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THE DEMON IN THE AIR

Folder 15

1798 Aetat.27

Smith's advice in his 25 August 1797 letter for Brown to "summon" -
courage to write to Dunlap did not take effect until it resembled
the turning of a new leaf. The letter is¹

(addressed Mr. William Dunlap. Care of Dunlap &
Judah, Pearl St., New York. Per post..)

(Philadelphia, Monday,) Jan'y 1, 1798

It is nearly twelve months since I parted from you. I believe I have not written to you nor you written to me since. How shall I account for your silence? The task is an easy one. I was not an object of sufficient importance to justify the trouble. My infirmities and follies were too rooted for you to hope their cure. Admonition and remonstrance under your own hand, would be superfluous to this end. Hence your habitual reserve and silence of the pen suffered no interruption on my account. I lived with you six months.² During that time you, no doubt scrutinized my conduct and character with accuracy. You must have formed some conclusions respecting me, but you thought proper to be silent respecting them. You weighed the opposite advantages of communication and reserve. You decided in favor of the latter. I revere your rectitude, my friend, in as great a degree as I detest my own imbecility; but it is allowable for me to question the propriety of your decision. Communication, it appears to me, was your duty. Whatever was my depravity, it did not sink me below deserving a mere verbal effort for my restoration. Had I led the way you would have followed. There needed only an introduction of the topic by me. Had I mentioned my opinion of your incommunicative temper, and importuned you for a knowledge of your sentiments, the barrier would have been removed. It is true I was criminal in failing to employ this means. Were you exempt from blame in making these means necessary? Think of this, my friend, if I may still call you by that name. Surely, all esteem for me has not perished in your bosom.

1 In the Pennsylvania Historical Society. A note reads to the effect that Robert Gilmore of Baltimore had received the letter in 1834 from Dunlap. Gilmore's collection was the nucleus of what is now known as the Dreer collection.

2 From September 1796 to February 1797.

I have never written to you. This is a piece with the reserve of my conversation. I think upon the life of last winter with self loathing almost insupportable. I sometimes wish they were buried in oblivion, but even a wish of this kind is a token of my intellectual infirmity. Alas! my friend few consolations of a self-approving mind have fallen to my lot. I have been raised to a sublimer pitch of speculation only to draw melancholy from the survey of the contrast between what I am and what I ought to be. I am sometimes apt to think that few human beings have drunk so deeply of the cup of self-aborrence as I have. There is no misery equal to that which flows from this source. I have been for some years in the full fruition of it. Whether it will end with my life I know not.

I have written to Elihu and informed him of the transactions ¹ of the last few months. You will of course be made acquainted with them. I know not whether your engagements have allowed you to prosecute any similar undertaking. What a dead and absolute vacuity has diffused itself between us. Not an event however momentous, which may have happened to you, is known to me. I have longed for a knowledge of your views and situation. I am not entitled to know them but by second hand. I make no demand upon you. As I am, you despise me. Now cannot I remove the burthen of your scorn by my transforming myself into a new being! I look not forward to such a change. I shall die, as I have lived, a victim to perverse and incurable habits. My progress in knowledge has enlightened my judgment, without adding to my power.

I have done nothing to deserve the esteem of your wife. I do not, therefore expect it. That is no reason why ² I should refuse her my respect. She is, in the highest degree, entitled to it; present it therefore to her---

C.B.Brown.

At the bottom of this letter there is ^a ~~this~~ note. "So at certain moments could think and write one of the purest and best beloved of men. W. Dunlap."

In that short sentence Dunlap did more than in all his other attempts to serve Brown's memory. With all his faults Dunlap

¹ No doubt literary.

² Written which, but obviously an error.

excuse his laziness and yet the very idea of putting the blame on Dunlap is so delightfully whimsical we must admire the man who conceived it. ⁸⁵²
 when mellowed by the years was not the kind of man to allow that

letter, with all its false self-abasement, to pass on to others

Correcting without some comment. From every point of view that letter is the best Brown ever wrote. Its opening is the most impudent attempt - and successful in covering Dunlap - that our charlatan ever made to - and in later years Brown himself realized that most of ~~the~~ self-

he had written by the facts so that condemnation was not justified and in the ninth letter of Jane he plucked his magic garment from him, Talbot gave expression to the discovery thus:

"It is surely possible for people to be their own calumniators, to place their own actions in the worst light; to exaggerate their faults and conceal their virtues."

The Brown's reference in that letter to Dunlap's wife is a reminder of the Alcuin dialogue in which, as we shall see, Brown looked on women as the intellectual equals of men and in which he also expressed himself perhaps too freely on other feminine matters. It is possible that his religious discussions and occasional idleness during ^{his} ~~this~~ visit to Dunlap were the cause of this self-condemnation but when we consider the material supplied in Alcuin it is also clear possible that his conversation had approached themes usually barred from mixed company, in which case it would ~~not~~ be surprising ^{to} ~~that~~ Mrs. Dunlap ^{had} ~~perhaps did not~~ act quite naturally hospitable ^{to the} ~~when~~ man who ~~Brown~~ introduced such subjects into her home. Be this as it may ^{also} it appears that when our author did not have letters from Dunlap ^{However, it is also possible that} Mrs. Dunlap may be ^{the} the Mrs. Carter of Alcuin.

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~~as~~ often as he wished, his brooding mind lead him to imagine all sorts of reasons for Dunlap's silence. Dunlap, ^{usually} ~~of course~~, was a busy ^{but} man ~~and~~ having spent so much time with Brown when he was ^{his} a guest, it was natural that Brown should suppose him to have plenty of leisure at all times. That Dunlap was sincere in his opinion ~~of~~ ~~Brown~~ is borne out by his manuscript journal under date of 4 January, where he says: "I yesterday received a letter from Brown full of self condemnation, particularly for his conduct last winter." This is followed by reference to another letter to Smith in which Brown speaks of literary work. Under date of 1 February we find that Dunlap wrote to Brown probably in answer to that letter.

^{Of course}
 The real fault was his own neglect to write
 as Smith had tried to tell him to do.

Smith's records mention a letter from Brown on 2 January, but intimately connected to that letter of Brown's to Dunlap is the next item under date of 3 January. It reads:

"Drank tea at Dunlap's. He has received a letter from C.B. Brown—which I read."

On the 10th of January Smith wrote the letter to Brown which is dated as composed on the 9th. It reads as follows:

To Charles B. Brown

Your letter, on many accounts, gave me uncommon pleasure.. So long delayed, I began seriously to apprehend that you had put in execution your wild project of devoting yourself to the care of the sick, and that my simple question had been directed, not to the living but, to the dead. Your reply, kind though late, dissipated every melancholy incertitude; and was the harbinger of tidings equally new, unexpected and joyful.

I rejoice at the proofs you have at length attained to and exhibition of perseverance, industry, and success. Henceforth, I dare to augur,--timidly I confess,--better things of you. Send to us your various works. We shall receive them as from a friend; and speak of them neither as parasites, nor as men consumed by pride and envy. I assure you that nothing shall prevent me from declaring my sincere opinion concerning whatever you may write, and request my sentiments upon. But the copiousness or brevity of my decision may be determined by a thousand circumstances--none of which I can certainly foresee.

In return for your intelligence, receive a few words relative to myself--few they must be; for the same crowd of petty concerns which have prevented me, till now, from answering your letter, have still sufficient importance to contract my present reply.

You despise Sonnets. Yet I have composed several since you were here which are not despicable. Otherwise the muses have quietly reposed from my solicitations, till very lately, when I have summoned them to my assistance in the production of a Prologue for the opening of our New Theatre which may probably take place, in about three weeks. This Prologue is not to be compared with Samuel Johnson's; nor is it as good as I should have made it, had not our Manager been afraid of promising too much, and receiving too little encouragement in doing as he ought to do, but, with all its mutilations, I dare expect that when you see it you will think it tolerable.

1 It was spoken at the opening on the 29th. January.

Medicine engrosses all my attention. Have you seen the Medical Repository? You will find it at Poulson's. I could wish you to look it over, and give me your opinion as to its literary character. In particular I am anxious to learn your judgment on my account of the Athenian Pestilence.

I have seen your letter to Dunlap. He will answer it. But it is very doubtful, or rather it is very improbable, that he will think to inform you that his "Andre" is nearly finished; and that he has the courage to determine on bringing it upon the Stage this present winter. I shall inform you of its success.¹

Hear you anything lately from Joseph. He wrote me a few lines, a long time ago--promising me a letter, in due form. Hitherto I have vainly expected it. What he wrote did not admit of an answer. Beside, my medical correspondence is very extensive and laborious.

You have not written to Roulet. I saw him to day. He and his are well.

Johnson sends his love to you. Mine to all who kindly remember me.

E.H.Smith.

Jan'y 9, 1798

That letter, transcribed on the eleventh, contains much that is new concerning our author. There is a mysterious fatality in Smith's opinion that Brown's noble thought of offering himself as a nurse for the yellow fever was a "wild project". Perhaps if he had done so he would have died and equally as probable he might have been all the better trained and therefore might have saved Smith himself.

We have seen Brown's struggle to obtain control of his medium so that the implication that he had written considerable and wished to have his New York friends' opinion on it should be noticed be-

¹ First played at the New York Park Theatre, 30 March 1798 and published the same year at New York.

cause it is so different from the usual report given of him.

The statement that Brown despised sonnets is not at all clear. Not one poem of that form as we know it has been found in our collection of more than two thousand lines; but remarkable to relate the couplet and the alternately rimed four-line stanza were in those days called "sonnets";¹ so that we cannot be sure exactly what kind of verses Smith had in mind.

That Brown's failure to write Dunlap for almost a year could have been due to his taking offence is improbable. Smith's mention that he had also failed to write Roulet shows that he had been using his pen for an enormous amount of literary composition rather than for correspondence. A bread-and-butter letter was no part of Brown's conscience any more than back in 1794 was a call his kind of payment for a dinner.

To his brother Elnathan Smith, Smith wrote on the 19th. of January and in the course of the letter varies the notice of the expected publication of Brown's Alcuin. He says:

"I shall consider you as a subscriber for Brown's Dialogue—and will send it to you when it is published. The copies are half a dollar each. you may get me as many subscribers as you please."

1 See New England Quarterly Magazine Boston 1802, pp. 285-7 and Ralph Erskine's Gospel Sonnets Lansingburgh, N.Y., 1806. The idea also goes back to Addison's Ned Softly paper of the Tatler (No. 163).

Under date of 6 February Smith wrote a few lines to Brown; but he [did not preserve them in his diary. On

Wednesday 14 February he wrote to his sister Mary S. Mumford and

in the course of the letter he again speaks of Brown's Alcuin.

"Connected with this subject and as an article of literary information, which will give you pleasure, I may impart to you the knowledge of a little work by our friend Charles Brockden Brown--for which I am now collecting subscriptions, and which I design to publish in the course of the spring. It is entitled "Alcuin-a dialogue". In this dialogue, which is written with great spirit and elegance, he recognizes the intellectual equality of the sexes, and endeavors to determine what pursuits are best adapted to women, under the present, and perhaps the future state of human society. He inculcates a suppression of all desires for mingling in the active occupations of politics and war, and would rather that they should cultivate science and retirement, correct opinion by their writings; and improve men by their example. What further opinions he designs to maintain I do not yet know, not having seen the whole of his performance. I think however, that it will be worthy your perusal; and recommend it to Thomas to authorize me to subscribe for it. The subscription is 50 cents."

That letter was dated the 15th. of February. On the 21st. the actual steps toward the publication were taken as follows:

"Put into his (Smith's printer's) hands "Alcuin" for printing and paid him towards it, \$23 and .50"

On the 23rd. Smith wrote to Brown but the original of the letter is not given by him.

The first proof of Alcuin was corrected on March 12. Besides Smith's entry in his memoir we have one of Dunlap's which reads:

"Smith showed me the first proof sheet of "Alcouin." "

Under date of Tuesday 27 March we learn that Smith

"Received a letter from C.B.Brown informing me of his intended marriage, that his first novel is complete and that he writes the "Man at Home" in the Philadelphia Weekly Magazine."

The Man at Home was not the only Weekly Magazine contribution of Brown's and on the same day Smith records that he read Brown's other pieces in the magazine. On the next day, the 28th., he wrote to Brown; but again the letter was not copied in his diary.

Dunlap in his journal gives a record of that same letter of Brown's as follows:

"Mar. 29. Yesterday Smith showed me a letter from C.B.Brown in which he describes himself as assiduously writing novels and in love. Smith had some numbers of a weekly magazine in which Brown has published under the title of "The Man at Home"."

On Friday 30 March Smith makes the entry:

"Received C.B.Brown's proposals for his novel "Sky Walk"."

To Brown's friends at New York it seemed that he was now on the road to literary fame and fortune. His industry for the past year had surprised them and aroused their interest and curiosity. On 1 April Smith records:

"Spent the evening at home--in conversation with Johnson and Osborn¹--and in reading various parts of C.B.Brown's letters to me,--suggested by conversation respecting him, and his new projects."

¹ Probably Dr. Joseph Osborn of Middletown, Conn., who had begun to study under Smith 27 September 1797.

Boyle 558A
probably explaining
that the last
instalment had already
been issued

Smith
On the 9th. Smith received a letter from Brown and the next day he wrote ~~him~~ a long ~~one in~~ reply; but neither was copied into his journal..

Shortly after that 29 March entry ~~of Dunlap the theatre manager~~
had to go to see Bernard and Aldrich on theatrical business.
went on to Philadelphia. Under date of 11 April we find him settled
in a room at Mrs. Smith's
there and writing in his journal as follows:.

"April 11. Call on Brown who goes with me to the Booksellers Ormrod & Humphreys and gives me some account of his "Sky Walk". He says it is founded on Somnambulism. Drank tea at Brown's. Go to the theatre and see "The Italian Monk" with no pleasure."
"April 12. Letter to Bernard and this note "Brown carried the above for me"--Dine with C. Brown; 3 he reads to me the beginning of a novel undertaken since "Sky Walk" he calls it Wieland or the Transformation--this must make a very fine book. Drank tea with Charles at his friend Paxson's: 4 Mrs. P. is a very charming woman and P. a man of strong mind and good information. I passed the evening with them until 9 o'clock and then went..."
"April 13. Call on Brown."

Smith's record for Tuesday 17 April reads:

"Received a letter from Scandella. Called at Dunlap's and found him returned. Charles had written by him but he has lost the letter--a careless fellow!"

Sky Walk occupies the greater part of Smith's attention in the subsequent records.

- 1 The word is not clear but obvious. ~~John Bernard the actor.~~
- 3 At 119 South Second street.
- 4 The 1797 directory gives him as a flour factor in Key's alley.

Tuesday 17 April: "Came home and read the Introduction and four first chapters of C.B. Brown's novel "Sky Walk"--the manuscript of which Dunlap brought me as also the third and fourth parts of "Alcuin". This "Sky Walk" is an extraordinary thing. The basis of it is Somnambulism."

18 April: "The rest of the day has been devoted to the eager perusal of "Sky Walk" which I have not yet finished--though I have read upon it this day at least 10 hours."

19 April: "In the morning I had finished "Sky Walk". It had inexpressibly interested me. My whole spirit was affected by it. But my perusal had been too rapid, the interest too violent, too many other ideas had passed through my mind, to allow me to judge properly of it. On these occasions, we first feel--examination follows--the last thing is to judge. Johnson had two chapters. After Radcliffe's departure he took up the book and read aloud the third and fourth. I followed him and read to the tenth. The peculiar merits of the work are more obvious to me now, than before; for a double reason. My perusal was less passionate and I had opportunity to mark the effects it produced on my friend. He has retired to his bed, in a throb and tumult of curiosity, interest, admiration. I have also read the third and fourth parts of "Alcuin" to day. They merit my applause, but I must hesitate on the expediency of the publication. I must determine this doubt by a reference to the decision of a woman, one or more, unaccustomed to past speculations and ignorant of the author, but who has good sense and candor. Her advice shall be conclusive--at least for the present."

That decision in regard to the last two parts of Alcuin was an important one. Ten days later they were submitted to Mrs. Dunlap, apparently were disapproved and did not see publication until five years after Brown's death and seventeen years after Smith suppressed them.

On Friday the twentieth Dr. Edward Miller read the last two parts of Alcuin and Smith wrote a letter to Brown which he did not copy into his diary. His account of Sky Walk goes on:

20 April: "He (Johnson) took up Sky Walk and read aloud to me. Every sentence increased my admiration of this performance. Why are there any obstacles to its immediate publication. Why so little liberal curiosity in our country? Why such sordid doubts among our brotherhood. Why have not I the property, as I have the wish, to incur myself the expenses of publication."

For some days thereafter the journalizing of Dunlap and Smith covers the same news which shall be arranged in chronological order.

Dunlap: April 21: "At club in Smith's room. Smith and Johnson¹ (who drank tea with me) W.W.W.² and Mr. Radcliff.³ Smith reads in "Sky Walk" which interests us all very much."

Smith: April 21: "Read several chapters in "Sky Walk".... Club night and my turn. Present, Dunlap, Johnson, Smith, W.W. Woolsey and Mr. Radcliffe visitor. I read five full chapters of "Sky Walk" and the conversation was principally on the approaching elections."

- 1 He was Dunlap's lawyer and New York state Recorder.
- 2 William Walton Woolsey the New York merchant.
- 3 Was he related to Ann Radcliffe the English novelist?

Dunlap: April 22: "Call on Smith and Johnson and bring home with (me) "Sky Walk" Begin to read it to my wife. (Later same day) I found Smith who read in "Sky Walk" for us."

Smith: April 22: "Listened an hour to Johnson reading "Sky Walk"... At Dunlap's where I read aloud a number of chapters of "Sky Walk".

For April 23 Dunlap says:

"Read "Sky Walk" to my wife. This is very superior performance." (a

Smith made no record for that day, but on the next he gave some new information that Dunlap does not.

Tuesday 24 April: "Received a letter from C.B. Brown. It inclosed one for Miss Susan Potts--who is his mistress--and who came to town yesterday. I delivered it and have seen her. Without being beautiful, she is very interesting. Our talk was on common topics, as there was a third person present, but it evinced good sense."

Dunlap's record for the day is quite different.

"April 24. Afternoon read "Sky Walk" Pass the evening with Smith, who came in and stayed after the others, reading "S.W." to us unto the end."
(Here Dunlap goes into detailed criticism of the piece which belongs only to the study of Sky Walk.)

Smith goes on with Miss Potts.

25 April: "Read some part of "Sky Walk"... Drank tea and spent some part of the evening with Miss Potts. There were others present--and ordinary beings--so that my opportunities for conversation with her were circumscribed. All that I see is in her favor. Knowing me to be possessed of her secret--she entered into conversation in relation to C.B. Brown--without affectation. This pleased me."

On Thursday 26 April Smith again read the third and fourth parts of Alcuin.

1 They were now living together at 45 Pine street.

The publication of Alcuin took place on April 27th. On the same day Smith again visited Miss Potts.

Dunlap's entry for the 28th. reads:

"Read to-day Smith's publication of Brown's "Alcuin" 1st. & 2nd. parts."

On the next day Dunlap records:

"April 29. Sunday. Read to my wife the unprinted part B's "Alcuin". Call on Smith."

On that same day Smith called again on Miss Potts but did not see her. The day following he received a short letter from Brown in which he learned that Brown was not coming to New York.

A very important entry of Smith's is the one line given at the end of the month as an Industry record. It gives "2 vols. Ms. "S.W." --- the only actual information we have of the manuscript of this ill-fated work of Brown's. Ultimately Sky Walk was merged into Edgar Huntly.

On the first of May Smith received the letter from Brown which according to the record of 17 April Dunlap had lost. Dunlap's record for the day reads:

"May 1. Call with Smith and my wife to see Miss Potts, C.B.B's wished-for."

The next day Smith records thus:

Wednesday 2 May: "I had called on Miss Potts in the morning

It is biographically important to notice that
 the first nine chapters of Volume one of Arthur Mervyn appeared

in the Weekly Magazine during June, July and August of this year; ^{otherwise}
 we might think the yellow fever scenes were based on the 1798
 experience of Brown in New York.

Though Brown was in Philadelphia when the Abolition Societies held
 their fifth convention (1-6 June) ^{but} none of ^{his} ~~Brown's~~ New York intimates
 were delegates so ~~that~~ there was no opportunity then ~~for him~~ to enter-
 tain them as he had done in previous years.

Smith received a few lines ~~from Brown~~ on 9 June and wrote to him
 as well as to Scandella on the 14th., but neither was copied in his
 diary. On the 1st. of July while on a visit to his Connecticut home
 scenes he recorded an account of sleep walking which he heard at
 Elnathan Smith's in Berlin, Connecticut, and which later ^{reinforced} ~~became one of~~
 the ^{foundation if it was not a source} ~~sources~~ of Brown's Edgar Huntly.

2
 Dunlap's diary records

3 July: "C.B. Brown arrives from Phil: last from Princeton
 and takes up his abode with me. He has brought on his
 second novel but not completed."

The records of both ^{diarists} ~~Smith and Dunlap~~ ^{identify} ~~will show that~~ the so-called

second novel was Wieland. Dunlap continues:

Wednesday 4 July: "Walk with Brown. Read in Wieland."
 5 July: "Pass some time at Sharpless' with Johnson and
 Brown. After supper B. reads his novel to self and
 wife, as far as he has gone."

1 Vol. XVI in Yale University Library.

* We shall see too much of him presently.

Dunlap's Thursday visit to Sharpless' studio where he found Brown and Johnson--both of whom became subjects of his--makes it fitting here to give attention to the Sharpless pastels of Brown. The exact time when they were made is at present impossible of determination. Curiously; in fact remarkably so, there are records of three Brown calls on the artist--5, 21 and 28 July--and there are three portraits so that the date of 1798 generally assigned to them may be accurate. Sharpless made pastels of most of the distinguished people--usually men--of the day. Smith, not a little prominent as a New York physician, records that he sat first for his portrait 26 September 1797. At that time Brown was little known--by July of 1798 he was as an author prominent in a large circle of New York notables.

From various sources we learn Brown's manners were easy, informal, gracious. His experience had given him self assurance but his natural benevolence made him modestly considerate. We know he was below the medium height--which may be estimated to have made him about five foot six. In a 13 February 1806 letter to his wife Dunlap says Mrs. Smith's husband a little man reminded him of Brown. The Sharpless and Dunlap portraits from life give no idea of his height because none is full length. Like most short men he was remarked for his quickness. By

habit he had become a hardened walker--he and Dunlap could cover as much as forty miles in one day's rambles.

Dunlap relying on a faulty memory many years after says Brown's dress was singular but his two portraits as well as the three done by Sharpless present him as appearing to conform to the fashion of the day. His features were remembered by Dunlap as none of them good though the whole especially when he was interested and active was agreeable but the Sharpless so-called replica (II) shows him as decidedly good looking with almost a feminine delicacy of some of the features such as the mouth and more than a suggestion of latent humor. There have been finer faces, especially in profile, but with due respect to Dunlap--and he deserves some--every feature is fine and you will have to go a long way before you happen on better ones. There is no vice in that face; it is exalted in character and is that of an intelligent and good man, if not a great one.

The coloring of the flesh varies in all the five portraits but the Sharpless I is the sole presentation that suggests anything other than health and perhaps something of a consumptive tendency. In that exception, apparently made when he was tired with nursing Smith and

worn with fighting off the first touch of yellow fever, he is presented as ghastly pale though not emaciated. Whether this is due to a change of colors by age and the paper on which the pastels are laid, or to the actual condition of the sitter is not known; probably the latter is the truth of the matter.

Of the details of his personal appearance his hair--probably brown, possibly slightly sandy--is said to have never been powdered according to fashion but its length was not singular for the times. His eyes may have been light blue--so light that in bad health or insufficient illumination they might appear to be dull grey. They are not piercing but they do not invite any attempted deception any more than the mouth and chin do. His neck somewhat short was usually swathed in a stock or cravat of the French Revolutionary type tied in a bow, again perhaps in lace, and much later with the usual pointed collar. His waistcoat was at one time a reddish brown, at another a deep pink, sometime concealed by the coat collar, sometime with a high point covering more of the stock. The coat was usually brown but when he wore the pink waistcoat and the lace stock it was a grey. The lapel of the former had an M cut at the shoulders, in the latter an inverted U cut. In the Sharpless profile (III) there are four--possibly five--

buttons, possibly gilt or gold at least represented in painting by red, which later in the Dunlap miniatures became conspicuous details of his dress. In the brown coat of the Sharpless I and II any buttons are so unobtrusive the Quakers themselves could not have objected to them. Probably the grey coat, pinkish waistcoat and lace stock were his better more formal dress.

No one has ever remarked anything exceptional of Brown's feet or hands so in the absence of any full length portraits we may assume they were proportioned to his build as usually found. In 1800 John Davis mentioned his shoes down at the heel and his great coat which he thought author-like--surely no one but a dandy would write otherwise than in comfort--who ever saw any shoes in shop-pie order on a busy writer?

Though we are without proof of the dates of the Sharpless portraits it seems reasonable to accept them--temporarily at least--as faithful presentations of the personal appearance of our author at this time of his life. After eight years we shall find Dunlap an authority for his later appearance; when his health had begun to decline.

Smith returned to New York from Connecticut on the seventh after¹ which time both his diary and Dunlap's record their daily intercourse with Brown. Smith says:

¹ Dunlap did not know it until the 8th.

Saturday 7 July: "C.B. Brown has been in town some days. All are well."

8 July: "C.B. Brown breakfasted with us. He looks as usual. His health is pretty well restored... Walk with Charles and William on the Battery. We all dined and spent the afternoon at H. Johnson's... Evening at Dunlap's. Johnson and Brown there and Mitchill."

9 July: "C.B. Brown breakfasted with us.... Meet Charles at the door and we went with William to Seth Johnson's where we terminated the evening."

Dunlap says:

9 July: "Evening Brown and G.M.W (oolsey) drank tea together my wife being out: Go with B. to W.W.W (oolsey)'s."

The two diarists give the essential details of the next day.

Smith ~~says:~~

10 July: "C.B. Brown breakfasted here.... Visit from Mr. Roulet from Dunlap and Brown here. After dinner read pp. 84 in Brown's "Wieland". Charles and I looked over, and I read to him, many parts of my journal.. At Woolsey's with Mr. and Mrs. Dunlap, Charles and Johnson."

~~To which~~ Dunlap adds:

10 July: "Dinner at G.M.W's with Brown and Miss Moore. 1 Drink tea at same place. Visit at W.W.W's and M. Rogers. 2 Brown and I read part of Hugh Trevor together."

Holcroft's Adventures of Hugh Trevor³ was apparently read in its entirety by Brown for traces of it may be found in Arthur

Mervyn and Wieland and possibly Edgar Huntly. Smith's record

of the book is ~~entirely~~ ^{for} inadequate ^{only} from it we cannot ~~do~~ ^{ought}

^{wonder} ~~but~~ ~~guess~~ whether he meant they read a part of volume one--which

1 Who she was we do not know.

2 Moses Rogers.

3 The copy used is the second edition of Volumes I, II and III (London 1794), and the first edition of Volumes IV, V and VI (London 1797).

carries the hero through Oxford and could have been read at one sitting—or some other of the six volumes; whether any of it was ever read later or abandoned; and whether Brown read it all or only a part. It is reasonable to assume Brown could not have read any part of the book and left the whole unread because it is teeming with ideas, situations and incidents that were as Brownish in appeal as if he himself had written it.

Vicious slaps at law and lawyers occur frequently. The ideas of novels in the preface; the young hero on the table in the coffee-house; his love for knowledge (I, xii); his verse making (II, i); the criticism of Hugh's composition (II, v); the comment on diction (II, viii); the religious ideas (II, v); the discourse on authorship (III, vi); the Radcliffe-like insertion of verse (III, vi); the suicide letter (III, viii); the debate on suicide (III, ix); the supernatural (explained) dead hand (IV, vii and viii); Hugh's study of the law with Ventilate (IV, xiv); and such names as Wilmot (I, xi) and the Cocoa Tree (VI, viii) as the haunt of Sir Barnard must have found autobiographical echoes in the heart of Brown. The trip to London (II, i); Hugh's position as secretary to the Earl of Idford (II, iii) not unlike that of Arthur Mervyn to

Welbeck; Enoch's daughter Eliza(II,iii); the interpolated story of Lydia Wilmot(III,iv); Hugh's visit with Dr. Eyelyn and the tale-telling by him(II,ix); and what Philip saw of Hugh's throwing himself into the Avon(V,viii) may have inspired similar and corresponding details in Arthur Mervyn. The terrors of Hugh(I,xvi) only need elaboration to become those in Wieland and Tummas' and Mary's dialogue when he attempted to murder her(I,vi) probably inspired the death scene of Wieland's wife which may have been written very near this same time. The night wandering of Hugh and Clarke and the latter's fall from the cliff(IV,vi) perhaps was remembered when Brown came to write a similar incident in Edgar Huntly. The moralizing on all the vices and follies of the world may have been French revolutionary ideas but like Turl's arguments(III,x) and the ideas of wealth and war(IV) they happen to be Godwinian as well.

Aside from any influences it may have exerted on Brown's works written at this time, Hugh Trevor is an excellent example of the books read and discussed by Brown and his friends. It could have given him all the knowledge he ever had or ever displayed of the underworld especially such things as kept-women, bagnios and similar immoralities

1

In his Reminiscences of New York Gulian C. Verplanck ~~after~~
 speaking of the romance that might be found in the city recalls
 the room which Brown occupied as follows:

"I might give my readers a peep into the little dark room in Pine-street where Brown used to frame his gloomy and interesting fictions, without any aid from the picturesque, and entangle his heroes in one difficulty after another without knowing how he should extricate them."

As the record goes on it will be seen that to Brown that room was transformed by our Prospero's wand into a veritable palace; as if it were ~~to its inhabitant~~ as symbolic of light and intelligence as any marble halls ever dreamed of.

Smith's record continues:

Friday 13 July: "Brown, Johnson and I walked out of town. We concluded the evening at home."

14 July: "Walked with Brown and Johnson to Corlear's Hook."

15 July: "Brown, Johnson and I visited at Riley's 2 and walked on the Battery. We dined and spent the afternoon at Horace Johnson's. Thence we went to Roulet's 3 and from his house came back to Seth Johnson's. I left them there."

16 July: "Hopkins, Brown, Johnson and I went to the College, on the business of constituting a Minerological

1 In Talisman N.Y., 1829, p. 343.

2 Isaac Riley, to be referred to ~~again in Smith's 23 July record as the bookseller for Wieland. The present writer owns a Sale and Exchange list of Isaac Riley & Co., for May 1866. According to Smith's diary 20 August 1797 Mrs. Riley liked romantic names for her daughters.~~

3 The 1798 directory gives Roulet and Brother merchants 77 Greenwich street.

Society.¹ The other members are to be the two Millers, and Mitchill (who were also there)--Dunlap, who is out of town; Solomon Simpson, a Jew Merchant, and George W. Warren a watchmaker; which two last were not there. After waiting some time, we proceeded to converse and agree on the general plan and Mitchill, Simpson and Smith were appointed a Committee to draw up rules or a Constitution. We conversed scientifically and profitably. After I came home I read what Charles had this day written on his "Wieland"--and we conversed and I read to him parts of my Journal."

~~Hitherto~~ Brown's interest in minerology has been never ~~even~~ suspected though in his 13 December 1792 letter he did make use of a simile of a fossil toad. The study never occupied his mind for any appreciable time and probably was merely one manifestation of his interest in all the curiosities of nature, *never growing into the habit of collecting specimens.*

Dunlap returned from Perth Amboy on the 16th. and on the following day enters in his diary:

17 July: "Call on Johnson: C.B.B. there. Receive Weekly Mag. 6 numbers....Drink tea with Johnson, Smith and Brown."

Smith was apparently busy with professional calls and merely records:

17 July: "Dunlap drank tea with us."

Smith neglected to make an entry of interest to us for the following day, Wednesday. Dunlap says:

18 July: "Breakfast with Smith, Johnson and Brown."

¹ For an account of it see Medical Works of Edward Miller by Samuel Miller N.Y., 1814, p. lili. Smith was the secretary, cf. N.Y. Spectator 11 August. S.L. Mitchill's Catalogue of the Organic Remains of the Society published at New York in 1826 does not give [Brown] credit for supplying any specimens.

As we have seen Dunlap was not present at the organization meeting of the 16th. when the American Minerological Society was started but he attended the second meeting ~~of the founders~~ which was held on the 19th. His diary record reads:

19 July: "Dine as yesterday (with the elder Mrs. Woolsey) passed this at Columbia in Mitchill's apartments, where was formed a Society entitled "The American Minerological Society". We chose officers and adopted an advertisement for publication. The members are Dr. Mitchill, Edward Miller, E.H. Smith, Mr. Warren, Solomon Simpson, William Johnson, Samuel Miller, C.B. Brown, Samuel Hopkins and myself."

In Smith's hands the record of the Society reads:

Thursday 19 July: "The evening at the College where we met again and agreed to the Constitution of the Minerological Society and did some business."

Neither of the diarists give any information of Brown for the 20th. but their later entries show ~~that~~ he was writing the last chapters of Wieland.

Smith records:

21 July: "Brown and myself drank tea at Sharpless. Brown went home."

Warner and Hopkins, dated 20 July in Medical Repository Vol. II, pp. 105-7.

a longer notice 1 Signed by Mitchill, as president and Smith as secretary it may be found in the Weekly Magazine Vol. III, 18 August 1798, pp. 83-4 as reprinted from the New York Commercial Advertiser and ~~Another~~ notice signed by Mitchill, Warner (sic) and Hopkins and dated 24 July appears in the Weekly Magazine Vol. III, p. 32 and the Philadelphia Monthly Magazine Vol. II, p. 109.

dated 8 August

Smith's watchmaker George Warren was George J. Warner.

and Dunlap's was Warren

Medical Repository Vol. II, pp. 200-3.

^{The}
~~That~~ picture of Albert Gallatin though characteristic of his
~~retiring~~ shyness in society is all the more amusing when we
recall that five months ago he had held the ^{attention of the} House of Represen-
tatives ~~spell bound~~ with a ~~remarkable~~ ¹ speech which lasted three
hours and a quarter. Henry Adams ² ~~biography~~ speaks of his being
at home with his wife Hannah Nicholson at New Geneva during
this summer so that his presence in New York may be generally
unknown. The time was critical in his career; otherwise it would
be ^e ~~r~~emarkable that he did not find a congenial companion in Brown

at least because of their respective interests in geography, ^{though}
^{their political beliefs may have kept them} ³ from any friendly intimacy.

The Nicholson home was on William street not far from the
Pine street apartments of Brown, Smith and Johnson. Through
Alexander J. Dallas and the Baches, Gallatin had been introduced
to the Nicholson circle and had married for his second wife Commo-
dore Nicholson's eldest daughter Hannah, on 11 November 1793

~~that~~ which one of the Nicholson girls had served as a loadstone
for Brown's circle is not definitely recorded but she appears to

1 Two thousand copies of it were published.

2 Life of Albert Gallatin Philadelphia 1879, p.209. J.A.Stevens:
Albert Gallatin Boston 1890 says nothing of his whereabouts
at this time. According to High Gaine's Journals N.Y.1902,

1798 at No.86. 3 1789 at No.91, 1809 his widow was at No.17.
Vol.II, p.200, 21 July "some people made some confusion at the
House of Com.Nicholson where Mr.Gallatin lodged."

add to text Republican.

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, ~~then~~ what we now call democratic.

be Maria the youngest who in 1809 married John Montgomery a member of Congress from Maryland and later the Mayor of Baltimore. Under Maria's leadership a famous coterie of politicians and literary men was created at the Nicholson home. At one time or another Aaron Burr, Tom Paine, the Livingstons, Clintons and others were guests. There the ruling spirit at this time was Republican.

Smith's journalizing continues:

Smith's records continue:

26 August: "We dined, spent the afternoon and part of the evening at Seth Johnson's. At tea entered Miss Morton, Mr. Craigie and H. Johnson and his wife. William, Charles and I walked on the Battery."

At this point there enters into Smith's journal several mentions of Scandella. His relation to the group about Brown will be made clear as we go on. Smith was giving a great deal of attention to the sufferers from the yellow fever and the number of deaths was mounting rapidly in the city.

28 August: "Visit Dr. Scandella who has been obliged from the leakiness of the ship in which he embarked to return. He is well."

29 August: "Visit to Dr. Scandella who came home with (me) and sat some time at my room. We had an interesting conversation."

30 August: "Visit from Dr. Scandella..At 3 visit from Dr. Scandella...Dr. Scandella drank tea and spent the evening with us."

31 August: "Dr. Scandella breakfasted and spent an hour with us."

Saturday 1 September: "Visit from Dr. Scandella who accompanied me to the hospital..Visit Dr. Scandella..All to Dr. Miller's and Scandella's and drank tea."

2 September: "Dr. Scandella came to see me and accompanied me to my Long Island patients..I dined and spent most of the afternoon at S. Johnson's in company with William and Brown..Visited Dr. Scandella."

3 September: "Dr. Scandella visited me..Scandella gone to Philadelphia in search of baggage. Mitchill, Miller and others have been here."

more than what he felicitiously calls "the wounded spirit and shattered frame". We know he helped attend Scandella and Smith, we see him writing letters and ^{even} some verse,

~~From the statement of Dunlap it would appear that Brown had had~~
~~he went from Pine street to Greenwich, stayed there~~
~~the first symptoms while nursing Scandella and Smith. That would~~
~~five days, then went to Miller's, again giving up his room~~
~~be another explanation of his removal to Johnson's house. When~~
~~to Smith; The absence of severe headache and chills and~~
~~Smith was moved along Brown appears to have been moved on again~~

Miller's medicine makes it improbable he had even a mild case of yellow fever.

~~Why all this moving about, is uncertain. Perhaps it was because~~

~~the place was a boarding house. However, yellow fever or not, five~~

Monday

days later on the 24th. Brown wrote a letter to one of his brothers,

and fled from the plague stricken city to Perth Amboy. The letter

is preserved by Dunlap and reads:

Monday

(New York, 24 September 1798.)

during only eight days

in fact he did everything he could to develop any infection he might have had.

"The weather has lately changed for the better, and hopes are generally entertained that the pestilence, for so it may truly be called, will decline. As to myself, I certainly improve, though slowly, and now entertain very slight apprehensions of danger to myself. Still I am anxious to leave the city. To go to Amboy and remain there for some time, will be most eligible. This calamity has endeared the survivors of the sacred fellowship, W. D., W. J. and myself to each other in a very high degree; and I confess my wounded spirit, and shattered frame, will be most likely to be healed and benefitted by their society. Permit me therefore, to decline going with you to Burlington. For a little while at least."

1 Horatio Johnson's.

2 Dunlap, Vol. II, p. 10. In a former letter we found a mention of Armit being at Burlington. It might seem that this letter was therefore to Armit, but there is no certainty of it for Dunlap had a slovenly method of using Brown's correspondence. It probably was, to James. Burlington seems to have been the

3 William Dunlap and William Johnson.

family refuge.

addressed /

MY DEAR BROTHER,

What excuse to make for my long silence I know not, unless the simple truth be sufficient for the purpose. Some time since I bargained with the publisher of Wieland for a new performance, part of which only was written, and the publication commencing immediately, I was obliged to apply with the utmost diligence to the pen, in order to keep pace with the press. Absorbed in this employment, I was scarcely conscious of the lapse of time, and when the day's task was finished, felt myself thoroughly weary and unfit for a continuance of the same employment in any new shape.

I call my book Ormond, or the Secret Witness. I hope to finish the writing and the publication together before new-year's day, when I shall have a breathing spell.²

Together with your letter, I received one from M^r proposing the publication of Mervyn on the terms and in the manner mentioned by you. I wrote him an immediate answer, assenting, perhaps, too hastily to the publication, and promising, when my present engagements were fulfilled to finish the adventures of A. Mervyn.⁴ He has not noticed the receipt, and I am half inclined to suspect that it has miscarried from the few words subjoined by you for my use, to your letter to Z.

Proposals have been issued here for the publication of a Monthly Magazine, of which I am to be the editor, and whose profits are to belong to me. The uncommon zeal of my friends here promises success to this project. If it answer expectation, it will commence in February or March. This scheme, if it answer in any tolerable manner, will be very profitable.

Yours, &c.

C .B. B.

~~Possibly that was only part of the whole letter~~ ^{for} Dunlap did not follow the usual method in his use of ~~them~~ ^{so that but} the quotation he ^{now} gives may belong to ~~this same letter or~~ to another one. The passage reads:

- 1 H. Caritat who became the publisher of Ormond.
- 2 The first edition of Ormond was dated New York 1799.
- 3 H. Maxwell of Philadelphia.
- 4 The second volume of Mervyn was published in New York by a different publisher--Hopkins.
- 5 Monthly Magazine and American Review. Johnson made an attempt to secure Kent's help for Brown.
- 6 It began in April and ran up to January 1801 when it was changed to the American Review and Literary Journal.
- 7 ~~If to another, Brown had repeated himself. If the former was to James, this to Armit would be no repetition.~~
- 8 Vol. II, p. 11.

"In the month of December, 1798, he thus details to his brother Armitt,¹ a plan for a magazine.

Eight of my friends here, men in the highest degree respectable for literature and influence, have urged me so vehemently to undertake the project of a magazine; and promised their contributions and assistance to its success, that I have written and published proposals. Four hundred subscribers will repay the annual expense of sixteen hundred dollars. As soon as this number is obtained, the printers will begin, and trust to the punctual payment of these for reimbursement. All above four hundred, will be clear profit to me; one thousand subscribers will produce four thousand five hundred dollars, and deducting the annual expense will leave two thousand seven hundred. If this sum be attainable, in a year or two you will allow that my prospect is consoling. The influence of my friends, and their unexpected and uncommon zeal, inspire me with a courage which I should be unable to derive from any other quarter."

The next letter, with its reply, is especially interesting in that we shall find Brown in the last years of his life a bitter anti-Jeffersonian.² The letter is a single sheet only, the other half with the address and seal probably having been torn off when it was docketed with Brown's name carelessly spelled with an "e".

(To Thomas Jefferson.)

No. 45. Pine Street, New York.

(Tuesday,) December 25, 1798.³

¹ Dunlap always erroneously spells the name with one "t".

² Jefferson Papers in the Library of Congress, Series II, Vol. V, No. 46.

³ Dated from the end of the letter.

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Sir

After some hesitation, a stranger to the person, though not to the character of Thomas Jefferson, ventures to intreat his acceptance of the volume 1 by which this is accompanied. He is unacquainted with the degree in which your time and attention is engrossed by your public office: he knows not in what way your studious hours are distributed, and whether mere works of imagination and invention are not excluded from your notice. He is even doubtful whether this letter will be opened or read, or, if read, whether its contents will not be instantly dismissed from your memory: so much a stranger is he, though a citizen of the United States, to the private occupations and modes of judging of the most illustrious of his fellow citizens.

To request your perusal of a work, which at the same time, is confessed to be unworthy of perusal, would be an uncommon proof of absurdity. In thus transmitting my book to you, I tacitly acknowledge my belief that it is capable of affording you pleasure and of entitling the writer to some portion of your good opinion. If I had not this belief, I should unavoidably be silent.

I am conscious, however, that this form of composition may be regarded by you with indifference or contempt; that social and intellectual theories, that the history of facts in the processes of nature and the operations of government may appear to you the only laudable pursuits, that fictitious narratives, in their own nature, or, in the manner in which they have been hitherto conducted, may be thought not to deserve notice, and that, consequently, whatever may be the merit of my book as a fiction, yet it is to be condemned because it is a fiction.

I need not say that my own opinions are different, and am therefore obliged to hope that an artful display of incidents, the powerful delineation of characters and the train of eloquent and judicious reasoning which may be combined in a fictitious work will be regarded by Thomas Jefferson with as much respect as they are regarded by me.

No man holds a performance which he has deliberately offered to the world in contempt; but, if he be a man of candour and discernment; his favourable judgment of his own work, will always be attended by diffidence and fluctuation, I confess. I foster the hope that Mr. Jefferson will be induced to open the book that is here offered him; that when he has begun it, he will find himself prompted to continue, and that he will not think the time employed upon it, tediously or uselessly consumed.

With more than this I dare not flatter myself. That he will be pleased in any uncommon degree, and that, by his recommendation, he will contribute to diffuse the knowledge of its author, and facilitate a favourable reception to future performances, is a benefit far beyond the expectations, though, certainly, the object of the fondest wishes of

Charles B. Brown.

1 Wieland.

Jefferson's reply though short is a particularly fine one, and while it does not promise the aid Brown hoped for, it must have been gratifying to him.

"January 15, 1800 Phila.

I receiv'd on my arrival here some days ago the copy of the book you were so kind as to send me together with your letter, for which be pleased to accept my thanks. As soon as I am in a situation to admit it (which is hardly the case here) I shall read it, and I doubt not with great pleasure, some of the most agreeable moments of my life have been spent in reading works of the imagination, which have this advantage over history that the incidents of the former may be dressed in the most interesting form, while those of the latter may be confined to fact: they cannot therefore present virtue in the best and vice in the worst forms possible, as the former may.

I have the honor to be with great consideration, Sir,
Your most obed' serv't,
Th. Jefferson.

The idea of the relation of fiction and history as here given is
the same, in briefer form, as expressed in Jefferson's letter¹ to Robert Skipwith in 1771.

²
Allen says the fragment of Jessica was written just after Alcuin and Brown says he finished it in December, which makes it appear that it was written this year.

¹ Quoted Jefferson Cyclopedia, edited by J.P. Foley, New York 1900, p. 335.
² P. 107.

Probably connected with this year are the fragmentary verses¹ to be found in the Wieland note-book. From the handwriting they appear to have been written about the same time as the notes for Wieland but other than this slight suggestion there is nothing external to help us in dating their composition. Internally they show a state of mind that could have been Brown's any time since he abandoned the law and up to 1798.

So far as we know these verses were never completed and published and our interest is therefore confined to their very slight biographical rather than literary importance. They are considerably confused, ill-formed and illegible and our reproduction of them makes it only necessary to quote a few passages for comment.

The first stanza reads:

"Tis party that destroys the state
And makes an hubbub wild displace
The order that in
Should show its sober face."

There we find Brown's idea of party politics such as had wrecked the Friendly Club and was to cause him untold annoyance in the editorial conduct of his magazines. The matter is purely of academic

1 P. 76.

interest in debate and has been treated by Brown in fuller detail elsewhere.

~~Federalist~~
The second stanza has a great deal of the politics of the day condensed in its four lines. *It shows Brown's sympathy with the Jeffersonian ideals in spite of the fact that he was* ~~It shows Brown's anti-Jeffersonian tendency such as he was later to express much more forcibly in his Federalist so far as he was at all party-bound,~~ *political pamphlets* It reads:

"The statesman's dream is full of fears
That poor will trample rich
That France will lug us by the ears
And roll us in the ditch."

The final stanza, though the poorest of the whole as verse, has another of the old slaps at the lawyer--Brown's pet object of attack:

"That gossips tongues however so shrill
To shallow pipes must yield
And lawyers drop their parchment bill
And drum sticks take instead."

Other than these ~~two~~ instances the only lines deserving notice are the two which read

"But some are anxious to defend
Their purses and estates"

all
There we ~~find~~ our Brown of the tradition of the money worn to pieces in his boots.

His party that destroys the state.
And makes an hubbub wild displace
The order that in
Should shew its sober face.

The statesman's dream is full of fears
That poor will trample rich
That France will lug us by the ears
And roll us in the ditch

But some are anxious to defend

their punes. & estates
That ^{will be exposed to}
And rich are little worth to lend.

To dictatorial sway.

The English, blessed with good arms
And punes of ~~three~~ months, to lend.

To ~~the~~ keep the dogs at bay.

That needles, spindles, awls & chaws.
Must yield their place to arms.
and spears & pikes & musket-balls.

That gossips tongues, however so shrill

To shullen pipes may yield.

And lawyers ^{drop their} change their parchment bills.
and dream sticks & take in shade.