

## DRIFTING AWAY FROM A FRIEND

1796. Aetat. 25

Brown's friendship for his Joseph somewhat cooled on account of Laura whom Bringhurst ultimately married. How serious he was we know from the 29 December 1795 letter but it can hardly be supposed that he had fallen so deeply in love with her as Bringhurst had done. His Estrina experience had taught him many of the wiles of woman and though he was very fond of Laura he was at this time of his life too sophisticated to allow himself to become attached to any woman who did not reciprocate his affection. The care in sending respects to her which appears to be a repetition was unobserved by Brown because he did not read over his letter but it should not produce in us much more than a smile of amusement.

Smith's plans miscarried and he did not arrive until a day later. His diary not only gives the account of his visit but in some details suggests other facts of value in the life of our author. It reads:

"We reached Philadelphia by three in the afternoon, in a most pleasant day. Immediately after dinner I sought out Charles. We went together to W. Franklin, the secretary of the Abolition Society here to learn where the Convention met....At this house (the house of the father of C.B.B.) I now first knew James Brown, an elder brother of Charles. This evening we had some talk and I read Charles some parts of my journal. It was late when we slept."

The Saturday 2 January entry again mentions Sky Walk.

"After supper Charles read me a few pages of his journal and also of his projected novel."

The next entry is disappointing in that it does not give any description of Brown's Stella, *Ruth Johnson*.

Sunday 3 January: "After dinner Charles and I went to his brother Armitt's<sup>1</sup>—where we tarried till near tea time. From there we proceeded to Timothy Paxson's. I have long had a curiosity to see this man and his wife. Here I remained till eight in the evening."

In writing to William Johnson at New York Smith says:

"I have seen Charles' Stella<sup>2</sup> and her husband....Charles remembers you all."

"I have seen Peter Thomson, been at his house and he accompanied Charles and me around the city to observe the late improvements."

<sup>1</sup> Armitt was a clerk in the Bank of Pennsylvania and then lived at 76 Union street, south side. Union street ran from Front to Fourth street between Pine and Spruce.  
<sup>2</sup> Timothy Paxson's wife.

Smith's diary continues:

**Tuesday 5 January: "Charles and I went to see his friend Miss Atmore, where also are found his friend Miss Biddle."**

Wednesday's entry again mentions Sky Walk.

6 January "Was with Joseph Strong 1 from ten till twelve in company with Charles. Then we spent an hour and a half at Timothy Paxson's. When returned home Charles read to me from his novel till three. We dined with his brother Armitt."

7 January "When I returned learnt of Charles, that Joseph 22  
was in town. We went to him; and stayed half an hour with  
him."

On Friday Brown read him more of Sky Walk and on Saturday Smith met Volney.

Saturday 9 January "Waited on Mr. Wertmüller 3and was highly gratified by seeing several of his pictures; of which more hereafter. I saw the celebrated Volney--I spent the whole evening with Joseph."

Case	Age	Sex	Duration	Location	Findings
1	10	M	10 days	Left eye	Small, dark, pigmented lesion
2	12	F	15 days	Right eye	Small, dark, pigmented lesion
3	15	M	20 days	Left eye	Small, dark, pigmented lesion
4	18	F	25 days	Right eye	Small, dark, pigmented lesion
5	20	M	30 days	Left eye	Small, dark, pigmented lesion
6	22	F	35 days	Right eye	Small, dark, pigmented lesion
7	25	M	40 days	Left eye	Small, dark, pigmented lesion
8	28	F	45 days	Right eye	Small, dark, pigmented lesion
9	30	M	50 days	Left eye	Small, dark, pigmented lesion
10	32	F	55 days	Right eye	Small, dark, pigmented lesion

"Charles and I visited at Timothy Parson's and saw T.P. Cooper. Charles, Joseph and I spent the evening at Parson's."

Smith returned to New York arriving Wednesday the 13th. On the next day he delivered letters to Dunlap, among which there was probably one from Brown.

[illegible]

<sup>1</sup>  
Dunlap only gives an extract from the letter.

(To William Dunlap)

(Philadelphia, 10 January 1796.)

\*  
After wandering through fifty pages, the experiment was sufficiently made, and the thorough consciousness that I was unfitted for the instructor's chair, that my style was feeble and diffuse, my method prolix and inaccurate, my reasoning crude and superficial, and my knowledge narrow and undigested, suddenly benumbed my fingers: I dropped the pen, and I sunk into silent meditation on the means of remedying these defects.

The work referred to is not clear and it is injudicious to hazard a conjecture for at this time Brown had under way several works which never got beyond their fragmentary state. It surely could not have been Sky Walk.

After Smith's return to New York he gave no information of Brown until the 15th. of February when he wrote to Bringham and sent his love to Charles and his family.

1 National Portrait Gallery memoir of Brown, p. 3 ff. Dunlap says the letter was written four months after September 1795. If it was not the 10th. it was the 11th.

Smith's next reference to Brown is in Volume I of his journal and comprises a letter to him and its transcription on the day after it was written. It makes up for his protracted silence by its length and interest. It reads:

To Charles Brockden Brown

You will, probably, receive a letter from Dunlap, at the same time with this; which will render it less necessary for me to be minute, on one subject, than I should otherwise have thought it. You will learn from him, that he has received answers to his letters to Godwin and Holcroft; and of such a sort as might be expected from the authors of those works which we have read together, with so much delight. Our friend will, no doubt, make you acquainted with their contents, and in the best manner which the distance you are from us will admit. We have all wished you to be present, on this occasion, with an eagerness the less becoming, as it was of necessity unfruitful. Let, however, these communications strengthen your heart, and give new activity to your hands. We must do something to convince these men that we are worthy to receive some moments of their consideration.

The length of time which has elapsed since I have heard anything, particularly of you, opens a wide range for the exercise of your epistolary powers. You can not have been idle, all this time; and you know that I have a right to demand of you, how you have been busied, and to receive precise information in return. You shall have no right to complain of me, in this respect; for I shall be sufficiently minute.

Soon after my return from Philadelphia I was called to Lichfield. My sisters were there, and Mr. Mumford;<sup>1</sup> and the eldest was immediately to return, and my youngest sister to accompany her, instead of Abby. I went; and had the opportunity of interrupted conversation with them, for two days: spending only three at my father's. The extreme badness of the road, made my journey long, though my visit was short.

These several visitings have very much broken in upon all regular exertion and application: my winter, of consequence, has been productive of very little. Since I came from Connecticut, my attention has been mostly directed to my professional studies; and, in this line, I have composed the rude outline of an account of the Fever which prevailed here in 1795. Should I finish this to my liking, perhaps I may publish it:<sup>2</sup> but this is quite uncertain. Further than this in the way of composition, I have done little more than make some corrections and additions, to the dramatic piece,

1 Smith's sister Mary married Thomas Mumford and had by him six children.

2 It was published. See our chapter VIII with its account of his works.

which you have seen; and prepare it for a representation, which I begin to fear it will not attain to this season.<sup>1</sup> If, however, contrary to my expectation, it should be played, I think, also, to have it printed; and, if this, I shall give you seasonable notice, as I shall, in that case, stand in need of your friendly assistance.

In respect to reading, I have no information to give, that will be particularly pleasing to you; unless it should be, that I have read Condorcet's book,<sup>2</sup> of which we conversed when last together, with great satisfaction; and have made some progress in a work of Dumarsais, intitled "Essai sur les Préjugés",<sup>3</sup> which appears to me to be the fount whence the Philosophers of the New School have drawn their delightful, vivifying, and invigorating, waters; the work which most deserves to be the manual of the little children of Truth. Religious persecution confined this inestimable volume to few hands: the late Revolution, while it threatened the destruction of morality, as well as of religion, opened a way for its introduction to universal notice. A new, and correct, edition was published; and is now, probably, to be had in almost every French bookstore. If you can, let me press you to procure it. The probability that it will soon appear in an English dress, is all that restrains my hand from attempting to bestow such a garb upon it. Beside this, we have been considerably amused and pleased with a publication of Riouffe's--:<sup>4</sup> a young Frenchman, the friend of Louvet &c who was imprisoned during the tyranny of Robespierre. I am not sure that I have the title right--but I think it is "Memoirs d'un

1 It was played 16 December.

2 In the 20 July letter we shall find it identified.

3 Cesar Chesneau Dumarsais: Essai sur les préjugés contenant l'apologie de la philosophie Paris 1795.

4 Honoré Riouffe: Memoirs d'un Detenu pour servir a l'histoire de la tyrannie de Robespierre. Smith must have used some earlier text than the Paris 1797.

Detenu &c". You will be gratified by the perusal, if it fall in your way; particularly with a new Religion, which he, and his friend, establish, while prisoners. We, Johnson, Dunlap, and myself have made some progress in a Translation; but other things have obliged us to relinquish it, for the present. As for Dunlap, he has been busy, in his way, reading, writing, and conversing. The correction of his three tragedies, copies of which he has transmitted to Holcroft, took up some of his time; still more has been devoted to his opera--on the story of William Tell--which is soon to be played, and is now in the press.<sup>1</sup> Our friend risks the impression of 750 copies; and depends on your aid, in the disposal of some part of them. It is indeed, in part, the purpose of this letter, to request of you to let us know how many copies you can circulate among your friends, and obtain immediate payment for; and how many you suppose you could put in a favorable situation for sale, and for the ready collection of the avails, when sold. The play has very considerable merit, in several respects; a succinct account of Swisserland, and the Helvetic Confederacy, is annexed to it; and the other pamphlet will be sold at 50 cents. We desire you to make it one of your first concerns to reply to these inquiries.

I have not received a line from any of my correspondents, in Philadelphia since I was there. It is true, that I have written but little to either of them, and not at all to you. Still I think you ought to have, and I hope you really have, some better reason than this, for your silence. I need not assure you that a

<sup>1</sup> The Archers, acted at the John Street Theatre, 18 April 1796, and published at New York, 1796. Later we shall hear from Holcroft.

letter from you would be the occasion of very deep and sincere delight to me,--or that I always remember you, your family, and our common friends, with a heart overflowing with affection.

William Johnson, his brothers, the Woolseys, all, send much love to you and Joseph.

Farewell

E.H. Smith.

Sunday March 27 1796  
Cedar St. No. 13 N. York.

P.S. The bearer of this letter will, probably, be Mr. Gahn; the young Swede, with whom you made some little acquaintance, while you were here, last summer. I can not doubt of your receiving great pleasure from a renewal of intercourse; and I beseech you, should he give you the opportunity, to avail yourself of it, as far as circumstances will permit. You know how highly we estimate his worth; and further intimacy will convince you that it is not without reason. He is intimate with Dr. Ballman, who, if you do not know, seek to know by means of Mr. Gahn. I would give you some interesting information concerning Dr. Ballman, did leisure permit.

E.H.S.

Besides certain details that deserve attention in other places the most important fact in this letter of Smith's is the absence of any mention of Brown being a pupil of Godwin. It is hardly to be supposed that he would fail to mention it had Brown been such a sedulous ape of Godwin as most writers would have us believe. Such a piece of negative testimony is remarkable and will be used by us in other parts of the present work.

1 According to Dunlap: Arts of Design, Vol. I, p. 430 Gahn was the Swedish consul. As the story of Brown's life as related by Smith goes on we shall hear more of him.



The mention by Smith of Dumarsais may lead the reader to give belief to the error that some atheistical tendencies had been developed by Brown and Smith. Dumarsais was a remarkably intelligent debater, a stickler for fine shades of difference in the use of words and from reading his work it is not to be implied that either Smith or Brown had anything more than an intellectual interest in any of his atheistical ideas. The same holds good of Riouffe's work mentioned. <sup>1</sup>Condorcet's book we shall see was supplied to Brown by his brother James. It was an atheist's revolutionary brief for the rule of reason. Condorcet's materialistic doctrine of perfectibility of man was taken up by Godwin.

From Smith's next entry we learn that Gahn had carried the letter to Brown and had brought one in reply. Saturday 23 April was an indolent day for Smith and he says:

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Miller sums it up in his Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century New York 1803, Vol. II, pp. 28-9.

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"In the meantime Dunlap had called with a letter from C.B. Brown addressed to us both, and brought by Mr. Gahn, who has returned.

What that letter contained we do not know but we are able to make reasonable conjectures from the comment that Smith makes in the next letter he writes to Brown.

The next letter is a long and particularly interesting one. Evidently Brown had become despondent and had renewed his exaggerated self-condemnation such as he wrote to Bringhurst. Smith was, it appears, about to supplant Bringhurst in the affections of Brown and Brown hoped to unburden his mind to him probably after the manner of his letters of 1792 and 1793.

The most striking thing about this letter was its reception by our author. In a letter to Bringhurst, to be given presently, we shall find him delighted with Smith's letter. He says Smith in it plays the philosopher with singular grace, that it is most charming and filled with much wisdom. Therein his judgment is accurate; for Smith does indeed write<sup>1</sup> a remarkable letter. His comment on Brown's ideas and action is not only wise but is of utmost value in that it is definite and helpful. The letter reads:

<sup>1</sup> In his preface to the month of May Smith had said that he must write to Joseph and Charles.

To Charles B. Brown.

The necessity of attending to concerns of immediate and considerable importance, has, in part, prevented my replying to your letter before this time. It is useless to particularize, or apologise: the first would only waste time, and the last could not repair the mischiefs of the error, if error there has been.

Your letter, my dear Charles, was the occasion of much satisfaction, as well as disappointment and sorrow, to your friends. Sentiments so opposite, yet so intimately combined and interwoven gave it an interest in our hearts which sensibility could not but cherish, and which reason hesitated whether she should welcome or disclaim. Why is it so? Wherefore are you so vigorous, so firm, in that; and so weak, so vacillating in action? Charles! Charles! if thou hast not strength to contend with the tempter,--if thou art not mighty enough to overcome temptation; strangle it under thy foot,--doth not wisdom whisper thee to decline the combat, and to fly the field? To encounter danger, to brave death, causelessly, and with the certainty of suffering,--the mildest appellation for such conduct is folly; and the person who is guilty of it can only be excused on the plea of disordered intellect. By heaven! my friend! I mourn and am afflicted for you--for myself (for my own weakness does this reproof reach) and I "could play the woman with my eyes", if haply it might warn you to retire, or animate you to conquer.

We must know our errors, or how can we correct them? We must be informed of their whole extent, of their utmost virulence, or how can we apply the remedy? He deserves not the name of Physician, who, through fear of giving pain, temporizes with his Patient, when the ulcer threatens his life, and requires instant extirpation. To wound, is to save; to delay, is to destroy. No palliative can reach this case. Nay, though it seem to menace but little danger; though returning sanity appear to glow around its edges; trust not! withhold not! the poison sinks inward; a moment;--and it preys upon the vitals. You "have been the child of passion and inconsistency; the slave of desires that can not be honorably gratified; the slave of hopes no less criminal, than fantastic."

What, my friend, is the meaning of all this? And what am I to learn from it? Or, rather what are we--Dunlap and Smith--to learn from it? If you meant that we should understand you, why were you not explicit? If you had no such intention, where was the necessity of introducing such a passage? Charles! you know we love you. Your heart has told you so, a thousand times; and you dare not question it! You know, too, that real friends, alone, have the courage to point out the faults of others, boldly to themselves. You know the difficulty, the delicacy, the danger, of the undertaking. You are well aware of the value of sincerity; you see that we stand, as it were, isolated from the rest of mankind; and you must be convinced, that if we are not true to ourselves and true to each other, we can not hope for aid, correction, and instruction,--candidly and affectionately administered--

from any one beside: for the world troubles not itself with these things, or minds them only to the injury of the individual.

This is a solemn strain, you will say; a melancholy and grave preface. It is—and indeed, my Charles, the occasion requires it. Why do you so much delight in mystery? Is it the disease of will? or of habit? Do you, of choice give to the simplest circumstances the air of fiction? or have you been so long accustomed to deal in visionary scenes, to interweave the real with the imaginary, and to encase yourself in the mantle of ambiguous seeming, that your pen, involuntarily borrows the phraseology of fancy, and by the spell of magic words, still diffuses round you the mist of obscuring uncertainty? The man of Truth, Charles, the pupil of Reason, has no mysteries. He knows that former errors do not constitute him guilty now—and he has nothing to conceal. He seeks only to know his duty, to perform it, and he has no occasion for disguise. He places, with his own hand, the window in his breast; and he bids the world look in, and comment. Lurks there any deformity within he blesses the eye that descries it, commends the tongue that proclaims, and kisses the hand that drags it to the light. He acknowledges his error; he owns his weakness; he purifies<sup>1</sup> his heart; and he invigorates his hands.

What do your most intimate friends, my Charles, know of you? What do they wish to know, but that they may be of use to you? Far be from them, that teasing curiosity which seeks only its own gratification. If there be any thing you think it your duty to withhold from them—withhold it—they will not blame you. If there be any thing you have not the courage to reveal—conceal it still. They will not commend the cowardice, but they will compassionate; will pardon it. But, when you know that these are their feelings, why will you continue to remind them, that there are secrets? that you have science, which they must not have? Why will you allude to misfortunes of which they are ignorant, and from which, therefore, they can not relieve you? Why will you array each new transaction in the garb of obscurity? Are you; yourself, conscious how much this is a prevailing fault, both in your speech and writing? In this very letter, to which I am replying, in a sort—we only learn, by implication, that Joseph has been imprisoned. The fact is no where plainly noted; and had it not been for his letter, I had still remained somewhat doubtful whether you meant he had been in prison, or not. It would have been much more agreeable to us both—Dunlap and Smith—to have been informed simply of the fact; and the circumstances of it. Again, when you mention the authors you have read—instead of a plain account of them—we behold you, with visionary step printing the sands of Arabia<sup>2</sup>, hovering over the hills of Switzerland on wings of imagination, and exploring the wilds of America with the use of fiction. I particularize,<sup>3</sup> because you have sometimes complained of an want of precision, when we have attempted to point out your errors. I confess that the style of these remarks of yours is handsome; and, in a Poem, I should have been charmed with it; but in a letter, a mere catalog, with a slight notice

1 Corrects changed to purifies. 2 Substituted for the Deserts.

3 These inferences, crossed out.

of the character of each 1 book, would have given me much better information. And, in such cases it is information we look for--not amusement--and the more simply and precisely it is conveyed, the better. Beside, we are apt to distrust information so conveyed; and we ought to distrust it; for it often imposes on, and misleads us. The pen of poesy, Charles, is not that of Philosophy and Truth. But, I will have done with this language--only commending the word Simplicity, to be inserted, in Capitals, in your vocabulary.

Joseph, you say, contemns our Philosophy. Ask him if the votaries of Jesus--the sincere votaries--always exhibit in their lives, that virtue they profess? Ask him, if the followers of Paul, the eulogists of Peter, have no moments of weakness? Let him answer you, whether Heaven allures, whether Hell terrifies, whether the Holy-Ghost sanctifies, any human being to unwavering, undismayed, ever-active, and self approving virtue? If he can not decide affirmatively; if he find not an unequivocal accordance in favor of some one man, on the part of all the world; where is his mighty boast? Let him hesitate!

There was no mistake in the person, mentioned as having been elected a Physician to the Hospital. I was the person elected. There is no immediate emolument from that place. The appointment is a respectable one, and holds up the person, obtaining it, to public consideration, employment, and munificence. Whether this will be the consequence, in respect to your friend, time must determine.

By this time, you have received several copies of Dunlap's opera.<sup>2</sup> I wish for your opinion of its merits; and to know what are the opinions of our friends at Philadelphia and of others, whose sentiments you can collect.

You will remember me respectfully and affectionately to the several ~~members~~ of your family--to Joseph and his family--to friend Paxsons--and all other friends.

E.H.Smith.

Saturday, May 7, 1796  
Cedar St. No. 13. N. York.

The comment necessary on this letter relates to the suggestion of religious discussion when the writer speaks of Bringhurst and his differing in opinion from Brown and Smith, and the imprisonment of Joseph Bringhurst. Better repeated than unnoticed, the religious matter was entirely an example of debate such as Brown loved to carry on, in which the reasoning is defective. In the matter of the 1 Changed from the.                      2 The Archers.

imprisonment, Smith's letter to Bringhurst dated 13 May and Smith's letter to Brown dated 27 May make it clear it was due to business troubles. In those ~~feeling~~ days a man was imprisoned for debt and kept in prison so ~~that~~ he was unable to pay the debts for which he was imprisoned, just as Brown's own father probably had been.

The next letter of Brown's <sup>has</sup> ~~was~~ the <sup>quaker</sup> ~~three-and-th~~ affectation which we shall see persist in his dying Correspondence with Bringhurst. It was (addressed Joseph Bringhurst, Junr. Delaware State, Wilmington.)

(Philadelphia, Wednesday, )May 11. 1796. 1

Thou escapedst, my good friend, without leaving thy adieus behind thee; at least without leaving them at my door. I will pardon thee, however, and prove the sincerity of ~~my~~ forgiveness, by transmitting thus speedily to thy retreat, this friendly greeting. Whether it may find thee disengaged, and at leisure to listen to its still, small voice, I cannot predict. Not that I imagine thee absorbed in occupations, whose purpose is gain, for it is thy fortune to be engaged most intensely, when most disengaged from pursuits merely lucrative, to find thy social and studious hours far the busiest, and, in the precious intercourse of souls a centre more irresistably attractive of thy thoughts than the importunities of necessity, or the allurements of Avarice.

Where shall this script find thee, or will the obscurity or uncertainty of thy abode, prevent its

The "child of reason" epithet was peculiarly appropriate - the motto of the Brown Coat of arms was quiver raison.

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reaching thy abode? Will it find thee in the studious recess, enamoured of sacred poesy, breathing her pious aspiration as, she, disdaining intermediate aid, and second-handed interference condescends to whisper them in thy abstracted ear; or as they have been recited to the harp of Hebrew Sages and Solima's poetic king,<sup>1</sup> or as they have been recorded by the most skillful of her recent scribes, Cowper? Or shall it catch thee paying thy devotions at the shrine, dedicated to Community of Hearts, whose priestess and deity is Laura, or overtake thee in thy rural excursion, thy solitary or companioned steps traversing those sweet domains, whose ways are ways of health and paths are cheerfulness?

No matter: if it find thee at last; 'twill be sufficient. I shall not puzzle myself by guessing how, when or where. Thou must favor me with thy letters Joseph; if they merely contain brief tidings of thy returning health; (experience it seems has taught thee that the atmosphere of Wilmington is peculiarly friendly to thy constitution) and information of the health and happiness of Laura, they will be satisfactory. Thy invention may perhaps provide thee with other articles to fill the vacancies of thy pages; but these I shall deem of chief importance, and shall not complain very bitterly if all others, are omitted.

As for me, I am nearly solitary. Thou hast heard me speak of Laffert.<sup>2</sup> I met him in the street, lately, and he exhibited so many inducements to visit him that I mean, as soon as my strength will suffer me, to look at his Cottage. I wish circumstances may favor me, so much, that our acquaintance may ripen into intimacy. Unless some such accident should happen I shall be entirely without associates in thy absence.

I have just received a most charming letter from Elihu. I assure thee he plays the philosopher with singular grace. It is full of censures, indeed, but these censures manifest a soul, glowing with benevolence and dignity. I cannot tell thee how much those proofs of moral improvement delighted me. Thou wilt smile at my belief that our two friends will evince the efficacy of the doctrines which they teach, but thou wilt rejoice if time should justify that opinion.

Thou, indeed, hast taken a different road. Appearances evince that thou hast made a considerable progress, nor have I the least doubt but that thou wilt attain the summit of thy wishes. Thy progress is inevitable.

There is so large a portion of truth in thy creed, of strength in thy character, of influence, propitious

<sup>1</sup> David?

<sup>2</sup> The name is afterwards given to a tenant of Constantia's in Chapter XXVII of Ormond.

to thy advancement in thy present track in the circumstances surrounding thee, how canst thou fail of accomplishing thy purposes? Thou possessest, perhaps just ideas of the value of a companion on thy journey, whose intellectual views harmonize with thine. So has Laura. If so you will be at no loss to perceive the unspeakable importance of cultivating and securing an indissoluble union <sup>1</sup> with each other, and of trampling, sooner or later, on every artificial impediment that may arise in the way.

Give my respectful love to thy friend, and take as large a portion of it to thyself, as thou thinkest thou meritest. Farewell

Charles Brockden B.

On the 13th. Smith received a long letter from Brown and on the 17th. Dunlap received another directed to both Smith and Dunlap.

On the 27th. of May Smith wrote another long letter in the same key as the one dated the 7th. but according to the Journal for 3 July it was not sent. Instead Smith "composed a new one, in which part of the former was incorporated." Not having found the revision we are left with the original. It is one of the best examples of Smith's attitude of mind toward Brown and suggests much that we have found characteristic of Brown's letters to Bringhurst.

<sup>1</sup> They were married 11 July 1799.



To C.B. Brown

My silence and delay in respect to your letter of the 10th. instant, my friend, have arisen from necessary and unavoidable avocations;--not trifling, but sufficiently important to justify my conduct in this behalf. To that letter I now sit down to frame an answer, but not with those vivid conceptions of the subject before me, which were awakened by the first perusal. The weather, too, which is heavy and stupefying, brings with it a sluggishness of thought, unfriendly to perspicacity and precision. Still, I hope to make myself intelligible to you, and to correct some errors into which you have fallen, respecting my last letter.

You have misapprehended both the purport and the purpose of my letter; the consequence has been that, in your reply, you have wandered wide from the object towards which your attention was meant to be directed; and in so doing, you have perplexed, without satisfying, yourself, and have contraverted, without replying to, the censures of your friends. Let me request you to read over, once again, and with attentiveness, my last communication. Do you find in it a single passage in which your veracity is questioned? I have a copy of that letter before me,--and certainly I can not find such a passage. But should you discover a phrase susceptible of such an interpretation, I wish you to be assured that no such questioning was intended. With this explanation, if you do not think it time misused, once more examine my remarks. To what do they tend? They point simply to the correction of a single error; and error, perhaps once, of will--probably now, of Habit. By them, you are not charged with intentional misrepresentation of the truth, but with conceiving it in such a manner, as to make it difficult of comprehension to your friends, or encumbered with such circumstances, or deficient in such particularities, as to render it unintelligible to them. There is no charge of falsifying the truth. Here are no doubts expressed of your veracity. Here is no more than a plain intimation of an erroneous manner of communicating information, which those who love you regard as a misfortune,--as an error--persisted in by you, through ignorance, and capable of being remedied by you, when fairly exposed to your contemplation.

Among the number of our conversations, at Amboy, some, you will recollect, turned on the subject of your style of composition. It was charged with certain defects, by us, and we endeavored to make you sensible to them. We were unsuccessful. In the epistolary communications which succeeded, we could (not) discern the same faults. The sense was often obscured by imperfect metaphors, tumultuously heaped upon each other; common facts were introduced with a species of poetical periphrasis, which sometimes puzzled us to determine what was and what was not, accurate; and allusions were made to transactions, in relation to which we could neither act, nor speak, neither aid, nor counsel you--as all, on our part, was conjecture and obscurity. It became necessary

1 Obviously superfluous.

for us to renew our remonstrances, on this point; and your letter, in answer to which my last was written, as it offered several examples of the defects we complain of, was made the subject, or basis, of our friendly reprehensions. The manner in which you communicated to us the names of the authors and the titles of their works, which you had been reading, was faulty, as it wanted both perspicuity and precision. The passage in regard to Bringham, as I have before remarked, was so obscure as to leave me in doubt. You talked of the terror he had conceived of imprisonment, the value he set upon unimpeached integrity, &c., from whence I concluded that he had been in Jail, and had been declared insolvent &c.--but the plain facts would have been more acceptable: knowing his character, it would not be difficult to make the proper inferences--Now, in respect to both these instances of a faulty mode of communication, on your part, you will not find that we have charged you with intentional "mystery and delusion". An instance occurs in your letter before me, of a similar fault,--when, speaking of Mr. Laffert, you say "He resides in the rural neighborhood of this city." I know where he lives--but what information would a stranger derive from that passage? You see, I do not question your veracity. I take it for granted that Mr. L. does "reside in the rural neighborhood" of Philadelphia: but what am I the wiser? Unless it be, that I learn that he does not reside in the city?

But I have dwelt too long, already, on these--which are mere trifling circumstances.

What, indeed, is the purpose of our correspondence--if it be not "to disclose our feelings and actions, chiefly with a view to benefit, and be benefitted in turn, by the communication"? Any disclosure which has not this for its object, is trivial, impertinent to the design of our intercourse, and undeserving of attention. Any narration or sentiment that is obscure and unintelligible, is defective, since it can neither, as to its proper contents and intent, be made the subject of comment or controversy, or occurrence. In this situation, what is he to do, to whom it is addressed, but to call for an explanation? Should such an explanation be demanded, is it fair to infer, that he by whom it was requested, doubted the veracity of the original communicator?

"You have been the slave of passion and inconsistency: and of desires &c." Pardon me, my friend, I do not mean to sport with you--but I did not doubt the truth of the facts, nor mean to question it. But why were they communicated to us? You doubtless had some object in making the communication. Was it not,--because you supposed we might "usefully animadvert upon them"? Was it not, that you might "in turn, be benefitted by our counsel, or instruction"? But how benefitted? on what circumstances are we to animadvert? Here is nothing precise--nothing thoroughly known to us. How have you been "the slave of passion and inconsistency?" and what are these "desires which can not be honorably gratified?" that are "no less criminal, than fantastic?" Do you not see that this partial communication is nugatory? That we can address to you neither counsel nor information--in short,

can not be of the least possible service to you, in these respects, without precise information? If you wished our assistance, it was your duty to point out explicitly, wherein we could assist you: to have discovered to us the nature of your danger, and the causes of your weakness. If you either did not need our aid, or was resolved neither to request, nor accept it, why make such a communication? To what purpose could it subserve? Surely none--since we could not "usefully animadvert" upon it; and you were determined not "to be benefitted by the disclosure". Here, then, is the point between us--; here is the matter of which I complain--that you will allude to circumstances which you do not choose to explain; and which, therefore, are foreign either to the purpose of our correspondence, since, without explanation, we can render you no assistance in regard to them. Not that I question your veracity when you assure me that you have been unfortunate--but that I am pained to be the useless depository of complaints I can not understand, or sorrows that I can not assuage.

I do not mean to call upon you for explanations. I do not want to know to what you allude. I can not find fault with your conduct in concealing the circumstances of your early fortunes--since I neither know what you conceal; nor the motives you have for concealment. I am actuated but by one wish in relation to you--to be of service to you, and to render you useful to mankind. To effect this wish, I am willing to receive what you choose to communicate--if, by my animadversions, or opinions, on such communications, I can advance your welfare. But I do not love to be needlessly perplexed and grieved; neither should you, needlessly, add to my perplexity and sorrow. In respect to your former communications, relative to the story of yourself,--though I meant not, in my last letter, to allude to them,--I acknowledge, in all sincerity and simplicity of heart, I know not what to believe. You have acknowledged that you once thought yourself at liberty to vary circumstances, in the narration--and in those fragments which have been related to me, I find so many and such perfect contradictions, that I am forced to suspend my belief, on all, as I can reconcile but few of them to each other. This has, formerly, been the cause of much pain to me, on your account,--it is so no longer. I suppose that, hereafter, should it seem proper in you to disclose the facts, the disclosure will be accurate. In the meantime, I have no curiosity; and my only wish is, that you, by avoiding all allusions to these events of your life, would neither excite doubt, nor alarm sensibility.

This letter is long; and I am weary with writing; you will excuse me, therefore, for passing over, for the present, at least, some parts of your letter. But I can not forbear to add, on the subject which is now before us, that it does appear to me that, at some former periods of your life, you affected to be mysterious--and made ambiguity your delight. That the example of J.J. Rousseau had too many charms in your eyes, not to captivate you, and invite you to imitate him; and that you were pleased to have others believe those misfortunes to be real, which you knew how so eloquently to describe. The transition is natural--and to a mind of sensibility

almost unavoidable:--you began to fancy that these fictions were real; that you had indeed suffered, enjoyed, known, and seen, all that you had so long pretended to have experienced; every subsequent event became tinged with this conviction and accompanied with this diseased apprehension; the habit was formed; and you wandered in a world of your own creation. Now and then a ray of truth broke in upon you, but ~~with an~~ influence too feeble to dissipate the phantoms which error had conjured up around you. Godwin came, and all was light.<sup>1</sup> But the Sun himself does not always diffuse around us his benignant beams; clouds and mists sometimes intervene; and shut him from our view. Despair, itself, is dear to the wretch who has drunk deep of the delicious poison of Love. Cold, cruel, though she be--dead to honor, and "glorying in her shame",--the form he loves is dear to him; he fosters, he cherishes her idea in his heart; it is his ruin--but he can not resolve to loose it. With what gradual, what scarce perceptible, advance, is (he) enticed back <sup>2</sup> to reason, to activity, to virtue! How often does he relapse into his woe, call upon the phantom of his passion, and banquet on the pleasures of despair! Nay, when full of mighty purposes of reformation, how often does his self-love cheat him of his resolution, his actions burst out, all the extravagance, his voice swell with all the emphasis of passion--while he smiles upon the cheat!

in/

See you any points of resemblance, in this picture, Charles? of a friend of ours that shall be nameless?

E.H. Smith.

Friday, May 27 1796  
Cedar St. No. 13 New York.

X  
According to Dunlap's Portrait Gallery memoir<sup>3</sup> Brown was a sleeping

partner in his brothers',--Joseph's and James'--office, until July of this

Smith's intellect was too fine, to be agitated by shadows or enchanted by any <sup>Prosperos</sup> jargon or hocus-focus as Brinkhurst had been. This time Brown met his superior. And he had to ~~submit~~ <sup>submit</sup> to his ~~reason~~ <sup>reason</sup>.

and his criticism too penetrating

~~1 Are we to understand that Godwin came to the United States? Or is Smith falling into the error which he had lately condemned in Brown? So far as we know Godwin never came here.~~

2 Back may be intended to be marked out.

3 P. 4.

year. Where Dunlap secured this information is not known. It is not so stated in the Allen biography or in Dunlap's revision of Allen, so that it may be an error or else it was learned from Brown by his conversations with him. If it is true, which the present writer finds no cause to doubt, it would be an easy explanation of the supplying of money to Brown by his brother James. The important fact however remains. Brown did not work in the office and he did not have any active part in commercial affairs at any time of his life.

On the 7th. of July Smith received a letter from Brown which is of course lost along with most of the rest of them.

The next letter of his we have is one to Bringhurst. It is

(addressed Joseph Bringhurst, Junr. Wilmington, Delaware State.)

(Philadelphia, Monday, ) July 11. 1796. 1

<sup>1</sup> Dated from the end of the letter.

Why have I not lately heard from thee, Josepoho? Thou promisedst to send me Condorcet's Works of which thee and thy friends have doubtless long since finished the perusal; but I have seen neither that or any thing else from thee, this monstrous long while: Not that I am at any loss to find for thee, in thy present situation, employments far more profitable and delightful than that of inditing letters to the absent: Thou art, perhaps, busy to a lucrative purpose; thou art not remarkable for neglecting the chief concern of human life; that of acquiring the means of subsistence. If thou art employed to that end, it will give me pleasure to be told of it. Thou wilt readily imagine that information of thy health and welfare will not be the less acceptable if given under thy own hand.

To speak in the manner of the vulgar, thou owest me a letter. But I will be contented with very scanty payment, and absolve thee from thy obligation, at the price of a few lines, which shall bring me tidings of thy welfare in temporals and spirituals.

I have lately heard from Elihu and Dunlap. The former has filled a long letter with much wisdom. The second has given me a dissertation on a very serious subject and informs me that in a few weeks he expects to retire as usual to Amboy, where he requests that I may meet him. I have some expectation of being able to comply with his request. A change of air may be beneficial to my health, which has greatly declined.

All thy friends are well: I suppose the union of Maria Atmore 1 with J.R. has long been placed beyond the reach of doubt. He is here at present. The more I know of him, the more I am surprised at the lady's choice. He is very much inferior to her in Capacity: and he exhibits so many proofs of this, and she shows herself so much awake to his defects, that I must repeat my astonishment at this projected union.

I suppose thou hearest from Peter 2 and his spouse, in a more direct manner than intelligence from me would be, who have not seen Peter these some months. Thomas Cope 3 has a daughter. There is an assortment of news for thee! for which I expect thy thanks.

Tell thy Laura that her name still fills, with respect and tenderness the heart of her and thy friend

C. Brockden B. 4

1 To be mentioned again in the letter of 19 August 1797.

2 This Cope was one of the intimate friends of Wilkins.

3 Brown seems to have taken to experimenting in all the possibilities of his name.

4 Peter Thompson one of Wilkins' friends and a member of Brown's circle.

Though Smith had planned on the 10th. to write to Brown he did not do so until Saturday the 16th. His letter deals frankly with Brown and then gives an interesting account of his own life. As we shall see later in the 20th. of July letter to Bringhurst Brown thought it controversial. It was transcribed on Sunday and reads:

To C.B.Brown

It has not been in my power to reply to your last letter till now, when it is impossible to send to you for two or three days; and when I should not write, could I be certain of having a more convenient moment as much at my command,

I pass over the contents of the greater part of your letter, as it principally relates to matters which have been sufficiently dwelt upon, and come to that paragraph, in which you attribute the gravity of my letter, to a supposed melancholy of my spirits. But you are mistaken. No such melancholy was felt; and my solemnity arose, solely from the sense I entertained of the importance of our understanding each other, and the earnest desire I felt to render all future explanation unnecessary. I experience, for the most part, a temperate flow of spirits; and though I find occasional causes of dejection, in the observation and contemplation of my own ignorance and weakness, I do not often suffer myself to be greatly depressed thereby.

You wish for information concerning your friends, yet cannot bring yourself to the communication of particulars relative to your own affairs. My several questions still remain unanswered; though my desire to know how you are? what you are doing? what you wish to do? what is proposed for you to do? and what you expect to do?—continues as vivid and anxious as ever. To give you an example of what is becoming in a friend, on occasions such as these, I shall be somewhat minute in recounting my own procedures; not only that I may satisfy your friendly inquiries, but to the inducing of you to return the like to me—though there is nothing in my manner of life particularly interesting.

I have long thought that the aid and death of no animal is necessary to man, were his desires and energies limited to their proper objects. His own limbs, the various machines by which he may be enabled to traverse and command the earth, the ocean and the air, suffice for locomotion, and for all the purposes of tillage, commerce, and manufactures—even supposing them necessary. Wants he clothing? the Flax and the Cotton, and various other plants, contribute to protect him from the cold of winter, the heat of summer, the chills

of spring, and the fogs of autumn. The myrtle, the Croton, the olive and various other shrubs and trees, furnish him with a substitute for animal oils, whether for food, or light. The farinaceous and leguminous plants, roots, greens, fruits, &c. are sufficient for his food; their juices, without the pernicious aid of fermentation and distillation, and the limpid stream, for his most salubrious beverage. But, I go farther. Not only are these sufficient for man, but all else is superfluous, is noxious. If this is true, how far can I, depraved by previous habits, bring myself back, uninjured, to the path, the simple path of nature? The example of a few solitary beings, scattered up and down in the history of my species, encouraged me. My first attempt was to inroach upon the territory of cold (That figure will do for you) I substituted a hard, for a soft, bed--and I have bidden adieu to the debilitating use of feathers. Distilled spirits I had long relinquished--I have nearly forgone the use of all other liquids than water. Nearly--for it will not do to make too rapid changes. The same is true of animal food--which I rarely taste; and when I do, in small quantities only. I feel better, freer from passion, more alert for corporal and mental exertion;--and I think that I shall never return to the habitual use of animal food. So much for my physical conduct.

My time, when not wasted in indolence, (an enemy hitherto insuperable) is principally divided between the active and contemplative duties of my profession. My present situation, in the Hospital, engages some share of my time and attention; my private practise, which, though small, is slowly increasing; a further portion. I devote the forenoons to medical studies; the afternoons to French and various literary pursuits; the evenings, mostly, to my friends. Plans of study, of Composition, and of life, press upon my mind in turbid and tumultuous assemblages; succeed, and mingle with, each other; and pass away, again, with faint impressions, or none at all. A small part of my leisure has been lately devoted to transcribing for the press some letters, written to my friend Buel, on the Yellow Fever, and overlooking their impression. Public considerations alone induced me to suffer them to be published. They are incorrectly written; and the Printers, as is their usual conduct, have loaded them with some errors which were not their own.

I have no more to add, than love to all friends, and a wish that I may soon hear, particularly from you.

E.H. Smith.

Saturday July 16 1796  
Cedar St. No. 13. N. York.

Brown's next letter is

1 Plants crossed out.



(addressed Joseph Bringham, Jun. Wilmington, Delaware State.)

(Philadelphia, Wednesday, ) July 20, 1796.1

My friend

How shall I account for the agreeable sensations which thy yesterday's letter produced? Perhaps the concern which thou expressest for my welfare is the cause of it: never did the reason which thou givest for thy long silence, appear of less weight. Assure thyself, my good Joseph, that with all my errors, and in spite of them, I love thee much, nor will the existence of those differences of sentiment to which thou alludest ever render, if I may judge from my present Emotion, thy letters otherwise than very acceptable.

. . . . .

I had written thus far immediately upon the receipt of thy letter but the weather was too sultry and I experienced too uneasy effects from it to proceed; I have since received a billet from thee, requesting me to send some book to thee, but I did not receive it till after thy brother's departure; and James<sup>2</sup> informing me that he expected thee to come up immediately, prevented my writing till now, when he has just delivered Condorcet's book<sup>3</sup> to me, and informs me that he no longer expects thy speedy arrival--

Thou hast not told me whether I was to buy or to borrow an amusing Volume for thee. Delia<sup>4</sup> has gone beyond my reach. I had thoughts of sending a Volume, belonging to the library, of Sullivan's Views of Nature.<sup>5</sup> Yet it is so probable that thou hast seen it, and art not sufficiently pleased with it, to prompt thee to undertake the perusal, that I shall forbear, till I hear from thee. He is a religious philosopher; a strenuous opponent, but (a) remarkably unprejudiced and candid one, of athiestical, material and unChristian systems. Yet he has perhaps admitted too much of licentious conjecture and an ardent fancy into his views of the system of nature and the history of man--His interpretations of the Mosaic history were quite new to me, (some part of them at least) and were highly satisfactory.

Thy brother was mistaken in imagining the Condition of the City more sickly than usual. On the Contrary, it is said, by the best authority, to be more than usually healthful, nor is my health in any degree so bad

- 1 Dated from the end of the letter.      2 Brown's brother.
- 3 Probably the Progrés de l'Esprit Humain translated as Outlines of An Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind, Philadelphia, 1796. Referred to in Smith's 27 March letter.
- 4 This probably refers to Delia; a pathetic and interesting tale. 4 vols., London 1790.
- 5 A View of Nature, in Letters to a Traveller among the Alps, with Reflections on Atheistical Philosophy now exemplified in France. 6 vols., London 1794. Brown did not notice the argument against suicide in Vol. I, p. 11.

as thy affectionate wishes bespeak thy opinion of it. I am better than I was when I last wrote to thee, and hope not to stand in need of winters coming to make me quite so, or at least to give me that degree of it, of which a wretched constitution is capable, and which though it may give me no hopes of long life may yet suffer me to live, in some measure, while I live: the highest physical advantage perhaps, that a reasonable man can aspire to.

I have not heard from Dunlap. As soon as he informs me of his return to Amboy, I shall prepare to go thither. If I do not, I may possibly visit Wilmington, for a short time, but not my friend as thy guest; thy domestic one I mean. The charms of that sweet spot and of thy society, not to mention, some little, at least, of the society of thy enchanting friend, might justly determine me in favor of Wilmington, but no other Consideration is necessary or would exist to make me prefer that to Shrewsbury or Bethlehem.

Why, my dear friend, shouldst thou insinuate that indifference or animosity may rise between us, in Consequence of difference of opinion. The value of a man is his capacity for usefulness. How diligent ought benevolence to be in infusing right principles into a mind whose faculties are acute and comprehensive: whose sensibility fits him for receiving exquisite felicity or misery, according to the tenor of his Conduct. The happiness of men is in proportion to the good they do in conformity to right principles. In rectifying the errors of a great mind therefore, we perform a most eminent service, in as much as we make him the instrument of happiness to himself as well as to others. Ought we to be deterred from so good a work by the dread of the certainty of encountering a pettish humor, an impatience of censure, and a desire of victory in debate. Is there not in truth and benevolence a power to cure even this infirmity, the genuine offspring of error, but often to be found conjoined with views, otherwise, great and enlightened.

Dost thou believe me eternally devoted to error: or at least, that though thou art in possession of truth, it is not in thy power to impart it to me; Art thou not inclined sometimes, to suspect, not the truth of thy principles in general, for on that head, considering the Source from which thou believest them to flow, there can, in thy own mind, be no possibility of doubt nor shadow of ~~turning~~, but merely that thy failure may proceed from some defect in thine own equanimity. But perhaps thou wilt say that the wisdom at whose fountains thou hast drunk, is from above: Thou attainest access to it not through human agency, nor to me if it shall ever cease to be, to me, a fountain sealed, shall its unclosure be brought about by human aid. Indeed the sufficiency of revelation seems the necessary consequence of

its reality: of revelation whether general or particular.

Thou seest I have thus spoken in thy person, but I would not insinuate that I have not partly spoken, in my own: or that I believe myself totally exempted from an opinionative or irascible disposition. Of this however I may be sure, that in proportion as I gain access to truth, whatever truth be, in proportion as my understanding is uniformly, steadfastly and powerfully illumined by its beams: and in proportion as my actions conform to the deliberate judgments of my understanding, I shall be a stranger to this disposition--I would fain persuade thee, my dear friend, to cherish still thy hopes of me, and believe that I shall finally arrive at the path of duty and felicity.

Error is the parent of misery: some may gather this truth in frigid speculation: some may find it the practical result of observation: others, and I am of the number, possess it as the plentiful harvest of their own calamitous experience:--but whither away? I am sliding into more solemnity than is fit; as thou art a man, my friend Carlo, beware of fostering a doleful, whimpering heart. Joy is thy inheritance. How far art thou from the goal of due perfection, if the exercise of a vivid and benevolent intelligence, does not dissipate forever the phantoms of sorrow and pain.--

Elihu's letter is chiefly controversial; and does not contain much general matter or such as would prove particularly interesting to thee: Dunlap's is a disquisition on a subject sufficiently important, but I question whether thou wouldst be satisfied with the trouble of perusal--Thou shalt, however, have some parts of it.

"If the doctrines propagated by Religionists are false, if virtue be its own reward and vice its own punishment, my mind starts with repugnance from the idea of its being possibly expedient at any time, to propagate such falsehood. I mean permanently and usefully expedient as a means of promoting general good. Every thing which has a tendency to mislead the reason, which can make man form false conclusions and consequently act upon false principles, must be highly pernicious.

Can there be any doubt of the means to be used in propagating Virtue? To convince man that virtue is happiness, that vice is misery. To appeal to his reason and demonstrate that every pang he has ever known was in consequence of his own ignorance, when this thorough and undoubting connection is produced, the work is done-- Can the same effect be produced by enforcing the opinion that the vicious man is capable of enjoying happiness in Vice, while the virtuous man is pining in misery and made more miserable by the scene, but that in an uncertain hereafter, this evident and certain absurdity will be corrected. It appears weakness

to ask the question in this short manner--it appears impossible to doubt; yet such is the mighty effect of early prejudice and long habit, that it is daily decided in the affirmative, and thou who decide, for the first mode are treated as the enemies of the human Race.

To Vindicate religious systems of future reward and punishment upon the same ground that law is supposed to be necessary as a temporary expedient to prevent, in some sort, the effects of temporary ignorance, it would be necessary that religion and law should be very much alike; in which case perhaps one of them would be unnecessary, and then we should only have to choose the least of two evils; but are they alike? And in what? Law, as allowable, offers no reward for doing right; consequently does not assert or imply that the good action is not sufficiently rewarded by itself; It only threatens the vicious man with an immediate punishment, to prevent his doing an act which tempted him by the lure of present gratification, and whose consequences, though inevitable were so far in futurity, as not to be seen through the mist of his ignorance. Law, then, by bringing in view, present punishment, balances the temptations of present gratification, and may prevent the evil action and give time to dispell his ignorance. Religion on the other hand, holds out a reward in a future and precarious state, by way of tempting men to do that which they know they ought to do, if right, without the inducement of such offers, for every man would have an undoubting confidence in the rectitude of his own dispositions, if religion had not stepped in and told him, he was a Villain and could not have a wish to do good, of himself. At the same time telling him that when another being had made him wish or will good, he should then be rewarded for what he did not, nor could not do or will of himself. His confidence in virtue as a source of present bliss, is destroyed or impaired, and in its place he has the promise of an hireling's wages in a certain country, of which his reason can never give him intelligence, and which has not the least appearance of reality, except in the dreams of his sick and feverish imagination, when the senses, the servants of reason, are incapable of ministering to her. His ideas of Justice become confused, confounded, while the eternal barriers which exist between Virtue and Vice, are hidden by the mysteries of superstition, and their deeply determined shades blended together.. What are the punishments held out by religion to scare the evil-intender? Eternal torments--hereafter. This, as the other, tends to destroy his natural sense of justice. The present gratification is not balanced by the fear of immediate pain, but additional future ills are promised, which from their distance and uncertainty are rendered nearly nothing in the Competition, and are quite done away by the promise,

in the same code, of pardon, on repentance---"

Here is the wisdom that I told thee of. Pretty wisdom! thou wilt say. A wisdom very different from thine and thy surrounding friends, yet, I will venture to affirm, essentially consonant with it.

But I have written thee and myself out of breath. In hope of hearing from thee, that thou and thine are well, and with due respects to Laura, I will dismiss thee for the present.

C.B.B.

July 20, 1796.

I have received a second letter from E.H.S. which though short will gratify thy curiosity. I will enclose it to thee the next opportunity.--

From that letter it appears that Bringhurst was displeased with Brown's discussion in his letters and it seems as if a breach in their friendship was imminent. As we have already suggested more than once, it comes out in that letter that Brown looked on the whole matter as a debate, which he considered an excellent means of forming opinions. Bringhurst's feeling is not to be wondered at but that this method of Brown's was making inroads not only on his health but on his friendship is to be deplored.

Sullivan's book has an unattractive and misleading title; it really assembles a remarkably complete exposition of world philosophy and science. His reasoning is acute, and with a few unimportant exceptions is intelligent; even to-day it reads unusual for its perspicuity and truthfulness. He is generally sane, intelligent, logical, inquisitive and reverent. In the fundamentals of theism and materialism his conclusions are sound and any Christian Protestant, educated or inquisitive, is secure in reading the View of Nature. The work is written in the form of letters which might be imagined to have been addressed to Brown; for our author was at this time exactly as anxious to hear what Sullivan had to say as Sullivan was driven to say it.

Speaking of the author Brown says:

"He is a religious philosopher; a strenuous opponent, but (a) remarkably unprejudiced and candid one, of atheistical, material and unChristian systems. Yet he has perhaps admitted too much of licentious conjecture and an ardent fancy into his views of the system of nature, and the history of man-- His interpretations of the Mosaic history were quite new to me, (some part of them at least) and were satisfactory."

The interpretations of Mosaic history referred to are apparently to be found in Vol. II, p. 209 et passim to 311. Some slight references might be also added in Vol. IV, pp. 175 ff. and Vol. V, p. 187 ff.

What Brown calls fanciful may be the suggested medical use of electricity (II,p.59) but he should have noticed that Sullivan presents the fanciful ideas only to shatter them.

In the development of his religious ideas Brown proceeded after the fashion here expressed in Sullivan:

"The zealous advocates of true religion would not proscrib[e] all use of reasoning. That would be to confound theology with superstition and barbarism. And yet there are those, who highly valuing themselves for being rational, and by virtue of it, religious; are yet ever contriving how to hinder the free exercise of reason in religious matters; as if reason and religion were irreconcilable; and that the method God has proposed for us for the discovery of all other truths, was the most certain way of confounding religious truth." (II,p.230)

The use of Sullivan's book when pondering with the enthusiasm of youth the great things of life is one of the indications of Brown's taste and the serious trend of his mind. His opinion of that work alone is enough to refute any argument that he was touched with atheism. Sullivan's

object was

"to expose the fallacy of the atheistical philosophy, and to show how little support its advocates could derive, either from physics, when well understood, or from metaphysics, when cleared of extravagancy."  
(Preface, p.v)

We should notice it is the only religious work which we know Brown mentioned favorably.

Brown may have derived his ideas of the Grecian sages from Cicero quoted by Sullivan Vol.IV, p.27 or from the previous page where the questioning of future rewards and punishments is treated. It is peculiar he did not notice that every bit as formidable an array of names of later Grecian philosophers could have been found on the opposite side of the argument. After that he did not have to read fifty pages to find a sound Christian philosophy of life and death equal if not superior to any ever presented; in fact when Sullivan in the sixth book came to summarize Christianity he answered every objection Brown had thought of, he successfully refuted Hobbes, Locke and Hume and warned his readers against



"the writers of great talents, who have employed their rare ability in the propagation of immorality." (Vol. II, p. 291)

As the title indicates he aimed at the atheist but also he took many a shot at the bigoted. He refuted Mirabeau, Helvétius and many others, among whom Brown could easily have included Godwin; but particularly he attacked Voltaire. He stood firmly for spirit and soul rather than the body and sense, he found no absurdity or contradiction in archangels and he ably presented the limits of human knowledge.

How much Brown read of Sullivan's monumental work is not made clear by him; possibly he did no more than dip into it. The second volume which we are fairly sure he read should have given him some idea of the sources of the Bible, at least enough to suggest some latitude in his understanding of it. If he had read in volume three he might have found not a little on the soul and its immateriality. He also might have heeded the warning against a literal acceptance of the Old and New Testament. The fourth volume should have especially appealed to him because of its wealth of material relating to both North and South

America. However, from the fact that the points which Brown felt compelled to debate were not discussed and clarified in the second volume and from the added fact that what he did mention is to be found clearly set forth in the second volume it appears he may have read only in that part of Sullivan's work. At best he does not indicate that he was reading here and there in the six volumes.

Many details of the volumes should have had an especial appeal to him--Halley's theory (I, pp. 90-1) of another habitable world within the earth surrounded by a system of subterraneous luminaries; the centre of the earth (I, p. 104); the electrified man (II, p. 54) at Rouen who appeared as if entirely on fire; the suggestions (II, p. 59) in regard to a medical use of electricity; the man of sanguine temperament (II, p. 66) who after having danced much, "traces of a phosphoric flame were seen on his shirt"; the warning (II, p. 206) against being too sceptical or too credulous, and the elaborate account of Newton's philosophy, touch Brown's interests very closely, especially his Wieland.

Except for an improbable but possible derivation of his Utopian island in the Atlantic, presumably the lost Atlantis,

the only direct influence traceable is in the ~~forty~~-sixth letter, Vol.II, pp.312-17 where we have many of the ideas which Brown expressed in his letters to Bringhurst.

The long quotation extracted for Bringhurst's edification from Dunlap's letter is of importance. It shows that the religious discussion was not confined to Bringhurst but was general among several of Brown's friends and correspondents.

The mention of his intention to go to Shrewsbury or Bethlehem and a former visit to Nazareth shows Brown's pleasure in rambles in the Blue mountain section of Pennsylvania. There is a tradition, which seems to have no little truth in it, that he used to be absent for weeks at a time on rambles and visits among the Indians.

On the 21st. of July Smith received a letter from Brown, and on Sunday the 24th. he records good news of Brown thus:

"Charles is to meet Dunlap, at Amboy, this week. They will be there a fortnight. I think it shall go hard with me, if I am not there next week."

Dunlap planned to go to Perth Amboy on Wednesday the 27th. July when Brown was to meet him. On 1 August when Smith had made plans to go to Amboy on Thursday the 4th. he received a letter from Brown at Dunlap's. On Thursday his hopes were realized and after tea and rest he speaks of the meeting as follows:

"I went up to Dunlap's--embraced and was embraced by C.B. Brown. I have never seen him look so well--though he tells me of his having been unwell this season."

On Friday the fifth they took a long ramble and discussed man, morals and politics. Later Smith records:

"I opened to Charles some views of, at least, a temporary settlement in New York. He has been idle. A few pages in his journal, and those too written since his arrival at Amboy, are all that he had to shew me."

The same evening Smith and Brown went off up stairs to read Smith's journal, being joined by the Dunlaps after some callers had departed.



Smith's diary record for Saturday 6 August reads:

"After calling at Dunlap's--we--Dunlap, Brown and myself-- took a walk. Conversation various. We seemed agreed, after a long discussion, that but one idea could be received by the mind at the same instant."

As they were walking Smith outlined to them an idea for a drama which met with their approval. Later

"Mrs. Dunlap, Charles and I went into the next neighbors-- to see Mrs. Turell and Mrs. Brown with whom I stayed part of the time when first at Amboy: i.e., I slept in their house. ... We spent the evening, pleasantly, at Dunlap's. It seemed more like the Friendly Club, than any Saturday evening in many weeks. Three of the members being together, and a friend, who had been a frequent visitant in 1795."<sup>1</sup>

On Sunday the 7th. of August Smith says it was good for them to be there, he reads aloud the conclusion of Wieland's Agathon and Woolsey having gone to New York

"Dunlap, Brown and I went to walk--was it this day, or yesterday, that we re-visited the three-partite Tree, emblem of our friendship, which we discovered, and made our own, last year? We had some doubt which stock belonged to each. For each of us had fixed upon his own. We readily agreed that the slenderest one, and which grew in the middle, must be Charles'; and, after many examinations, the reason of size determined me that the westernmost must be mine.

This proves to be the fact. We dined together, at Dunlap's. We walked after dinner; and I, then, returned to Lovegrove's....<sup>2</sup> Dunlap and his wife, and Charles, agreeable to previous engagements, drank tea with us."

So ends Smith's visit to Amboy. He was a late-riser and did not have an opportunity to bid Brown farewell on Monday the 8th. of August.

On the 13th. Smith records that Dunlap had hoped to come to New

- 1 This undoubtedly refers to Brown. The three members were Dunlap, Smith and Woolsey.
- 2 Mr. and Mrs. Charles Lovegrove. They had gone from New York to Perth Amboy to live on 19th. April.

York the week after next. Brown was to accompany him and spend the winter at New York.

After two weeks and one day, Smith writes in his journal on 28 August

"Dunlap and Brown will, I suppose, be here this week. They will form a sinking fund for much time, and perhaps redeem some moral Science."

From this time forth the records are almost daily and need little comment, being for the most part clear and specific.

30 August, Tuesday: "Dunlap and his family, and with them Brown, arrived this afternoon. We spent the evening there."  
Wednesday 31 August: "C.B. Brown and Dunlap came in and stayed till after twelve. Spent the evening at Dunlap's."

In his preface to the month of September we read:

"The circumstances which, at present, appears most likely to impede my progress in my destined course, is the presence of my friend C.B. Brown. His society is too pleasing, his conversation too interesting, and his pursuits too important and connected with my own, not to engage an unusual share of my attention and my time. In his company, in that of my other friends as united with him, and occupied in the discussion of so many high and extensive principles of policy and morals, it is not improbable that I may oftentimes forget to "build the lofty rhyme", etc."

Thursday, 1 September: "I found C.B. Brown here when we returned. He spent the rest of the afternoon here. I went with him to Woolsey's where we past the evening. Dunlap, his wife, G.M. Woolsey &c were there."

Saturday 3 September: "C.B. Brown breakfasted here."

After his professional calls on Sunday 4 September Smith says:

"When I returned, Dunlap and Brown came in, and we had an hour of pleasing and instructive conversation. I went, then, to the Hospital. Dunlap and Brown accompanied me. Dunlap walked on and Brown went in..... Brown was much gratified by his visit. Dunlap now joined us, and we went to his house."

Monday 5 September: "Brown was here two hours... drank tea at Dunlap's; and with him and Brown--spent the evening at Mr. Roulet's." 1

1 John Sigismund Roulet, a Swiss lately from Genoa. In June 1797 he evidently worked in Gahn's counting house and lived in Greenwich St.



Tuesday 6 September: "Found C.B. Brown here when I came home. Dined and spent the afternoon at Mr. W.W. Woolsey's--- with Brown, Dunlap and G.M. Woolsey. The two former and myself spent the evening at Kent's."

7 September: "Part of the afternoon at Dunlap's. Brown and he here. We and Johnson and Lovegroves &c. went to see the Lion, and then walked.... Drank tea at Dunlap's."

Thursday 8 September: "Brown here.... Brown, William and I drank tea, and spent the evening at Seth's." 1

Friday 9 September: "Look up Lion at library.... Brown joined us there. We came here. William came home and we talked till dinner.... Evening at Dunlap's. G.M. Woolsey and W.W. Woolsey, William Johnson and Brown there."

10 September: "In the evening we revived the Friendly Club. We met at Dunlap's. Present, myself, Brown, William Johnson, Smith and the Woolseys."

Sunday 11 September: "Dunlap and Brown here, the remainder of the forenoon. William and I walked out of town."

12 September: "I suppose C.B. Brown left this city, for Phila. to-day."

Though that last entry may be an error it is clear that Brown did go to Philadelphia. From the next letter we have of Brown's we learn that he reached his native city on Sunday the 18th.

The letter is

1 Seth Johnson's.

(addressed Joseph Bringhurst, Junr. Merchant, Wilmington, Delaware State..)

(Monday) Philada. Sept. 19, 1796.

My friend.

I came hither yesterday. I had such slight hopes that thou wast in the City, that I felt their disappointment by thy absence the less forcibly, and now I hardly know why I take up the pen to write to thee. Thou hast lately totally abandoned me, and hast furnished me with nothing on which to comment. Thou deemest me unworthy of being informed with respect to the present situation of thy affairs, thy health or those of thy Laura. Thou art doubtless influenced by thy old opinion, that the difference between our principles justifies or requires the ceasing of all intercourse between us.

With this persuasion on thy part why should I write to thee? Yet I cannot forbear. I have been too long accustomed to thy friendship and thy intercourse, easily to relinquish it. Thou hast too just a claim upon my esteem, not to make me anxious to know whether thy condition be prosperous or adverse, and what the state of those perplexities is which have aimed such deadly blows at thy happiness.

My brother James, agreeably to thy request, shewed thee the letter in which my own views are explained. Thou art therefore no stranger to them. (I) came hither to see my brother 1 and his wife, who shortly

1 Probably Joseph who went to live in North Carolina. James was not married at this time.



return to their distant home, and to seek out what pieces of my paper-furniture I shall need, during my abode in New York. I do not expect to stay here above a week.

My health is considerably improved. I owe it, I believe chiefly to much exercise. Dunlap and I did not spare ourselves while in Jersey, and once wandered from his home, no less than thirty miles.<sup>1</sup> I bring with me from our friends at N.Y. particular remembrances for thee. Believe me, it is with pleasure that I take this opportunity of delivering them. Present my respects to Laura. Farewell.

C.B. Brown.

By the time that letter was written Bringhurst had probably made up his mind that it was a hopeless task to assist Brown..

What answer Bringhurst made to Brown's accusation that he had abandoned him would be of particular interest here, but unfortunately none of his letters have survived. Whether "Laura" played any part in the separation is not known but it would be quite natural for her to have influenced Bringhurst in that particular.

On the other hand it appears that the fault was all on Brown's side. With his growing interest and friendship for Smith, his visits to Smith and with his known ideas of friendship, it seems that the decision to go to New York to live acted as a winding-up to this familiarity with Bringhurst..

<sup>1</sup> Probably down to Sandy Hook. Cf. recollection of this visit to Dunlap in the Jaunt to Rockaway, (1803).

The "Farewell" with which he closes his letter is alas! almost true. At this time Bringhurst begins to drop out of Brown's life, and as we shall find there are to be only a few appearances of him before he disappears altogether.

Smith's record in his journal (II) says that Brown returned from Philadelphia under date of Monday 19 September. This is ~~probably~~ <sup>not of fact but</sup> an entry based on his knowledge and expectation. <sup>for Brown</sup> The trip from Philadelphia to New York was not in those days only a matter of some hours <sup>for he usually <sup>made it by</sup> walking.</sup> <sup>Apparently</sup> ~~so that it is probable that~~ Brown did not leave until he had had time to write that letter to Bringhurst, and it is likely he spent part of Monday, all of Tuesday and part of Wednesday, on the road.

However, by Wednesday the regular entries of Brown calls are resumed

by Smith as follows:

21 September: "C.B. Brown and I spent the evening at Mr. Roulet's. C.B. B. to commence instructor in English to Mr. R. to-morrow."  
22 September: "Mr. Roulet and C.B. Brown here a few minutes."  
Friday 23 September: "C.B. Brown, William Johnson, Dunlap and I walked out of town together."  
Saturday 24 September: "Drank tea at Woolsey's. Club there. Present--Brown, Dunlap, William Johnson, Kent, the Woolseys. W.W.W. read us the conquest of Liberia from Cox's "Russian Discoveries" 1.... Some systematic more desultory conversation."  
Tuesday 27 September: "Decius Wadsworth and C.B. Brown here."  
29 September: "William, Brown, Dunlap and I walked out of town."  
Saturday 1 October: "Evening at Dunlap's. Club night--G.M. Woolsey's evening. Present, Brown, Dunlap, Johnson, Smith, the Woolseys."  
3 October: "In the evening went to the Theatre--"Road to Ruin"--and "Spoiled Child"--Saw Decius Wadsworth there--and Dunlap and Brown &c."

1 This is an error for Siberia. It forms a section of Coxe's work comprising Part II, pp. 417-434.



Brown's presence at the theatre is of especial interest not<sup>so</sup> much because of the friends whom he met there as for the plays selected for that evening's performance.

Both in 1796 and 1797 Holcroft and his work was of interest to Brown and his circle so that the Road to Ruin was not attended merely for amusement. That the play had its appeal for Brown is obvious from the title but when we notice the great part that bankruptcy had in it we are sure that he could acutely appreciate it because of his father's and Bringham's possible business troubles of a similar character. But that was only one side of the play in which Brown must have found interest. The attitude toward wealth, the help of the father in financial trouble, and the sacrifice of love to honor were others. In our study of the year 1804 we shall have cause to suspect that Brown possibly was the critic of another performance of this piece for one of the Philadelphia newspapers. In 1797 we shall find him set up by Smith as a judge of a very remarkable letter of Holcroft's.

The other play, the Spoiled Child by Prince Hoare had much more that appealed directly to our author's own experience. The whole idea of the plot, the disguises of the little Pickle, the Miss Pickle whom the Gods made poetical, Mr. Tagg the author, and the garden bower where these two worthies met were echoes that reached into the depths of Brown's mind. The principal character even had his Christian name to add to the interest.



Smith's journal continues its daily record of Brown, thus:

Wednesday 5 October: "Brown breakfasted with us....(afternoon) C.B. Brown here, again. Part of the evening at Dr. & Mrs. Miller's. Much company there. Gentlemen and ladies. I had called to see Miss Mason and found her here. Escorted the Misses Linns home. Was surprised at an intimation from them, with whom I am not at all acquainted, that it has been reported I am attentive in the way of courtship to Miss ---- 1  
6 October: "Charles B. Brown, Dunlap & c., here in the afternoon."

Saturday 8 October carries the record that Brown spent all the forenoon with Smith during which time they read and conversed. The same evening the Friendly Club met with Smith but he does not include our author's name in the list of those present so that it is doubtful whether he attended that meeting.

Sunday 9 October: "C.B. Brown spent most of the forenoon, and part of the afternoon with me".

2  
Brown and Miller were with Smith in the afternoon of the 10th. and that same evening there was another party at Dr. Miller's similar to the one of the 5th. but again it appears that Brown was not there though he may have been.

The journal of Smith continues:

Tuesday 11 October: "Looked over the "Monthly Review" for January 1796--and some articles in the later numbers in company with Brown.

1 Mason?

2 Edward Miller, probably.

Wednesday 12 October: "C.B.Brown here in the forenoon."

13 October: "A visit from Mr.Roulet--from C.B.Brown in the forenoon and from Brown and Dunlap who returned<sup>1</sup> to-day from Amboy--in the afternoon."

14 October: "Visit from Alsop and from Brown.(Evening at the theatre to see Inkle and Yariko).<sup>2</sup>

15 October: "C.B.Brown here....Club night--at Kent's. Present--Dunlap, Brown, Johnson, Alsop, Kent, the Woolseys, Smith. Mr.Gahn and a Dr.Wheaton (who has lately removed to New York from Hudson) visitors. Mr.Kent read us Brian Edwards on the Climate &c. of the West Indies. The conversation, this evening, has been chiefly on particular politics, desultory and animated."

<sup>1</sup> Dunlap had gone there on the 8th.

<sup>2</sup> Inkle and Yariko has been erroneously attributed to Brown, ~~as we shall see later in our study.~~



<sup>e</sup>  
That reading by Kent was probably the first twenty-four  
pages of Volume one of the Dublin 1793 edition of the West Indies.  
The description of the tropical nights with the planet Venus like a  
small moon and the fireflies <sup>fitting about</sup> must have made a ~~strong~~ impression on  
Brown. The islands ~~described~~ had an especial appeal to him in the  
fact that the family shipping was carried into those parts. Edwards  
is an excellent writer with a deep and impressive religious feeling  
and at the same time none of the dullness that is commonly met in  
works of a similar descriptive character. ~~The general description~~  
~~of the islands, the climate, the vegetation, the face of nature, all are~~  
~~permeated with a fine sense of the power of the Creator.~~

The record for Monday 17 October gives us information of some work of Brown's unidentified. It may be Alcuin, Jessica or Henry Colden but is probably--because spoken of as a political romance and not a projected novel--not Sky Walk. The passage reads

"Charles B. Brown was here, and read me part of a new political romance, in which he is now engaged."  
 18 October: "A visit from C.B. Brown, from Dunlap, from Dr. Miller. Dunlap had with him "The Iron Chest"--a drama of Geo. Coleman, Jr. He read some part of it, which I thought good. Brown finished the reading of what he had written on his new romance."  
 Wednesday 19 October: "A visit from C.B. Brown.... Brown here much of the afternoon."

On Friday 21 October Smith called at Mrs. Miller's with others of his group among which Brown probably was one.

Saturday 22 October: "Club night--Dunlap's night. Present, Brown, Dunlap, Johnson, the Woolseys, Smith. Interrupted by the cry of fire.<sup>2</sup>  
 23 October: "Call from C.B. Brown."  
 25 October: "Brown and Alsop here a few minutes."  
 26 October: "A visit from C.B. Brown."

The next entry contains a reference to some work of Brown's which we have not been able to identify. Cox's Russian Discoveries contains much of interest to Brown such as exploration, travel, geography and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Smith's journal 2, 6, 8 January 1797.

<sup>2</sup> This may be the origin of numerous fire scenes, especially that of Ormond.



maps as well as a slight account of the North American Indians, a volcano explosion, subterranean caves and passages and a Wieland-like Chinese temple, so that the work referred to may be Sky Walk. From the absence of reference to the conspicuous motive of somnambulism it seems hardly possible that he had at this time any idea of writing Edgar Huntly. The passage reads:

Thursday 27 October: "Dunlap and Brown here, an hour, before dinner.. Brown here again about 4 P.M. He read me some notes towards his great plan, drawn from reading Cox's "Russian Discoveries."

What the "great plan" was is nowhere made clear. If it were literary it has no remains in any of the work now extant and known as Brown's. On the other hand it may have been a purely practical matter. The Tartarian rhubarb described at length may have been in some way connected with the family's so-called Brown's Jamaica ginger. The idea of importing tea and furs from China may also be another possible interpretation.

Smith's record continues:

28 October: "Dunlap, Brown and Alsop, here, an hour in the forenoon."

On Saturday 29 October Brown took breakfast with Smith and that evening being Friendly Club night we learn an unusual lot concern-

ing an opinion of Brown's. The entry reads:

"Club night--at our house--Johnson's night. Present, Alsop, Brown, Dunlap, Johnson, Kent, Smith, W.W. Woolsey. Johnson read us the History of the interior state of France during the latter part of the reign of Robespierre and for several months after his fall, written more than 2000 years ago by Thucydides, but then predicated of Corcyra. Much conversation and luckily. Fell, at last, on the old subject of Truth. Many difficulties. Woolsey, Johnson and I maintain that on all occasions truth is to be spoken; i.e. that nothing will justify a falsehood; or that utility can never be promoted thereby. Brown and Dunlap pretend that though our position is, generally, true yet there (are) occasions when it will be our duty to speak falsely, since by so doing we shall promote the general good. Long discussion, grounds of argument gone over several times--no conclusion."

Sunday 30 October: "Brown had called on Johnson, and they walked. The former breakfasted with us."

31 October: "C.B. Brown was here much of the forenoon. We talked--principally in reference to political morality and happiness of man. Drank tea at Dunlap's; and went with himself, Brown, and Johnson to the theatre. Dunlap's tragedy entitled "The Mysterious Monk" was played for the first time."

Tuesday 1 November: "Ch.B. Brown came in, just after I had taken up my pen to trace out the concluding notices of the last month. Dunlap came in shortly after."

text:

The play was a sort of composite of Othello, the Winter's Tale, Romeo and Juliet and Schiller with a considerable ~~blend~~ seasoning of the Schiller Ghost-Seen supernatural. The man of sorrow, the suicide talk, Horatio's religious touch and the gothic <sup>most</sup> castle with harbour's mysterious escape was ~~the~~ <sup>palatable</sup> food for Brown.

Smith's record continues:

1 Ribbemont, or the Feudal Baron, New York 1803.



Wednesday 2 November: "Dunlap and Brown here in the afternoon."

3 November: "C.B. Brown breakfasted with us. He brought two French pamphlets—one of which I looked over."

<sup>1</sup>  
One of those pamphlets is identified by Smith, the next day, as Benjamin Constant's De La Force du Gouvernement et de l'Importance d'y rallier.

Constant was one of the few who worked for a parliamentary government for France. His pamphlet originally published in the Moniteur in May supported the Directoire against the Royalists, it cried out against tyranny a great deal like Brown had done in his youthful verses, it implored the electors to lay aside party just as Brown soon found necessary in his editorial positions.

So far as can be traced Constant's pamphlet did not influence Brown at this time. It is possible he was, in his later years, lead by it to turn to publicism but not very probable.

<sup>1</sup> The other, which could not have been by Constant, has not been identified.

Later on the same day Brown called again in company with Richard Alsop, one of the "Hartford Wits".

Friday 4 November: "Dunlap and Brown here in the afternoon."

5 November: "While Johnson was reading Hermsprong Brown came in.... Club night--W.W. Woolsey's turn. Present, Brown, Dunlap, Kent, Johnson, Smith, the Woolseys--an agreeable and very sociable evening; though nothing of importance beyond the news, politics, and chit-chat of the day, occupied our consideration."

That novel of Robert Bage's, Hermsprong or man as he is not, was particularly of interest to Brown. In it there is a Mr. Brown whose early life and love must have been of touching interest to our author somewhat resembling some of his early experience. The work is an epistolary and autobiographical novel,--very slightly epistolary--the character of the title hero Charles probably found many an echo in Brown's own heart especially in the first chapter. Among other details that we find possibly related to Brown's work are the sort of summer house in chapter I, the irony, the literary club, the verse writing, the comment on authorship particularly of novelists, the dialogue which presents the Godwin-Wollstonecraft ideas of women, the Doctor Brown and the praise by Hermsprong of the American Indians. Later in February of 1797 we shall find the work has an important relation to the literary efforts of our author in that he began a dramatization of it.

Smith's record goes on:

Sunday 6 November: "It occurred to me that Dunlap and Brown would not be displeased in hearing more of what seemed yesterday to give them pleasure. To them, therefore, I hastened. I sat down, with Mrs. Dunlap and the others, began the volume anew, and did not quit it, till it was finished. The reading has given us unknown pleasure; we pronounced the book an excellent one; and I have half resolved to undertake the mechanical task of compiling, out of it, a comedy."

7 November: "C.B. Brown breakfasted with us."

On the 8th. Smith was called as a witness of the riot at Dunlap's theatre on the 2nd.

"I found C.B. Brown here, when I came home. Mr. Allen<sup>1</sup> came, and we went to the anniversary meeting of the Agricultural Society; where we heard Mr. Kent deliver a discourse."

Thursday 10 November: "When I came home, I found C.B. Brown here. It was after 11 o'clock when I sat down by myself."

11 November: "Ch.B. Brown breakfasted with us."

12 November: "Ch.B. Brown called on me, in the morning.... It was club night, G.M. Woolsey's turn. Present, Alsop, Brown, Dunlap, Johnson, Kent, Smith, the Woolseys. G.M.W. was hoarse with a catarrh. Dunlap read to us his comedy of two acts intitled "Tell Truth and Shame the Devil". He means to bring it on to the stage, this winter."

13 November: "Ch.B. Brown here."

Monday 14 November: "Ch.B. Brown breakfasted with us."

15 November: "A visit from C.B. Brown."

16 November: "Ch.B. Brown breakfasted with us."

17 November: "Ch.B. Brown here."

18 November: "Visit from Ch.B. Brown."

Saturday 19 November: "Ch.B. Brown breakfasted with us. Club night—and my night. Present, Brown, Dunlap, Johnson, Smith, the Woolseys. I read Marat's character, by Brissot, from H.M. William's letters, Vol. VII, appendix; and a scene from "The Negro Slaves"<sup>2</sup> translated from a German play—inserted in the Oracle, a London paper of Oct. 10, 1796."

kept

Samuel and Whitely, lawyers, surely must have provoked some comment of our author on Wilcocks and Bromley for he was not so pompous as to allow the opening to pass unnoticed.

We The Smith diary resumes

<sup>1</sup> Probably Thomas Allen the bookseller and stationer of 186 Pearl street.

<sup>2</sup> By Kotzebue also published separately London 1796.

<sup>x</sup> Published New York 1797. Played 9 January.



and the similarity of the physical characteristics of the Houzou-  
 anas to the Indians may have been moulded into parts of Edgar  
Huntly but going so far astray for such material when it was so  
 easily found in any one of Brown's rambles into the country is  
 doubtful. The entry reads:

Sunday 20 November: "Article vii Vaillant's "Second  
 Journey" is extremely interesting. The effect of  
 Fascination, as it is called, seems simply the operation  
 of Fear. There is no difficult(y) to explain the  
 fact, on this principle. All the extracts are judic-  
 ious. I have been most interested in that relative  
 to the "Houzouana". In this race of men are found  
 the very qualities--I mean physical qualities--  
 which are most desirable;--activity, force, insensi-  
 bility to changes of temperature, agility, temper-  
 ance, acute vision. There is a notion for the pur-  
 poses of Ch.B.Brown."

What the "notion for the purposes" of Brown was we have not been  
 able to discover. Smith might have added to all the other physical  
 qualities that the men were expert bowmen. The Houzouanas were a sort  
 of mountain Hottentot, with an awful reputation as banditti. They were  
 short of stature, held their property in common and used signal fires  
 for communication between tribes. The reading of this part of Vaillant  
 should at least have afforded hilarious amusement by the free descrip-  
 tion of the women especially that one instance of the mother  
 carrying her child.

1 English translation, Vol. III, pp. 144 et passim, London 1796 which has  
 fine plates of the Houzouana men and women. For obvious reasons  
 Smith could not have used the extract given in the New York  
Magazine for May 1797, pp. 255-7.

## Smith's journal continues:

21 November: "Ch.B.Brown here."

22 November: "Dunlap was here, in the forenoon; and again in the afternoon; as was Ch.B.Brown."

23 November: "Ch.B.Brown who breakfasted with us, was here again and Dunlap.... Johnson, Brown and I dined, by invitation, at Mr. Boyd's, where we met Mr. Kent, Mr. Radclif, his friend, of Poughkeepsie and Mr. Wortman, and where we spent the afternoon.... at the theatre--with Johnson and Brown. The play was "Othello"; which I saw for the first time."

24 November: "Ch.B.Brown here. He read me some extracts from his Journal.... Found Ch.B.Brown here, when I returned."

25 November: "Ch.B.Brown breakfasted here.... Ch.B. Brown and Dunlap here."

26 November: Saturday: "Found Ch.B.Brown here when I returned. I read the news-papers; we conversed; and read together, several articles, and parts of articles in the Monthly Review.... Read a considerable part of the Vol. III of Gooch's works; which I procured for the purpose of shewing Brown the history of the Sleepless man of Madrid; a history which is connected with many important speculations. Dunlap and Brown both here in the afternoon. I shewed them, the former, a few slight alterations, made in my Opera; which he approved. Club night--at Kent's. Present, Alsop, Brown, Dunlap, Johnson, Kent, Smith, the Woolseys."

27 November: "We found Ch.B.Brown here, when we returned."

Monday 28 November: "Ch.B.Brown breakfasted with us... Ch.B.Brown here, in the afternoon. Spent the evening at Wm.W.Woolsey's. Dunlap and wife, Ch.B. Brown, Dr. Mitchill, Geo.M.Woolsey, and others there. A sociable evening."

29 November: "Ch.B.Brown here."

30 November: "Ch.B.Brown breakfasted here, and we attended to the very interesting anecdotes of Mr. Howard, written by Pratt, and inserted in the New Annual Register for 1705.... I found Ch.B.Brown here when I returned."

2 December: "Ch.B.Brown and Henry Johnson (Wm's youngest brother--who came to town last evening to spend the winter here--a fine youth) breakfasted with us.... C.B.Brown here, again."

3 December: "A visit from Ch.B.Brown, in the forenoon; and in the afternoon, with Dunlap.... Club night--Dunlap's evening. Present, Brown, Dunlap, Johnson, Kent, Smith, the Woolseys. Dunlap read us the history of Wilkes' famous prosecution, from No. 45 of the North Briton--from Belsham's Memoirs of the House of Hanover; and afterward the account of the retreat of a

X This is Wortman  
with 1800 defended  
Jefferson in a pamphlet  
any way to Wm. Linn. I think  
1801 he was the orator at the New York  
celebration of Jefferson's inauguration and in 1803 was City Clerk  
two doors from Smith's

2 He made no use of the motif. (was, 19 Cedar street.  
1 Samuel Boyd was a counsellor at law and a member of the New York Abolition Society. In 1809 he had an office at 23 Pine street and a home at 17 Robinson street. In 1796-7-8 his address.

British forces, from Halland, into Germany, from the New Annual Register. Some politics of the day, and much trivial talk not worthy the name of conversation, occupied the meeting. I wish we could devote our evenings to more respectable and useful purposes; but I fear they must be allowed to proceed without restraint."

§ Sunday 4 December: "Ch.B.Brown here. We read and compared a New Year and Birthday ode of Pope's with those (of) Warton and Whitehead; Pope's, for 1795; Warton's, for 1798; Whitehead's, for 1784--was it? or 1783?--I read the account of the Religion &c. of the Dahomans in the New Annual Register--extracted from Dalzel's History of Dahomey--Good and bad."

5 December: "Ch.B.Brown breakfasted with us."

6 December: "Found Ch.B.Brown here, when I returned. He spent the evening which is very rainy; as the night promises to be. This is our first rain, for a long time:--several weeks."

8 December: "Brown and Dunlap here."

9 December: "Ch.B.Brown breakfasted with us."

Saturday 10 December: "Ch.B.Brown breakfasted with us.... We generally spend an hour in conversation, when this happens... Ch.B.Brown read and wrote here, most of the forenoon.... Club night--met with Johnson. Present, Alsop, Brown, Dunlap, Johnson, Kent, Smith, the Woolseys and Mr. Mason, visitor. 1 Johnson read us Pratt's account of Mr. Howard's singularities, from the New Annual Register. A spirited discussion succeeded, on the subject of simplicity of diet, dress &c. &c. The President's (of U.S.) Address, next talked over. Lively conversation: some investigative talents displayed. A very general disapproval of the project of a navy, a military Academy &c. Difference of sentiment, relative to a National University; which I defended, on definite principles--not on the apparent foundation of the President--A very agreeable meeting."

The President's Address spoken of was Washington's message to the Legislature which was practically a farewell address and was delivered in the Senate chamber 7 December. A special message more in particular was reserved until the next year so that it cannot concern us here. Marshall's biography of Washington<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Philadelphia 1807, Vol. V, pp. 713 ff.

<sup>1</sup> Probably Rev. John M. Mason secretary of the New York Missionary Society.



summarizes the address which besides the details noticed by Smith included a recommendation for an institution for the improvement of agriculture. Washington's argument for a navy was to provide an "armed neutrality". It should also be known that at the time the air was overcharged with accusations of the French minister Adet that America was abandoning the friend who had helped her to secure her independence. Naturally France looked for something more than a friendship that neutrally stands by and even unconcernedly sees the friend whipped.

Later, on the 16th., we shall see Brown reading a reply which he had composed as an answer to Washington's address. What his ideas were we are not told but may surmise from Smith speaking of his defending the idea of a national university. From his brothers Brown probably knew well the effect of French privateers on the exports of the country; by several other members of the club who were university men the principle of independence of the government and private support of the educational institutions of our country was well supported. That Smith a Yale graduate did not agree is remarkable.

11 December: "Ch.B.Brown reading and writing here, most of the afternoon."

12 December: "Ch.B.Brown breakfasted with us."

14 December: "A visit from Ch.B.Brown who read me several passages from his journal. I wish he would turn his Aloas and Astolias, his Battiscoes and Carlovingas to some account. He starts an idea; pursues it, a little way, new ones spring up; he runs a short distance after each; meantime the original one is likely to escape entirely."

The intimacy with Smith and Johnson appears to be rapidly growing and the continuous list of breakfasts and calls are making their home the greater part of his daily existence. As time goes on we shall see this producing its happy results. The comment just made concerning his writing is not only new but of great importance. It was undoubtedly the cause of the great number of fragments which he left. That he was making serious efforts to gain control of his medium is the point most worthy of notice.

The Smith records continue:

Thursday 15 December: "Ch.B.Brown was here from 5 to 6."

The next entry mentions a work of Brown's which we have not found and it is probable that it was merely put among the manuscripts he was piling up in his desk. It did not fail to have its result in his life and is probably the earliest record of his actually writing

anything political. Later we shall find him entering the political field with an uncommon zest.

The passage reads:

Friday 16 December: "Ch. B. Brown breakfasted here, was writing here, much of the forenoon; and spent from 5 to 6 here, in the evening; when he read us his "Reply which might have been made by the Senate of the U.S. to the President."

Brown's reply has not been found. The actual reply which was delivered by the Senate approved every recommendation of the President. In the House Giles lead an unsuccessful opposition which wished to expunge from the answer the fulsome praise of Washington. He believed the United States could go on without Washington and that there were a thousand men as capable of filling the presidential chair as it had been filled by Washington. When it came to a vote the revision was practically entirely lost the only change being a small one which referred to America as the finest and most enlightened nation of the world which was redeemed of its odious comparison.

As we go on we shall see that Brown's ideas of Washington never varied one iota all during his life and were the same as

posterity has stamped as just and true; at the same time it is probable that he took exceptions as already suggested in reference to the club's reading of the President's address on the 10th.

17 December: "Alsop and Brown were both here, to-day .... Drank tea at W.W. Woolsey's and spent the evening. Club night--and his turn. Present, Brown, Dunlap, Johnson, Smith, the Woolseys. The conversation not remarkably interesting."

Sunday 18 December: "Ch. B. Brown spent most of the forenoon here, which passed off busily enough, in varied conversation."

19 December: "I found Ch. B. Brown here, when I returned. A long and disputatious argument, "on the difference between poetry and prose" or rather on "the wherein are poetry and prose distinct"; which ended as such discussions usually do, without the conviction of either party, and with no clearer ideas on the subject, than before."

That discussion on prose and poetry may have been suggested by Erasmus Darwin's Botanic Garden which was read at this time in London editions and first published in New York by the Swords' 1798 edited by Smith. Smith had read it as early as the autumn of 1789 at Dwight's in Connecticut and his edition was probably being prepared at this time the proofs being read in December of the next year. The first interlude of Part II<sup>1</sup> is a dialogue between a bookseller and a poet and the question proposed by the

<sup>1</sup> See Omond: English Metrists Oxford 1921, p. 300.

former is what is the essential difference between poetry and prose. There is more truth than fancy if we take the bookseller to be Smith and the poet to be Brown for most of their interests are found there. The second interlude might very well have suggested to Brown some of the excellent omissions he made in Wieland. The third concerns Brown's interest again in its comparison of poetry to painting and music and may have had some influence on his Dialogues on Music and Painting of 1802.

There again we find Brown attacking the problems of his art and endeavoring to evolve correct opinions of them. Though Smith appears to have thought little of the discussion it is more than probable that it had much of value to our author in deciding the course of his literary life.

Smith's account goes on:

Tuesday 20 December: "Ch.B.Brown breakfasted here. Conversation till 10 o'clock...Found Brown here, when I returned."

21 December: "Ch.B.Brown breakfasted here."

22 December: "Ch.B.Brown here....Drank tea at Dunlap's. We went to W.W.Woolsey's, where Mrs. Dunlap

was, and Ch.B.Brown and Geo.M.Woolsey came. Nuts and apples--of which there was universal destruction."

23 December: "Ch.B.Brown and Alsop here, in the forenoon."

24 December: "Dunlap and Alsop spent some time here, in the forenoon, and also Ch.B.Brown.... Brown was here all the afternoon. He read me part of his journal; I him, part of mine--for a fortnight past. We read Moore's or Brooke's Fables "Love and Vanity" and the "Sparrow and the Dove."....

Smith's unsettled authorship of those poems is not so careless as it would seem. They were by Henry Brooke but published in Moore's

<sup>1</sup>  
Fables for Ladies.

Love and Vanity is, with its clever close, of interest to Brown and Smith as presenting the ideas which in their days were held of woman. It may have influenced Brown's similarly light verses on marriage and woman as written to John E. Hall 21 November 1806.

The Sparrow and the Dove is very nicely balanced satire on marital fidelity and was of particular concern to these two young investigators of all the hidden phases of human life.

These two fables of Brooke's could not help but recall the writing of Brown's verses of the judgment on the respective merits of a quill of the crow and the goose of which we have ten lines in the 20 March 1792 letter to Brighthurst.

<sup>1</sup> Brooke was the author of A Fool of Quality. The edition of the fables used by us is the works collected by Cooke, London, (1797).

Smith's account for 24 December continues:

I left him 1 and repaired to Dunlap's where the Club met, in Geo.M. Woolsey's turn. Present, Alsop, Brown, Dunlap, Johnson, Smith, the Woolseys. Much talk; very little conversation."

Monday 26 December: "Ch.B. Brown breakfasted here.... Found Alsop and Brown here, when I returned. The latter stayed till 7."

27 December: "Alsop and Brown here."

28 December: "Ch.B. Brown breakfasted here."

29 December: "Ch.B. Brown here and read much in Rumford's Essays--and much to his gratification."

30 December: "Ch.B. Brown breakfasted here."

31 December: "Th. Mason, Alsop and Brown here, in the forenoon.... Club night--and my turn--late in collecting. Present, Alsop, Brown, Dunlap, Johnson, Smith, the Woolseys--Kent goes to Albany to-morrow. I read the Introduction and first and seventh chapters of Count Rumford's first essay--with which all seemed pleased. The meeting was not productive of much entertainment. W.W. Woolsey had been on the Patrole, ~~last~~ night; Geo.M. Woolsey had ridden twenty miles, in the wind; Dunlap was here but a few moments--there being a Play acted to-night; and no one seemed to feel any generous elevation of spirits, or ideas."

That reading of Rumford's Essays by Brown and the later reading

by Smith at the Friendly Club of three of Rumford's chapters are

*of interest for*  
~~important for us~~ Later when we come to our study of Brown's in his

Monthly Magazine and American Review, we shall see him *ed* reviewing them

~~these same essays, and~~ *In* ~~When we come to~~ Ormond chapter VI we shall

*when relating*  
~~find~~ a reference to them as ~~confirmation~~ of the provision of food

by Constantia. The chapters chosen by Smith are peculiarly appropriate

1 James Kent.

2 A Jeremiah Mason, Yale 1788, afterwards famous as a lawyer in New Hampshire. He came near settling in New York and knew some of Brown's

3 Night patrols had been established to prevent incendiarism. (friends, as  
(including Dennie.  
well as

Possibly



inasmuch as they explain Rumford's Bavarian citizen military training, which had just previously been brought to the attention of the club by the President's message advocating a navy and military training school such as West Point.



Thus Smith closes the year's record with our author firmly established in the happy New York circle.

Allen<sup>1</sup>'s ~~biography of Brown~~ states that the dialogue of Alcuin was written during the fall and winter of 1797, <sup>which</sup> ~~there~~ is evidently an error, ~~here~~. In the advertisement, to the first edition Smith says ~~that~~ the dialogue was put into his hands last spring (1797), ~~and the same advertisement was~~ dated March 1798, That would ~~seem to~~ make it certain that Brown was writing Alcuin during the fall of

1796 and the early part of 1797, ~~possibly~~ when he was a daily visitor

at Smith's and Johnson's Cedar street home, ~~in New York~~. ~~Living~~ As he

records in his 1 January 1798 letter, <sup>he lived</sup> mostly with Sumner at New York and Perth Amboy, with occasional trips to Philadelphia.

~~during the~~

1 P. 71.

2 Alcuin may have been one of the works "which occasionally occupied your mind while here" referred to by Smith.