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895-918

ALCUIN

1798

Brown's first published book, Alcuin, a dialogue, was printed by

T. and J. Swords in New York 1798. ^{were in not sense} ~~that they acted as the publishers~~ in ~~merely being the printers~~ the usual sense, but they may have been booksellers. ~~is doubtful though probable.~~

¹ ~~Allen and Dunlap say~~ ^{X state positively though neither knew what he was talking about} it was written during the fall and winter of

^{previous to 1910} 1797; so that ^{until recently} all writers, who have ^{except the two or three} not seen a copy of the first

edition, surmise ^{ed} the date of publication to be 1797.

^{ho I} ~~the~~ ^{preface} ~~advertisement~~ ^{signed by} to the first edition Elisha Hubbard Smith

says the manuscript of the first two parts was put in his hands in

the spring of 1797; therefore ~~the published work~~ ^A probably was written

during the fall of 1796 and the early part of 1797. ~~An important~~

^{particular} ~~point is that it was not written especially for Dennie's~~ ~~as sent by Brown to Smith~~

^{II} ~~Under date of 8 August 1797~~ Dunlap's manuscript journal ^{says S} ~~says: would~~

^{suggested} ~~Call on Smith~~ ["] now S. shows me two dialogues called (Brown) / Alcuin sent on by him, to be forwarded to Dennie's paper: there is much truth, philosophical accuracy and handsome writing in the essay."

~~Whatever the intent~~

^{The} These two dialogues of Alcuin were ~~not~~ ^{never} sent ^{by Smith} to Dennie and they

^{never} ~~do not~~ ^{ed} appear in the Farmer's Museum. Smith's efforts to substi-

tute Brown for himself as a contributor to Dennie's paper we

1 P. 71, ^{in both} ~~2 Vol. I, p. 71.~~

know were unsuccessful, without any submission of any manuscript.

July 1797 suggesting the idea ~~dead~~ failure to reply
His two letters to Dennie and Dennie's silence decided the matter

so that
and in consequence Brown's manuscript was held by Smith, until
~~the book was prepared for publication.~~

Smith ^{then} ~~was the~~ editor ^{ed} the first two parts of Alcuin. He was
at ^{the} ~~this~~ time seriously considering his entrance into the book
business. He ~~was~~ Enthusiastic over Brown's efforts, he used
every means ¹ to get and actually ^{did} received ^{the} subscriptions for it,
he made ^{verbal} alterations, ~~in the copy~~, supplied it with the "adver-
tisement" and the note on the outside of the back cover, saw it
through the press, ~~and~~ advanced the money for its manufacture,
and copyrighted ^{xx} it as proprietor.
His name should have gone on the title-page as the publisher.

1798
On Thursday 15 February, he says he

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

He corrected the proofs on the five days, ^{Monday} March 12, 13, 14, 17
and 19. ^{Monday}

1 ~~The records show~~ ^{He} assumes his brother and sister will
subscribe ~~and given~~ under 19 January and 6 February 1798.
~~in our biographical study of Brown.~~

xx Le Roy S. Knibb, ^{fx1} Introduction ^{Dates} 1935 new ^{hand} type facsimile published by
Carl H. Harris quotes the ^{23 May} New York Spectator notice dated May first.

II Where ^{Brown} ~~he~~ got the ^{remarkable} name of the "Paradise of Women" is not
 clear. ^{the answer} ~~Bages~~ man as he is (Vol. II, p. 234) ^{finds} ~~represents~~ it
 exemplified in France but there is no certainty Brown
 read that work though ^{it is} ~~not~~ likely - for we know
 ✓ he read Hemans Strong and Barham Downs and found
 both suggestive. Bages' novels are noted for their political
 and philosophical opinions of the French Revolutionary type.

h^o II

Because of the presentation of the ^{it} ~~Godwin-Wellstonecraft~~ philosophy it might be surmised that ~~Page's~~ Hermesprong (Vol. II, chapter iv) was a possible origin of Brown's dialogue. ^{Brown} ~~We know he read Page in~~ November of 1796 so that the influence is possible. On the other hand it is more probable the form ^{as well as the ideas expressed} ~~of a dialogue~~ was the result of ~~part of~~ ~~the discussion being an actual experience of Brown's~~ } wide reading.

The secondary title of Robert and Adela or the Rights of Women best maintained by the Sentiments of Nature, Dublin 1795 an epistolary novel is improbable as ^{of} ~~any~~ inspiration of Brown. The title is ~~merely~~ ^{defective} ~~incidental~~ the book being a novel of manners with nothing polemical in it.

De Foe's first book An Essay upon Projects London 1697 ~~(Earlsbrooke Library reprint London 1889) edited by John Morley~~ so far as we

know was never read by Brown so that ^{any} ~~Clark's~~ ¹ claim of possible influence should be ^{denied.} ~~discarded~~. A few ^{questions and answers} ~~short conversations~~ that are ^{or any other kind of} not Platonic dialogues and some details that are general to all

writers of polemics cannot ^{substantiate} ~~found any~~ influence. ^{De Foe's work is a collection of} ~~Brown was too~~ essays, ^{and the only one with which we are concerned being the ninth which touches on an} ~~advanced education for women, but there is not a word on votes or any other side of Brown's~~ ^{indeed Brown was too} serious a literary worker to have neglected the preface and the conclusion if he had ^{ever} read this work ~~of De Foe~~.

1 David Lee Clark: Brockden Brown and the Rights of Women University of Texas Bulletin March 1922, p.10.

Milton's prose works are unlikely as an influence. Brown might have found ^{many of} his ideas there ~~as well as the figure of a rope of sand~~ but it is remarkable that none of these ~~ideas~~ were illuminated by Milton's wisdom. ^{To have absorbed the problems and not ~~some~~ ^{Milton's} answers is an intellectual impossibility.}

III 26

We know ^{Brown} read Siderot's ^{the} dictionary discourse in 1752 but that he ever saw the Supplément au voyage de Bougainville, 1756, is ~~equally~~ doubtful, though the Volney View of 1804 ^{shows} ~~indicates~~ he knew Bougainville's travels.

^{unquestionable} The real influences for his ideas on marriage, cohabitation, sex equality, the irrevocable contract, the dream for women and the Utopian commonwealth may be traced to Rasselas, Richardson, Rousseau, ^{Plato's Republic} and ^{more}. A debate on marriage is in the Héloïse. Elizabeth Carter is in Johnson's Rambler. All of these books and authors we know Brown read. Of course some of the same ideas appeared in Godwin's Political Justice and Mary Wollstonecraft's Vindication of the Rights of Women, which he also read but as influences neither is to be elevated given ^{credit for what may be} ~~more than is~~ due to all the others. In Corwin we shall find a male fictional character, Andloe, of ideas similar to Mrs. Carter of Alcibiades and ~~as a~~ dream of an ideal commonwealth near the Admiralty Islands.

Brown's ^{own} observations here are truer to nature than those of any of his models and ^{by his} ~~the~~ dialogue method ^{are given more breadth} ~~makes them broader and~~ ^{makes them} more interesting. ^{developed element} The fictional characters ^{used} introduced ~~tend to~~ humanizes the arguments rather than ^{present} ~~to make~~ them cold and pedantic as an ^{even} the essay ^{is in danger of being} ~~is bound to be~~. This is especially true in the ^{instance} ~~case~~ of the guide ^{to} of the paradise of women. ^{though a guide is the common device for exposition in many of the Utopias.} ~~But Brown improved on them in a~~ number of other details. Mary Wollstonecraft had suggested and

left incomplete the idea of the political neglect of women which

^{relied upon and} Brown developed nearer to ^a ~~its~~ logical conclusion. The same thing he did with ^{the} ~~the~~ other arguments brought into the matter. ~~The ideal island "the paradise of women" would seem perhaps to owe something to the Utopian~~ ^{immediately suggests it}

1 Cf. Brown's Remarks on Female Politicians, Monthly Magazine, Vol. III, p. 416, ^(December 1800)

~~where~~ ^{described with the remarkable title}

~~and in 1862 he also made other attempts in the same form of~~ 904A-905
(A) ~~literary expression.~~ 905

To take most of the controversial subjects of the day, the ~~whole~~ gamut of political science, law, philosophy, science, metaphysics, theology, education, arts and letters, and to make ~~from~~ them not a murky cloud of dulness but an interesting and at times a pleasant if not sensationally startling debate demonstrates ~~that~~ he had developed considerable ability in literary presentation. We may have doubted his linguistic facility in the Rhapsodist or in other early efforts; in this instance we have to recognize that he had reached a high standard of rhetorical excellence, indeed the passage "I need not.... invent" (Lancelot Vol. I, p. 77) is a ~~very~~ remarkable example of prose rhythm ~~but~~ not the only one. Disagree as we may with the opinions put in the mouth of the guest or the hostess as proper to his time, though eminently suited to the freedom ~~if not license~~ of ours, of the manner of their presentation there can be but one judgment.

The faults of Alcuin not being so much those of a literary character demand little attention, ~~here~~. The principal ones are those of logic

~~and theory~~ ^{-mostly theory-} and if ^{kind} any discussion of the ^{there} matter is to be ~~made~~ we should

adopt Brown's own method, and cut the foundations from the structure

Mrs. Carter erects. The statement of a few simple facts pertaining to

young women and motherhood which Brown knew ^{completely} ~~more about~~ when he had

lived to be the father of four children would expose most of the weak-

nesses of ^{her} ~~Mrs. Carter's~~ arguments. ^{that} The facts of human nature are ^{immutable} while the speculations ^{of youth} are ^{perennial} as youth itself was ^{also known by him} built on a

(Stet) ^{accepted} ~~Alley's~~ idea - ~~small~~ ^{accepted} by ~~Alcuin~~, who should have known better - ~~that~~ Brown feared the ghost he had raised is only ~~another~~ ^{spread over the world} instance of the mental bog of his biographers. ^{that} ~~He~~ ^{Brown} feared nothing, but he knew when to stop!

The handling of the dialogue when the delicacies of the subject

of marriage lead him ^{perhaps} too far ~~into the mysteries of human existence~~

~~tence~~ is an indication of ^{that} ~~Brown's~~ fearlessness. The fact that

he was never a prude is a matter of striking importance ~~here~~

~~for~~ ^{later} in his novels of realism, such as Jane Talbot, Clara

Howard and The Memoirs of Mary Selwyn, we shall find him equally

as ^{bold} ~~frank~~ in giving details ~~that are~~ usually barred from conver-

sation in a mixed company.

X
 The passage ~~about~~ "the spoiling of our dinner or little temporary alarm is all we can fear from a chimney-sweep" seems to ^{suggest} ~~smack of the autobiographical~~, as if Brown himself had once experienced such a catastrophe. Later we shall see Ormond playing the part of a chimney-sweep. The fact ~~of~~ the matter is Brown had a deal of sympathy for the lower classes of society.

~~Other~~ Details that have a suggestion of the autobiographic are plentiful. ^{Alcuius} ~~The narrator's~~ hatred of a lecturer because he

allows no discussion is amusingly Brownish. His taking a seat in a corner is Brown through and through. The shutting up of the school ~~will~~ recalls the directory designation of Brown as master of a Quaker grammar school. ^{as he} ~~His~~ headaches and rheumatism may very well be Brown. The moderate means of subsistence, the unnecessarily depreciatory references to his uncouth gait, his ^{stabbiness} ~~uncouth~~ ^{self confidence} ~~garb~~, his lack of ~~savoir faire~~, his unpowdered locks, worsted stockings and pewter buckles, and his low opinion of the law as well as his reference to the Quaker practise of having female preachers may all be personal, ~~to the writer~~. The grandmother who doctored with simples was common to most families in Brown's days and can be autobiographic.

been published in Philadelphia by Matthew Carey which ~~edition~~
 it is probable Brown read. Noah Webster had ~~also~~ written on
 female edu^action in the Prompter published at Boston 1793¹. So
 far as we have been able to discover Brown was seriously inter-
 ested in the subject--he did not jeer at the emancipation of
 women ~~as De Maistre did~~ for it was perfectly evident to any one
 who gave it the least thought that in his day woman needed to
 be somewhat emancipated. At the same time he made his woman
 character ask for the same privileges that present day cham-
 pions claim ~~and he involved her in the same reductio ad absurd-~~
~~um.~~
 The discussion was based on most of the arguments ~~pro and con~~
 that may seem to us to-day to be new such as property ownership,
 equality, justice, a voice in government, the ~~necessity for res-~~
 triction of the vote, the neglect of the privilege, but which
 we here find used ~~in Brown's Alouin~~ more than a hundred and
 twenty years before there was any Nineteenth Amendment.

1 ~~A little later~~ The subject was treated by a young lady of
 Susannah Rowson's boarding school in Boston. See poem, the
 Rights of Women, Boston Weekly Magazine, 30 October 1802.
 2 pp. 56, 57, 66, 67 and 70.

From the fact that the arguments in similar lines were not so weak as Mrs. Carter's, or so much indebted to the obvious sources such as Mary Wollstonecraft and Godwin and from the testimony

Stet ~~that his life shows that he never again championed the cause for~~ *Brown* *used*

Literary purposes. It *is* *certain* *he* *is* *probable* *that* *Brown* *knew* *well* *the* *weaknesses* *of* *the* *arguments*

Any real reader will put in the mouth of Mrs. Carter. ~~It is important to notice that he~~

does not put the ~~new~~ *new or revolutionary ideas* in the mouth of the male character

(himself) of the dialogue and he opens the work with very low

estimates of the intelligence of Mrs. Carter, the mouth-piece of

the woman's cause.

Allen is correct in introducing the work by an explanation that Brown was accustomed to debate an opinion before accepting it as a part of his principles but this introduction (accepted also by Dunlap) is an example of his hasty and superficial work.

He says:

"A principle with him was sacred in proportion as it accorded with his preconceived sensations, and these sensations as has been already abundantly seen, were ardently romantic. Whatever of defect was discernible in existing systems, he imputed to the wrong cause, which was to some inherent ineffectiveness in the system itself, and not to the depravity of our common nature, so capable of perverting the best systems to the worst of purposes. That all human systems are fallible, is saying nothing more than that they were

not all the workmanship of our munificent Creator. But Charles took other ground; in the overflowing philanthropy of his heart, he was prone to believe that all these injurious consequences were imputable to the laws of the land. Finding a defect in the law when vigorously analyzed, and that man continued to perpetrate outrages against it, he thought too often that these were imputable to the law itself. Hence in many of his earlier speculations, he reasons upon what mankind would not do, had not such authority interposed its injunctions. His feelings, warmed as they always were by human sufferings, aided this deception, until he imputes to the law itself the creation of those very evils which it was designed most assiduously to guard against. To this he might probably have been led by the perusal of history. Tyrants have existed undoubtedly, and all authority may be called tyranny if the dreams of a visionary are allowed the force and authority of law.

Hence the ardour with which he speaks, unless the peculiarity of his character is known, unless his warm and sublimated fancy, his intense feelings are taken into consideration, will need an apology. Fortunately it may be found, as has been proved by the latter already given, in the excellence of his heart. And it is not an uninteresting speculation to observe how those plunging tenets and dangerous doctrines which he advanced in his first entry into public life, became gradually contracted as he mingles with men and observes human manners. Subtleties that may be defended by an able logician in a thousand different ways are abandoned when he sees them brought to the touch of experiment and fail."

and Dunlap

What Allen imputes to Brown belongs alone to Mrs. Carter! That

explanation was thereupon followed by the Alcun as given in

Allen and Dunlap and after quoting what he saw fit to give he

¹
continues his commentary thus:

"It was deemed proper to give a full and front view of such speculations, to show the arguments which ingenious sophistry might urge against any existing establishment, and at the same time, how little mankind will be benefitted by the substitute recommended as a cure for such evils. That imperfection is written on the features of humanity is certainly a discovery which has no claim to novelty. If we consider the operation of a law merely to discover what instances of

reprint

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partial injustice may arise, and overlook all the benefits resulting from its adoption, nothing is easier than to point out such defects. With the aid of eloquence nothing is easier than to represent such defects of gigantic magnitude, and sufficiently forcible they may be thought to warrant the repeal of such a law. But when such ingenuity is pressed upon this point to provide a substitute for what it demolishes, it commonly terminates in an evil tenfold more alarming than what has been so violently declaimed against. The misery of such speculations is, that their projectors do not see the end of their own arguments. The sanctity of the matrimonial tie, may give rise to instances of partial injustice and oppression for which the law has provided a remedy. If these instances are urged as valid objections against matrimony, they may be made to appear formidable and convincing; but the alternative proposed is, indiscriminate intercourse. It is made dependent on the will of the parties, their caprices, their jealousies and their antipathies, reasonable or unreasonable, which they themselves would be the first to condemn afterwards, when they shall unite and when they shall separate."

cf Dr Lupton
Walking Stewart
Works vi 17
Edin. 1863 (1884
reprint)

All the faults there found Brown knew perfectly. The following paragraph was ^{humorous} ~~omitted~~ ^{suppressed} by Dunlap (not by Allen) probably as out of dignity with the matter being considered.

"The drift of such arguments resembles the conduct of the Irishman, more honest than sagacious, who set fire to the house which protected himself and his family from the inclemencies of the weather, to avoid the intrusion of an inhospitable guest."

Allen's (and Dunlap's) comment then continues:

"Had the proposition now advanced by this writer been stated to him as a substitute for the ceremonial solemnities now in use, he would have been the first to have anathematized the introduction of such dangerous novelties. He would have rejected the Amendment to the matrimonial code at once, for none entertained higher ideas of the sanctity of such obligations, than this very author. But following his own speculations, intent only on finding fault with existing establishments, in order to make himself consistent in the sequel, he is compelled to plunge headlong into the very difficulty he would have wished most sedulously to avoid. Such is the fate

1 Given on page 105.

end. Who ^{it} was made for we do not know. It ^{or may not} have been Elijah
 Brown's own copy.¹ But one thing ~~about it~~ is quite certain--it is
 not the original of the printed version for it lacks textual
 corrections though it does have some corrections of the copy-
 ist's errors. This is ^{confirmed} ~~further made~~ certain when we ^{read} ~~refer to~~
 Smith's diary of August 1797 where, at the close of the month,
 he describes the manuscript he had as twenty pages in octavo.

The second form is ^{the} ~~when a~~ part of the work ^{which} first appeared in the
Weekly Magazine published at Philadelphia by James Watters, in four

1 In his Book of Entries there is a partial copy of the first edition. It omits ~~however~~ all from the paragraph beginning True, p.22 to of attraction, third word from end of p.74. The cause for this ~~unreasonable break~~ is not known to us. Possibly some pages have been torn out of the book.

instalments in the numbers for 17,24,31 March and 7 April,1798.

This appearance ~~is not to be confused with the whole work for it~~ contains only the first and second parts. It was not issued under the supervision of Brown so that ~~the changes to be found in it~~ suggest ~~that~~ the editor, James Watters, handled his blue pencil without regard to the author's meaning or feeling. Grammatical corrections were made, such as new sentences, dashes, omission of brackets, new paragraphs, capitals and italics. Words were changed for the better; the slur on barbers on pages 18 and 19 was omitted; on page 32 there was a remodelling of one of the sentences about sects that admit females and the omission of another; on page 45 the clause about the injustice that gave birth to kings and nobles is omitted; the part beginning "The maxims of constitution-makers" on page 54 to "which they exclude" on page 66 was omitted; and the last three sentences of the end of the second part on page 77 were also omitted. On the whole the omissions ~~that~~ may have been made for the purpose of shortening the work, ~~did so at the expense of~~ ~~clearness and thoroughness. Whether Brown or Watters actually made~~ ~~these alterations from the manuscript is not definitely known but~~ ~~it is very probable that the latter did.~~