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CLARA HOWARD

1801

Clara Howard; in a Series of Letters was published pseudonymously in Philadelphia by Asbury Dickins. H. Maxwell, who had been the publisher of the first volume of Edgar Huntly, and whose work in that capacity was unsatisfactory to Brown and his brother James, appears as the printer.

The April 25 number of the Portfolio, in the "Literary Intelligence" ^{it.} [^] announces ~~the work as follows~~ #

"Mr. Asbury Dickins is preparing for the press, a new novel, of the epistolary class, from the pen of a well-known and popular writer."

~~The absence of Brown's name was a part of the plan of publication~~ ^{usual}
~~and the pseudonym~~
~~for it also did not appear on the title page. In this connection it~~
~~is interesting to note that the Portfolio was printed and published by~~ [^] #
~~the same two individuals as Brown's book so that the announcement was~~
~~of an official nature.~~

^{the first}
 In volume ~~one~~ of Sparks' American Biography ^{the} as a frontispiece to Prescott's essay on Brown there is a reproduction of one of Brown's letters, as follows:-

~~1 The secondary title of the first edition was not "for the Enthusiasm of Love".~~

Philad. May 8, 1801.1

The printer has made considerable progress on the publication which I believe I mentioned to you in my last, as having been begun. It will, be, typographically considered, a very beautiful book.

I'm in haste

Adieu

Charles B. Brown.

Brown's opinion ~~of the bookmaking~~ is true even to-day. ~~The volume~~ will compare favorably with any, ~~the only improvement that could be~~ ^{though} ~~made is~~ the binding, could be improved.

^{the} ~~Brown's~~ American Review ² ~~in the number~~ for April, May and June notices the late publication of Clara Howard. The Philadelphia Gazette and Daily Advertiser contained an advertisement which, from its date, makes the ~~day of~~ publication Monday 22 June. ~~It reads:~~

"A New Novel | A. Dickens | Has this day published | An original novel, | entitled | Clara Howard; | in a | Series of letters | By the author of Wieland, Ormond, | Arthur Mervyn, Edgar Huntley, &c. | Copyright secured | Beautifully printed on fine wove paper | Price one dollar |."

The title is important, ~~for more than the obvious reason~~. It gives the secondary-title as ~~it was~~ in the first edition not as it appeared in the London 180⁴ edition altered into the sickly-sentimental "Enthusiasm of Love."

Exactly when Brown wrote the story is not known, but it seems as if

1 Who it was addressed to and what has become of ^A ~~this letter~~ is not known.

2 Vol. I, p. 263.

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of her hand. This novel has been republished in England. There is a great skill and energy displayed in the delineation of Edward's fate; and the mind of the reader sympathizes with him when the cause for which he suffers is lost in our sense of his sufferings. But the succeeding moment, when we recover from the author's energy, and call to mind the strange and incredible nature of the incident, all the sympathy is lost, and the writer has to do the work of Penelope again."

In that too lengthy explanation Paul Allen shows a surprising ignorance of the novel ~~as worked out by Brown~~; in truth his knowledge ~~of the facts~~ is so much at variance with the book ~~that~~ he is under the suspicion of having skimmed ~~rather than read~~ it.

When ~~his~~ objections ~~are thoroughly~~ examined ~~they~~ prove to be absolutely untrue.

Brown did not plan his novel on the case only as presented by Wilkins. First of all he showed ~~that~~ the situation was not so ~~childishly~~ simple as Allen had represented it, ~~to be~~ ~~thus~~ The absurdity which Allen pictures in it was quite changed when Brown added the details which make the plot possible of the perfectly reasonable solution desired by the reader. Allen represents it as incapable of solution. In Clara Howard there is no where a statement that Edward was to press his suit with Mary as if Clara ~~were~~ the subject. Mary had represented herself as wasting away to death, so ~~that~~ Clara's and Edward's desire was to ascertain

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in the History of Maria Kittle.¹ "An American Lady" used it in the
Hapless Orphan,² and Samuel Relf used it in Infidelity.³ These
only
four cases are the ones recorded in the usual references. An
anonymous English work entitled The Advertisement for A Husband
which carries a running title of Belinda or the Enterprising Lover
was printed by Isaiah Thomas at Worcester in 1799 and also uses
it.

Probably the most important work of Brown's day which carried
such an explanation was the English translation of Rousseau's
Nouvelle Héloïse ~~as~~ published in ^{Philadelphia 1796.} ~~London 1784~~. Its title ^{is} reads
Eloisa: or, a series of original letters. So far as we have been
able to learn ^{it} ~~there~~ ^{improbable} ~~is no authority for saying~~ Brown read any
of the five, ~~though it is probable he had read~~ ^{except} Maria Kittle, but
we are certain ~~that~~ he ~~had~~ read Rousseau's work ^{so} and it ^{seems} ~~is apparent~~
he derived his secondary-title from that source. ^{particular}

Clara Howard ~~is a novel of the epistolary type~~. As distinguished
from his romances ^{up to this time} ~~it is~~ a venture into the realm
of realism. Other than ^{belonging to} ~~its being of~~ the epistolary class of novel
it has no relation to Fanny Burney's Evelina or to Richardson's
Clarissa Harlowe for it has nothing of the manners of the latter
1 N.Y. Magazine, 1790-91. 2 Boston, 1793. 3 Philadelphia, 1797.

and nothing of the social satire of the former. In fact ~~con-~~
~~trary to the famous examples cited~~, it exists mostly for the story,
and so far as its ^{literary type} ~~general character~~ is concerned it ~~may be con-~~
~~sidered as a novel of the epistolary class~~ ^{has} with no parentage.

~~Whatever virtues it may have as a novel of its class it is,~~
As we have seen ^{it is} not a new venture for Brown, though it is the
first which he completed and offered to the public as a volume.
In letter structure it does not compare with the fragment Jessica,
~~in which he had the opportunity to improve on the epistolary~~
~~novel.~~

The story is presented in a total of thirty-six documents:
¹
thirty-three letters with three more as enclosures. Four of the
characters tell the ~~whole~~ story ~~by this means~~. Of them Clara
²
Howard writes thirteen, seven signed C.H., four signed Clara and one
unsigned; Edward Hartley writes sixteen, ³ twelve signed E.H.,
one signed E.Hartley, one signed Edward and two unsigned; Mary
⁴
Wilmot writes five, one signed M.W. and four signed Mary; and
Clara's father writes two, one signed E.Howard and one signed

1 The numbering of the first edition is ~~made~~ erroneous after XXVII,
the number being repeated. ~~All~~ of our references are ~~to be~~ made
as if it were corrected. Thus XXVIII is the second letter numbered
XXVII, XXIX is XXVIII of the first edition, etc.
2 Letters Nos. IV, VI, VII, IX, XI, XIV, XVI, XIX, XXI, XXIII, XXIX, XXXII, and
XXXIII.
3 Letters I, II, III, V, VIII, XII, XIII, XV, XVII, XVIII, XX, XXII, XXIV, XXV,
XXVI, and XXXI.
4 Letters (2) enclosed in II, XXVI

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of two things--he either kept it because he feared the real people concerned in the story would be recognised or else he left it in his journal and only pulled it out when he ^{found material} ~~was hard put to it to~~ ~~find a plot for another story~~ ^{book.}

Unimportant details are not properly attended to; characters are invented and introduced at convenience being named almost any time after; the Schuylkill floods happen too often and conveniently; ~~in fact there is too much of the river business~~; Mary speaks of New York as her native city and in another letter she said she was born at a hotel in Paris; there is an unnecessary confusion of Mary Anne the mother and Mary the daughter because Brown soon calls the mother Mary; the ages of the characters are all mixed up; ~~and no where made clear, so that the reader cannot grasp the relation of their ages~~; and so many details of ~~the~~ relationships are needlessly given ~~so that~~ no one can follow them without a diagram.

Brown makes a careless mistake when he dates letters XXI and XXII so ~~that~~ it would have been necessary ~~for one~~ to go by stage from New York to Philadelphia in one day. Ususally the journey took ¹⁰⁰ at least two. There are ~~so~~ many engagements made for Tuesday, ~~that one is inclined to believe that there was no other day in the calendar.~~

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What is possibly an interesting slip ~~which Brown made here~~ appears
to have been ^{received} ~~taken~~ by Timothy Flint ¹ as an example of the early ignor-
ance of the western part of our country. In the twenty-sixth letter
Philip, ~~in~~ telling Clara of his canoeing down the Allegheny river into
the Ohio and Mississippi and then up the Missouri, makes what may be an
~~careless slip~~ ^{error} ~~of~~ ^{by} giving the sources of the Allegheny as near the shore
of lake Ontario. If Brown so intended the passage ~~to be understood~~
he should of course have said Erie instead of Ontario but we are not
compelled to interpret ~~it in~~ ^{way.} that ~~light~~. So far as the map goes there
is no reason whatever why Philip's eye should not have taken the leap
from the shore of Ontario to the sources of the Allegheny. On the other
hand it is possible ~~that~~ Flint's point is merely applicable to the
close of the ~~Brown~~ paragraph which speaks of "the dangers of an untried
navigation, of hostile tribes, and unknown regions" of the Missouri.

1 Western Monthly Review, December 1827, p. 493.

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Hall's contributions to Brown's Literary Magazine, is not known,

but ^{likely} it is ~~probable~~ that the name was a fanciful one and the occurrence a coincidence.

~~The account of Mary's father as having made~~ ^{many} marginal notes in books, and ~~having kept~~ ^{my} a youthful journal for two or three years seems to recall ^{Brown's} the author's own journalizing; the despair, suicidal thoughts and melancholy of the characters; Edward's dislike of rural life and ~~the picture of the hero studying the map on the walls of his uncle's parlor~~ ^{which we know Brown did at home} ~~already quoted as an autobiographical touch of Brown's~~ ⁱⁿ early youth: are all autobiographical. However, ~~on the whole~~ this work is less related to Brown's own life

than any other ~~one~~ of his ~~pieces of~~ prose fiction, up to this time.

Clara Howard was not an entirely new production of ~~Brown's~~ ^{for} in

it ~~there are~~ ^{has} some of the situations with most of their details ~~just~~

^{the same} as they had appeared before, in ~~his other books~~. Of these the principal

situation ~~is that~~ of Mary Wilmot and Edward Hartley, ~~which~~ is

merely another form of that of Mary Waldegrave and Edgar Huntly.

In Edgar Huntly ^a ~~one of the~~ points which caused unfavorable comment

by the critics was the question ~~as to~~ whether Huntly married

Mary Waldegrave. The actual outcome was left unstated and while

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~~as we have endeavored to show in treating of that work,~~ there ^{were} are
suggestive passages which seem ^{to} indicate Brown's intention
still the facts ^{was} ~~were~~ not given. Here ~~In Clara Howard~~ we not only
have practically all of the situation ~~that we had~~ in Edgar Huntly
but we have ~~the affair~~ ^{it} brought to a happy termination.

In Edgar Huntly Mary Waldegrave had a brother, a penurious school-
teacher, who died. After his death it was found ~~that~~ he had eight
thousand dollars in the bank. Mary had meanwhile become engaged
to Edgar Huntly and the ~~sudden acquisition of so much money~~
made possible their marriage. They spent some of the money and
were nearing the time of the ^{Ceremony} ~~wedding~~ when a stranger, Wentworth,
~~by name~~ appeared and claimed ~~that~~ the money had been sent by him
to Mary's brother for safe keeping. Huntly then goes through
various experiences, all thoughts of a wedding being abandoned and
the story proceeds to its ending with the payment of the money
and the wedding unnarrated.

For the situation we only have to substitute ^{for Mary Waldegrave,}
Here in Clara Howard Mary Wilmot had a brother, a school-master,
make the money three thousand less, use Edward Hartley for Huntly and
who died. After his death it was found that he had five thousand
call the stranger Morton instead of Wentworth. That ^{will} carry us to
~~dollars in the bank. Mary had meanwhile become engaged to Edward~~
~~Hartley and the sudden acquisition of so much money made possible~~

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~~thousand dollars and in the end the question whether it is paid or not is not stated, but presumably it is. In the former case it is not real the complication being a coincidence, in the latter the claim is an actual one and so far as we know is not given up by the claimant.~~

Besides this intimate relationship between Clara Howard and Edgar Huntly there are many traces of the earlier works of Brown.

Edward's nurse, Mrs. Ashton who is conveniently the sister of the girl he rescues and the situation, recalls the Mary Selwyn of Mary Selwyn and Mrs. Stevens of Arthur Mervyn. When Mr. Wilmot died and left Mary alone with her brother to be cared for, she took cheap lodgings in a suburb and did needle work. Constantia Dudley in Ormond did the same thing when her father became blind. The widow whom Howard married had formerly paid a debt for which Howard had been arrested. In Sky Walk, or at least all that we have of that work, there is a similar situation. Mary's running away from Hartley recalls Mary Selwyn running away from Haywood as found in Mary Selwyn in the Monthly Magazine. Hartley's idea of being Clara's almoner or agent in the philanthropic use of her wealth recalls the position of Clithero as related to Mrs. Lorimer in Edgar

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Huntly. As a result of the death of Mary's mother, her father had become dissipated ~~just~~ as Dudley did in Ormond after the death of his wife. As in other instances characters are startled by a sudden unannounced entrance such as that of Mary in letter II.

Taken as a whole this indebtedness of Clara Howard to Edgar Huntly and other works by Brown is ~~to be considered as~~ an indication ~~that~~ he did not ~~always~~ strive to collect new material for his successive works. He saw no reason why the old details should not be shaken up and allowed to fall in different or the same combinations but unlike the actual use in two works of the same composition which he had practised in the case of the Man at Home and Ormond the passages which contain the similar detailed materials are entirely written in different words, sentences and paragraphs.

While they are details which may be beyond the pale of interest of the reader still ~~the fact remains that~~ some of the names are so strikingly similar ~~to others that~~ it is only proper to call attention to them. Clara Howard is not far from Clarissa Harlowe, perhaps it is no further from Clara Wieland. Whether Clara is also related to the Clara of the verses of this same year and the "lady whom you and I know" in the Taste for the Picturesque in the Monthly Magazine we do not know. It is quite

For a great part of Clara Howard Brown went back to his early sickly sentiment so ~~that~~ the work is lacking in sufficient excellences to offset the faults, ~~which are too evident~~. With such a plot and its complications, which Brown ~~took no care to simplify~~ ~~but on the contrary~~ did all he could to complicate, the work falls to what is probably the lowest level ^{he} ~~our~~ author ever reached.

However as a step in the life of Brown ^{the book} ~~Clara Howard~~ is one of the most important. In a ~~former~~ letter to his brother James we ^{learn} ~~see~~ ^{had been} ~~that~~ he ~~was~~ assailed because of the wildness and out-of-nature incidents which he ~~had~~ used in Edgar Huntly. Here in Clara Howard he made a serious attempt to turn ~~his hand~~ to the realistic ^{from} ~~rather than~~ the romantic side of fiction and he succeeded. From this time forth we shall lose sight of the old romantic rhapsodical Brown and find him ^a ~~changed into~~ the realistic novelist and ^a ~~the~~ severely practical journalist.

~~It seems clear that~~ ^{he} ~~he~~ was a real prophet who said ~~that~~ Brown had he lived longer would have become a great publicist.