

ART. XI.—*Dr John Brown (1715-1766)*. By P. M. HORSLEY, M.A., Ph.D.

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JOHN BROWN was the victim of hypomania.¹ In his day neither the name of the disorder nor the appropriate therapy were known, but the watchful affection and good sense of his north-country friends helped him, in his early life, to combat his disability. When he left Cumberland, mixed in a society which, with few exceptions, made no attempt to understand his moods, and sought an antidote in overwork, his condition steadily deteriorated. At the age of fifty-one he was driven to take the step he had always feared and abhorred, the step which, in his sober senses, he said was that of a man devoid of all religion and in dread of infamy and shame — suicide.

By descent a Lowland Scot,² a fact of which he was not a little proud, a Northumbrian by birth,³ he was by upbringing a Cumbrian. His father was inducted Vicar of Wigton in 1715 and served the parish faithfully for forty-seven years.

Young John grew up in the vicarage, playing in the garden and paddock with his sister Margaret, whose death in 1722 at the age of eight was his first encounter with sorrow. He was tutored by his scholarly father and, in due course, attended the local grammar school, enjoying the bounty of Dr John Thomlinson, Rector

¹ A psychosis in which alterations in mental function spring from a pathologically disordered mind. These alterations vary from excessive elation, through normalcy, to acute depression, which may lead to suicide.

² He claimed descent from the Brouns of Colstoun, near Haddington. His father, also named John, was born at Duns.

³ Born in 1715 at Whitton, near Rothbury, where his father was then curate. In 1712 Brown senior had married Eleanor (née Potts), widow of Anthony Troutbeck (died August 1710), both of Whitton.

of Rothbury. The Rector was instrumental in effecting an increase in the vicar's very modest stipend,⁴ and, towards the end of the boy's schooldays, in conjunction with his brother, Dr Robert Thomlinson, Rector of Whickham, contributed to the endowment fund and the rebuilding of the school.⁵

Probably on Dr Thomlinson's suggestion Brown was entered at St John's College, Cambridge, where, after matriculating in 1732, he studied under Dr Tostal and showed outstanding promise. Indeed, at the outset of his career Brown felt an upsurge of ambition to shine in matters ecclesiastical and literary. He graduated in 1735 and proceeded M.A. four years later.

On returning to Cumberland he was ordained deacon at Carlisle (26 February 1737/38) and appointed assistant curate at his father's church in Wigton. On 20 April, he obtained a minor canonry at Carlisle Cathedral, which he held until his replacement on 23 November 1750. A lectureship at Carlisle (14 November 1739)⁶ preceded his ordination as priest (23 December 1739) by Sir George Fleming, the ageing Bishop of Carlisle. These appointments were followed

⁴ £32. 13s. 4d. per annum at the time of Queen Anne's Bounty.

⁵ Brown was to benefit from Dr Robert's generosity when he went to Newcastle. His fine library was housed at the Church of St Nicholas and the librarian was Nathaniel Clayton, later one of Brown's close friends and executor.

John was the eldest, and Robert the youngest son of Richard Thomlinson of Blencogo. The benefactions of the two brothers to Allonby, Wigton, Newcastle, Whickham, Rothbury and Bellingham are listed by E. H. Adamson (AA2 xiv) and W. Shand (AA2 xix). Through their brother Richard, admitted free of the Merchant Adventurers (10 January 1693), and their sister Isabel, wife of Ralph Reed, merchant adventurer and alderman of Newcastle, the family figures in the commercial life of Tyneside.

The Carlisle pedigree states that their grandfather, Edward, was the son of Anthony Thomlinson, Bailiff of Gateshead. Shand favours their descent from the Yorkshire Thomlinsons and this thesis is supported by their nephew, John Thomlinson, curate at Rothbury in 1717. (See *Diary of the Reverend John Thomlinson*, Surtees Society, vol. 118.)

The diarist also suggests that Robert was the more sympathetic and approachable of the two rectors, but that John Brown senior managed to keep on good terms with Dr John: "1717. August 9th. Uncle Robert was very kind — gave me five sermons, he advised me never to contradict th'old lad. Mr Brown gott into his favour by telling him old Canterbury stories, etc."

⁶ He resigned the lectureship on 14 November 1757.

by his induction as Vicar of Morland (6 June 1743)⁷ and Lazonby (8 April 1752).

If we are to believe Warburton, Brown was then hoping for promotion. In a letter (14 October 1754) to Hurd, Warburton wrote:

Our honest little friend Brown is fertile in projects. He has a scheme to erect a chaplain and chapel in the castle of Carlisle, and to be himself the man. *Inter nos*, I believe he might as well think of erecting a third archbishopric.

But long before this there was trouble at the Cathedral. Dr Bolton, the Dean, censured him for forgetting to read the Athanasian Creed on the appointed day. Brown retorted by inserting the creed on the wrong occasion and refusing to officiate at any more services.

He was suffering from acute depression. He had begun work on an epic poem, the story of a Trojan who came to Britain after the fall of Troy, and had driven himself so mercilessly that his father, alarmed at his increasing attacks of irritability and dejection, finally persuaded him to lay it aside. His poem *Honour* (1743), dedicated to Lord Lonsdale, attracted little attention and Brown for a time disappeared from public view.

In private life he had good friends, for he was normally an agreeable companion and entertaining conversationalist. Captain Gilpin, then on duty at the Castle, held soirées at his home. Both men were interested in literature, painting⁸ and music. Brown had a pleasing voice⁹ and was a proficient violinist. Mrs Gilpin and her large family provided a ready-made

⁷ A richer living than his father's. £45 net per annum at the time of the Bounty.

⁸ See Brown's works, *passim*. He was on visiting terms with Hogarth and well acquainted with Hudson, Knapton, Pond, Davis and Grignon of London, and with Hoare of Bath. He took infinite pains to place George Senhouse of Netherhall as a pupil. Brown's portraits of his father and mother, together with his self-portrait, were well known. Unfortunately their present whereabouts is unknown.

⁹ Not in Horace Walpole's opinion. He wrote scathingly to George Montagu (4 May 1758) of the "jackanape's" performance with Mingotti in the *Stabat Mater* at Lady Carlisle's concert.

audience for impromptu concerts, regularly attended by the learned and kindly James Farish, Vicar of Stanwix, and occasionally by Charles Avison, organist of St Nicholas' Church, Newcastle. Brown was extremely fortunate in his choice of friends. There is no doubt that he gleaned ideas, later to be incorporated in his writings, from Farish, Avison,¹⁰ and his father,¹¹ while Mrs Gilpin and Farish understood his moodiness and never failed to relieve his despondency.

In 1745 Brown emerged from semi-retirement. On 9 November an advance party of the Young Pretender's troops, whom he later dubbed "a mob of ragged Highlanders", reached Stanwix Bank. The following day the city, ill-equipped to withstand a siege, was surrounded. Lt-Col. Durand commanded the pathetically inadequate garrison, which included two companies of invalided veterans led by Captain Gilpin. The local militia decamped and the call went out for volunteers. Brown, always a staunch Hanoverian and completely indifferent to his personal safety, offered his services. As he was still officially a member of the cathedral staff, he took his turn with his fellow-clergy as look-out at the top of the church tower,¹² did sentry duty on the walls from dusk to dawn and, when the defenders retired into the castle, acted, together with Mr Farish and Prebendary Wilson, as aide-de-camp to Gilpin. The position was untenable. To save the town from destruction Col.

¹⁰ The Rev. William Gilpin (see *Memoirs of Dr Richard Gilpin*, London and Carlisle, 1879) was in error in saying that Brown helped Avison with his *Essay on Musical Expression*, when he was Vicar of Newcastle. Brown did not go to Newcastle until 1761. He possibly introduced Avison to his own bookseller, Lockyer Davis of London, whose name appears in the 1752, 1753 and 1775 editions.

Gilpin shows considerable animosity towards Brown whom he accused of failing to implement his offer to help Gilpin with his expenses for his degree course at The Queen's College, Oxford.

¹¹ In his *Dissertation on the Rise and Progress of Poetry*. See Hutchinson's *History and Antiquities of Cumberland*, ii 470-473.

¹² At his court martial (15-16 September 1746) Col. Durand paid tribute to their accuracy and vigilance.

Durand was forced to surrender. On 18 November Charles Edward Stuart entered Carlisle.

If the inhabitants suffered during the Scottish occupation, they were even more wretched after the relief of the town by the Duke of Cumberland's army on New Year's Eve. The distress caused by overcrowded billets, inefficient sanitation, a shortage of food and water, and wintry weather was further aggravated by an outbreak of smallpox. It was little consolation that many of their late captors were under lock and key in the cathedral which was left in such a state that it had to be fumigated before it could be reopened for worship. In these anxious days Brown remained in the neighbourhood, carrying letters between the authorities and the Bishop at Rose Castle, but still at variance with the Dean and Chapter.¹³

He was soon to reappear in the cathedral pulpit. The trial of 127 Jacobite rebels opened at Carlisle on 9 September 1746 and Brown preached two Assize sermons before a congregation already influenced by the local press which was violently biased against the accused. Taking as his text: "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free",¹⁴ he expounded his views on the connection between religious truth and civil freedom, between superstition, irreligion, tyranny and licentiousness, views which he was to maintain throughout his career as preacher and writer. He revealed his unswerving allegiance to the Established Church and the House of Hanover, his intense pride in his country, his firm belief that true liberty and obedience to the laws of the land are complementary. While asserting that Christian practice requires

¹³ As late as 26 June 1746, Joseph Nicolson, confidential adviser to the Bishop, commented to the Chancellor, Dr Waugh, on the "pretty warm dispute between the Dean and Mr Head (Prebendary) about Mr Brown's refusing to do duty in the Cathedral." (See *An Authentic Account of the Occupation of Carlisle in 1745 by Prince Charles Edward Stuart*, Ed. G. G. Mounsey, London and Carlisle, 1846.)

¹⁴ St John xii. 32.

the extension of the laws of justice and charity to men of all denominations, he denounced Roman Catholicism as "absurdity made sacred", the Pope as "the great enemy of truth and freedom" the Pretender as the despotic propagator of ignorance and servitude. He therefore urged his honest countrymen to support King George who was ever mindful of the rights of his humblest subjects — inflammatory words which scarcely accorded with his assurance that he was not inciting his hearers against the prisoners, whose fate must be left to the "justice of our excellent laws, tempered by the wise mercy of a gracious King".

The exercise of such justice and mercy meant that, some six weeks later, Brown could see, impaled on the Scotch and English Gates, the heads of many of the men who had been hanged, drawn and quartered on Gallows Hill.

These sermons formed the basis of Brown's reputation as a popular preacher. Their unqualified support of the government was couched in neat turns of phrase with a discreet use of antithesis and a clarity which contrasts markedly with the digressions and wealth of detail in his books, designed to display his erudition rather than to further his argument. Abbé Le Blanc roundly condemned all English preachers for their poor delivery,¹⁵ but Brown could claim exemption from this ruling. We know from one of his Tyneside listeners that his congregations "felt the magic of his tongue".¹⁶ He himself publicly condemned indolent or lifeless preachers and was complacently aware of his own forcefulness, although apt to exaggerate its impact.

Shortly afterwards he was appointed chaplain to Dr Richard Osbaldeston, Sir George Fleming's successor as Bishop of Carlisle, who was to prove a

¹⁵ *Lettres d'un Français*, no. 53.

¹⁶ William Hilton in *A Fragment*, written during Brown's lifetime.

friend in need. In this capacity he preached at the consecration of St James' Church, Whitehaven, on the use and abuse of ceremonial, stressing the necessity, in that indifferent age, for a consecrated building where Christians could bear public witness to their faith by sincere participation in a simple, dignified form of worship. He admitted that Christianity and conformity were not synonymous, that all sects were entitled to their own ceremonial or lack of it, but concluded that no form of worship could equal that of the Established Church in its contribution to peace, piety and virtue.

In very different vein was his vigorous attack on gambling, delivered in Bath Abbey (22 April 1750). The immediate purpose of the sermon was the raising of funds for the hospital, an aim in which Brown was always successful, but, finding himself in the haunts of a Beau Nash hard hit by the gaming laws of 1740 and 1745, he addressed himself to those members of his fashionable congregation who might feel tempted to squander their time, health and money at the gaming tables and drew a vivid picture of the progressive degradation and evil fate in store for habitués. He went so far as to attack the local magistrates for failing to suppress illegal gambling. It was a provocative discourse but did not justify Brown in stating in the 1764 edition of *Sermons on Various Subjects* that, soon after the delivery of this sermon, the tables at Bath had been suppressed by the magistrates. They had acted vigorously some months before.¹⁷

It becomes increasingly clear that Brown was not to emulate his father in his devotion to parish work. Apart from his name in the list of vicars there is no record of his ministry at Morland or Lazonby. He was frequently absent from his parishes and must have

¹⁷ The *Bath Journal* (8 January 1749/1750) reported the descent by the Mayor, Corporation and Justices of the City on a house where illegal gaming was in progress. Several arrests were made, the tables and equipment destroyed.

spent the greater part of his time there in his study, engrossed in his growing correspondence with new and influential acquaintances or working on an extensive literary programme. In his own words he felt "buried in a country curacy" and, at a later stage, countered critics of his absenteeism by asserting that he neither despised nor neglected the duties of a parochial preacher but took upon himself "the more important and arduous one of a *national preacher*".¹⁸ Such overweening self-esteem could not be contained in a remote countryside. Yet Brown occasionally betrays an innate appreciation of natural beauty and serenity, notably in his comparison of Dovedale and Keswick in a letter to Lord Lyttelton and in his *Inscription written at a favourite Retirement in May 1758*,¹⁹ when his star was in temporary eclipse. Does this poem hint at his regret for what he had thrown away? It would perhaps have been better for his health of body and mind if he had contented himself with his rural surroundings and the company of old, well-tried friends, but he was to be entangled in a web of his own weaving.

His poem *Liberty*, published by his friend Bowyer in 1749 made no more impact than *Honour*. Indeed Thomas Gray, discussing Brown among other poets, expressed his dissatisfaction to Walpole, if not to the authors in question. "What shall I say? — If I say, Messieurs, this is not the thing; write prose, write sermons, write nothing at all; they will disdain me and my advice." Certainly Brown, whose acquaintance with Gray dated from their undergraduate days, would have ignored his stricture. Brown produced a more ambitious work, his *Essay on Satire*, inspired by the death of Pope and dedicated to Warburton, which was later to appear in Dodsley's *Collection of Poems*

¹⁸ *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, 1758 edition, Book 2, part 2, section 2.

¹⁹ Both are quoted in Hutchinson's *History and Antiquities of Cumberland*, ii.

(1751) and in Warburton's edition of Pope's works.

Part I dealt with the purpose of satire, the surgeon's knife which cuts out the canker of vainglory and fear of shame, leaving the patient receptive to the healing influence of true virtue and wisdom. From these metaphorical flights Brown descended to the essentials of effective satire. Satire must be just and credible, the foe of the guilty and the protector of the blameless. The unbridled use of ridicule manifest in Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* has no place in satire, which must preserve decency and dignity of expression in delineating the follies and vices of contemporary society, whose portrayal further demands well-judged variations in approach and style. A bantering tone best suits the affectations of the world of fashion whereas irreligion, treachery and betrayal of public or private trust must be denounced in uncompromising terms. Benign praise of virtue is part of the satirist's duty but here he must beware of the pitfalls of the panegyric.

"— tread with cautious step this dang'rous ground," wrote Brown, careless of the fact that he had already penned two eulogies of Warburton and was to conclude the third section — a history of satire from Lucilius to Pope — with the fervent hope that

— O Warburton, inspir'd by you,
The daring Muse a nobler path pursue,
By you inspir'd, on trembling pinion soar,
The sacred founts of social bliss explore,
In her bold numbers chain the tyrant's rage,
And bid her country's glory fire her page."

Warburton voiced his approval of this work, generally accepted as "breathing the very soul of Pope", in a letter to Hurd (30 January 1750): "Mr Brown has fine parts; he has a genius for poetry, and has acquired a force of versification very uncommon." He took Brown under his wing, introduced him to

many of his friends and indicated what his next literary venture should be. Brown had yet to discover that his patron was attentive to any promising young author²⁰ who might prove useful to him. Warburton adopted the wrong attitude towards the sensitive, unbalanced young man and aggravated Brown's disability by precipitating quarrels and reconciliations. He praised and blamed, pitied and disparaged, and prided himself on his firm handling of a difficult character. On one occasion he wrote:²¹ "Brown is here; I think rather perter than ordinary, but no wiser. You cannot imagine the tenderness they all have of his tender places and with how unfeeling a hand I probe them." Despite this cavalier treatment Brown, in his will, dated 1766, listed Warburton among his "esteemed" friends, who were to receive mourning rings.

The work Warburton had in mind in 1750 was a critical analysis of Shaftesbury's attacks on Christianity. The idea was originally suggested by Pope who considered that the *Characteristics* had done more harm to revealed religion than all the works of infidelity put together. What could be more fitting than that Pope's enthusiastic admirer should refute Shaftesbury's arguments? So, in 1751, Brown published his *Essays on the Characteristics of the Earl of Shaftesbury*.²²

Genuinely disturbed lest contemporary developments in the scientific world should be paralleled by the spread of rationalism and atheism, he launched a spirited attack, not only against Shaftesbury, but against the atheists, agnostics, humanists and half-hearted Christians of his day. He agreed with Shaftesbury that freedom of thought is the natural privilege

²⁰ See Dr Heathcote's *Memoirs*, cited by Nichol in his *Literary Anecdotes*, v 536.

²¹ To Hurd, 19 September 1757.

²² Dedicated to Ralph Allen of Prior Park, whom he had met through Warburton and whose guest he had been when he preached at Bath.

of man, that intolerance is impolitic, irrational and unchristian, that politeness and amiability are consonant with the exercise of such freedom which is, in his view, the only permanent basis on which religion or virtue can be established, but he denounced the use of ridicule in the investigation of unknown truth. Because it appeals to man's lower nature, excites contempt, prejudice and passion, ridicule may be used only to discredit known falsehood. Brown therefore openly condemned Swift's *Tale of a Tub* and, by implication, Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*. In support of his contention that scoffers are generally the least able or the least willing to understand, he concluded the first essay with an illustration which reveals one of his rare flashes of humour: "This new design of discovering truth by the vague and unsteady light of ridicule puts one in mind of the honest Irishman, who applied his candle to the sundial, in order to see how the night went."

His second essay, a milder criticism of Shaftesbury's *Advice to an Author*, is a clear exposition of the popular utilitarian theory that the greatest good of the greatest number is the chief aim of morality. A consideration of the basic motive which impels man to practise virtue — a sense of his present happiness or prospect of future happiness — led Brown to an analysis of the three variables of human nature, understanding, imagination and emotion, which no human laws can standardize for the furtherance of the common weal. Belief in God and in an after-life are the true promoters of human happiness. Shaftesbury might pay lip-service to the nobleness, dignity and usefulness of religion but his confusion of the "Fear of God" with superstitious dread lay behind his refusal to accept the possibility of life after death. "Why," asked Brown, "should the hope of a happy immortality be branded as base and slavish, while the consciousness

or prospect of a happy life on earth is regarded as a just and honourable motive?" The human mind, because it is human, cannot see beyond earthly delights. "Doth it hence follow that no other sources of happiness may be dispensed, which are as yet utterly unknown to us? Can our narrow and partial imaginations set bounds to the omnipotence of God?"

The final essay²³ was a vindication, based on proven facts, logical deductions and unshaken faith, of the credibility of the Scriptures, especially the Gospels. Brown accused Shaftesbury of claiming that there is no valid reason for accepting the truth of anything in the Bible; that miracles are no proof of the existence of God; that paganism is sociable and Christianity anti-social; that the pagan viewpoint, being disinterested, is superior to the Christian, which is governed by self-interest — the expectation of reward or punishment after death.

Brown marshalled all the evidence at his command to prove the authenticity of Holy Writ and showed considerable erudition in his references to documentary support and to questions of content and style. He was satisfied that he offered "such a full proof of the genuineness of these sacred records, as is not to be paralleled, concerning any other book of equal or even of much less antiquity". He was as effective in his arguments for belief in miracles performed by God or by men inspired by God, and maintained that the purposeful chain of miracles recorded throughout the Bible could never be broken by any cavilling at single incidents.

His rebuttal of Shaftesbury's contention that Christianity is anti-social took the form of a résumé of the life and teaching of Jesus, summarized in the two great commandments, to love God and to love

²³ Kippis, in the *Biographia Britannica* (1780 edition), ii, says that Brown's father helped him with this section, but offers no supporting evidence.

one's neighbour as oneself. At this point Brown ran into difficulties. He failed to find a convincing explanation of the excesses of the crusades, persecutions and inquisitions, which he tentatively attributed to misguided enthusiasm, fostered by impetuosity, self-conceit or ignorance, or to a lack of true Christian charity.

The opening essay won generous praise from his friends Balguy and Hurd, usually fair and constructive critics. Warburton agreed so far but objected to the second and third on the grounds that they betrayed signs of haste, superficiality and a complete disregard of his own advice on the form and style suited to the subject-matter. However, he made allowances for the obstinate young author's inexperience, remarking to Hurd:²⁴ "— in this I may be mistaken and it may take better with the world than if it had been what we three would have had it." Warburton was mistaken. The essay on the motives to virtue was commended by J. S. Mill in his appreciation of Bentham and, two centuries later, was reprinted in *British Moralists*.²⁵ It is perhaps worth noting that the essays also appealed to a vastly different circle. They appear on the reading-list (23 November 1752) of the Bluestocking, Elizabeth Montagu, along with Hooke's *Roman History*, Sully's *Mémoires* and Warburton's edition of Pope's works.

Neither Warburton's faint praise nor the unpromising disapproval of the nonconformist Bulkley, expressed in his pamphlets in defence of Lord Shaftesbury, nor the censure of an anonymous pamphleteer — Brown ignored anonymous critics — weakened his resolution to establish a reputation as a controversialist. Already he had plans for a *magnum opus*.

Brown had other plans, too, and was soon to

²⁴ In his letter of 15 February 1751.

²⁵ Edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge, New York, 1964.

surprise and shock both friends and enemies. He next appeared as a playwright, consorting with Garrick and frequenting Drury Lane.

On 17 December 1754 *Barbarossa* had its *première* with Mossop in the title-rôle, Mrs Cibber as Zaphira and Garrick as Achmet. It ran for several nights, found its way into the regular repertoire and was published by Bowyer in the same month; a surprising success for a rather dull echo of Voltaire's *Mérope*, redeemed by first-class acting. Garrick, more anxious than usual for the success of a newcomer's work, wrote both prologue and epilogue, speaking the former himself in the character of a Cumberland yokel, supposed to be the author's servant. Unfortunately, Brown took offence at a stock joke in the epilogue: "Let the poor devil eat, allow him that." His sense of humour failed him and he feared the audience would picture him as a struggling poet starving in a garret. Garrick soothed his outraged pride and a mollified Brown later made amends in written praise of Garrick's unexampled acting ability.²⁶

Others were not so careful of Brown's feelings. Ten days after the opening night Walpole pretended ignorance of this "very indifferent new tragedy — now running; the author unknown but believed to be Garrick". He condemned the play for distortion of the true story of *Barbarossa*, lack of original thought, the insertion of sheer nonsense and an ignorance of Mohammedan customs which made the heroine behave in a most unseemly manner. As far as the authorship was concerned, Dr Johnson revealed a much shrewder understanding of Brown's character when he averred that "he would no more suffer Garrick to write a line in his play, than he would suffer him to mount his pulpit".

Gray read *Barbarossa* on its publication and found

²⁶ In his *Estimate* (1751); part 1, section 5.

it neither better or worse than any contemporary production: "*Barbarossa* I have read, but I did not cry: at a modern tragedy it is sufficient not to laugh."

Warburton, to his intense chagrin, knew nothing of this venture until it was a *fait accompli*. "I am grieved," he wrote to Hurd the following January, "that either these *unrewarding times*, or his *love of poetry*, or his *love of money*, should have made him overlook the duty of a clergyman in these times, and the dignity of a clergyman in all times, to make connections with players. Mr Allen is grieved. You are sufficiently grieved as I saw by your postscript in a letter to him, where you reprove him for an *advertisement*."

Brown was only one of a dozen clergymen of his day who felt they had literary taste and scholarship enough to embark upon at least one play. Emboldened by success. Brown ignored his friends' opinions and wrote a second.

In January 1756, Hurd wrote from Cambridge to Mason, his great friend and Brown's *bête noire*:

You don't tell me if you have seen Doctor Brown. — *Athelstan* comes on pretty early in the next month. Mr B(alguy) and I expect him here one of these days, and then we are to sit upon it. But the Doctor is either so lazy or so careless himself and Garrick is so peremptory in having everything his own way, that no great good, I foresee, will come of our criticisms, if they should be ever so reasonable. However, the poet may wing his flight for *gain*, not glory; and if so, it is no great matter, provided it passes upon the stage, what the few in the closet think of his performance.

Athelstan was produced at Covent Garden on 27 February with Garrick as Athelstan and Mrs Cibber as Thyra, his daughter. The plot, a free adaptation of the defection of Alfric of Mercia to the Danes in the reign of Ethelred the Unready, was designed to stimulate national pride and awareness of the threat of invasion in the uneasy days before the outbreak of

war between England and France.²⁷ Although more original and better executed than *Barbarossa*, *Athelstan* did not survive its first season. Smollett's *Critical Review* (March 1756) contains a stinging condemnation, presumably by Franklin, then professor of poetry at Cambridge, which dismisses the play as a lifeless piece of five tedious acts through which Garrick laboured with inimitable artistry. Tragedy was not Brown's *métier*.

Hurd referred to "Doctor" Brown with good reason. In the midst of his preoccupation with the alluring new world of the theatre he had found time, in 1755, to take his doctorate at Cambridge, and Hurd had listened to Brown's well-received sermon on tyranny, superstition, debauchery and free-thought. The argument, revised and expanded in 1765, was that of his Assize sermons and the theme underlying *Athelstan*. The conclusion, that the only way of preventing England from becoming a French province was to preserve our constitutional liberties and the purity of our manners, was one he was continually to reinforce.

Hurd was less than just in calling Brown lazy or careless. He was then contemplating a move to a new rectory within easy access of his London booksellers, Drury Lane and Covent Garden, and his Cambridge friends, for his ties with St. John's College remained unbroken. Warburton had earlier introduced Brown to Lord Hardwicke in whose gift was the living of All Saints', Great Horkeley, which was worth some £200 a year. The living was offered to Brown who was delighted to accept, and he was inducted on 20 November 1756 by the Bishop of London.²⁸ It is true that he made no more impression at Great Horkeley as

²⁷ May 1756.

²⁸ Gibson II, Sherlock and Hayter, Guildhall Library, MS. 9531/20, fol. 363 r.

a parish priest than in Cumberland. He was immersed in an ambitious literary programme and the strain was aggravating his bouts of depression. Hurd completely missed the clue to his state of mind, revealed by the lines from *Barbarossa*:

*Now let us thank the eternal Power; convinced
That Heaven but tries our virtue by affliction,
That oft the cloud that wraps the present hour
Serves but to brighten all our future days.*

Furthermore, Brown's bodily health was affected. He never pampered himself. He poured scorn on effeminate men of fashion who, "like puny and starved exotics, take the advantage of a south wall, to shelter themselves from the wholesome rigours of the winter air",²⁹ but the bleak East Anglian climate was to take its toll in sharp attacks of gout and rheumatism which increased his irritability. In addition Brown, apparently impervious to censure, was hypersensitive. Disparagement rankled. Small wonder that he was difficult, at times ungracious and quarrelsome.

The *magnum opus*, which gave him the name of "Estimate" Brown, appeared in 1757. *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, a violent philippic against the vices of contemporary society, reached its seventh edition in just over a year and was translated by Charles Chais under the title, *Les Moeurs Anglaises*.³⁰ Brown set out to show that Britain's initial lack of success in the struggle against France must be attributed, not to individual shortcomings, but to the venal, decadent ruling classes. He dealt gently with the common people, except for a minority of clamorous town-dwellers — an impression left, perhaps, by his encounters during the siege of Carlisle — and with the middle class, the backbone of the

²⁹ *Estimate* (1758 edition); vol. 2, part 1, section 12.

³⁰ La Haye, 1758.

country. His attitude was consonant with his upbringing. He had spent much of his life among country folk, understood their problems and was ready to give practical, albeit condescending help. By birth he belonged to and instinctively supported the middle class, but he was envious of the aristocracy and jealous of parvenus who, through wealth or influence, successfully climbed the social ladder.

Brown fulminated against the degeneration of liberty into licence, the increasing indulgence in luxury, drinking and gambling, the pre-occupation with money-making to pay for these excesses. Misguided teaching at school and university led to a love of trivialities in dress, reading and the arts. It was an age of mental sloth, irreligion, intolerance, which prized personal notoriety above national honour.

In developing his arguments Brown displayed a sound knowledge of literature, music and painting and a marked preference for the traditional in all forms of art. His lively description of fashionable drawing-rooms, cluttered with grotesque bric-à-brac from the Far East, is amusing and endorsed by Mrs Montagu, who laughingly admitted that her house, crowded with gifts from her sailor brothers, looked like an Indian warehouse, and she considered herself a woman of taste. But such light-hearted interludes are rare.

Brown was convinced that Roman Catholicism was rapidly gaining ground and threatening both the religious and political stability of the country. Therefore he was fierce in his denunciation of religious apathy among Protestants. He deplored the steady decline in Sunday worship and family prayers, the indifference shown to the Gospel truths and the contempt of the clergy who preached them. Here he expressed views upon which his detractors were quick to seize. He condemned those priests who neglected

their parishes, made the round of house parties, frequented and shone in all public places, except their own pulpits. This was indeed fuel for the critics.

Thirty years earlier Defoe, in *A Plan of the English Commerce*, had pleaded, with what he deemed support from Ezekiel, for the expansion of the trade which was making Britain the richest, most populous and most powerful nation in the world, but neatly evaded any discussion of the opposing view that "our luxury is become a virtue in commerce, and our extravagancies are the life and soul of our trade". He would have found a persistent antagonist in Brown who foresaw even greater ills resulting from the unrestricted expansion of trade — self-seeking and cupidity, the widening of the gulf between rich and poor, the extinction of religious principle. He attacked increasing imports of luxury goods, rising prices and heavy taxation, the unemployment caused by mechanization, the drift from the country to the towns, the inevitable overcrowding and spread of disease among "debilitated gin-drinkers", all of which were leading to general disaffection.

So he called for a change of heart and a vigorous lead from the Established Church and the government. Never again must we be directed by a prime minister who sacrificed his country's interests to his friends' and chose to rule by corrupt practices rather than resign. The thinly veiled allusion to Sir Robert Walpole did not pass unnoticed and Brown's readers had no difficulty in identifying his ideal minister, an honest, courageous man, whose private life would be consistent with his public life, who would unite all men in the common cause, who might fall from power but would be recalled in time of danger, who would not cling to office but resign if he could not accomplish his just task.

The publication of the *Estimate* "perhaps as

extravagantly applauded and as extravagantly censured as any book that was ever written",³¹ was well-timed. The failure of Admiral Byng to relieve Minorca, the horrors of the "Black Hole" of Calcutta, had stunned the country. The *Estimate* played a signal part in combating the general despondency. In his "Table Talk" Cowper said it "rose like a paper kite and charmed the town" but, for informed readers, it was a counter-irritant. Hurd was restrained in his praise; Gray was non-committal. From Cambridge he wrote (23 April 1757) to Mason: "I expected it should be admired here, but they affect not to like it; though I know they ought. What would you have me do? There is one thing in it I applaud, which is the dissertation against trade, for I have always said, it was the ruin of the nation." The *Monthly Review*³² and the *Annual Register*³³ agreed that the timing was good; the substance showed depth of reading and reflection; the style was polished and lively, but the author was only too well aware of his talents. It was a just criticism but unacceptable to Brown, not only because of the sting in the tail, but because he heartily disapproved of what he termed the general hash of essays, romantic plays, novels, political pamphlets and blasphemous works "served up in some monthly mess of dullness.

For the same reason he ignored, with one exception, a flood of censorious pamphlets, signed and unsigned. The exception was the *Characteristics of the present political State of Great Britain* by Dr Wallace, the Edinburgh divine, who was, said Brown, his only decent and candid adversary. Probably he never knew Horace Walpole's opinion. Brown's portrayal of Sir Robert was not calculated to endear him to his son,

³¹ *History of Northumberland*, ii (E. Mackenzie, 1825).

³² Vol. 16, pp. 430-443.

³³ Vol. 1, pp. 444-445.

who sneered at the "first silly volume of the *Estimate*" and declared that the second "beat all the Scaligers and Scioppius's for vanity and insolent impertinence".

Brown had, in 1758, added a second volume, in which he sought to justify his earlier pronouncements and confound his critics, but he so overloaded the text with digressions and quotations from his current favourite sources, Montesquieu and Machiavelli, that he obscured his train of thought. He had plunged into this work despite Warburton's disapproval. The latter, although gratified by a eulogistic reference to his eminence in the world of letters, was nevertheless jealous of the stir created by the first volume. He may have derived some satisfaction from the failure of the second.

The tide of war had turned. Britons saw no necessity to mend their ways which were proving remarkably effective. "Victory refuted all he said", wrote Cowper. Voltaire, writing in 1760 to Louise-Florence d'Epainay, summed up the significance of the *Estimate* in his usual incisive manner. The people whom Brown had proved to be without money, navy, army, virtue and courage, had retorted by nobbling the King of Prussia, capturing Canada and beating the French in the four quarters of the world. Nearly a century later Macaulay, in his essay on Chatham, re-echoed this verdict.

An open quarrel with Lord Hardwicke, followed by a rift with Warburton, who was naturally displeased at the rupture, added to Brown's discomfiture. In his defence of the clergy in general and of himself in particular, he had stated bluntly that the "clergy cannot generally be reformed, till they are reformed who generally appoint them. Who appoint the clergy? Are they not the GREAT? Are they not those (I take things in their general aspect) who are most infected with the manners and principles of the times?" It is unlikely that these words won his patron's

approval. In any event Brown felt his position was untenable and vacated the rectorate. For two years he remained in seclusion, writing and studying.

What he published during this period was insignificant. His revised edition of Dr Walker's *Siege of Londonderry*, with a preface tersely pointing out that its perusal would benefit the reader, had appeared just before the *contretemps*. He now contented himself with an *Additional Dialogue of the Dead* (1760). Subtitled *A Sequel to the Dialogue between Pericles and Cosmo*, its avowed intention was to defend Pitt against insinuations made, in their *Dialogues*, by Mrs Montagu and Lord Lyttelton, with whom Brown was no longer on speaking terms. None of the dialogues merited much praise. Gray considered the first two second-rate. The third, by Mason's "friend, the little black man", he did not trouble to read. Walpole did and, with unusual civility, dismissed it as a dull effort.

A helping hand was now stretched out by Bishop Osbaldeston, who was supremely indifferent to Brown's attacks on the hierarchy. Thomas Turner, Vicar of Newcastle since 1728, had recently died and the Bishop offered Brown the living. For some time Brown hesitated. Restless and irresolute, he suddenly descended on Warburton, an uninvited guest. Despite the unrelieved "gloom and sullen insolence on his countenance", he was made welcome, but Warburton was frankly amazed at his indecision and wondered whether he was already at odds with Newcastle Corporation. Brown was, in truth, bitterly disappointed. He felt that his unwavering support of the Hanoverians and his reputation as a preacher and man of letters deserved higher preferment. No higher preferment, apart from a chaplaincy-in-ordinary to the King, was forthcoming. Brown accepted the *pis-aller* and was inducted on 7 January 1761.

Critics of Brown's conduct during his vicariate have

labelled him aloof, intolerant, condescending, absorbed in music and books to the point of neglecting his duties as parish priest. On one count only can such views be fully justified.

His move to Newcastle, which brought him within easier reach of his old friends in Cumberland, also strengthened his family ties. The Rev. Mark Hall, perpetual curate of Earsdon was his cousin, with whose children Brown was soon on intimate terms, as is shown by the provisions of his will, dated 9 April 1766. Margaret and Elizabeth were to receive £200, in consideration of their care of his late parents; their brother William, then under-usher at the Free Grammar School, inherited Brown's books, pamphlets and the lion's share of the profits from a manuscript he was to edit; their father, in addition to two of the portraits already mentioned, got a possibly less acceptable legacy — a large trunkful of the Vicar of Wigton's sermons. Brown must also have met a widowed relative of his mother, then living at Dunston, for he made provision for her children's education.

More than half the friends whose disinterested help he recorded in his will,³⁴ were local men, many of whom he met in the well-stocked circulating libraries of Joseph Barber and his friendly rival, William Charnley.³⁵ These libraries were in effect literary clubs, frequented by the Riddleys of Blagdon, Edward Montagu of Denton Hall, Sir Francis Delaval, Lord Ravensworth, Thomas Bewick the engraver, Hugh Moises the gracious and imperturbable Headmaster of

³⁴ Ref.: PCC Tynedale, fol. 397. See appendix.

³⁵ Son of William Charnley of Penrith, who was described in his will (13 June 1739) as a "haberdasher of Hats". Bound apprentice (8 January 1741/42) to Joseph Longstaffe of Newcastle, tinplate worker, for 7 years. Later "turned over" to Martin Bryson, bookseller on Tyne Bridge. Admitted free 1748/49 and remained with Bryson as journeyman. After Bryson's death in 1759 he opened a circulating library in the Flesh Market and caused Barber, already established at Amen Corner, to bring his prices down. (See *Men of Mark twixt Tyne and Tweed*, vol. 1. R. Welford, Felling, 1895.)

the Grammar School, Thomas Slack the affable and benevolent printer,³⁶ Dr Askew the fashionable physician,³⁷ Aubone Surtees the banker, Sir Walter Blackett, philanthropic Mayor of Newcastle, and Avison, now his organist.

Evidently Brown was more cordial in Newcastle than anywhere else. If we accept the unflattering dictum of Dr Carlyle of Inveresk³⁸ that "there were not many conversable gentlemen in the town, for the men were in general very ill-educated", then Dr John Brown must have displayed uncommon adaptability.

His staunchest supporters, however, could not claim that he was tolerant. In the pulpit and in his writings, he alternated between acknowledgement of every man's inalienable right to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience and violent denunciation of what he termed Popish fanaticism, Quaker sullenness and Nonconformist bigotry. Apparently he saw no inconsistency in his abrupt volte-face. His last public expression of these irreconcilable assessments is found in the introduction to the printed edition of his sermon, *On Religious Liberty*, preached at St Paul's Cathedral (6 March 1763), in support of the establishment of the Colleges of Philadelphia and New York.

The sermon was discreet, as befitted a chaplain to His Majesty, who, on the signing of the Peace of Paris exactly one month earlier, had said that the

³⁶ Founder of the *Newcastle Chronicle* (24 March 1763), he was born at Wreay, Cumberland, the eldest child of Joseph Slack of Wreay and Mary Stephenson of Briscoe. He married at Long Benton (15 December 1751) Anne Fisher, daughter of Henry Fisher, yeoman of Oldscale, Lorton, Cumberland, by whom he had nine daughters. In 1752 he inherited from his father a messuage and two tenements at Wreay and a parcel of land, known as Railton-garth, the whole held of the Dean and Chapter of Carlisle at an annual rent of £2. 3s. 2d. (See *Thomas Slack of Newcastle, Printer, 1723-1784*. By James Hodgson the younger, 1920. AA3 xlvi.)

³⁷ Son of Dr Anthony Askew, physician, of Kendal, of the same family as Sir Hugh Askew, courtier, soldier and sheriff of Cumberland in the reign of Henry VIII. Born at Kendal, 1694. Graduated M.D. at St John's College, Cambridge. He later acquired the estate of Middleton Hall, near Kirkby Lonsdale. (See *Men of Mark, ibid.*)

³⁸ He was connected by marriage with the Blacketts and found Sir Walter dull, "though rich, magnificent and generous".

greatest satisfaction deriving from the extension of his American dominions would be the spread of Protestantism. Brown limited himself to outlining the dangers of religious persecution, the evils of slavery, the unifying effect of true Christian charity upon colonists of mixed stock, the need for Protestant missionaries among the Indians and the part the new colleges would play in laying the foundations of a united dominion overseas. But this discourse was preceded by an open letter to the principal inhabitants of the British North-American colonies, wherein Brown warned them of the aims and methods of Catholic missionaries, whose successes in Indian territory were turning ignorant natives into idolatrous, cruel and vicious enemies of the white settlers. To reinforce his arguments, he attached a letter from an admirer of his *Estimate*, a Captain Schomberg, then on active service in America, who provided unsolicited corroboration of Brown's theses.

The same contrariety marred his private dealings. He was on good terms with his fellow-clergy of the Established Church, the Bishop of Durham, Archdeacon Sharp, the lecturers at the four churches within the town walls but he ignored those outside the fold. He had no contact with Cordell or Walsh, the Roman Catholic priests officiating in rooms in Bell's Court and the Close: there is no record of any encounter with Wesley, although they were both in Newcastle at the same time: nor do we hear of his reactions to James Murray, the ebullient Scottish Presbyterian. Murray certainly knew something of Brown's earlier career and his relations with Warburton whom he despised as, indeed, he despised all Doctors of Divinity.³⁹ In all likelihood Dr Brown despised a preacher whose services were often kept in

³⁹ See his *Sermons to Doctors in Divinity*; vol. 2 of *Sermons to Asses*. London, 1771.

order by the presence of the police. About the time this fiery gentleman, self-confessed champion of the Quakers, came to Newcastle, the *Journal* (10 May 1765) reported that Quaker householders had appeared before the magistrates at the Guildhall to answer the Vicar's complaint that they had refused to pay certain obventions and Easter reckonings. The plaintiff was granted a warrant of distress and the details of the distraint, for sums ranging from 8d. to 4s. 2d., are listed in the *Newcastle Book of Sufferings* for July of that year, mute reminders of Brown's indefensible uncharitableness.

It is unfair to dismiss Brown as condescending and neglectful of his parochial and outside commitments at Newcastle. He was the product of a century of rigid class distinction but showed a greater appreciation of the living conditions of the so-called lower orders than many of his contemporaries and, as an educationalist, was far ahead of his times.

Scattered throughout his books are pertinent comments on the upbringing of children. In 1765 he preached to the guardians of the female orphanage on the character and education of the girls in their care. This address was an abstract of a series of highly successful sermons, which he had given in Christmas week of the preceding year on behalf of the poor of the town. Newcastle already had its Free Grammar School, Trinity House School, four parochial Charity Schools and sundry private academies but, for Dr Brown, this was not enough. He advocated compulsory education for all, an education which would produce good citizens by inculcating a lively acceptance of the Christian Faith and its public avowal. The lessons of the Gospel, humility, sympathy, self-control, integrity, truth, must be explained to every child. On the secular side, children should be given training in practical skills suited to their abilities. It is remark-

able that this celibate divine should have such a clear insight into child psychology. He recognized that teaching methods must be adapted to the individual pupil, for no two children react in the same way, and that acceptance of instruction is not automatic. It is the pupil's voluntary act. He was also very much alive to the strength of home influence and made some trenchant criticisms of parental over-indulgence, the evils attendant on bad example, which he saw as the breeding-ground of juvenile delinquency and adult criminality, the plight of children from broken homes. In the *Estimate* he had drawn attention to the marked increase in divorce and separation which he felt would aggravate the ever-present problems of illegitimacy.

Those children of affliction, the inmates of the public Hospital for Lunatics, received his special attention. With the Bishop and the Archdeacon he served as governor of the institution which drew its patients from Durham, Northumberland and Newcastle. In this capacity Brown was emotionally involved. His own disorder was becoming increasingly difficult to control.

Like Saul, he sought comfort in music, and his oratorio of that name, set to music which he adapted from Purcell, Marcello and Handel, was performed in 1763. Reset by Arnold after his death, it was revived eight times. Brown's state of mind is reflected in the attempted suicide of the proud, conscience-stricken Saul, who is saved by his friends and soothed by David's music:

*The lifted dagger quits his trembling hand:
Smooth'd is his brow, where sullen care
And furrow'd horror couch'd with fell despair;
No more his eyes with fury glow;
But heav'nly grief succeeds to hell-born woe.*

The oratorio was by way of introduction to his original and controversial *Dissertation on the Rise and*

Progress of Poetry, which was republished the following year and translated into French, German and Italian. It opened with a scholarly history of the inter-relationship of music, poetry and dance from remote times to his own day. Then followed an outline of the development of church music and his views on its contemporary performance, which coincided with Avison's.⁴⁰ Vicar and organist united their efforts to improve the musical side of worship at St Nicholas' Church. Brown had experience of country choirs who attempted too difficult music with disastrous results: Avison had been organist of town churches for thirty years and was, moreover, a successful teacher and composer. They agreed that good music, within the compass of the average performer, was a valuable adjunct to congregational participation in dignified worship. Brown approved new psalm and hymn tunes and Avison led the people on the organ. He avoided the temptation to display his own virtuosity by indulging in pretentious flourishes, calculated only to confuse the congregation, and his results were so gratifying that he was offered — but declined — the post of organist at York Minster.

The conclusion to the *Dissertation* contained a suggestion for the formation of *A Poetic and Musical Academy* to foster the reunion of those arts and to educate public taste. The academy remained a dream but work on raising the standard of musical appreciation was already under way at Newcastle. The subscription concerts, inaugurated by Avison in 1736, were flourishing in the 1760s and attracted as guest artistes Giardini, one of the finest violinists in Europe, and Herschel, well known as a violinist, oboe-player and conductor, before he transferred his interests to astronomy.

Brown found much-needed relaxation in these circles

⁴⁰ See his *Essay on Musical Expression* (1752).

and contributed to the musical life of the town by Sunday evening soirées at the Vicarage. There you would find an enthusiastic group; Brown and Ralph Beilby, amateur violinists; the Avisons, father and sons, professional musicians; Avison's favourite pupils, Mrs Ord of Fenham, a singer, and Lady Milbanke of Halnaby, a harpsichordist, who provided the feminine graces.

Dr Brown had scarcely arrived in Newcastle when the countryside was shocked and alarmed by the Hexham riot⁴¹ on "Bloody Monday" (9 March 1761). About five thousand armed men from miles around gathered in the market-place to protest against the enforcement of the recent militia laws. They were met by six companies of the Yorkshire militia, quartered in Newcastle, and in the ensuing *mêlée* a young ensign was shot dead, several rioters and bystanders wounded and some arrested as they tried to escape. On 17 August the arrested men were brought to trial at Newcastle on a charge of high treason.

Unmoved by threats of personal violence, Brown preached as forceful an Assize sermon as those he delivered at Carlisle fifteen years before. He was sometimes accused of talking above the heads of his congregation but, on this occasion, his message was abundantly clear. He defined the responsibility of every man towards his fellow-countrymen, a responsibility which involves absolute obedience to the laws of the land, which are framed to protect the life, liberty and property of the individual. The ring-leaders of the riot, who had flouted the militia laws, were, therefore, terrorists, murderers and traitors who must pay the just penalty of their crimes. Brown spoke more leniently of the mob, whom he deemed ignorant and misguided, but he issued a stern warning to those

⁴¹ Its course and consequences are vividly described in the *Diary of John Dawson of Brunton*, captain of a Tynedale company of militia. (Surtees Society, vol. 124.)

who had stood idly by. They had connived at crime and could not be held guiltless.

From unqualified praise of the behaviour of the militia under extreme provocation and regret for the waste of a promising young life, Brown turned to the conduct of the trial, calling for strict truthfulness from the witnesses, a directive which Dawson heeded, and asking the judges, Bathurst and Lloyd, to dispense justice tempered with mercy. They were perhaps moved by this plea, in that they sentenced to death only two of the seventeen accused.

Brown's literary output was rapidly decreasing. One work appeared in 1766, his letter to Dr Lowth, in which he defended his own integrity and attempted, unsuccessfully, to justify, indeed to minimize, his previous eulogies of Warburton. He was thought to be immersed in the eight volumes of *Principles of Christian Legislation*, whose speedy publication he had promised in his *Dissertation*. This monumental project was never completed. The manuscript was that bequeathed to William Hall who, twenty-five years afterwards, was upbraided by an irate reader of the *Gentleman's Magazine* for neglecting to edit the work. Hall, now fully occupied as a headmaster and fervent worker for the abolition of slavery, explained at some length⁴² that the manuscript comprised only one finished volume, a rough analysis of the whole and a mass of disjointed notes which he felt unable to collocate with any hope of success.

The work had been shelved because Brown, as he wrote to Garrick (19 January 1766) in great excitement, had been invited "to assist in the civilisation of a great empire". Poor, self-deluded Brown! He had woefully over-estimated his terms of reference but nothing Garrick, or anyone else, could say disillusioned him.

⁴² *Gentleman's Magazine*, November 1791.

The true state of affairs was very different. In 1765 Dr Dumaresq⁴³ was in Russia at the invitation of the Empress to advise her on the establishment of schools in various parts of the country. A correspondent in England mentioned Brown's well-informed views on education so Dumaresq asked his advice on syllabuses and teaching methods. Brown replied that he would be glad to assist in any way, submitted a twelve-point plan, covering reforms in education and legislation, to be laid before the Empress, and ended, to Dumaresq's consternation, with the words: "I should not scruple to take a voyage to Saint Petersburg at a proper season." Her Imperial Majesty was informed of this unexpected development. After some delay she issued a non-committal invitation, accompanied by £1,000 to defray Brown's expenses.

From his vicarage at Newcastle, Brown accepted (19 March) in high glee, delegated his parochial duties to his curates and set out for his lodgings in Pall Mall. He made extensive preparations for a journey to Russia in the early autumn, but over-excitement irritated his imbalance. His condition was further weakened by a violent attack of rheumatic gout which forced him to retire to bed. At the end of July he was advised by his doctor, Sir John Pringle, and his old Cambridge friend, Stevens, that he must have rest, warmth and careful nursing — in short, that he was in no fit state to face the rigours of a Russian winter. Bitterly disappointed, Brown wrote (8 August) to the Russian ambassador, enclosing the £1,000 and begging to be allowed to postpone his visit until the following spring. In his heart he felt the invitation would not be renewed.

As he lay in bed, ill and depressed, he read in the *St James's Chronicle* (26-28 August) a cruel satire, the

⁴³ Prebendary of Bath and Wells, honorary member of the Imperial Academy of Sciences at Saint Petersburg.

work of Mason, which ridiculed his entire career and poured scorn on the would-be Lycurgus, foiled by the "Demon Gout". That such an attack should have been made upon him, even by an enemy, wounded his pride; that his friend Gray should, as it later transpired, be associated with its publication, was a grievous blow. The thought that all London was laughing at him was more than he could bear. Frustrated, sick in body and mind, he lay brooding.

On 23 September, in answer to his servant's enquiry, he said he had passed a restful night. Ten minutes later, he cut his throat.

In the hour of his greatest need, there was no friend to save, no David to soothe Dr John Brown.

APPENDIX.

Dr John Brown's Will.

[P.C.C. Original Will.]

This is the last Will of me John Brown D.D. Vicar of Newcastle. First, I order, that all my lawful Debts be discharged. After which,

I leave to Mrs. Barbara Dawson, my late Father's Sister, the Sum of Two Hundred Pounds: Or in Case of her Death, I leave the same Sum to her Son James Dawson, who is blind. Mrs. Dawson is in Scotland; and may be heard of, by enquiring of the Minister or Inhabitants of Dunning near Perth.

I leave to Miss Margaret Hall, and to Miss Elizabeth Hall, Daughters of my Cousin The Revd. Mr. Mark Hall¹ of Earsden, the Sum of Two hundred Pounds, to be divided equally between them, in Consideration of their Attendance on my deceased Father and Mother.

I leave to the Revd. Mr. William Hall, Son of the said Mr. Mark Hall, all my Books and Pamphlets.

I leave to the Revd. Mr. Mark Hall aforesaid, all my Father's Manuscript Sermons, now lying in a large Trunk in the Front

¹ Mark Hall, an Edinburgh graduate, was ordained deacon by the Bishop of Carlisle in 1730, his first curacy being Flimby. A year later he was ordained priest by the Bishop of Durham. He was curate of Earsdon 1746 until his death in 1768. By his wife, Elizabeth Brown, he was father of William Hall (1740-1803), who was ordained in 1764 and became headmaster of Haydon Bridge Grammar School in 1781.

Room next my Bedchamber; and also the Pictures of my Father and Mother painted in Crayons by myself.

I leave to — Brown Esq^r of Colstown near Haddington in Scotland, commonly called Lord Colstown, Two Half-length Pictures of Colonel Brown and myself now in the Possession of Mrs. Singleton in London: desiring he will be pleased to give them a Place in his House at Colstown, that being the House from whence our Ancestors were descended.

I leave to Mrs. Graham of Netherby in Cumberland, Daughter of the late Lady Graham, who was Wife to my deceased Cousin Col: Brown, my Diamond Ring; being a large Rose Diamond, set round with Brilliants; in Consideration of its having been the Gift of Lady Graham to Me.²

I order, that mourning Rings, properly inscribed, may be sent to the following Persons, my esteemed Friends. To Lord Ravensworth. To Dr. Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester. To Lord Adam Gordon. To Sir Walter Blacket. To William Ord Esq^r of Fenham. To Leonard Smelt Esq^r. To Charles Gray Esq^r of Colchester. To George Wegg Esq^r of Colchester. To David Garrick Esq^r. To Levet Blackbourne Esq^r Judge of the Marshalsea. To the Revd. Mr. Kilner of Leaden near Colchester. To the Revd. Mr. Stevens, Fellow of St. John's Coll: Cambridge. To Percival Clennel Esq^r of Newcastle. To William Wilson Esq^r of Newcastle. To Ralph Carr Esq^r of Dunston Hill. To Joseph Airey Esq^r of Westgate. To Mr. Henry Richmond. To the Revd. Mr. Dockwray of St. Nicholas. To the Revd. Mr. Wilson of St. Nicholas. To Mr. Charles Avison. To Mr. William Hall and Mr. George Hall of Whitehaven. To the Revd. Mr. Darch of Longbenton.

I order, that all my Papers, Letters, Sermons, and Manuscripts of whatever Kind, that are sealed up in the Bureau in the Green Room, may be delivered or burnt without Inspection, according to the Directions written upon them severally.

I order, that all my Writings now published, shall be republished together; with the Addition of such Manuscripts and Copies now lying in a Drawer in my Bedchamber, as are

² Sir Reginald Graham, 4th baronet of Norton Conyers, Yorks. (1704-55), married at Pickhill, Yorks., 5 June 1727, his cousin Jacoba Catherina, dau. of Col. Metcalfe Graham. After his death, Lady Graham married Col Brown, cousin of the subject of this paper. She died in 1763, having survived the Colonel. By Sir Reginald, she was mother of Frances Graham, who married on 1 June 1752 her kinsman, the Rev. Dr Robert Graham of Netherby, and became ancestress of the Netherby line of baronets. I am indebted to Lady Broun-Lindsay of Colstoun for endeavouring to throw light on Brown's relationship to the Colstoun family. She tells me that the portrait of Col. Brown is not to be found at Colstoun.—EDITOR.

mentioned in a Paper lying there also: and that they be published in seven Volumes, in the Order and Manner described in that Paper. And that they be thus published under the Direction of the Revd. Mr. Nathaniel Clayton of St. John's Church in Westgate, the Revd. Mr. Darch aforesaid, Perc: Clennel Esq^r, and Joseph Airey Esq^r aforesaid; if they will be so kind as to superintend the Publication of them at Mr. Saint's Press in Newcastle. And particularly it is my Request, that they will revive and correct the Manuscript entitled "Principles of Christian Legislation"; the Copy of which, being in some Places interlined and obscure, I desire they will make out according to the best of their Judgment, and the Tenor of the Argument.

And I bequeath the Property in these my Writings, thus published, to the Revd. Mr. William Hall, Son of the Revd. Mr. Hall aforesaid; provided that he assist the Gentlemen aforesaid in the Publication of them, by taking the principal Part of that Trouble upon himself, and according to their Opinion and Directions: and provided Likewise, that he employs Mr. Lockyer Davis in Holborn, London, as the Bookseller, for the Sale of the first Edition, and that he allows him one half of the Clear Profits of the first Edition.

I appoint the Revd. Mr. Nathaniel Clayton aforesaid and Mr. George Ord of Green Court in Newcastle, to be the Executors of this my last Will.

And I bequeath all the Residue of my Effects, Furniture of my House, Goods, and Moneys whatsoever to the said Mr. N. Clayton and Mr. George Ord (in consideration of their friendly and disinterested Conduct towards me, and also in Consideration of their executing this my Will) to be divided between them in equal portions.

But in Case my Money and Effects should fall short of answering the Purposes aforesaid, or should not amount to one hundred Pounds after the several Articles aforesaid are discharged; I then order that my Executors aforesaid shall take fifty Pounds from the Sum bequeathed to Mrs. Dawson, and fifty Pounds from the Sum bequeathed to Mr. Hall's Daughters; which I order my Executors to receive in equal Portions as a Gift from me; the remaining Sums to be paid as ordered above:

And in Case, after the Discharge of these several legacies, my Money and Effects should amount to above two hundred Pounds, I recommend it to the said Mr. Clayton and Mr. Ord, to lay out any small Sum they may think proper, in putting to School the Children of a relation of my Mother's, who is a

Widow, and lives at Dunston near Whickham; in what Manner they shall judge best. Dated April 9th 1766.

John Brown

Proved at London before the Worshipfull William Maeham Doctor of Law Surrogate on the seventh day of November 1766 by the Oath of George Ord one of the executors to whom administration was granted he having been first sworn duly to administer Power reserved of making the like grant to the Reverend Nathaniel Clayton Clerk the other executor when he shall apply for the same.

7th November 1766

George Ord one of the Executors named in this Will was sworn duly to perform the same power reserved to the Revd. Nathaniel Clayton Clerk the other Executor/Before Me

Will: Maeham

Surrogate

Testator was late Vicar of the Parish of St. Nicholas in the Town and County of the Town of Newcastle upon Tyne, and died in September last.

Attached to the will is the affidavit of Lockyer Davis and Charles Reymers, booksellers, both of the parish of St Andrew, Holborn, sworn on 7 November 1766. In this they declare that they have been for several years very well acquainted with Brown's handwriting and that they believe that the will is in his hand.