel or my sympathy can be of no service to you, I am exceedingly anxious to know what you are about, and what you design to do. As to myself, my friends judge rightly when they think me situated happily in my present way of life in every respect, to my mind. There is nothing to disturb my felicity but the sense of the uncertainty and instability that sticks to every thing human. I cannot be happier than I am. Every change therefore must be for the worse. My business, if I may so call it, is altogether pleasurable, and such as it is, it occupies not one fourth of my time. My companion is all that an husband can wish for, and in addition to my own personal situation, I have nothing to wish but that it may last. These feelings would be thought by some, to arise more from the narrowness of my desires than from the abundance of my enjoyments; so much the better if that were the case, for the more confidence might I then entertain of its duration. I wish your affairs would permit you to visit Philadelphia once more. Meanwhile let me, I beseech you, hear from you. I have little doubt, considering all things, that your next ten years will be happier than the last ten have been.

C. B. B.

Happiness is
his theme.

Careless

The usual comment made on that letter is that it exhibits

Brown's longing for better health. ~~On the contrary~~ ^{the letter} it does not

at all mention or suggest or imply health. So far as it is a

witness at this time it appears that his health had no concern

for him. ^{as a result} When one knows he died of tuberculosis of the lungs it

is easy ^{there, but} to read, ex post facto, ~~in this letter~~ a whine ~~about his~~

^{absurd} health. It is ~~hardly~~ to be supposed ~~that~~ he was unwell at this

time or foresaw his fate. With a magazine on his hands and an

occasional book, with a wonderfully happy home and hopes for a

in
 baby ~~to~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ most serious wish of
~~visit from the story it is quite in keeping with a man of his~~

was
 serious mind ~~to wish only~~ for a continuance of the present

^{the}
 happiness. In ~~a former~~ letter, ~~the one~~ to his father-in-law,

-possibly
 Gray's
 Prospect
 of Eton-

we have found the same wish expressed and in a later letter,

6 November, we shall find a ^{no other} further allusion to the same idea,
 which really is as old as the hills.

In the latter case it will appear ~~that~~ Brown had been lead to

^{it} ^{by}
 express ~~the idea~~ from some thing he had been reading ^{and} that his
 only thought was ^{for} his wife.

^{the} ^{gives no indication that}
~~Incidentally~~ It should be noticed that ~~that~~ letter ~~also con-~~

^{the safety of} ^{Although he}
~~tains~~ a hint that authorship was not ^a so profitable a business,

~~as Dunlap had thought it and that, contrary to the usual belief~~

~~as noticed by us in our study of the year 1804, he had ^{any} no exten-~~

~~active connection with ^{the} any commercial enterprises of his brother's.~~

he did all he could in the Literary Magazine to further
 the sale of ^{the collection of} Dunlap's plays when he ^{learned} ~~the~~ plans.

The June number gave a fine ^{advance} notice and the December
 number followed it up by opening the Literary Intelligence
 with ^{the} details of the set and ^{even} a notice of Dunlap's collection
 of stage history, which ultimately became the American
 Theatre. Any effort Brown may have made to have Conrad
 publish apparently produced no result. Dunlap gave the
 printing to Brown's printers the Palmers, assuming the expenses
 himself.

additional

1 Probably Nathaniel S. Ingraham the New York merchant.
2 June 4 is apparently an error. Brown was probably not at home from 21 May to 4 June (three weeks). See note following.

~~Dunlap had been in Philadelphia in June but Brown being away he did not stop at his home. His journal entry reads: 22 June at Philadelphia. On the day of my arrival in Phil. I dined with Watts, Denny's publisher, an author, scholar and printer: Isaac Riley of N.Y. and Mr. Meredith (I believe Wm.) present. I made final arrangements for the publishing first vol. of my works." The works referred to are Dramatic Works of William Dunlap ... Philadelphia, Printed by T. & G. Palmer, ... 1806. Vol. I. Copyright date 7 July. Contents: Father of an only child, Leicester, from Fortainville Abbey, and Darbys Return. Single's Diary of 1806 records that Brown paid him one dollar for the first volume book.~~

(Stet)
Next
He was

1652A
1805
2.1
A

1801-Phila 1806
H 4.7.1816
H

From Van Lape's diary of 6 January 1806, to be
 quoted later, it seems ~~that~~ ^{he} ~~Van Lape~~ visited Brown in
 July of this year when he painted some sort of a
 portrait of Elizabeth Brown which he
 destroyed ~~when~~ ^{as} unsatisfactory replacing
 it by the miniature ~~which he~~ painted
 in January 1806.

note-book

From the ~~diary~~ of Brown's mother it may be learned that on
 Saturday 10 August of this year his incomparable wife gave
 Brown another happiness of domestic life. The entry reads:

"Daughter Eliza Brown|brought to Bed of Two sons|
 Tenth Day of Eighth month|1805."

~~Brown's mention in November of their having had two months~~
~~trial of life would seem to indicate that they had at least been~~

1 Egle: Pennsylvania Genealogies, Harrisburg, Pa., 1886, p. 327, gives
 it as September.

~~born before September sixth but the statement is not to be taken~~
~~literally.~~ They were named William Linn Brown and Charles Brockden
 Brown, Jr.

1806
 ^

Dunlap's diary 14 January speaks of them thus:

"The boys continue to grow and to crow and to be
 beauties."

In Brown's letter, 17 June 1806, it is recorded that Anthony
 Bleecker assured Brown's friends in Albany that these boys

"are the finest pair that he ever set eyes upon".

~~In the next letter we shall find Brown expressing his anxiety~~
~~and happiness.~~

Perhaps as expressed in Edgar Huntly the independence of a
 married couple having a capital of \$7,500 may be autobiographic,
 but certainly the tradition that Brown had a hatred of dirty
 and squalling children is of ^{especial} interest at this time.
 ^

The first ~~child, one~~ of the twins ^{was} William Linn Brown, Lippard
~~in his absurd raving The Heart Broken says one of the sons of~~
^{= speaks x}
~~Brown~~ was wealthy at about the date of 1848. In the 1859 and 60
 directories he is given as an attorney and counsellor with an
 1 Nineteenth Century, January 1848, p.26.

office at 215 Walnut street and a home at 1907 Pine street.

The United States Gazette for 28 April 1835 publishes his formal admission to the bar as dated the 27th. He is mentioned as a friend of Griswold's.¹ A kindly old Quaker gentleman of Philadelphia wrote in 1912 as follows:

"I well remember his only surviving son, William Linn Brown: at one time a lawyer, and I think, afterwards, paymaster in the Navy. 2 Years ago I met him on a matter at his office. He was a mild gentlemanly man, unassuming in his manners. He is scarcely remembered now."

Another authority says that he was a Federal Judge and the Treasurer or Secretary of the Pennsylvania Company for Insurance on Lives and Granting of Annuities but neither of these reports can be verified. He presented copies of the 1827 edition of Brown's romances to John Savage and Ferdinand J. Dreer.³ As we have seen in another place he also presented the manuscript of L'Amoroso to Frank M. Etting.⁴ He still resided at Philadelphia in 1868 having married on 10 October 1836 Emily G. Burling the

1 Prose Writers, p. 110.

2 The Bureau of Navigation of the Navy Department has no such record.

3 The latter has a presentation letter dated 13 May 1853 pasted in the Wieland volume.

4 Cushing has attributed to him Scribblings and Sketches, diplomatic, piscatory and oceanic by a Fisher in Small Streams, first and second editions, Philadelphia 1844 but a copy of the second edition purports to be a presentation copy from the author Edward L. Watmough, July 8, 1844. Drake's American Biography gives the author as John G. Watmough, apparently an error.

daughter of Samuel Burling of New York, and had by her ¹(i)--
Virginia P. who died at Philadelphia;(ii)--Laura L. who died
in infancy;(iii)--Emily B. who died at Philadelphia;²(iv)--
Eugene A.B. who is said to have died leaving Emily B. of Philadelphia. He presented the Sharpless portrait to Independence Hall in 1876;and (v)--William Linn Junior of Philadelphia who died 6 July 1890 leaving his entire estate to Louisa M. Brown.

The second child Charles Brockden Brown Junior was the twin born with William Linn Brown and is said ³to have died 1875 in some unknown place in the south.

1 Egle: Pennsylvania Genealogies, 1886, p. 327.

2 See the report of an Emily B. in our account of Brown's son born 1807.

3 Egle: op.cit.

The second 1805 letter to Dunlap has the confirmation of the belief that Brown had not at this time any indication of bad health but that contrary to many commentators on the previous letter, his idea of the mutability of human happiness had been derived from his reading, probably Gray's Prospect of Eton.¹

²
It is given by Dunlap and reads:

To W. Dunlap.

Philadelphia, (Wednesday) Nov, 6, 1805.

My Dear Friend,

I wish, notwithstanding my neglect of your last, you had favored me with another, telling me how you had fared, where you have been, and whither you are going. I have been looking for you hourly this fortnight past, agreeable to your plans and prospects, when we parted, but have neither seen you nor heard from you. I must therefore, though tardily, take up my pen to find you out and provoke some information from you. What excuse shall I make for not keeping up the correspondence as I projected? I have none. I fear that you will deem sufficient. When I received your last, my apprehensions and

¹ On a distant prospect of Eton College last stanza. The Philadelphia edition of Gray published in 1804 has it on page 42:

² Vol. II, p. 113 ff.

("And happiness too swiftly flies".

hopes seemed to be monopolized by one domestic image. Some one says that the happiest man is still miserable inasmuch as every human good is precarious and pent with danger, and the more he values the goods in his possession, the more fearful is he of the accident by which he is liable to be bereaved of them. My domestic felicities were so great that I shuddered at the approach of an event by which they were endangered. If the event however came, and instead of depriving me of my wife, has added two lovely children to my store. They are sons, counterparts to each other, with all their members and faculties complete, and enjoying as far as we can judge, after two months trial of life and its perils, the admirable constitution of their mother. Do not you congratulate me on this event? I was always terribly impressed with the hardships and anxieties attending the care of infants, and was at the moment appalled by the prospect of a double portion of care; but when I had seen the little strangers with my own eyes and beheld their mother in perfect health and safety after all her perils, my terrors were exchanged for confidence, and now after two months experience, I find, and their mother finds that the two healthy and lovely babes are a double joy, instead of being a double care. And now that I have told you my chief concern, may I tell you yours. Let me know what you have been doing. That new prospects a few months have opened to you. Whether you persist in your scheme of publication and what success has hitherto attended you. When particularly may we hope to see you amongst us once more.

C. B. B.

Near the opening of that letter there is a mention of a contemplated correspondence with Dunlap which might have extended to the bulk of that with Bringham. But it is a far cry from the introspective morbid Werther of 1792 and 1793 to the happy husband and father of 1805, so that it is not surprising he did not do his part of continuing it.

During this year Brown's literary activities were principally confined to the Literary Magazine but, about 3 November, probably

1 With the frequent use in his fiction of twins who could not be distinguished one from the other it seems particularly appropriate for him to have them in his own home for observation.

later, he prepared for the press and published John Blair Linn's Valerian for which he wrote the biographical preface. The fragments Carsol, the Carrils and Ormes also may belong to this year.