

A Journey to Philadelphia; or, Memoirs of Charles Coleman Saunders (1804), by “Adelio”

This anonymous novella appeared in six installments in the *Philadelphia Repository and Weekly Register*, an 8-page paper published most Saturdays from late 1800 to the end of 1804. The *Repository* published some contemporary political news, and early on reported local births and deaths, but by and large it was a literary magazine, reprinting new European works, presenting original US works, offering excerpts from contemporary critics, and providing a venue for the publication of a wide range of poetry. In 1804, for example, the paper reprinted French tales (like Gabriel Legouvé’s anti-revolutionary “Fortitude,” and Bricaire de la Dixmerie’s “Azakia”), a number of Oriental tales (like “Arabian Anecdotes”), and a long British novel, the anonymous *History of Netterville, a Chance Pedestrian*, first published in 1802. It also published several series of literary essays (e.g., “The Scribler,” “The Mediator,” “Juvenis Serenus”), excerpts from recent biographies (of historian Edward Gibbon and Napoleon, among others), extracts from a recent travel book about Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), an announcement of the German astronomer Wilhelm Olber’s discovery of the planet Hercules, and an essay about theories about the yellow fever. An anti-slavery essay, reprinted from a Delaware newspaper, by one “Timothy Spintext,” also appeared, as did some advertising for anti-slavery writing by Irish immigrant and abolitionist Thomas

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Branagan. Each issue also ended with a poetry section titled “Temple of the Muses,” much of the material for which appears to have come from local contributors. Among the poetry contributors was someone adopting the pen-name “Adelio,” who also participated in a readers’ debate about the virtues of the marriage institution. The writer adopted the masculine pronoun, though it’s not clear Adelio was a man: Adelio defended marriage, pointedly criticizing the misogyny of the anti-marriage advocates. It is likely this “Adelio” is the same writer who submitted the novella *A Journey to Philadelphia; or, Memoirs of Charles Coleman Saunders* for publication in the paper’s spring issues.

Whatever Adelio’s identity, we can clearly see a familiarity with the writing of Philadelphia’s well-known novelist Charles Brockden Brown. Brown had published a number of novels or portions of novels in book and serial format, becoming a unique literary voice. His writings have often been labeled “gothic,” though they differed significantly from the gothic fiction imported from Europe, by authors like Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Lewis, or William Beckford, with exotic, often medieval locales and supernatural phenomena. Brown often showed an interest in some paranormal phenomenon--ventriloquism, sleep-walking, doubling, extreme isolation--around which he would construct a narrative of uncertainty and suspense, frequently with episodes of violence, confusion, and persecution. Intensive self-questioning, consideration of multiple possibilities, feelings of helplessness and resignation alternating with altruistic activism, mistaken identities--all of these were recognizable characteristics of most of Brown’s fiction. It’s possible that Adelio’s titular character alludes to Brown, but unquestionable allusions to Brown’s writings dot the narrative: a reference to sleep-walking, a surprising double, the ambitious rustic who comes to the city, the mysterious persecutor, the false accusation, the heightening and

dampening of emotion. Even the character names seem to allude to Brown, the villainous Carnell echoing Brown's character Carwin. *A Journey to Philadelphia* thus encapsulates what one ambitious reader found to be the most powerful elements of a favorite writer.

It's unclear how popular Adelio's narrative was, although it was reprinted later in 1804 in Hartford, CT. (Published by Lincoln and Gleason, it was packaged with a novella of the 1770s, the Welsh author Elizabeth Griffith's "The Story of Miss Williams," retitled "An Interesting Narrative.") But it may have resonated as a tale of the dangers of the transition from country to city. While it's true that the persecution and perceived violence happens in the country, it's in the city that Charles is arrested and subject to the punishment of impersonal institutions. In that respect, the story's final note may strike modern readers as odd: "fame is not always the portion of merit, [and] that to deserve the esteem of mankind, was a superior enjoyment to an enlarged mind, than distinction or fame could bestow." These final lines, at least, suggest the dangers of being known, a peril all the more vexing in an urban environment in which notoriety may mean crowds gathered at the gallows.

Suggestions for further reading: Perhaps the earliest scholarly engagement with *A Journey to Philadelphia* appears in Henri Petter's *The Early American Novel*, in which he labels the text "a confession narrative"; see Petter, *The Early American Novel* (Ohio State University Press, 1971), 324. While Petter notes the text's failure to fully elucidate the source of Carnell's anger, he nonetheless declares that "Saunder's tendency to brood over what happens to him makes a plausible and adequate sense of mystery result simply from the combination of consistent hostility and accidental discredit" (324). In a broad ranging discussion of the early American gothic, Cathy Davidson notes

how *A Journey to Philadelphia* borrows "all too obviously from the work of Charles Brockden Brown," especially given how Carnell, for example, "combines the worst features of Carwin [from *Wieland*], Clithero (from *Edgar Huntly*), and Colden (from *Jane Talbot*)"; see Davidson, *Revolution and the Word* (Oxford University Press, 1986), 235.

As many critics have noted, the Gothic stands as one of the most important and widely circulating genres of late eighteenth and early nineteenth Anglo-American print culture. Important studies of the American gothic include, Leslie Fiedler's *Love and Death in the American Novel* (Vintage, 1960), Donald A. Ringe's *American Gothic: Imagination and Reason in Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (University of Kentucky Press, 1982), Davidson's *Revolution and the Word* (1986), Teresa A. Goddu's *Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation* (Columbia University Press, 1997), and Siân Silyn Roberts's important new book *Gothic Subjects: The Transformation of Individualism in American Fiction, 1790-1861* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).

In his trans-Atlantic study of the evolution of gothic tropes and motifs, Fred Botting argues that at its core the "Gothic signifies a writing of excess," noting that "gothic atmospheres – gloomy and mysterious – have repeatedly signaled the disturbing return of pasts upon presents and evoked emotions of terror and laughter;" see Botting, *Gothic* (Routledge, 1996), 1. In her incisive overview of American gothic criticism since the publication of Fiedler's landmark volume *Love and Death* in 1960, Siân Silyn Roberts argues that while "the Gothic is notoriously resistant to generic classification," it has remained fundamental to studies of early American literature since it has long been privileged as the key genre for encoding "in narrative form, the 'special guilts' of American experience, chiefly slavery, land dispossession, and revolutionary patricide;" see, Silyn

Roberts, “A Transnational Perspective on American Gothic Criticism,” in *Transnational Gothic: Literary and Social Exchanges in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Ashgate, 2013) 21, 19. Noting this critical tendency “to claim that American culture is ‘drenched in gothic sensibility,’” Marilyn Michaud registers how “ardently critics feel the need to explain the persistence of the form in a political and cultural environment seemingly divorced from traditional Gothic impulses” by turning to “psychology” as a means of locating the Gothic within the United States; see, Michaud, *Republicanism and the American Gothic* (University of Wales Press, 2009), 2.

Other useful entry points to the importance of the gothic in early American print culture include Leonard Tennenhouse’s “Is There An Early American Novel?,” *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 40:1-2 (2007), 5-17; Faye Ringel’s essay “Early American Gothic (Puritan and New Republic)” and Elizabeth Jane Wall Hinds’ essay “American Frontier Gothic,” both in *The Cambridge Companion to American Gothic*, ed. Jeffrey Weinstock (Cambridge University Press, 2017). Finally, in an intriguing essay focused on Gothic serial publications, Douglass H. Thomson and Diane Long Hoeveler argue that “shorter versions of the Gothic,” especially chapbooks and serialized magazine tales, “were far more affordable than a multi-volume Gothic novel,” and that these shorter texts were therefore intentionally aimed at “the newly literate working class” and thus often featured plots which highlight the struggles of working class individuals who are plagued by the machinations of wealthier protagonists; see, Thomson & Hoeveler, “To Make A Long Story Short: Varieties of Shorter Gothic Tales and Ballads,” in *Romantic Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion* (Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 148-166.

For more information on the history of *Philadelphia Repository and Weekly Register* we recommend chapter three,

“Nature of the Magazine of the Second Period,” of Frank Luther Mott’s *A History of American Magazines: 1741-1850* (Harvard University Press, 1957), which traces the growth of regional literary magazines during the first two decades of the nineteenth century. For a more recent and generative history of early U.S. seriality, we recommend Jared Gardner’s indispensable *The Rise and Fall of Early American Magazine Culture* (University of Illinois Press, 2012).

For the *Philadelphia Repository and Weekly Register*,
April 14, 1804.

AN ORIGINAL TALE—BY ADELIO.

**A
JOURNEY TO PHILADELPHIA;
OR,
MEMOIRS OF
CHARLES COLEMAN SAUNDERS.**

SOME time in the year —, I frequently visited the prison at Philadelphia, for no other purpose than to satisfy curiosity, in one of which visits, I noticed a man sitting in a retired part: Something in his appearance made me wish for a nearer view, to accomplish my purpose, I resolved to address him and offer such little services, as I knew were agreeable to person in his situation; his countenance was remarkably interesting, it bore the traces of sorrow resisted by a manly fortitude, his dress was plain in a much greater degree, than was common for persons at his age (he appeared about twenty;) his manners were mild and prepossessing, and his conversation plainly evinced that he possessed no common share of intelligence: I afterwards frequently visited him in his prison and did him any little services in my power:—I would describe his character; but this will be better done, by presenting the following memoirs of him, written by himself.

TO you, my friend, who have not suffered appearances to make you impenetrable to the voice of truth; and whose humanity has alleviated the miseries of my situation; I will relate the adventures of my life; you will find them singular and unfortunate, and it will require an exertion of all your candor to enable you to give credit to the relation;—but I have now no motive, even if I had the inclination, to deceive you; I shall shortly suffer the punishment due to the crime of which I have been convicted, if you think he who is standing on the verge of eternity, and deeply impressed with a proper sense of his situation, will not deceive you, you will give my story a patient and accredited hearing.

The first part of my life was passed on the banks of the Susquehannah in Pennsylvania; my father had retired to this place to pass his days in the quiet of an agricultural life: He was one, who, like myself, had early struggled in the thorny paths of adversity and misfortune; he had once filled a station better suited to his talents and industry, and it was chiefly from this excellent being I received the little knowledge I have acquired; but on this it is unnecessary to dwell:—Profiting by his instructions, and aided by a disposition to inquire into the causes of all I saw in the works of nature and art, and generally to add to my fund of knowledge, I early contracted an aversion to the dull uniform, and as I then thought, uninformative round of pursuits which mark the progress of an agricultural life; I sought to distinguish myself by becoming eminently useful to mankind; I had read of men who, with no unusual talents, but by a proper exertion of them, had become celebrated for some singular services they had performed; and why, thought I, could not I, like them become distinguished; the path of fame was open to all who had courage to tread it; could I not, by application and a strenuous exertion of

my powers give my ideas a greater expansion? If I reflected on what I saw, what I did, and what was done by others, would it not at last lead me to the accomplishment of my wishes? There were various methods by which I might acquire celebrity and honor; in the field, in the cabinet,¹ in the study of the arts and sciences; for the first I had neither inclination nor taste, my disposition was peaceable, I possessed none of that terrible kind of courage, better called ferocity, which would enable me to distinguish myself as a soldier, and had I possessed it, I did not entertain the idea that honest fame could be acquired by becoming the greatest of the destroyers of the human race, and an increaser of their already too numerous calamities.

Politics pleased me as little, I thought it would be impossible to preserve my integrity, amidst the dangers and temptations which usually surround an important political station, I saw that even the preservation of this invaluable possession would not perhaps eventually accomplish my purpose; the best of politicians had not all been famous for their virtue; even those who had preserved it untainted, while they had been extolled by one party of men, had been vilified by another; to become celebrated in the promotion of the arts and sciences, was the only path left open to my footsteps, my success in this pursuit would displease no one, and the applause I might merit would be willingly awarded by all. Many of my leisure hours had been occupied by reflections of this nature, and time only served to add strength to my resolution; I had already become acquainted with some of the principles of experimental philosophy, my father's books had supplied me with much useful knowledge in mechanics, hydraulics, &c. many an unoccupied hour had been passed in applying my theoretical knowledge to practice; I had

¹ *In the field*: in military service; *in the cabinet*: in politics

constructed clocks of wood, I had made mills, pumps, &c. it is true, they were rude and unfinished, but they were my first essays, and much could not be expected, where the only tools used were a saw, hatchet, and knife; yet my success served to add vigor to my ruling passion; I flattered myself that my little machines were constructed on an improved plan, and if I could make improvements here, under so many disadvantages, what should I not be able to perform in the city, where these attempts might be made on a more extensive scale, and would receive the reward due to their merit.

To go to the city became my most earnest wish; but my father was very averse to the scheme, his experience had taught him to believe a greater share of felicity was attainable in his situation, than in the accomplishment of the object of my pursuit; I knew he entertained this opinion, and therefore resolved not to consult him, but to act in obedience to the dictates of my inclination, without his knowledge; it would do him no injury, my brother was a sufficient assistant in the ordinary labors of the plantation, and his circumstances enabled him to hire in the case of inability.—My resolution was taken, and I had but to put it in execution; a journey of a few days would bear me to the city: I was well acquainted with the roads, accustomed to pedestrian feats, and dreaded no danger, from a nightly elopement.² A circumstance which happened some time before, was an additional motive; it had been my delight to take a nightly ramble to a rock which commanded a fine view of the river and surrounding country, here I used to sit, or walk, and contemplate the beauties of nature, when the mild radiance of the moon displayed all the romantic beauties of the surrounding scene, in its richest, though softest tints; nor was this my only employment, I

² *Elopement*: running away

had a smattering of astronomy, I could name most of the constellations, and loved to gaze over, and reflect on the innumerable glories of the heavens; returning from an excursion of this kind, I was alarmed by a cry of distress, I started—the natural timidity of my disposition gave way to the idea, that I might, perhaps, be serviceable to some person in distress, the voice was that of a female, but from whence could it proceed? I knew no female would willingly be abroad at this solitary hour, in a country but thinly settled; the idea of robbers occurred,—the shriek was heard again, it was near me; and I quickly saw a man attempting to bear a struggling female from the public road; I rushed upon him,—a desperate struggle ensued, in which I proved victorious; meanwhile, the lady had fled, but the momentary view I had of her features awakened sensations of a new and unaccountable kind; the first wish they produced was, a desire to behold again, the object which had excited them; the man who had yielded to my superior strength had fled, I had no right to detain him, I had accomplished my object; but now a new one occupied my attention; I hastened to search after the female, I searched the road, the wood, but in vain, she was nowhere to be found; and I returned home weary, dissatisfied and perplexed.

All my inquiries with regard to the lady, were fruitless,—my affairs proceeded in their wonted course for some time; my nocturnal rambles were continued, and my speculations with regard to the future were still indulged; one night as I was returning home from my favorite spot, I noticed a man crossing the path which led to my father's dwelling; surprised at an appearance so uncommon, I was endeavoring to guess what could induce any one, besides myself, to wander through the woods at this late hour; from these reflections, I was roused by a pistol shot, which deprived me for a time, of sensation; I knew

not how long I remained in this state, and when I recovered, found I had sustained but little injury; how I happened to escape so well, I know not, whether it had been fired from a great distance, had spent its force by striking against a tree, or been deadened by the resistance of my hat and a large handkerchief, which I had bound round my head to relieve a violent headache, I am unable to determine; but I was happy I had received so small an injury.

A new train of reflections and surmises were not excited; I asked myself who could be the person that fired; it was evident it was an enemy; every concurrent circumstance, the hour, the place, seemed to impress this belief; but who could it be? I had injured no being on earth, I was almost a stranger (owing to my romantic notions) even to my nearest neighbors; I was totally unable to form any rational conjecture; I soon recovered the slight injury I had sustained; the circumstance no longer caused any anxiety, and I again ventured to revisit my favorite retreat;—returning home one night, as I passed through my brother's chamber to gain my own, I saw by the light of the moon, the figure of a man standing near the bed of my brother, armed with a dagger; I stood almost petrified with fear and astonishment; I had imbibed from our rustic neighbors, some superstitious ideas, it was near, “the noon of night,” that solemn hour, when the dead forsake their graves, and wander forth to revisit scenes once dear to them; I believed I saw a spectre; I made no alarm, my tongue clave to the roof of my mouth, horror almost froze the blood in my veins, and my limbs scarcely supported my tottering frame! The figure moved towards me,—I made a desperate effort, reached my chamber and locked the door; the silence of death reigned in the house,—not a sound reached my ear; I gave myself up to reflection: could, I asked, this figure be an inhabitant of the grave? Was it probable that the dead could leave the earth, and

rise to sport with the terrors of mankind? Would they come armed with the weapons of death? My reason would not suffer me to cherish the thought, my courage returned, I left the room and searched the house in silence, for now I believed it must be a robber I had seen; but I found no one, every thing was safe, and returning to my bed, I puzzled myself with vain conjectures, till sleep wrapped my senses in forgetfulness.

In the morning, I enquired if any noise had been heard in the night? and No, was the answer; no one had heard any thing, their slumbers had been sound and uninterrupted; I evaded answering with truth to the consequent enquiries, by saying I had dreamed a frightful dream. The next night I again saw the same figure, but I was now convinced it was no spectre, but a man; at the sight of me he fled, and passed through the door which I had by accident left unfastened: a new cause of wonder here presented itself; who could this man be? and what was his object? were questions which naturally occurred; my father frequently left his bed and traversed the house in his sleep; but it was certain this was not him. By what means could he have entered the house? I had fastened the door and had the key in my pocket; he was armed; this gave birth to a new idea; it was evident his intentions were dreadful; my adventure on a preceding night was remembered; my life had been aimed at, and it was probable it was again attempted; my thoughts, however, fixed themselves on no determinate object, until I recalled the remembrance of the female whose rescue I had effected; that man whom I had defeated, he then, I concluded, must be the one who had fired the pistol, and whom I twice met armed in my brother's chamber,—he wished to revenge himself on the author of his defeat, he had attempted to destroy my brother through mistake, and my appearance alone had saved his life. There now appeared to be an absolute necessity of taking some measures to counteract

his schemes; and in forming plans of this nature I busied myself, till a new thought displaced my former ones. It now appeared plain to me, that this man had discovered his error, or why did he not (believing I slept in the bed of my brother) pierce his bosom with the dagger; there was nothing to prevent him, my brother was sleeping, he might have killed him, retired in silence, and the dark mantle of oblivion, would have hidden the secret from the knowledge of man. It was now evident my life was attempted; he had found means to descend the chimney, and enter my brother's chamber, as by this means only, he could enter mine.

AN ORIGINAL TALE—BY ADELIO.

(continued)

A

JOURNEY TO PHILADELPHIA;

OR,

MEMOIRS OF

CHARLES COLEMAN SAUNDERS.

[April 21, 1804 issue]

THERE is no fear which acts so powerfully on the mind of man, as that which bids him guard against no determinate object or attempt; my death was certainly intended. To meet it face to face in any form (though constitutionally timid) I thought possible; but to be forever in danger, to be taken off by a bullet while I believed myself safe, to drink the draught of death, when I thought myself restoring vigor to my exhausted frame, or to perish when lying defenceless and reposing in the arms of sleep—these were dangers to encounter for which all my courage was unequal, and which could only be avoided by removing from my present abode; once gone, my enemy's scheme of revenge

would be relinquished; if I remained, I should one time or other, become its victim. My journey to the city was again resolved upon and executed. At midnight I left my father's house, but without any intention to return: I took nothing with me except a small sum of money: I imparted my intention to no one: I may be blamed for leaving my friends thus abruptly, in anxiety and suspense respecting my fate; but I thought it wrong to alarm them, as they could not possibly remove the cause of my danger; they would have persuaded me to remain, or by their means my future residence would be discovered, CARNELL (the being whom I believed to be my secret enemy) would pursue me, and I should be subject to incessant alarms; perhaps you may think my conclusions unwarranted; if so, remember they were the conclusions of one, who was unable, from the singularity of the case, to receive advantages from the judgment of others.

I did not, however, leave my father's house without emotion, I could not deny myself the secret satisfaction of visiting every spot, which recollection made dear to my heart; the nocturnal seat was not forgotten; once more I repaired thither and seated myself in the usual place;—the night was calm and clear, not a cloud obscured the splendors of the ethereal vault of heaven, the moon was full and her beams seemed to repose on the tranquil bosom of the water; every sound was hushed, save when the zephyr sighed through the foliage of the venerable oaks.—It brought to my recollection the celebrated night-piece of *Homer*,—thus translated by *Pope*:—

As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heav'n's clear azure casts her sacred light,
When not a breeze disturbs the blue serene,
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole;

O'er the dark trees a yellower lustre shed,
And tip the silver ev'ry mountain's head.—
Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise;
A flood of glory bursts from the skies;
The conscious swains, exulting in the sight,
Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.³

To me who was about to leave it, perhaps forever, this scene appeared unusually interesting; I knew not how long I sat occupied with various reflections, when I was roused by the sound of approaching footsteps; I started, and looked around, I saw a young woman at no great distance from me, in her hand she held an open letter; her movements were wild and irregular, she would look on the letter, and then on heaven; I watched her with attention and solicitude; the adventure was of a singular nature; this was a place not frequented by any human being except myself, at least I had not seen any one here at this hour. Could she be seeking any one here! This seemed improbable, and her attention seemed wholly absorbed by the letter.—Suddenly she exclaimed, I can bear this torture no longer, and rushed toward the river; I started from my seat, and flew to prevent her; I seized her but she eluded my grasp, shrieked, and leaped into the water! In a moment all was again silent; to descend to the river at this spot, could not be accomplished without imminent risk; I looked down on the stream, but the overhanging rocks cast a deep shade over it, and I saw her no more: Some distressing occurrence had probably overpowered her reason, and in a moment of despair and insanity she had put an end to her existence; she had chosen the hour of midnight for this purpose,

³ The narrative quotes, with slight variations and errors, from Alexander Pope's much-praised translation of Homer's *Iliad* (Book 8, lines 687-98), completed in 1720.

when she thought the deed would be concealed from every human eye; I however, had been a melancholy witness to the shocking catastrophe. Her friends would wonder whither she had fled—I only could tell; her corse⁴ would be borne down the stream, it would perhaps be found, when corruption had made the features indistinguishable; conjectures would be formed as to who it had been, and how it came there; and I alone could answer all these questions; but should I endeavor to discover who it was, should I inform her friends what had been her fate; I should be seized as the perpetrator of the deed; I might indeed discover the truth, but they would not believe it; I should suffer by my sincerity, I should at least be blamed for not preventing it; this I might have done, but how was I to imagine her intention? Self-destruction was a deed of which I thought mankind incapable, and when convinced of the contrary, it was too late—the deed was done; the past could not be recalled. I resolved to leave every thing to its course; no one had witnessed her end but myself, and I would, for many reasons, be induced to conceal it, her friends would be benefited by this procedure, they would suppose her death, (if the intelligence of it reached them) accidental, and be spared the dreadful certainty of its being intentionally effected.

I pursued my journey, and reached the city in safety; here new difficulties presented themselves; my object had been to offer myself as an apprentice to a watchmaker; but who would take me? I was acquainted with no human being, though surrounded by so many thousands, I was unknown and unrecommended; in the mean time I might be apprehended as a thief, or confined as a vagrant or runaway; this might be prevented by a disclosure of the truth, but its concealment was

⁴ *Corse*: an older term for corpse

necessary to my purpose; in addition to this, food was absolutely necessary; my stock of money was almost exhausted.

Those who have lived remote from cities, have not a just conception of the real necessity of money; provisions for a day, lodgings for a night, might be had in many parts of the country gratis, and would be received as the offering of hospitality, a virtue more practiced in the country, than in town. The little cash I had yet remaining would not, here, purchase more food than was necessary for a single meal; the haughty independence of my spirit would not permit me to ask a favor, and my soul revolted at the thought of stealing; I shuddered when I reflected on the condition to which my imprudence had reduced me; a secret voice whispered, “you have done wrong;” but to return was too late, and the evils I had fled from would again be encountered; my situation was similar to that of a man in the midst of a rapid stream; it was at least as easy to proceed as to return, my course was pointed out, and I could do nothing more than rush on boldly to the endurance of whatever ills I was doomed to suffer.

I knocked at the door of a watch maker in market-street,⁵ and was soon ushered into the room, where sat the master and his family, in a manner which plainly evinced my embarrassment;

⁵ *Market-Street*: as the name suggests, this street in the heart of Philadelphia accommodated the major marketplace. Robert Waln, in his 1819 satire of Philadelphia titled *The Hermit in America on a Visit to Philadelphia*, identifies Market-Street as a plebeian or working-class area. The narrative later mentions *Race-Street* (officially known as Sassafras Street), a site for informal horse-racing. And a bit later, the narrative refers to *Front-Street*, described by Waln as “now blocked up with ware-houses, and dwelling-houses, and tipling-houses, all joined together with the utmost care to prevent loss of space, generating disease from their confined situations...” (69).

I told him my business; his dark, unprepossessing features were contracted, and his penetrating eyes seemed to pierce into my very soul: He asked my name, place of abode, &c. I told him no falsehoods, neither did I tell him the whole truth; I did not tell him my father's dislike to my pursuit; after much conversation of an uninteresting nature, he said, "your story does not seem improbable, your appearance seems to evince the truth of some parts of it, but if I take you as an apprentice, what security can you give me, for your good conduct and industry." All I have to give, I replied, is the word of a man of honor, who values his word too highly, to promise what he does not intend to perform. The term, I believe sounded strangely in his ears, it was indeed ludicrously contrasted with my homely⁶ dress, and awkward appearance, and I believe he was about to refuse me, when the entrance of a young lady put an end to this interval of suspense, and created another; she cast an enquiring look upon me; I felt still more distressed, and held down my head, confused and confounded, when a sudden exclamation from her, of "Can it be possible?" effectually roused me, "can what be possible!" said every one in the same instant; she answered not, but hastening to me, she seized my hand; I was now convinced my conjectures were right; when she spoke, I thought the voice familiar to my ear, at least that I had some where heard it before; a sight of her features told me where, my hand trembled in hers, and I flattered myself she was not without emotion: You have, no doubt, already guessed who this lady was, you will remember my adventure in the wood, when I saved her from the violence of CARNELL:—An explanation ensued, and I received the thanks of her family; my first request was granted, and I became an apprentice.

⁶ *Homely*: rough or unsophisticated

[April 28, 1804 issue]⁷

TIME rolled rapidly along; my exertions pleased Mr. BRANART; my knowledge increased; my reading, and conversation with man, enlarged my mind, whilst it corrected many of my errors; my hopes of distinction were raised, I thought I saw the path of fame open as I travelled: Mean time my leisure hours were passed in the society of the amiable EMILIA BRANART, the first impressions which I had felt at the sight of her, were strengthened and confirmed; nor did I think her opinion of me unfavorable, and I believed I should have no cause to repent my journey.

But this pleasing calm, this feast on lively hopes of future prosperity, distinction and happiness, was doomed to be interrupted by an alarming circumstance: I had been sent to repair a clock at the house of a gentleman in race-street: returning home, just as I stepped on the pavement, I saw a stage coach arrive at a neighboring house; wishing to see if any of the passengers were known to me, I stopped, and to my astonishment, saw Carnell descend from it; a cold shuddering seized me; the sight of this being filled me with sensations of a dreadful nature; they were connected with a sense of the dangers to which I thought myself again exposed; this man I was convinced, had sought to destroy me, and now again haunted me for the same dreadful purpose. Yet, how could he have discovered my residence? I had imparted no hints of the place of my destination on quitting my spot, to any human being; yet he

⁷ All subsequent installments include the title header reproduced above, except the final installment, which changes "*(continued)*" to "*(concluded)*".

was here; causes with which I was wholly unconnected, might have induced him to visit Philadelphia; pleasure, business, for aught I knew, this city might be his home, yet I still labored under the conviction that I, and I alone, was the object of his journey, to gratify his revenge, to embrue his hands in the blood of an innocent man. And was his vengeance to be gratified only by my destruction? Was there no method of warding off the impending danger? Could I not cause him to be apprehended? I had seen him in my chamber, armed with the instruments of death, at the hour of midnight; but I was the only one; my voice alone would not condemn him, and if it would, dare I charge him with meditating a deed, of which he had perhaps never formed an idea? It was at least possible, I might be mistaken, it might have been some other, my apprehensions had probably deceived my senses; these and many more reflections passed rapidly through my mind, but produced no other effect than to confuse it with the uncertainty of probabilities, and the horrors of apprehension.

Nothing, however could be done; no means could be pursued, to ensure my safety, or lull my fears. I was obliged to wait with patience the unfolding of this mystery, and prepare myself to meet, with firmness, whatever might happen.

Walking in the state house garden,⁸ was a favorite amusement with EMILIA; thither I frequently attended her, when the warmth of the summer days, made the coolness of the evening, and the fragrance of the garden inviting; here, enjoying the society and conversation of the object of my fondest

⁸ This place was then the resort of people of fashion and decency. [Note in original. Robert Waln, cited in note 5 above, describes the state-house grounds as the place for Philadelphia's fashionable set, where "all-impatient belles and beaux sallied forth armed for conquest and admiration."]]

affections,—I was suddenly seized by two officers of justice: I was surprised, and enquired their business, "Our business, Sir," said one of them, "is with you." You have mistaken your object, said I, with me you can have no possible business; they however, insisted they were right, they mentioned my name, and even my former place of abode; after a vain altercation I accompanied them to the mayor's office, and answered many questions, and was finally informed I was charged with the crime of murder! You may form some idea of my astonishment at the information; EMILIA had accompanied me to the mayor's, she believed the officers labored under some mistake, and her feelings may easily be conceived when she found me charged with the commission of so detestable a crime; yet what she knew of my character and conduct, seemed not to accord with that of a murderer; she requested I should not be sent to prison; she believed me innocent, and related those events of my life which had fallen under her observation: The mayor was a humane man, but he was compelled to fulfil the duties of his office; "All you have stated," said he, "may be true," but I, he observed, was charged with the murder of a young woman, who had long been missing. I had entered the city under very suspicious circumstances, &c. if I was innocent the truth would shortly appear; this was not the place of my trial, his duty, however, obliged him to confine me, and I was sent to prison!

Of all the strange adventures I had met with, this was the furthest above my comprehension: I could recollect no circumstance of my life which could possibly create suspicions of this nature: I did not think myself a dubious character; during my residence in the city I had led a quiet and inoffensive life; how then was this to be accounted for? It was evident some person had lodged information which would justify my confinement, in the judgment of the mayor; but here I was almost entirely a

stranger, and who, except actuated by the spirit of a demon, would accuse me of any crime, without possessing at least a shadow of proof; the crime, too, was so detestable, I had never even meditated it; I was lost and bewildered amidst innumerable and useless conjectures: At length the idea of CARNELL occurred, and with it a train of terrifying images; might not he, I asked, have caused my apprehension? Might he not have suborned⁹ some desperate villains, to prove me guilty of the crime? The conjecture seemed probable; instigated by revenge, he had already sought my destruction; and was not he who could deliberately meditate the death of an innocent man, capable of any deed, however enormous and detestable? Thus did I bewilder my senses endeavoring to guess why I had been apprehended; my few friends, in the mean time, visited me in prison: they believed me innocent, and endeavored to impress a belief, that I would, on trial, be proved so, and be honorably acquitted; for this occasion, I summoned all my firmness to my aid, yet I could not avoid reflecting with pain on the misfortunes I had encountered in consequence of quitting my paternal home; I had left it, chiefly to avoid assassination, and was now to suffer death, (perhaps) for a crime of the commission of which I was innocent.

[May 5, 1804 issue]

THE day of trial came; I was conducted to the bar of the supreme court; the eyes of hundreds were upon me; the usual question was asked, "*Are you guilty? or not guilty?*" I replied with firmness "Not guilty!" when the charge was read, and I was accused of drowning a young woman, by forcibly pushing her into the river *Susquehanna*! A smothered groan was heard from

⁹ *Suborned*: induced

the audience; it was not excited by an emotion of pity for me, but was a proof of their detestation of the author of so shocking a deed; I did not blame it, it was honorable to their feelings, and evinced the rectitude of their hearts. I now found to my surprise, I was tried for the murder of her whose life I would gladly have saved, and whose unfortunate end I thought no eye, save mine, had witnessed; it now appeared, some others had witnessed it besides me, but who, and why I was charged with the crime, were circumstances, to me, inexplicable. The witnesses now appeared, but guess, if you can, my sensations, when the first I saw, was (CARNELL) the same dreadful being I had seen in my brother's chamber, I shuddered; my heart beat tremulously in my bosom; my sight grew dim, and I almost fainted; the spectators seemed to consider my emotion a proof of my guilt, but they were mistaken. The trial continued, and new sources of indescribable astonishment and wonder were every moment displayed. The substance of the evidence was as follows—"That I had planned and effected the death of SUSAN WARFIELD; I had been heard to say, I would destroy her, by any means in my power; that, knowing she had frequented the scene of her death, I had laid in ambush (armed) to effect my purpose, and had been seen by the evidence¹⁰ (who were fishing at a little distance, though in a situation which precluded all possibility of rendering assistance) to push her forcibly into the water, where there was little probability of her escaping:" All this was new to me, so far from planning her death, I had scarcely known her, she had consequently never given me any cause of offence, I was certainly ignorant of the visits of any one but myself to the spot I had chosen for my nocturnal seat; the exertion I had made to save

¹⁰ *Evidence*: the term can also refer to witnesses providing testimony

her, might, it was true, be mistaken for a different one, by persons who had seen the transaction from a distance; but that it should be said, I had declared my intention to destroy her, and that I had concealed myself to effect this purpose, was really astonishing: But the witnesses were sufficient, respectable, positive and uniform in their depositions. I had nothing to offer in my defence but the truth, but who would give credit to the relation of one, who stood convicted of so foul a crime, who had secretly left his native home, had entered the city in a manner not ill calculated to excite suspicion, had concealed his true name and passed under a different one (CHARLES COLEMAN) and betrayed evident marks of guilt and confusion, at the sight of his accusers.—Had I said,—I had seen CARNELL offering violence to EMILIA; had rescued her from his grasp; had seen him in my brother's chamber armed with a dagger, at midnight, &c. would my tale have been credited? No, I had no proofs to offer; I had informed no person, not even my brother of what I had seen. I believed all attempts at defence would prove entirely useless, and therefore forbore to make any. I thought it better to meet my fate, dreadful and ignominious as it was, with manly firmness and unyielding fortitude: my story would be treated as the last effort of despairing villainy and impotent malice. The Judge addressed the jury in a solemn and impressive manner; they retired, and in a short time, returned with the expected verdict, "*guilty!*" They had done their duty, I had no cause to complain, the evidence was sufficient to condemn me; and had I been appointed to judge a similar cause I should have acted in the same manner; I listened to my sentence with calmness and composure, and was reconducted for the last time to the prison. Thus, I have given you a faithful and exact account of my adventures.—I shall now shortly suffer an ignominious death: the world in general believes me guilty; but the time may come, when what is now hidden

from human eyes will be disclosed,—and then, my friend, when the grave shall hide me from the world, you, I trust, will do justice to my memory.

* * * * *

THUS ended the story of this unfortunate young man, it was told with the greatest apparent sincerity, and my heart became deeply interested in his fate. I was astonished at the calmness with which he supported his misfortunes; he was endowed with the keenest sensibility, and even timidity of disposition; his courage had probably never been awakened by danger, or perhaps was of that kind, which, though unequal to the encounter of sudden and alarming attacks, gathered strength by reflection; those who best know the various shades of character which distinguish mankind, know, that there are persons of weak and delicate constitutions, who tremble at the slightest agitation, while their minds remain firm and undaunted, who, if they have time for reflection, meet danger with an undaunted front: Thus it appeared in the present case, here reflection seemed to have inspired a contempt of death in its most terrified and disgraceful form, in the mind of this young man; yet there were moments, when his tranquility was disturbed, when the images of his father, his friends, and above all, his EMILIA presented themselves to his imagination; EMILIA loved him with the tenderest affection, which even his misfortunes, (for she believed him guiltless) were unable to alienate; yet, for him she was doomed to suffer all the evils, flowing from disappointed love, and the cruel taunts of a misjudging world; these causes interrupted his quiet far more than his own misfortunes; "my pain," said he, will "shortly end; death will lull it to rest; but, for them, an ample store of anguish is collected, which time alone can mitigate."—Some pressing affairs obliging me to hasten to Europe, I bade him an eternal

adieu! The day of his execution was at hand, which my departure alone spared me the pain of witnessing.—

[May 12, 1804 issue]

SOME years after, I returned to Philadelphia; the misfortunes of SAUNDERS, though not forgotten, yet the impression they made was partly effaced by time and various cares.

While walking one day in front-street, I was transported with the sight of SAUNDERS coming towards me, we instantly recognized each other, and were folded in a mutual embrace; I eagerly interrogated him on that subject, which my former knowledge of him and my astonishment at our present meeting naturally excited, when, after entering his house, he gave me the following information.

“The day of my intended execution came, and with it my father: His presence was more distressing to me, than death itself; I wished to spare him the pangs a parent must feel, who is doomed to witness the ignominious death of a son, once dear to his affections; but fate had determined otherwise: Some person had informed him of my expected fate, and he hastened to bid me a last adieu. He entered my prison, I flew to embrace him, he received me with emotions, which his love of justice made him desirous of suppressing; but the tide of nature was powerful, and the severity of the judge was softened by the tenderness of the parent: Think, my friend, what must be the feelings of a parent, who has labored for years, to teach his offspring the duties of life, and the exercise of virtue,—a parent, venerable for his age, and whose life, was unstained with a crime, when he beholds the object of his love, forsake the paths of rectitude, and become the most detested villain, and your imagination will paint

this scene, better than my words can describe it: He believed me guilty,—this impression I strove to remove, and succeeded; falsehood was so mean a crime, that he believed me incapable of it, though passion might have impelled to the perpetration of greater crimes. Yet the conviction of my innocence did not dispel his sorrow; to the pain which the death of a son will naturally produce, was added, the shameful manner by which justice inflicted the blow: I should die innocent, but would his conviction of this, induce the world to believe me so?—Would not my death load my family with shame and infamy, which an indiscriminating world casts on the relations of a murderer?—But now the appointed hour was come—I bade my friends farewell and the cart moved towards the place of execution; the rope was fastened around my neck, the cap was about to be drawn over my eyes, and the signal was about to be given, the execution of which would hide the world from my view forever, when a sudden and piercing cry of “Save him! save him!” was heard, and a young woman rushed through the crowd, to the foot of the gallows; her distress and agitation soon discovered who she was, it was her for whose murder I was about to suffer! whom I thought I had seen perish on the memorable night when I left my paternal abode! Yet, here she was, by some means unaccountable to me, at the foot of the gallows, accusing herself as being the cause of my misfortunes, and imploring the sheriff to suspend my execution. The crowd pressed tumultuously around, and joined their cries to hers.—The rope was unfastened, and I reconducted to prison.

“I had been saved, in the last moment, from an infamous death; a prospect of life and liberty was open before me; my friends, and even the spectators congratulated me with that tenderness and joy which will naturally arise in the bosoms of men, when they behold innocence snatched from the fate which is only the punishment of guilt; yet, strange as it may seem, I was

the only one who seemed to feel but little emotion: I had long contemplated death as certain and inevitable, I had prepared myself to meet it with a manly fortitude; I wished to prove with what dignity I could suffer a fate I had never merited, and conscious innocence brightened my prospect of eternity; the name of death had become familiar, and his terrible shaft had lost the keenness of its point; I returned to prison with but little more pleasure than I left it, and some hours elapsed ere I was sufficiently sensible of the blessing of renewed existence to be grateful for the gift; to no one was my life more gratifying, than the lovely EMILIA; her joy was not expressed by words, nor displayed by gestures; but was painted in lively colors on her expressive countenance; a sweet satisfaction animated every feature, and gave additional lustre to her beaming eyes.

“You will naturally be anxious to know how this change was produced; WARFIELD’S information was as follows; she had, for some reason she did not explain, determined to anticipate the hand of death by drowning herself; that she attempted it, you know; but the fear of death, proved stronger than her disgust of life, and with great difficulty she saved herself from that fate she had sought with so much secrecy: but, dreading to return home and endure the severity of her parents’ reproaches (who she supposed would be made acquainted with the circumstance) she fled to a relation in Maryland: Meanwhile the intelligence of my fate reached her; alarmed at the consequences her folly was likely to occasion, she hastened to Philadelphia, thinking it probable she might arrive in time to avert the fate which hung over me; when she reached the city, she saw the immense concourse of people, who had assembled to witness my execution; curiosity led her to enquire my crime; the moment was propitious, and my life was preserved. Yet reflection dissipated a greater part of my joy, when I considered my

situation, my innocence of the crime of murder was proved and I should probably be liberated in a short time from confinement; but who was to prove me innocent of meditated guilt? Would not I still be treated as a being dangerous to the community? Would the world consider me as much less guilty than before? I should be detested by all mankind, and condemned to wander through the world like an outcast from human society; I was conscious of my innocence, it is true; this had supported me at the most trying moment of my existence; but that proud, unbending spirit I had received from nature, and which had been strengthened by education, recoiled at the prospect. I wished to deserve the good opinion of all mankind, to command respect, though I could not inspire love; how then should I be able, when walking through the streets of the city, to bear to be shunned by all good men, and treated as a being with whom no one could safely commune; these reflections gave me intolerable anguish; I was almost tempted to wish I had perished by the hand of justice; I should then have slept quietly with the dead, the grave would have shielded me from the scorn of mankind, and insured my tranquility.

“But my uneasiness was happily relieved—on the day succeeding that in which my life was saved, I was saved from a fate which I considered as little better than death, in the following manner; several of the persons who were witnesses at my trial visited me in prison, one of whom gave me the following welcome information, which I will give you in his own words.

(to be concluded)

[May 19, 1804 issue]

“THAT the motives of my conduct, and that of my colleagues may be understood, and our innocence of any design

against your life, or the crime of perjury may be proved; I shall relate a few circumstances which happened previous to your unfortunate journey to Philadelphia: Being on a visit of some length in the neighborhood of your late residence, we happened to stop one evening at an inn, where we heard a young man (who we then thought was you) express his intention of effecting the death of SUSAN WARFIELD; he said her base treatment of him, would justify any measures, however violent and sanguinary; it was such, as no human being, however gentle, would suffer to pass, without the severest punishment; and finally, he said he would effect her destruction in any manner whatever; we saw him, though we were in the next room, through the glazed door; he, I believed, was unconscious of our presence; he declared his intention to his companion, while intoxicated with passion and foaming with rage and fury; the circumstance made some impression on our minds; but we believed his words proceeded from the violence of his passion, and did not doubt, but during the paroxisms of anger, he had meditated, what when reason again regulated his conduct, he would certainly not execute; for these reasons we were silent, until some months after; we were accustomed during the moon-light summer nights to fish for eels in a small stream which emptied into the river Susquehannah, the situation we usually chose commanded a near view of the rocky eminence where we could observe all that passed without being seen; here we saw you frequently arrive, armed with a club in the night; near this place WARFIELD usually passed the evening with her lover, as his visits to her father's house were forbidden; these circumstances, compared with what we had witnessed at the inn, excited our suspicions, and you were narrowly watched;—one night, while pursuing our usual sport, we saw WARFIELD approach you; we saw you rise soon after, rush upon, and push her into the river; all this was done in a few minutes, nor was it in

our power, (though in a short distance) to prevent, or to save WARFIELD; as to reach you, we should have been obliged to take a circuitous rout: we therefore watched you, as you had to pass very near where we were concealed, by the trees, (it should be recollected, that we still believed, you was the same person we had seen at the inn.) That night you absconded, and it was long ere our enquiries traced you to Philadelphia. We caused your apprehension and conviction.—As we were returning home to Maryland (our place of residence) we lodged at an inn on the road, where, on entering, to our astonishment we saw a man sitting in the room, so much resembling you, that we were fully persuaded you had escaped from prison; without a moment's hesitation we seized him; his astonishment seemed equal to our own; he said he was in search of his wife, who had left his house in Maryland, and he believed had gone to her father's on the banks of the Susquehannah; he told his story with apparent sincerity, and with that confidence which innocence, or impudence, only, can assume when charged with a crime; we gazed on each other in silent wonder; with the banks of the Susquehannah we were somewhat acquainted; we asked him many questions which he readily answered; but when we charged him with the crime for which you were condemned to suffer, he replied, if possible, with increasing astonishment; SUSAN WARFIELD is my wife! Not many days have elapsed since I saw her, he then explained to us several circumstances, all which filled us with horror and consternation; in short, we were made acquainted with every circumstance necessary to prove your innocence: Judge then, if you can, what we felt; we had caused the death of a guiltless and deserving man, we had been deceived by an unusual resemblance between two persons, unknown to each other; the day appointed for your execution had already passed; and you had probably been punished for a deed you had

never committed; but the pangs of death, and the extremest tortures were bliss compared to the horrible sensations we experienced.—Yet there was still a possibility of your execution being deferred; this had more than once, been the case; the life of a man, and our own future peace were at stake, and while there was the most distant hope it might be saved, it was our duty and our wish to make the experiment. To return to Philadelphia and to take CARSON with us, was a resolution adopted and instantly put into execution; to our inexpressible joy our journey has not been vain; you will scarcely be able, sufferer as you have been, to forgive us, who have been, though unintentionally, the cause of your misfortunes; but could you know the torments we have felt, when in imagination, we saw your injured spirit rise from the shades of death, and accuse us of destroying you by deeds perpetrated only by the most abandoned of mankind, and when you have seen the dreadful resemblance which caused our unfortunate error; you will look on us with less detestation than is at present possible.”—

He ceased, went out, and soon returned with CARSON—here was indeed an extraordinary resemblance, so exact, so striking, that all present were filled with astonishment, but for a small difference in our height, the most intimate friend could have scarcely distinguished us from each other; from these men I learned that the dreadful CARNELL was dead, and thus another cause of uneasiness was removed. I was now soon liberated, restored to that respect I had before enjoyed, and united to that amiable woman, EMILIA, who had been one of the first causes of my misfortunes. In her I have found a woman of a superior understanding, enlightened mind, and gentle disposition, her superior judgment has corrected many of my errors; she has lessened that love of distinction and celebrity, which I had once indulged, and which I had attained by means, as

unwelcome, as unexpected; she has convinced me, that fame is not always the portion of merit, that to deserve the esteem of mankind, was a superior enjoyment to an enlarged mind, than distinction or fame could bestow.”

ADELIO.