

STREET SCENES
BY
STEPHEN HEDWSON



EDITED BY MARION L. RUST

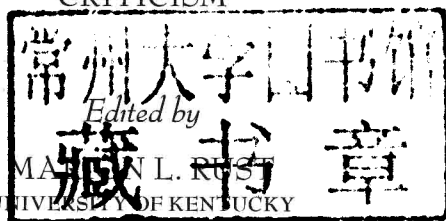
A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

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Susanna Rowson
CHARLOTTE TEMPLE



AUTHORITATIVE TEXT
CONTEXTS
CRITICISM



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Introduction

Spoonfuls of Sugar

It's worth remembering that *Charlotte Temple* was originally read for fun. Despite the fact that you may peruse this edition on your way to some form of academic credit, its author, Susanna Rowson, would never have assigned it at the female academy she ran in and around Boston during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. She would have taught history, yes. Geography, definitely. Dancing and piano, even, for those who could afford the extra fee. But not fiction.

To say readers found this book pleasurable enough to read even though they didn't have to, however, is not to say they didn't learn anything from it. Indeed, for a novel reader of Rowson's day, the two—fun and learning—were said to go hand in hand. In late eighteenth-century England, where *Charlotte* was first published, the most common synonym for readerly pleasure was *entertainment*. Almost all novels in this period, as well as essays and other narrative publications, promised to entertain their readers. The word was rarely found on its own, however; instead, it was accompanied by its better half, *instruction*. English novelist Samuel Richardson founds his 1748 novel *Clarissa*, a prototype for *Charlotte Temple*, on just such a balance when he proposes that the foibles of his secondary characters will “entertain and divert; and at the same time both warn and instruct” (see p. 264). Rowson herself introduces a later novel as “instruction . . . blended with amusement” (see p. 360). The idea was that one could do well by doing good: reading a novel provided sensations of well-being that made the learning go down easy, while it warned against bad behavior by spelling out its imagined consequences.

This proposition depended on a model of the mind that kept thought (what instruction made happen) and feelings (to which entertainment appealed) securely cordoned off from one another. If entertainment helped make instruction easier, that was precisely because it maintained its own separate status outside the realm of knowledge. These entities came together in the novel, theoretically at least, only to touch hands briefly and depart. In practice, however,

as most of us already know, there is no such neat separation between thought and feeling. The term *sentiment* itself already suggested as much by the mid-eighteenth century, when it meant “a thought or reflection coloured by or proceeding from emotion” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Conversely, as Michelle Rosaldo argues, emotions themselves can be considered “embodied thoughts” (see p. 313). And the novel was one place where this imbrication became only too clear.

This was especially true of the sentimental novel, of which *Charlotte Temple* is considered a prime example. Sentimental novels both represented characters in the grip of strong emotion and invited readers to respond in kind (the essays in the section “The American Sentimental” elaborate on this definition at some length). At the same time, they attempted to harness these sensations to the production of rational behavior that bettered society. According to the Scottish commonsense philosophy that served as both source and scourge of sentimental novels, it was the benevolent impulse at the heart of each and every person that allowed us to recognize one another’s suffering as a first step toward alleviating that suffering. This eighteenth-century emphasis on “sensibility,” or a compassionate attentiveness to one’s own and other people’s state of mind, not only revealed the importance of emotional intimacy to society at large but also illustrated the dangers inherent in human trust (for more on sensibility, see Todd, on p. 280 herein). As Charlotte learned the hard way, not everyone who pretended to have one’s best interests at heart really did. How was one to distinguish the selfless from the selfish impulse, in oneself and, perhaps more important, in another person?

For skeptics of the novel in general and the sentimental novel in particular, it exacerbated this danger in at least two ways: one resulting from a dearth of responsiveness, the other from an excess. Regarding the former, readers who spent their time crying over the sorrowful fate of fictional characters might find themselves emotionally exhausted and thereby less inclined to alleviate real suffering, despite its obviously greater claim on the thinking subject. This is what Benjamin Rush warned of in 1787, when he exhorted the students of the Young Ladies’ Academy of Philadelphia to read history, travel literature, poetry, and moral essays—anything but British novels, which excited “an abortive sympathy” that “blunts the heart to that which is real.”

If on the one hand novels could produce callous, lazy readers who were loathe to lift a finger to assist the less fortunate, at the other extreme, they were thought to create overexcitable readers with poor judgment. Just as sentimental heroines such as Charlotte had a problematic tendency to be drawn to men they knew weren’t good for them, readers could not be depended on to avoid in practice the pleasures they rehearsed mentally in a novel, however heinous the conse-

quences might be. This is the fate of Mary Lumley, the character most like Charlotte in Rowson's posthumously published sequel, commonly known as *Lucy Temple*. Because Mary was indulged by her royalty-loving mother in all the light reading she could wish, she demands similarly intense sensations in her everyday life to those she derives from fiction. At the same time, because she has ignored more ennobling fare such as history and advice literature, she possesses little practical knowledge to temper her fantastic expectations. As a result, like the heroines of her beloved novels, she behaves excessively. She is a grouch and a spendthrift, with horrible taste in men. Despite the advice of her adoptive family, she marries a rake, signs over her inheritance to him, and—surprise, surprise—is shortly abandoned.

As the fact that Mary is a character in a novel suggests, novels themselves were continually fighting back against the belief that they must, by their very nature, corrupt. *Charlotte Temple* is full of such defenses, from its claim to be based on fact (and therefore incapable of instilling unrealistic expectations) to its extreme flagging of negative behaviors (not least by a plot that punishes the wicked) to its promise that it is dedicated to the salvation, and not the ruin, of the "hapless fair." But, even if readers were both capable of recognizing bad behavior and had no intention of imitating it, their very commitment to experiencing folly imaginatively by means of the novel put what Richardson called its "warning" feature in doubt. In fact, experiencing forbidden pleasures was a large part of what kept readers reading. Thus, as Margaret Doody explains, no matter how many prefatory promises authors made, there was no such thing as a truly "exemplary novel": no way to ensure that an author cured, rather than created, hapless readers. This is why Rowson had to downplay her career as a novelist to succeed as the founder of a school (see p. 371).

Had Rowson's school admitted boys, she would probably not have had to go to such lengths. By the same token, it is no coincidence that Rush addressed his lecture on the dangers of the novel to a female academy or that the character ruined by novels in *Lucy Temple* is a girl. For as Doody and many others have argued, novels fell into critical disrepute in the late eighteenth century precisely as they became known as women's work. As more women began to read and write fiction, it began to be imagined as an activity that was both inherently attractive and uniquely threatening to the female sex. This was especially true for women of the expanding middle class, who were expected to serve others through their roles as daughters, wives, mothers, and members of the local community. In essence, what this correlation between fiction's increasing "femality" (to quote nineteenth-century author Fanny Fern) and its declining status suggests is that novels were especially perilous to women because

they made women less useful. No wonder critics protested. Novels were dangerous, yes: not because they created foolish women but, rather, less tractable ones.

Rowson's sensitivity to, first, the uncomfortable relationship between pleasure and moral instruction and, second, how this discomfort was essential to both the art of the novel and the empowerment of women is evident from her prefatory remarks to *Charlotte Temple*. She hopes to be of service to those who have "neither friends to advise, or understanding to direct them" (*sic*; see p. 5). At first glance, this phrase lines up nicely with the entertain-instruct dyad. Our friends not only make the pleasures of sociability possible—a key aspect of entertainment as perceived in this period—we also belong to these companions through ties of love, envy, affection, anger, compassion, and myriad other emotions. Thus even when we're not out on the town together (not being entertained in the narrow sense of the term), they appeal to our feeling selves, in much the way that novels do. On the other side of Rowson's equation, understanding is precisely that which instruction aims to convey. You must understand what you've read, in order for it to direct your behavior.

Rowson's statement, however, disturbs this apparent opposition in several ways. First of all, the friends whom she mentions "advise"; like the novel itself, they aren't there just to entertain but also to teach us something. Second, *understanding* sounds suspiciously like just such another so-called friend; where he or she advises, it "directs." In other words, it tells you what to do. But isn't knowing what to do a matter of feeling, at least in part? To choose a course of action, one must prefer a particular outcome. And to want a particular outcome is to feel something: desire.

The preface is not the only apparently straightforward declaration in the novel whose meaning becomes more complex on closer inspection. Throughout, *Charlotte Temple* suggests that, for all that defenders of the genre (including Rowson herself) claimed it made entertainment the means to instruction, cognition was as likely to serve emotion as to master it. Charlotte demonstrates the consequences of this complication early in the novel, when she rationalizes her decision to open a letter from Montraville by telling herself she can reseal it afterward to make it look as though it had never been read. As it turns out, such resealing is not as easy as it looks: of a letter, of the virginal body it metonymizes, or of past mistakes that continually intrude themselves upon one's present in the form of misfortune and sorrowful memory.

Charlotte Temple highlights the subversive function of reading in yet another way, one that finally suggests why such a risky business as the novel might be worth the instability it engenders. To understand this, we must take one more look at the author's friendless,

ignorant imaginary reader. It's one thing to have one's rational resolve corrupted by desire; but it's quite another not to possess either desire or resolve. And that's the scenario Rowson presents by describing the reader exclusively in terms of what she's missing. Much like Charlotte herself, the figure Rowson imagines has no friends and insufficient understanding. Far from offering more of something a reader already knows to appreciate, the novel describes an abysmal absence and supplies a fundamental lack.

Why should the author describe her potential reader, let alone her protagonist, in such abject terms? One answer emerges from Rowson's own life history. For if this forlorn creature sounds like an orphan, that should come as no surprise. Rowson was only days old when her mother died of complications from childbirth, so she was intimately familiar with the sense of loss and not-knowingness described in *Charlotte Temple*. When she offers to mother the reader, then (an offer that the rest of the novel bears out in the narrator's many comforting asides), she is also in a sense mothering herself. It is in these imagined relationships between text and reader, text and author that we see why Rowson defended novels. However doubtful their educational benefits, she was drawn to them as a surrogate form of intimacy. Whether or not novels taught you anything, they helped alleviate loneliness; and how could that be anything but worthy?

Charlotte Temple performed this task more thoroughly than any other novel of the period, which helps explain its unique popularity among a host of readily available novels that also treated the theme of seduction. More than *The Coquette*, *The Power of Sympathy*, *The Story of Margaretta*, or even its own sequel, *Charlotte Temple* virtually embodied friendship, serving less as a set of ideas than a proximate physical being. This can be seen by the fact that almost every affective state in the novel is accompanied by a bodily symptom. Tears are the most frequent: for instance, in the course of a few paragraphs describing the introduction of Charlotte's father, Mr. Temple, to his future wife and her aged father, all three have cause to shed a "pellucid drop." But tears are by no means the only somatic corollary to emotions in the story. Charlotte faints a lot, especially when she's scared. Belcour continually sneers his contempt. Montraville, consumed by guilt, is subject to intermittent "delirium" and continual "fits of melancholy." Even atonement has its embodiment, in the form of the soon-to-be-orphaned infant whom Charlotte hands over to her father at the end of the novel. Whatever *Charlotte Temple* did or failed to do for the reader's cognitive processes, then, it continually played the role of a distraught friend, whose every gesture invites one in reply. Ultimately, it is the reader who fulfills the novel's project of embodiment, providing proof of the book's humanity with his or her own tears, clenched fists, and sighs.

If *Charlotte's* historic appeal can be explained in part by its claim on the reader's own body as the register of human intimacy, it also achieved something quite different, having to do with the sheer number of readily available roles it describes. In other words, Rowson did not expect her actual readership to consist of a plethora of motherless daughters. Rather, just as in mothering herself she plays two roles, the reader is invited to a range of possibilities. And just as she knew what it was to be the reader she described, we are free to identify with the concerned parent-narrator she addresses directly in the story: or indeed, the dissatisfied "Sir" who finds the whole thing improbable. The tale could even have appealed to a skeptical reader, whose amusement at such histrionics signaled his or her own sophistication. Most likely, these and a host of other responses occurred simultaneously and continued to overlap throughout the reading process.

In its dual appeal to soulful intimacy and theatrical self-modulation, *Charlotte Temple* provided the ultimate challenge to those who would treat the novel as either glorified advice book or unwise indiscretion. Unlike, say, John Gregory's *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters*, a popular advice book of the period, *Charlotte Temple* provides too many possibilities to allow the reader to determine a proper course of action, despite its outspoken intent to get readers to do the right thing. Like any novel worth its salt, this one provided relief from the pressure to choose one behavioral alternative over another, even as it made clear (especially for women of Charlotte's age and station) the limited options available. Figuring out how early American readers found relief within a story of female misery is to me the most important lesson the book can teach. This Norton Critical Edition provides materials to make that endeavor possible.

A Life's Work

Set in England, published in London, and devoured in a country it depicted as mercenary and heartless, *Charlotte Temple's* enthusiastic reception in the postrevolutionary United States is as surprising as it is significant. Rowson reciprocated the affection, displaying an unexpected fondness for the nation that bested her country of origin while she was still a teenager. In a letter to a close relative written in 1795, shortly after her return to the United States, she described herself as an "Englishwoman" with "an unaccountable affection for America." By 1814, she could call America her own. Recalling her childhood on the outskirts of Boston, she wrote:

[M]y own native land is not more dear to me than is my foster country, America. If I drew my first breath in Britain; it was

here I began to feel the value of life, here my ideas first expanded, here I first sipped at the fountain of knowledge; and here my heart first glowed with those exquisitely delightful sensations, friendship and gratitude (p. 364 herein).

This was also the country that took her family's property and sent them packing back to England, penniless, during the American Revolution, on the basis of her father's employ as a British naval officer. Rowson's failure to mention this fact, however, is not merely a sign of Christian charity. Rather, her outspoken patriotism on her second immigration to the United States reflects flexible national allegiances that allowed her to flourish as a public figure in both nations. Her success can be measured in *Charlotte Temple's* lasting love affair with its "foster country."

The currents linking Rowson's British and American careers make her most-successful publication an exemplary transatlantic text, even if it is not an exemplary novel, as discussed in the last section of this volume. Why should the rubric of the transatlantic, which considers cultural artifacts on one side of the Atlantic Ocean as inextricably related to their counterparts on the other side, matter to our understanding of this author, this novel, or the readers who made it famous? To me, transatlanticism is important because it denies the notion of singularity as it pertains to identity, whether of persons, objects, or nations. As such, it insists on the continued acknowledgment of even those influences that do not predominate in our inevitably skewed self-depictions and the exchanges of power that they document and shape. As the product of warring nations with allegiances to both, Rowson was particularly adept at both remembering the vanquished and assuaging the victorious. This grants her unusual accuracy as a chronicler of her era.

Rowson's transatlantic sensibilities as reflected in her dual national identity also allowed for an unprecedented commitment to female self-determination in her own life if not always that of her heroines. The author describes her citizenship as a complex and shifting state, one informed by conscious reflection ("ideas" and "knowledge") rather than the mere accident of birthplace. As such, she uses it to surpass constraints normally incumbent on her sex. In contrast, Charlotte's fatal flaw is precisely the absence of similar confidence in her ability to reconcile conflicting sensations so as to influence her life's course under challenging circumstances.

Susanna Rowson was not a tall woman. Observers described her as rather small and round, with a gift for dressing her "inelegant and clumsy form" to advantage in "stylish and tasteful . . . dress," often stripes or black silk. Being short, she tended to associate height with

power. How else explain the fact that Charlotte literally shrinks over the course of the novel, than by her declining social stature? She begins her eponymous tale "tall" and "elegant." By the end of the novel, pregnant, homeless, and alone, she has ceded her influence over her lover to a richer woman from a better family—and with it her statuesque appearance. For "Julia Franklin was the very reverse of Charlotte Temple: she was tall."

The most obvious explanation for Charlotte's unlikely shrinkage is authorial forgetfulness of the same kind that makes the novel's male arch-villain, Belcour, utter the phrase "whining, pining" twice in two pages. Hastily composing her novel in order to receive a flat fee from London publisher William Lane in 1791, Rowson probably simply never noticed such inconsequential incongruities. We know she wrote one of her plays, *Slaves in Algiers*, in two months; why would she spend longer on an anonymous publication that everyone knew was going to be light reading by the mere fact that it issued from Minerva Press, infamous for what English essayist Charles Lamb called its "scanty" fare? (Lamb considered Lane a "lesser wit" and, in a comment that indicates how closely the novel's denigration was linked to its feminization, held him largely responsible for "those scanty intellectual viands of the whole female reading public.")

The novel's inconsistencies speak not only to Rowson's proclivities as an artist but also to the demands of the English literary marketplace, where the novel was first published, and the American, where it had its biggest success (for more on the novel's first American publication, see p. 183). Like everyone else in the novel business, the Minerva Press claimed (in a statement at the front of *Charlotte*) that its books would "improve the understanding," even as its "study shall be to please, as this will equally add to our interest as reflect to our honor." The extent to which interest trumped honor, however, is clear from another line of the "Appeal," which offers potential authors £500 per "literary production." As Lane bought novels in lots to cater to an ever-expanding "female reading public," *Charlotte* kept company with myriad anonymous Minerva "productions," from *Phantoms of the Cloister; or, the Mysterious Manuscript* (1795), to *Nobility Run Mad; or Raymond and His Three Wives* (1802). From its English distribution in new circulating libraries catering primarily to working-class women, to its 1867 release as one of "Munro's 10-cent novels," *Charlotte Temple* appealed to a popular audience for whom a flair for the dramatic was valued over exactitude.

The positive qualities the novel attributes to female height can also be seen as a response to the gender politics that informed these markets. Put simply, Rowson associated height with masculinity, and masculinity with power. This association would have been familiar

to her from her earliest days growing up in a colonial American naval town surrounded by enlisted men. She would soon come to succeed in a variety of activities that required her either to assume traditionally male duties (such as supporting her father's family) or to please male superiors who could help (such as the Prince of Wales, who is said to have offered her family financial assistance on the basis of her precocious charm). Experiences like these would have familiarized her with masculinity as both a way of being she could approximate (as when she wrote anonymous poems that displayed classical expertise typically available only to men) and an external force she could shape to her benefit (as when she flirted with male readers in *Charlotte Temple*).

Charlotte herself, of course, did none of these things. In contrast with her creator, Charlotte's career emphasized the dangers associated with extreme femininity as it was conceived of during this period. Reckless infatuation, misplaced trust, excessive deference to the wishes of others and, finally, unwanted pregnancy characterize her fate. Only women who successfully negotiated their ascribed gender characteristics so as to maximize their own (implicitly masculine) authority stayed tall: women like Julia Franklin, who managed to hold her suitor's interest precisely by maintaining her own "independent fortune" in both a financial and an emotional sense, whereas Charlotte sacrificed hers to the desires of her lover and the wiles of an evil friend.

Rowson, then, despite her own motherless state, small stature, and unstable financial status, was no Charlotte. The following brief account of her life emphasizes the conditions that inspired and shaped this dissimilarity. It attempts to do justice to three aspects of her experience on both sides of the Atlantic: her emotional and financial insecurity; the active role played in the earliest professional fields open to women—teaching and authorship—to relieve that insecurity; and the reliance placed on her, obscured by many early biographers, by the two most documented men in her life, her father and her husband.

Rowson was born in 1762 in the garrison town of Portsmouth, England, one fourth of a large naval station whose population consisted of "sailors, naval officers, and dockyard workers." Her father, William Haswell, was a lieutenant in the British navy. Her mother, Susanna Musgrave Haswell, about whom almost nothing is known, died within days of her birth. This early loss had important repercussions not only for *Charlotte Temple* but also in Rowson's other fiction, where mothers are a yearned-for and immaculate, though rarely an intimate, presence.

Susanna's father came to America as collector of royal customs soon after her birth, leaving her in England under the care of a nurse

while he settled in Nantasket, about nine miles from Boston. There he met and married Rachel Woodward, the daughter of a successful merchant, with whom he was to have three sons.* In 1766, he returned to England to pick up his daughter and her nurse, and the family embarked for New England. The journey itself lasted twelve weeks and almost resulted in the starvation of those on board, before ending in a shipwreck off the coast of Boston. Like the heroine of her semiautobiographical novel, *Trials of the Human Heart*, Susanna indicates that she was rescued by having a rope tied around her waist and being lowered over the ship's side "like a bundle of straw." Again, her early life can be seen to have thematic repercussions on her work, where sailing and its attendant disasters figure prominently in such novels as *Rebecca* and *Trials of the Human Heart* as well as in several verses. In her own way, Charlotte too finds crossing the Atlantic risky: it is "on board of the ship" between Portsmouth, England, and New York—"a tedious and tempestuous passage" if ever there was one—that she has sex with her seducer, Lieutenant Montraville, while her letters home, unbeknownst to her, are tossed overboard. In their own demonstration of the hold the ocean held over the family, Rowson's half-brothers all became naval officers. By 1767, the family was back in Nantasket.

There, under the aegis of her father, whom literary biographer Patricia Parker calls "a jovial man who enjoyed storytelling and jests," Susanna flourished in a wide circle of genteel acquaintance, including the revolutionary statesman and orator James Otis Jr. (he is said to have called her "his little pupil"). But jovial or not, as an officer of the British Royal Navy Susanna's father found himself increasingly unwelcome as revolutionary tensions increased, while he remained unwilling to take the required oath of allegiance to the revolutionary cause. In 1777, when Susanna was fifteen, his property was confiscated, and he was detained as a prisoner of war. The entire family was forced fourteen miles inland to Abington, and then twelve miles south to Halifax. In 1778, the family, now destitute and with William in poor health, was sent back to England as part of a prisoner exchange.

At this point, Susanna became the family's primary breadwinner (her song lyrics for London theatrical productions may have been her first literary creations). Her father, unable to continue his service to the Royal Navy, spent the following years in futile petitions to the British government to recoup his financial losses. Literary biographer Dorothy Weil attributes his inability to the

* If the fictional reference in *Lucy Temple* is any indication, Susanna and her stepmother enjoyed an amicable, if not a close, relationship: "though she experienced not the most tender affection, yet Aura Melville found in her all the care and solicitude of a mother."

"physical and psychological effects of his detention." One can only wonder what psychological effects such detention had on Susanna herself.

Rowson helped support her family until her marriage in 1786 to hardware merchant William Rowson. In the same year, her first novel, *Victoria*, was published. Among the motives behind Susanna's marriage, Parker includes the desire for "economic support." Rather than release her from her financial obligations, however, Susanna's marriage essentially widened the circle of her male dependents, for her husband relied on her to make ends meet. Bibliographer R. W. Vail writes of him: "Mr. Rowson, though something of a musician, seems to have been a person of no particular ability or ambition. Though he appears now and then in the story of Mrs. Rowson's life, he is always very much in the background." In addition to supporting her husband, Susanna also raised William's son from outside the marriage, William Jr. They corresponded when he was an adult, and it has been suggested that her sea shanty "The Little Sailor Boy" was written with him in mind.

However forgiving a spouse she may have been, Rowson's unusual relationships with her father and her husband, both of whom depended on her economically for much of their lives, is reflected in ambivalent portrayals of father figures throughout her work. It must be emphasized that she went to great lengths to honor domestic patriarchs such as Charlotte's own father, who arrives at her dying bedside in time to forgive her and accept her infant daughter. Scholar Nina Baym notes that among all the woman-authored dialogue texts she studied from between 1790 and 1860, Rowson's *Biblical Dialogues* was the only one "with a father present." Even Lieutenant Montraville, Charlotte Temple's weak-willed seducer and the absent father to her daughter Lucy, redeems himself in the sequel, *Lucy Temple*, where he prevents his daughter's incestuous marriage while continuing to heartily repent past misdeeds. In the novel that followed *Charlotte Temple*'s American publication, *Trials of the Human Heart*, Rowson even resorts to mistaken identity to salvage her protagonist's faith in fatherhood, as she discovers that the cruel and neglectful man she had once called "Father" was an impostor. Nevertheless, the sheer number of weak, duplicitous, or downright dastardly male characters in her literary compositions (see, for example, "Verses to a Libertine" on p. 376 herein), along with a corresponding dearth of morally upstanding self-sufficient types, suggests that she recognized and at times resented her supposed caretakers' relative inadequacy to the task, even as she excelled in the role left vacant by their inability or unwillingness.

Whatever his flaws, William Rowson, who sang, acted, and played trumpet in the Royal Horse Guards, did introduce his wife to the

world of public entertainment. Along with William's sister, the couple performed in Edinburgh and other British cities in the winter of 1792–93, until comedian and theatrical manager Thomas Wignell asked them to join his New Theatre, about to be opened in Philadelphia. In 1793, Susanna returned with her husband to what was now the United States, on a three-year engagement with Wignell's theater. Arriving in Philadelphia only to find it evacuated in the midst of a yellow fever epidemic, the New Theatre opened its season in Annapolis. There, Rowson embarked on a moderately well-received career of stage acting. During this period, she also began a long-term working relationship with Alexander Reinagle, an admired composer and cofounder of the New Theatre, with whom she collaborated on musical dramas and songs. In 1794, the company returned to Philadelphia's Chestnut Street Theater for one successful season, and then to Baltimore for two. In 1796, she left for Boston's Federal Street Theater, where the bouncer was paid a higher weekly salary than any actor or musician.

Rowson's career was soon to take a turn that offered greater opportunities for social advancement, when in November of 1797 she opened the Young Ladies' Academy in Boston. In 1800, she moved the school to Medford, and then to Newton, both nearby suburbs, before returning it to Boston in 1807. The Young Ladies' Academy was an immediate success. According to Rowson's friend and first memoirist Samuel Knapp, it went from one to about one hundred pupils in less than a year. It also gained Rowson the respectability that acting and authorship never had, as indicated by her membership in several of Boston's leading social organizations. Rowson served as president of the Boston Fatherless and Widow's Society and by 1816 was also a member of the Prayer Book and Tract Society, whose first anniversary she celebrated in an ode and a hymn. She ran the Young Ladies' Academy until shortly before her death, March 2, 1824.

Throughout this somewhat nomadic and financially insecure life, Rowson continued to publish. While still in England, she published eight works (and the majority of her fiction), including four novels, a picaresque tale, a rhymed critique of the contemporary theater scene, a book of poems, and a series of edifying sketches for young ladies. Arriving in the United States, she continued with an American edition of *Charlotte* (1794) and the four-volume *Trials of the Human Heart* (1795). A historical novel followed in which she professed to have made her last attempt at fiction, *Reuben and Rachel: or Tales of Old Times* (1798). The last novel printed during her lifetime was *Sarah: or, the Exemplary Wife* (1813). (This appeared in serial form as *Sincerity* in the *Boston Weekly Magazine* in 1803–04.) Between 1794 and 1796, Rowson also wrote a number of plays, of which two are