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EDITOR

Gwen G. Robinson

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Edward Lyon

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Intentional Omissions from the Published Civil War Diaries of Admiral John A. Dahlgren

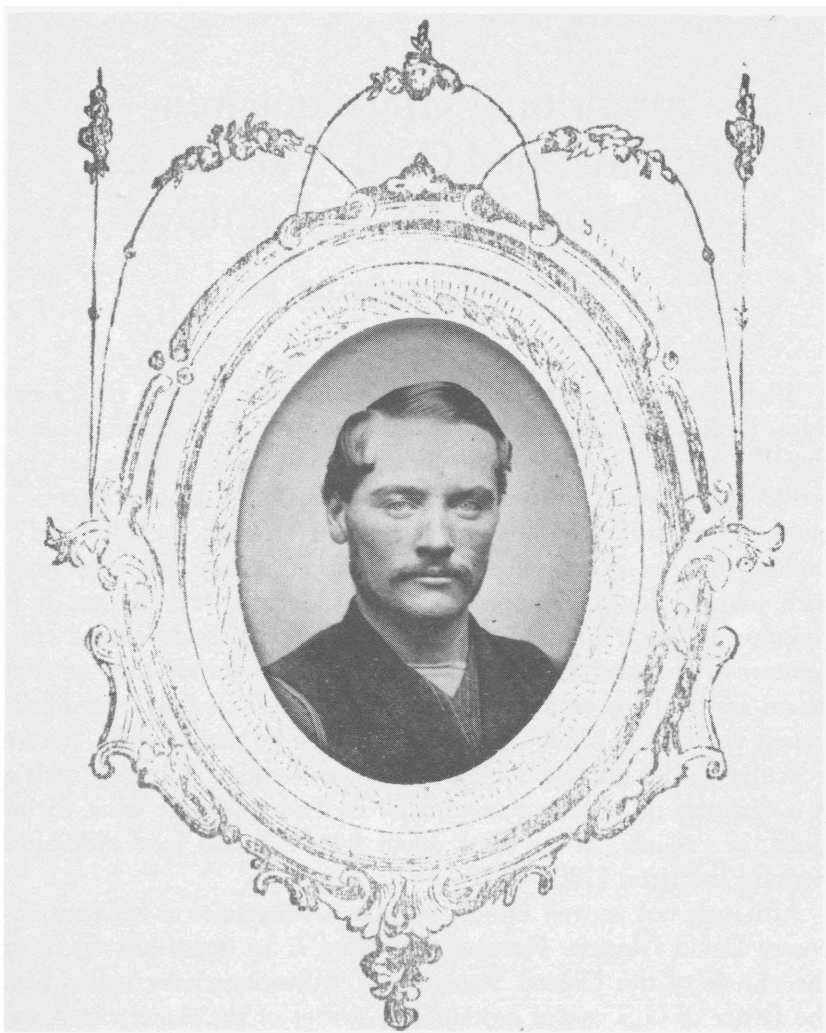
BY ROBERT J. SCHNELLER, JR.

When an author sets out to exalt her subject, let the reader beware. Reflecting upon her book *Memoir of John A. Dahlgren*, a semi-autobiographical account of her late husband's life, Madeleine Vinton Dahlgren said, "I was determined to mass all I could collect—and build the Admiral's monument as high as I could, for all Time".¹ Builders of literary monuments are artists; the materials they work with include books, newspapers, reports, letters, and diaries. It is common for such artists to begin work with a fully developed conception of the end product in mind. Only materials that fit that vision are used, those inconsistent with it are excluded or modified. Given her goal, Madeleine Dahlgren faced decisions of this nature in sculpting her husband's biographical monument. Working with a vast quantity of historical materials, she had to decide what to include, or exclude, in her book about Rear Admiral John Adolphus Bernard Dahlgren (1809–1870).

Although not as well known outside naval circles as his contemporary David Glasgow Farragut, Dahlgren is an important figure in the annals of the United States Navy. Historians have called him the father of U.S. naval ordnance, a maker of the American naval tradition, and one of the five great admirals of the American Civil War.² His signal accomplishments were: fostering the application of

1. Madeleine Dahlgren to Charles Cowley, 17 December 1882, John A. Dahlgren Papers, Syracuse University Library (hereafter cited as DS).

2. Clarence Stewart Peterson, *Admiral John A. Dahlgren: Father of U. S. Naval Ordnance* (Cynthiana, Ky.: Hobson Book Press, 1945); James C. Bradford, ed., *Captains of the Old Steam Navy: Makers of the American Naval Tradition, 1840–1880* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1986); Clarence Edward Noble Macartney, *Mr. Lincoln's Admirals* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1956), vi.



Previously unpublished photograph of John A. Dahlgren, as he appeared ca. 1850.
John A. Dahlgren Papers, Syracuse University Library.

science to naval weapons technology and inventing the Dahlgren gun, widely regarded as the most powerful naval cannon in the world when it first appeared in the 1850s. The navy recognized his contributions by naming three vessels after him, as well as a building at the Naval Academy and a naval weapons proving ground.

Dahlgren's career spanned nearly half of the nineteenth century. He joined the navy in 1826 at the age of sixteen. For the next six years he served on board the vessels *Macedonian* and *Ontario*, learning the ropes of seamanship and the rudiments of being an officer. Then followed a brief stint on board a receiving ship, after which the navy assigned him to the United States Coast Survey, one of several scientific enterprises sponsored by the United States government during that period. Dahlgren excelled in this work, but labored so hard, day and night, that he injured his eyes and was threatened with blindness. For this reason he was forced to take a leave of absence for several years. Shortly after returning to active duty, Dahlgren embarked on a Mediterranean cruise that the threat of war with Mexico cut short. Following his return from the Mediterranean, the navy assigned him to the Washington Navy Yard, where, under the auspices of the Bureau of Ordnance and Hydrography, he began his ordnance work, the longest single phase of his career and the one that produced his most significant accomplishments. During the first two years of the Civil War, Dahlgren rose to the rank of rear admiral and became chief of the Bureau of Ordnance. In 1863 he took command of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron and spent the next year and a half trying to take Charleston. After the war he served in various posts, notably in command of the South Pacific Squadron.

Dahlgren was nothing if not controversial. Those who knew him held decided opinions of his character and abilities. His close friend Andrew Hull Foote, ardent social reformer and commander of the Mississippi Squadron during the Civil War, highly regarded Dahlgren's "attainments—literary—scientific—& moral". Charles Cowley, a member of Admiral Dahlgren's staff during the Charleston campaign and later a friend of Madeleine Dahlgren, "respected and honored him as a son would a father". Samuel F. DuPont, Dahlgren's predecessor in command of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, thought him "a diseased man on the subject of preferment and position". Charles B. Sedgwick, chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee during the first two years of the Civil War, believed that Dahlgren, as head of naval ordnance, was "not *up* to business details & affairs & will necessarily suffer by trying to manage them". Percival Drayton, a good friend who worked with Dahlgren on ordnance and served as Farragut's flag captain during the Civil War battle of Mobile Bay, said that he had "a great regard for Dahl-

gren”, but like other officers, did not believe that he was “up to the command of the Charleston Squadron”. Charles Knap, an owner of the Fort Pitt Foundry, an industrial firm which produced Dahlgren guns for the navy, deplored Dahlgren’s “constant readiness to wait upon and devote himself to whomsoever may be in power”. Gideon Welles, secretary of the navy during the Civil War and an astute judge of character, remarked that Dahlgren was intelligent but did not possess the fighting qualities of a Farragut. There were materials here for a high monument, but they would need some chiseling.³

Her impulse to vindicate her husband in the eyes of his contemporaries was not the only reason that Madeleine Dahlgren wrote *Memoir*. She had noted that the admiral “always cared *much more*, for posterity than for the present”. The “recognition he most ardently desired”, she reflected, was “the recognition of posterity”. But apart from considerations of her husband’s reputation, Madeleine Dahlgren wrote the book, it seems, partly to satisfy needs of her own. When Dahlgren died, he left an estate of twenty thousand dollars for his widow and surviving children. Apparently unsatisfied with this amount, Madeleine Dahlgren petitioned Congress for payment of royalties on Dahlgren’s patented ordnance inventions. She spent seven years before Congress and two years in the courts battling for her claim. As she told her friend Charles Cowley, “*the least sum for a just and proper compensation to our estate would be \$1,374,000*”. She was incensed about the final settlement, receiving, as she put it, “an insolvent percentage of \$65,000—and ten thousand . . . was at once required to meet the expenses of this pro-

3. Andrew H. Foote to John Dahlgren, 30 October 1847, John A. Dahlgren Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress (hereafter cited as DLC); Charles Cowley to Madeleine Dahlgren, 2 August 1870, DLC; Samuel F. DuPont to Gustavus V. Fox, 8 October 1862, *Confidential Correspondence of Gustavus V. Fox: Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1861–1865*, eds. Robert Mears Thompson and Richard Wainwright (New York: Naval Historical Society, 1919), 1:160–61; Charles B. Sedgwick to Henry A. Wise, 2 July 1863, H. A. Wise Papers, New-York Historical Society; Charles B. Sedgwick to Henry A. Wise, 30 July [1863], H. A. Wise Papers, New-York Historical Society; Percival Drayton to Henry A. Wise, [?] September 1863, H. A. Wise Papers, New-York Historical Society; Charles Knap to [?], 1 February 1863, H. A. Wise Papers, New-York Historical Society; Gideon Welles, *The Diary of Gideon Welles*, ed. Howard K. Beale (New York: W. W. Norton, 1960), 1:62.

longed suit!" It is probably no coincidence that Madeleine Dahlgren wrote *Memoir* during this same period.⁴

Much of the book was drawn from her husband's diaries. John Dahlgren chronicled his entire career in a journal, in which he habitually recorded his reactions to the people and situations that he confronted in his life and work. He told us why:

Some people have not the talent, some have not the leisure, and others do not possess the requisite industry, for keeping a private diary or journal; and yet there is probably no book which a man could consult with half so much advantage as a record of this sort, if it presented a faithful transcript of the writer's fluctuating feelings and opinions. As a mere psychological curiosity, it must be interesting to observe the advancement of our own mind; still more so to trace it's [sic] caprices and contrasts. Changes of taste and opinion are generally graduated by such slow and imperceptible progressions, that we are unconscious of the process, and should hardly believe that our former opinions were diametrically opposed to our present did not our faithful Journal present them to our eyes on the incontestable evidence of our own hand-writing.⁵

Like many of his fellow officers, he kept meticulous records, and along with his journal, amassed an ever growing archive of personal papers that documented his existence. "In a social role constructed of such material as honor, fame, and glory," writes military historian Peter Karsten, "the guarding of sources that might aid one to recon-

4. Madeleine Dahlgren to Charles Cowley, 10 March 1890, DS; Madeleine V. Dahlgren, *The Petition of Madeleine Vinton Dahlgren, Widow of the Late Rear-Admiral Dahlgren, Asking Compensation for Property Taken and Used by the United States, With Proof of the Facts Set Forth in the Petition* (Lancaster, Pa.: Inquirer Printing and Publishing Co., 1874), copy in Box 37, DLC; Madeleine Dahlgren to Charles Cowley, 21 November 1882, DS; Madeleine Dahlgren to Charles Cowley, 22 November 1877, DS; Madeleine Dahlgren to Charles Cowley, 19 April 1880, DS.

5. An anonymous quote in Dahlgren's hand in "Private Journal of John A. Dahlgren U.S. Navy on Board the U.S. Frigate *Macedonian* on a Voyage from Norfolk Va. to the Coast of Brazil", Box 32, DLC.

struct the past may have been deemed axiomatic".⁶ And as we shall see, Dahlgren's experience in the Civil War proved especially problematic for Madeleine Dahlgren in this respect. Chapters 14 through 16 of *Memoir* consist exclusively of journal entries dating from 1 January 1863 to 12 July 1865. Madeleine Dahlgren wrote:

The writer of this memoir has thought it best for the truth of history, to let Admiral Dahlgren—through his private journal written by his own hand, day by day—narrate for himself, unwittingly, as it were, the events of his personal life as connected with the civil war. . . . And it is with the aim to give *original* sources that the journal is now published—as the reader has seen—*verbatim*. . . . During all the course of this history the writer has never used her own words where those of the Admiral could be found to tell the story. . . . She has rigidly adhered to the journal left by her husband.⁷

The George Arents Research Library at Syracuse University contains an important collection of John Dahlgren's papers, including his Civil War diaries, and thus offers a unique opportunity to examine Madeleine Dahlgren's assertions about her book. Given her husband's unpopularity and the fact that she wrote *Memoir* while lobbying for her claim in Congress, it is reasonable to wonder whether she edited the diaries to portray the Admiral in the best possible light. In a letter preserved at Syracuse University, Madeleine Dahlgren asked Charles Cowley, then a judge, to examine the proof sheets of *Memoir* concerned with General Quincy A. Gillmore, who, while in command of the Union army forces during the Charleston campaign, had become involved in a bitter dispute with John Dahlgren:

I have to day written a "confidential" letter to Mr. James R. Osgood, head of the publishing firm, regarding the near approaching forthcoming "Memoir" of the Admiral—

6. Peter Karsten, *The Naval Aristocracy: The Golden Age of Annapolis and the Emergence of Modern American Navalism* (New York: Free Press, 1972), 76.

7. Madeleine V. Dahlgren, *Memoir of John A. Dahlgren* (Boston: James R. Osgood and Co., 1882), 516–17 (hereafter cited as *Memoir*).

I have become somewhat *nervous* regarding several passages about General Gillmore.

While there is nothing not strictly true, yet there may be sentences which might bring me within the technical liability to the law of “libel”—I am not disposed to let Gillmore off, one iota; of that just condemnation which he merits—but in trying to give a true idea of the difficult position of Admiral Dahlgren—I will do him more harm than good if I fail in being prudent. As to how far *true* statements can be construed as libellous, I know not. I have suggested to Osgood—that as a good & devoted friend of the Admiral it would be prudent to ask you to read over very carefully the printed private journal—and if you think it safer, to indicate those places which ought to be expunged—of course if by any misadventure I should subject my book to any suit for libel, it would do the memory of the Admiral harm, and be playing into the hand of the enemy—This, I wish to avoid, and in the Admiral’s true interests protect his memory.⁸

Did Madeleine Dahlgren edit her husband’s diaries so as to repaint his portrait for posterity? A comparison of chapters 14 through 16 of *Memoir* with the corresponding original diaries provides an answer.

There are discrepancies. In her editing Madeleine Dahlgren made both mistakes and conscious alterations. She usually touched up her husband’s grammar and spelled out his abbreviations. Sometimes she added italics to emphasize certain points. Occasionally she misplaced portions of one entry under the date of another.⁹ As these changes do not substantially alter the style or content of the original, they are not really significant, although they emphatically nullify her claim of copying the original diaries verbatim. But what Madeleine Dahlgren actually omitted from her *Memoir* merits closer scrutiny. She

8. Madeleine Dahlgren to Charles Cowley, 10 October 1882, DS.

9. Compare the 21 April 1863 entries in *Memoir*, 390, and John A. Dahlgren Diaries, John A. Dahlgren Papers, Syracuse University Library, vol. 9 (hereafter cited as *Diary*) for corrected grammar; the 9 May 1864 entries in *Memoir*, 452, and *Diary*, vol. 12 for spelled-out abbreviations; and the 31 March 1863 entries in *Memoir*, 389–90 and *Diary*, vol. 9 for added italics. *Memoir*, 437, includes a portion of the entry dated 23 January 1864 in *Diary*, vol. 11, under the date 22 January 1864.

did in fact delete sentences and even entire entries where her husband emerged in ways she did not wish to have known.

A bare-bones account of Dahlgren's role in the Charleston campaign will give the context for discussing these omissions. Because Northerners considered Charleston to be the nursery of the rebellion, the Navy Department determined to take the city by storm with its new ironclad fleet, and thereby win public acclaim in an exclusively naval victory. Samuel F. DuPont led the first assault, but failed to take the city. When DuPont refused to try again, the Navy Department sacked him. As DuPont had learned, a system of intricate defensive works, featuring interlocking fields of fire, made Charleston the Confederacy's most strongly fortified port. Fort Sumter, standing in the middle of the harbor, both covered and was covered by a ring of batteries built on the surrounding islands. Underwater obstructions and mines complemented the frowning guns. Navy Department officials reluctantly concluded that the city would not fall without army cooperation. The Federal general-in-chief had doubted that a joint operation against Charleston could succeed, until Brigadier General Quincy A. Gillmore, an engineer experienced in knocking down forts, convinced him otherwise. Gillmore's plan sounded simple. If the navy could put the army within a mile and a half of Fort Sumter, he guaranteed that he could knock it to pieces as he had Fort Pulaski in Savannah earlier in the war. With Sumter demolished, the navy's ironclads could enter Charleston harbor and demand the surrender of the city. Gillmore assumed command of the army's Department of the South on 12 June 1863, with the understanding that his limited task was to destroy Fort Sumter for the navy.¹⁰

Dahlgren succeeded DuPont in command of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, the organization responsible for naval operations in the vicinity of Charleston, on 6 July 1863. Both Dahlgren and Gillmore had assumed their respective commands without specific instructions from their superiors and were thus free to pursue their own plans. Four days after his arrival, Dahlgren supported an

10. This account of the joint army-navy operations in the vicinity of Charleston relies on Rowena Reed, *Combined Operations of the Civil War* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1978); Samuel Jones, *The Siege of Charleston* (New York: Neale Co., 1911); and E. Milby Burton, *The Siege of Charleston, 1861–1865* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970).

assault made by Gillmore on Morris Island, a long, low sand island, the northern half of which lay within range of Sumter's guns. Two Confederate forts, Batteries Wagner and Gregg, defended this northern end. Gillmore intended to establish his own batteries on the island in order to pound Sumter into rubble, and so enable Dahlgren's fleet to clear the underwater obstructions and dash into the harbor. Gillmore established a beachhead on the southern end of Morris Island on 10 July and assaulted Wagner the next day, but failed to carry it. A week later a second assault on Wagner, preceded by a terrible bombardment both from Gillmore's batteries and Dahlgren's ships, also failed. The two Union commanders then decided that a different tactic was called for. They agreed that Gillmore's troops, supported by the guns of the fleet, should construct siege lines to approach Wagner. By 8 August the Federals had reached a position 500 yards from the fort, but Confederate gunfire from Sumter halted their advance. To remedy this situation Gillmore and Dahlgren agreed on a joint bombardment of Sumter, which began on 17 August. The shelling silenced Sumter's guns within six days. Without cover from Sumter, the Confederates realized that it was only a matter of time before Wagner would fall. On the night of 6 September the defenders evacuated the island, making a clean getaway.

With Morris Island in Federal hands, Sumter became the main target. Dahlgren moved quickly in the wake of the Confederate evacuation. Hoping to exploit the ensuing confusion in the rebel ranks, the Admiral on the night of 8 September sent a force of 500 sailors and marines in small boats to capture Sumter. Gillmore independently determined to send a similar force of soldiers, but neither leader learned of the other's plan until late that day, when they communicated their intentions by signal flags. The Confederates intercepted their messages, and lay in wait for the attack. As Dahlgren's men approached Sumter, the Confederate batteries opened fire at once, spreading panic and confusion among the attackers, who withdrew in less than an hour, leaving behind 125 of their number as prisoners. Gillmore's soldiers never left their starting point. Following the failed boat attack, Gillmore and Dahlgren cooperated in a forty-day bombardment of Sumter from 26 October through 4 December.

By the end of 1863 the campaign had more or less degenerated

into a stalemate. Because the Navy Department never sent Dahlgren the ships he needed for an all-out attack, the blockade of the city became his primary mission. Late in February 1864, Dahlgren left for Washington to discuss future operations with superiors in the Navy Department. His fleet captain, Stephen Clegg Rowan, assumed command of the squadron in his absence. While in Washington, Dahlgren learned that his son Ulric, a colonel in the Union cavalry, had been killed in a raid on Richmond to free Union prisoners of war. Dahlgren's absence from the fleet lengthened as he tried in vain to recover his son's body. He did not return until early May, at which time he discovered that Gillmore, who had requested a transfer because the bombardment of Fort Sumter had failed to open a way into the city, had joined Union forces operating in Virginia.¹¹ With the odd exception, the rest of Dahlgren's campaign consisted of the humdrum routine of blockade. Because the War Department was dissatisfied with Gillmore's successor, Major General John G. Foster, Gillmore returned to his old command early in February 1865, but made no further offensive moves against the city. Charleston fell only when General William T. Sherman's "bummers" menaced it from behind. The Confederates evacuated the city on 17 February, thus ending the 567-day siege. Dahlgren and Gillmore had effectively sealed off Charleston from maritime commerce, but had failed to achieve their original goal, the capture of the city.

Gillmore tried to place the blame for the failure squarely on Dahlgren and he argued his case about their joint operations during 1863 in a book that was published just before his return to Charleston in February 1865.¹² Gillmore contended that both the Navy and War departments had agreed from the beginning that his own role was simply to secure Morris Island and reduce Sumter. After that, it was to be Dahlgren's ironclads that would clear the underwater obstructions, gain control of the harbor, and force the surrender of the city. Gillmore's role was to support a naval attack; a siege was not origi-

11. *Memoir*, 440–51.

12. Quincy A. Gillmore, *Engineer and Artillery Operations Against the Defences of Charleston Harbor in 1863; Comprising the Descent upon Morris Island, the Demolition of Fort Sumter, the Reduction of Forts Wagner and Gregg. With Observations on Heavy Ordnance, Fortifications, Etc.* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1865).



Brigadier-General Quincy A. Gillmore at the time of the Civil War.
National Archives photograph.

nally contemplated. He reasoned that when the fleet reached the city, the Confederates would abandon their defensive works on the islands around Sumter. But Dahlgren had failed to act at the opportune moment:

The period during which the weakness of the enemy's interior defences was most palpably apparent was during the ten or fifteen days subsequent to the 23d of August, and that was the time when success could have been most easily achieved by the fleet. The concurrent testimony of prisoners, refugees, and deserters, represented the obstacles in the way as by no means insurmountable. . . .

The failure of the fleet to enter immediately after the 23d of August, whether unavoidable or otherwise, gave the enemy an opportunity, doubtless much needed, to improve their interior defences. Of the actual strength of those improvements we had no reliable information, as they were never tested or encountered by the ironclads.¹³

In short, Gillmore argued that he had accomplished all that had been expected of him, while Dahlgren had not.

Dahlgren responded vigorously with the following assertions. Gillmore had missed an opportunity by not assaulting Fort Wagner on 10 July 1863, before Confederate reinforcements had arrived. His attack the next day was poorly prepared, and failed from want of enough troops. Gillmore could not have taken Morris Island without the navy's help. Although Fort Sumter had been battered severely by 23 August 1863, its garrison remained intact, able to deploy light guns and musketry against any attempt to clear obstructions from the harbor. The boat attack on Sumter failed because the army did not support the naval effort. Gillmore had played down the strength of the Confederate batteries. Fire from the undergunned ironclads during operations against rebel fortifications had inflicted only negligible damage. And even if the ironclads had succeeded in forcing their way into the harbor, their presence alone would not have compelled the city to surrender. Getting in was not the real problem, getting out was. As long as the batteries surrounding Sumter remained intact, ironclads could stay in the harbor only as long as their limited supplies lasted. They would have to run the gauntlet of enemy fire a second time with whatever damage they had already sustained when their provisions and ammunition ran low. Captured ironclads could be effectively turned against the wooden blockading fleet. And as

13. Gillmore, *Operations*, 63–66.

the capture of Morris Island had virtually eliminated maritime commerce with Charleston, capturing the city was not a strategic necessity. The fruits of a successful naval attack were not worth the risk. On this point the Navy Department concurred.¹⁴ All told, Dahlgren argued that he had been given an impossible task. If anyone was to blame for a failure, it was Gillmore.

Madeleine Dahlgren's treatment of Gillmore in *Memoir* naturally reflected her husband's point of view. Despite her fear of a libel charge, she published portions of John Dahlgren's diary that dealt with Gillmore in plain language. Many of these entries appearing in *Memoir* concern Dahlgren's accusation that during the war Gillmore had waged a campaign in the press to discredit him. This accusation, the original source of discord between the two leaders, predated the publication of Gillmore's book. Shortly after returning to the squadron in May 1864 following the unsuccessful attempt to recover his son's body, Dahlgren spoke of the matter with General George H. Gordon:

[4 May 1864] Gordon denounced Gillmore. . . . Said he had encouraged, and was pleased with, the war upon me, and used to speak gleefully of the newspaper attacks, and always had in view a scapegoat for the failure to take Charleston, which he knew was not possible. Here is patriotism, and honor, and honesty!¹⁵

On the eve of Gillmore's return to Charleston in February 1865, Dahlgren wrote:

[6 February 1865] I have an entire contempt for Gillmore because of his conduct last year,—harboring scribblers to lampoon me and denying their assertions to my face. . . .¹⁶

14. See for example John A. Dahlgren, "Report of Rear-Admiral Dahlgren, U.S. Navy, regarding Operations against the Defenses of Charleston, S.C.," 16 October 1865, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894–1922), series 1, 16:429–55; John Dahlgren, "Minutes for Hamersly's 'Records of Living Officers' ", 14 June 1870, in a letterbook dated 15 December 1868, p. 147, Box 18, DLC; and *Memoir*, chapters 17–19.

15. *Memoir*, 451, 4 May 1864 entry.

16. *Memoir*, 494, 6 February 1865 entry.

After seeing Gillmore's book for the first time the next day, Dahlgren wrote:

[7 February 1865] [Gillmore's book appears] to be a vindication of himself, from something, at my expense. . . . Is it not a heart-burning shame that a man who is educated, with high rank, and intrusted with grave responsibilities, should be incapable of pursuing the plain, straight path to duty, without permitting baser motives to mingle in his thoughts, and swerve head and hand from the true course? Gillmore was a Captain of Engineers with the rank of Volunteer Brigadier-General, an ephemeral, fleeting thing. Of course he would like to be a Major-General, and this demanded some brilliant performance. This he thought he could not achieve without having the entire credit. The Navy must not be allowed any share, and the howl that Charleston was not taken came like a shock. Did he fear that he would fail to be a Major-General, and find it necessary to place the failure upon me? He took Morris Island (by his own account); I did not even help. Now I must take Charleston!¹⁷

These assertions, apart from virtually calling Gillmore a liar, accuse him of deliberate and underhanded conduct. In both an era and a profession that placed a high value on honor, such charges fell heavily on the accused. Madeleine Dahlgren published them nonetheless.

However, she did not include in *Memoir* similar things about Gillmore that Dahlgren wrote in his diary. From the May 1864 entry appearing above, she edited out the details of General Gordon's remarks about Gillmore:

[4 May 1864] Gordon denounced Gillmore as untruthful, selfish, and insane for notoriety. . . .¹⁸

Later, she omitted an incident that occurred when Gillmore visited Dahlgren's flagship for their first meeting after the General's return in February 1865:

17. *Memoir*, 494–95, 7 February 1865 entry.

18. *Diary*, vol. 12, 4 May 1864 entry.

[11 February 1865] The gangway was manned as usual. Gillmore came over the side—same old face but quite grave. He took off his hat. I raised my cap—and as he moved towards me he held out his hand. I bowed and said “Please walk into my Cabin”, and turned to show the way.

I doubt if anyone present noticed the offer of his hand, as he had on a short cloak and his hand was just visible to me beneath it.¹⁹

Dahlgren had refused to shake Gillmore’s hand. And again, she thought fit to cut the following:

[7 June 1865] Gillmore and the rest of the party have proved to be a lying skulking set of poor devils.²⁰

All in all, it seems that Madeleine Dahlgren purposely omitted her husband’s most vitriolic denunciations of and actions against Gillmore; and her reason for doing so was that they ran counter to the neo-chivalric image idealized in that era. Dahlgren’s behavior reflected as much upon himself as it did upon others. His wife must have reasoned that publishing his private indignation would have marred his image as a truly honorable man. Honor was an essential quality of leadership, indispensable to the make-up of the heroic naval officer, the archetype of Dahlgren’s navy. Animosity, petty rivalry, and interpersonal tensions were, in actuality, central to the real nature of the nineteenth-century navy, but they had no place in the heroic ideal.²¹ Probably, or at least in part, Madeleine Dahlgren excluded her husband’s most venomous remarks about Gillmore and others because they cast a shadow on his honor.

In a manner comparable to her treatment of Gillmore, Madeleine Dahlgren toned down her husband’s remarks about Stephen Clegg

19. Diary, vol. 13, 11 February 1865 entry.

20. Diary, vol. 13, 7 June 1865 entry.

21. The observations on honor come from Karsten, *The Naval Aristocracy*, 30–31, 392; Leonard F. Guttridge and Jay D. Smith, *The Commodores* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1986), xi; James C. Bradford, ed., *Command Under Sail: Makers of the American Naval Tradition, 1775–1850* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1985), 214–16; and James Calvert, *The Naval Profession* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), 178.

Rowan, his second-in-command at Charleston. Before going there, Dahlgren had expressed regret that Rowan had not been made an admiral.²² But after only two months of service with him, Dahlgren's opinion changed, as Madeleine Dahlgren disclosed in *Memoir*:

[26 August 1863] Rowan is a great drawback,—full of objections. . . . Shows no interest, and is ready to cavil at anything. I have nothing from him.²³

Somewhat harsher remarks made in the diaries do not appear in *Memoir*. Just before leaving for Washington in February 1864, Dahlgren had written:

[25–27 February 1864] Old Rowan came on board and was of course duly astonished to hear that I was going North and he was to command—Rowan is too cute to be ambitious of the honor—would not hold permanently if he could help it. . . . the old man does not take the responsibility too cheerfully. . . .²⁴

Both sets of remarks cast aspersions on Rowan's abilities, but the entry omitted from *Memoir* reflected poorly on his character and revealed as well a sarcastic edge to Dahlgren's personality.

The troubled waters between Dahlgren and Rowan ran deeper than words in the diary suggest. An alleged impropriety involving Rowan and the officers under his command on board the ironclad USS *New Ironsides* took place just before Dahlgren's return to the fleet following his son's death. Here is how the incident unfolded in *Memoir*:

[9 May 1864] I was handed a communication from Commodore Rowan, which proved to be letters from Dr. Duval [surgeon of the *New Ironsides*, whose name the Dahlgrens spell inconsistently], reporting, to Navy Department, Commodore Rowan and his executive officer Belknap, and other officers, as being parties to disparaging remarks on myself; which was

22. *Memoir*, 388, 19 February 1863 entry.

23. *Memoir*, 410–11, 26 August 1863 entry.

24. *Diary*, vol. 11, 25 and 27 February 1864 entries.

producing serious consequences on the discipline of the squadron. Whereupon Rowan indorses them as false so far as concerns himself, and prefers charges against Duval. . . . As Belknap was not exonerated, I decided to begin with him as the senior offender.²⁵

[11 May 1864] I found myself obliged to send a Court of Inquiry to ascertain *what* Belknap had said.²⁶

[14 May 1864] Report from Court of Inquiry, in case of some other officers on board the “Iron-sides” [USS *New Ironsides*, the ironclad which Rowan commanded], charged with disrespectful language. Instead of facts, they favored me with an opinion. Sent it back.²⁷

[16 May 1864] Court of Inquiry again at work on “Iron-sides.”²⁸

[17 May 1864] Court of Inquiry finished. And, after swearing everybody, it seems that nobody ever spoke disrespectfully of me in the “Iron-sides.” Fortunate man!²⁹

Madeleine Dahlgren did not include everything. Here is what she omitted from the diary:

[6 May 1864] The murder begins to come out—this evening Capt Bradford told me that while I was gone, Dr. Duvall said that L. Belknap had been speaking illy of me—believed it came from Commo. Rowan—& that there were others in the Ironsides who were infected in the same way—if true then it seems that I have traitors to deal with. . . . Bradford said that Rowan did everything for popularity—³⁰

[8 May 1864] [an unknown individual (who signed himself “W”) made additional comments in the diary, as indicated

25. *Memoir*, 452–53, 9 May 1864 entry.

26. *Memoir*, 453, 11 May 1864 entry.

27. *Memoir*, 454, 14 May 1864 entry.

28. *Memoir*, 454, 16 May 1864 entry.

29. *Memoir*, 454, 17 May 1864 entry.

30. *Diary*, vol. 12, 6 May 1864 entry; no entry for this date appears in *Memoir*.

by the superscript letters below] Commo. Rowan came on board[.] I had resolved to open the matter at once,^a but Capt. Bradford had to-day requested me not to do so until Dr. Duvall informed me, as he did not wish to be concerned. So when Rowan came in all smiles & welcome I shook hands as usual—

Nothing could exceed the friendliness of the interview—it was entirely unreserved, and among other things he denounced Gillmore for his course towards me & the Navy in permitting *the* correspondence [a reference to Gillmore's press campaign against Dahlgren]—(wonder he never said so before) took tea &c

I told him the present seemed a good opportunity for trying the Rebels at some point & asked him what he thought of an attempt on Sumter; he entirely approved,—but shook his head^b at the idea of going up to the city—might be done with the reinforcements,—would probably lose two or three &c[.] He left after a most cordial evening.

I sent for Bradford and told him that Duval must be mistaken; the Commo. never could have said or allowed to be said anything to my disadvantage that if Belknap had done so, it must have been without the knowledge of Com. R.—for to act the friend to my face & stab me behind was not possible

Bradford did not seem to be convinced^c

^aYou should firmly have done so and so exposed the villainous plotting against you on all sides—W.

^bhow *could* John with all his sagacity persist in being duped by these curs! W.

^cof course not W.³¹

[9 May 1864] Nice business for honorable men and patriots to be meanly, basely & clandestinely decrying their Command while he is engaged with the Rebel enemy in front—³²

[10 May 1864] Expressed my astonishment to Rowan at the alleged state of things in his ship—He said he was astonished

31. Diary, vol. 12, 8 May 1864 entry.

32. Diary, vol. 12, 9 May 1864 entry.

too and that Belknap was as clear of it as he was[.] Told him I could not let B stay in his ship if the charges were true,— he said he could disclaim them for B[.] Received Duvall's answer—could not specify the words of Belknap—they were disrespectful, that was all—Can't frame charges on that—³³

[17 May 1864] Court of Inq. finished—and after swearing every body, it seems that nobody ever spoke disrespectfully of me in the Ironsides; fortunate man! The poor Doctor has to suffer now—³⁴

Although unfavorable comments about one's superior may not seem so important to a civilian, naval officers have always regarded them as evidence of insubordination. Proper respect for authority was considered essential to the military way of doing things.³⁵ Thus, it was not unusual that Dahlgren convened a court of inquiry to look into the matter, although doing so clearly distressed him. The omissions from *Memoir* not only suggest naivete on Dahlgren's part in being taken in by Rowan's cordial and friendly manner, but also reveal a hope that his subordinates' dissatisfaction with him simply did not exist, that the perception of impropriety had been a mistake. No leader likes insubordination. It reflects poorly on his command. By denying that there had been any wrongdoing, Dahlgren erased the threat to his reputation as a leader of men. His remark about the suffering doctor implies that the surgeon had a rough go of it on board the *Ironsides* after the inquiry, for reporting the misconduct of one's senior officer was very much out of line. Although Duvall had tried to help by reporting Rowan's serious breach of military conduct, Dahlgren, who did not wish to believe that such a thing had occurred, abandoned Duvall to his fate at Rowan's hands. The affair was not to end here.

The Rowan and Gillmore themes converged, culminating in an alleged attempt to remove Dahlgren from command of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron. The allegations surface in Dahlgren's account of his chat with Assistant Secretary of the Navy Gustavus Fox, during Fox's visit to Charleston in the spring of 1865 to tour the fallen city. *Memoir* says only this:

33. Diary, vol. 12, 10 May 1864 entry.

34. Diary, vol. 12, 17 May 1864 entry.

35. Karsten, *The Naval Aristocracy*, 88.

[31 March 1865] As things come out, the proportions of that 'Ironsides' and Gillmore coalition begin to show themselves! Gillmore, undermining in the papers, and then preparing his book; while Rowan was ready to take the vacancy! . . . Fox says that the Department intends to try the charges of Duval against Rowan.³⁶

[2 April 1865] Bradford says they badgered him till six o'clock in the evening, trying to upset his testimony [reference to the court of inquiry proceedings of May 1864]. Pretty business for a second in command [Rowan], and one that I have known as a friend for some thirty years, and have befriended when I could!³⁷

Here are passages that Madeleine Dahlgren left out:

[1 April 1865] Gillmore undermining in the papers, and then preparing his book—While Rowan was on the sly to take the vacancy—they explaining where the Ironside conspiracy really lay—and how dexterously Rowan had done the work and thrown the appearance on others—Duvall was right, and the enquiries I ordered were put at every one but the right one [—all] very dirty,—Fox says that the Dept intends to try the charges of Duvall against Rowan³⁸

[27 June 1865] Dr. Duvall called and entered at length on his difficulties—He says that Rowan incited & encouraged the secret expressions against me—That he manifested dislike to me openly on various occasions—That he said on one occasion that I wanted to take the Ironsides into Rebellion Roads, but if I did she would never come back again—Also that Simpson was a prime actor and well known to be opposed to me,—even to expressing it—which seems very strange—for I placed him senior on the Engineers upon the officers charged with having used disrespectful language of me—The Dr. also told me that my effigy was hung up on

36. *Memoir*, 507, 31 March 1865 entry. This entry is dated 1 April 1865 in the original, see below.

37. *Memoir*, 507–8, 2 April 1865 entry.

38. *Diary*, vol. 13, 1 April 1865 entry.



A famous photograph of Admiral Dahlgren. He leans on a Dahlgren gun with the ruins of Fort Sumter behind his right shoulder. Library of Congress photograph.

The Admiral wrote in his diary that day:

Friday April 21 [1865]

Fine day—cloud & shine—much wind from SW—

A day of photographs—Brady's man Mr. [blank] called and asked to photo. me—had asked me in N.Y. two years ago, just as I was about to start for this,—but I declined—rather the first one I fancy who shunned such immortality—he had been so sorry—the Photo. had been so much asked for and would have sold so well—

So I went on board the Pawnee with all the Staff—and between big and little Photos—alone & with the Staff—there were a dozen or more Photos. taken—It used up the working part of a day—

board the *Ironsides* because I retained in the Sqdrn. such of her crew as had 6 mos. to serve, when the *Ironsides* was going home³⁹

It would appear that the May 1864 proceedings on the *Ironsides* should indeed have exposed some sort of misconduct. The statement in *Memoir* about the badgered witness suggests a cover-up. But the book simply does not reveal the full extent of the disgruntlement with Dahlgren's command. More importantly, Madeleine Dahlgren's omissions from the May 1864 and April and June 1865 diary entries show that Rowan had pulled the wool over Dahlgren's eyes about the whole business. It is not surprising that Madeleine Dahlgren rejected these passages.

Because leadership demands social finesse, an officer's good relationship with his men and his peers is especially important.⁴⁰ The ability to get along with others can make or break a leader. *Memoir* characterizes Dahlgren's relationships with Gillmore and Rowan as having been poor. Omissions from the book, such as Dahlgren's refusal to shake hands with Gillmore and the hanging of his effigy on board the *New Ironsides*, show them to have been wretched. Madeleine Dahlgren apparently understood that the exposure of her husband's shortcomings would not reflect well on his reputation as a commander of men. The prescription for successful leadership during the Civil War included a sympathetic understanding of the men's grievances, a wide flexibility in the imposition of discipline, and an instinct for the men's likely reactions. Only rarely and in extreme instances should recourse to military law be sought. Dahlgren's hasty convening of a court of inquiry shows him to have been deficient in this last crucial respect. It could be argued that the sad failure to recover his son's body drove him to emotional extremes. But should a leader be excused for allowing personal grief to interfere in command decisions? Ideally, Dahlgren should have ascertained the pertinent facts and confronted Rowan directly. If he had then deemed a formal investigation to be necessary, he should have headed it him-

39. Diary, vol. 13, 27 June 1865 entry; no entry for this date appears in *Memoir*.

40. The observations on leadership are from John Horsfield, *The Art of Leadership in War: The Royal Navy from the Age of Nelson to the End of World War II* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), 160–69 and Gerald F. Linderman, *Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War* (New York: Free Press, 1987), 56.

self and kept it under his own roof without involving the Navy Department. Mishandling the affair as he did left grievances undressed. Those who may have deserved punishment went unpunished, and those who tried to help him were injured. That the problem resurfaced almost a year after the investigation on the *New Ironsides* illustrates the inadequacy of his solution. The *Memoir* version only hints that Dahlgren had botched the affair and that Rowan had duped him. What Madeleine Dahlgren omitted from the book underlines what she herself thought, namely, that Dahlgren had failed to follow a cardinal rule of war: know yourself and know your comrades. Madeleine Dahlgren did not hide her husband's deficiency entirely, but she quite clearly tried to play it down.

Another point about Dahlgren's leadership skills arises from passages in which he criticizes subordinates. Madeleine Dahlgren included only one such passage in *Memoir*:

[31 May 1864] The Captain said when he came on board that the men came aft and said that if the Admiral was going on an expedition they did not want to go. These men had been transferred from the 'Wabash' for discharge, their time being out; the old crew sent elsewhere. A nice set of patriots! The crew of this ship 'Wabash' has been troublesome from the first. When sent ashore to the naval battery on Morris Island they complained that their time was out. . . .⁴¹

Their term of enlistment having expired, these men, quite naturally, were reluctant to re-expose themselves to danger. The enlisted man's less engaged enthusiasm is an understood fact of military life. By itself, Dahlgren's statement is not necessarily indicative of flawed leadership. But the omitted passages in which he criticized his officers suggest a contrary reality:

[21 August 1863] Very vexatious—Too little interest felt in proceedings, *that* is the trouble.⁴²

[21 February 1864] Rowan came on board, then other Captains all looking rather despondent about Torpedoes—It is

41. *Memoir*, 456, 31 May 1864 entry.

42. *Diary*, vol. 11, 21 August 1863 entry.

evident that I am very indifferently supported—no zeal—just a look out for bread & butter—the officers are against the War⁴³

[15 January 1865] [Dahlgren had assembled the ironclad skippers to discuss the possibility of a joint move on Charleston.] The most diffident party that I had yet called together on such an occasion—Not a fire eater among them—yet on the whole it was an excellent band of Capts—⁴⁴

These complaints disclose more than Dahlgren's apparent disappointment in his subordinates. They reveal a long-standing morale problem. As the dates of these entries suggest, the problem lasted throughout Dahlgren's tenure in command of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron. He recognized its existence early, but evidently was never able to solve it. That he failed to do so is another indictment of his ability to command. But Madeleine Dahlgren did not publish the above remarks, and thus, simply eliminated public evidence that might have detracted from history's assessment of her husband's leadership.

Madeleine Dahlgren wrote *Memoir of John A. Dahlgren* with an eye to heighten her husband's reputation. It was not an easy job, for Dahlgren was unpopular. He faced great difficulties as commander of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, not the least of which was Gillmore's accusatory book. His comrades entertained serious doubts about his ability to lead, and their doubts were not unfounded, as his own Civil War diaries give evidence. With her motives for writing *Memoir*, it is not surprising that Madeleine Dahlgren eliminated some of that evidence. In general, the omitted passages deal with aspects of command—honor, social finesse, judgment about subordinates, the ability to redress grievances satisfactorily, and the maintenance of good morale. Although her deletions modify the final portrayal in *Memoir*, they do not entirely render it false. The Dahlgren that emerges from chapters 14 through 16 is not fundamentally different from the Dahlgren of the corresponding diaries. The editing merely softened the blow that he had already inflicted upon himself by his own words. Madeleine Dahlgren did not repaint her husband's portrait for posterity, but she did touch it up.

43. Diary, vol. 11, 21 February 1864 entry.

44. Diary, vol. 13, 15 January 1865 entry.

Stephen Crane's Father and the Holiness Movement

BY CHRISTOPHER BENFEY

Stephen Crane was the son and grandson of prominent Methodist ministers, and it is often assumed that his colorful life of excess and adventure was an understandable rejection of that legacy.¹ But his father's prominence during Crane's childhood was tinged with something close to scandal, and what the son rejected is not entirely clear. Indeed, Crane the novelist seems to have inherited certain traits of character from Crane the minister—tenacity of purpose, intellectual integrity, iconoclastic fearlessness—and adapted them to his own ends.

This article attempts to answer the question: Why did Stephen Crane's father, Jonathan Townley Crane (1819–1880), give up the prestigious position of presiding elder in the Elizabeth (New Jersey) district of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1876, and return to the itinerant ministry? The answer may turn out to have a bearing on issues central to Crane studies, such as the reputed differences between the conceptions of God held by Crane's father and his maternal grandfather, and Stephen Crane's own obsessive search for intense experience. It may also help to convey the atmosphere in the Crane household during the years when Stephen, born in 1871, was growing up. I propose, in short, to reveal a momentous and hitherto unsuspected episode in J. T. Crane's life.

Jonathan Townley Crane's strange fate was to find himself in the

© Christopher Benfey, all rights reserved. This essay is part of a study of Stephen Crane, to be published by Alfred A. Knopf next year. The author wishes to thank the staff of the Syracuse University Library, and especially Edward Lyon, for generous help with the Stephen Crane and the George Peck collections.

1. See, for example, R. W. Stallman's "standard" biography, *Stephen Crane: A Biography* (New York: George Braziller, 1968), 14: "Revolt against the fathers is the common lot of sons, but in Stephen Crane's life it is exemplified more clearly than in any other American writer".

midst of one of those awakenings of religious fervor that erupt periodically in American history. His life during the years of Stephen Crane's childhood must be seen in relation to what was known as the "Holiness Movement", which convulsed the Methodist Church in the United States, and especially its New Jersey wing, during the 1870s. As one chronicler of the movement grandly proclaimed in 1873, "It was in the divine order that New Jersey should be the place where this advance movement of the times should be made".² J. T. Crane's intellectual integrity was such that amid the ensuing doctrinal controversies he consistently took positions opposite to those of his influential in-laws, the Reverends George and Jesse T. Peck, his wife's father and uncle respectively.

J. T. Crane paid for his courage. From being the presiding elder of the Elizabeth district in 1876, a position of great responsibility and adequate pay, he was demoted to the itinerant ministry. By the time of his death from heart failure in 1880, he was living in virtual exile in the backwater of Port Jervis, New York, still trying to convince his opponents of the superiority of his views. The first eight years of Stephen Crane's life corresponded to his father's professional and financial humiliation. It is not unreasonable to imagine that the effects of his father's clouded last years lingered on in the family circle, to be discussed in whatever terms—shame, anger, desire to redress (we can never know)—in front of the growing boy.

Jonathan Townley Crane was born in 1819 to Presbyterian parents on a farm in what is now Union, New Jersey, and orphaned at thirteen. His own religious conversion five years later was apparently more intellectual than emotional. Repelled like many of his generation by the Calvinist doctrine of infant damnation, he converted to the gentler creed of Methodism. To pay his way through the College of New Jersey (the Presbyterian forerunner of Princeton University), he worked in a Newark trunk factory. The Methodist ministry had had no educational requirements in the first half of the century, and its unlettered, plain-speaking preachers appealed to the heterogeneous population of the American West, where Methodism had spread rapidly. Peter Cartwright (1785–1872), a famous itinerant preacher known as "the Methodist bulldog", wrote with scorn in his *Autobiog-*

2. George Hughes, *Days of Power in the Forest Temple* (Boston: John Bent, 1873), 37.

raphy of learned ministers of other denominations, boasting that “illiterate Methodist preachers set the world on fire while they [the others] were lighting their matches!”³

But J. T. Crane was a Methodist minister of the new stamp. Well-educated, bookish, respectable in every way, Crane was of the generation of Methodist ministers who brought the post-Civil War church much closer to the other Protestant denominations. If, as Stephen Crane’s friend Harold Frederic was to say of these ministers, “they were not the men their forbears had been”,⁴ they were nonetheless proud of having brought Methodism up to date. Having purged it of its ruder aspects—by the 1870s the old Methodist “campgrounds”, where histrionic conversions took place under the trees, had become summer resorts where respectable Methodists vacationed together—they had made Methodism competitive in the civilized Northeast, a part of the country where its appeal had traditionally been weakest.

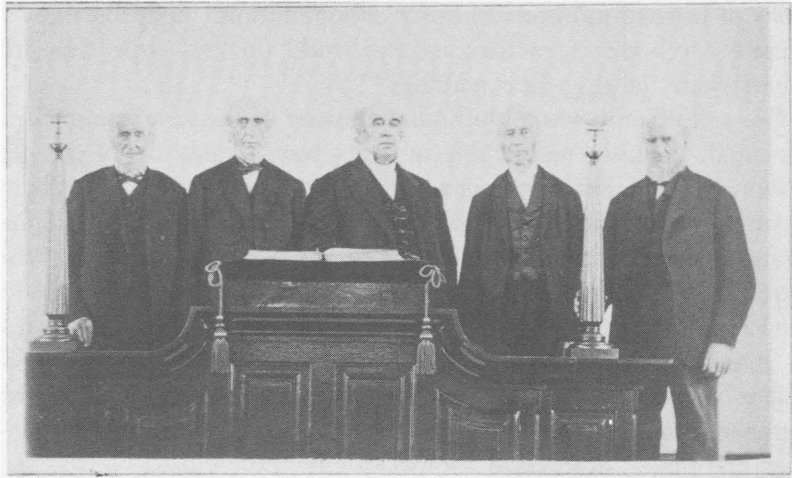
To all appearances J. T. Crane married strategically; if so, he soon learned that an alliance of love and ambition can have its own intrinsic constraints. Mary Helen Peck was the only daughter of the Reverend George Peck, editor of the influential *Christian Advocate* of New York, author of several much-admired books including an autobiography, and for twenty years the presiding elder in the large Wyoming (Pennsylvania) Conference of the Methodist Church. Peck’s four brothers were all ministers, among them the imposing Jesse T. Peck—he weighed three hundred pounds—whose career was to be even more illustrious than his brother George’s, culminating in his rise to the rank of bishop. (He was also one of the founders of Syracuse University.) These Pecks, who were much in demand as speakers, assembled yearly for family reunions, where they prayed together and listened to one another preach.⁵

J. T. Crane first caught the attention of the Methodist leadership with his *An Essay on Dancing* (1848), published in the same year as

3. Quoted in Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Avon, 1977), 41. For information on the history of Methodism in the United States, I have relied on Douglas and on Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1972).

4. Harold Frederic, *The Damnation of Theron Ware* (1896; New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 3.

5. Invitations and programs for these reunions can be found in the George Peck Papers, Syracuse University Library.



The five Peck brothers. Photograph from the George Peck Papers, Syracuse University Library.

his marriage banns. In the preface to this joyless and puritanical attack, Crane revealed (and apparently revealed in) the narrowness of his own experience: “The author is constrained to admit the charge of being wholly unacquainted, *experimentally*, with his theme”. He resorted perforce to a scholarly treatment, in which he established that dancing had declined in grace and morality since Biblical times:⁶

Our dances are performed by males and females mingled together, and arranged in pairs; that of the [ancient] Hebrews was performed by a band of maidens and women alone. The modern dance is regulated by the senseless whine of a violin, while that of the Hebrews was accompanied by a noble anthem of praise.

Crane worried about the effects of dancing on domestic order: “Young lady, by imbibing a love for the dance, you will almost necessarily acquire a distaste for the duties of everyday life”. His readers would

6. J. T. Crane, *An Essay on Dancing* (1848), quoted in Melvin H. Schoberlin, “Flagon of Despair: Stephen Crane” (unpublished manuscript, Schoberlin Collection, Syracuse University Library), I-5.

appreciate the delicacy of his implication that “imbibing” a taste for dance might be as dangerous as drinking hard liquor.

Crane’s concern for the morals of youth won him appointment to the Methodist seminary at Pennington, New Jersey, where he served as principal for ten pleasant years before returning, in 1858, to the active ministry. The expanding Crane household at Pennington seems to have been a cozy refuge for sentimental piety. His mother-in-law, Mary Peck, visiting at Pennington to care for her daughter’s latest baby, described the scene to her own husband George. One of the grandchildren, having spent the afternoon playing in the sand,⁷

was saying his prayers to his Mother [i.e., M. Helen Crane] one evening after which he asked her whether the Lord would take care of him down here or up yonder she said she thought he would take care of him down here but asked him if he would like to go up into the sky and be a little Angel He replied that he would rather be a little Angel down here in the dirt.

Though Crane opposed slavery like other northern ministers, he suggested that a period of serfdom “on the Russian model” might ease the morally treacherous transition from bondage to freedom, and prevent a civil war. The idea, however naive, so appealed to Crane’s audience that his sermon on slavery was published and widely distributed.

After the war Crane turned his attention to social issues. *Popular Amusements* (1869) and *Arts of Intoxication* (1870) departed in no significant way from Methodist orthodoxy; the latter was noticed in the religious press primarily for its “captivating style” and “true eloquence”.⁸ What struck his contemporaries as graceful and scholarly sounds merely pedantic today. He liked to mix scientific expertise with the narrowest fundamentalism; he defended Noah’s intemperance, for example, as a regrettable but not damnable lapse:⁹

7. Undated letter, George Peck Papers, Syracuse University Library.

8. The quoted words are attributed to the *Newark Journal* and the *Boston Nation* respectively, and appear in advertisements bound into Crane’s *Holiness the Birthright of All God’s Children* (New York: Nelson and Phillips, 1874).

9. *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. “Crane, Jonathan Townley”.

The Scriptures tell us that Noah planted a vineyard and on one occasion drank of the wine until he was drunken. Very possibly the process of fermentation had not before been noticed, the results were not known, and the consequences in this case were wholly unexpected.

Crane's anxious promotion of temperance and healthy forms of recreation reflects a change in the preoccupations of post-Civil War Methodism. The emotional and physical trauma of backwoods revivals had begun to yield to an emphasis on social reform. This taming of Methodism's "heroic" energies—part of the process that Ann Douglas has called the "feminization" of American culture in the nineteenth century—led to a diminished stress on individual religious experience. One searches in vain through J. T. Crane's writings for a sense of religion as intense experience, and finds instead a great deal about religion as social control.

A counter-movement was perhaps to be expected, especially after the American wing of the Methodist Church celebrated its centenary, in 1866, amid a widely felt mood of spiritual torpor. Observers at the time blamed the malaise on the "demoralizing influence of our civil war", and some ventured sociological explanations for the Church's declining influence:¹⁰

Many of her members went forth to the sanguinary field. Removal from elevating home-influences and from sanctuary privileges had a tendency to loosen, and often to sunder, the bonds of fervent piety.

To reawaken that piety was the explicit goal of the group of prominent ministers who met at Vineland, New Jersey, in 1867 and formed the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness.

The Holiness Movement followed the pattern of other religious renewals by clothing its program for change in a conservative rhetoric that demanded a return to earlier values. Among the innovations its adherents condemned were Gothic architecture in church buildings, the new "operatic" style of church music, and modern sermons, with their "ornate" style and references to "science, philosophy, po-

10. Hughes, *Days of Power*, 10.

lite literature, poetry, and even *antique fables*'¹¹—an adequate description of the kind of sermons that J. T. Crane, with his fondness for examples from Homer and folklore, preached.

Promoters of Holiness called for a return to “the primitive simplicity and power of Christianity” and for the revival of camp meetings; tabernacles in the woods would replace Gothic churches to become scenes of violent conversion—the campsites were referred to as “battlegrounds”—and of that further spiritual cleansing that they called “entire sanctification”. Much emphasis was put on this “second blessing”, which Jesse T. Peck had discussed at length in his popular tract *The Central Idea of Christianity* (1865, revised 1876), while his brother George described his own experience of it in his autobiography of 1874. Despite its conservative rhetoric, the Holiness Movement, with its rejection of outer ritual and insistence on individual religious experience, found itself spiritually in step with such progressive denominations as the Society of Friends.

Given his family ties, J. T. Crane’s open hostility to the Holiness Movement, as expressed in his book *Holiness the Birthright of All God’s Children* (1874), was impolitic, to say the least. Two traits of Crane’s temperament are evident in his opposition to the promoters of Holiness, however: his compassion and his cautiousness—an apparent wariness of intense experience. He thought that the Movement’s insistence on a second stage of religious experience diminished the gravity of the first conversion or “justification” of the regenerate sinner. He was offended by the corollary claim that there lingered after conversion a “residue of depravity”, which put the convert right back to the risk of damnation at any moment. This view sounded cruel and Calvinistic to Crane, and challenged his reasons for embracing Methodism in the first place. In what constituted something of a compromise, he preferred a gradual “groaning” toward perfection, usually unattainable in this life, to the “instantaneous” experience of sanctity.

It did not escape the attention of Crane’s fellow ministers that he had launched a public attack on the most cherished beliefs of his own father-in-law. One must assume a measure of détente within the family; certainly there is evidence for it in the fact that an advertisement for J. T. Crane’s *Holiness the Birthright* appeared at the end of

11. *Ibid.*, 20.

Peck's *The Life and Times of Rev. George Peck* (1874), a book that advanced contrary ideas. Furthermore, J. T. Crane had dutifully delivered a eulogy at his father-in-law's golden wedding anniversary celebration four years earlier.¹² But such civility was not to be found in all segments of the Peck camp. The Reverend Anthony Atwood of Philadelphia, a Peck associate and one of the original organizers of the National Association, published a particularly vicious, book-length response to Crane's arguments, adding the gratuitous observation that Crane's "natural manner" as a preacher was "dry and devoid of sympathy or feeling". Atwood quotes at some length from a Holiness tract by George Peck and concludes:¹³

Dr. George Peck, here quoted, is the venerable father-in-law (still living) of Dr. Crane. The father is sound, Methodistic [i.e., his arguments correspond to John Wesley's, a view disputed by Crane, who found Wesley's positions inconsistent] and scriptural; the son-in-law is neither. . . . The blessed Master said that "the father would be against the son, and the son against the father." Herein is this prediction fulfilled.

There was, in fact, a vigorous and well-organized effort to suppress Crane's book and end his career in the upper ranks of the Methodist hierarchy. The editor of the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, a magazine that had serialized Crane's temperance tract the previous year, ran a mildly critical review of *Holiness the Birthright*, only to find himself attacked for refusing "to join in a purpose to personally victimize Dr. Crane". The editor explained:¹⁴

12. A copy of the program for the event is in the George Peck Papers, Syracuse University Library.

13. Reverend Anthony Atwood, *The Abiding Comforter* (Philadelphia: A. Wallace, 1874), 40, 70. I am indebted to Melvin Schoberlin for this reference. Schoberlin was aware that Crane's *Holiness* book was controversial. Schoberlin writes in his "Flagon of Despair": "During 1875 Jonathan Crane was the focal point of unceasing conflict; he was attacked and defended, but he took no part in the battle that threatened to divide the Church" (II-9). Schoberlin suspected a link between the controversy and Crane's professional demotion: "Jonathan Crane was informed that his reappointment was impossible. At the Conference of 1876 he was returned to the list of active itinerants and assigned to the First Methodist (old Cross Street) church in Paterson" (II-10). But Schoberlin seems to have been unaware of the precise nature of the Holiness controversy, or of its extent.

14. *Methodist Quarterly Review* (October 1874): 663, 664, 677. The editor's name was D. D. Whedon.

By letter and by interview, we had been made to understand that Dr. C. had now destroyed “all his hopes of ecclesiastical preferment,” and we were urged to “speak out,” so that he should be put down reputationally and officially.

One reviewer quoted in the article had announced that he “felt so cheated by the book, that after a careful reading *I put it into the stove*, where I was sure it would do no harm” (his emphasis), while another referred to it as a “poisonous reptile”.

George Peck was indeed still living in 1874, as Atwood had remarked, though he would not live for much longer. He died within two years, in 1876—the same year that J. T. Crane was compelled to return (perhaps no longer protected by Peck family ties) to the itinerant ministry, and sent first to Paterson, New Jersey, then to Port Jervis. He spent the last four years of his life fretting about the controversial ideas that he had advanced. “He was rewriting [*Holiness the Birthright*] when he died”, his widow recalled, “and he expressed the hope that he would be able to ‘re-state his views in a manner that would commend them to those who differed from him theoretically’”.¹⁵

Oddly enough, arguments similar to J. T. Crane’s finally triumphed in the Methodist Church, but so long after his death that his own expression of them was forgotten. The idea of a “second blessing” (and sometimes a third, accompanied by speaking in tongues) took refuge in the various Holiness sects, such as the Assemblies of God, that split off from Methodism after the 1890s to flourish in the twentieth century. The reasons for schism were complex and involved issues of administration and ordination irrelevant to the difficulties of J. T. Crane. But he seems to have understood, twenty years earlier, that the future of Methodism in the cities would require a tamer, more social-minded set of religious practices than those offered by the Holiness Movement.

Crane’s doctrinal arguments, interestingly, have won a measure of recent respect. The historian J. L. Peters, in his lucid account of the controversies surrounding the concept of Christian holiness in American churches, offers an appreciative analysis of J. T. Crane’s ideas. Peters suggests that Crane was ahead of his time, and that his at-

15. M. Helen Crane, quoted in Thomas Gullason, ed., *Stephen Crane’s Career: Perspectives and Evaluations* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1972), 34.

tempt at a “general synthesis”—of conversion followed by gradual growth in spiritual awareness—“was not heeded by an age absorbed wholly with thesis and antithesis”.¹⁶ A reevaluation of Crane as one of the major Methodist thinkers of the last century, while suggested in recent scholarship, seems yet in the future. But it would be a noteworthy reversal if the father of Stephen Crane, hitherto viewed as an intellectually timid and otherworldly divine, came to be seen as a path-breaking innovator.

16. John Leland Peters, *Christian Perfection and American Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956), 174. “Crane’s book was written . . . in the midst of controversy. And he frequently says more than he seems to mean. He is in specific protest against what he feels is a disparagement of regeneration which, he holds, brings one into the complete favor of God. Entire sanctification is not, therefore and strictly speaking, a requisite for a barely safe hereafter but a necessity for an abundantly satisfactory here and now” (171).

“I Want to Do This Job”: More Margaret Bourke-White Letters to Erskine Caldwell

BY WILLIAM L. HOWARD

Eleven letters have recently been added to the George Arents Research Library's collection of Erskine Caldwell and Margaret Bourke-White correspondence. In the possession of Caldwell's first wife, Helen Caldwell Cushman, until her death in 1986, these letters were bought from a North Carolina bookdealer acting on behalf of Helen and Erskine's granddaughter. The entire group was written by Bourke-White in 1936, just prior to and immediately after her first tour of the South with Caldwell, during which they gathered material for *You Have Seen Their Faces*. A page of unsigned journal entries chronicling Bourke-White's behavior on the trip accompanies the letters.

The first of the letters was an attempt to salvage the Southern trip. From the Richmond Hotel in Augusta, Georgia, Bourke-White anxiously urged an exasperated Caldwell, who was visiting his parents in Wrens, to go forward with their plans to tour the South, after her requests for extensions had finally provoked him to cancel. The letter is two pages in length, in Bourke-White's handwriting, dated "Saturday morning" and addressed to "Dear Mr. Caldwell". Scrawled along the edge in someone else's hand is the date 18 July 1936. There is no envelope, but on the second page is Bourke-White's complete signature followed by "Richmond Hotel, Augusta".¹

Interestingly, a typed draft of this letter, somewhat different from the letter actually sent but clearly written for the same purpose, had been earlier deposited in the Arents Library by Bourke-White her-

1. Bourke-White to Erskine Caldwell, 18 July 1936, Margaret Bourke-White Papers, Syracuse University Library. All other references to the Bourke-White-Caldwell correspondence (cited by date within the text) are from the Margaret Bourke-White Papers.

self. Vicki Goldberg (in her biography of Bourke-White) and I (in a previous article for the *Courier*) have cited this draft in our efforts to piece together what happened that day.² In *Portrait of Myself*, Bourke-White states that she wrote the letter at breakfast in the hotel and then sent it in the care of a boy on a bicycle to Caldwell in Wrens, thirty miles away. Caldwell appeared that evening, and the argument was resolved by “wordless communication” as the two drank a cup of coffee together.³ Although Caldwell’s autobiographies do not contradict Bourke-White’s account, a letter to his wife, written two days later, describes a very different scene. There, he reports

2. Vicki Goldberg, *Margaret Bourke-White: A Biography* (New York: Harper and Row, 1986), 164; William Howard, “Dear Kit, Dear Skinny: The Letters of Erskine Caldwell and Margaret Bourke-White”, *Syracuse University Library Associates Courier* 23 (Fall 1988): 27.

Knowing the project’s importance to her, one can understand her revising the letter, perhaps several times—thus the survival of different drafts. However, it is puzzling that the unsent draft was typed and the sent letter handwritten. Recognizing the importance of saying just the right thing, she may have composed a version of the letter and had it typed while still in New York—this being the draft long held at the Arents Library. Then, once in Georgia, she may have decided to revise it, and, not having access to a typewriter, written it longhand—this being the newly acquired letter under consideration in this article. The content of the letters tends to undermine this theory, however, because both state that she is writing from the hotel in Augusta.

Another possible solution to the puzzle suggests itself if one considers the third actor in the *You Have Seen Their Faces* drama. A letter from Caldwell to his wife in Maine states that in the hotel at the time of Bourke-White’s arrival was Ruth Carnall, Caldwell’s Hollywood secretary, whom he had hired to keep records of the trip (Erskine Caldwell to Helen Caldwell, 17 July 1936, Erskine Caldwell Collection, Baker Library, Dartmouth College). We are aware that Bourke-White knew of Carnall’s presence because in her letter to Peggy Sargent, composed on that Saturday of her arrival, she explained that she was negotiating with Caldwell through Carnall by telephone from the hotel. Having enlisted Carnall’s help then, she might also have consulted Carnall before sending her missive. It is even possible that the Arents draft—the unsent draft—was typed on Carnall’s typewriter. The typewriting of the letter and that of Carnall’s journal entries (discussed later in this article) match. Advice from Carnall on how to approach Caldwell may then have suggested ways that Bourke-White could improve the letter, prompting a spontaneous decision to compose a different draft by hand at the breakfast table.

3. Margaret Bourke-White, *Portrait of Myself* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963), 120–21.

that Margaret “begged and cried, and promised to behave”, until he reluctantly agreed to resume plans for the trip.⁴

Although the newly acquired letter and the Arents draft are the same in their predominant sentiment, the letter as sent is simpler, more straightforward, and less plaintive. More persuasive as well, it was very likely composed after the typed version—after she had arrived at a clearer view of the problem and a simpler and more effective strategy for solving it. Six paragraphs have become three. A hesitant, indirect opening—“It seemed to me that this work you and I had planned is so important that I couldn’t bear to see it hopelessly lost”—is replaced with a more positive, active beginning in which she shoulders responsibility for the situation and then seeks to resolve it: “Forgive me, but I can’t abandon this book without an effort to rectify the damage done by my postponements”. Instead of qualifying her availability, as she did in the Arents draft—“I am free now for at least a month”—the sent letter assures him that she has “the time we would need for the book”. His reservations about resuming their plans are addressed directly and early in the letter:⁵ “I am afraid that you have concluded that there would be more delays, and interruptions by other affairs, if we finally started. It was to eliminate this possibility that I stayed on in New York.” She must have felt that identifying with his point of view in this way was a more effective strategy than she had displayed, for example, in this sentence from the earlier, typed draft: “If you judge the future by these last several days it isn’t fair to me or fair to this important thing we plan to do”. Finally, she retains in the second letter the shrewd appeal to Caldwell’s well-publicized sense of economic justice, depicting herself as hampered by the economic pressures of a capitalistic system and explaining that her commercial work, as much as she deplored it, gave her the “freedom for creative and socially significant work”. (7-18-36)

Ultimately, the differences in the two 18 July letters are less im-

4. Erskine Caldwell to Helen Caldwell, 20 July 1936, Erskine Caldwell Collection, Baker Library, Dartmouth College.

5. Carnall, who was in communication with Caldwell by phone, may have articulated those reservations to her, providing another reason for her to revise the letter as she did.

portant than the fact that the content was revised and considered very carefully. Bourke-White spent time reworking it because the project meant a great deal to her. Indeed, the collaboration changed the course of her career.

Also among the newly deposited materials and also related to that first Southern trip in the summer of 1936 is a single page of typed journal entries by an unsigned author that records Margaret's behavior on the trip and the early stages of her love affair with Erskine:

- 7-17 Called on telephone and asked for another postponement. Hysterics over phone.
- 7-18 Appeared at Hotel Richmond, Augusta, after having received wire trip was off. Another outburst.
- 7-22 At Jefferson Davis Hotel, Montgomery, Ala. 1½ hour session. Another outburst. Sat on his lap.
- 7-23 At Walthall Hotel, Jackson, Miss. About 10 p.m. Another outburst. About 2 p.m. [sic] Came to door after had retired and had hysterics and made scene until taken in. Took her to bed with him for the night.
- 7-24 She called after he had gone to bed. He dressed and went to her. . . . stayed all night. Hysterics diminishing. . . .
- 7-25 Reached hotel at 8:30—had dinner and she received him in her bed (without clothes) for the night.
She hadn't enough money to pay her expenses and he said she probably expected to pay for them with favours. But he ordered that she be reminded until she paid up. . . .

The bookdealer who sold these new letters to Syracuse speculates that these entries were written by Erskine and that his use of the third person raises the possibility that they were notes for an autobiographical novel or story. Although not the most obvious solution, there is some justification for this position: the details of Margaret's attire (or lack of it) suggest a firsthand observer. Furthermore, Cald-

well's autobiography mentions that he did keep a notebook during the trip.⁶

But it must be remembered that there was a third person present on the trip, Ruth Carnall, Caldwell's Hollywood secretary. William A. Sutton, author of an unpublished Caldwell biography, identifies her as the writer of the journal entries, and Vicki Goldberg, citing Sutton's work and her own interview with Helen Caldwell Cushman, agrees.⁷

Carnall was hired by Caldwell to join them because of Bourke-White's reputation for being "unscrupulous financially", for allowing others to pick up the tab.⁸ He wanted Carnall to keep records of the trip and to ensure that expenses were shared equally. Another reason for Carnall's presence was that Bourke-White had a reputation for seducing married men. Harvey Klevar, one of Caldwell's biographers, suggests that Helen Caldwell favored hiring the secretary, a known quantity, to deter Bourke-White, an unknown quantity, from developing anything other than a professional relationship with her husband.⁹ Even Margaret sensed that sexual dynamics had more to do with Carnall's presence than recordkeeping. As she put it, Caldwell "planned to hedge himself in with a second woman".¹⁰

The specificity of dates and times in the journal entries suggests Carnall as the author. It was, after all, her job as cost accountant to attend to and record the particulars of the trip, while the artists did their work. That the way they went about their business did not meet with her approval did not stop her from fulfilling her function. Her records, if they are indeed hers, are neatly typed and carefully tabulated by day in the manner of a secretary. But would a secretary have felt compelled to record the progression of her boss's affair in

6. Erskine Caldwell, *With All My Might* (Atlanta: Peachtree Publishers, 1987), 148–49.

7. William Sutton, "Lover's Quarrel: A Biography of Erskine Caldwell". Unpublished biography of Erskine Caldwell, Sutton Collection, Rare Book Room, University of Illinois Library. Goldberg, *Margaret Bourke-White*, 165, 167, 391–92.

8. Harvey L. Klevar, "Interview with Helen Caldwell Cushman", *Southern Quarterly* 27 (Spring 1989): 95. See also Goldberg, *Margaret Bourke-White*, 163.

9. Harvey L. Klevar, "Erskine Caldwell, Solitary Puritan: A Biography". Unpublished, unpaginated biography of Erskine Caldwell, in the possession of Professor Klevar, Luther College, Decorah, Iowa.

10. Bourke-White, *Portrait of Myself*, 115.

such acidic terms?—in any terms at all? Indeed, it is not until the final paragraph that mention is made of the expenses that she was hired to keep track of, and even there the cynical assessment of Margaret is more than a dispassionate balancing of accounts: “She hadn’t enough money to pay her expenses and he said she probably expected to pay for them with favours”.

That the journal entries suggest more than a secretary’s interest in the affair does not, however, disqualify Carnall. Helen Caldwell Cushman states in interviews that Carnall had been Erskine’s mistress,¹¹ a fact which, if true, explains the rancor of the entries. Caldwell’s wry account of the tour reveals the two women’s disagreement and fighting, and somewhat smugly suggests that the fighting was more than a little over him.¹² Such rivalry would support the notion of a prior relationship with Carnall, who undoubtedly resented the other woman’s encroachment on her territory. The degree of detail in the journal entries can be accounted for by Caldwell’s tendency to confide in women with whom he had been intimate the stories of new conquests. He had shared similar confidences with Helen, without considering the extent to which they might have hurt her.¹³ Having been his mistress, Carnall may well have qualified as a confidant, and that is how she learned the details of his affair with Margaret. That Caldwell was the source of Carnall’s information also raises the possibility that what he told her was exaggerated, even boastful. In his autobiography, for example, Caldwell describes a much more modest opening love scene than that implied by the journal, and dates it two or three days later. In that account, Bourke-White invites him to lie by her side in bed but forbids him to remove his clothes. His response—“Can’t I even take off my necktie?”—evoked laughter. At midnight, according to Caldwell, he returned to his own room. This scene does not portray the ‘hysterical’ and rashly brazen Bourke-White described by the journal.

There is an interesting footnote to the story. Helen Caldwell Cushman states in an interview that Carnall wrote her “a blow-by-blow account of the affair before she left [the Southern tour]. She wrote me about Margaret’s appearing without any clothes on in Er-

11. Sutton, “Lover’s Quarrel”; Goldberg, *Margaret Bourke-White*, 167.

12. Caldwell, *With All My Might*, 147–51.

13. Sutton, “Lover’s Quarrel”; Klevar, “Interview”, 96.

skine's room and losing her temper and pulling all of the fixtures out of the wall." Again, one wonders if Caldwell might have stretched the details somewhat in his telling. When asked Carnall's motive for writing her, Helen answered, "She was a friend of mine. I knew her after she was his mistress."¹⁴ Whether the "blow-by-blow account" included the page of quite possibly exaggerated journal entries or whether they were provided later, Helen used the entries for evidence when she filed for divorce two years later.¹⁵ Interestingly, Helen's talent for winning the friendship of her husband's former mistresses applied not only to Carnall but also to Bourke-White. As she states, "When I first met Margaret, I liked her immediately."¹⁶ They had a friendship that lasted a good many more years than either of their marriages with Caldwell.¹⁷

One of the difficulties of accurately assessing the pair's early relationship has been the scarcity of letters from Bourke-White,¹⁸ and the absence of her replies has up to now tempted one to conclude that Caldwell's early impassioned appeals received little encouragement. But the ten newly acquired letters that were written just after the Southern trip affirm that Margaret wrote him back, although she rarely wrote him with the passion that he was craving. As with her later love letters, these incorporate details of her work. They are more balanced than his letters of the same period. Part of her control may be attributable to an understandable restraint caused by the situation itself. Caldwell was addressing his amorous letters to a single woman living alone in New York City, while Margaret was addressing hers to Mt. Vernon, Maine, where Caldwell lived with his wife and their three children. The reality of this situation must certainly have constrained her. Beyond that, however, was the quality of her personality. For her, work was paramount, and by nature she was not as possessive as Caldwell.

Four of the letters written after their 1936 trip are written from New York City on the Bourke-White Studio letterhead. The first of these is two and one-half pages long and dated 20 August. Its envelope is addressed to Mr. Erskine Caldwell, Mount Vernon, Maine.

14. Klevar, "Interview", 95.

15. Sutton, "Lover's Quarrel".

16. Klevar, "Interview", 95.

17. Sutton, "Lover's Quarrel".

18. Howard, "Dear Kit, Dear Skinny", 29.

Beginning affectionately with “Dear Skinny”, it recalls their work together and describes the difficulties she met upon her return: “Camp meetings and chain gangs seem very peaceful in retrospect now. When I walked into the studio the sky began crashing.” (8-20-36)

As Goldberg’s biography has explained, Bourke-White was trying to repair her relationship with the Newspaper Enterprise Association (NEA), one of her chief sources of income. She had an agreement with the NEA to devote forty-eight days a year to work assigned by it and Acme Newspictures. But before the Southern trip with Caldwell, she had done an uncommissioned photograph of Earl Browder, Communist Party candidate for president, and it had appeared on the front page of the *New York Times*.¹⁹ As Margaret puts it, NEA was trying to fire her over the picture “not because it was red, they insist, but because it cut into their exclusive rights on my newspaper work”. (8-20-36) Eventually she would lose her contract with NEA over the matter.

At the time, the loss of the NEA contract was a tremendous blow to Bourke-White: first, because the NEA work helped pay the bills so that she could stay self-employed and, second, because “with the exception of a rare thing like a chance to work on a book ranging from convicts to evangelists”, the NEA work was her “favorite” kind of assignment. (8-20-36) In a retrospective interview, however, Peggy Sargent, the secretary in the Bourke-White studio, noted that the loss of the NEA contract was a blessing in disguise because it freed Margaret to sign a contract with *Life* less than a month later.²⁰

The 20 August letter is a good example of Bourke-White’s poise under pressure and successful balancing of the diverse parts of her life. In the midst of losing the NEA contract, she maintained her professional aplomb and her sense of humor. She wrote that she was developing the Southern photos and asked that Caldwell confirm dates when they might meet to coordinate the photos with his notes. She closes with a playful allusion to “a certain delayed reaction exposure which shows a writer and a photographer very obviously not preparing to meet their god”. The letter is signed “Kit”, his nickname for her. (8-20-36)

The next letter is postmarked 2 September 1936, and by now the

19. Goldberg, *Margaret Bourke-White*, 149–51.

20. *Ibid.*, 175.



Margaret Bourke-White and Erskine Caldwell in August 1936.

c. 2 Sept. 1936

Bourke-White Studio
FIVE HUNDRED TWENTY-ONE FIFTH AVENUE
THE PEPPY HOUSE
NEW YORK

Wednesday

Dear Skinning:

That was very high praise,
probably as high praise as you ever give.
I can't tell you how happy it made
me. I read those sentences over a great
many times today. If there are
nine-hundred sentences that you like that well
I consider it a good haul out of a
month's work. I am so happy that you
wrote me so you did.

If you should decide, after you
had seen everything, that we ought to go back
for a while it could probably be arranged.
But I feel as you do, that it is a subject

One of the early letters to Caldwell written on Bourke-White Studio stationery.

“Mr.” on the envelope has been dropped. Bourke-White writes that she is extremely pleased with Caldwell’s “high praise” for the photographs from the Southern trip. “I read those sentences over a great many times today.” And she is open to the possibility of returning

to the South for more pictures, although “it is a subject on which we could spend months and still feel that we had only scratched the surface”. (9-2-36)

Pleased by his compliments on her pictures, she is nevertheless “acutely distressed” about another aspect of his letter, although she hastens to add, “that doesn’t mean that you should stop writing me what you think about it”. Apparently, Caldwell objected to Bourke-White’s signing a contract with *Life*. This is an early manifestation of his tendency to want to “take charge of” her career, a tendency that will cause problems later in their relationship.²¹ She reassures him that there will be “a cancelation [sic] clause in it, or something that keeps me from getting too tied up”. Then she explains the importance of the alternative that *Life* presents to her. Working on advertising jobs, “a photographer’s main means of support”, leaves her “paralyzed”. *Life* magazine presents the opportunity of escaping from advertising work and feeling creative again. “If I’m given new problems to solve, and something that I think is close to reality, it acts on me like rain falling on the grass”. She admits candidly that she is “a little frightened by my recent experience of being fired” and that she might have made a “better bargain”, but she does not think the job as bad as Caldwell thinks. “I think there’s a lot to be said for starting with a new magazine—that’s something that I like.” (9-2-36)

Postmarked the very next day is a five-page letter that not only proves to be an invaluable source for our understanding of Bourke-White’s character and her sense of her profession, but also anticipates the benefits and the drawbacks of a relationship with Erskine Caldwell. Responding to another letter from Erskine that has raised doubts about her decision to join *Life*, she further develops her rationale for taking the job and writes: “I’ve had terrific ups and downs, on getting your letters. And don’t let the fact that what you write may upset me ever stop you from expressing an opinion when you want to. I pay more attention to it than you probably believe.” (9-3-36) One suspects that Caldwell offered more in his letters than just impartial professional advice. Judging from the impassioned correspondence already part of the Bourke-White collection, one can easily imagine his tying her vocational decision to the practicalities of

21. Howard, “Dear Kit, Dear Skinny”, 31, 41-44.

their personal relationship.²² He wanted her to preserve her independence so that there would be more time for their work together—and complementary to that, more time for him to persuade her to marry him.

Bourke-White, however, was able to disconnect her personal relationships from her professional decisions. She firmly draws the conversation away from the personal to the professional: “But I keep coming back to the fact that I want to do this job”. Although she has her own doubts about tying herself to an employer, she distinguishes them from Caldwell’s. “I’m not at all afraid of being kept to the common garden-variety of picture. . . . I believe the assignments will be extremely varied, which I find very stimulating as a photographer.” Of far more concern to her are the political uses to which her photos will be put. “I am much less afraid of the kind of pictures that they’ll send me out to take than I am of the kind of captions they’ll [pen?] under them.” Yet, she notes that that is a problem with all jobs. She had had little control over the uses to which her NEA photos were put and could not object when her advertising photos were used “to prove that when a small child on rollerskates darts in front of a fast moving automobile the car stops miraculously because it is equipped with Goodyear tires”. (9-3-36)

To Caldwell’s argument that she needed to keep the independence that self-employment assured her, Bourke-White answered that self-employment offered only a “theoretical freedom”. She spent two-thirds of her time “making business arrangements” and only one-third engaged in photography. Even then, the opportunities for doing work she liked and then actually seeing it published were rare. Her current arrangement was “destructive”. She did not want to develop as a business woman. “It’s another kind of development I want, and I’ve had conspicuously little time for it.” (9-3-36)

The letter closes by gratefully acknowledging Caldwell’s suggestion that she demand two months a year free (with pay) to pursue her own interests as long as they did not compete with Time, Inc. publications. “I never would have thought of asking for it if you had not suggested it.” (9-3-36) As Goldberg notes, the contract ultimately did include the two-month clause.²³

22. Howard, “Dear Kit, Dear Skinny”, 41.

23. Goldberg, *Margaret Bourke-White*, 175.

The last of the New York letters is undated and written just prior to an assignment in the South to photograph textile mills, a “funny coincidence . . . to be retracing our territory”. The letter shows Bourke-White’s easy sense of humor. She begins by describing herself under a Saks Fifth Avenue hairdryer: “I am seated under one of those great hot helmets that men need have no experience with”—and ends: “I look like an antelope”. By this time, Caldwell and she had met in New York several times to plan their book, and presumably they had carried their personal relationship forward, as well. The tone of the letter suggests a new intimacy to which she is more committed. She affectionately addresses him as “My dear Canoe Carrier”, an unknown allusion, and eagerly looks forward to his “precious letters”. (No date)

The other six letters of the new acquisition were written on the road while Bourke-White was on her first important assignment for *Life*. From this trip came her Fort Peck Dam photo that appeared on the cover of the premier issue of the magazine and her photographs of night life among the relief workers in New Deal, Montana, the boom town that arose from the dam project. According to Goldberg, this was “the first true photographic essay in America”.²⁴ Although these letters do not contain the substance of some of the New York letters, they do give an idea of the hectic, exciting, and often lonely life on the road. They are written from various places in the Pacific Northwest: the Grand Coulee Dam, Spokane and Yakima, Washington; Bonneville and Corvallis, Oregon. They mix reassurances of her love with discussions of her work.

She left New York in late October of 1936. The first letter is postmarked 31 October from Spokane. Writing on stationery with the Davenport Hotel letterhead, she anticipates taking a bus early the next morning for the Grand Coulee Dam. As with the last of the New York letters, there are indications of the deepening intimacy of their relationship. Her use of “darling” and endearments such as “the sweet freckle faced country boy that you are” are more frequent—a long way from the “Mr. Caldwell” of her first letter. (10-31-36)

Another letter, dated simply Sunday, responds to a complaint aired often in their subsequent correspondence: that Caldwell wasn’t get-

24. *Ibid.*, 180.

ting her letters and was consequently beset with anxiety. Most likely they were simply slow in getting all the way across the country and into the backwoods of Maine. Yet, given the fact that these letters were in the possession of Helen Caldwell Cushman, rather than in the hands of Erskine or Margaret, it is possible that they had been intercepted. Perhaps Helen contemplated using them, with the journal entries, as evidence in the divorce proceedings. However it was, Margaret reassured Erskine that she was writing regularly.

She reassures him again in a subsequent letter from Corvallis, Oregon, postmarked 9 November 1936. This time she is feeling pressed both to explain that the paucity of her letters has nothing to do with the quantity of her love and to account for the “coldness” of her letters. “There is only one reason why my letters may sometimes seem cold and that has nothing to do with loving you. You are in my thoughts all the time, and I wait so for your letters.” Although she does not actually specify the “one reason” for her letters’ matter-of-factness, she does imply that her situation was complex. Her telegram to him, for example, had been written in public and sent by “my host”. She could not very well pour all her passion into it. As for the infrequency of her letters, she speculates that air mail in the Northwest must travel by “dog sledge”. (11-9-36)

But this is an interesting letter for more reasons. Her hosts in Corvallis were an old boyfriend, F. A. (Gil) Gilfillan, and his wife,²⁵ an arrangement that might well have made passionate communicating with Caldwell more complicated. Also, the Corvallis letter anticipates later occasions in the correspondence when Bourke-White’s attention to both the professional and personal aspects of her life, as well as her restrained manner, aggravated Caldwell’s sense of loneliness. Occasionally he would urge her to concentrate only on him. At such times, she might devote an entire letter to bolstering him, as she does in the 9 November letter.

The Corvallis letter also reveals that Bourke-White became upset when Caldwell’s demands grew too great. She writes, “I love you smiling, and you frighten me when you’re stern”. (11-9-36) This “sternness” will bother her later in their relationship and one day contribute to their divorce.²⁶ At this point, however, she tries to

25. Goldberg, *Margaret Bourke-White*, 178.

26. Howard, “Dear Kit, Dear Skinny”, 35–36; Bourke-White, *Portrait of Myself*, 170–71.

resolve the problem by playing his little Kit and charming back the happy face.

Near the end of her sojourn in the West, her letters express more longing for home and for him. As with her letters from Europe in 1939 and 1940, she became more affectionate and loving the wearier she grew of a long assignment. For example, a letter dated 10 November 1936 from Bonneville, Oregon, states, "I want to get home so badly. I'm tired and I've been away so long and I miss you so terribly." She tells him that she "can't get along without letters" from him and that she is happy to be saving an unread one in her pocket because it makes her feel closer to him. (11-10-36, noon) That night, eating dinner "in a miserable little place", she wrote another letter on the back of counter checks describing his last letter as "darling" and ending with, "Heavens I miss you". (11-10-36, evening)

The newly acquired correspondence ends with this wistful yearning. Although there were other separations during the formative stage of their relationship, few of Bourke-White's letters have been recovered. Caldwell's, pursuing Margaret around the globe, are less rare than hers. Helen, who knew of the affair essentially from its beginning, finally became fed up and divorced Caldwell in 1938. In that same year, he and Bourke-White travelled to Czechoslovakia and then lived together in Darien, Connecticut. They were married in February 1939. It is not until late 1939 and early 1940, when Bourke-White travelled to Europe to cover the outbreak of the war, that we see a sustained correspondence between them.²⁷

Compared with the more than 300 items already in the Bourke-White-Caldwell correspondence, the twelve items of this new acquisition seem relatively few; yet, they provide significant insight into Bourke-White's professional self and into the pair's relationship in its early stages. There is still much of that early correspondence missing—still many letters from Bourke-White that must have been written. In view of the rarity of her extant responses, this newly acquired addition to the George Arents Research Library collection is particularly valuable. It gives glimpses of their lives and indicates some of the patterns that emerged later in their relationship.

As to why Helen Caldwell Cushman and not Margaret Bourke-

27. Howard, "Dear Kit, Dear Skinny", 31-40.

White or Erskine Caldwell had custody of the letters, the answer may never be known. Though it is a possibility that Helen deliberately gathered them to use as evidence for the divorce, it is well to remember that Caldwell, when he left Bourke-White in 1942, left letters and manuscripts behind in the Darien home. Perhaps he did the same when he left Mt. Vernon. Now, many years later, from the heirs of his first marriage come love letters from the woman who would be his second wife. They make an important addition to our knowledge of that extraordinary woman and of the love affair of two American celebrities.

The New School of Wood Engraving

BY EDWARD A. GOKEY

In the spring of 1878, John LaFarge (1835–1910) appealed to the committee on American art at the Paris Exposition to include wood engravings among their selections. He presented his view in a series of open letters published in several New York newspapers. Here is an excerpt from his letter to the *New York World*:

I believe that, overweighted with the cares of business and the representation of great public interests, and unaccustomed and inexpert at deciding this more recondite and technical art, they did not realize the injury they inflicted upon the standing of a meritorious though less well-known class of artists, nor the harm they were doing to art and its culture in America. Your own experience and knowledge of life will have shown you how difficult it is in a country of commerce and manufacture to lift a trade into high art. It is difficult in any part of the world; to have it happen here is a thing of which we should be proud, nor should we, it seems to me, lose any chance of letting it be known. I hope that through such a public statement our American committee will take the matter into consideration, unwilling as they must be to pass over lightly an American success which has had the praise of every principal artist and critic I have met—and it has been my good fortune to know a good many both here and across the Atlantic.¹

Undoubtedly, readers of the *World* understood less about the “recondite and technical art” of wood engraving than did the committee members, yet all within reach of printed materials had surely

1. John LaFarge, “American Wood Engraving at Paris”, Letter to the Editor, *New York World*, 16 March 1878, p. 5.

come in contact with wood-engraved images.² They could be found most everywhere: in books, magazines, advertisements—in newspapers like the *World*. Often, such images were crude, and LaFarge was not referring to commonplace engraving churned out on a daily basis. That was the craft. Rather, he had in mind works created by a dozen or so gifted engravers (mostly reproductive engravers), that could be readily distinguished from their crafted counterparts by the artistic sensibilities they embraced.

At first, the committee did not move, claiming that their instructions were to choose oil paintings and watercolors.³ But a handful of engravings were eventually selected, including three works after LaFarge designs, so that the champion of the so-called minor arts would feel some satisfaction.⁴ However, a much more immediate response to the *World* letter, and one certainly less to LaFarge's liking, came from the painter George Inness (1825–1894), who wrote in an open letter to the *New York Evening Post*:

Wood-engravers, properly speaking, are not artists, nor do artists, as a rule, recognize them as such. The duty of an engraver always is to follow his copy, to imitate the form and spirit of the picture he is attempting to reproduce. Sometimes, to be sure, he engraves one of his own pictures. In that case if the picture is artistic, he is both an artist and an engraver . . . but his ability to engrave did not make him

2. According to the *Official Catalogue of the United States Exhibitors*, exhibition catalogue for the Paris Universal Exposition (London: Chiswick Press, 1878), 241, the committee in charge of selecting paintings, and presumably all works of art, included Parke Godwin, who was on the staff of the *New York World* from 1837 to 1881, and became editor-in-chief following the death of William Cullen Bryant in June 1878; J. Taylor Johnston, railroad executive and first president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art; and H. G. Marquand, an organizer, benefactor, and later president of the Metropolitan Museum. These men, along with E. D. Morgan, J. W. Pinchot, N. M. Beckwith, Robert G. Dun, John H. Sherwood, and Charles S. Smith, worked from New York, while the sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, D. Maitland Armstrong, and C. E. Detmold served on the international committee in Paris. I am grateful to James Yarnall for bringing this catalogue to my attention.

3. "Wood Engravings as Works of Art", *Nation* 26 (March 1878): 218.

4. "World's Fair of 1878", exhibition catalogue reproduced in *Modern Art in Paris*, selected and organized by Theodore Reff (New York: Garland Publishing, 1981), 206.

an artist. The engraver is little if not an imitator and a plodder; and nobody feels this more keenly than himself.⁵

Within a few days, LaFarge strengthened his position in another letter, this time stressing the creative powers of the engraver. “To translate faithfully the work of another artist into a different art”, LaFarge stated, “requires a high degree of many of the qualities that are rarest in art, and that are identically the same through which the artist who paints or carves, copies and imitates nature”.⁶ Inness rebutted, adjusting his viewpoint to include the engraver among the highest rank of artists, but only if the engraver created original work, exercised those elements of pictorial construction (such as perspective) that are demanded of original work, and worked with color, the last of which, Inness said, is “the most difficult thing in the world”.⁷ This statement did little in the way of reconciling the two men, for the engravers whom LaFarge admired did not, for the most part, meet Inness’s requirements.

Neither LaFarge nor Inness persuaded the other to renounce his stance. The dipolar nature of the argument disallowed any chance of that. Perhaps the only indisputable fact that emerges from the LaFarge-Inness letters is that the state of wood engraving in America was shifting. LaFarge recognized it, critics wrote about it—even Inness acknowledged it, although he did not believe the changes would amount to anything:

Our best wood-engravers—Mr. Linton, Mr. Henry Marsh and Mr. Cole, for example—try hard to be something more than mere copyists, and the occasional slight successes which they achieve in this direction have for us a mournful and tender interest. Their trade has clipped the wings of their spirits, and when they would soar they can only flutter.⁸

5. George Inness, “Artists and Engravers”, Letter to the Editor, *New York Evening Post*, 16 March 1878, editorial page.

6. LaFarge, “A Plea for the Engravers”, Letter to the Editor, *New York Evening Post*, 20 March 1878, p. 3.

7. Inness, “A Plea for the Painters”, Letter to the Editor, *New York Evening Post*, 21 March 1878, p. 2.

8. Inness, “Artists and Engravers”, editorial page.

To understand the nature of the change and the background of the LaFarge-Inness dispute, we need to look to the practice of wood engraving in the years just previous. Wood engraving is not, as its name seems to imply, an intaglio process. Rather, like wood cutting, it is a relief process—the areas of the wood block left uncut will take ink and print, while the areas cut away will not. It differs from wood cutting, however, in the tools and materials used. As the process was practised during the nineteenth century, the wood cutter primarily relied on a knife; the wood engraver commonly used a graver (or burin), a metal-shanked instrument with either a square or lozenge-shaped tip. To produce lines of even widths, instruments with slightly flattened tips, called tint tools, were used (the width of lines made by a graver varied according to the amount of pressure exerted). Scoopers, with U-shaped tips, and chisels were helpful when clearing away large areas from the block.⁹

Box was the preferred wood for engraving, owing to its hardness, close grain, and toxicity to woodworms. The slenderness of box boles, however, presented certain limitations. Engravers worked on the end grain, rather than the plank side like wood cutters, and the rounds (or slices) of box, which were uniformly seven-eighths of an inch in height, never exceeded one foot across.¹⁰ The relatively soft heart had to be avoided, as did knots, and cracks that developed during seasoning. After the rounds were dry, they were cut into small squared sections, usually no more than a few inches in either dimension.

To provide enough surface for illustration, a composite wood block often had to be made from the small individual blocks. At first, the blocks were glued together, with long bolts running right through, but the glue tended to melt in the steam presses.¹¹ A tongue-and-groove method followed, but the problem was not sufficiently solved

9. Eric De Maré, *The Victorian Woodblock Illustrators* (New York: Sandstone Press, 1981), 44. All of the tools were held in essentially the same manner. One cupped the rounded wooden handle in the palm and guided the shank by pressing its sides with the fingers and thumb. Cutting proceeded by rotating the block towards the point of the tool. Some engravers rested the block on a small leather pad or sandbag and looked through a magnifying glass, either affixed to a stand or attached to a visor. Sometimes, glass globes were filled with blue water and placed near an adjustable gas or oil lamp to direct light onto the block so that work could continue well into the night (De Maré, 44).

10. Experiments were made cutting boles on the skew, but the change in grain proved disadvantageous (De Maré, 43).

11. De Maré, *Victorian*, 43.

until the late 1850s, when a system of recessed short nuts and bolts was introduced, locking each block to its neighbor.¹² This invention also meant that the individual blocks could be handed out to various assistants, a practice described by one of the most important American wood engravers, Timothy Cole (1852–1931), in his *Considerations on Engraving* (1921):

Engraving was properly a trade; some apprentices succeeded as sky and foliage cutters (they were called pruners); others as coat or drapery cutters (they were the tailors); the more advanced did flesh cutting (they were styled the butchers). I myself succeeded in cutting machinery and the sides of houses. I was a mechanic.

In those days the popular illustrated weeklies brought out large page engravings and sometimes double-page illustrations. On these large blocks the subject to be engraved was drawn by a draughtsman in India-ink washes reinforced by lead-pencil hatching. The blocks, being made in sections bolted together, were unbolted when the drawing was completed, and the parts divided among several engravers, who, sometimes, when a rush was on, would work all night and have their several parts finished by the morning. The parts were then rebolted together and a master engraver finished the joining of the several parts, uniting the work in one whole. There was no art in it, the engraver was but an artisan. A hardness characterized the work. Such a quality as the softness of painting was never met with in the best work of the masters of that time.¹³

The illustrated magazines' preference for wood engravings over metal engravings, etchings, or lithographs was dictated by time and expense. Because wood blocks could be cut type high, block and type could easily lock up and print form together. Images created by in-

12. Ibid. This invention is credited to Charles Wells, a cabinet maker and later an importer of boxwood. It should be noted that this system was not completely successful. When reassembling the blocks, it was particularly difficult to keep the joints perfectly tight, and that is why one often finds thin white lines marking the borders of each block in some printed wood engravings created in this manner.

13. Timothy Cole, *Considerations on Engraving* (New York: William Edwin Rudge, 1921), 11.

taglio or planographic processes required different presses than those used for printing letterpress, so that in order to have a non-relief image appear on the same page as large amounts of text (limited amounts of text, of course, could be drawn in reverse on the metal plate or stone), either the paper had to go through two presses, or the image had to be sewn or glued into place.

Not all engraving was done in the manner that Cole described. Indeed, certain technical advances had made it possible for wood engraving to compare favorably with all other printmaking processes. With large press runs, stereotypes and electrotypes took the place of original engravings, eliminating the risk of having wood blocks crack or break during printing.¹⁴ Printing presses changed too. The once preferred platen press gave way to the stronger, faster cylinder press, which could print between six hundred and one thousand impressions per hour.¹⁵ Consistent first-rate work, however, required the patience and know-how of a gifted master printer. One of the most talented of these was Theodore Low DeVinne, printer for *Scribner's Monthly* (founded in 1870), later *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*. A very deliberate man, who learned French, German, Italian, and Latin to master the literature of his field, DeVinne often spent hours, and sometimes days, carefully cutting and pasting small pieces of paper, called overlays, and then attaching them precisely to the surface of the cylinder. By this means he controlled the pressure exerted on every part of an electrotype.¹⁶ In an article titled "The Growth of Wood-Cut Printing" (1880), DeVinne explains the process:

14. Stereotypes, which were in use by the 1830s, were made by taking a mold of the engraving with plaster of Paris, and then casting its duplicate with type metal. Electrotypes, introduced around 1850, provided a process better suited for taking many thousands of impressions, as it substituted a veneer of copper, which in turn was faced with steel, for the comparatively soft type-metal face of the stereotype. Electrotypes were, therefore, more durable than stereotypes, and they were also cheaper, quicker, and more accurate. (For a brief description of the steel facing process as it applied to stereotype and electrotype plates curved to fit on the cylinder, see Stephen D. Tucker, "History of R. Hoe & Company, 1834–1885", edited with an introduction by Rollo G. Silver, *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 82 [1972]: 416.)

15. Theodore Low DeVinne, "The Printing of Wood-Engravings", *The Print Collector's Quarterly* 1 (July 1911): 375.

16. Robert Underwood Johnson, *Remembered Yesterdays* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1929), 109.

The object sought in overlaying is to do mechanically what the engraver does intelligently in proving, and to do it by a similar method—by graduating or making uneven the impression on different parts of the cut. The most skillful pressmen try to do their work with the least overlays. Too many defeat the purpose. If more than six thicknesses of paper are used, the overlay so made will increase the circumference of the cylinder so much that it will not strike exactly in the right place on the cut at the point of the impression. Nor is the overlay of any value if the machine be shakly or inaccurate in movement. Bed and cylinder must travel together, at any rate of speed, and under other difficult conditions, so exactly that every line in the overlay shall fairly meet its corresponding line in the electrotype plate.¹⁷

In addition to the use of overlays, which moved towards tonal printing, DeVinne adopted a method of printing with dry, smooth paper against a hard, inelastic surface.¹⁸ The former method of printing on damp paper was tricky; too often presswork was damaged when the paper held the wrong amount of moisture. Smooth paper, required for clean impressions, had already been in use. DeVinne, however, employed a cold rolling, or calendering, process, which brought effective results at a lesser cost than the European method of hot pressing.¹⁹ And for the pressing surface, DeVinne replaced the soft woolen blanket and India rubber cloth (carryovers from days when the pressed and the pressing surfaces could not be kept in true parallel) with mill-glazed pressboard, a thin, tough card that was as smooth as glass and harder than wood. After this method proved successful, harder substances, such as brass and iron, were tried with even better results.²⁰ These innovations contributed significantly to the quality of *Scribner's* pictures, and also to the success of the magazine. Curiously, during the magazine's prepublication stage, cofounder and editor Dr. Josiah Gilbert Holland had felt indifferently

17. DeVinne, "The Growth of Wood-Cut Printing. II: The Modern Method by Machines", *Scribner's Monthly* 20 (May 1880): 42.

18. *Ibid.*, 38, 39.

19. *Ibid.*, 38. The European process involved putting the sheets through heated plates. The American process, which DeVinne adopted, involved putting the sheets between iron cylinders and hardened paper pulp.

20. *Ibid.*, 39.

towards illustrations, and had put much greater emphasis on the high quality of the magazine's cover, type, and paper.²¹ But before the printing of the first issue, Holland adjusted his view. When advertisements announced *Scribner's*, they promised that the magazine would be "profusely illustrated".²²

During its first five years, *Scribner's* printed more than 2700 engravings at a cost of nearly \$100,000.²³ The art director at that time, and for some forty years afterward, was Alexander W. Drake, who, along with DeVinne and Holland, deserves much credit for *Scribner's* handsome appearance. Drake demanded the highest standards from all who worked for him, a fact well illustrated by his dismissal of three printing firms before finally settling with DeVinne in 1876.²⁴

Of at least equal significance, Drake taught his engravers the technique of engraving from photographs on sensitized wood.²⁵ Before 1870, the common practice had been to have an artist either draw or transfer the original image onto the block, which the engraver would then cut. The photographic process allowed the artist to work in any medium and in any size, since the photograph of the work could be reduced; and the artist did not need to work in reverse, as had been the case, for the photograph could easily be reversed on the block. Also, the original was preserved, and could be kept close by, if desired, to serve as a guide.

Photography on wood marked an important stage in the history of wood engraving. Perhaps more than anything else, it gave rise to a

21. Arthur John, *The Best Years of the Century: Richard Watson Gilder, Scribner's Monthly, and Century Magazine, 1870-1909* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 16.

22. Advertisement for *Scribner's* on back cover of *The Book Buyer*, o.s. 3, as cited in John, *Best Years*, 16. The main rivals of *Scribner's*, among them *Harper's Monthly* and the *Atlantic Monthly*, already controlled the market for writing of high quality, and Holland realized that it would take some time before he could match his competitors in that area. No doubt, that is why he insisted on producing a visually striking magazine. But in a genre that gained much of its great popularity with standbys like the serial novel, Holland must have believed that appearance counted just so much. He relied more heavily on his own reputation as a popular author (loyal readers of his works knew him by the pseudonym "Timothy Titcomb") than he did on impressive looks for the magazine's initial appeal (John, 16).

23. *Index to Scribner's Monthly, Volumes I to X* (New York, 1876), preface, as cited in John, 77.

24. John, *Best Years*, 80.

25. *Ibid.*, 77.

dramatically new conception of the engraver's purpose. No longer subject to the strictures of line and wash drawings (however loose those strictures may have been), one group of engravers began exploring the hitherto untouched world of surface texture. Their primary goal was fidelity to the original, often at the expense of the linear quality prevalent in traditional wood engraved images. Of course, exact replication was impossible, but they did achieve close approximations, and they sought acknowledgment as creative artists in doing so, claiming much inventiveness was called upon in their methods. Collectively, these engravers were labeled the New School, and one of the first realizations of their style can be seen in Cole's engraving of James Edward Kelly's *The Gillie-Boy* (Scribner's, August 1877; fig. 1).²⁶ Everything in this work is subordinate to Cole's attempt to capture the tactile qualities of paint. The sky in the background, depicted with alternating areas of parallel lines and cross-hatching, streaking and swirling in imitation of cloud movement, serves the primary purpose of feigning brushwork. The treatment of the boy's left hand and parts of his legs, which seems awkward at first, is meant to express a fluid surface of impasto. In looking at this work, one is forced to set aside all preconceptions of how a wood engraving should look—that is, if one is to call the work a success.

Some did not. The most vocal opponent of the New School was the British expatriate engraver and author William James Linton (1812–1897). A passionate man by nature, Linton expressed his views on wood engraving with the same intensity that characterizes his many writings on political and social topics, most notably those from *The English Republic*, a periodical he edited from 1851 to 1855.

Before coming to America at the end of 1866, Linton established himself as England's preeminent engraver on wood. Upon his arrival, he taught intermittently at William Rimmer's School of Design for Women (alternatively known as the Ladies' School of Design), at the Cooper Union in New York, and soon thereafter began working

26. George Howes Whittle, "Wood Engraving in America", *The American Magazine of Art* 10 (November 1918): 10. Whittle states that one of the earliest examples of the photographic transfer is an engraving by John G. Smithwick after a work by E. A. Abbey, illustrated on p. 313 of the January 1876 *Scribner's. Drumming out a Tory*, also by Smithwick, after a work by C. S. Reinhart (*Harper's Weekly*, 3 February 1877), had been designated, Whittle adds, by Sylvester Rosa Koehler as the first distinctive New School engraving.

as “artistic director” for *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*.²⁷ In 1868, he was nominated by the sculptor Rimmer and Peter Cooper, founder of the Cooper Union, for membership in the Century Club, a congenial association of artists and writers.²⁸ All the while, Linton received many commissions and continued to write whenever the spirit moved him. His first article of importance to the subject at hand, “The Engraver: His Function and Status”, published by *Scribner’s* in June 1878, was a reaction to the aforementioned Inness letters. It introduced Linton to American readers as a persuasive writer who thought seriously about his vocation:

What has this “copyist” to do? Does his master, Raffaele, do all the designing for him? He gives a “Madonna,” or his “Planets,” to be copied, only copied, by a Marc-Antonio or a Dorigny. This mere copying clerk has to draw an outline which (be pleased to observe this though the remark be new) is not in the picture; he has to invent, to design, the lines, the regulated strength and order of which shall not only most faithfully, but also most beautifully round the forms and place at proper distance, and in perspective, the hollows of face and figure. . . .

He who works in Art, artfully, artistically, is an Artist, whatever his subject, whatever his material, whatever his tools. The relative grandeur and importance of this or that branch of Art is altogether beside the question.²⁹

One year later, Linton turned his attention to the New School engravers. In his “Art in Engraving on Wood” (*Atlantic Monthly*, June 1879), he strongly denounced their aims and methods:

27. F. B. Smith, *Radical Artisan: William James Linton 1817–97* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1973), 160. In the summer of 1867 Linton returned to England. While abroad, Linton visited that year’s Paris Exposition, which led him to conclude, after viewing the wood engravings on display, that the medium “was dead in Europe” (*Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, 9 February 1867, pp. 322 and 325, as cited in Smith, 160, 161).

28. Smith, *Radical Artisan*, 165.

29. William James Linton, “The Engraver: His Function and Status”, *Scribner’s* 16 (June 1878): 239.



Fig. 1. Timothy Cole, *The Gillie-Boy*. After James Edward Kelly. Scribner's, August 1877.

My attention to the new phenomenon was first attracted by a portrait, one of a series, engraved by Mr. Cole after a picture or from a drawing by Mr. Wyatt Eaton [fig. 2]. It is always a pleasure to see conscientious and careful work. Yet

even at the first glance I could not but ask the exhibitor, Why waste so much of pains on the unimportant parts of the engraving? Why give the same value to the background, which is nothing, a formless void without intention, as to the features? Why no difference between the texture of the coat and the texture of the cheek? At first it looked like the earnest but ill-considered performance of a very young man, ambitious, very painstaking, timid as a young man might be under the eyes of the master painter, afraid to be careless even of the minutest portions of the great work entrusted to him, and which he was resolved to render faithfully, however ineffectively. I praised—could not help praising—the endeavor, and the young endeavorer albeit ill advised or mistaking. But looking at the series,—there are the same faults, not mere shortcomings but shameful faults, throughout: the faces badly modeled (I may be blaming the engraver when I should blame the painter, but I speak also of such modeling as even good direction of lines will give); the heads looking as if carved out of wood, or patted into shape in butter (perhaps for the Philadelphia Exhibition); no drawing fairly made out, but all indistinct, hidden under a minuteness of weakest line that muddies everything; coats and neckties (of the same material, of course) and eyes and hair and background of one uniform texture; an unmeaning scribble in the background defined most carefully, while markings on the brows (of Emerson or Longfellow) were indefinite and slurred,—all thought of the ambitious, timid, careful student was lost in disgust at the manifest conceit of such pretentious impotence, in sorrow for the false direction in which such pains had been bestowed. I speak severely, because these things have been lauded to the skies as fine art, when indeed they are only marvels of microscopic mechanism; not works of art at all, but bad, altogether bad, in all that an artist cares or ought to care for.³⁰

Linton particularly disdained the use of photography on wood. Because it encouraged pure imitation, he believed that photography hindered the artistic input of the engraver. He preferred instead the

30. Linton, "Art in Engraving on Wood", *Atlantic Monthly* 43 (June 1879): 708.

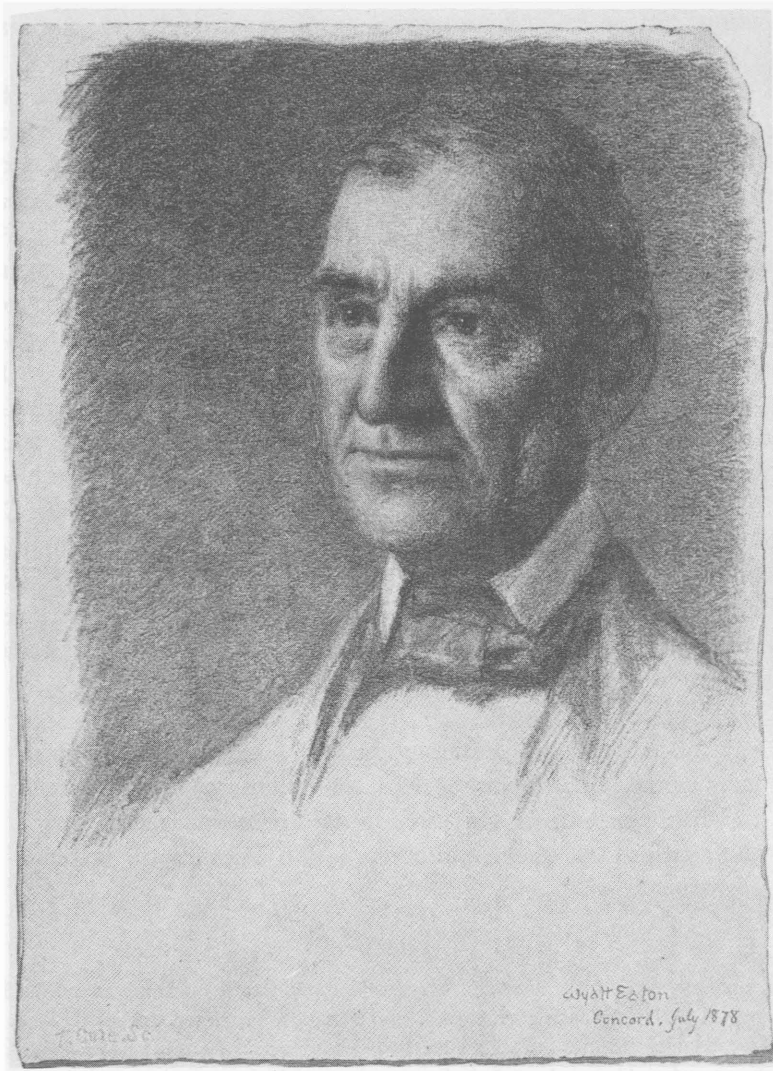


Fig. 2. Timothy Cole, *Emerson*. After Wyatt Eaton. *Scribner's*, February 1879.

traditional method of working from line and wash drawings on the block, which allowed, indeed necessitated, the engraving of lines not drawn beforehand by the artist of the original.³¹ When working from

31. Engraving from drawings on the block was sometimes problematic. Many artists relied too heavily on suggestive washes, leaving large areas for the engraver to

drawings, Linton said, the engraver “is an artist in exactly the same degree in which the translator of poetry is a poet”.³²

Linton frequently worked in the white-line style of engraving (fig. 3), that is, he conceived many of his images in terms of the areas cut away by the graver. Almost always, these areas were accompanied by a certain amount of facsimile work (the stylistic counterpart of white-line engraving, which imitates copperplate engraving). An example of the two styles combined can be seen in Linton’s engraving after a W. J. Hennessy illustration to Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s *Lady Geraldine’s Courtship* (1870; fig. 4). Here, the crossed white lines that model the woman’s face are surrounded by foliage cut, for the most part, in the facsimile manner. Linton favored white-line work, but above all he believed that “every line of an engraving ought to have a meaning, should be cut in the plate or in the block *with design*”.³³ Often, as in portions of the sky in Cole’s *Gillie-Boy* and in the whole upper left-hand section of Frederick Juengling’s (1846–1889) *Engineer Crossing the Chasm over the Rimac* (fig. 5; after Kelly, and from the same issue of *Scribner’s* as the Cole), New School engravers utilized white-line cross-hatching, but without, according to Linton, a proper sense of design, or purpose:

Cross-white-lined backgrounds, and wooden or cadaverous faces worked in cross-stitch, skies, mountains, walls, and water, in white worsted, we are asked to admire as *fine engraving*. In the words of our greatest engraver [John Thompson], *It is not engraving at all.*

work up with something definite. Winslow Homer was a notable exception. He understood the limits facing engravers, and generally restricted washes to areas of shadow, keeping outlines firm. This method left little to the engraver’s imagination, which was what Homer intended, because it gave him control over the way the image would look in print.

32. Linton, “Art in Engraving”, 713. Linton also believed that working from drawings was, in essence, more truthful than working from photographs, which, he believed, were never true and often put the same emphasis on the unessentials as on the essentials (Linton, *The History of Wood-Engraving in America* [Boston: Estes and Lauriar, 1882, 71], as cited in *American Wood Engraving: A Victorian History* [Watkins Glen, N.Y.: Published for the Athenaeum Library of Nineteenth Century America by the American Life Foundation & Study Institute, 1976], 71).

33. Linton, “Art in Engraving”, 713.



Fig. 3. William James Linton, Illustration to *The Flood of Years* (1878),
by William Cullen Bryant.



Fig. 4. William James Linton, Illustration to *Lady Geraldine's Courtship* (1870), by Elizabeth Barrett Browning. After W. J. Hennessy.

The purpose of engraving is expression, which necessitates some attention to differences. . . .

Surely I am not objecting to the employment of cross-white-line. I myself have used it more than any other engraver of past times; may claim indeed to have brought it into vogue,

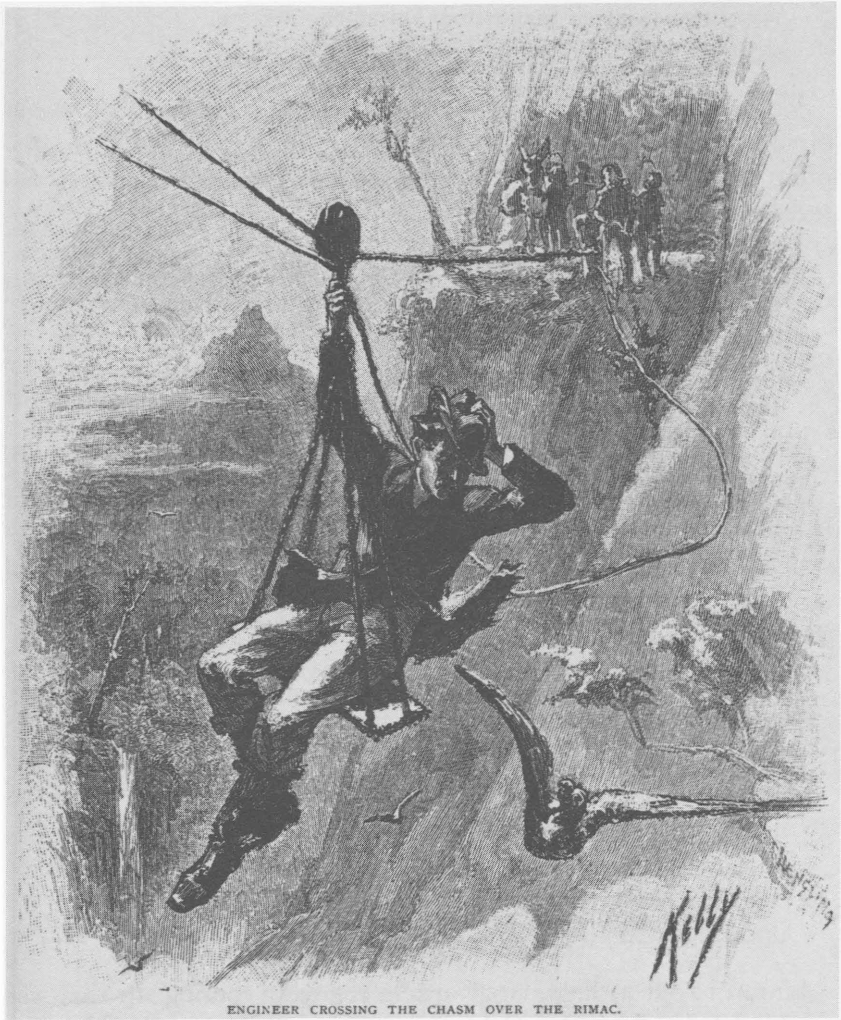


Fig. 5. Frederick Juengling, *Engineer Crossing the Chasm over the Rimac*. After James Edward Kelly. *Scribner's*, August 1877.

though I have never been able to equal the work of Charlton Nesbitt, which first taught me of what value it might be made. It is indeed of especial value in flesh, the texture and roundness of which can hardly be rendered on wood with sufficient

sweetness in cross black lines, after the manner of copper or steel.³⁴

To round out his list, Linton objects to excessive fineness, exemplified by short white lines and dots (achieved by pricking or stippling the block), which, along with unnecessary cross-hatching, disregards

the bold carelessness characteristic of the painting as to give you in niggling minuteness every brush and trowel mark, in order that, or so that, you may forget the real worth of the picture, despite the painter's slovenliness and absolute disdain or dislike of finish, in your admiration of the engraver's most delicate and neatest handling[.]³⁵

Linton is especially harsh when discussing the multiple graver, what he calls "the six-toothed annihilator of meaning".³⁶ This device, of which Juengling was probably the sole user from the New School (and he seems to have abandoned it shortly after engraving the *Engineer*),³⁷ is condemned for the lack of creativity it invited:

After a few operations on the face of the block in various directions (perpendicular is generally preferred, but you can have it all ways), you may call the part so improved whatever pleases you—a rice field, or a torrent, or a street pavement. It is as much like one as another. It can be dust or chickens, a snow storm or prairie grass, or distant mountains; the only requisite is that after due examination you shall be uncertain which.³⁸

Linton's "Art in Engraving" article created a rousing stir that was quickly labeled "the New School controversy". Engravers and critics alike suddenly felt compelled to put their own thoughts on the issues

34. Linton, "Art in Engraving", 710.

35. *Ibid.*, 711.

36. *Ibid.*, 709.

37. Linton, *Some Practical Hints on Wood-Engraving for the Instruction of Reviewers and the Public* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1879), 12; and Timothy Cole from George William Sheldon, "A Symposium of Wood-Engravers", *Harper's Monthly* 60 (February 1880): 446.

38. Linton, "Art in Engraving", 709, 710.

in print, with the result that dozens of letters and articles were published (many of which repeat the earlier comments of others). One can get a taste of the sometimes bitter debate by browsing through the editorial pages of many of the magazines of the period. Of them all, the magazines that employed New School engravers, like *Scribner's*, defended Cole and his colleagues the most forcefully:

We believe it is pretty well understood among publishers that Mr. Linton's work is not what it used to be. . . . We do not know of an artist who would not choose to have Cole cut his blocks rather than Linton, yet Cole is the man whom Linton has "sat down on," if we may use the slang of the time. It is the conservative old man, who has arrived at the end of his development, and sits petulantly enshrined within his conventional methods, who assumes to be god and arbiter of wood-engraving, passing judgement upon a young genius, all alive with the spirit of discovery and progress.³⁹

"A Symposium of Wood-Engravers" (*Harper's Monthly*, February 1880) provides an important source for New School reaction to the "Art in Engraving" article. In this forum, Cole expresses his personal indebtedness to Linton and agrees that "there is no propriety in picking, stippling, and cross-lining where there is no sense in it". Cole adds:

But when engraving the Wyatt Eaton portrait of Emerson, to which objection has been made by Mr. Linton, I exactly reproduced the crayon effects by the use of mechanical means—simply by picking with the "square" tool. Mr. Linton notes a deficiency of texture; the nose, he says, is the same as the background in quality. But he forgets that he often indulges in the same fault himself. The fault, if it was a fault, could have been avoided easily enough; but then I should have lost the crayon effect which I intended to keep. The background is in pure line, very slight and varied, and extremely laborious.⁴⁰

39. "Engraving on Wood", *Scribner's* 18 (July 1879): 456.

40. Cole from Sheldon's "Symposium", 445.

Juengling, who also clung to exact reproduction as the paramount objective of the engraver, says in the "Symposium":

The method of the old school is to adapt the original to the means; the method of the new school is to adapt the means to the original.⁴¹

A bit further on, Juengling outlines the advantages of the New School over the Old School as follows:

First, latitude of reproduction. Second, absence of exclusive method, of conventionalism, of formalism; no set way for producing an effect. For each work in hand special ideas are originated, special means are invented. Third, the use of photography on wood, which inaugurated the existence of the new school, and the advantages of which I have just mentioned. Fourth, faithfulness of reproduction, not only to the beauties, but down to the manner and defects, of the original. Mr. Linton thinks that such an aim is an unworthy one. The answer is that it is no more unworthy than for Wilhelmj, when playing a composition of Mozart's, to stick to it, and give it as it is. The able executant of the composition of another is not necessarily a smaller artist in his own sphere.⁴²

In Europe, admiration for the New School was almost unanimous. Juengling and William B. Closson (1848–1926), later a painter of some note, were the first Americans to have their engravings exhibited at the Paris Salon; in 1881, Juengling received *mention honorable* for *The Professor* (fig. 6; after a portrait by Frank Duveneck).⁴³ In 1882, Marianna Griswold van Rensselaer informed readers of the *Century*:

41. Frederick Juengling from Sheldon's "Symposium", 448.

42. *Ibid.*, 449.

43. James Watrous, *American Printmaking: A Century of American Printmaking 1880–1980* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 21.

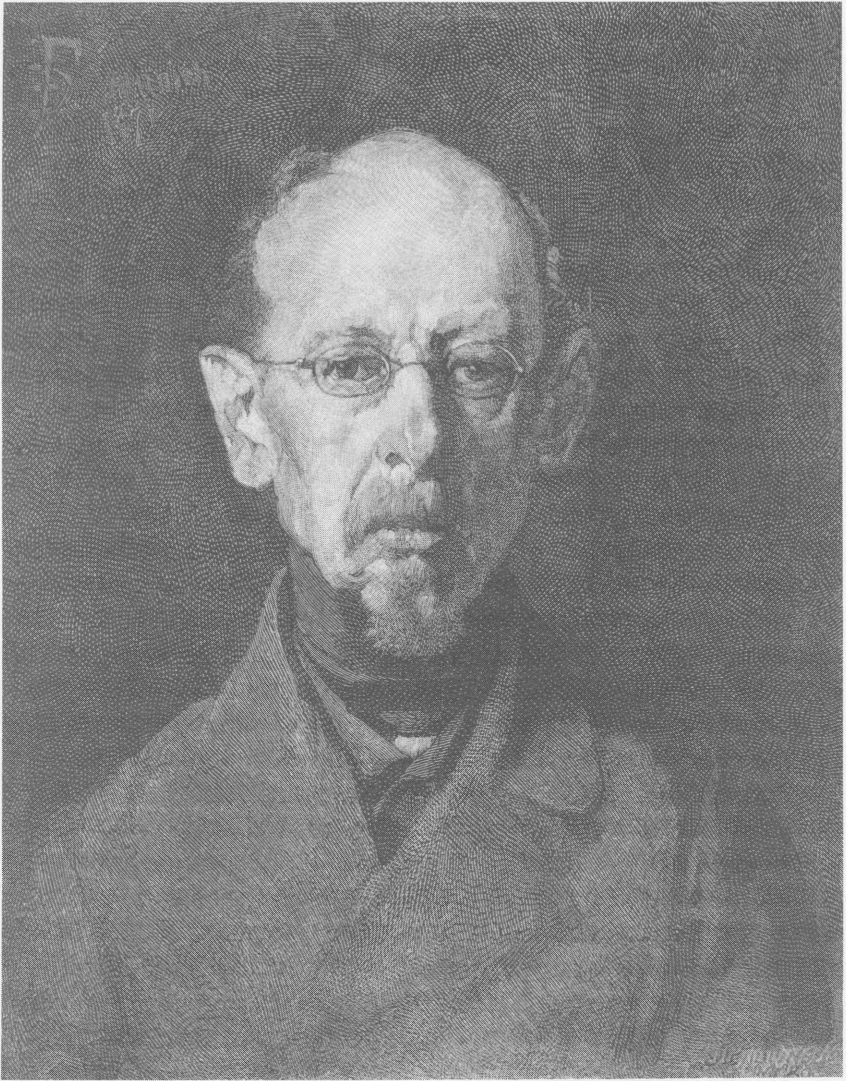


Fig. 6. Frederick Juengling, *The Professor*. After Frank Duveneck.
American Art Review, vol. 2, 1881.

Every reader knows, most probably, that, for the past two or three years, a rather sharp controversy has been going on with reference to the "new school" of American wood-engraving. Every reader ought to know, in addition, that whatever strictures may have been passed upon it at home, it has been almost universally praised abroad. In England as in France critics have been lavish of their commendation. When we find, for example, "L'Art" reprinting a series of cuts from the "Scribner Portfolio," and even the "Saturday Review" ranking American work above all that is done in other countries, we cannot be blamed for feeling a responsive glow of self-approval.⁴⁴

In the same report, van Rensselaer quotes the critic Philip Gilbert Hamerton from his *The Graphic Arts* (1882):

The development of delicate and versatile wood-engraving in America is due to the managers of *Scribner's Magazine*, who worked resolutely with this definite end in view, and gradually reached perfection by paying for many cuts which were never published, and by forming a school of wood-engravers animated by the same spirit. Now, whatever may be the differences of opinion about the desirableness of this imitative art, there can be no question that the Americans have far surpassed all other nations in delicacy of execution. The manual skill displayed in their wood-cuts is a continual marvel, and it is accompanied by so much intelligence—I mean by so much critical understanding of different graphic arts—that a portfolio of their best woodcuts is most interesting. Not only do they understand engraving thoroughly, but they are the best printers in the world, and they give an amount of care and thought to their printing which would be considered uncommercial elsewhere.

The two superiorities in American wood-engraving are in tone and texture—two qualities very popular in modern times in all the graphic arts which can attain them.⁴⁵

44. Marianna Griswold van Rensselaer, "Wood-Engraving and the Century Prizes", *Century Magazine* 24 (June 1882): 230.

45. *Ibid.*

Unquestionably, *Scribner's* exerted considerable influence on the state of American wood engraving after 1870. Drake and DeVinne, as already noted, contributed their expertise in technical matters, while Richard Watson Gilder, who had assumed most of Holland's editorial responsibilities around 1875, guided the magazine (renamed the *Century* in 1881) in its overall artistic sensibilities. Also, by employing America's best engravers, the magazine attracted works by some of America's most gifted painters, including Thomas Eakins, Winslow Homer, and William Merritt Chase, all presumably confident that their works would not suffer in reproduction.⁴⁶

Scribner's was not, however, the only publication that took a step up in pictorial quality. In fact, there began, in the 1870s, a healthy competition among several of the leading illustrated magazines, most notably with *Harper's*, under the very capable direction of their art editor Charles Parsons. *Scribner's* may be credited with initiating the competition, but not with all of the good that came of it.

As the reputation of the New School grew, the controversy did not die; rather, it was rekindled with new fuel, which came in one instance in the form of a small volume by Linton wryly titled *Some Practical Hints on Wood Engraving for the Instruction of Reviewers and the Public* (1879). For the most part, this book serves as a vehicle for Linton's reassertion of his earlier remarks in "Art in Engraving", but now in a more humorous, if still sharp, tone. In *Hints*, Linton addresses facsimile and white-line engraving, mechanism and art, and photography on wood in a clearer fashion than he had previously; and he includes many perceptive comments that give insight into the actual application of technical procedures, which, he believed, escaped his critics. For example, Linton explains how photographic reduction led to inaccurate, muddied images on the block, a claim soon to be substantiated in a letter to Sylvester Rosa Koehler, editor of the short-lived *American Art Review*, from Cole, who, while proclaiming his strong preference for photography on wood, also says that he liked Koehler's work especially "because it is large".⁴⁷

46. John, *Best Years*, 79.

47. Timothy Cole, Letter to Sylvester Rosa Koehler, 12 October 1880, Sylvester Rosa Koehler Letters, George Arents Research Library, Syracuse University. Also, in Sheldon's "Symposium", p. 446, Cole states: "The secret of so many recent failures of engravers to do justice to the artist lies in the fact that artists make their

Reaction to *Hints* was mild compared to the furor started by “Art in Engraving”. Koehler, who was later responsible for a display of American wood engravings (1882), felt that Linton was perfectly justified in staging a second attack, especially since he targeted much of his vituperation on anonymous reviewing (and there were several harsh unsigned letters that condemned “Art in Engraving”, including the *Scribner’s* editorial already cited), which Koehler saw as “a fruitful source of recklessness, and a reckless teacher is by no means desirable”.⁴⁸ He also said, in an editorial from the *American Art Review*:

It is a pity that Mr. Linton’s valuable and timely *Hints* should be burdened with so much personal matter, and those who esteem him most highly will be most grieved thereat. That he has had ample provocation, there is no room to doubt. . . . Nevertheless, one cannot help thinking that a little less wrath would have been better.⁴⁹

More words on the controversial issues were published when Linton finished his *History of Wood-Engraving in America* (1880), which first appeared as a series of eight articles in the *American Art Review*. The same text, with an additional chapter, came out in book form in 1882. The first three chapters retrace the development of the medium in America; chapter 4 focuses on the rise of illustrated magazines; and chapters 5 through 8 are largely devoted to critical commentary, with Cole, Juengling, and Gustav Kruell receiving the most attention. The final chapter in the book sums up Linton’s general attitude towards the New School.

As he had done in his earlier writings, Linton carefully analyzes the details of many specific works, and, it should be noted, he does not always write hostilely. Sometimes he offers sincere praise, as when he discusses Cole’s engraving of Polish actress Helena Modjeska (fig. 7):

drawings too large, and when these are reduced by photography, and put on the block very small, the engraver is put to a great task in striving to reproduce the original effects; and he fails in the endeavor because, through the reduction in size, the effect has already been lost”.

48. Koehler, “Wood-Engraving”, *American Art Review* 1 (1880): 124.

49. *Ibid.*, 123.



Fig. 7. Timothy Cole, *Modjeska as Juliet*. After a photograph. *Scribner's*, March 1879.

Modjeska as Juliet (*Scribner's Monthly*, vol. XVII, p. 665.), engraved from a photograph, is very perfect: extremely fine, but not unnecessarily so: the line on the face firm and yet delicate, the details of the white dress admirably preserved, the line nowhere offensive, but helping to express both form and material. Some want of clearness in the shadows is evidently owing to the printer; but on the whole it is a beautiful piece of engraving (I would call it Mr. Cole's best), one worthy of any engraver of the old time.⁵⁰

As early as the "Art in Engraving" article, Linton had expressed his belief that the leading New School engravers had potential, and he consistently claimed that he only sought to provide constructive criticism. Yet, in retrospect, one might have to agree with Koehler—a little less wrath would have been better—if only to avoid speculation as to whether he was equally interested in securing his own position in the annals of wood engraving.

Certain inconsistencies and ambiguities emerge from the writings surrounding the New School controversy. On occasion, as with his praise of Cole's *Modjeska*, Linton approves of what he generally denounces, in this instance, photography on wood. He did not ignore the contradiction, but when he defends himself in *Hints*, he weakly proposes that "from a drawing it would have been better cut, and might have escaped the faults it now has", leading one to question why he spoke with such admiration in the first place.⁵¹ And Cole states in the "Symposium", in reference to the reproduction of a painter's brush marks, "I don't like it myself. Is it right to make a surface look as if it were patched?"⁵² One cannot, of course, wholly disregard his *Gillie-Boy*, which seems to have been cut with that purpose foremost in the engraver's mind; but, especially later in his career, Cole did develop a more linear style. Such inconsistencies do not discount the main premises to which each school subscribed, but they do indicate that a middle ground existed during the whole of the controversy, although it received very little attention.

50. Linton, *History*, 50. The original image of *Modjeska* was a photograph, not a photograph of another work.

51. Linton, *Hints*, 81.

52. Cole from Sheldon's "Symposium", 445.

When the air cleared later in the decade, a new departure in American wood engraving came forth. A group of engravers, led by Elbridge Kingsley (1841–1918), began taking their blocks and gravers out into the woods, to work directly from nature. During one such outing, they spotted a woodpecker in a nearby tree, and as engraver Frank French later recounted, “his presence in camp was looked upon as a good omen. It was decided hereafter to place his likeness with the initials O.W.W. (“Original workers on Wood”) on our original cuts.”⁵³

Kingsley believed that the wood engraving medium perfectly suited original composition, and that “wood, under the graver, is capable of the finest artistic expression”.⁵⁴ Following the lead of American etchers, he sometimes limited the editions of his works, and he always made it known that his conceptions were original.⁵⁵ In one such statement, Kingsley discusses his *View in New England Woods* (fig. 8) and sheds some light on his method:

Camping alone in a New England wood, from the window of a car fitted up with every convenience for painting in oils, engraving on wood, and photographing whatever appealed to the fancy, I overlooked the scene before me and wrought it on my block. This was my first attempt to engrave direct from nature. The subject was photographed on the block in the beginning, but the photographic copy was of no assistance in getting the true values of tone and color. Most engravers use a strong magnifying-glass, resting the block upon a sand-bag, and also using many gravers,—one kind for tints, one kind for figures, and another for ground, foliage, etc. This engraving was produced almost entirely with one graver, the block being held in the hand. For a part of the time I left the car, and, going out upon the scene itself, worked with the sunlight upon the block. This tends to force the mind away from finish in mere execution; but there is sure to be a compensation in the greater breadth of the masses by

53. Frank French, “Wood-Engravers in Camp”, *Century* 38 (August 1889): 574.

54. Elbridge Kingsley, “Wood-Engraving Direct from Nature”, *Century* 25 (November 1882): 48.

55. Watrous, *American Printmaking*, 25.



Fig. 8. Elbridge Kingsley, *View in New England Woods*. *Century*, November 1882.

the keeping of the whole under the eye at once, and, by a careful study of the refined portions of the scene at hand, a greater delicacy can be reached than can be found in a shining line under a magnifying-glass. There was necessarily much preparatory material belonging to the work, but nothing as a whole was photographed, nothing that would be recognized as such, and much was cut away of that which was traced at the outset, and other forms were drawn in with the graver as the work progressed. The leading thought was, to be faithful to the great masses and values, simplifying the form as much as possible. To hold the mind up to its first impressions required constant effort, and all the ordinary means employed in getting form and material were of no use whatever. It was a matter of simple feeling and nerve-power held up to their best level till the work was completed.⁵⁶

Kingsley's words, of course, echo the sentiment of contemporary European artists. But stylistically, his *View in New England Woods* looks tame compared to the works of the Impressionists, and it is even further from the radical relief prints by artists like Gauguin and Munch.⁵⁷ Still, O.W.W. members did produce some impressive works. A particularly fine example, *Night Moths* (*Century*, August 1889; fig. 9), created by Closson, is very effective in capturing the fluttering motion of the thin beating wings passing through subtle slants of moonlight. *Night Moths* reveals a complete mastery of the medium, in conception, execution, and in printing; and it serves well as an example of what many critics had called, since the late 1870s, the unequalled delicacy of American wood engraving.

Originality must have appeared as the logical path for engravers to follow. As photomechanical processes improved over the last two decades of the nineteenth century, there was less and less call for the skills that reproductive engravers had acquired. In 1911, Henry Wolf, who had worked in the New School style and created numerous original prints, lamented the invention of the halftone:

56. Kingsley, "Wood-Engraving", 48.

57. Watrous, *American Printmaking*, 26.

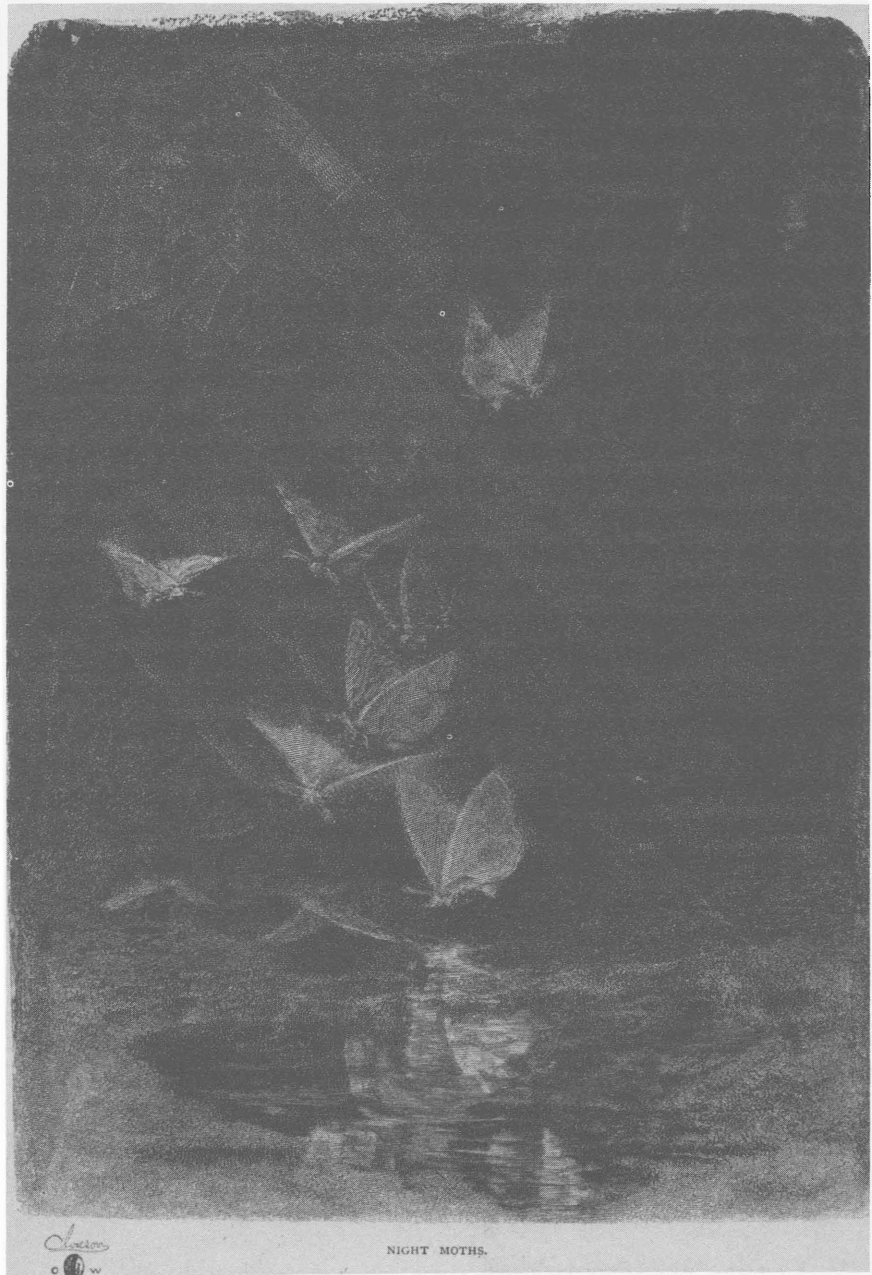


Fig. 9. William B. Closson, *Night Moths*. *Century*, August 1889.

This discovery sounded the death knell of wood-engraving. One by one the experienced engravers were given up by the publishers and since the beginning of this century only two engravers have been kept busy,—one for *Harper's* and another for *The Century Magazine*. . . .

Artistic wood-engraving is bound to become a dead art; in a few years it will have ceased to exist. There are no more apprentices or students because there is no encouragement.⁵⁸

Wolf's prophecy was not wholly accurate. Reproductive engraving did die out, but twentieth-century artists have, on occasion, breathed new life into the medium, perhaps most notably Rockwell Kent and Fritz Eichenberg. However, it was during the late nineteenth century when American wood engraving can be said to have reached its golden age. It was then that innovative engravers withstood the repercussions of controversy before ironically falling victim to advances in the technology that had triggered their existence.

58. Henry Wolf, "Concerning Wood-Engraving", *The Print Collector's Quarterly* 1 (July 1911): 354, 357. The two reproductive engravers that continued working after 1900 were Cole (*Scribner's*) and Wolf (*Harper's*).

The Punctator's World: A Discursion

BY GWEN G. ROBINSON

Part Four

England: Up to 1650

This, the fourth in a series of essays on the history of punctuation, deals with Renaissance and Jacobean England, a period of intense experiment both in language and in the bookmaking arts. Printing, now fully in action, governed the public perception of what looked best on the page and how text should be pointed and spelled.

During the fifteenth century, rustic England moved into the ambience of the marketplace and contracted thereby a host of radical ambitions. Commerce put money into the pockets of 'pour unconynge' folk, whose focus accordingly rose from the mud on their feet to the concerns of the world and how to deal with them. With lucre so opportunely at hand, the popular urge for skills to acquire it was not to be suppressed—though the church as well as the crown, fearing an educated proletariat, certainly tried. While the study of Latin with its complex of elite disciplines had long prepared the privileged for royal, state, or clerical duties, the public had been more or less abandoned to vernacular ignorance. But now that trade brought fresh opportunity, new vision, and the desire to participate, a groundswell of homespun teaching developed. For a few pennies little Johnny, and perhaps sister Mary too, could learn the ABCs from the neighboring widow or the village bellringer.

Theory soon followed practice, opening up the way for a legitimate and effective aristocratic interest in the mental nourishment of the humbler classes. Between 1466 and 1483 a school near York engaged an extra master to "teche to Write and all such things as belonged to the Scrivener Craft to all manner of persons . . . within

the realm of England . . . openly and freely without the exaction of money”.¹ In 1483 the Archbishop of York founded Jesus College, for which he provided teachers of grammar, music, and writing. The school statutes give definition to the evolving educational policy:²

Because that country-side brings forth many youths endowed with the light of keen wit and not all of them wish to attain to the lofty dignity of the priesthood, we have ordained a third fellow knowing and skilled in the arts of writing and keeping accounts in order that such youths may be rendered more capable for the mechanic arts and other worldly affairs.

In the late fifteenth century, merchants and booksellers were importing hundreds of printed volumes into London; for the English, racked by the Wars of the Roses, were slow off the mark to manufacture their own. Ecclesiastical prohibitions against vernacular translations of the Scriptures added their weight to the repression of enterprising spirits. Thus, of the some fifteen hundred established European presses only a few were on English soil. To bring the country up to snuff, Richard III's Act of 1484, regulating the book trade, included a proviso that foreigners who were living in England might import and sell books made abroad, and furthermore, that they might engage in other facets of the bookmaking business: such as printing, illuminating, and binding. Many responded to this appeal—so many indeed, that for the next fifty years two-thirds of all the people connected with English bookmaking were foreigners. These escaped the stringent jurisdiction of stationer companies by locating close to St. Paul's Cathedral or within the liberties of St. Martin's or Blackfriars, where the lubberly Londoners admired them guardedly. Their burgeoning presses put out mostly popular, uncomplicated materials—rhymes, romance, official documents, and the like—for clerical censorship stayed harsh. Bolstered by the proclamations of Henry VIII against heretical and seditious publications, church attitudes contin-

1. J. W. Adamson, "The Extent of Literacy in England in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries: Notes and Conjectures", *The Library*, 4th ser., 10 (September 1929): 175–76.

2. *Ibid.*, 176.

ued to drain the courage of those who might have been tempted to put out learned books in any language. So beaten down were the start-up printers in England, that amongst the lot there was not even sufficient Greek type to print Greek quotations within a text of roman lettering. Accordingly, the import of cheap, scholarly books from Antwerp and liturgical books from France persisted for many decades, and until 1535, England was notably dependent on the continent for intellectual works.³ Listed on the custom rolls by consignments only—by barrels, vats, baskets, pipes, cases, coffers and sometimes by number—these books, alas, remain nameless. Evidence of their presence mounts dramatically after 1500 and among the names of importers appear those of bookbinder Henry Cony and printers Wynken de Worde and William Facques. An account of 1502 registers the arrival of hundreds upon hundreds of primers.⁴

The school *par excellence* of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was the grammar school, either administered by its own governing body or adjoined to a cathedral or collegiate church, a chantry, or a hospital. Its mission was to hammer into the skulls of adolescent gentry the inherited Latin rhetorical and grammatical traditions. But humbler grammar schools soon began to admit ‘petties’, that is, little children to be taught the alphabet and how to read by a second master, the usher. With this custom the implantation of English into the pedagogical scheme became permanent. Those who were thrown by the heels straight into the classical languages found it easy enough to read English syllables in place of the Latin ones. The activity of writing in either language was considered a step harder, and even as late as the eighteenth century, a more elevated attainment.⁵

If literacy means the ability to read a book, then many people in England by the end of the sixteenth century were without doubt

3. E. G. Duff, *Westminster and London Printers 1476–1535* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1906), 189. Until 1510 the only English book-related men were Caxton (England’s prototypographer, translator, and a major influence on the settling down of the English language), Hunte (the Oxford stationer), and Bretton (a patron of printing). See pages 205–40; and also Curt F. Bühler, *William Caxton and His Critics* (Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1960), *passim*.

4. H. R. Plomer, “The Importation of Books into England in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries: An Examination of Some Customs Rolls”, *The Library*, 4th ser., 4 (1 September 1923): 146–50.

5. Adamson, “The Extent of Literacy”, 173–74.

literate. As early as 1533 Sir Thomas More in his *Apology* had written that “farre more then four partes of all the whole [English population] dyvyded into tenne” could not read English.⁶ The remaining literate sixty percent—about two million people—would have included both ordinary boys and Latin scholars, probably girls, and definitely women. Though in this case Sir Thomas was bewailing popular access to Tyndale’s English translation of the Scriptures, the complaint itself reflects the fact that democratized literacy was by that time in the ascendancy. Within a few decades signs would appear of an approved pre-grammar-school system, preparatory in the case of some for life and work, and in the case of others, for further education. In 1561 the churchwardens of St. Olave’s, Southwark, were instructed to find a schoolmaster who was prepared to teach the “childerne . . . to write and rede and caste accompthe”, such children being “mene” (men) children only. This school was for all the parish children “untyl such tyme that they sayd children can be lerned to rede awrighte [and write] sufficiently till they be abell to goo to servyce, or elles other wyse to goo to gramer, as their frendes shall thinke for them most fetyst at that tyme”. In Essex in 1599, a single endowment supported both a grammar school and a writing master to teach in his own dwelling the three Rs to small children.⁷ By this time, children “qui Latine nesciunt” (who don’t know Latin) were well entrenched in the school system, and reciting their catechism in English.

Respondent to the growing audience of ambitious parents and would-be teachers, Richard Mulcaster wrote and had published in English his book *Positions . . .* (1581), in which he discussed at length all conceivable aspects of education for boys (and for girls too, though their learning must be considered accessory). In 1582 Mulcaster published *The First Part of the Elementarie, which entreateth chefelie of the right writing of our English tung* (complete with a very brief discussion of punctuation “for a right and tunable uttering”), in order to help those who taught children to read and write English.⁸ Another guide to teach the teacher was Edward Coote’s *The Englische Scholemaister*

6. Thomas More, *The Apologye of Syr. T. More, Knight* (London, 1530), 20r and 20v, published in facsimile (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970).

7. Adamson, “The Extent of Literacy”, 184–85.

8. Richard Mulcaster, *The First Part of the Elementarie* (London: Thomas Vautroulier, 1582), 5, 148, and the unpagged prefatory “Epistle to Robert Dudlie, Earle of Leicester”.

(1596), a book that enjoyed repeated editions up to 1704. In the 1636 preface, Coote wrote:⁹

I am now therefore to direct my speech to the unskillfull, which desire to make use of it for their owne private benefit; and to such men and women of trade as Taylors, Weavers, Shoppe-keepers, Seamsters and such others as have undertaken the charge of teaching others. [Study it diligently] and thou mayest sit on thy shop-board, at thy loomes or at thy needle and never hinder thy worke to heare thy Schollers, after thou hast once made the little book familiar to thee.

With nets so broad, not many would escape being proficiently (often insatiably) literate. Unless gross misfortune overtook him, the average child could expect to learn both to read and to write his letters, and thereafter to acquire for his own the vocabulary and rhythms of the English Bible.

The following will give a feel for the accessibility of print in the sixteenth-century working man's home. In the 1470s Sir John Paston had paid some three shillings and four pence for the rubricating of capital letters in a small book. Scriveners in general had been charging one shilling for 3100 words of missal text or for 6200 words of academic text.¹⁰ By 1520, however, a mere two pennies would purchase a child's book bound in vellum, four pounds of cheese, or a hen. By 1549 Edward VI's entire prayer book was available in print, unbound, for two shillings and twopence. In 1595 you could buy a sheep for nine shillings, that is, a little less than the price of an unbound copy of the Bible.¹¹ Generally speaking, during the reign of Elizabeth, two pounds ten shillings was deemed a meagre but adequate annual income for common folk. For the 4000 or more country gentlemen and their professional cousins in the church, in law, and the trades, it was considered more seemly to possess upward of fifty pounds per annum.¹²

9. Adamson, "The Extent of Literacy", 185–86.

10. H. E. Bell, "The Price of Books in Medieval England", *The Library*, 4th ser., 17 (December 1936): 316–19.

11. Marjory Plant, *The English Book Trade* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1939), 239–45.

12. Lacey Baldwin Smith, *The Horizon Book of the Elizabethan World* (New York: American Heritage, 1967), 86. Another informative assessment of the ratio of Re-

Against this background the English language took its shape. Writers of authority and position began to turn to it with interest, national pride, and with a very thorough, even bilingual, knowledge of Latin. Sir Thomas More, for example, and Sir Francis Bacon were equally comfortable writing in both languages. A facility with French, and a smattering of Italian and German were standard acquirements in educated circles. In comparison—particularly with the ancient languages, but also with the more developed vernaculars—English prose could not for many years measure up. It lacked the authority of a distinguished tradition and the precision to handle complexity. Chaucer's prose rendering of Boethius, in sharpest contrast to his verse, had been unsure. Sir Thomas Malory's prose was sufficient for narrative, but not for the rigors of philosophical discussion. Sir Thomas More showed a firmer control, though even he seemed sometimes in doubt about the boundaries of sentences and the subordination of clauses. George Gascoigne's 1566 translation of Ariosto exposed an English syntax that was still not very feasible.¹³ Yet the improvement, culminating in the precocious clarity of Richard Hooker [d. 1600], was constant. In the atmosphere of dispersive literacy, English was pulling free from Latin (the language of the Church and all serious scholarly exposition) and from French (historically the tongue of high fashion and the courts of law). Popular translations into English from the more sophisticated continental literatures enforced lessons that enlarged and confirmed its special grammatical capabilities. Words, as they were needed to support the pervasive spirit of inquiry, had at first been borrowed indiscriminately from any language at hand; but gradually, common sense prevailing, the unused, the redundant, and the wildly exotic entrants were discarded. Thus, out of experience and authorial self-examination, there grew an assured, flexible, more purely English syntax. Increasingly, the literary figures of the day—Sir John Lyly (the polished euphuistic stylist and author of *Euphues*) and Roger Ascham amongst them—recognized that the new vernacular did not require classical graftings or imitative manipulation, either for beauty or for the power of expression. It could

naissance income to the cost of books can be found in Sandra Hindman, *Pen to Press* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1977), 196–99.

13. Jonas A. Barish, *Ben Jonson and the Language of Prose Comedy* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1960), 7.

simply be itself. Sir John Cheke, their contemporary, put it neatly: "I am of the opinion that our own tung shold be written cleane and pure, unmixt and unmangeled with borrowing of other tungen".¹⁴ Adopted and refined by men of such good name, English established itself in the hearts of the literate public.

How to construe a Greek or Latin passage, speak French, and debate learnedly over the intricacies of prosody were matters solely for youths whose fathers had money to spare. Those with such luck attended the major schools—Winchester, St. Paul's, Eton, which were now well established. But grammar schools, imitating their Latin curricula, were also beginning to flourish in towns as rustic as Stratford-upon-Avon. Shakespeare, who came of gentle stock, must have attended such a school (probably the King's New School) until his middle-teens, and been thereby sufficiently stimulated, under a well-qualified master, to begin a lifetime of reading and storing knowledge.¹⁵ It is moving indeed to think of him in the midst of Bodley's books at Oxford, where as an adult he spent quiet stopover hours on his way to and from London, absorbing world literature from the rare volumes of that still extant collection.¹⁶ In his omnivorous literary quests and with his special access to the libraries of noble houses, he unquestionably handled books from the finest presses of continental Europe. More likely from those than from the less polished English

14. Charles Sears Baldwin, *Renaissance Literary Theory and Practice* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1959), 220–25 and 37–50. Richard Mulcaster and Sir Thomas Elyot also gave voice to sentiments of this nature. Cf. Albert C. Baugh and Thomas Cable, *A History of the English Language*, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1978), 203–6, 214–19.

15. Stanley Wells, *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), xiii. Wells conjectures that the young Shakespeare attended a 'petty school' to acquire the necessary rudiments for grammar school, which his father's position would have qualified him to attend. The grammar school education was centered on Latin. In the upper forms, the speaking of English was forbidden.

16. Peter Levi, *The Life and Times of William Shakespeare* (London: Macmillan, 1988), 293. The Bodleian Library opened in early November 1602 and charged a shilling for entry. But its books were accumulating for years before it formally opened. Oxford town was full of books and book-loving people, and Shakespeare went there often. G. W. Wheeler in *The Earliest Catalogues of the Bodleian Library* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1928) tells us (page 21) that when the Bodleian Library first opened, it probably contained some 5000 items and was considered to be a practically complete collection. By 1604 the holdings, nevertheless, had doubled.

editions, he would have known text well differentiated into chapters and paragraphs and grown familiar with clear-faced roman types, meted out between punctuation marks that were positioned strategically to evoke the sound of the voice and delineate syntactical shapes.

This is not to say that he gave his deepest attention to these matters. Shakespeare was noted for writing in haste; for carelessness in finishing off details, as for example, his apparent failure to indicate exits. His excessive facility, said Jonson, was a fault, and it encouraged a natural disinclination to cross out or reshape.¹⁷ Generally, in Shakespeare's era, playmaking was very much an oral-aural art form. It focussed squarely on performance. Once acted on the stage, a drama was for all intents and purposes 'published', so that a subsequent printing might well be deemed both redundant and unexciting. Indeed, many plays of the time never saw print. Though in the end all Shakespeare's finished plays were put out in book form, not a manuscript fragment of them exists today that is reliably in his own handwriting. Apparently satisfied that the acclaim of his contemporaries would keep his works alive, he did not choose, as did Ben Jonson, to escort his theatre manuscripts through the printing operation. The poems "Venus and Adonis" and "The Rape of Lucrece" were the only pieces to have been printed with Shakespeare's certain authority.¹⁸ Nevertheless, by one means or another, about half of Shakespeare's plays were printed singly in his lifetime, "almost all of them in the flimsy paperback format of a quarto" that normally sold for sixpence.¹⁹ Scarcely worth the while of a serious printer, these 'pamphlets' were put together quickly and without the protection of an effective dramatic copyright.

17. Ben Jonson, *Discoveries* (London: The Bodley Head, 1923 reprint of the 1641 edition), 28–29. For a delightful and elucidating treat the reader is urged to read Maurice Baring's imaginary account of Shakespeare's rushed, on-stage amendment to "Macbeth", entitled "The Rehearsal". It is to be found most recently in *Parodies: An Anthology from Chaucer to Beerbohm and After*, ed. Dwight Macdonald (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), 294–302.

18. Henry Farr, "Notes on Shakespeare's Printers and Publishers", *The Library*, 4th ser., 3 (March 1923): 227. Peter Levi in *The Life and Times* (cf. p. 276) is less certain of Shakespeare's insouciance: Levi says of Shakespeare that he did sometimes revise and work with the printers; he did care about the fate of his plays, but was seldom in complete personal control of what survived.

19. Wells, *William Shakespeare*, xxx.

Relevant to our theme is the fact that none of these editions indicated either act or scene divisions; instead, the text of the piece was produced without stop. Though on stage the five-act structure was being marked in varying degrees by pauses with music, readers were left on their own to deal with the sequences and unities. In Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* (1590), a brief note added to the dedication (possibly by Ponsonby, the publisher) reads: "The division and summing of the Chapters was not of Sir Philip Sidneis dooing, but adventured by the over-seer of the print, for the more ease of the Readers".²⁰ Nor did Shakespeare as a young playwright follow the new convention of act-pauses that threw emphasis on the integrity of the divisions. Nevertheless, he seems to have recognized the principle of breaks between theatrical segments; for even in his early "The Taming of the Shrew" he more often than not ended both scenes and acts with a rhyming couplet. But overall, it is difficult to see why he and his fellow company shareholders were willing to allow so many avowed masterpieces to appear in garbled, unproofread, and sometimes badly printed texts. None of the quartos, 'good' or 'bad', "bears an author's dedication or shows any sign of having been prepared for the press".²¹ Unlike the authors who took up residence with their printers (one thinks especially of Erasmus) or stopped press owing to change of mind, Shakespeare simply had no time.²² Also, he may have viewed the printing of plays as a matter of small consequence.

20. Percy Simpson, *Proof-reading in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1935), 2-3.

21. Wells, *William Shakespeare*, xxviii, xxx.

22. James Binns, "STC Latin Books: Further Evidence for Printing-House Practice", *The Library*, 6th ser., 1 (December 1979): 351. An interesting verification of the confusion that was commonly the printer's lot is to be found in the introductory pages of the *Vindiciae ecclesiae Anglicanae* (London: 1625), B2^r. Here the author, Francis Mason, recounts the trauma of emerging into print. "When this work came to the press, I was transfixed by a sudden anxiety that I had perhaps scrutinised the work with insufficient diligence. And so in the first edition of this work, I several times caused the printing presses to be stopped whilst I hastened to the Archives to examine whole passages afresh with my own eyes. I had some second thoughts too in preparing this second edition." Shakespeare, undoubtedly, had second thoughts too—but not the leisure nor inclination to chase down, correct, conciliate, and compensate a piratical printer, who had bought the rights for his own, however corrupt, first printing. Cf. also the first folio reproduction introduction by Sidney Lee (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902), xiii.

Such an attitude, however ambivalent intellectually, seems rather in keeping with the proverbial Elizabethan rush to fulfil theatrical commitments. John Marston, introducing the printed text of his play "The Malcontent" in 1604, wrote: "Only one thing afflicts me, to think that scenes invented merely to be spoken, should be enforcively published to be read".²³ Shakespeare could well have been similarly "afflicted".

Despite the hopelessness of divining Shakespeare's attitude to the benefits of print, it is interesting to consider the state of the art in the books that he might, indeed, have handled. To this end let us glance briefly at the most influential contemporary printing houses on the continent, from where so many English bibliophiles were gathering their prize collections. Though English translations of many of the classics appeared in print during the sixteenth century, the coveted exempla came from abroad. Christopher Plantin's press in Antwerp was established and productive by the 1560s. In 1592 he published his eight-volume Complutensian Polyglot Bible, the supreme achievement in a series of masterly editions that embraced many fields: science, jurisprudence, the classics, and religion. Johannes Froben, the most famous of the Basel scholar printers, was operating four presses by 1515, and later, more. His printing house was famous for its fine contributions (totaling some 250 publications), for popularizing roman type, for hiring Hans Holbein as an illustrator and many famous scholars as correctors. Meanwhile, the Estienne dynasty in Paris and Geneva was in operation more or less throughout the sixteenth century. Henri Estienne II, grandson of the founder, was a noted classicist, as well as a scholar printer. His voluminous output included the Latin edition of Herodotus, a Greek and Latin text of Plutarch (thirteen volumes), and his monumental Greek dictionary. Venice, where the House of Aldus had published and kept in print the first series of books with uniform formats,²⁴ continued to

23. Wells, *William Shakespeare*, xxxii. Charles Tyler Prouty in his introduction to Shakespeare's first folio (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1954) offers another example of this unmodern attitude. He quotes from Thomas Heywood, a contemporary of Shakespeare: "It never was any great ambition in me to be in this kind voluminously read". See page ix.

24. Colin Clair, *Christopher Plantin* (London: Cassell, 1960), 113–33; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., s.v. "Froben", "Estienne". See also, Harry Graham Carter, *A View of Early Typography up to about 1600* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 75.

ro consuetudinem multorum annorum,
quam habes cum ista ciuitate, illi etiam
reipub. gratum & optatum, magnope-
re confido fore. Datis X V I. Calend.
Aprilis. M. D. X I I I. ante coronatio-
nem. Roma.

Leonardo Lauredano Veneto-
rum principi. IIII

Visimus interpretem apud te
I remq; publicam tuam esse no-
strum Petrum Bibienam, cum
prudencia & rerum gerendarū usu præ-
ditum hominem, tum imprimis nobis &
probatum & gratum: scripsimusq; ad il-
lum ea de re. Quamobrem abs te peti-
mus, ut omnibus in rebus, quas is nostro
nomine ad te perferet, eandē illi fidem
habeas, quam haberes nobis ipsis, si te
coram alloqueremur. Datis X V I. Cal.
Aprilis. M. D. X I I I. ante coronatio-
nem. Roma.

Sigismundo Poloniae regi. V
Intellexi magna quidem cum
I molestia, inter te atq; Albertū
Marchionē, ut appellāt, Bran-
denburgensem societatis Marianorum
Theuto.

A sample page of clear, well-broken text from Pietro Bembo, *Epistolarum* (Basel: J. Froben, 1547). Courtesy of the Syracuse University Library.

maintain its high standards of carefully edited, scholarly publications. Appropriately, it was from the Aldine Press that the first significant post-print treatise on logical punctuation volleyed forth.

THE *INTERPUNGENDI* RATIO OF ALDUS MANUTIUS II

In 1561, at the unlikely age of fourteen, Aldus Manutius II (1547–1597: the grandson of Aldus I and a scholar himself in the family tradition) wrote his *Orthographiae ratio*, to which he appended a short eight-page octavo, the *Interpungendi*, on the subject of pointing.²⁵ The body of this Latin text is printed in Aldine italic, with only the opening word of each paragraph and the various paradigmatic examples printed in roman. Practice not being yet the equal of theory, not all the sentences in the original begin with capitals.

The *Interpungendi* opens with a letter to Franciscus Morandus.

Since you are of the opinion, Franciscus Morandus, that the subject of punctuation is related to orthography, we shall be strengthened by your support, in our treatment of this section too: that learned men are well known to disagree on this matter of punctuation is in itself a proof, that the knowledge of it, in theory and practice, is of some importance. I myself have learnt by experience, that, if ideas that are difficult to understand are properly separated, they become clearer; and that, on the other hand, through defective punctuation, many passages are confused, and distorted to such a degree, that sometimes they can only with difficulty be understood, or even cannot be understood at all.

Bravely, this reasonable boy continues to deal with the various points. The “mark that some call the virgule, others the comma, and others again the half-point” he describes as useful in distinguishing the varying parts of a series; but he advises against appending it in profusion to all the words that one wishes to separate, since the sentence will then in no way be “freed from difficulty”. For one could

25. In preparing this section I have used both a copy of the 1561 Aldine Latin edition and the translation of it from T. F. and M.F.A. Husband, *Punctuation: Its Principles and Practice* (London: Geo. Routledge and Sons, 1905), 130–36.

argue that every word is different in meaning from its neighbor and therefore needs to be thus separated.

He describes semicolons (which were not used by English printers until the 1580s nor discussed by English grammarians until the 1600s) as being, generally, separators of word groups that are opposed in meaning to each other.

It is quite clear, that [often] a comma alone is not enough, and that the mark, which is made with a double point so (:) interrupts the sentence too much. The mark in question (;) is also sometimes found in passages, in which the words are not opposed in meaning, but the sense depends on the words in such a way, that, if you use the comma it is too little; if the double points, too much. I was thinking to give an example: but, I felt the point had come out plainly enough, in the immediately preceding sentence. A great many instances of this kind occur in the books of the ancients. Why then should I grudge the trouble? especially as amongst all the marks, I consider this one, at present under consideration, to be the most difficult of all, these then will be our examples: *Our good sense teaches us, that, if our lot be ill, we must not grieve too much; if good, we must rejoice with moderation.* For, if you put a comma after this, *too much*, the sentence is carried on as by a headlong current: since however, it consists of two members, it ought after the first part to stop altogether for a little. But if you want rather to put the double point in this place, the sentence will not stand so much of a break: its latter part depends on its former: since the word, *teaches*, dominates each part of the sentence in the same degree.

The colon (or double point) effects the most compelling break within the sentence and is to be used

when the sentence has two, or more, parts, which individually are dominated by their own verbs and are independent, and complete so that, just as a whole body consists of limbs complete in themselves, the sentence in its entirety is made up of integral parts. . . . But sometimes the sentence con-

tinues to such a length, that a break has to be made by the double point not simply once, but a second time, and even oftener; this is generally the case when the sentence consists of integral parts, for the distinction of which neither a comma, nor yet the point in conjunction with the comma is enough.

As for the entire sentence, the young Aldus prefers long to short and advocates combining short sentences by means of the colon. Everyone, he says (perhaps a bit blithely), knows instinctively where the precise end of a sentence is. In the following example, two short sentences have been joined entailing a further problem: whether to capitalize the opening letter of the second segment. Here, he is addressing in very clear terms a matter that would baffle the English for another century and a half.

I give you no orders concerning my affairs: you yourself will decide, what is to be done. It seems to be in harmony with the account given, that, if after the single point a sentence follows, that is akin to the preceding, the first word begins with a small letter; if the second sentence be quite unlike the preceding then a capital is used. If in addition to the sentence being unlike, an altogether different subject is introduced: then what follows, must be separated, not merely by a single point, and a capital letter, but also by a short space: this seems to be the principle that controls the introduction of a different subject.

He carries on with an interestingly modern analysis of interrogation. In cases where no answer is required and the prominence of the question subsides in the flow of wordage, he advises that the writer dispense with the mark of interrogation. The emphasis demanded by it in purely rhetorical instances is neither suitable nor elegant.

He is equally assured, as well as perceptive, in his assessment of when to apply the parenthesis.

This one thing I cannot refrain from remarking, that people act foolishly, who enclose in a parenthesis, *As I think, As the matter shows, As has been handed down to us from our ances-*

tors, *Which I myself could easily understand*, and such phrases; if they are separated by the comma, or even by the point with a comma, it is enough. Those words ought to be enclosed in a parenthesis, which are not a part of the sentence, and do not depend on any word either preceding, or following: words whose absence causes no loss to the sentence.

EYES VERSUS EARS

Imbued with the spirit of the age, scholar printers everywhere were probing their way towards readable type and the intelligible layout of text, towards consistency and accuracy. At some expense they hired 'correctors' to scrutinize their proofs for literals, to vouch for foreign words, spellings, and punctuation. Their fine productions, acclaimed by an ever more discerning readership, pressed new standards on all their fellow craftsmen.

Accordingly, in the daily round of life, the status of books improved. From the Queen down, reading was essential to one's pleasure, and so, apparently, was scribbling. The Elizabethans, who were nothing if not communicative, left behind them an abundance of drama, poetry, and fiction—not to mention millions of letters, pamphlets, broadsides, diaries, account books, journals, and contemporary histories. The affluent middle class, keen to improve itself—to straddle that invisible, but palpable, barrier to upperclass acceptance—began to buy books and pamphlets of advice and instruction. As experiences broadened, so sharpened too the hunger for more reading matter. From 1586 to 1640, as there were only about twenty-five master printers at work in London sharing some fifty-three presses, it was a scramble to keep the St. Paul's bookstalls supplied with the romances, encyclopaedias, plays, prayers, jest books, and histories that the public were demanding. Though literacy was clearly there to stay, society (loving to read aloud and fond of its sermons) continued to operate largely through speech, and ears remained the dominant organs in sifting the intake of information. Printing, in time, would lock the chatter into metal type and impose its rules of uniformity; but for the moment, variability was the major component of commonplace, typographical products. If the book was merely average, the reader's ride, though improved, was still a bumpy one. The immense mix of word choice, the unsettled spellings, and erratic

punctuation were having their last fling before printers marked out their targets and coordinated networks of agreed-upon details.

Notoriously, England was slow to come to heel. The publications of the Early English Text Society offer a veritable quarry of the misapplied stop. One sees it there, meandering onto alien terrain where it disrupts the unity of subjects and verbs and creates so many false trails and jerky rhythms that one can only excuse its presence on the grounds of childish ornament, used perhaps wistfully to lend touches of professionalism. How could the reader, oral or silent, possibly have paid any attention to them? Yet, Caxton, for example, had sought to be clear. Witness his comment in the dedication (ca. 1489) of the poem *Blanchardyn and Eglantine* to the Queen: "I hope that it shall be understonden of the redars and herers: And that shall suf-fyse".²⁶ Despite all that earnestness, he proceeded forthwith to contribute to the confusion (of terminology and sense) that he so yearned to lay to rest, by his own random and undifferentiated application of the comma and virgule. In his printing of *The Churl and the Bird*, translated from the French by John Lydgate, the line endings as *per cola et commata* (see Part One) seem to have satisfied his breath intakes as well as, on occasion, his sense of completed concept. Within the entire twenty or so pages of rhymed verses (seven lines per stanza), there is but one (:) and only a few (/)s—the latter unfailingly found in the middle of a line, where it sometimes confounds the meaning absolutely.

Meanwhile, as we have seen, visionaries were reasoning a path through the disorder. It was their goal to convert mutable sound into durable images. The expanding visual sense favored syntax as the critical element in language structure, and logical (or syntactical) punctuation to accompany it, for the eye tends to disjoin not only words, but sentence segments—that is, clauses and phrases—and to analyze them in terms of how they preponderate over one another. But while these new fields were greening, old aural customs persisted. Pitch, volume, and rhythm—all grist for the ear—continued to pattern a great deal of the written delivery. Word sounds that were still vividly imagined in the head dictated the placement of rhythmical (or euphuistic) puncts. The clash came when speech habits coerced pausal marks into positions that trespassed the boundaries of syntac-

26. William Caxton, *Blanchardyn and Eglantine* (London, 1489), *Early English Text Society* (London: Trübner & Co., 1890), 2.

Wpues that thenne shall be come to the astate of Wpddolshed
their doughters & also their children/their grete treysours &
all that they be worthe shall be rauysshed. habandoued/ ta-
ken & departed in to an hondreth thousand shippes/ chassed
carped & transported & epyled from theyr contrey/ and putte
oute of their nacyon/the one slayne. the other in prson in
right grete seruage & captiuyte/ they shalke solde as Wpde
lestes/ iniured defoyled & litten/ Theyr sayr doughters & the
ir byrgynnes shall be habandoued to men by force & deflow-
red/and to a ryght grete shame deliuered & vpolated apensst
their Wpille. A hondred thousande euylles shall be apparepl
led for theym more than men can recouete ne telle/ Thenne
shall my shame be socoured & the maculates taken from me
by Hanyball that shall be borne of myn asshes/whiche shal
be a man of grete polber & of grete venomee/ preu hardy &
cheualrouse aboue all men y shall be in his tyme. so that me
more shalke therof as longe as heyn & erthe shall last. but
in y meane while I make a request to you all/ & after to yo
ur children whan they shall be borne & to all their lpgnage
y of theym shall come vnto thende of the worlde/ that they
make werre by armes & by bataylles/ by see & by lond/by
assaltes & shippes apensst y traytours twians aslonge as
they shall lyue/ & that y see whiche is in oure lond & the ry
uages & portes & the walwes be to them repulsyng cotrare
& rebel euer more. thise thynges sayd by dydo enraged from
hir good Wpille/troubled in courage more than euer she was
esprised for all partes. sekpyng meanes moost subtil to the-
de of her myserable lyf. whiche she can support no lenger soo
weri she was of it/Wpillyng to fynde som meane to voyde o
ute of hir castel all them y were there/ as she had of custu-
me whan she wold do sacrifices. & y she myght abyde alone

In his prose Caxton was less sparing of puncts. But his text—often rebarbatively dense with type and inconsistently spelled—was nevertheless daunting. This page was taken from Virgil's *Aeneis*, as printed by William Caxton (Westminster, after 22 June 1490). Courtesy of the Syracuse University Library.

tical integrity. We will be studying some of these clashes later, but for the moment let us define the two styles in terms of example.

Logical: But, in general, the public did not take to cold baths.

Euphuistic: But in general, the public did not take to cold baths.

As is apparent, the logical pointing brings out the intellectual texture. Through separation of word groups, it stresses the contrariness of the *but*, which is there to refute some previous assertion and which differentiates the writer's slight change of stance in expressing his two views: 1) that some of the public liked cold baths; 2) that most of them did not. The euphuistic approach scoops up the song of the three opener words, ignoring syntactical sensitivities. Sadly, it fails the voice as well. All the delicate variance that it might have conjured up has escaped, for euphuistic punctating is utterly inadequate to reflect fully the subtleties inherent in the drop, rise, rhythm, and volume of the human voice. To guide the likeliest rendition would call for another pause after the subject:

But in general, the public, did not take to cold baths.

Or, in the case of an open-air speech:

But in general, the public, did not take, to cold baths.

Contemporary news readers such as Peter Jennings or Dan Rather tire their listeners with the monotonous trick of pausing before each noun group:

But in general, the public did not take to, cold baths.

Nevertheless, as it stands in any one of our examples, the statement is comprehensible. As for the interesting option of deleting all the punctuation in the sample sentence, that will be a matter for discussion in the final part of "The Punctator's World", where we will deal with contemporary styles.

Sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century England wavered over the two incompatible principles of pointing text. Whereas euphuistic punctuation disarranges hierarchical relationships, logical punctua-

tion is awkward in talk. Thus neither is perfectly satisfying. When the eye began to participate in, then to dominate intellectual communication, the balance tipped. Under the guidance of the scholar printers and the new breed of author (whose concern for literary eternity was now broadly emergent), punctating forsook speech, with its breathing rhythms, its hodgepodge of dialects and transient idiom, and inclined to the permanence of logic.

INTO PRINT WITH POETRY

How the compositor dealt with his author's copy during this standardization period is a rich source for discovery. An example is the British Library's autograph manuscript (Cantos XIV–XLVI, intact with notes and instructions to the printer) of Sir John Harington's translation into English *ottava rima* of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. According to W. W. Greg it is certain that this manuscript was the one used by Richard Field ("as good a printer as any in the London of his time") for the original edition of the work in 1591. As such, it affords a splendid opportunity for precisely observing how an Elizabethan compositor followed copy in the matter of punctuation. Comparisons of two verses are made below. In italics, the verses are as they appear in Harington's manuscript; in roman, as Field printed them.²⁷ The lines where punctuation varies are marked by asterisks.

6

And so far forth his wrath and fury grew,
* *hee wryngs his necke as pincers wryng a nayle,*
* *and twyse, or thryse, about his hed him threw,*
* *as husbandmen, that threshe do tosse a flayle:*
* *Dyvers reports, doe afterward ensew,*
but which be trew, and which of truth do fayle,
Is hard to say: some say hee was so battered,
* *that all his lymms, about a rocke wear skattered./*

And so farre forth his wrath and furie grew,
* He wrings his necke, as pincers wring a naile,

27. W. W. Greg, "An Elizabethan Printer and his Copy", *The Library*, 4th ser., 4 (September 1923): 110–15.

- * And twice or thrise about his head him threw,
- * As husbandmen that thresh, do tosse a flaile:
- * Diurse reports do afterwards ensew,
But which be true, and which of truth do faile,
Is hard to say: some say he was so battered,
- * That all his limbs about a rocke were scattered.

7

- * *Some say that to the sea hee hurled him
thoughe dyvers furlongs distant from the place,*
 - * *and that hee dyde, because hee cowld not swim,*
 - * *others report, som saynt did him that grace:
to save his lyfe, and heale each broken lim,*
 - * *and to the shore, to bring him in short space.
the lykelyhood heerof, who lyst may way,*
 - * *for now of him I have no more to say./*
-
- *Some say that to the sea he hurled him,
Though diurse furlongs distant from the place,
 - * And that he dide, because he could not swim:
 - * Others report, some saint did him that grace,
To saue his life, and heale each broken lim,
 - * And to the shore did bring him in short space.
The likelyhood hereof, who list may way,
 - * For now of him, I haue no more to say.

The changes from Harington's archaic spelling, typical of the average educated writer at the end of Elizabeth's reign, to Field's generally more regular and modern style are apparent. As for punctuation, Harington's is curiously mechanical, with a colon ending every fourth line and a period every eighth—quite regardless of sense, as for example, in the case of the colon in verse 7. Harington ends all other lines (the first in verse 7 being an exception, and most likely an oversight) with a comma or a full stop—a feature, typical of poetic metrical punctuation, that imposes a harping rhythm, scarcely relieved by the internal pausal commas, which appear in profusion and sometimes without relation to meaning. Field regularizes these phrasal points, and brings them firmly into keeping with the sense. In his

version the internal commas largely disappear. Professor Greg notes “a distinct though by no means consistent tendency to confine them to grammatical positions. . . . But again, uniformity is not stable: in the very last line Field has introduced a purely rhetorical comma that is not in the manuscript.”²⁸

Overall, one can rely very little on the authenticity of punctuation in early editions. Although a point might seem effective, it cannot with confidence be attributed to the author. In any case, the average compositor would probably have paid little attention to it, whatever it was or wherever it was placed. Perhaps some of the “striking instances of dramatic pointing that critics have discovered in early editions do in fact represent sudden inspirations of the author, though it is likely that they have survived more or less by chance in a general system (such as it was) imposed upon the text in the printing house”.²⁹

Now let us watch how, twenty years later, a more intellectual poet, John Donne, punctuated the lines of “A Letter to the Lady Carey, and Mrs. Essex Riche”. This sixty-three-line piece, the only extant holograph manuscript of a Donne poem, is now in the Bodleian Library. Written in 1612 and represented below by italic lines, it offers the only reliable view of the poet’s punctating practice in verse. The intervening indented roman lines are as they appear in the first printed collection of Donne’s poems, assembled by his son in 1633. Asterisks mark the punctuational changes.³⁰

28. Greg, “An Elizabethan Printer”, 115. See also: Mindele Treip, *Milton’s Punctuation and Changing English Usage, 1582–1676* (London: Methuen, 1970), 15. Harington’s style of punctuation (essentially a metrical one) was motivated by a concern to delineate the poem’s formal shape and contours: that is, the verses, lines, caesuras. During the period under discussion, metrical pointing was not unusual in poetry; often it was mixed with rhythmical punctuation, to open up the lines for a more natural breathing and for the accentuation of word groups. For the reader of this survey it will perhaps be simplest to think of metrical punctating as a subset of the rhythmical (or euphuistic, or elocutionary), and to think of that rhythmical group as incorporating all the pointing practices that do not deal with logical (or syntactical) clarification.

29. W. W. Greg, *The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), 111.

30. A. C. Partridge, *John Donne: Language and Style* (London: André Deutsch, 1978), 24–27; and John Donne, *Poems by J. D.* (London: John Marriot, 1633).

Madame!

Madame, *

Here, where by all, all Saints invoked are,

Here* where by All* All Saincts invoked are,

T'were too much Scisme to bee singulare,

'Twere too much schisme to be singular,

And gainst a practise generall to war;

And 'gainst a practise generall to warre. *

Yett, turninge to Saints, should my Humilitee

Yet turning to Saincts, should my'humility

To other Saint, then yo^w, directed bee, 5

To other Sainct* then you* directed bee, 5

That were to make my Scisme Heresee.

That were to make my schisme,* heresie.

nor would I bee a Convertite so cold

Nor* would I be a Convertite so cold,*

As not to tell ytt; If thys bee to bold,

As not to tell it; If this be too bold,

Pardons are in thys Market cheaply sold.

Pardons are in this market cheaply sold.

where, because Fayth ys in too lowe degree, 10

Where,* because Faith is in too low degree, 10

I thought yt some Apostleship in mee,

I thought it some Apostleship in mee*

To speak things w^{ch} by Fayth alone I see:

To speake things which by faith alone I see. *

That ys, of yo^w, who are a firmament

That is, of you, who is a firmament

Of vertues, where no one ys growen, nor spent;

Of virtues, where no one is growne, or spent,*

Thay'are yo^r Materialls, not yo^r Ornament. 15

They'are your materials, not your ornament. 15

Though the single on-line dot of the italicized manuscript (cf. line 6, followed by *nor*; and line 9, followed by *where*) is startling at first, the modern reader comes to see that Donne was attributing to it the

value of a heightened comma and applying it to clarify relationships. Where his concern for elocutionary guidance was strong, however, he was ready enough to respond, though not at the cost of meaning. His commas, which are often superfluous to syntactical needs, must as a rule be attributed to euphuistic intentions. It is interesting to note the care that he took: to divide the two *alls* in the first line; to maintain the enjambments (unlike Harington) in lines 4, 7, and 13; to implant the comma after *mee* (line 11) to signal its appositive connection with *yt*; to separate by commas the *because* clause in line 10; and to distinguish by comma the antithesis between *Materialls* and *Ornament* (line 15). Another interesting comma occurs in the last line (not shown) of the poem: "He that beleevs himselfe, doth never ly". In this case, Donne was following a strong convention that has remained standard in English into the twentieth century. The marking off of a multiword subject from its verb is not infrequently found in literature and even journalism today, and is a common feature in the literature of other languages (for example, German and Italian). In general, however, the modern writer of English, with his tight sentences and strong feel for syntactical ordering, has discarded this particular device.

In the entire poem Donne himself used twelve semicolons, a very high number for any writer at this date. Usually, they are followed by a capitalized word, but in three cases they are followed by a lowercase word, without apparent differentiation. In some instances a greater-than-comma-value pause seems justifiable. All in all, Donne, though attentive to the powers of both the aural and the visual punct, applied no system to his semicolons as strict as the one that typography would soon introduce. As for colons, two are to be found in his holograph, and both times they are used syntactically for the purpose (still in force today) of indicating a resumptive function.³¹

SHAKESPEARE: DRAMA, POETRY, PUNCTUATION

We will turn next to the theatre to see how dramatic literature fared as it was readied for public consumption. In their passage from

31. Partridge, *John Donne*, 30–31. See also Treip, *Milton's Punctuation*, 31. Where no capital letter follows a perfect stop (colon or period), the intention, apparently, is to stress the near independence of each main component, "without indicating any complete discontinuity either in thought or delivery until the concluding full stop".

manuscript to type, plays received even less certain treatment than poems or prose tracts, the manuscripts of which would have passed directly from author (or author's scribe) to printer to be set into type and punctuated according to shop standards. Autograph copy from theatre production, however, ran a gauntlet of graftings by the playhouse scribes, the bookkeeper, the prompter, and later, the compositor at the printing shop. Of all of these, it is the prompter's marks that are perhaps the most confusing to the modern eye. His excessive insertions *despite syntax* of commas and colons (to indicate dramatic pauses and breathing stops) and his sometimes mid-sentence capital letters (for emphasis) were regarded as essential aids to the actor.³² Such disorder, moreover, was further compounded in a number of ways. For a fee the bookkeeper (an experienced scribe) would copy out a play in his best, but nevertheless inexact, script. When originals and prompters' copies went astray, and particularly after the burning of the Globe in 1613, bookkeepers would produce fresh texts from memory, or from foul papers, or actors' scraps, or rough drafts supplied by authors.³³ But normally, once the performance was over and the text released for printing, the prompter's manuscript (for it was often enough his) then passed to the compositor, where it underwent its final overhaul. There, hit or miss, it was subject to the vagaries of house editing rules, to decisions inspired by carelessness or stupidity—even to the mischance that the needed piece of type might be missing from the type drawer. In any case, Elizabethan printers rarely expended their best efforts on the quarto format publications, which they considered ephemeral. And even though they might strive for accuracy while setting type, they were hampered by the heavy annotations generally to be found on dramatic manuscripts. Even the neat scribal transcripts could not be trusted. Scribes were "liable to introduce error in copying difficult manuscripts, and also had a habit of sophisticating what they copied—for example, by expanding colloquial contractions—in ways that would distort the dramatist's intentions".³⁴

32. A. C. Partridge, *Orthography in Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama* (London: Edward Arnold, 1964), 125.

33. W. W. Greg, "Prompt Copies, Private Transcripts, and the 'Playhouse Scrivener' ", *The Library*, 4th ser., 6 (September 1925): 149–56.

34. Wells, *William Shakespeare*, xxxv.

As the Harington-Field example (see pages 103–4) suggests, Elizabethan punctuating habits were not subject to any principle more dominating than flexibility itself. The language was evolving by giant steps, and where past met present lay a great mix. As the grammar firmed, punctuation moved—according to the taste and assurance of the individual writer—away from the essentially rhythmic and into structural domains. As far as we can tell, Shakespeare punctuated his own fluid syntax with a light pen. Lines from act 5, scene 1, of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” attest to his sensitive ear and to an interest in the matter of pausal stops—at least in oral delivery.

Lysander: [About Quince] He had rid his prologue like a rough colt: he knows not the stop. A good moral, my Lord: it is not enough to speak, but to speak true.

Hippolyta: Indeed, he hath played on this prologue like a child on a recorder—a sound, but not in government.

Ralph Crane (scrivener to the King’s Men) is known to have imposed his pointing system upon the texts that he transcribed.³⁵ In general, when manuscripts went to press, the printers strengthened the stops they found in the copy, changing a comma to a colon, a colon to a period—and thereby took great liberties.³⁶ One is not surprised, then, to discover that the 1600 quarto of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” (which was probably written and performed some five or six years earlier) is far more precisely punctuated than Shakespeare was likely to have intended it to be. The imposition of such a precision reduced ambiguities that might have been wanted, and forced definition onto indefinability. The light stopping that appears in the better, more authoritative Shakespeare quartos seems more suited to the freer, literary flow of Elizabethan statement.³⁷

The English Renaissance attitude towards all aspects of writing was unstable. Spelling forms were still unsettled, as were words themselves and the syntax that couched them. But particularly in the area of drama, where poetical concerns intersected with speech and both

35. *Ibid.*, xxxvii.

36. Raymond Macdonald Alden, “The Punctuation of Shakespeare’s Printers”, *PMLA* 39 (1924): 579–80.

37. Greg, *Editorial Problem in Shakespeare*, 111.

again with the strictures of print, indecision about punctuation seemed common. The uncertainty was demonstrated more or less constantly in the unsure vacillation between rhythmical and logical motives for the breaking up of text. Not infrequently, the final version of a printed play would issue forth pointed for syntactical emphasis but bearing still the undeleted marks of previous punctators. A. E. Partridge, in speaking of Shakespearean texts, notes, for example, that brackets have been found “in some Good Quartos to indicate a drop or change in the voice. These reappear in the Folio, along with the use of brackets for syntactical parentheses in the form of interpolated phrases and clauses.”³⁸ On the general importance of Shakespearean punctuation, Partridge adds:³⁹

In his most passionate outbursts [Shakespeare’s] style could be tortured, and neglect its syntax. His is, perhaps, the most difficult of Elizabethan styles for the grammarian to analyse into recognizable clauses. There are passages of the writing so characteristically his, that no one else could have been responsible for them. These passages called equally for his own individuality of punctuation. It is, therefore, regrettable that this pointing can never be certainly recovered, to throw further light on the processes of his thought.

In his book *Shakespearean Punctuation*, Percy Simpson has defended the effectiveness of Elizabethan punctators. They were, Simpson insisted, quite consistent in their assignments of value for the various points in use. The fact is simply that English punctuation has changed radically in the last 300 years. “Modern punctuation is, or at any rate attempts to be, logical; the earlier system was mainly rhythmical. Modern punctuation is uniform; old punctuation is quite the reverse. For the poet a flexible system allowed subtle differences of tones.”⁴⁰

Although flexibility might well have appealed to the sensibilities of a poet, there is, nevertheless, evidence of sheer uncertainty in printers’ shops. A good example is found in the varied versions of

38. Partridge, *Orthography*, 135.

39. *Ibid.*, 140.

40. Percy Simpson, *Shakespearean Punctuation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), 8.

the final six lines of Shakespeare's sonnet "Two loves I have". In his 1599 edition, Jaggard, a notorious heavy-stopper, has rendered them almost meaningless:⁴¹

And whether that my Angell be turnde feend,
Suspect I may (yet not directly tell:
For being both to me: both, to each friend,
I ghesse one Angell in anothers hell:
The truth I shall not know, but live in doubt,
Till my bad Angell fire my good one out.

The poem is thus left to grind to its conclusion in the dropped-voice gear activated by an unclosed left parenthesis. Compare now Thorpe's lighter stopping in his edition of 1609 (asterisks mark the punctuational changes):⁴²

And whether that my angel be turn'd finde,
Suspect I may* yet not directly tell,*
But being both from me* both* to each friend,
I gesse one angel in an others hel.*
Yet this shal I nere know* but live in doubt,
Till my bad angel fire my good one out.

Clearly, compositors enjoyed a broad license in the placement of stops; but they were not, according to Simpson, the pack of bumbling boneheads that many critics have proclaimed them to be. Is it conceivable, he asked, that "a human being endowed with reason sufficient to serve an apprenticeship, could work at the trade of printing all his life, and set up the type of book after book, without fathoming the inscrutable mystery of the comma and the full stop?"⁴³

Simpson, who shows a sensitive appreciation of euphuistic punctuation, minutely compares a number of Shakespearean lines to see how the various distinctions affect the meaning. For example, in his section entitled "Comma marking a metrical pause", he says:⁴⁴

41. Partridge, *Orthography*, 133.

42. *Ibid.*, 134.

43. Simpson, *Shakespearean Punctuation*, 8.

44. *Ibid.*, 24.

[In the following excerpt] the effect of the comma is to give a momentary check to the rhythm and fix attention on the words which follow.

And nothing gainst Times sieth can make defence
Save breed to brave him, when he takes thee hence.
(Sonnet xii)

A beautiful and suggestive pointing: the alliteration of “breed” and “brave” carries on the line to the pause where the voice seems to falter at the thought of the final parting. The passage is ruined by the modern punctuation,

And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence
Save breed, to brave him when he takes thee hence.

Here are only a few of the forty-three punctuational topics about which Simpson has genuinely interesting and elucidating things to say. As will be realized, the punctator's world is not necessarily a small one.

Vocative without commas
Comma between object and complement
Comma marking ellipse of copula
Semicolon with preliminary clauses
Semicolon marking an interrupted speech
Colon marking an interrupted speech
The use of ? in exclamations
Comma marking the logical subject
The emphasizing semicolon
The emphasizing comma
Colon marking an emphatic pause
Antithetic colon
The full stop in an incomplete sentence [to be used for a *huge* pause when the field is already littered with colons, semicolons, and commas]
Capital letters for emphasis

PROSE

In the last quarter of the sixteenth century, fashions changed in English prose. The Attic (or Senecan) style re-emerged with a fresh strength to challenge the euphuistic dogmata that rhetorical studies had been instilling into students for centuries. Science was now beginning to thrive in the radiance of Ramist logic and puritanical sincerity, and it was recognized that stark truth was not satisfactorily conveyed by tropes and schemes and *cursus* cadences. Serious writers—politicians, lawyers, doctors, gentlemen-scholars, and theologians—needed to express their thoughts as precisely as they could, clarity being the declared intent. Accordingly, their prose took on a different ring. It was marked by the straightening out of the hitherto circuitous modes of saying what was meant; and by the repression of rhythmic repetitions, forced alliterations, and the symmetries of phrases and clauses—all the elaborate patterns and balances that, before the common usage of punctuation, had helped to guide the reader (see Part Three). Now, the Attic stylist was favoring short, deliberately disparate clauses because they suggested in their faster, irregular breathing spans the actuality of hard thinking. For the belief was that to keep its integrity, an idea should be captured in the full ardor of its conception, not molded by afterthought into an artificial casing that was, in effect, the thought of a thought, and not so reasoned either.⁴⁵ To assure a safe passage for an idiosyncratic insight, the conveying words needed to impact directly. As for the reader—with the multiplicity of materials that print was now making available to him—he no longer had the time to absorb fatuous gush, however prettily packaged. He needed the facts. The more help the author could give him, the better. In this atmosphere logical punctuation grew stronger.

The old euphuistic school, represented by writers like Sir Thomas More, Roger Ascham, Sir Philip Sidney, and John Lyly, followed the precepts of the oratorical style, replete with the rhetorical ploys inaccurately associated with Cicero. Whereas the euphuistic ‘Ciceronians’ wrote in strings of echoing and parisonic word groups to achieve

45. Morris W. Croll, *Style, Rhetoric, and Rhythm* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1966), 210.

the effect of controlled copiousness, the true Ciceronian periodic sentence, it should be remembered (see Part One), was distinguished by a copious grammatical ‘roundness’, where clausal and phrasal members did not continue on and on, but held together by interreferential inflexion and the centripetal impulse of the Latinate conjunction.⁴⁶ Though the relationship with Cicero was tenuous indeed, the ‘Ciceronians’ continued to keep up the nominal connection, for the name maintained a tremendous clout in the world of letters. In truth, however, centuries of medieval curricula, patristic writings, and the prestigious *Ars dictandi* had transformed the medium of ‘classic’ expression. When vernacular English prose took over the burden of hard-nosed explication (previously Latin’s job), euphuism attempted to ennoble it not only with ‘classical’ but also with poetical adornment. The resultant loss of clarity brought protest against the ornaments of ‘Ciceronianism’ and increased recommendation for the study of argument and structural framework.⁴⁷ Embellishment was no longer acknowledged to be the cardinal virtue of expression. Nevertheless, when the ‘Ciceronian’ formalities were not so dense as to inhibit the warmth or impair the clarity, the euphuistic style could be attractive, and there were sensitive, restrained writers (Lyly on occasion, and certainly Shakespeare) who believed in the value of its artistry. Roger Ascham, another, distraught by the severity of Atticism, wrote sadly, “You know not what hurt ye do to learning, that care not for words, but for matter”.⁴⁸

Ascham’s own writing illustrates how pleasing both to ear and to mind the controlled ‘Ciceronian’ rhythms could be:⁴⁹

It is your shame (I speake to you all, you yong gentlemen of England) that one mayd should go beyond you all, in excellencie of leamyng, and knowledge of diuers tonges. Pointe forth sir of the best given gentlemen of this Court, and all they together, shew not so much good will, spend not so

46. Barish, *Ben Jonson*, 67.

47. Charles Sears Baldwin, *Renaissance Literary Theory and Practice* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1959), 38. See also Lee A. Sonnino, “Critical Bibliography of Important Renaissance Texts”, in *A Handbook to Sixteenth-Century Rhetoric* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), 236–40.

48. Croll, *Style, Rhetoric*, 120.

49. Roger Ascham, *The Scholemaster* (London: John Daye, 1570), 21.

much tyme, bestow not so many houres, dayly orderly, & constantly, for the increase of learning & knowledge, as both the Quaenes Maiestie her selfe. Yea I beleue, that beside her perfitt readines, in Latin, Italian, French, & Spanish, she readeth here now at Windsore more Greeke every day, than some Prebendarie of this Chirch both read Latin in a whole weeke. And that which is most praise worthie of all, within the walles of her priue chamber, she hath obeyned that excellencie of learning, to understand, speake, & write, both wittely with head, and faire with hand, as scarce one or two rare wittes in both the uniuersities have in many yeares reached onto.

The sentences are manageable in length and the ideas emerge clearly, unburdened by wearisome alliteration. But note the space- and time-consuming repetitions, the dyads and triads of synonyms, and imagine the tedium of ploughing “daily orderly, & constantly” through a whole book of them.

But John Donne was the true liberator of this style. He brought it up to the boundary line of Attic prose with an eloquence that not only appeals to sensory experience, but also is contentious and functional, plied with muscular rhythms and the wit favored by the intellectual, anti-‘Ciceronian’ Atticists. Though he did employ euphuistic patterns to accumulate his argument, they are neither rigid nor restricting. Where he wrote to be seriously read, he broke up the symmetry of his phrases and pared them of extravagant qualifiers. His vocabulary is not unduly freighted with Renaissance latinity; on the contrary, it flows naturally with an occasional colloquialism in token of warmth. His style, neither aureate nor casual, is full of tension and so, one can presume, reflects the torments of his temperament. His words are charged with meaning; their rhythms wake you up. His wonderful English usage bore out George Puttenham’s boast, that the English language is “no lesse copious pithie and significative then theirs [the ancients’], our conceipts the same, and our wits no lesse apt to devise and imitate than theirs”.⁵⁰ The following sample por-

50. George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (London: Richard Field, 1589), 3. On this point, the author makes further comparison of English poetical possibility with the triumphs of “the Greeks and Latines”. They have their metrical feet which

tion of a sentence is from Donne's "A Defence of Women's Inconstancy".⁵¹

That Women are *Inconstant*, I with any man confess, but that *Inconstancy* is a bad quality, I against any man will maintain: For every thing as it is one better than another, so is it fuller of *change*; The *Heavens* themselves continually turne, the *Starres* move, the *Moone* changeth: *Fire* whirleth, *Aire* flyeth, *Water* ebbs and flowes, the face of the *Earth* altereth her looks, time staires not; . . .

As will have been noticed, a dexterous use of points (both rhetorical and logical) shapes the statement.

But there is more for the punctator in an autograph letter written by Donne about the year 1610, now in the Bodleian Library. It follows, as taken from Partridge.⁵²

Sr

I make account that thys Booke hath inough perform'd
y^t w^{ch} yt undertooke, both by Argument and Example. Itt
shall therefore the lesse neede to bee yttselfe another
Example of y^e Doctrine. Itt shall not therefore kyll yttselfe;
that ys, not bury itselfe. for if ytt should do so, those 5
reasons by w^{ch} that Act should bee defended or excusd,
were also lost w^t ytt. Since ytt ys content to liue, ytt cannot
chuse a wholsomer ayre than yo^r Library, where Autors of
all complexions are preserud. If any of them grudge thys
Booke a roome, and suspect ytt of new, or dangerous 10
Doctrine, yo^u, who know us all, can best Moderate. To
those Reasons, w^{ch} I know yo^r Loue to mee wyll make in
my fauor, and discharge, yo^u may add thys, That though

"we have not, nor as yet never went about to frame (the nature of our language and wordes not permitting it) we have in stead thereof twentie other curious points in that skill more then they ever had, by reason of our rime and tunable concords or simphonie, which they never observed".

51. John Donne, "A Defence of Women's Inconstancy" from *Paradoxes and Problems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 75.

52. Partridge, *John Donne*, 32.

thys Doctrine hath not beene tought nor defended by
writers, yet they, most of any sorte of Men in the world, 15
haue practisd ytt.

In 1651 the same letter appeared in print in the first published edition of Donne's letters. The printer had imposed a number of punctuation changes on the original holograph. These are:

Line 5: The period after *itselfe* is now a semicolon, an acceptable change by modern standards.

Line 6: A comma has been inserted after *reasons*, violating the integrity of the words *those reasons by which* that Donne had properly perceived to be restrictive.

Line 10: Donne's rhetorical comma after *new* has been deleted in favor of a stronger coupling of *new* with *dangerous*, and thus both, equally, with *Doctrine*. Modern sensibilities will perhaps prefer this.

Line 11: The logical comma has been deleted after *you*, but not after *all*. Thus, the subject is divided from the verb it governs.

Line 12: The comma has been deleted after *Reasons*, a proper correction in modern terms, since the clause that follows is restrictive.

Line 13: The comma is deleted after *favor* to unite *make* with *dischardge* (acceptable); the comma after *dischardge* now marks off an opening, lengthy prepositional phrase (acceptable); and the *T* of *That*, after *thys*, is lowercased (again, acceptable). Given the resumptive nature of the point after the said *thys*, which introduces the final noun clause, writers today might have preferred a colon.

As this example suggests, Donne was a thinker when it came to punctuation. He used commas and semicolons liberally to assort his pile-ups of clause and phrase, and in this way served his complex, often turbulent, prose very well.⁵³

The Attic style opposed profuseness. Its proponents had a taste for bare and level expression, for the exact portrayal of things as they are. Conceived in the spirit of Erasmus, Lipsius, and Ramus, and

53. Ibid. Evelyn M. Simpson in "A Note on Donne's Punctuation", *Review of English Studies* 4 (1928): 295–300, corroborates this feature of Donne's extreme care and fine shading in the matter of pointing. Careful printers followed it with respect though never with total accuracy. As the century progressed and the customs of pointing firmed, Donne's commas seemed increasingly excessive.

championed most notably in England by Sir Francis Bacon (for whom, *pace* Ascham, content was paramount), it drew its authority from Senecan terseness, with worshipful nods to Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. Atticists despised the Gorgianic figures associated with conventional sermonizing. The sought-after element was ingenuity, which was best displayed by sparky aphorisms, with unexpected imbalances of phrasing to prove alertness and to sharpen up inattentive minds. These were either set into short, choppy sentences (the curt style) or strung together (the loose style) in a progression of short clauses frailly conjoined with *ands*, *ors*, or *buts* and without syntactical connection. Parentheses in the loose style also figured prominently, as did open-ended and noncommittal absolute-participle constructions. The effect of all this was cumulative and massive, as indeed was that of the true Ciceronian period. But here, there was no artificial rounding off, no elaborate interweaving or tight cohesion of parts rendered possible by Latin inflexions; nor was frequent use made of the strong conjunctives—*who*, *which*, *although*, *because*—that would soon structure the classical prose of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Instead, as does thinking, the loose style simply pattered on: opening statements were second-guessed, then enlarged upon and illustrated, as the pulses of intellect produced them. Juxtaposition proved the relationship.⁵⁴ Yet despite the unexpected twists and jumps of thought in writing such as this, one senses that the communicating effort in general was becoming a collaborative affair. Exterior reality, perceived through the lens of science by an enlarged (thanks to print) visual sense, was drawing writers out of self-absorption. They were learning to accept readers as full partners in the acts of thinking, explaining, and understanding, for which logic was, increasingly, the universal medium.⁵⁵ Communication, in the era's best form, was at last discarding the histrionics that had for centuries relieved the author's emotions at the reader's expense.

The Attic style relied on tropes (antithesis, metaphor, *argutiae*—or turns of wit). *Sententiae* (or aphorisms) were thought to add incisiveness and an aura of profundity. Though called a 'natural' style, Atticism had been crafted by many intelligences, whose desire was

54. Croll *Style, Rhetoric*, 58–67, 220–24.

55. Walter J. Ong, *Ramus: Method and the Decay of Dialogue* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974), *passim*.

to reveal the experiences of solitary intellects, to express (even in the subtleties of style) the difficulties of a mind exploring unfamiliar truth. The movement, in general, was an effort to divorce prose writing from the formalism of Renaissance rhetoric, and to fit it for philosophy and science.⁵⁶

Two samples will illustrate its claims: first, a quotation taken from Seneca's "On Benefits" from the *Moral Essays*. Seneca's works had come down through the centuries almost unimpaired and constantly studied. Reeking of medieval acceptance and marked by a curtness that aligned it with the camp of science and Puritanism (with overtones of heresy), Senecan prose was generally suspect by the church fathers.^{57, 58}

But he who is happy in having received a benefit tastes a constant and unfailling pleasure, and rejoices in viewing, not the gift, but the intention of him from whom he received it. The grateful man delights in a benefit over and over, the ungrateful man but once.

The writing of Sir Thomas Browne abounds in the strung-out sentences of the loose Attic style. Morris W. Croll's analysis of a sentence from the first book of the *Religio Medici* is worth the while of any punctator to inspect closely.⁵⁹

As there were many reformers, so likewise many reformations; every country proceeding in a particular way and method, according as their national interest, together with their constitution and clime, inclined them: some angrily and with extremity; others calmly and with mediocrity, not rending, but easily dividing, the community, and leaving an honest possibility of a reconciliation;—which, though peaceable spirits do desire, and may conceive that revolution of time and the mercies of God may effect, yet that judgment that

56. Croll, *Style, Rhetoric*, 90, 95.

57. *Ibid.*, 147, 49.

58. Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Moral Essays*, 3 vols., trans. John W. Basore (London: Wm. Heinemann; Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1935), 3:159.

59. Croll, *Style, Rhetoric*, 225.

shall consider the present antipathies between the two extremes,—their contrarities in condition, affection, and opinion,—may with the same hopes, expect a union in the poles of heaven.

The entirety constitutes a single sentence. However, as Croll points out, the opening, sharply formulated statement, being itself complete, fails to imply anything of what follows. Appearing brusquely, it gives way to an absolute participial construction that itself buds off a pair of appositional members, one of these again budding two new members by means of dangling participles. A *which*, relating only to the word ‘reconciliation’, then picks up the thought and leads it into a complex (initially tight) *though . . . yet* construction. Nevertheless, the sentence still moves freely, digressing at will and extricates itself from the complex form by a kind of anacoluthon (an abandonment of the ongoing construction) in the *yet* clause, “broadening its scope, and gathering new confluents, till it ends, like a river, in an opening view”.⁶⁰

Punctuation is a necessity for such an elastic style. In this era of post-rhetorical, pre-Cartesian freedom, the heavy freight of such sentences strains the grammar about which the English of that period had not really begun to think. The rules of syntax were thus made to bear the extravagances of the new liberty. Connections were casual between units of thought; digressions frequent; parentheses overdone. Anacoluthon was relied on to keep up the flow. Even the limits of sentences were not always clear. The way through the tangle was to cut off the assimilable bits by colons and semicolons, which for the time were the symbols of a smart fashion. Later, concern for the precise meaning of words, and for the sentence as a logical unit, would bring about a gradual reduction of sentential length and with that, the replacement of semicolons and colons with commas and periods. Because of the unsure syntax, the “only possible punctuation of seventeenth-century prose [was] that which it used itself”.⁶¹

As Morris Croll points out, both curt and loose Attic writing reveal aspects of the seventeenth-century mind: “its sententiousness, its penetrating wit, its Stoic intensity, on the one hand, and its

60. Croll, *Style, Rhetoric*, 225.

61. *Ibid.*, 230–33.

dislike of formalism, its roving and self-exploring curiosity, in brief, its sceptical tendency, on the other". Rarely is either style found in a pure and extended state, nor are the two "always distinguishable". Rhythms and formulae from the rhetorical camp were always on hand. For to be truly representative of its age, seventeenth-century prose needed to draw on both: the loftily formal, eloquent in its grave demeanor; and the intense and profound, the realistic and revealing.⁶²

Sir Francis Bacon, the prophet of modern science and the protagonist of sound logic in prose, combined the two, as witness the following single sentence (with punctuation intact) from the 1605 edition of *The Advancement of Learning*.⁶³

And that learning should take up too much time or leasure, I answere, the most active or basic man that hath been or can bee, hath (no question) many vacant times of leasure, while he expecteth the tides and returnes of businesse (except he be either tedious, and of no dispatch, or lightly and unworthily ambitious, to meddle in things that may be better done by others) and then the question is, but how those spaces and times of leasure shall be filled and spent: whether in pleasures, or in studies; as was wel answered by *Demos-thenes* to his adversarie *Aeschynes*, that was a man given to pleasure, and told him, *That his Orations did smell of the Lampe: Indeede (sayd Demosthenes) there is a great difference betweene the things that you and I doe by Lampe-light: so as no man neede doubt, that learning will expulse businesse, but rather it will keepe and defend the possession of the mind against idlenesse and pleasure, which otherwise, at unawares, may enter to the preiudice of both.*

BEN JONSON

With the national mind so respectful of knowledge and mechanical proficiency, the Jacobean gentleman quite naturally gave his at-

62. *Ibid.*, 194.

63. Francis Bacon, *Of the Proficiency and Advancement of Learning, Divine and Humane* (London: Henrie Tomes, 1605), 10b.

tention to the pursuit of precision. He had learned to use his brain, and was confident that his intellectual powers would lead him to some good end. Detail, measurements, definition, categories, hierarchies, and analyses characterized his thinking.

Such a man was Ben Jonson, who, to our delight, applied his sharpened mind not only to grammar but to the subtleties of pointing. He was himself the owner of a large collection of grammars, amongst them the *Grammatica* of Pierre Ramus, a prime inspirant of the emergent Attic prose movement. Among the better known English grammatical authorities, whose works sat upon Jonson's shelves, were: John Hart (1570), Richard Mulcaster (1582), William Bullokar (1586), P. Greenwood (1594), and Charles Butler (1633).⁶⁴

Jonson prepared his own texts for the printer with exacting care—rewriting, then checking again over the compositor's shoulder. Partridge notes his meticulousness in marking elisions, his hyphenation of compound words, his use of scholarly spellings, and of the commas, colons, and semicolons, all applied abundantly but with meaningfulness.⁶⁵ Simpson observes that within twenty-four lines (act 3, scene 3 of "Criticus") Jonson corrected three italic colons and two italic notes of interrogation, inserted three apostrophes, and changed two initial capitals to lowercase. Though English authors were generally reading proof by the mid-1530s,⁶⁶ Jonson was indeed rare to oversee his own publications so intellectually and to exhort his followers to do likewise with theirs. Like John Donne, he was strongly moved by the pull of logic and the benefits to be derived from careful use of points for syntactical distinction. Nevertheless, the urges of orality were strong, even in him, causing a confluence of punctating motives, as he tried to combine the logical and the rhythmical systems.⁶⁷ We have noticed earlier in our glance at Renaissance drama publication how at times confusion was generated from the blending of the two potentially incompatible pointing styles: that which delineated grammatical structures to elicit strict meaning and was hence appropriate for legal, scientific, and theological treatises, where con-

64. Cf. *Ben Jonson: The Man and His Work*, 418–19. Butler's book probably postdated the actual writing of Jonson's grammar.

65. Partridge, *Orthography*, 138.

66. Simpson, *Proof-reading*, 12, 5.

67. See Simpson, *Shakespearean Punctuation*, 56.

tent was both regent and difficult; and that most used for poetry and drama, where the domination of rhythm required a voice for the full effect.

Jonson's delight in seemingly small matters is manifest throughout his short book *The English Grammar*, which first came out in 1640 for the purpose of teaching to "all Strangers" the laws of language. Its spirit of order is strong, as the following admonitory notice from his preface testifies:⁶⁸

Confusion of Language, a Curse.
Experience breedeth Art: Lacke of Experience, Chance.

The flavor of Jonson *Pedagogus* (or as he referred to himself, *elementarius Senex*) is powerfully present in the following type facsimile of his final chapter, from which only his supernumerary examples from the literature are deleted. Interestingly, it was Jonson who brought the "commonly neglected" and vagrant semicolon (he calls it a *sub-distinction*) to anchor in English, giving it the distinct value (between comma and period) that it retains today.⁶⁹ This point brought a finer grading to the three already fully accepted stops: the period, colon, and comma. Its common appearance, ca. 1589, marked the beginning of the strong logical system in use today.^{70, 71}

OF THE DISTINCTION OF
SENTENCES

All the parts of Syntaxe have already beene declared. There resteth one generall affection of the whole, dispersed thorow every member thereof, as the bloud is thorow the body; and consisteth in the breathing, when we pronounce any *Sentence*; For, whereas our breath is by nature so short, that we cannot continue without a stay to speake long together; it was thought necessarie, as well for the speakers ease, as for the plainer deliverance of the things spoken, to invent this meanes, whereby men pausing a pretty while, the whole speech might never the worse be understood.

68. Ben Jonson, *The English Grammar* (London, 1640), I B, 74.

69. Partridge, *Orthography*, 138.

70. Ben Jonson: *The Man and His Work*, 431–32. The semicolon was apparently introduced into England in 1569 and began to be used (erratically) about 1580.

71. Jonson, *English Grammar*, 75–77.

These distinctions are, either of a *perfect*, or *imperfect* sentence. The distinctions of an *imperfect* sentence are two, a *sub-distinction*, and a *Comma*.

A *sub-distinction* is a meane breathing, when the word serveth indifferently, both to the parts of the sentence going before, and following after, and is marked thus (;)

A *Comma* is a distinction of an imperfect sentence, wherein with somewhat a longer breath, the sentence following; and is noted with this shorter semicircle (,).

Hither pertaineth a *Parenthesis*, wherein two comma's include a sentence [i.e., a statement]:

Jewell: *Certaine falshoods* (by meane of good utterance) *have sometime more likely-hood of truth, then truth it selfe.*

These imperfect distinctions in the Syntaxe of a substantive, and an adjective give the former place to the substantive:

Ascham: *Thus the poore Gentleman suffered griefe; great for the paine; but greater for the spite.*

Gower. lib. 2. Speaking of the envious person:

*Though he a man see vertuous,
And full of good condition,
Thereof maketh he no mention.*

The distinction of a perfect sentence hath a more full stay, and doth rest the spirit, which is a *Pause*, or a *Period*.

A *Pause* is a distinction of a sentence, though perfect in it selfe, yet joyned to another, being marked with two pricks (:).

A *period* is the distinction of a sentence, in all respects perfect, and is marked with one full prick, over against the lower part of the last letter, thus (.).

If a sentence be with an interrogation, we use this note (?).

Sir John Cheeke: *Who can perswade, where treason is above reason; and might ruleth right; and it is had for lawfull, whatsoever is lustfull;*

and Commotioners are better then Commissioners; and common woe is named Commonwealth?

If it be pronounced with an *admiration*, then thus (!)

Sir Tho. More:

O Lord God, the blindnesse of our mortall nature!

These distinctions (whereof the first is commonly neglected) as they best agree with nature: so come they neerest to the ancient staies of sentences among the Romans, and the Grecians. An example of all foure to make the matter plaine [or more confusing, since he only makes use of two], let us take out of that excellent Oration of Sir John Cheeke, against the Rebels, whereof before we have made

so often mention: When common order of the law can take no place in unruly, and disobedient subjects: and all men will of wilfulnesse resist with rage, and thinke their owne violence, to be the best justice: then be wise Magistrates compelled by necessitie, to seeke an extreme remedy, where meane salves helpe not, and bring in the Martiall Law where none other law serveth

* *

*

News of the Library and the Library Associates

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

From March 1944 through July 1945 Helen and Sydney Stringer found themselves on separate continents: he, a medical officer in Africa, Italy, France and Germany and she, the mother of four, living in Skaneateles, New York. They wrote almost daily—articulate, courageous, touching, often humorous letters—exchanging accounts of life in the war zone and on the home front.

The letters were recently made into the book *Prisms: As We Were, March 23, 1944–July 12, 1945* and privately printed by Helen Stringer (Manlius, New York: 1989). Both the book and the original letters have been donated by Helen Stringer to the George Arents Research Library and are available for research use.

Amy S. Doherty
University Archivist

The development of the Library's research collections has been dependent, in great measure, on the generous contributions of many friends over the past 120 years. The continuing support of donors and members of Library Associates will ensure the vitality of the collections into the future.

Briefly noted below are a number of interesting additions to the special collections in the George Arents Research Library acquired in 1989–90 through gifts and purchase by the Associates.

Borgstedt, Douglas

474 original cartoons (1965–75) by Douglas Borgstedt, syndicated editorial cartoonist for the *Philadelphia Bulletin*, as an addition to

21

BATEMAN'S
BURWASH
SUSSEX

Dec. 22. 1930

Dear Suzanne -

She wife - still abed but
thank goodness, a bit more free
dom pain - has awfully pleased
with the Delphinium rose which
suggested (in spite of the unusual
heavily weather) Spring & Gardening,
and the return of life generally.
It's a good solid-based thing and
(as we have found out already) will
take a lot of long stuff without
tipping over: and in transmitted
light it looks like a jewel. It
was kind of you.

What I miss extraordinarily
now (I expect you did, too) is the
scent of those forest trees blowing along
whatever I heat - even from warm towns.
It soothes my nerves - rather depressing.
All good wishes from us with
best regards

Rudraw Kipling.

A letter of thanks to Colonel Roland Gwynne recently donated by Chancellor Tolley. A transcription will be found at the top of the next page.

Dec. 22, 1930

Dear Gwynne—

The wife—still abed but thank goodness, a bit more free from pain—was awfully pleased with the Delphinium vase which suggested (in spite of this unusual beastly weather) spring & gardening, and the return of life generally. It's a good solid-based thing and (as we have found out already) will take a lot of long stuff without tipping over; and in transmitted light it looks like a jewel. It was kind of you.

What I miss extraordinarily now (I take it you did, too) is the sound of those four feet trotting along wherever I went—even from room to room. It makes my walks—rather depressing. All good wishes from us both

Ever sincerely
Rudyard Kipling.

the collection of his work originally established at Syracuse University in 1966. *Gift of Douglas Borgstedt.*

Byrne, Donn

An extensive collection of first and later English and American editions of the novels and short-story collections of the Irish-American author, Donn Byrne (1889–1928), best known for his book *Messer Marco Polo*. The collection consists of twenty-one titles in forty-two editions and states. *Gift of Henry S. Bannister.*

Donleavy, J. P.

A collection of ten first editions of the works of American-born novelist J. P. Donleavy (b. 1926), including his two early novels, *The Ginger Man* and *A Singular Man*. *Gift of David Tatham.*

Kipling, Rudyard

Additions to the Rudyard Kipling Collection consisting of letters, a typescript of unpublished poems found among his papers and given to Sir Alfred Webb-Johnson by Kipling's wife, and proofs and copyright editions of broadside poems, many with corrections by the author. Of particular interest is a group of fourteen letters (1930–35) to Colonel Roland Gwynne D.S.O. discussing dogs, gardening, his failing health, and giving news of his wife. In addition, there is a collection of nine letters (1897–1933) to Sir Walter R. Laurence and three letters (1895) to Rev. and Mrs. Paul Wyatt dating from the Kipling's residence in Vermont. Among

the published items are scarce printings of such poems as “The Declaration of London” (1911), “Ulster” (1912), “A Nativity” (n.d.), and “Justice” (1919). *Gift of William P. Tolley.*

Levine, Irving R.

Additions (15 linear feet) to the Irving R. Levine Papers consisting of printed material, diaries, manuscripts, correspondence, financial records, and video tapes from the period 1950–89. Of particular interest are primary materials relating to NBC correspondent and commentator Levine’s work during the Korean War and his coverage of economic summits from 1979 to 1989. *Gift of Irving R. Levine.*

Medieval Manuscripts

A late-fourteenth-century illuminated manuscript of the *Book of Judith* from the *Apocrypha* and a complete fifteenth-century antiphony containing the choral parts of the Divine Office. *From the Estate of Barbara Weiss.*

Miniature Books

A nearly complete collection of miniature books printed by Frank J. Anderson (Syracuse University M.L.S., 1951), formerly Chief Librarian of Wofford College, at his private press, the Kitemaug Press, in Spartanburg, South Carolina. *Gift of Frank J. Anderson.*

Oneida Community

A collection of nineteenth-century documents, letters, and printed materials from the Skinner family, and particularly John Langdon Skinner (1803–1889), founding member of the Oneida Community. Of particular interest are J. L. Skinner’s records of membership in the Oneida Community. These contain considerable genealogical data, information on assets brought to the Community, and biographical details of Community members. *Gift of Prudence Wayland-Smith.*

Phillips, Robert

Significant additions to the literary collection established by Robert Phillips at Syracuse University in 1967. These include correspondence with writers Joyce Carol Oates, Elizabeth Spencer, Karl

Summary of the
Oneida Association,
Feb. 1. 1850.

No. of Adults, (males 57, fem. 55,) 112	112
Youth between the ages of ten and fifteen, - - - -	13
Children under ten years old, - - -	47
Total number of Persons in the Association, - - -	172

Of the above, there are
40 married Couples, and
32 single adults, (reckoning
all over the age of fifteen.)

Whole number of males =	87
" " " females =	85
	172

Oneida Community census data for 1850 from J. L. Skinner's manuscript memoranda book.

Shapiro, and others, as well as manuscripts of Phillips's poetry and works of fiction. *Gift of Robert Phillips.*

Spanish Drama

Colección de las mejores comedias nuevas que se van representando en los teatros de esta corte . . . (Madrid, 1789?–1799). A group of 118 eighteenth-century Spanish plays brought together in a hitherto unrecorded edition of eleven volumes by Madrid publishers Ramon Ruiz and Manuel Gonzalez. *Purchased by Library Associates.*

Mark F. Weimer

Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts

POST-STANDARD AWARD CITATION, 1990, FOR ROBERT PHILLIPS

Robert Phillips, after graduation as a member of the outstanding class of 1960, you continued your studies at Syracuse University to receive a Master of Arts in English before undertaking a career in advertising in New York City. Since then, you have combined remarkable achievement in this field with a creative and intellectual life attested by your numerous books of poetry, fiction, and criticism. Also, as Delmore Schwartz's literary executor, you have published collections of his late poems, fugitive stories, and correspondence, all of which have stimulated a reassessment of his work and reputation.

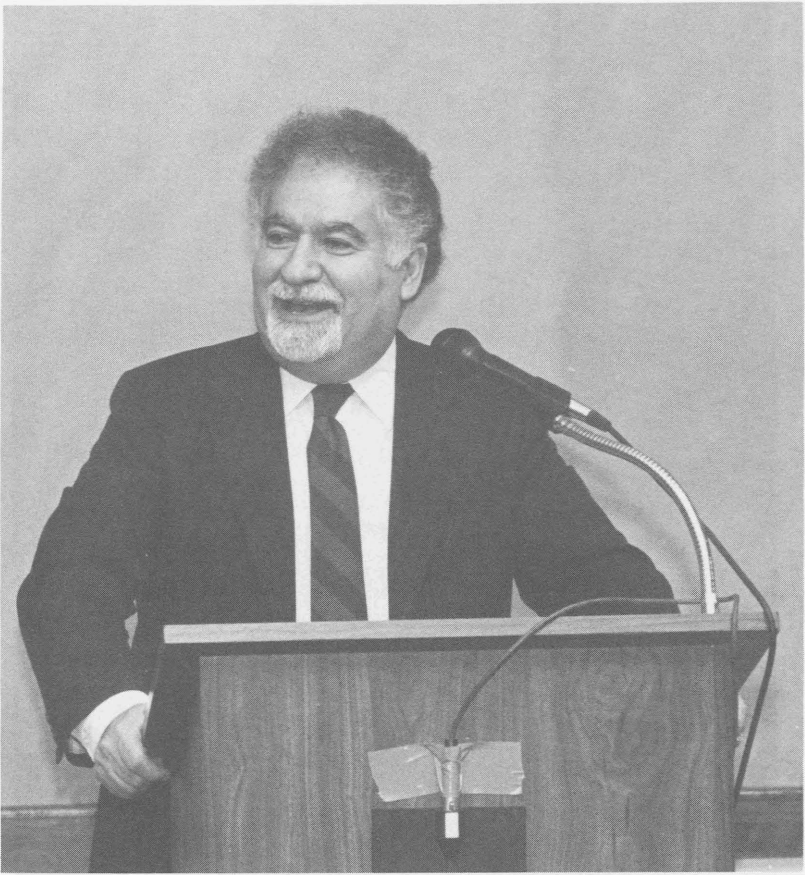
You have also served on the boards of literary reviews and of numerous organizations devoted to the promotion of literature and the arts. Among the awards and other tokens of recognition you have received are the Award in Literature of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, the George Arents Pioneer Medal, the Creative Artists' Public Service Award, and fellowships at Yaddo and the MacDowell Colony.

Your association with the Syracuse University Library extends from the time of your work as a student assistant in the old Arents Room to your present position as a life member and trustee of the Library Associates. During this period, you have helped in the acquisition of valuable collections like those of Horace Gregory, Marya Zaturenska,



Robert Phillips, ca. 1978 (Photo: Thomas Victor).

and Granville Hicks. More recently, your 1988 contribution of your own literary papers has enriched the Library's holdings through both your own work and your correspondence with many contemporary and modern authors. These include numerous writers with Syracuse



Vartan Gregorian, President of Brown University, addressing the 1990 Spring Luncheon of the Syracuse University Library Associates (Photo: Bill Gandino).

University associations, among them Phillip Booth, Hayden Caruth, Stanley Edgar Hyman, Shirley Jackson, Greg Kuzma, Joyce Carol Oates, William Van O'Connor, Delmore Schwartz, and W. D. Snodgrass.

In view of your achievements and your valuable support over the years, it is most fitting that you should receive the 1990 Post-Standard Award for Distinguished Service to the Syracuse University Library.

IN MEMORIAM

ERNST BACON, composer, pianist, conductor, teacher, and author, died in Orinda, California on March 16, 1990. He was 91.

He was the director of the Syracuse University School of Music from 1945 to 1947 and then, for the next sixteen years, professor and composer-in-residence. He wrote two symphonies (receiving a Pulitzer award in 1932 for the *Symphony in D Minor*), two piano concertos, two operas, and a variety of works for chamber ensemble. He is best known, however, for his songs and particularly for his settings of Emily Dickinson poems, of which there are over seventy. Twenty-two of the Dickinson songs were recorded in 1964 by Helen Boatwright with the composer at the piano.

Among Bacon's books are *Words on Music* (1960) and *Notes on the Piano* (1963), both still in print. Despite failing vision, he remained active as an author throughout his later years. He donated a significant portion of his personal papers to the Syracuse University Library.

THE SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY ASSOCIATES, founded in 1953, is a society whose efforts are devoted to the enrichment of the Syracuse University Library and especially the rare book and manuscript collections. The Associates' interests lie in strengthening these collections through the acquisition of unusual books, manuscripts, and other research materials which are rare and often of such value that the Library would not otherwise be able to acquire them.

The Associates welcome anyone to join whose interests incline in the direction of book collecting or the graphic arts. The perquisites of membership include borrowing privileges and general use of the Syracuse University Library's facilities and resources, as well as invitations to exhibitions, Associates-sponsored lectures, and special events of the University Library. In addition, members will receive our incidental publications, typographic keepsakes, and the *Syracuse University Library Associates Courier*, a semiannual publication that contains articles related to unusual and interesting aspects of the Library's holdings and, in particular, to the holdings of the George Arents Research Library for Special Collections.

SUGGESTED MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS are as follows: Benefactor, \$500; Sustaining member, \$200; Individual member, \$50; Faculty and staff of Syracuse University, \$30; Senior citizen and student, \$20. Checks, made payable to Syracuse University Library Associates, should be sent to the Secretary, 100 E. S. Bird Library, Syracuse University, Syracuse NY 13244-2010. For further information about the programs and activities of the Library Associates, telephone (315) 443-2697.

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