

## AMELIA: OR THE FAITHLESS BRITON.

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*Amelia: or the Faithless Briton*, labeled “An Original Novel, Founded Upon Recent Facts,” first appeared in *The Columbian Magazine* in late 1787.<sup>1</sup> The magazine, published from Philadelphia, was among the most prominent and ornate of the period: issues regularly included engravings, contemporary music, and essays, poetry, and fiction by eminent writers of the time. The physician Benjamin Rush published a series of essays on contemporary social issues, including slavery, in the 1787 numbers, and Jeremy Belknap serialized *The Foresters*, an allegorical novel about US independence, in its pages as well. Elizabeth Graeme Ferguson, Francis Hopkinson, and John Trumbull published poetry in its pages, Charles Brockden Brown’s essay series “The Rhapsodist” appeared there in 1789, and a number of new works by American authors—Royall Tyler’s play “The Contrast,” Noah Webster’s collected essays, and Hugh Henry Brackenridge’s *Modern Chivalry*, for example—were reviewed in its pages. Prominent nonfiction works—biographical sketches by Belknap, an early history of the American Revolution, an early biography of Benjamin Franklin—appeared therein as well, though fiction always figures prominently. Edward Pitcher’s bibliography of magazine fiction lists several works of fiction, much original, in virtually every issue before the magazine folded in 1792.<sup>2</sup> When *Amelia* appeared, it did so alongside the oriental tale “The Complaint of Iman” and an installment of *The Foresters*, and beside essays on “religion in general,” the development of the arts in ancient Egypt, vision’s relation to passion, Quebec, and the Canary Islands.

*Amelia* was successful and popular enough to enjoy multiple reprinting, including in *The Massachusetts Magazine* in 1789, *The New-York*

*Magazine, or Literary Repository* in 1795, *The Philadelphia Minerva* in 1797, *The New-York Weekly Magazine; or, Miscellaneous Repository* in 1797, and *The Lady’s Weekly Miscellany* in 1810. There was also a 1798 printing in Boston, which grouped the novel with *Galatea, a Pastoral Romance*, the unrelated story *Amelia, or Malevolence Defeated*, and the poem “Miss Seward’s Monody on Major André.”<sup>3</sup>

**Suggestions for further reading:** Lillie Deming Loshe briefly mentions *Amelia* as “the oldest really American tale of the Revolution”; see Loshe, *The Early American Novel, 1789-1830* (1907; New York: Frederick Ungar, 1966), 61. Terence Martin groups *Amelia* among a number of proto-historical novels which consider the American Revolution before the publication of James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Spy* (1821), arguing that in these earlier texts “the war is never brought close, is never, in our terms, made realistic”; see Martin, “Social Institutions in the Early American Novel,” *American Quarterly* 9:1 (1957), 76. Cathy Davidson mentions *Amelia* in passing, but does reproduce an interesting illustration which often accompanied publications of the text; see Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 114-115. Tara Fitzpatrick considers the political implications of *Amelia* by thinking about how “Amelia sacrifices her life rather than accede to the sacrifice of her liberty—figured here not as her independence but as her right to consent, to contract”; see Fitzpatrick, “Liberty, Corruption and Seduction in the Republican Imagination,” *Connotations* 4.1-2 (1994/5), 47. Karen Weyler suggestively examines how *Amelia* differs from the female protagonists of other early American seduction narratives, and in so doing interrogates how the novel features an “anxiety over female agency”; see Weyler, *Intricate Relations: Sexual and Economic Desire in American Fiction, 1789-1814* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2004), 100. Finally, Leonard Tennenhouse refers to *Amelia* as among the first U.S. seduction narratives in his exploration of the prevalence of the genre in the early Republic, see chapter two (“The Sentimental Libertine”) of Tennenhouse, *The Importance of Feeling English: American Literature and the British Diaspora, 1750-1850* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

<sup>1</sup> The first part appeared in the October issue, pages 667-82, the second in a supplementary issue, 877-80. For discussions of the magazine, see Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines, 1741-1850* (New York: Appleton & Co., 1930); *American Literary Magazines: The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Edward E. Chiellens (New York: Greenwood, 1986), 112-16; and William J. Free, *The Columbian Magazine and American Literary Nationalism* (Paris: Mouton, 1968).

<sup>2</sup> Edward W. R. Pitcher, *Fiction in American Magazines Before 1800: An Annotated Catalogue* (Schenectady, NY: Union College Press, 1993), 194-97.

<sup>3</sup> Many scholarly references to *Amelia* refer to this 1798 omnibus edition.

# AMELIA: OR THE FAITHLESS BRITON.

*An ORIGINAL NOVEL, founded upon recent facts.*

THE revolutions of government, and the subversions of empire, which have swelled the theme of national historians, have, likewise, in every age, furnished anecdote to the biographer, and incident to the novellist. The objects of policy or ambition are generally, indeed, accomplished at the expence of private ease and prosperity; while the triumph of arms, like the funeral festivity of a savage tribe, serves to announce some recent calamity—the waste of property, or the fall of families.

Thus, the great events of the late war,<sup>4</sup> which produced the separation of the British empire, and established the sovereignty of America, were chequered with scenes of private sorrow, and the success of the contending forces was alternately fatal to the peace and order of domestic life. The lamentations of the widow and the orphan, mingled with the song of victory; and the sable mantle with which the hand of friendship cloathed the bier of the gallant MONTGOMERY,

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<sup>4</sup> The “late war” refers to the American Revolution which concluded just four years prior to the first publication of *Amelia*.

cast a momentary gloom upon the trophies his valour had achieved.<sup>5</sup>

Though the following tale then, does not exhibit the terrible magnificence of warlike operations, or scrutinize the principles of national politics, it recites an episode that too frequently occurs in the military drama, and contains a history of female affliction, that claims, from its authenticity, at least, an interest in the feeling heart.<sup>6</sup> It is the first of a series of novels, drawn from the same source, and intended for public communication, through the medium of the *Columbian Magazine*: but as the author’s object is merely to glean those circumstances in the progress of the revolution, which the historian has neither leisure nor disposition to commemorate, and to produce, from the annals of private life, something to entertain, and something to improve his readers, the occasion will yield little to hope from the applause of the public, and nothing to dread from its candor.

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<sup>5</sup> Richard *Montgomery* was a former British army officer who accepted a commission as a Brigadier General in the American army at the outbreak of the Revolution. He was killed in 1775 during the Battle of Quebec, but was notably treated with great respect by the British forces who discovered his body. Montgomery’s death was the subject of one of the first historical paintings commemorating the Revolution, John Trumbull’s *The Death of General Montgomery in the Attack on Quebec December 31 1775* (1786) which appeared the year before the first publication of *Amelia*.

<sup>6</sup> The remainder of this paragraph did not appear in later versions, and we have not found other novels or novellas in the *Columbian Magazine* that indicate shared authorship.

HORATIO BLYFIELD was a respectable inhabitant of the state of New-York. Success had rewarded his industry in trade with an ample fortune; and his mind, uncontaminated by envy and ambition, freely indulged itself in the delicious enjoyments of the father and the friend. In the former character he superintended the education of a son and a daughter, left to his sole care by the death of their excellent mother; and in the latter, his benevolence and council were uniformly exercised for the relief of the distressed, and the information of the illiterate.

His mercantile intercourse with Great Britain afforded an early opportunity of observing the disposition of that kingdom with respect to her colonies; and his knowledge of the habits, tempers, and opinions of the American citizens, furnished him with a painful anticipation of anarchy and war. The texture of his mind, indeed, was naturally calm and passive, and the ordinary effects of a life of sixty years duration, had totally eradicated all those passions which rouse men to opposition, and qualify them for enterprize. When, therefore, the gauntlet was thrown upon the theatre of the new world, and the spirit of discord began to rage, Horatio, like the Roman Atticus,<sup>7</sup> withdrew from public clamour, to a sequestered cottage, in the interior district of Long-Island; and, consecrating the youthful ardour of his son, Honorius, to the service of his country, the fair Amelia was the only companion of his retreat.

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<sup>7</sup> Titus Pomponius *Atticus* (~112/109 BCE—~35/32 BCE) was born to a noble Roman family, but left Rome during a period of marked civil unrest. After relocating to the safety of Athens, Atticus devoted himself to his intellectual interests.

Amelia had then attained her seventeenth year. The delicacy of her form was in unison with the mildness of her aspect, and the exquisite harmony of her soul, was responsive to the symmetry of her person. The pride of parental attachment had graced her with every accomplishment that depends upon tuition<sup>8</sup>; and it was the singular fortune of Amelia, to be at once the admiration of our sex, and the favourite of her own. From such a daughter, Horatio could not but receive every solace of which his generous feelings were susceptible in a season of national calamity; but the din of arms that frequently interrupted the silence of the neighbouring forests, and the disastrous intelligence which his son occasionally transmitted from the standard of the union<sup>9</sup>, superceded the cheerful avocations of the day, and dispelled the peaceful slumbers of the night.

After a retirement of many months, on a morning fatal to the happiness of Horatio's family, the sound of artillery announced a battle, and the horsemen who were observed galloping across the grounds, proved that the scene of action could not be remote. As soon, therefore, as the tumult of hostility had subsided, Horatio advanced with his domestics, to administer comfort and assistance to the wounded, and to provide a decent interment for the mangled victims of the conflict. In traversing the deadly field, he perceived an officer, whose exhausted strength just served for the articulation of a groan, and his attention was immediately directed to the preservation of this interesting object, who alone, of the number that had fallen, yielded a hope that his compassionate

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<sup>8</sup> *Tuition*: safe-keeping, protection, care, or tutelage.

<sup>9</sup> *Of the union*: literally from the flag of the Continental Army, but more colloquially from the American encampment where his son is stationed.

exertions might be crowned with success. Having bathed, and bound up his wounds, the youthful soldier was borne to the cottage; where, in a short time, a stronger pulse, and a freer respiration, afforded a flattering presage of returning life.

Amelia, who had anxiously waited the arrival of her father, beheld, with a mixed sensation of horror and pity, the spectacle which now accompanied him. She had never before seen the semblance of death, which therefore afflicted her with all the terrors of imagination; and, notwithstanding the pallid countenance of the wounded guest, he possessed an elegance of person, which, according to the natural operations of female sensibility, added something, perhaps, to her commiseration for his misfortunes. When, however, these first impressions had passed away, the tenderness of her nature expressed itself in the most assiduous actions for his ease and accommodation, and the encreasing symptoms of his recovery, filled her mind with joy and exultation.

The day succeeding that on which he was introduced to the family of Horatio, his servant, who had made an ineffectual search for his body among the slain, arrived at the cottage, and discovered<sup>10</sup> him to be *Doliscus*,<sup>11</sup> the only son and heir of a noble family in England.

When Doliscus had recovered from the senseless state to which he had been reduced (chiefly, indeed, by the great effusion of blood) the first exercise of his faculties was the acknowledgement of obligation, and the profession of gratitude. To Horatio he spoke in terms of reverence and respect; and to Amelia in the more animated language of

admiration, which melted at length, into the gentle tone of flattery and love. But Doliscus had been reared in the school of dissipation! and, with all the qualifications which allure and captivate the female heart, he had learned to consider virtue only as an obstacle to pleasure, and beauty merely as an incentive to the gratification of passion. His experience soon enabled him to discover something in the solicitude of the artless<sup>12</sup> Amelia beyond the dictates of compassion and hospitality; and, even before his wounds were closed, he conceived the infamous project of violating the purity and tranquility of a family, to which he was indebted for the prolongation of his existence, and the restoration of his health. From that very innocence, however, which betrayed her feelings, while she was herself ignorant of their source, he anticipated the extremest difficulty and danger. To improve the evident predilection of her mind into a fixed and ardent attachment, required not, indeed, a very strenuous display of his talents and address; but the sacrifice of her honour (which an insurmountable antipathy to the matrimonial engagements made necessary to the accomplishment of his purpose) was a task that he justly foresaw, could be only executed by the detestable agency of perfidy and fraud. With these views then he readily accepted the solicitations of the unsuspecting host, and even contrived to protract his cure, in order to furnish a plea for his continuance at the cottage.

Amelia, when, at length, the apprehensions for his safety were removed, employed all the charms of music and conversation to dissipate the languor, which his indisposition had produced, and to prevent the melancholy, with which

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<sup>10</sup> *Discovered*: recognized as; announced to be.

<sup>11</sup> *Doliscus*: the name may reference the Latin *dolor*, pain, or *dolum*, grief, but most likely extends *dolus*, meaning deceit or trickery.

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<sup>12</sup> *Artless*: without artifice.

retirement is apt to affect a disposition accustomed to the gay and busy transactions of the world. She experienced an unusual pleasure, indeed, in the discharge of these benevolent offices; for, in the company of Doliscus she insensibly forgot the anxiety she was wont to feel for the fate of her absent brother; and the sympathy which she had hitherto extended to all the sufferers of the war, was now monopolized by a single object. Horatio's attachment to the solitude of his library, afforded frequent opportunities for this infatuating intercourse, which the designing Doliscus gradually diverted from general to particular topics—from observations upon public manners and events, to insinuations of personal esteem and partiality. Amelia was incapable of deceit, and unacquainted with suspicion. The energy, but, at the same time, the respect, with which Doliscus addressed her, was grateful to her feelings; his rank and fortune entitled him to consideration, and the inestimable favors that had been conferred upon him, offered a specious security for his truth and fidelity. The acknowledgement of reciprocal regard was, therefore, an easy acquisition, and Doliscus triumphed in the modest, but explicit avowal, before Amelia was apprized of its importance and extent. From that moment, however, he assumed a pensive and dejected carriage. He occasionally affected to start from the terrors of a deep reverie; and the vivacity of his temper, which had never yielded to the anguish of his wounds, seemed suddenly to have expired under the weight of secret and intolerable affliction. Amelia, distressed and astonished, implored an explanation of so mysterious a change in his deportment; but his reiterated sighs, which were for a while, the only answers she received, tended equally to encrease her curiosity and her sorrow.

At length he undertook to disclose the source of his pretended wretchedness; and, having prefaced the hypocritical tale with the most solemn protestations of his love and constancy, he told the trembling Amelia that, were it even possible to disengage himself from an alliance which had been early contracted for him with a noble heiress of London, still the pride of family, and the spirit of loyalty, which governed his father's actions, would oppose a union unaccompanied by the accumulation of dignity, and formed with one whose connections were zealous in the arduous resistance to the authority of Britain. "While he lives," added Doliscus, "it is not in my power to chuse the means of happiness—and yet, as the time approaches when it will be inconsistent with the duty and honor of a soldier to enjoy any longer the society of Amelia, how can I reflect upon my situation without anguish and despair!" The delicate frame of Amelia was agitated with the sensations which this picture had excited; and, for the first time, she became acquainted with the force of love, and the dread of separation from its object. Doliscus traced the sentiments of her heart in the silent, but certain indications of her countenance, and when tears had melted the violence of her first emotion into a soft and sympathetic grief, the treacherous suitor thus prosecuted his scheme against her peace and innocence. "But it is impossible to resolve upon perpetual misery! One thing may yet be done to change the scene without incurring a father's resentment and reproach:—can my Amelia consent to sacrifice a sentiment of delicacy, to ensure a life of happiness?" Her complexion brightened, and her eye inquisitively turned towards him. "The parade of public marriage" he continued, "neither adds strength or energy to the obligation; for, form is the superfluous offspring

of fashion, not the result of reason. The poor peasant whose nuptial contract is only witnessed by the hallowed minister that pronounces it, is as blest as the prince who weds in all the ostentation of a court, and furnishes an additional festival to a giddy nation. My Amelia has surely no vanity to gratify with idle pageantry; and as the privacy of the marriage does not take from its sanctity, I will venture to propose—nay, look not with severity—at the neighbouring farm we may be met by the chaplain of my regiment, and love and honour shall record a union, which prudence fetters with a temporary secrecy.”

Hope, fear, the sense of decorum, and the incitements of a passion pure, but fervent, completed the painful perturbation of Amelia’s heart, and, in this critical moment of her fate, deprived her of speech and recollection.

An anxious interval of silence took place; but when, at length, the power of expression returned, Amelia urged the duty which she owed to a parent, the scandal which the world imputed to clandestine marriages, and the fatal consequences that might arise from the obscurity of the transaction. But Doliscus, steady to his purpose, again deprecated the folly of pursuing the shadow in preference to the substance, of preserving fame at the expence of happiness, and of relinquishing the blessings of connubial life, for the sake of its formalities. He spoke of Horatio’s inflexible integrity, which could not brook even the appearance of deception, and of his punctilious honor, which could not submit even to the appearance of intrusion upon the domestic arrangements of another, as insurmountable arguments for denying him the knowledge of their union. Finally, he described, in the warmest colouring of passion and fancy, the effects of Amelia’s refusal upon the future tenor of his life, and bathing

her hand with his obedient tears, practised all the arts of flattery and frenzy. The influence of love supercedes every other obligation: Amelia acknowledged its dominion, and yielded to the persuasion of the exulting Doliscus. The marriage ceremony was privately repeated:—but how will it excite the indignation of the virtuous reader when he understands, that the sacred character of the priest was personated by a soldier whom Doliscus had suborned for this iniquitous occasion! Ye spirits of seduction! whose means are the prostitution of faith, and whose end is the destruction of innocence,—tremble at impending judgment, for “there is no mercy in heaven for such unheard of crimes as these!”

But a short time had elapsed after this fatal step, when the mandate of the commanding officer obliged Doliscus to prepare for joining his corps. A silent, but pungent sense of indiscretion, added to the anguish which Amelia felt in the hour of separation; and not all his strong assurances of inviolable truth and attachment, with the soothing prospect of an honorable avowal of their union could efface the melancholy impressions of her mind. The farmer, at whose house the fictitious marriage had been rehearsed, was employed to manage their future correspondence; and Doliscus, finally, left the cottage with vows of love and gratitude at his lips; but schemes of fraud and perjury in his heart. The small distance from New-York, where he was quartered, rendered it easy to maintain an epistolary intercourse; which became, during its continuance, the only employment, and the only gratification of Amelia’s existence. Its continuance, however, exceeded not a few weeks. Doliscus soon assumed a formal and dispassionate style, the number of his letters gradually diminished, and every allusion to that

marriage, which was the last hope and consolation of Amelia, he cautiously avoided.

But an event, that demanded the exercise of all her fortitude, now forced itself upon Amelia's thoughts. She was pregnant; yet could neither resort for council and comfort to the father whom she had deceived, or obtain it from the lover by whom she had been seduced. In the tenderest and most delicate terms she communicated her situation to Doliscus, emphatically called upon him to rescue her reputation from obloquy,<sup>13</sup> and solicitously courted his return to the cottage, or, at least, that he would disclose to Horatio the secret of their union. To prevent any accident, the farmer was prevailed upon to be the bearer of the paper which contained these sentiments, and, on his return produced the following epistle.

"MADAM,

"THE sudden death of my father will occasion my embarking for England to-morrow. It is not therefore possible to visit the cottage before my departure; but you may be assured, that I still entertain the warmest gratitude for the favours which were there conferred upon me by the virtuous Horatio, and his amiable daughter.

"Although I do not perfectly comprehend the meaning of some expressions you have employed, I perceive that you stand in need of a confidential person, to whom you may reveal the consequence of an indiscreet attachment; and from my knowledge of his probity (of which you are likewise a judge) no man seems more conveniently situated, or better calculated for that office than the worthy farmer who has delivered your letter. To him, therefore, I have recommended

you; and, lest any pecuniary<sup>14</sup> assistance should be necessary on this occasion, I have entrusted him with a temporary supply, directing him in what manner he may, from time to time, obtain a sum adequate to your exigencies.

"The hurry of package<sup>15</sup> and adieu compels me abruptly to subscribe myself,

"Madam,

"Your most devoted, humble servant,

"DOLISCUS."

"Gracious God!" exclaimed Amelia, and fell senseless to the ground. For a while, a convulsive motion shook her frame, but gradually subsiding, the flame of life seemed to be extinct, and all her terrors at an end. The poor farmer, petrified with horror and amazement, stood gazing on the scene: but the exertions of his homely<sup>16</sup> spouse, at length, restored Amelia to existence and despair.

It has often been observed that despondency begets boldness and enterprize; and the female heart, which is susceptible of the gentlest sentiment, is, likewise, capable of the noblest fortitude. Amelia perceived all the baseness of the desertion meditated by Doliscus, she foresaw all its ruinous consequences upon Horatio's peace, her own character, and the fate of the innocent being which she bore, and, wiping the useless tears from her cheek, she resolved publicly to vindicate her honor, and assert her rights. Animated then, with the important purpose, supported by the presumption of her marriage, and hoping yet to find Doliscus in New-York, she immediately repaired to that city—but, alas! he was gone!

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<sup>14</sup> *Pecuniary*: financial or monetary.

<sup>15</sup> *Package*: packing in preparation for departure.

<sup>16</sup> *Homely*: unpretentious, from a humble background.

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<sup>13</sup> *Obloquy*: slander.

This disappointment, however, did not defeat, nor could any obstacle retard the prosecution of her design: a ship that sailed the succeeding day wafted her to Britain, friendless and forlorn.

Innumerable difficulties and inconveniences were encountered by the inexperienced traveller, but they vanished before the object of her pursuit; and even her entrance into London, that chaos of clamour and dissipation, produced no other sensations than those which naturally arose from her approach to the dwelling of Doliscus.

Amelia recollected that Doliscus had often described the family residence to be situated to Grosvenor-place, and the stage, in which she journeyed, stopping in the evening, at a public house in Picadilly,<sup>17</sup> she determined, without delay, to pay him her unexpected and unwelcome visit. The embarrassed and anxious manner with which she enquired for his house, exposed her to unjust surmise and senseless ribaldry; but her grief rendered her incapable of observation, and her purity was superior to insult.

Doliscus had arrived about a fortnight earlier than Amelia. The title, influence, and fortune which devolved upon him in consequence of his father's death, had swelled his youthful vanity to excess, and supplied him with a numerous retinue of flatterers and dependants. At the moment that he was listening in extasy to that servile crew, the victim of his arts, the deluded daughter of the man to whom he was

indebted for the preservation of his life, stood trembling at his door. A gentle rap, after an awful pause of some minutes, procured her admission. Her memory recognized the features of the servant that opened the door; but it was not the valet who had attended Doliscus at the cottage—she remembered not where or when she had seen him.

After considerable solicitation the porter consented to call Doliscus from his company, and conducted Amelia into an antichamber to wait his arrival. A roar of laughter succeeded the delivery of her message, and the word *assignation*, which was repeated on all sides, seemed to renovate the wit and hilarity of the table. The gay and gallant host, inflamed with Champagne, was not displeased at the imputation, but observed that as a lady was in the case, it was unnecessary to apologize for a short desertion of his friends and wine.

At the sight of that lady, however, Doliscus started. Amelia's countenance was pale and haggard with fatigue and sorrow, her person was oppressed with the burthen which she now bore in its last stage, and her eye, fixed steadfastly upon him, as he entered the room, bespoke the complicated anguish and indignation of her feelings. Her aspect so changed, and her appearance so unexpected, added to the terrors of a guilty conscience, and, for a moment, Doliscus thought the visitation supernatural. But Amelia's wrongs having inspired her with courage, she boldly reproached him with his baseness and perfidy, and demanded a public and unequivocal acknowledgement of their marriage. In vain he endeavoured to sooth and divert her from her purpose, in vain to persuade her to silence and delay,—his arts had lost their wonted influence, while the restoration of her injured fame and honor absorbed every faculty of her mind.

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<sup>17</sup> *Grosvenor-place* is a street in London that runs adjacent to the grounds of Buckingham Place (the London home of the British Royal family); Doliscus's family residence there signals his great wealth. *Piccadilly* was a fashionable residential district northwest of Buckingham Palace and its grounds, and also likely the nearest commercial district to the palace.



At length he assumed a different tone, a more authoritative manner. "Madam," exclaimed he, "I am not to be thus duped or controuled. I have a sense of pity, indeed, for your indiscretion, but none for your passion: I would alleviate your afflictions, but I will not submit to your frenzy." "Wretch!" retorted Amelia, "but that I owe something to a father's peace, I should despise to call thee husband." — "Husband" cried Doliscus, with a sneer, "Husband! why truly, I remember a rural masquerade, at which an honest soldier, now my humble porter, played the parson, and you the blushing bride—but, pr'ythee, do not talk of husband." —

This discovery only was wanting for the consummation of Amelia's misery. It was sudden and fatal as the lightning's blast—she sunk beneath the stroke. A deadly stupor seized upon her senses, which was sometimes interrupted with a boisterous laugh, and sometimes with a nervous ejaculation.

Doliscus, unaffected by compassion or remorse, was solicitous only to employ this opportunity for Amelia's removal, and having conveyed her into a coach, a servant was directed to procure lodgings for her, in some obscure quarter of the city. She spoke not a word during the transaction, but gazing with apparent indifference upon the objects that surrounded her, she submitted to be transported whither soever they pleased to conduct her. After winding through a drear and dirty passage in the neighbourhood of St. Giles's,<sup>18</sup> the carriage stopped at a hovel which belonged to a relation of

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<sup>18</sup> *St. Giles* is a London neighborhood which in the late eighteenth century was one of the city's worst slums. Home to poor immigrants and the city's under-classes, the area was known for its overcrowding and squalid living conditions.

the servant that accompanied her, and, he having communicated in a short whisper the object of his visit, an old and decrepid beldame<sup>19</sup> led Amelia into a damp and narrow room, whose scant and tattered furniture proved the wretchedness of its inhabitants.

A premature birth was the natural consequence of the conflict which had raged in Amelia's mind. She had entered the apartment but a few moments, when the approach of that event gave a turn to her passions, and called her drooping faculties once more into action. Without comfort, without assistance, in the hour of extreme distress (save the officious services of her antiquated host) she was delivered of a son; but the fond sensibility of the mother obtained an instantaneous superiority over every other consideration. Though, alas! this solitary gratification too, continued not long;—her infant expired after a languid existence of three days, serving only to encrease the bitterness of Amelia's portion.

Amelia cast her eye towards heaven as the breath deserted the body of her babe:—it was not a look of supplication, for what had she to hope, or what to dread?—neither did it indicate dissatisfaction or reproach, for she had early learned the duty of reverence and resignation—but it was an awful appeal to the throne of grace, for the vindication of the act by which she had resolved to terminate her woes. A phial of laudanum, left by a charitable apothecary, who had visited her in her sickness, presented the means, and she wanted not the fortitude to employ them. Deliberately, then, pouring the baneful draught into a glass, she looked wistfully for a while upon the infant corpse that lay extended on its bed,

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<sup>19</sup> *Beldame*: an aged woman, a matron of advanced years.

then bending on her knee, uttered, in a firm and solemn voice the melancholy effusions of her soul.—“Gracious Father! when thy justice shall pronounce upon the deed which extricates me from the calamities of the world, let thy mercy contemplate the cause that urged me to the perpetration. I have been deluded into error; but am free from guilt: I have been solicitous to preserve my innocence and honour; but am exposed to infamy and shame. The treachery of him to whom I entrusted my fate, has reduced me to despair—the declining day of him from whom I received my being, has been clouded with my indiscretions, and there is no cure left for the sorrows that consume me, but the dark and silent grave. Visit me not then, in thy wrath, oh! Father, but let the excess of my sufferings in this world, expiate the crime which wafts me into the world to come—may thy mercy yield comfort to Horatio’s heart, and teach Doliscus the virtue of repentance!”

She rose and lifted the glass. At that instant, a noise on the stairs attracted her attention, and a voice anxiously pronouncing—“It must be so!—nay, I will see her--” arrested the dreadful potion in its passage to her lips. “It is my Amelia!” exclaimed Horatio, as he hastily entered the room.<sup>20</sup>

Amelia started, and looked for some moments intently on her father, then rushed into his arms, and anxiously concealed the shame and agony of her countenance, in that bosom, from which alone she now dreaded a reproach, or hoped for consolation. He, too, beheld with horror the scene that was presented to his view: he pressed his deluded, miserable daughter, to his heart, while a stream of tears ran

freely down his cheeks; till, at length, his imagination, infected with the objects that surrounded him, conceived the dreadful purpose of the draught, which had fallen from Amelia’s hand, and anticipated a sorrow, even beyond the extremity of his present feelings. When, however, he collected sufficient courage to resolve his fears, and it was ascertained, that the meditated act had not been perpetrated, a momentary sensation of joy illuminated his mind, like the transient appearance of the moon, amidst the gloomy horrors of a midnight storm.

When the first impressions of this mournful interview had passed away, Horatio spoke comfort to his daughter. “Come, my child, the hand of Heaven, that afflicted us with worldly cares, has been stretched out to guard you from everlasting wretchedness:—that Providence which proves how vain are the pursuits of this life, has bestowed upon us the means of seeking the permanent happiness of that which is to come. Cheer up, my Amelia! The errors of our conduct may expose us to the scandal of the world, but it is guilt alone which can violate the inward tranquility of the mind.” He then took her hand, and attempted to lead her to the door. “Let us withdraw from this melancholy scene, my love!”—“Look there!” said Amelia, pointing to the corpse,—“look there!” “Ah!” said Horatio, in a faltering accent, “but it is the will of Heaven!” “Then it is right,” cried Amelia—“give the poor victim a little earth—sir! is it not sad to think of?—and I am satisfied.” She now consented to quit the room, and was conveyed in a carriage to the inn, at which Horatio (who immediately returned to superintend the interment of the child) had stopped on his arrival.

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<sup>20</sup> This is the point at which the first installment of *Amelia* in the *Columbia Magazine* breaks off, before resuming two months later in December of 1787.

It is now proper to inform the reader, that after Amelia had left the Cottage, and the alarm of her elopement had spread around the neighbourhood, the Farmer hastened to communicate to Horatio the transactions which he had witnessed, and the suspicions which his wife had conceived of Amelia's situation. The wretched father sickened at the tale. But it was the sentiment of compassion, and not of resentment, that oppressed his soul. There are men, indeed, so abject in their subjection to the opinion of the world, that they can sacrifice natural affection to artificial pride, and doom to perpetual infamy and wretchedness, a child, who might be reclaimed from error by parental admonition, or raised from despair by the fostering hand of friendship. Horatio, however, entertained a different sense: he regarded not the weakness of human virtue as an object of accusation, but liberally distinguished between the crimes and the errors of mankind; and, when he could not alleviate the afflicted, or correct the vicious, he continued to lament, but he forebore to reprobate. "My poor Amelia! How basely has her innocence been betrayed!—But I must follow her:—may be, her injuries have distracted her, and she has fled, she knows not whither! Come! Not a moment shall be lost: I will overtake my child, wherever her sorrows may lead her; for, if I cannot procure redress for her wrongs, I will, at least, administer comfort to her miseries." Such was the language of Horatio, as soon as he could exercise the power of utterance. A few days enabled him to arrange his affairs, and having learned the route which Amelia had taken, he embarked in the first vessel for England. The peculiar object of his voyage, and the nature of his misfortunes, determined him to conceal himself from the knowledge of his friends and correspondents; and a lucky

chance discovered the wretched abode of his Amelia, the very instant of his arrival in London.

"Can you tell me, my good host, where Doliscus, the lord —, resides?" said Horatio as he entered the inn. "Marry, that I can," replied the landlord: "his porter is just now talking with my wife; and if you will step into the next room, perhaps he will shew you the way to the house." Horatio advanced towards the room door, and, upon looking through a glass pannel in the door, he beheld the identical servant that had attended Doliscus at the Cottage, in eager conversation with the hostess. He paused. "She is delivered; but the child is dead:" —said the servant. Horatio started; his imagination eagerly interpreted these words to have been spoken of Amelia, and he could scarcely restrain the anguish of his feelings from loud exclamation and complaint.—"My lord's conscience grows unusually troublesome" continued the servant; "he has ordered me again to enquire after her health, and to provide for the funeral of the child--Would she were safe in America! for, to be sure, her father is the best old man that ever lived!" "It is well!" cried Horatio. "Did you call sir?" said the hostess, opening the door. The servant took this opportunity of withdrawing, and Horatio silently followed him, at a distance, till he arrived at the habitation of Amelia, in the critical moment which enabled him to save the life he had given, and to rescue his deluded daughter from the desperate sin of suicide.

When Horatio returned to the inn, after discharging the last solemn duties to the departed infant, the landlord presented a letter to him, which a servant had just left at the bar, and asked if he was the person to whom it was addressed. As soon as Horatio had cast eye upon the superscription, he

exclaimed, "What mystery is this?—A letter left for my son Honorius at an inn in London." He eagerly seized the paper, and retiring into an adjoining chamber, he perused its contents with increased amazement and agitation.

"SIR,

"I AM sensible that the injuries of which you complain, will neither admit of denial or expiation. Your note was delivered; a few minutes after, some circumstances had been communicated to me respecting the unhappy Amelia, that awakened a sentiment of remorse, and prepared me for a ready compliance with your summons. To-morrow morning, at five o'clock, I shall attend at the place which you have appointed.

DOLISCUS."

The voice of Honorius, enquiring for the letter, roused Horatio from the reverie into which its contents had plunged him. The honor, of his son, the villainy of his antagonist and Amelia's sufferings, contending with the feelings of the father, and the forbearance of the christian, at last prevailed with him to suffer the hostile interview to which Doliscus had thus consented. When therefore, Honorius entered the room, and the natural expressions of tenderness and surprize were mutually exchanged, they freely discoursed of the lamentable history of Amelia, and warmly execrated that treachery which had accomplished the ruin of her peace and fame. Nor had Doliscus confined his baseness to this object. The chance of war had thrown Honorius into his power shortly after his departure from the cottage, and discovering his affinity to Amelia, the persevering hypocrite artfully insinuated to the

commander in chief, that Honorius meditated an escape, and obtained an order for his imprisonment on board a frigate, which sailing suddenly for England, he was lodged upon his arrival, in the common gaol, appropriated for the confinement of American prisoners. Here it was, however, that he acquired the information of Amelia's elopement, and heard the cause to which it was imputed from the captured master of an American vessel, who had formerly been employed in the service of Horatio, and had received the communication from the lips of his ancient patron, in the first moments of his grief. The fate which had unexpectedly led him to Britain, Honorius now regarded as the minister<sup>21</sup> of his revenge. He frowned away the tear which started at the recital of his sister's wrongs, as if ashamed to pity 'till he had redressed them; and feeling, upon this occasion, an additional motive for soliciting his freedom, he employed the interest of Horatio's name, which notwithstanding the political feuds that prevailed, was sufficient, at length, to procure his discharge upon parol. Having easily learned the abode of Doliscus, he immediately addressed that note to him which produced the answer delivered to Horatio.

When Honorius was informed that Amelia was, at that time, beneath the same roof, he expressed an eager desire immediately to embrace his afflicted sister; but Horatio strongly represented the impropriety of an interview 'till the event of the assignation with Doliscus was ascertained, and it was, therefore, agreed for the present, to conceal his arrival from her knowledge. Absorbed in the melancholy of her thoughts, Amelia had not uttered a syllable since the removal

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<sup>21</sup> *as the minister.* as the agent

from her dreary habitation, but suffered the busy attentions of the servants of the inn, with a listless indifference. The agitation of her mind, indeed, had hitherto rendered her insensible to the weakness of her frame; but exhausted nature, at length produced the symptoms of an approaching fever, and compelled her, reluctantly, to retire to her bed. When Horatio entered the room, the fever had considerably increased, he therefore requested the assistance of a neighbouring physician, who pronounced her situation to be critically dangerous. In the evening, the unusual vivacity of her eyes, the incoherence of her speech, and repeated peals of loud and vacant laughter, proved the disordered state of her understanding, and increased the apprehensions of her attendants. "A few hours will decide her fate," said the Doctor, as he left the room. "My poor Amelia!" cried Horatio, raising her hand to his lips—she looked sternly at him for a moment, then relaxing the severity of her features, she again burst into a boisterous laugh, which terminated in a long and heavy sigh, as if her spirits were exhausted with the violence of her exertions.

The task which Horatio had now to perform was difficult indeed! The virtue and fortitude of his soul could hardly sustain a conflict against the grief and passion that consumed him, while on the one hand, he beheld the distraction of his daughter, and, on the other, anticipated the danger of his son. He resolved, however, to keep Amelia's indisposition a secret from Honorius, with whom he arranged the dreadful business of the morning, and, having fervently bestowed his blessing there, he returned to pass the night in prayer and watching by Amelia's side.

Honorius retired to his chamber, but not to rest. It was not, however, the danger of the approaching combat, which occasioned a moment's anxiety or reflection; for his courage was superior to every consideration of personal safety. But that courage had hitherto been regulated by a sense of obligation consistent with the precepts of religion—he had often exerted it to deserve the glorious meed<sup>22</sup> of a soldier, but he scorned to employ it for the contemptible reputation of a duellist; it had taught him to serve his country, but not to offend his God. "If there is a cause which can justify the act, is it not mine? 'Tis not a punctilious honour, a visionary insult, or a petulant disposition that influences my conduct:" said Honorius, as he mused upon the subject. "A sister basely tricked of her innocence and fame, a father ungratefully plundered of his peace and hopes, in the last stage of an honorable life, and myself (but that is little) treacherously transported to a remote and inhospitable land—these are my motives; and Heaven, Doliscus, be the judge between us!"

As soon as the dawn appeared, Honorius repaired to the place of appointment, where a few minutes before the hour, Doliscus, likewise arrived. He was attended by a friend, but perceiving his antagonist alone, he requested his companion to withdraw to a distant spot, from which he might observe the event, and afford assistance to the vanquished party.

"Once more we meet, Sir," said Doliscus, "upon the business of death; but that fortune which failed you in your country's cause, may be more propitious in your own."—"What pity it is," exclaimed Honorius, "that thou should'st be

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<sup>22</sup> *Meed*: rewards or recompense.

a villain, for thou art brave!" "Nay, I come to offer a more substantial revenge for the wrongs I have committed, than merely the imputation of so gross an epithet—take it, Sir,—it is my life." They instantly engaged. Doliscus for awhile defended himself with superior address, but laying himself suddenly open to the pass of his antagonist, he received his sword in the left breast, a little below the seat of the heart!

"Nobly done," cried Doliscus as he fell, "it is the vengeance of Amelia; and oh! may it serve to expiate<sup>23</sup> the crime of her betrayer." His friend who had attentively viewed the scene, advanced, when he saw him on the ground; and, assisted by Honorius, bore him to a carriage which had been directed to attend within call. He was then conveyed to the house of an eminent surgeon, who having ordered the necessary accommodations, examined the wound, and pronounced it to be mortal. "Fly, sir," said Doliscus turning to Honorius at this intelligence—"your country will afford you an asylum, and protect you from the consequences of my fate. I beseech you embitter not my last moments with the reflection of your danger—but bear with you to the injured Amelia, the story of my repentance, and, if you dare, ask her to forgive me." The resentments of Honorius were subdued, he presented his hand to the dying Doliscus, in whose eye a gleam of joy was kindled at the thought, but it was quickly superceded by a cold and sudden tremour; he attempted, but in vain, to speak; he seized the offered hand; he pressed it eagerly to his lips, and in the moment of that expressive action, he expired.

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<sup>23</sup> *Expiate*: to cleanse or purify of sin; a term with religious connotations.

Honorius now hastened to inform Horatio of this fatal event, and to contrive the means of escape. But when he returned to the inn, confusion and distress were pictured on every face; a wild, but harmonious voice, occasionally broke forth into melancholy strains, and the name of Amelia was repeatedly pronounced in accents of tenderness and compassion.—"How is it my son?" cried Horatio eagerly. "Doliscus is no more!" replied Honorius. "Would he had lived another day! I wished not the ruin of his soul." "But he repented sir." "Then heaven be merciful!" exclaimed Horatio.

Here their conversation was interrupted, by the melodious chauntings of Amelia.

I'll have none of your flowr's, tho' so blooming and sweet;  
Their scent, it may poison, and false is their hue;  
I tell you be gone! for I ne'er shall forget,  
That Doliscus was lovely and treacherous too.

Honorius listened attentively to the song; it vibrated in his ear, and swelled the aching artery of his heart. "Come on!" said Horatio leading him to Amelia's chamber. They found her sitting on the bed, with a pillow before her, over which she moved her fingers, as if playing on a harpsichord. Their entrance disturbed her for a moment, but she soon resumed her employment.

He said and swore he lov'd me true:—was it a lover's part,  
To ruin good Horatio's peace, and break Amelia's heart?

A heavy sigh followed these lines, which were articulated in a wistful and sympathetic tone, and she sunk exhausted on her bed.—In a few minutes, however, she started from this still and silent state, and having gazed with a wild and aching eye around the room, she uttered a loud and piercing cry—it was the awful signal of her dissolution—and her injured spirit took its everlasting flight.

The reader will excuse a minute description of the succeeding scenes. The alarm raised by the death of Doliscus compelled Honorius to quicken his departure, and he joined the standard of America a few hours before the battle of Monmouth,<sup>24</sup> in which, for the service of his country, he sacrificed a life that misfortune had then taught him to consider of no other use or estimation.

As for the venerable Horatio--having carried with him to the cottage the remains of his darling child, in a melancholy solitude he consumes the time; his only business, meditation and prayer; his only recreation a daily visit to the monument, which he has raised in commemoration of Amelia's fate, and all his consolation resting in this assurance, that whatever may be the sufferings of virtue HERE, its portion must be happiness HEREAFTER.

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<sup>24</sup> *Monmouth* was an important (albeit largely symbolic) victory for the Continental army after its winter encampment at Valley Forge. While the battle resulted in a virtual draw, the Continental Army demonstrated a greater effectiveness in its tactics and execution, making the battle an important one for Revolutionary morale and support.