

Revised 3 October 1924  
Revised 25 August 1927  
Revised 4 October 1927  
Revised 17 May 1933  
Revised 27 June 1933  
Revised 18-19 August 1933  
Revised 23 May 1942

16

29

1463-1471

1802 - BETROTHED

change note on pocket book

1463

3 ~~This probably refers to The American Ladies & Gentlemen's Pocket Almanac and Belles Lettres Repository for 1802 published by David Henry at the New York Shakespeare Gallery, printed by Brown's printer, G. F. Hopkins. It contains verses mostly English but some American among them <sup>two</sup> extracts from Lucretius' Power of Genius, the Almanac with engravings by Anderson from Stothard, prose selections among them (Lassius' addresses to the sun and moon <sup>not Brown's</sup> and advertisements of the publisher. The copy was in the original decorated box with a glazed green printed <sup>design</sup> cover ~~labeled~~ <sup>in centre</sup> Belles-Lettres Repository Continued Annually, 3 1/4 x 5 inches, ~~the book itself~~ 2 1/8 x 4 3/4 inches, back cover ~~missing~~ <sup>wanting</sup>.~~

and pub-  
lished of  
the second  
volume of  
Arthur  
Murray

Macpherson's

(giving <sup>the</sup> dates of American Independence and Washington's death)

~~and not~~  
(which Brown's head  
youthful ~~described~~ <sup>was</sup> when a  
~~boy~~)

## BETROTHED

1802 Aetat. 31

~~It happened~~ <sup>As</sup> Brown had wished in the 30 October 1801 letter to Anthony Bleecker, ~~that~~ he did find or make an occasion for a visit to New York during the winter of 1801-2, Whether he re-

mained for a week we do not know, but that he was in New York is

shown by the following letter. <sup>Another volume of the letter is ~~that~~</sup> It warrants the assumption ~~that~~

<sup>that</sup> at this time he was engaged to marry Elizabeth Linn; at least

the expression of his having a brotherly affection for Mary,

the youngest of the ~~three~~ Linn girls, can mean nothing else.

<sup>Curiously all the ~~previous~~ letters <sup>from</sup> were addressed to the Linn.</sup>

The letter <sup>was</sup> ~~not~~ sent alone enclosed in <sup>a parcel</sup> ~~one~~ sent to Elizabeth or ~~the~~ carried by messenger.

(addressed Miss Mary Linn )

New York, (Saturday) Jan'y 9, 1802.2

Will my friend do me the favor to accept the enclosed little volume.3 It may not unprofitably amuse a vacant hour, and the ruled pages will invite her to practise the first and simple rules of a necessary economy. Take it, if you wish to oblige me, who will always feel the interest of an affectionate brother, in the cares and pleasures of Mary Linn.

1 An account of the Lirns will be given under the date of 1804.

2 Dated from the end of the letter.

3 This probably refers to the pretty red leather American Ladies' Pocket Book as issued in 1802 by John Morgan of Philadelphia. It contained an almanac, a table of the engravings (among them one of N.Y. from Hoboken, Penn's grave and Washington's Mount Vernon) a table of expenses, a line-a-day memorandum, marketing and shopping table, description of the latest dresses, a list of all departments of literature, account of the London drama for 1801, books on painting and list of new prints, miscellaneous receipts, poetry, charades, country dances and engraved pieces of the latest music. ~~It is an English importation with an American title page printed by Brown's friend Hugh Maxwell.~~

unsealed  
and  
unstamped

change

(stet.)

Knowing the pleasure you would receive from a letter from your eldest sister I have taken the liberty to urge her to write to you, by the present opportunity, which is safe and speedy, but she answers--"No! She hates writing. It is always a painful task. Rebecca will tell you all that you wish to know and you cannot be so ignorant of her character as to make the written assurance of her continual love, necessary. She would have nothing to say but that she loves you still, and that you cannot doubt."

I hope, when I see you, which will not be very long, to hear that you have talked, and visited, and read, and reflected, and written a great deal: and that you will be able to say, of the last six weeks--they have made you wiser and better. Your mind is a fertile soil, which only wants to be cultivated by reading and reflection to bring forth noble fruits, and nobody, believe me, will take more pleasure in witnessing such fruits than

C.B.B.

To the reader accustomed to form his opinion from the generally-used references that letter should come as an illumination. It reveals a Brown far different from the usual one.

Elizabeth Linn's dislike for letter writing we shall have occasion to refer to again when we come to summarize her character in 1804.

The next information we have of Brown is surprisingly striking by contrast.

Under date of 26 April at Philadelphia Brown and Richard Waln, a son-in-law, were affirmed as executors of the last will and testament of Brown's maternal grandmother Elizabeth Armitt. Her

1 We shall see and hear more of her presently.

2 There is a copy of the will entirely in Brown's handwriting. The original may be found in the records of the Register of Wills at Philadelphia in Book Y, page 479, No. 40 for 1802.

will, dated 16th. 5 mo. 1798, among other bequests left a silver tankard marked "E.L." to her great grand-daughter Elizabeth Waln Wister, her home and its contents including her wearing apparel were left to Charles Brockden Brown in trust for her daughter Mary Brown. She empowered her executors or executor to sell a ground rent of £14 per year, the interest to be applied to the use of Mary Brown and on her death to be divided share and share alike between the children of her two daughters Mary Brown and Elizabeth Waln. It was her "earnest desire and request that my children and Grand children Live in Love as becomes the followers of Christ." The witnesses to the will were Thomas Wright and James Sawyer, and J. Wampole the deputy register took their oaths. Elizabeth Armiti died on the 17th. of April. The continuation of this important trust is to be found in the last year of Brown's life, to which the reader is referred.

As in that letter to Mary Linn we have here another surprise. That our author of all the grandsons should be the only one chosen for such an important office as executor is the finest of evidence to corroborate our claim that dreamer that he was Brown was fully able to appreciate and act in all the practical

affairs of life. This trust and the turn his literary work had  
 taken at this time are <sup>convincing</sup> ~~merely~~ manifestations of the ~~superior~~  
 intelligence of Brown. ~~in all matters~~

The next letter<sup>x</sup> shows Brown was again in New York  
 & in July for the week of the fourth to the tenth.

<sup>x</sup> A facsimile and copy was published in the American Book Company  
 1937 edition of Brown. <sup>The late</sup> ~~Mr.~~ W. T. H. Howe kindly gave us permission  
 to use it here.

To John Blair Linn  
(Philadelphia)

[Thursday]

N. Y. July 8. 1802

My dear friend

Every day have I said: "Well; this morning will I write to Mr. Linn," & every day has gone by without writing. And how has this omission happened? I cannot tell. I, that, while here, have scarcely any thing, to do but to consult my pleasure, am overwhelmed with business, & have scarcely time to write a friendly letter. What with walks to the battery, to Harlem; to Hobuck; to Long Island, what with visits & conversations, I have less time, if possible, than in Philada.

The review is exceedingly behind hand, & my friends have imposed on me the task of reading & reviewing half a dozen books, which, without their injunctions, I should never have looked into. This has been an irksome undertaking, & which nothing but a kind of necessity could reconcile me to. To criticize without reading would be absurd, & to read not for instruction or amusement, would be galling slavery. The next number is very long in making its appearance, & I suppose will scarcely issue from the press in less than a fortnight. When

it reaches you, I am afraid you will be but little pleased with the alterations they have made in your pieces. I have prepared them to expect some displeasure from you, & they have earnestly besought me to apologise for them. I have told them, however, that they have little to expect from an advocate who thinks them in the wrong, & that I shall make but a poor defence against a displeasure, which I think has been merited.

I should like to have heard from you, my dear friend, but could hardly expect to be thus favoured unless by writing to you first, & provoking a reply. As it is, I expect in a few days, to make these inquiries in person. I stay here no longer than this week.

Present my affectionate respects to Mrs. Kim & to Rebecca. Tell Rebecca that I hope to bring her a copy of a letter from her sisters by way of atonement for past omissions. Mary has been disabled for some weeks, in her better hand, by a yellow which had like to have rotted her of her forefinger. She is getting the better of the enemy.



I shall be glad to kiss the little stranger  
 & to call him by his name, if he has one. I  
 hope he grows, at least, an inch a day.

Powers of  
 Genius  
 rev 2<sup>d</sup> ed.

Hers fares your poem.<sup>x</sup> I hope it has made  
 some advances toward the light in my  
 absence. If it has not I shall begin to lose  
 all faith in printers<sup>(1)</sup> yet, to say the truth,  
 my confidence in that tribe has never been great<sup>(1)</sup>

Your father is hourly expected from Albany,  
 but his stay here, it is said by those who  
 pretend to know, will be short, it being  
 settled that he is to supply Mr. Johnson's  
 place in Albany.<sup>xx</sup> Of this, however, if it  
 be true, you yourself, are doubtless, by  
 this time, apprized, through the proper  
 channels<sup>(1)</sup>

[1]

Though I expect to see you so soon,  
 it would give me great pleasure to have a  
 line from you ere I return, assuring me of  
 your welfare. Any thing directed to the care  
 of W. S. Esyre, Pine St., will reach

Your affectionate

C. B. B.

Your sisters are in health. The prospect of  
 removal to Albany<sup>xx</sup> has not added much to  
 their felicity<sup>(1)</sup>

[2]

<sup>x</sup> Powers of Genius revised second edition.

<sup>xx</sup> The "l" is omitted.

1

The next letter is given by Dunlap and indicated as addressed to an unknown young lady. Time and fate have removed the necessity for any secrecy in the matter and we supply the missing name.

To Miss (Rebecca Linn.<sup>2</sup>)

Philadelphia, (Wednesday) August 18, 1802.

My dear R.

Well, I hope your Sunday's journey was not very disagreeable. A coach, crowded with eleven persons, carrying you fifty miles, over rugged roads, on a sultry day in August, to a place you never saw before, with no friendly and tenderly remembered face to shine a welcome on you; how dare I even *hope* that your journey was a pleasant one?

You went away without me, my friend, but you did not leave my *fancy* behind you. Every now and then during that day, I figured your situation to myself, and when I awoke next morning *one* of the first things that occurred, nay, I am not sure that it was not absolutely the very first, was that you were safely arrived at your journey's end.

And how does my friend like her new situation? by this time you have begun to be acquainted with the men, women and trees that surround you. You have looked, several times, out of your chamber window on a meadow that lies before it, with the hobbled horse that grazes in it, and the blackberry bushes that border it. You have made more than one visit to the bushes, and regaled very sumptuously on these blackberries. You have grown quite familiar with the stout slices of brown bread, that make their appearance duly at morning and evening, and have not only banquetted on milk, but, milk maid like, have provided the banquet with your own hands. The pure airs and sweet smells of your new abode, inspire you with a thousand agreeable reveries. Health and cheerfulness have taken possession of you, and time flies so swiftly that you look back and are astonished that a couple of *weeks*, not a couple of days, have flown away since your arrival at the manor.

Am I a true *seer*, my friend? sometimes, I must confess, the picture which rises before me, when I think of you, is not quite so captivating. Instead of sound repose, I, now and then, behold nothing but unquiet dreams and tedious watchings. Instead of sprightly thoughts and the keen appetite

1 Vol. II, p. 105 ff.

2 This is the Rebecca Linn of the 9 January letter. See note on same with next letter.

that can feast even at a farmer's table, I see nothing but repining and disgusts; a mind continually musing on the past, an eye constantly intent on the absent. The scene before you is dull and tiresome. The stumblings of an hobbled horse have no power to delight you. Even blackberries display their delicious clusters in vain. You walk among them, merely because you can take no path which is not beset with them, and you pluck them as you go, for want of thought.

You will pardon the friendly zeal that is anxious to know which of these pictures is the true one. I beg you to write to me immediately, and tell me, exactly, how you feel, what you see, and what you are doing. Whether the pleasing prospect which I set before you, in our last conversation, has been realized. If it has *not*, I shall not be very much surprised, but I shall be very sorry.

The scene here is very dismal. There is scarcely a soul to be seen in quarters that used to be thronged, yet there seems no reason for those to be alarmed who still remain in the city. I expect to be gone into Jersey next week, merely because the total suspension of business will leave me nothing to do here.

Do not forget your promise to write to me. Remember that, with a generous mind, to *bestow* pleasure is to *receive* it, and that a letter from you, written as fully and as candidly as my affectionate regard for you deserves, will afford uncommon pleasure to your true friend

C. B. B. 11

There again we have an illuminating letter of Brown's. In the past the fault has been that the name was not supplied. Taken with the one to Mary Linn and with the next one and the latest one to Rebecca dated 18 January 1803 we have displayed one of the finest traits in Brown's character--his loyalty to the family he was to marry into. What he thought of Rebecca's character is to be seen in those four Portraits as given in the Literary Magazine among which<sup>2</sup> the third is Rebecca under the name of Rosa, as follows:

1 The yellow fever had broken out again.

2 Vol. II, p. 9. Later we shall find it necessary to quote the other portraits.

Rosa was a striking contrast with her two elder sisters. She was sprightly as the lark when he hails the first blush of morning. She was wild and imprudent, and neglectful of advice. Giddy in the pursuit of pleasure, she was heedless of consequences. She was not deficient in understanding, but that understanding she left uncultivated, for she was the student of dress. Her disposition was not unamiable, but it was not sufficiently corrected: it was frequently perverted. She was generally considered handsome: this she knew, and this was extremely detrimental to her progress in knowledge.

(A) The Farington Diary edited by James Greig, New York 1923, Vol. II, p. 33 note and 34, records an interesting dinner party at the ~~Rosier~~ Hotel de Marigny 27 September and thinks ~~it probable that~~ the Mr. Brown from America was our man. More than interesting, it is marvellous! How are we going to get him from Paris ~~back~~ to Philadelphia by <sup>the</sup> 9 October?

1

The next letter Dunlap indicates as to the same unknown young

lady.

To Miss (Rebecca Linn. 2)

Philadelphia, (Saturday, ) October 9, 1802.

1 Dunlap, Vol. II, p. 106 fr. (4 A)

2 She married William Keese, 5 February 1803. See note to Brown's letter to him in 1807.

So, my good R. your brother tells me that you reached home in safety and in due season. I suppose the tediousness of the way was somewhat beguiled by the agreeable conversation of Mr. E. I should like to have been in his place. The pleasure of accompanying you, together with the pleasures I might hope for on my arrival, and the more agreeable hope of accompanying one of your family back to Philadelphia, would have rendered it by far the most pleasing journey I have ever taken: but fate intervened and said "nay."

You will not tell me, I fear, the motive of your hasty journey, but will you not, at least, tell me whether the mystery, whatever it be, has found a satisfactory explanation. Whether, in this change of scene, and under the paternal roof, you are as happy as you hoped or expected to be. Does the angel "consideration" always stand at your elbow, and give you the friendly twitch whenever you are going to say or do a wrong thing. What a privilege would it be to enjoy the constant admonitions of some such friend as this. How much unhappiness would it enable you, my good friend, particularly, to escape.

Caution, forbearance, a constant curb upon the thoughts and the tongue are necessary to the happiness of every human being: especially of the young, and of those who have naturally a warm and impetuous temper; and is not R. somewhat distinguished by such a temper; and is she not at present in a situation where her own happiness and that of others very much depend upon her circumspection?

What infinitely greater merit is there in that meekness and forbearance which is the fruit of forethought and consideration than that which is the gift of our mothers: which governs us naturally, and not so much from the exercise, as from the absence of a strenuous mind. And this merit, R. may be yours. Nature has given you irritable feelings, it is true, but she has given you, likewise, an excellent understanding, and thus enabled you to temper and controul those feelings, and thus to secure to yourself greater merit as well as greater happiness than can possibly fall to the share of the naturally, insipidly, unreflectingly meek.

But what a preachment is here! I am afraid it will disgust you. I wish you happy, but, alas, have it not in my power to make you so. Cold, unanimated, starch precepts, never pointed out, or facilitated the road to any body, I am not near enough, nor if I were, have I authority enough with you, to play successfully the part of that elbow monitor I have spoken of above.

I rely on your promise to write to me: write me not a short letter, and treat me, I beseech you, without reserve. Tell me all that particularly concerns you, as to one who makes your interest his own, and who, while he is your true friend, cannot but be a disinterested one.

I shall greatly be disappointed if you do not write to me, and still more so if you treat me as a stranger. I shall be glad to hear of you, and of the dear friends to which my regard for you intitles me.

You can enclose any thing for me, in your sister's letters, if she will permit; or, if that mode be inconvenient, you can address to me, by post, as you have already done.

Adieu, God and his angel prudence, be with you, my friend,

C. B. B.

Now that we have seen what sort of letters Brown could write to his prospective sisters it is suitable to call attention to what may often be found in his works of prose fiction and in other writings which we shall ascribe to him; namely that one of the favorite circumstances for his hero is to have two or three sisters dependent on him.. So far as we know this dependence, if it was pecuniary and not social, could not have been literally true in the case of the Linns but it undoubtedly was inspired by them. Later we shall find Brown carrying this care of a sister-in-law to its logical end.

As we shall see presently when we have noticed the last material of Brown's biography for this year it was during September and October that the Dialogues on Music and Painting were published in the Port Folio. Our study of them has brought to light new material of importance but being purely literary this is no place to give it.

~~Brown was one of the earliest to appreciate and recognise the~~  
 1 Elizabeth Linn's.

Clark<sup>x</sup> quotes a letter as follows

(To Elizabeth Anne ~~Thompson~~)  
(7 December 1802)

"You hint at the propriety of my unbosoming myself, upon my own affairs - What hitherto has deterred me? Nothing but the sense, that the detail of my affairs would be unintelligible. The general truths - that I have an equal share, in the gains of my profession, with my brothers; - that those gains were, one or two years ago, such as to secure thee & me in the possession of affluence. I have often told you misfortunes (I have not concealed from thee) have since come - and now what remains but to build up again the half-fallen edifice: not to suffer the disappointments of the highest hopes to extinguish hope altogether."

The interpretation put on that ~~represents~~ Brown as <sup>a partner</sup> ~~in~~ the mercantile business of James Brown & Co.

~~James was established since 1601 at 33 South Front street. but it was not until the next year that the company appears in Robinson's directory.~~ With all of his editorial work and

x M. C. Clark: C.B.B. (New York, 1923) pp. 44-5.

1471B  
his trips to New York it is improbable  
he was more than the sleeping partner  
Dunlap has recorded.

The reference to the affluence of two years  
ago ~~may~~<sup>probably</sup> means ~~Brown~~<sup>he</sup> had, hoped to  
marry Elizabeth Linn. (as early as 1800)

Brown was one of the earliest to recognize the



promising work Jonathan Oldstyle which made its appearance in the New York Morning Chronicle beginning 15 November and continuing on the 20th., December 1, 3, 11, etc. Dunlap had been stirred up over Jonathan's dramatic criticism, so Brown could hardly have been ignorant of the work in which the satire may have amused him and the chivalrous attitude toward women could not help but win <sup>his</sup> the applause ~~of the author of Alcuin~~. Be that as it may, it was in December of this year he made an unsuccessful attempt to secure Washington Irving as a contributor to the Literary Magazine and American Register, which ~~was then being regularly published~~. Irving was ~~then~~ nineteen and just beginning his career. That Brown <sup>interviewed</sup> ~~called on, rather than wrote to~~ him seems probable for Irving <sup>ed</sup> ~~was then living~~ at the corner of William and Ann streets in New York.

With the end of this year came the last issue of the American Review and Literary Journal which had been begun in 1801.

<sup>The first number</sup>  
 1 <sup>others</sup> A may be found in the Knickerbocker edition and the ~~rest~~ in the New York and London 1824 pamphlet, which omits I and numbers the others from I to VIII instead of II to IX. ~~Unfortunately~~ The dates of the last four are not given.