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## Catalog of the Peal Exhibition: American Literature

John Spalding Gatton  
*University of Kentucky*

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## American Literature

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176. JOHN HOWARD PAYNE. A.L.s. to Charles Lamb, 6 October 1822.

John Howard Payne (1791-1852), author of the lyric of "Home, Sweet Home," lived much of his life outside his native America. He had his first play produced in New York at the age of fourteen and debuted there as an actor a few years later. Resented as a prodigy, Payne sailed for England to reestablish his reputation, distinguishing himself at Drury Lane and in the provinces. Financial concerns, however, drove him to theatrical hack work until Edmund Kean's successful production of his blank-verse tragedy *Brutus; or, The Fall of Tarquin* in 1818 rescued him from such drudgeries. His poor management of Sadler's Wells Theatre landed him in prison for debt, and to escape subsequent duns, he fled to Paris. There he became an intimate of the great French tragedian Talma, frequented the Comédie Française, adapted current French dramas for the English stage, and eventually settled in a top-floor apartment of the Palais Royal.

In 1822 several of his London associates visited Paris, among them Charles and Mary Lamb, whom he conducted about the city. In the following months Payne and Lamb maintained a brief correspondence. One set of letters concerned Payne's two-act melodrama *Ali Pacha*. When Payne wrote from his "Palace" on 6 October 1822, he had just learned of the imminent production of his play, upon which he had "never built anything like a hope." He rather regretted that his contact with Covent Garden, where it would open, should begin with "such a trifle," but if Lamb had "the power to make it better thought of" among his "critical friends" than it deserved, Payne could get "a footing" at that theatre.

*Ali Pacha* "would have a chance," he felt, "if acted by powerful speakers." It did not have enough action "for a melodramatic company." Yet he feared that the Covent Garden managers would put "their mere posture masters into it," who would "gesticulate" his sentences, "not being able to speak them. All the better for the hearers perhaps." Should the result of his "playhouse experiment disappoint" his fears, he looked forward to the pleasure of thanking



Lamb in London "for the flattering kindness" with which he had remembered Payne in his letters.

Payne also sent his "best regards" to Mary Lamb, for whose sake he especially desired to succeed, in order to overcome "the resolution she seemd to take" when they "last supped together," of dying without seeing him again.

In closing Payne sent news of Paris. Talma's "Bellows" portrait of Shakespeare, which Lamb had admired and accepted as an authentic likeness, was, in fact, a counterfeit "manufactured in London" by a man who had made a great deal of money "by various readings of the same text, all 'the only genuine.'" Louis XVIII had begun to put restrictions on the priests, lately forbidding them to wear straw hats. Such "fastidiousness," in Payne's opinion, looked "ill for popery."

*Ali Pacha* opened on 19 October 1822, and ran for sixteen performances. According to Lamb's letter to Payne of the twenty-second, Mary gave a "most favourable" report of the première, and he found the third night of the play "most satisfactorily received."

In his career Payne wrote or adapted some fifty or sixty dramas. In May 1823 Covent Garden staged his play *Clari; or, The Maid of Milan*, set as an opera by Sir Henry Bishop, and memorable for the heroine's song "Home, Sweet Home," which became a favorite of the divas Pasta and Patti, and of Jenny Lind. After Payne returned to London, he collaborated on plays with his lifelong friend Washington Irving; seven of their works were produced, notably their adaptations from the French, *Charles II* (1824) and *Richelieu* (1826). During this period Payne found himself drawn to Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, a widow since 1822, even as she inclined toward Irving. Nothing came of either attraction.

From 1832, Payne resided for a decade in America, then, on the basis of his literary fame, he received an appointment as American consul in Tunis. He died there in 1852, captivated by schemes for further plays and plagued by debts. His association with "Home, Sweet Home" spurred the financier, philanthropist, and American art enthusiast William Wilson Corcoran to arrange for Payne's reinterment in Oak Hill Cemetery, Washington, D.C., in 1883, in a ceremony attended by President Chester A. Arthur, his cabinet, General William T. Sherman, and John Philip Sousa and the Marine Band.

Formerly in the collections of Ernest Dressel North and William Warren Carman. Peal 7,904.



177. JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL. *The Biglow Papers*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: George Nichols, 1848.

In 1846 the *Boston Courier* published a letter to the editor from one Mr. Ezekiel Biglow of "Jaylem." The correspondent explains that while in Boston the previous week his son Hosea had met a recruiting sergeant who tried to make him enlist for service in the Mexican War. That very evening the indignant Hosea wrote a poem of protest which the father encloses with his letter and which the paper also prints. In the fifth stanza Hosea declares in his pronounced Down East dialect, and with one of his many Bible-based arguments,

Ez fer war, I call it murder,—  
There you hev it plain an' flat;  
I don't want to go no furdur  
Than my Testyment fer that;  
God hez sed so plump an' fairly,  
It's ez long ez it is broad,  
An' you've gut to git up airly  
Ef you want to take in God.

Thus begins the first series of *The Biglow Papers*, a total of nine letters in verse directed against the Mexican War and slavery. A young New England farmer ostensibly wrote the *Papers*, but in fact they issued from the pen of the youthful Massachusetts poet, critic, and satirist, James Russell Lowell (1819-1891), destined to succeed Longfellow as Smith Professor of Modern Languages at Harvard (1855); to serve as first editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* (1857-1861); to author a second series of *Biglow Papers* supporting the North during the Civil War; and to represent his country as Minister to Spain (1877-1880) and to England (1880-1885).

His grandfather had introduced the clause abolishing slavery in Massachusetts into the Bill of Rights, and Lowell himself believed that the war with Mexico was part of a design to extend slaveholding territories through the expansion of American borders. To oppose such action he conceived *The Biglow Papers*. The nine poems originally appeared between 1846 and 1848 in newspapers, either the liberal *Boston Courier* or the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, of which Lowell was for a time corresponding editor.

Three of the letters represent Hosea Biglow's versification of



prose correspondence received from his rustic friend Birdofredum Sawin, "Private in the Massachusetts Regiment." Initially swallowing the propaganda of "Manifest Destiny," Sawin patriotically joined the army, only to return disillusioned by the experience: "Nimepunce a day fer killin' folks comes kind o' low fer murder."

In succeeding *Papers* Lowell satirizes the "pernicious sentiment—'Our country, right or wrong'" ("The side of our country must ollers be took"); a "Sennit" speech by John C. Calhoun on behalf of slavery; pious newspaper editors who believe ". . . wutever trash / 'll keep the people in blindness"; and a presidential candidate so uncommitted that he ends "frontin' South by North."

To extend the range of satire in *The Biglow Papers*, Lowell created the Rev. Mr. Homer Wilbur, "Pastor of the First Church of Jaalam," inveterate letter writer, and editor of Hosea's verses in their collected form. Unlike Hosea, Parson Wilbur uses standard, if pedantic, English in the caustic "Introduction, Notes, Glossary, and Copious Index" he provides for the text. George Nichols published the volume in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on 10 November 1848. Three days earlier the Whig slaveowner, Mexican War hero, and former Kentucky resident Zachary Taylor had been elected America's twelfth president. (Wilbur glossed him as "Zack, Ole, a second Washington, an antislavery slaveholder, a humane buyer and seller of men and women, a Christian hero generally.") *The Biglow Papers* came out too late to help Martin Van Buren, eighth president and Free-Soil candidate.

Printed reviews of the book were few and usually unfavorable. Even Northern popular periodicals viewed discussions of slavery and its abolition as bad business and thus gave the *Papers* scant attention. Edgar Allan Poe, writing in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, damned Lowell as "one of the most rabid of the Abolition fanatics." But Thomas Hughes, writing in 1859, correctly associated Lowell with such masters of satire as Aristophanes, Juvenal, Cervantes, Molière, Swift, and Thackeray, among others. His pen-portraits of Hosea, Birdofredum, the Pious Editor, and the Candidate have impressed modern critics as "Hogarthian."

The greatest strength of *The Biglow Papers* lies in its irony, sustained from start to finish, from the opening parodies of literary notices to Wilbur's trenchant index ("Human rights out of order on the floor of Congress, 95"). As Thomas Hughes observed, in James Russell Lowell and *The Biglow Papers*, "the American mind" had



"for the first time flowered out into thoroughly original genius."  
Peal 10,288.

178. NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE. *The House of the Seven Gables*.  
Boston: Ticknor, Reed, and Fields, 1851.

At thirty-three Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864) published his first important work, *Twice-Told Tales*, a collection of shorter narratives and sketches from magazines and annuals. At forty-six he found immediate fame with *The Scarlet Letter*. But to this masterpiece he claimed to prefer his next book, *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851). He said that unlike the "hell-fired story" of Hester Prynne's adultery, which he could illuminate with almost no "cheering light," the tale of the cursed ancestral home of the Pyncheons struck him as "rather a cheerful one than otherwise," because he brought it to "a prosperous close" filled with literal great fortune, wedding bells, and a sense of hopefulness. To friends he variously confided that *Seven Gables* was "a more natural and healthy product" of his mind, and one that was "more proper and natural for [him] to write than 'The Scarlet Letter.'" His wife Sophia had taken to her bed with a headache on hearing the conclusion to *The Scarlet Letter*, but when he read her *Seven Gables*, she pronounced it "Joy unspeakable!"

Despite this marked contrast in tone, Hawthorne labelled both works *romances*, a term he favored over *novels* for his longer fiction. As he explained in the preface to *Seven Gables*, a romance writer, unlike a novelist, enjoys "a certain latitude" of fashion and material, and may "mingle the Marvelous . . . as a slight, delicate, and evanescent flavor" with his prose. *Seven Gables* merits the "Romantic definition" for its attempt "to connect a by-gone time with the very Present that is flitting away from us."

Before Hawthorne wrote *The House of the Seven Gables*, no American author had so meditated on the interrelationship of past and present, on what he termed in his *American Notebooks* "the influence which Dead Men have among living affairs." This theme, explored by such later writers as Faulkner and Robert Penn Warren, earned Hawthorne much praise from contemporaries and successors. Melville, who dedicated *Moby Dick* to Hawthorne, discerned in *Seven Gables* "a certain tragic phase of humanity which, in our opinion, was never more powerfully embodied." If



Henry James could regard the romance as "more like a prologue to a great novel than a great novel itself," he could also celebrate it as "a large and generous production, pervaded with that vague hum, that indefinable echo, of the whole multitudinous life of man, which is the real sign of a great work of fiction." For T.S. Eliot, *The House of the Seven Gables* was simply "Hawthorne's best novel after all."

Peal 3,278.

179. HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW. *The Song of Hiawatha*. Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1855.

In 1836 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) began an eighteen-year association with Harvard College as Smith Professor of Modern Languages and Belles-Lettres. During this period he became a prominent figure in the literary and social life of Cambridge, as well as a popular writer in America and Europe. Despite his departmental duties he produced such works as *Ballads and Other Poems* (1841), including "The Village Blacksmith," "The Wreck of the Hesperus," and "The Skeleton in Armor"; *Evangeline* (1847); and *The Golden Legend* (1851). Nevertheless, he viewed his academic obligations in part as "a great hand laid on all the strings of my lyre, stopping their vibration." In 1854 he resigned his professorship.

Longfellow now had the freedom to proceed with a major poem about the American Indian over which he had apparently brooded for several years. As a student he had written "The Burial of the Minnisink"; as a teacher he had seen Black Hawk in Boston, heard stories from a student who lived for a summer on the Plains with the Indians, and conversed with an Ojibway preacher and poet who presented his autobiography to Longfellow.

Before he could start writing, he had to select the appropriate metrical form. For the primitive folk tale he contemplated he turned to the short, unrhymed lines of the Finish epic *Kalevala*. (As preparation for his position at Harvard he had travelled and studied in Germany and Scandinavia.) From *Kalevala* ("Land of Heroes") he derived his poem's unrhymed trochaic tetrameter (a line of eight syllables, divided into four feet, with the stress on the first syllable of each foot). By late June he had begun "Manabozho," his original name for the work; by the end of July he had retitled it *Hiawatha*.



As he knew little about Indians he drew on scholarly tomes by such experts as Schoolcraft, Tanner, and Heckewelder. He may also have studied George Catlin's engravings of Indian life, three hundred of which appeared in 1841.

Longfellow completed *The Song of Hiawatha* at noon on 21 March 1855. "Of course," he wrote his publisher, "the bells rang!" It was published on 10 November 1855 and was an immediate success—indeed, more successful than any of his previous works. In the first four weeks, the book sold 10,000 copies, and treble that in six months. Hawthorne wrote the poet that he read it "with great delight." Longfellow's wife Fanny found it "very fresh and fragrant of the woods and genuine Indian life," but predicted accurately that "its rhymeless rhythm" would "puzzle the critics" and be "abundantly abused." Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, the author of Longfellow's principal source books, praised the poet's ability faithfully to portray the Indian not only as "a warrior in war, a savage in revenge," but also as "a father at the head of his lodge, a patriot in the love of his country."

Although a romanticization of the Indian, Longfellow's story of Hiawatha, Minnehaha, and Nokomis, set by the shores of Gitche Gumee, has passed into the cultural and literary heritage of the country.

Peal 3,188.

180. WASHINGTON IRVING. *Wolfert's Roost and Other Papers, Now First Collected*. New York: George Putnam, 1855.

*Wolfert's Roost* appeared in February 1855 as the fifteenth volume in Putnam's edition of *The Works of Washington Irving* (1849-1859). Then acknowledged as the leading American author, Irving (1783-1859) was nearing the end of a lengthy and successful life in letters. He had achieved an international reputation with *The Sketch Book* (1819), containing such evergreens as "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." A fairly steady stream of tales and histories followed, products, like *The Sketch Book*, of a seventeen-year sojourn in Europe from 1815. A hero's welcome marked his triumphant return to America. Works with native themes, along with biographies of Goldsmith, Mahomet, and Washington, occupied his remaining years.

Although heralded here and abroad as a new *Sketch Book* in the



Irving canon, *Wolfert's Roost*, as the full title indicates, in fact collected nineteen pieces originally published in magazines between 1826 and 1841, and only cursorily revised for the miscellany.

This single volume, which Irving labelled "garret-trumpery," demonstrates his breadth: history, biography, literary criticism, chronicle, essay, tale, gothic story, and sketch. Characters, settings, and plots derive both from his travels in Europe and from his familiarity with such American locales as the region around "Sunnyside," his country estate near Tarrytown, New York, and portions of Kentucky, the Carolinas, and Virginia. The reader journeys by easy stages from Sleepy Hollow to Florida to the Bermudas and around the continent, mixing with a governor, a count, the Duke of Wellington, a Knight of Malta, and three hanged pirates. The author not only entertains but in certain of the writings by turns voices a humanitarian concern for the Indian, preaches the moral of moderation, and criticizes the economic policies of the Van Buren administration. He also repeatedly bemoans the country's infatuation with luxury and its worship of "the almighty dollar." (Since its introduction in 1837 in his sketch "The Creole Village," the phrase, he punningly observed in a footnote to the 1855 edition, had passed "into current circulation.")

Ironically, Irving's own financial insecurity contributed to the publication of *Wolfert's Roost*. In 1848, without an American publisher or ideas for new tales, he signed a demanding contract with Putnam providing for the republication of his complete works and the composition of new volumes. A dearth of fresh material forced him to rummage in his notebooks and trunks for literary oddments with which to meet his commitments. George Haven Putnam recalled having to "entice the papers" for *Wolfert's Roost* from Irving's desk drawers. Neither man labored over the editing or revision of the old stories. Pieces hastily assembled years earlier for magazines received scarcely more care when selected for *Wolfert's Roost*.

However cobbled together its contents, *Wolfert's Roost* delighted the public. Putnam saw Irving "affected actually to tears" by the praise the volume elicited. Although the collection of a septuagenarian, the book presented anew the popular charm, grace, and wit of Irving's youth.

The front cover features a central gilt vignette of "Sunnyside" (an appropriate design since its original name was "The Roost"), with its turrets, crow-stepped gables, and weathercocks backed by a



panorama of the Hudson River. So intimate and famous was Irving's association with his estate that by 1855 contemporary readers could be expected to identify the cover illustration immediately. F.O.C. Darley (1822-1888) provided a frontispiece entitled "The Cow Boys" (for the opening title story) and a facing picture, "The Contented Man" (for a tale of the same name). Like other of his pen-and-ink drawings for books by Irving, Cooper, and English authors, these works embody Darley's technical facility and his sense of humor.

Peal 3,279.

181. WASHINGTON IRVING. A.L.s. to John Young Mason, 19 September 1847.

On 19 September 1847 Washington Irving wrote from Sunnyside to the Hon. John Young Mason (1799-1859), Secretary of the Navy in the Polk Administration, to recommend Langford Howard Newman "for an appointment as a Midshipman." Newman, then seventeen years of age, would remain eligible for "nearly nine months to come," and Irving "most earnestly" hoped that "should a vacancy occur" during that period, his candidate would receive "the favorable attention of the Department."

On the last page of the double sheet Mason wrote a draft of an acknowledgment to Irving's request. There was not, at that time, an opening to which Newman could be appointed, but when "a suitable occasion" offered itself, it would give the secretary "pleasure to gratify W.I."

Peal 8,407.

182. HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW. *The Courtship of Miles Standish and Other Poems*. Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1858.

Hawthorne's placement of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow at "the head of our list of native poets" reflected the view of the many readers who made him the most popular poet of his age. *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855) sold 30,000 copies in six months, and his next major poem, *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1858), accounted for the sale of 5000 volumes in Boston on the day of its publication. Thereafter, Longfellow became a national institution. People rose



when he entered a room; gentlemen removed their hats in his presence; in England, where Queen Victoria received him at Windsor, and Oxford and Cambridge conferred honorary doctorates upon him, his popularity overshadowed that of Tennyson and Browning; his poetry was translated throughout Europe. Following his death, his residence at Craigie House, Cambridge, Massachusetts, became an American literary shrine, and a bust was raised to him in Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey. (Longfellow was the first American to be so honored.)

In writing *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, originally entitled *Priscilla*, Longfellow drew on early New England chronicles, such as William Bradford's *History of Plimmoth Plantation* (completed in 1651), on local tradition, and on family anecdote. (He claimed descent from the poem's lovers, John and Priscilla.) He cast the Puritan romance in unrhymed English hexameters. The widower Captain Miles Standish asks his younger, better-educated friend John Alden to be his proxy in wooing the orphan Priscilla Mullins. Alden, also in love with the girl, reluctantly performs the task in the name of friendship. When Priscilla hears Standish's proposal secondhand, she asks her famous, coquettish question that concludes Part III, "Why don't you speak for yourself, John?" Standish, infuriated by Alden's failure, must leave on a campaign against the Indians. Alden, originally intending to return to England, instead stays on to protect Priscilla. When news reaches them of Standish's death, they make plans to marry. At the wedding, however, Standish reappears, begs forgiveness for his anger, and is reconciled with his friends. What Longfellow described in his journal as "an idyl of the Old Colonial times; a bunch of Mayflowers from the Plymouth woods," has become part of America's literary treasure.

Unaccessioned.

183. JAMES THOMAS FIELDS. A.L.s. to John Greenleaf Whittier, 27 July 1865.

At the age of twenty-six James Thomas Fields (1817-1881) joined a prominent Boston publishing house. Between 1843 and 1871 it was known successively as William D. Ticknor and Company; Ticknor, Reed and Fields; Ticknor and Fields; and Fields, Osgood and Company. In his day Fields was the city's foremost publisher.



In 1859 he and Ticknor purchased the *Atlantic Monthly*, and two years later he succeeded James Russell Lowell as its editor; at his own retirement a decade later, Fields yielded his chair to William Dean Howells. His clients and friends included many prominent men and women of letters, notably, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Longfellow, Julia Ward Howe, Hawthorne, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Emerson, Thoreau, De Quincey, Dickens, Charles Reade, Tennyson, Browning, and Thackeray.

John Greenleaf Whittier was, for many years, the steadiest and among the most respected of the early contributors of poetry to the *Atlantic*. His "Barbara Frietchie" in the October 1863 number proved to be one of the most significant Civil War poems Fields printed in the journal. With his native ballads Whittier helped create the pronounced New England tone of the magazine during Fields's tenure as editor. Nevertheless, Fields insisted on mechanical accuracy in verse and often revised and occasionally rejected Whittier's rough rhymes and meters. (He himself produced several volumes of poetry, along with essays, sketches, and reminiscences.)

From Boston on 27 July 1865 Fields wrote to Whittier to proffer a gift, to offer a compliment, and to make a request. He has for the poet "a little souvenir in the shape of an engraving framed" which he hesitates to send "as glass is proverbially brittle." However, he hopes "to get it put up in some safer way" and dispatched "shortly." Fields also promises to forward "in a day or two" Whittier's *Home Ballads*, originally published by Ticknor and Fields in the summer of 1860.

Fields then states the purpose of his letter. He wishes that Whittier would "now and then" give the *Atlantic* "a prose sketch like those in the 'Literary Recreations' " (1854), a work composed of selections reprinted chiefly from his book *The Stranger in Lowell* (1845) and from his columns in the antislavery weekly, the *National Era*. "Yankee Gypsies" and "Dr. Singletary" are pieces after Fields's "own heart." The editor encourages the author to "try and get out of" his "portfolio some more of those charming things, not omitting the *poems* also." Fields claims that Whittier's contributions to the *Atlantic* "always refine" his eyes as well as those of the readers. In parting, Fields assures Whittier that he "cannot write too often."

In 1866 Ticknor and Fields published Whittier's longest poem, *Snow-Bound: A Winter Idyl*, which rapidly went into three editions. He continued to contribute regularly to the *Atlantic*, and



at Fields's death in 1881 responded to editor Thomas Bailey Aldrich's request for a poetic memoir with "In Memory," printed in the July issue.

Peal 10,731.

184. JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER. *The Panorama and Other Poems*. Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1856.

After encountering at the age of fourteen the celebration of rural life in the works of Robert Burns, John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892), born in Massachusetts of Quaker stock, tried his hand at writing verse. By 1827 he had had some eighty poems published in local newspapers, one of them run by William Lloyd Garrison, who became a close friend. From 1829 to the Civil War, Whittier practiced journalism in Hartford, Philadelphia, and Washington. Deeply affected by the antislavery movement, he developed into one of the nation's leading abolitionists, advancing the cause through political involvement, and through pamphlets and poems he printed in the *National Era*, of which he was an editor from 1847 to 1860. During his tenure the paper also serialized Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1851-1852). After 1859 he contributed with greater frequency to the *Atlantic Monthly*, where he found a wider audience for his work.

In his poetry he addressed a variety of topics. His proletarian verses, *Songs of Labor* (1850), commemorate the dignity of manual work. His hymns continue to appear in standard hymnals. His numerous ballads capture in detail the New England country life he knew so well. Whittier's fame in this latter field increased with the publication of collections like *The Chapel of the Hermits* (1853) and *Home Ballads, Poems and Lyrics* (1860), containing "Skipper Ireson's Ride" and "Telling the Bees." In 1866 appeared *Snow-Bound: A Winter Idyl*, Whittier's masterpiece. In this regional period picture, a counterpart to Burns's "The Cotter's Saturday Night," Whittier recounts the experiences of a household during a snowstorm. The poem's popularity made him financially secure.

In his later years, though plagued by ill health, he received many honors, including festivities on his seventieth and eightieth birthdays, with tributes from Emerson, Longfellow, and Holmes, and a Quaker town and college in California named after him. Doubtless aware of the diffuseness and flaccidity that mar portions



of his prodigious canon, he once noted that he wrote "good Yankee rhymes, but out of New England they would be cashiered." Yet he happily shared his singular gift, in "The Panorama" asking his countrymen to "Forget the poet, but his warning heed, / And shame his poor word with your nobler deed."

This work served as the title piece for *The Panorama and Other Poems*, a collection published in 1856. In addition to "Burns" and "Maud Muller," the volume includes one of Whittier's most famous characters, "The Barefoot Boy" (first printed in 1855) with the familiar opening couplet, "Blessings on thee, little man, / Barefoot boy, with cheeks of tan." Late in life Whittier expressed the belief that the happiest if not wisest people in the world were those who still retained "something of the child's creative faculty of imagination, which makes atmosphere and color, sun and shadow, and boundless horizons, out of what seems to prosaic wisdom most inadequate material." In this poem he immortalizes the carefree youth who lives close to nature and studies her wonders. Adopting a nostalgic, bathetic tone in the closing lines he exhorts his "little man" to "Live and laugh, as boyhood can," for time will put an end to such delights: "Ah! that thou couldst know the joy, / Ere it passes, barefoot boy."

Peal 9,967.

185. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES. *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*. Edinburgh: Alexander Strahan, 1859.

Cambridge-born, Harvard-educated, unembarrassed about the Boston Brahmin class to which he belonged or the leadership his city exerted in the nation's cultural life ("Boston State-House is the hub of the solar system," he once remarked), Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894) became famous even as a collegian with the poem "Old Ironsides," which was responsible for saving the battle frigate *Constitution*. The publication of his *Poems* (1836) coincided with his Harvard M.D.; the two vocations, literary and scientific, nurtured him throughout his long and productive life.

In 1842 Holmes became the first dean of the Harvard Medical School, and was associated with the institution as Parkman Professor of Anatomy and Physiology until his retirement in 1882. Not the least of his accomplishments were several important treatises on disease.



As *littérateur*, Holmes was one of the founders of the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1857 and was responsible for the journal's name. As contributor of the lively, urbane monologues of an "autocrat" at an imaginary Boston boardinghouse, Holmes found the way to express his sprightly views on almost any topic, even to occasionally declaiming poetry at the breakfast table. These essays were collected in *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table* (1858), subtitled "Every man his own Boswell," which inaugurated a popular series continued by *The Professor at the Breakfast-Table* (1860), *The Poet at the Breakfast-Table* (1872), and *Over the Tea-Cups* (1891). Holmes was also much in demand as a lecturer, and his novels, *Elsie Venner* (1861) particularly, are considered precursors of the modern psychological novel.

Two of Holmes's better-known poems, "The Deacon's Masterpiece; or, The Wonderful 'One-Hoss Shay,'" which gently mocked the Calvinism of his minister-father, and "The Chambered Nautilus," which uses the self-enlarging housing of the shellfish as a metaphor for the progress of the soul, were both printed in *The Autocrat*. The latter ends with the famous invocation:

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,  
As the swift seasons roll!  
Leave thy low-vaulted past!  
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
Till thou at length art free,  
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

Holmes's son, Oliver Wendell, Jr. (1841-1935), distinguished jurist and Supreme Court justice (1902-1932), was even more celebrated than his father as a prose stylist. Richard Rovere has written of the son, who knew John Quincy Adams and Alger Hiss at the extremes of his life, that "he lived in the state of grace we call maturity as long as any man in the history of this republic."

Peal 10,344.

186. SIDNEY LANIER. Holograph of "To J.D.H.," signed, 1866.

The Georgia native Sidney Lanier (1842-1881) returned from service in the Confederate Army with a horror of warfare (reflected



A-wild to quaff some cup of Lethe,  
Pain is proud and scorns to weep.

My heart breaks if it cling about thee,  
And still breaks, if far from thee.

O dear, dear death, to live without thee,  
O sad life — to keep thee mine.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sidney Lanier.

1866.

Second page of holograph of Sidney Lanier's "To J.D.H." The row of x's indicates an omission (item 186)



in his only novel, *Tiger-Lilies*, 1867) and with a latent, ultimately fatal tuberculosis aggravated by several months as a prisoner at Point Lookout, Maryland. Unable to support his family as a lawyer, teacher, or hotel clerk, he moved to Baltimore, where he played first flute with the Peabody Symphony Orchestra and wrote verse designed to show the formal relationship between poetry and music. He attracted notice with his contributions to *Lippincott's Magazine*, collected in *Poems* in 1877, and two years later, he accepted a lectureship at Johns Hopkins. From his classes came *The Science of English Verse* (1880), critical studies on music as the basis of poetry, and *The English Novel* (1883). After the war, Lanier emerged as the leading exponent of Southern high seriousness in literature, insisting that the true power and importance of poetry lay in its music.

Although "The Symphony," "The Marshes of Glynn," and "Marsh Song—At Sunset" stand in the forefront of his poetic creations, Lanier claimed in 1866 that his short piece, "To Captain James DeWitt Hankins" was "the best thing" he had written, "approaching more nearly" than other lines his "ideal of simplicity." Involvement in a political dispute led to Captain Hankins's death at Surry Court House, Virginia, on 19 October 1866. (In 1884, C.E. Williams romanticized the episode in the novel *The Penalty of Recklessness; or, Virginia Society Twenty Years Ago*.) During the war Lanier had become acquainted with the captain and his family while stationed near their home, Bacon's Castle, close to the mouth of the James River opposite Newport News. Virginia Hankins, whom he deeply loved for a time, requested Lanier to write what he termed "a little In Memoriam" to her brother. The Tennysonian allusion was most apt. For a decade, Lanier derived from Tennyson the majority of the literary quotations in his letters, journal, and published prose, the Englishman's elegiac mood and his celebration of love and friendship initially appealing to the Southerner's sentimental nature. In *Memoriam*, Tennyson's elegy in iambic tetrameter for his youthful intimate Arthur Henry Hallam, had a marked influence on the mood and language of Lanier's writings. In particular, it provided a model for Lanier's octosyllabic elegy for Captain Hankins, dead at the age of twenty-five.

Lanier wrote the poem in 1866, while a clerk in Montgomery, Alabama, intending it for publication in the Richmond and Petersburg, Virginia, newspapers. In fact, it only appeared posthumously, in the July 1886 number of *Century Magazine*, with



the title "To J.D.H." and with the first and last stanzas omitted on the advice of the *Century's* editor. The Peal Collection contains a signed, dated autograph manuscript of the four quatrains in the shorter version of the poem, beginning "Dead Friend, forgive a wild lament." A row of x's before and after the text indicates the omissions. The manuscript represents a fine example of an early Lanier work.

Peal 11,965.

187. BRET HARTE. A.L.s. to Mr. Macmillan, [ca. 1885-1893].

Francis Brett Hart (1836-1902), the father of the romantic western novel, was born in Albany, New York, but by 1854 had migrated to California and tried his hand at a variety of jobs, including work in the mining fields of the Mother Lode (experience he was to use to effect in his first stories), before settling in San Francisco in 1860. Establishing himself as a printer and journalist, he became a prominent literary figure with contributions to the *Golden Era* and the *Northern Californian* and his first books of verse and parody. In 1868 Harte became editor of the *Overland Monthly*, a newly founded magazine modeled closely on the *Atlantic Monthly*. The logo of the *Overland* was a snarling bear, symbol of California and the Wild West, crossing a railroad track, symbol of the East and its civilization. (The Peal Collection contains a Harte letter written on *Overland* stationery.) The magazine became a great success, appealing to readers on both sides of the continent by publishing Mark Twain, Joaquin Miller, and Harte himself, whose celebrated local-color story, "The Luck of Roaring Camp," appeared in the second issue, followed by "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," "Tennessee's Partner," "Brown of Calaveras," and others, stories that skillfully blended realistic settings and events with romantic, moralistic themes.

Publication of *The Luck of Roaring Camp and Other Sketches* (1870) won almost worldwide renown for Harte. In the spring of 1871 he returned to New York in triumph, exulting in the acclaim of admiring fans at each cross-country stop. The *Atlantic Monthly* gave him a contract for \$10,000 for twelve contributions, but the stories that resulted were mediocre, and Harte's popularity proved short-lived. He continued to publish, but without his earlier success, so that by 1878 he was forced to accept appointment as



United States consul, first in Crefeld, Germany, then at Glasgow. In 1885 he settled in London, where he lived until his death, turning out poor imitations of his California stories, which were nonetheless accepted for publication by English editors.

The undated letter in the Peal Collection to Mr. Macmillan is from the early part of his London years. Harte is responding to his correspondent's question about the word "tule," which Harte explains as the "Mexican aboriginal term for the 'bulrush,'" and, more specifically, the marsh or swamp in which it grows, as in the expressions "in among the tules" and "down in the tules."

Formerly in the collections of Ernest Dressel North and William Warren Carman. Peal 8,792.

188. JOAQUIN MILLER. *Songs of the Sierras*. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1871.

Joaquin Miller (1841?-1913) is often bracketed with Bret Harte as a pioneer western local-colorist, although Miller specialized in poetry rather than fiction. Unlike Harte, he was a genuine westerner, having migrated with his family from his Liberty, Indiana, birthplace to frontier Oregon in a covered wagon. Born Cincinnatus Hiner Miller, he adopted the name "Joaquin" after the Mexican bandit Murietta. The events of his early life, chronicled in autobiographical works of the 1870s and 1880s, are perhaps exaggerated; he supposedly worked in the mining fields of Nevada and California, lived with the Indians and took a squaw as wife, was later an Indian fighter and messenger for the Pony Express, and once made a storybook escape from a county jail where he was held on charges of horse stealing.

Miller started a small newspaper in northern California and used it as a forum for his literary efforts, liberal views on western politics, and strong support of the Confederacy (in a pro-Union area). He drifted to San Francisco and entered literary society with contributions to Harte's *Overland Monthly*, but the *Monthly* severely criticized the early volume of his verse published as *Joaquin et al* (1869), and he left for England.

In London Miller won acclaim as a poet with private printings of *Pacific Poems* (1870) and *Songs of the Sierras* (1871). The British were fascinated with the frontier poet and accepted the colorful bearded and buckskinned westerner into high society, where he was



hailed as "the Byron of Oregon." *Songs of the Sierras* contains, in addition to such fare as the dramatic "Kit Carson's Ride," a tribute to "Burns and Byron"; in a preface to the poem, Miller tells of obtaining a bay wreath woven by the "fairest hands" of "Saucélito" and bringing it over the Rockies and the seas to place on Byron's tomb, "above the dust of the soldier-poet." An apostrophe to the Sierras written in Athens in 1870 is typical of the flavor of *Songs*:

Have I not turned to thee and thine,  
O sun-land of the palm and pine,  
And sung thy scenes, surpassing skies,  
Till Europe lifted up her face  
And marvelled at thy matchless grace,  
With eager and inquiring eyes?

In the first American edition of *Songs of the Sierras*, displayed, the publishers included as back matter some twenty pages of laudatory reviews from the British press, "presented to the American public, with a feeling of national pride." But Miller was to outlive this acclaim after returning to his native country. In later years he wrote dramas and novels.

Peal 9,928.

189. LOUISA MAY ALCOTT. *Little Men*. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1871.

Louisa May Alcott (1832-1888) was a woman whose hope and ambition were frequently stifled by the demands of her parents and sisters. The *Little Women* series of books that Louisa wrote reflected the positive side of her relationship with her family, the thinly veiled descriptions of her home life being designed to entertain and inspire children. Louisa herself often admitted that the series was somewhat trite and boring, but continued producing the books, as their popularity assured her family's monetary comfort and security. The authoress's life was not the rosy "Plumfield" that she related in her books, but writing them was important to her, because the medium allowed her to express the emotions, dreams, and desires that she suppressed.

Louisa's father, Bronson Alcott, spent much of his life teaching his socialistic philosophy, and failed to make much of a living. As a



result, Louisa began writing at an early age to support her family. It was not until *Little Women* appeared in 1868 that Louisa finally began earning a comfortable income. The book was a commercial success, bringing her sudden recognition in the literary world. Two other successful works, *Hospital Sketches* and *An Old-Fashioned Girl*, quickly followed, leaving the Alcotts financially assured. Tired and ill from the pressure of writing, Louisa travelled to Europe to recover her health in 1870. She thrived abroad, away from the cares of her family. In Italy, however, her recovery received a shocking setback when news came that John Pratt, husband of her sister Anna, had died suddenly of calomel poisoning. (Calomel, a popular mercury-based drug, was also often taken by Louisa.) Although she was never outwardly able to express her feelings, the abrupt death deeply affected Louisa. In an effort to cope with her grief, she once again began to write.

The result was *Little Men*, written in a frenzied three weeks in Rome. Louisa felt driven to write the novel, with the idea that the proceeds from its publication would go to benefit her sister's children. The most poignant passage of the book is the death of John Brooke (an obvious analogue of Pratt) and the family's reaction to his passing. Seen through the eyes of the children, who are somewhat removed from the death scene, much as Louisa was at the time of Pratt's death, the passage demonstrates the bittersweet sentimentality common throughout much of her work. The sympathetic overtures of the children to "Aunt Jo" (Louisa) emphasized her own desire for companionship and affection, as Jo comes home wanting to "cuddle" and be waited upon.

*Little Men*, which appeared shortly before her fortieth birthday, came at a transitional point in her career. During the next six years Louisa produced no major work. Her recurring bouts of illness caused her spirit and ambition to decline. She died, shortly after her father, in the spring of 1888.

Peal 2,686.

190. HARRIET BEECHER STOWE. *Oldtown Fireside Stories*. Boston: James R. Osgood, 1872.

The antislavery Calvinist minister Lyman Beecher was the father of clergymen Edward and Henry Ward Beecher, women's education pioneer Catherine Beecher (who founded the Western Female



Institute in Cincinnati), and Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896), author of the antislavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), the best-selling American book of the nineteenth century. Born and reared in Connecticut, Harriet spent eighteen years in Cincinnati (1832-1850), where her father headed the Lane Theological Seminary. She saw at close hand the institution she was to attack so effectively on a trip to Kentucky during this period. Marrying Calvin Ellis Stowe, a theology professor at her father's seminary, in 1836, she moved with him to Bowdoin, Maine (1850), and Andover, Massachusetts (1852).

Outrage at the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 was probably the immediate impetus for *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, in which Mrs. Stowe exploited all the conventions of sentimental fiction for her purposes, notably in the crudely villainous Simon Legree and the saintly Evangeline St. Clare. After trips abroad (she was met with adulation in England and received by Queen Victoria) and the publication of a second, less successful antislavery novel, *Dred, A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp* (1856), she turned to tales of her native New England, with fictional rather than propagandistic ends. Although *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, that "chaotic masterpiece," remains her greatest achievement, her New England books are not without their importance, showing, in the words of Henry Nash Smith, "her enduring concern . . . with the relation of the actual world to the realm of spirit."

Mrs. Stowe was eventually to reject her Calvinist upbringing in the aftermath of the death of a son whose soul and its fate she anguished over. Her New England novels and stories in particular show a counter-theology of love and mercy as against the stern Calvinism of her father. Books such as *Oldtown Fireside Stories*, whose anecdotal unity is provided by raconteur Sam Lawson, show also Mrs. Stowe's gift for comedy and dialect.

The Wolcott copy. Peal 10,051.

191. THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH. *Marjorie Daw and Other People*. Boston: James R. Osgood, 1873.

During the last half of the nineteenth century the New Hampshire-born author Thomas Bailey Aldrich (1837-1907) enjoyed a reputation as the literary equal of William Dean Howells and Mark Twain. Successive volumes of poetry earned him enthusiastic



reviews and favorable comparisons with Longfellow, Lowell, and Whittier.

From occasional contributor to magazines he advanced to assistant editor of N.P. Willis's weekly *Home Journal* and to managing editor of the *Illustrated News*. In 1865 he moved from New York to Boston where for nine years (1866-1874) he edited *Every Saturday* and produced the popular semi-autobiographical novel *The Story of a Bad Boy* (1869). At the same time Howells worked as assistant editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, published, like Aldrich's periodical, by Ticknor and Fields. The two young men soon became acquainted and remained friends for life. In 1881 Aldrich, by then the respected author of poetry, short fiction, a novel, and a detective mystery, succeeded the resigning Howells as editor-in-chief of the *Atlantic*. In his nine-year tenure he adhered to a conservative policy and "Boston-plated" traditions. Yet Aldrich abhorred dullness and won wide contemporary fame as a wit. Twain called him "brilliant. . . . When he speaks, the diamonds flash." These traits appear in Aldrich's remark that Horace Scudder, his successor at the journal, was greater than Moses, for although Moses dried up the Red Sea once, Scudder dried up the *Atlantic* monthly.

In 1873 Aldrich published nine of his best short stories under the title *Marjorie Daw and Other People*. Howells recognized that the book practically created a new species in fiction "in which character and incident constantly verge with us towards the brink of a quite precipitous surprise ending. . . ." Aldrich's epistolary novelette "Marjorie Daw" brought him international acclaim and remains a classic of American fiction. The story involves two young men, one recovering in the city from a broken leg, the other residing with his ill father at an isolated summer hotel. In an exchange of letters the country dweller so skillfully describes a neighboring colonial mansion and the lovely girl who lives there that his correspondent falls in love with her. But when the city beau eventually arrives to meet Miss Daw, he discovers that she exists only in his friend's imagination. "A Rivermouth Romance," "Miss Mehetabel's Son," and "The Friend of My Youth" display Aldrich's talents as a local-color writer. "Quite So" draws on his limited experience as a journalist for the *New York Tribune* during the Civil War. Realistic treatment of children distinguishes "A Young Desperado," about a mischievous six-and-a-half-year-old. In the fanciful gothic tale, "A Struggle for Life," an American tries to escape from his fiancée's



Paris tomb. "Mademoiselle Olympe Zabriski" highlights the rigid distinction between the merely wealthy and the old Hudson River aristocracy. "Père Antoine's Date-Palm" tells a sentimental story of love, death, and a miraculously grown fruit tree.

In praising this last piece for its "sobriety and purity of composition," Mrs. Nathaniel Hawthorne pinpointed one of Aldrich's strengths—his talent for compression. He regularly wrote the last paragraph first, then, when he had completed the story, he eliminated all but the essential details. Using this technique Aldrich created unusual short fiction that remains worthy of note.

The A.A. McFall copy. Peal 10,260.

192. GEORGE WASHINGTON CABLE. *The Grandissimes: A Story of Creole Life*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1880.

George Washington Cable's first novel, *The Grandissimes*, set in his native New Orleans in 1803 and dealing with a feud between two Creole families, owed its publication in large part to a Scandinavian academic living in New York State. Early in 1877, Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen, a Norwegian author and professor at Cornell University, wrote Cable (1844-1925) complimenting his series of short stories about New Orleans that had appeared in magazines between 1873 and 1876. In reply, the gratified Cable outlined the plot of a novel he was contemplating. Boyesen suggested that Cable submit the manuscript to *Scribner's Monthly* for serialization before book publication, and he promised to intervene with the editors on Cable's behalf. *The Grandissimes* ran in *Scribner's Monthly* from November 1879 to October 1880, and was published in a single volume in 1880.

Unlike the earlier sketches, the novel permitted Cable the breadth to develop characterizations, to trace complex relationships, and to expand his setting. Much of the strength of *The Grandissimes* lies in its rich social texture suffused with realism, warmth, and drama: the quadroon balls; the voodooes; the tragedy of slavery, f.m.c. and f.w.c. (free men and women of color); the ravages of flood, cholera, and yellow fever.

As with much of his writing, Cable's novel has value for its descriptions of locale and its use of black and Creole dialects. Yet the author, always an enemy of slavery, maintained in a letter that he meant to make *The Grandissimes* "a political work," in which he



would attack the oppression of the black man by the white South. If his moral purpose enraged many Southerners, the book and its author won praise from readers and reviewers in New Orleans and across the nation. In correspondence with Cable, William Dean Howells applauded the work's structure and confided that the Creole dialect had so "intoxicated" him and his wife that they spoke nothing else. (As the phonetic spellings proved difficult for the general public, however, Cable reduced them for a new edition of *The Grandissimes* in 1883.) In platform readings—including those given with Mark Twain from November 1884 to the following February—Cable recreated such characters from *The Grandissimes* as Madame Nancanou and Raoul Innerarity. Here the dialect proved more effective as its oral presentation eliminated the difficulties many readers had experienced.

Ironically, Cable found it impossible to remain in the region which inspired his writings. By 1885 his advocacy of Negro rights had forced him to move with his family to Northampton, Massachusetts.

Through its examination of a society divided by opposing cultural traditions, *The Grandissimes* testifies to Cable's commitments to history, social criticism, and reform. He stands as the pioneer local colorist of New Orleans and one of the first liberals among Southern regionalists.

Peal 1,990.

193. THOMAS NELSON PAGE. *In Ole Virginia*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887.

Thomas Nelson Page (1853-1922) belongs to the plantation tradition of local-color writers for his depictions of a romantic way of life in the aristocratic Old South. According to New Orleans author Grace King, Page was "the first Southern writer to appear in print as a Southerner." His lasting contribution to American letters—an evocation of ante- and post-bellum Virginia—remains a standard of its kind.

*In Ole Virginia* (1887) contains six tales, four of them previously published in journals, notable for their frequent use of Negro dialect. A love letter taken from the pocket of a private killed in the fighting around Richmond inspired "Marse Chan." Sam, a former slave, remembers a pair of lovers separated by their fathers'



political rivalry. Chan falls heroically in battle and Anne dies of grief. "Unc' Edinburg's Drowndin'," also in dialect, similarly centers on an unconsummated love affair, but the story ends with the heroine present at her beloved's deathbed. "Meh Lady" and "Polly" treat of the reconciliation through marriage of sectional and political prejudices. In "No Haid Pawn" (No Head Pond) Page recounts a sensational story of the supernatural, complete with a ghost who has "preserved his wonderful strength by drinking human blood" and a mysterious deserted plantation in the swamps. In "Ole 'Stracted," Page creates one of the most poignant tales in the local-color movement. A slave becomes "distracted" or deranged when his family is taken from him to be sold. After the war he works for many years to earn their freedom. Having saved the exact amount, he finds his son only to die in his arms.

Page's reading of Scott's Waverly novels doubtless shaped the chivalric code of honor, loyalty, love, courtesy, hospitality, and regional pride that informs his characters. Death, the dominant note sounded in *In Ole Virginia*, fittingly symbolizes the decline of a society, the passing of the old order, as the South moves into Reconstruction.

In his later stories, novels, essays, and social studies, Page generally drew on similar themes and backgrounds, although after serving six years as American ambassador to Italy (1913-1919), he published *Italy and the World War* (1920) and *Dante and His Influence* (1922).

The G. Cusachs-A.A. McFall copy. Peal 9,869.

194. RICHARD HARDING DAVIS. *Van Bibber and Others*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1892.

In a relatively brief but dramatically varied life, Richard Harding Davis, "Richard the Lion Harding" (1864-1916), covered the coronation of Czar Nicholas II, the Greco-Turkish War, Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, the Spanish War in Cuba, the Spanish-American War (attached to Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders), the Boer War, the Russo-Japanese War, and World War I; published a series of books based on his battle experiences; wrote twenty-five plays; saw a dozen collections of short stories through the press; was heralded as the most handsome male of his generation; and modeled for the clean-shaven, strong-jawed,



sartorially elegant escort of the Gibson Girl in the popular drawings by his friend Charles Dana Gibson.

The son of author Rebecca Harding Davis, he began his journalistic career in his native Philadelphia, and rose to prominence as the leading reporter of his time with his stories and "specials" for the *New York Evening Sun*, *Scribner's*, *Harper's Weekly* (of which he became managing editor in 1890), and other New York and London newspapers. He was no less successful socially than professionally, equally at ease with the Roosevelts, the Pulitzers, the patrons at Delmonico's, the members of The Players, and the leading lights of Broadway.

His glamour as a dashing young reporter alone did not make him sought after. He also enjoyed a growing reputation as the author of fashionable short stories about Cortlandt Van Bibber, a *boulevardier* in silk hat and evening cape. The public eagerly took to the pieces which began appearing in March 1890 in the *Evening Sun*, and its enthusiasm swelled with their publication in book form as *Van Bibber and Others* in 1892. By its second day of release, the work had sold four thousand copies. The *New York Independent* called Davis "one of the rising stars in this field of letters"; in England *The Academy* hailed him as "one of the best of short story writers" and Van Bibber as "that most excellent of dudes."

Something of a self-portrait of his creator, Van Bibber entertains at Delmonico's (at a table held until his arrival by his socially astute man, Walters), frequents the wings and personalities of New York theatres, and spends weekends in the country. A man of leisure, he prefers "his club window and its quiet" to the bustle of "the marts of trade and finance," which he entered only "in response to a call from his lawyer who wanted his signature on some papers."

In other adventures, Van Bibber displays his morality as well as his sophistication. On one occasion he rescues a little girl abandoned by her mother and returns her to her father. Another time he apprehends a burglar, but after hearing his hard-luck story, releases him and gives him money to get home. With a sense of humor he exposes a seemingly hungry tramp as a petty racketeer.

In his charming, socialite Davis captured, as no other writer would do, the spirit of a generation of parvenus. For Booth Tarkington, Richard Harding Davis, no less than Van Bibber, represented the "beau ideal [*sic*] of jeunesse dorée."

Peal 2,449.



195. MARK TWAIN [pseud. of SAMUEL LANGHORNE CLEMENS].  
Holograph of "A Song Composed in a Dream."

Samuel Clemens's mother, Jane Lampton, was a Kentuckian who wed John Marshall Clemens in a moment of annoyance with the man she really sought. She moved to Missouri to become the mother of America's most famous writer. The scorned beau, we are told, became a Lexington physician.

As Mark Twain, Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835-1910) captured the American imagination as the literary embodiment of the western frontier. He wrote of his boyhood in Missouri, his travels on the Mississippi River, and life in California. He lectured about a trip to the Sandwich Islands and, as an "innocent abroad," gave his impressions of European culture as seen through the eyes of an unsophisticated Yankee. Although a son of the West, Clemens married Olivia Langdon of Buffalo, New York, and spent most of his adult life in the East and in Europe. He sought and attained great wealth and public acclaim, but his life was troubled by financial concerns and the tragedies of losing a son, two daughters, and his wife to various illnesses. He was increasingly repelled by the history of Christianity and simultaneously drawn to the ideas of Darwin. He concluded finally that the universe was at best but an amoral physical phenomenon in which man was only another animal; else, it was all a dream.

The manuscript on display is a characteristic sketch from Clemens's later years. It combines two features, the dream mechanism and the anxiety associated with the platform, which occur elsewhere either in his fiction, his correspondence, or his notebooks over a period of many years. "During his later period," writes Maxwell Geismar, "Clemens, as we know, was constantly playing on the theme of dream and reality, both in published and unpublished material." Although the present manuscript dates from the early years of this century when Clemens spent several winters at Riverdale, New York, the idea of dream as a framework for narrative goes back at least as far as *The Connecticut Yankee* (1889) and persists on into *The Mysterious Stranger*, of which there are several versions, none published in the author's lifetime. Clemens's late use of the dream is frequently negative, and plays on the ideas of nihilism and despair which grow along with his personal losses.

"A Song Composed in a Dream" is a narrative of seven pages



outlining a stage performance by a vocalist who transports an audience with an English version of a German song, "Die Wacht am Rhein" ("Watch on the Rhine"). "I have," he writes, "dreamed in verse with a strange frequency, considering that I am a person who does not meddle with verse at all in the daytime." The piece has the quality of a "case history," but without the analyst's interpretation. Evidently prepared for publication, with a marginal request for proofs, it does not appear in contemporary periodical indexes or collected editions of Clemens's works.

Peal 8,419.

196. MARK TWAIN. *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson; and, The Comedy, Those Extraordinary Twins*. Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1894.

*Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894), Mark Twain's novel about the fortunes of identical but unrelated men, one free, the other slave, incorporated material and ideas that had occupied the author for twenty-five years. In 1869 Twain published a magazine sketch entitled "Personal Habits of the Siamese Twins," an imaginary account of the actual Siamese twins Chang and Eng, who had come out of retirement and were again exhibiting. In 1892 he wrote a story entitled "Those Extraordinary Twins" having as its heroes the Italian brothers Angelo and Luigi, whose two heads and four arms were joined to a single body with a single pair of legs. But as Twain explained in the opening pages of the tale, into the twins' lives came "a stranger named Pudd'nhead Wilson, and a woman named Roxana; and . . . a young fellow named Tom Driscoll, whose proper place was away in the obscure background." Before he had completed half the book, "those three were taking things almost entirely into their own hands and working the whole tale as a private venture of their own." To unravel the tangles produced by two plots, he "pulled one of the stories out by the roots, and left the other one—a kind of literary Caesarean operation." He also "took the twins apart and made two separate men of them" for *Pudd'nhead Wilson*.

In the excised portion, published as "Those Extraordinary Twins," Angelo and Luigi remain joined. The grotesque story relates incidents in their lives. In a case of assault and battery brought against them by Tom Driscoll, the lawyer Pudd'nhead



Wilson argues so brilliantly on their behalf that the court can blame neither brother. Later, Luigi becomes an alderman, but cannot take his seat because the unelected Angelo would perforce also attend the meetings. City government grinds to a halt until the people, in an act of summary justice, hang Luigi.

The Italian twins, now separated, figure in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, but in subordinate roles. The novel primarily chronicles the lives of two identical babies, one, Tom Driscoll, the child of a prosperous slave owner, the other, Chambers, the son of a nearly white slave woman named Roxy. In a variation on Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper* (1882), she switches the infants so that her son grows up free and rich, while her master's child lives the life of a slave. Pudd'nhead Wilson discovers the fraud through a comparison of fingerprints, restoring the real Tom Driscoll to his rightful station and convicting the imposter.

The story originally ran as a serial in *The Century Magazine* from December 1893 to June 1894. For copyright reasons, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* first appeared in novel form in an English edition published in London by Chatto and Windus in 1894. Shortly thereafter, the American Publishing Company printed the first edition in this country under the title *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson; and, The Comedy, Those Extraordinary Twins*. By terming his novel a "tragedy," Twain signaled that he had not developed the story as a farce but with what Malcolm Bradbury characterized as "an inexorable misfortune." This tragic accent derives in part from Twain's presentation of slavery and miscegenation: "To all intents and purposes," he wrote in Chapter Two, "Roxy was as white as anybody, but the one sixteenth of her which was black outvoted the other fifteen parts and made her a negro. She was a slave, and saleable as such. Her child was thirty-one parts white, and he, too, was a slave and, by a fiction of law and custom, a negro."

Part of the novel's merit lies in Twain's pioneering literary use of the individuality of fingerprints, within two years of Sir Francis Galton's treatise on the subject (1892). Writing to his agent Redpath about *Pudd'nhead Wilson* Twain emphasized that "the fingerprints in this one is virgin ground—absolutely *fresh*, and mighty curious and interesting to anybody." By studying such prints lawyer Wilson first proves that those found on a murder weapon do not belong to the Italian twins accused of the crime; later he establishes the identity of the real Tom Driscoll.



The novels suffers at times from poor motivation, broad humor, and a confusing insistence on determinism. Despite such flaws, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* represents for Twain authority Bernard De Voto "the most courageous of Mark's books," with "a fine verve, a theme he never dared to face outside it, the magnificent Roxana, and a certain historical importance as one of the few serious treatments in American fiction of any aspect of slavery."

Peal 5,806.

197. Cabinet photograph of Clemens, signed "Mark Twain."

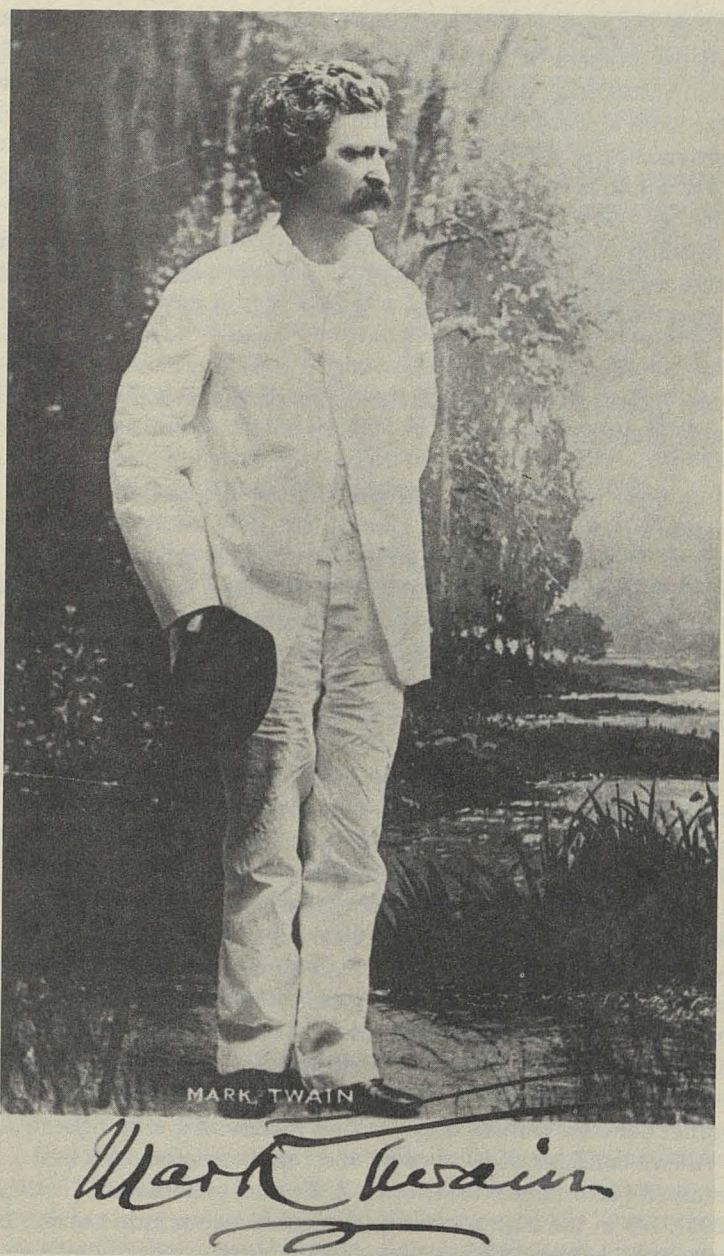
Peal 11,493.

198. HENRY JAMES. A.L.s. to Helen Leah Reed, 18 September [1880 or 1881].

One of the greatest American literary minds, Henry James (1843-1916) argued in his best-known critical essay, "The Art of Fiction" (published 1884), that the genre was a serious art form, an "imitation of life." Among other Jamesian hallmarks, psychological realism and the international theme (the conflict of moral and cultural values between the old European and the new American worlds) animate such novels as *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), *The Ambassadors* (1903), and *The Golden Bowl* (1904). A native of New York City, James lived the last forty years of his life in Europe, mainly in London. He became a British subject in 1915, largely because of America's delay in entering World War I.

While travelling in Scotland in 1880 or 1881, he writes to the author Helen Leah Reed (1860?-1926), who resided in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In a "flattering note" dated 18 August, Miss Reed had sought from James a literary contribution to a "little volume" she was compiling, most likely "*The City and the Sea, With Other Cambridge Contributions, in Aid of the Hospital Fund* (1881). In his reply of 18 September he admits that while her "invitation" does him "great honour," he fears that his "present situation makes it quite impossible" for him to comply with her request. He has "nothing ready," and even if he had, "it would be buried" in his papers, "somewhere in London." Had he heard from her "a little sooner," he gives himself "the benefit of thinking" that he "probably would have tried to write something. But now it is too





Item 197



late," as the book must be in the printers' hands by 20 September.

At the moment he is in Tillypronie, Aberdeen, in "the heart of a Scotch wilderness, among misty mountains & purple moors, & ever so far from a post-office." Even putting his "powers of improvisation at the highest (& they are very low)," his "little packet would be a day—or many days" late. He must therefore thank her "very kindly" both for her "suggestion" and for her "expression of interest" in his "productions." He closes "with many sincere regrets, & many good wishes" for her "excellent enterprise."

From the collection of Herman T. Radin. Peal 10,547f.

199. JAMES LANE ALLEN. *A Kentucky Cardinal*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1895.

In a piece of theoretical criticism entitled "Local Color" (1886), Lexington-born author James Lane Allen (1849-1925) defined his topic as "those colors" laid by the writer on his canvas "that are true for the region" being described and "characteristic of it." But for the local colorist "descriptions of scenery" must remain "a means, not an end." His primary obligation is "to relate nature to life in literature," to "comprehend the significance of the natural pictorial environment of humanity in its manifold effects upon humanity."

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, such influential writers and critics as Henry James and William Dean Howells championed realism, or objectivity, actuality, and observation of the ordinary in fiction; they denounced romanticism, which pictured an idealized nature that provided man with a source of spiritual consolation, which linked man with nature, and which used romantic love as a basic plot. Allen responded in his essay "Realism and Romance" (1886) that the romantic side of human nature formed a genuine part of reality and that realistic portrayal could not exist without it. In his own writings the "romantic motive" becomes allied with the ennobling powers of nature, and the conflict between realism and romance figures as a major theme.

Allen's concepts of local color and romance inform his best-sustained performance in fiction—*A Kentucky Cardinal: A Story* (1894). Set in the author's native Bluegrass region in the mid-nineteenth century, the novelette, on one level, skillfully tells a simple story of love between Adam Moss and Georgiana Cobb. But



its symbolic use of proper names and of objects such as the redbird of the title, along with its echoes of the Eden myth, transform the work into a moral and psychological study of some complexity and depth. *A Kentucky Cardinal* also contains Allen's first lengthy exploration of the tension between realism and romance.

Georgiana, the practical manager of the Cobb household, represents the realistic point of view; Adam, as the tiller of land and the man of ideals and dreams, the romantic. Behind them as the book's dominating symbols stand the variant figures of John James Audubon and Henry David Thoreau. Georgiana worships Audubon, the ornithologist who ironically killed by the hundreds the birds he used as subjects for his realistic paintings. Adam, like the naturalist Thoreau, prefers to observe living birds in their native habitats and hates the thought of even caging one. Allen's plot, which intimately relates "nature to life in literature," concerns the love that develops between these two people of opposing temperaments.

The story reaches its climax through variations on the biblical account of Eden. In a reversal of the archetypal roles, Adam sends Georgiana a proposal of marriage in a dish of heart-shaped strawberries; and as Eve tempted Adam, Georgiana requires her Adam to prove his love by caging a redbird living in his garden. Like his scriptural namesake, Adam Moss falls, and the bird, once caged, dies. The lovers then move from discord to mutual understanding and reconciliation. However, on the night of their betrothal at the book's conclusion, Adam feels neither love nor happiness, but only regret and melancholy. As capture stilled the cardinal's song of "Peace . . . Peace . . . Peace," Adam's impending marriage silences his own feelings of peace and freedom.

*Aftermath*, a sequel (1896), takes the married couple through the birth of a son and Georgiana's death to Adam's ultimate consolation in his devotion to nature. Speaking from his romantic heart—and in Allen's voice—Adam remarks, "I have long since gone back to nature. . . . I feel that in my way I am part of it, that I can match the aftermath of nature with the aftermath of my life."

Although after 1893 Allen made his permanent home in New York City, he always sought to promote a better understanding of the South and its literature. His belief in the Southern agrarian tradition (as opposed to industrialism) anticipated the "Agrarian Movement" of the 1920s and 1930s advocated by such writers as John Crowe Ransom, Robert Penn Warren, Allen Tate, and



Andrew Lytle. In advancing the cause of Southern letters with works like his minor masterpiece *A Kentucky Cardinal*, James Lane Allen stands to the fore of writers representing the commonwealth in fiction.

Peal 10,320.

200. GERTRUDE ATHERTON. *The Californians*. London and New York: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1898.

In her sixty-year career as a writer, Gertrude Atherton (1857-1948) treated of such disparate locales as ancient Carthage (*Dido, Queen of Hearts*, 1929), the West Indies and colonial America (*The Conqueror*, 1902), and New York in the Roaring Twenties (*Black Oxen*, 1923). But she established her reputation primarily as an observer and interpreter of her native California. In novels, short stories, and narratives produced between 1883 and 1946 she chronicled the social history of the ambitious and arcadian western state. (Born in San Francisco, Mrs. Atherton attended the Sayre Institute in Lexington, Kentucky, in the years 1874-1875.)

*The Californians* (1898), for example, tells a story of romance and failure within the realistic setting of San Francisco in the 1880s. Yet Mrs. Atherton concentrates on an area unexplored by other California writers, such as Bret Harte, who often depict the harsh realities of the gold-rush days. She locates her novel among the mansions on Nob Hill. While appreciating the beauties of ocean and sky, the fashionable set ignores the grimmer realities of life on the wharf and in the Spanish and Chinese districts. The author repeatedly juxtaposes the potential of San Francisco and California with the greed, exploitation, and loss of traditional values that accompany expansion.

Mrs. Atherton surrounds her characters with local color drawn from Spanish and American customs, and from California scenery; but she infuses the book with more than mere regionalism. Through her heroine Magdalena Yorba, a fledgling writer, she explores psychological realism as she traces the young lady's initiation into selfhood in a new world also searching for its identity.

Despite her close association with California, Mrs. Atherton divided her life between the United States and Europe in the period from 1888 to 1931, when she returned in alternate years to San Francisco to live. When writing a novel she had to reside in a place



distinct from her fictional setting so that her imagination would not be distracted by local reality. Thus, she created the sunshine and energy of *The Californians* in rural England.

The Henry Eastman Lower-George Heron Milne copy. Peal 5,981.

201. WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS. Portion of a typescript draft of *Their Silver Wedding Journey*, with manuscript corrections.

At the height of his fame, William Dean Howells was the unofficial dean of American letters. An influential and energetic poet, dramatist, essayist, and novelist, Howells (1837-1920) produced over one hundred books in his long publishing life. In 1866 he began a fifteen-year association with the *Atlantic Monthly*, including a decade as its editor-in-chief. For *Harper's Magazine* he conducted the "Editor's Study" (1886-1892) and the "Editor's Easy Chair" (1900-1920). As a critic he championed realism in literature and led the attack on contemporary romanticism. As a reviewer and editor he published the literary opposites Mark Twain and Henry James, whom he counted as friends, and encouraged such naturalistic realists as Stephen Crane and Frank Norris. In practice as well as in theory he promoted a democratic art devoted, not to heroic characters and unusual events, but to the commonplace.

His first novel, *Their Wedding Journey* (1871), originally published in six installments in the *Atlantic Monthly*, chronicled the Canadian honeymoon of Basil and Isabel March. All fifteen hundred copies in the first printing were sold within twenty-four hours. Realizing their popularity, Howells introduced the Marches into novels, sketches, and essays for decades. While they were not precisely Howells and his wife Elinor, they often travelled similar routes and experienced incidents in their creator's life.

In the autumn of 1898 Howells and his family returned home to New York from a tour through Germany, Belgium, and France. As he wrote to Mark Twain, he was soon "working away at a kind of story for Harpers," which he was "rather enjoying." He was "taking up" the Marches and "putting them through" a twenty-fifth anniversary trip, "with the changed point of view, and the evening light on everything." *Their Silver Wedding Journey* ran in *Harper's Magazine* from January to December 1899. Mr. and Mrs. March, like Mr. and Mrs. Howells, go sightseeing in Europe, principally in Hamburg, Leipzig, Carlsbad, Weimar, and Berlin.



~~a woman, and he found a difficulty both in
 reconciling himself to <sup>his friends</sup> the
 justification of it. One day
 they passed a woman-and-dog-team taking a rest on the wayside
 grass under a tree: the great girl flung headlong on the tank,
 fast asleep, with the old dog <sup>beside her</sup> ~~almost in her arms~~ and March
 owned that the notion of their being yoke-mates was shocking; but he
 urged that it was ~~to be considered~~ as a stage of evolution, and a
 distinct advance upon the time when the women dragged the carts
 and ~~that the time ought not be far distant when the~~
<sup>dogs would drag the carts without the help of the women.</sup>
~~without the help of the dogs. Rose surprised a joke in this
 in other things, and he was relieved to find in fact that they
 were not in earnest. If there was anything he could have blamed
 in March it was his apparent acceptance of unjust things on their
 picturesque side. They walked out one day to see the oak, a two-
 and-a-half-old and a fathom through, which is called Kernor's be-
 <sup>side which</sup> ~~cause the poet wrote a patriotic ballad against the French, under
 its name and they were sauntering homeward by the brink of the turbid
 River, when they came to a man lying half asleep on the grass with
 a pipe in his mouth, and lazily watching from under his fallen
 lids the cows grazing by the riverside, <sup>like in</sup> ~~in a field of <sup>or a yard</sup> wheat
 a file of women were reaping a belated harvest with sickles, be-
 in wearily over to clutch the stems together and cut them with
 their hooked blades.~~~~~~~~

Portion of typescript of *Their Silver Wedding Journey*, with corrections by William Dean Howells (item 201)

A writer of travel books for much of his career, Howells in *Their Silver Wedding Journey* turned out less a novel than a Baedeker for Germany interspersed with a coquettish love story. It was the very sort of literary hybrid Basil March dismissed as impossible when his wife suggested that he produce one: "The fiction would kill the travel, and the travel would kill the fiction." Yet *Their Silver*



*Wedding Journey* worked well in both genres. Howells wrote his son in July 1900 that the novel, published earlier that year, had sold 2700 of the "gorgeous" sets "besides 1600 of the ordinary edition," and he expected Harpers to "get rid of the whole fine edition, this coming Christmas and the next." In 1920 he revised and reprinted portions of the novel as a travel book, *Hither and Thither in Germany*.

On display is part of a working draft of *Their Silver Wedding Journey* as it appeared in *Harper's Magazine*. At the top of page 744 are the notations "For the Printer" and "November" for the 1899 installment. The manuscript consists of both typewritten pages heavily corrected in ink and insertions of autograph pages, for a total of 159 pages.

Howells characteristically wrote in longhand, on half sheets, but late in 1875 Mark Twain sent him his old typewriter, one of the earliest models. Howells complained that the keys had to be struck so hard as to make his fingers sore, yet, he conceded, one became "sufficiently unconscious of the mechanism with a little practice, to be able to use it with comfort," and make "great speed." In 1883 he wrote to Twain on a new typewriter that he had just rented for a month, with the option to buy it for forty dollars. It wrote "distinctly" and he could use it "with a fair degree of speed."

Peal 7,805.

202. ELLEN GLASGOW. *The Descendant*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1897.

*The Descendant*, Ellen Glasgow's first novel, experienced a fitful birth. Begun in 1891, partially destroyed two years later following the death of the author's mother, and completed in 1895, it appeared—anonously—in January 1897.

From the start, readers noticed Glasgow's work and discerned her promise as a successful writer. A reviewer in *The Critic* deduced that the author was a woman because of "certain delicacies of insight," compared *The Descendant* favorably to the widely popular work of Sir Hall Caine, and praised both the book's style and its "engrossing human interest." Although it exhibits such shortcomings of the apprentice novel as underdeveloped characterizations and unassimilated ideas drawn from background reading in science, philosophy, Zola, and Hardy, the American



author Hamlin Garland perceived a pronounced authorial talent informing the material. And at a time when historical romances and adventures stories held the field, *The Descendant*, with its unsentimental story of the illegitimate son of a "poor white" mother and of a Virginia aristocrat, went into three editions.

A native Virginian, Ellen Glasgow (1873-1945) placed most of her stories in what she termed "the familiar Virginian scene" of her childhood. But she resisted the designation of Southern writer or even of local author. To Allen Tate she wrote that she was not concerned with "the code of Virginia, but with the conventions of the world we call civilized." For her, "the true and only purpose of fiction" lay in "the communication of ideas, of feeling, of vital experience." Yet with her third novel, *The Voice of the People* (1900), she began her social history of Virginia told in the form of fiction, a project she would continue for the next forty years.

Miss Glasgow set most of *The Descendant* in New York, where the hero, Michael Akershem, becomes the editor of a reform journal. But the chapters which most truly live are those depicting Michael's childhood in the fields and woods of Virginia. Once the author transports him (and herself) out of familiar surroundings, she fails to imagine vividly her various metropolitan locales, which she knew only slightly.

Nevertheless, *The Descendant* succeeds as a first novel. If it lacks the effective language, sure plotting, and malicious epigrammatic wit of her subsequent works, it possesses vitality and credibly human characters—outstanding accomplishments in a work by a writer then barely in her twenties who was destined to win the Pulitzer Prize (belatedly, in 1941, for *In This Our Life*).

Peal 4,265.

203. ELLEN GLASGOW. A.L.s. to Miss Lyon, 1 June 1905.

From New York on 1 June 1905 Ellen Glasgow writes to a Miss Lyon to thank her "so much" for "the names of shops." She is "sure" they will be "the greatest assistance" to her and she "heartily" appreciates "the trouble" Miss Lyon has taken to make the list.

Miss Glasgow apologizes for not writing sooner, but she has laid her correspondent's "first letter so carefully away before leaving home" that it is only when she starts to reply that she remembers



she does not have Miss Lyon's address.

Formerly in the collections of Ernest Dressel North and William Warren Carman. Peal 9,033.

204. EDITH WHARTON. *Italian Villas and Their Gardens*. New York: Century, 1904.

*Italian Villas and Their Gardens* first appeared in parts in *The Century Magazine* from November 1903 to October 1904. There were fewer of Maxfield Parrish's illustrations in the serial than in the book, and those which did appear in *The Century* were in black and white. Both Wharton and Parrish had travelled quite extensively in Europe previous to working on *Italian Villas*, but both made special trips to Italy to gather material for the series. Parrish sailed in March 1903 for three months of study of Italian landscape and architecture (expenses paid by the Century Company). Edith Wharton went to Italy in February of the same year. The terms of Parrish's contract required him to take photographs and to make sketches and notes in Italy of what he was observing but to print the actual pictures at his home in Cornish, New Hampshire. He and Edith Wharton met at The Mount, the Whartons' house in Lenox, Massachusetts, after their return, to compare observations and to decide upon the points of view to be taken.

*Italian Villas and Their Gardens* is one of several nonfiction volumes that Edith Wharton published. Her first book was *The Decoration of Houses* written in collaboration with Ogden Codman, a title which sold unexpectedly well. *Italian Villas* was only one of a number of travel books. The year after it appeared, however, she published her first successful novel, *The House of Mirth*, and in 1920 she received a Pulitzer Prize for *The Age of Innocence*. Her contribution to American literature is in the field of fiction, both long and short, rather than in the essay.

*Italian Villas* was more important to the development of Parrish's career than to that of Wharton. He had been illustrating books since at least 1897, but *Italian Villas*, containing fifteen color and eleven black and white illustrations, is the first with color reproductions. A review of the book in *The Critic* states that though Edith Wharton's text was a "distinct disappointment," Parrish "succeeded in depicting the beauties of the Italian gardens as



they have never been depicted before." Various combinations of selected illustrations were published as art portfolios. The volume had given Parrish a chance to express a growing desire to paint landscapes and a long-standing interest in architecture. It also helped to determine the style of his landscape painting for the remainder of his life. To recuperate from tuberculosis he had painted in Arizona in the winters of 1901-1902 and 1902-1903. The low-keyed colors of Italy with its browns and greens balanced the influence in his art of the brilliant craggy landscape of the Southwest.

Peal 7,862.

205. WILLA CATHER. *My Ántonia*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1918.

The First World War was the force behind Willa Sibert Cather's best-known novel, *My Ántonia*. With the war, Cather (1873-1947) feared America's departure from old spiritual and moral values toward a new materialistic culture. *My Ántonia* reflects her concern with this transition.

*My Ántonia* has been criticized as a simple, nostalgic attempt to recapture the past. Cather did not disagree when she said, "The story wrote itself and has no plot." While it may not have a plot, it does have a framework created by the narrator Jim Burden. The story moves Jim from the simplicities of childhood to the complexities of adult life. Jim's transition symbolically represents America's transition.

The story may be considered an autobiography of Cather's youth. Cather often remarked that the most valuable experiences of her life came to her before she was twenty years old. Many of these early experiences are recreated by Jim. The novel's characters are Cather's friends and relatives as she remembered them from her childhood. While Ántonia is the center of the novel, her story is created through the memory of Jim. His memories of Ántonia are also happy memories of childhood.

*My Ántonia* was not a financial success. Its initial sale brought a little over \$1000 the first year and not quite \$400 the next. While the author was confident in her writing she was also discouraged. She felt she could never write well enough to please the Houghton Mifflin Company and went to see Alfred Knopf. Her decision to



switch publishers changed her career. Alfred Knopf encouraged her and allowed her absolute liberty to write as she chose. Not only did her Knopf books give her financial security, but she won the Pulitzer Prize in 1923 for the novel *One of Ours*.

Peal 5,918.

206. THEODORE DREISER. T.L.s. to George Wilson, 9 October 1905.

Now recognized as one of the major novelists of the first half of the twentieth century, Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945) grew up poor in Terre Haute, Indiana, the twelfth of thirteen children of German Catholic immigrants. (One of Dreiser's brothers, Paul Dresser, was to achieve some fame as a Tin Pan Alley tunesmith and the composer of "On the Banks of the Wabash Far Away," which Dreiser is said to have had a hand in writing.) The intense poverty of his early years made wealth and status predictable subjects for Dreiser in the naturalistic novels he began writing at the turn of the century. His finest work, *An American Tragedy* (1925), though which of his novels deserves that distinction is arguable, is pathetic rather than tragic, telling the story of Clyde Griffiths and his involvement with two women, one a rich girl who represents his ticket out of his class and station, the other a drab who has become pregnant by him and promises to tie him to the factory-worker milieu he wants to escape. Clyde plans to kill his working-girl mistress, but his resolve weakens; she drowns anyway in the "accident" Clyde has arranged, and he is executed for her murder, a victim of the meaningless forces in life that thwart and finally destroy us.

The plebeian origins that later resulted in the imaginative vision of *An American Tragedy* led Dreiser first to menial jobs in Chicago. After an unprofitable year at Indiana University (1889-1890) provided by a kindly benefactor, Dreiser began a career as a newspaper reporter in St. Louis, Chicago, Pittsburgh, and New York, moving up into the editorship of pulp and women's magazines. He interrupted this hack work to write *Sister Carrie*, the story of the rise of a Chicago working girl. It was printed in 1900 but withheld from circulation by its publisher because of its supposed immorality. Some copies found their readers, however, and the encouragement of those who thought this starkly realistic



novel important influenced Dreiser's commitment to fiction.

Dreiser was editor of *Smith's Magazine* in New York City from its first issue in April 1905 until April 1906, when he left to take over the "New" *Broadway Magazine*. He was to boast to the publisher of the latter, in a letter outlining his credentials for the new job, that *Smith's*, an illustrated home magazine, had reached a circulation of 200,000 under his management "without a dollar spent on advertising." The letter displayed is from the middle of his year-long editorship of *Smith's*. Dreiser is returning some jokes to a contributor in Saginaw, Michigan; with characteristic Dreiserian diction, he writes that they "have been found unavailable for use."

In another letter from this period (6 May 1905), Dreiser wrote of his livelihood: "I am an editor at present, holding a moderately comfortable and autocratic position, but longing to do but one thing—write." He was yet a few years away from realizing that desire.

Peal 8,580.

207. THEODORE DREISER. *The "Genius."* New York and London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1915.

It is often said of Dreiser's novels that they are ponderous but powerful. No one would call Dreiser a great prose stylist; in fact, his writing is occasionally embarrassing, his narrative technique clumsy, and his philosophy—derived from Huxley, Tyndall, and Spencer—simplistic. Yet his "lumbering art" convinces and moves in the end because of the honesty of his naturalism and the determination with which he builds his detailed vision of the world, especially the economic world of early twentieth-century America.

Eleven years elapsed between Dreiser's suppressed first novel *Sister Carrie* (1900), which Frank Norris had recommended for publication, and *Jennie Gerhardt* (1911), which marks the beginning of his full-time writing career. Both these novels are about women who rise in the world despite illicit sexual relations, subject matter that was new and daring in the years before World War I.

With the breakthrough of *Jennie Gerhardt*, Dreiser produced three novels in quick succession about driven, ambitious men. *The Financier* (1912) and *The Titan* (1914) constitute the first two volumes of a trilogy that was not complete until the posthumous publication of *The Stoic* in 1947. The trilogy is a thorough



character study of financial magnate Frank Algernon Cowperwood, whose rising and falling business and personal fortunes—involving millions of dollars and many mistresses—are traced. Cowperwood is a fictional surrogate for the flamboyant American financier C.T. Yerkes.

The third of Dreiser's novels of the teens, *The "Genius"* (1915), tells the story of a gifted but weak artist, Eugene Witla, who becomes famous in his youth as a painter and illustrator, suffers a nervous breakdown from overwork and sexual intemperance, is again highly successful in a second career in publishing, and finally finds peace in devotion to his motherless child and attention to his true vocation of painting. The depiction of Eugene's many sexual affairs caused *The "Genius"* to be banned in some quarters.

Dreiser continued to write fiction after the popular success of *An American Tragedy* (1925), and his many other writings include drama, a modicum of poetry, essays, autobiography, and philosophical reflections that express a faith in socialism. (He travelled to the Soviet Union in 1927.) He joined the Communist Party of the United States before his death in Hollywood in 1945.

The Henry Eastman Lower copy. Peal 6,811.

208. EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON. A.L.s. to Spencer Brown, 29 January 1934.

A herald of modernism in poetry with his subjects, language, and realism, although not in his masterly use of traditional metrical forms, Edwin Arlington Robinson (1869-1935) grew up in Gardiner, Maine, the prototype of "Tilbury Town," a village of conventional mores and home of the famous fictional personages of his poems of character—Miniver Cheevy, Luke Havergal, Richard Cory, and Mr. Flood—most of whose values conflict in some way with those of the town. Robinson was a special student at Harvard (1891-1893), a status he shared with Robert Frost and Wallace Stevens, and afterwards settled in New York City, where he lived an outwardly uneventful, celibate life, devoted to his poetry and his friends.

His first book of poems, *The Torrent and the Night Before*, was privately printed in 1896. *Children of the Night* (1897), which contained "Richard Cory," and *Captain Craig* (1902) impressed Theodore Roosevelt enough for the president to secure the poet a clerkship in the New York Custom House, where he worked from



1905 to 1910. Thereafter he was able to support himself through the financial patronage of friends and the modest success of a ceaseless flow of books of verse.

Robinson's poetic masterpiece is probably *The Man against the Sky* (1916). The title poem is a long philosophical reflection on existence, inspired by the sight of a solitary figure on the crest of a hill at sunset:

Where was he going, this man against the sky?  
You know not, nor do I.  
But this we know if we know anything:  
That we may laugh and fight and sing  
And of our transience here make offering  
To an orient Word that will not be erased,  
Or, save in incommunicable gleams,  
Too permanent for dreams,  
Be found or known.

An Arthurian trilogy followed *Man against the Sky*: *Merlin* (1917), *Camelot* (1920), and *Tristram* (1927), his greatest popular success and winner of the first of his three Pulitzers. *Tristram* also gave him the financial security to devote his last poetical works to long blank-verse narratives. According to J.V. Cunningham, "tobacco, alcohol, and Wagner" were Robinson's "passions and his stay." He died of cancer at age sixty-five.

The letter displayed is one of three in the Peal Collection from Robinson to Spencer Brown of the Taft School in Watertown, Connecticut. Brown was an admirer of the poet and something of a poet himself, for Robinson has occasion in the correspondence to thank Brown for a sonnet, or, as here, to venture that "it is only right for me to say that the poem you have sent to me suggests rather musical qualities." From 1911, Robinson spent his summers at the McDowell Colony, a retreat for artists, composers, and writers in Peterborough, New Hampshire, which numbered Willa Cather, the Benéts, Thornton Wilder, and Hervey Allen among its visitors. Robinson writes Mr. Brown that it will be impossible to recommend him for the colony until he has published at least one book.

Peal 9,191.



209. EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY. *Conversation at Midnight*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937.

Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950) had the manuscript for *Conversation at Midnight* almost completed when she and her husband, Eugene Boissevain, went on vacation to the island of Sanibel off the coast of Florida. They arrived late in the afternoon with about one hour left before sunset. Edna was so anxious to get out on the beach to collect shells that they had their luggage sent to their hotel room, one suitcase containing the manuscript for her new book. While on the beach, Edna looked back to see the hotel in flames. Everything was lost, including the only copy of her manuscript.

Although sick with shock over the loss of her work, Edna was determined to recall her drama. Eventually she managed to piece together most of the contents. *Conversation at Midnight* was published approximately one year after it was originally scheduled.

The play includes eight characters, each representing his particular segment of society. The conversation takes place over an after-dinner drink and concerns itself with such issues as religion, politics, love, modern conveniences (and their nuisance value), and women. Merton, a sportsman-hunter-capitalist, and Carl, a Communist poet, debate the major issues.

The play was a financial success for Millay. Several directors and producers bid for its presentation on Broadway. The critics, however, were less enthusiastic about her work. They felt the play concerned itself too directly with world events and that her diffuse style would not interest readers. Indeed, Millay was so interested in world problems that she often became physically ill with worry over the "hopelessness of civilization." In later works her beliefs became so strong that they almost obliterated her art.

Peal 3,679.



THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

BY CHARLES A. BEAUPRE

VOLUME I

THE EARLY YEARS

CHAPTER I

THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

THE EARLY SETTLEMENTS

THE GROWTH OF THE COLONIES

THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

THE CONSTITUTION

THE UNION

THE WESTERN FRONTIER

THE CIVIL WAR

THE RECONSTRUCTION



MEMBERSHIP LIST

1917-1918

1917-1918

1918-1919

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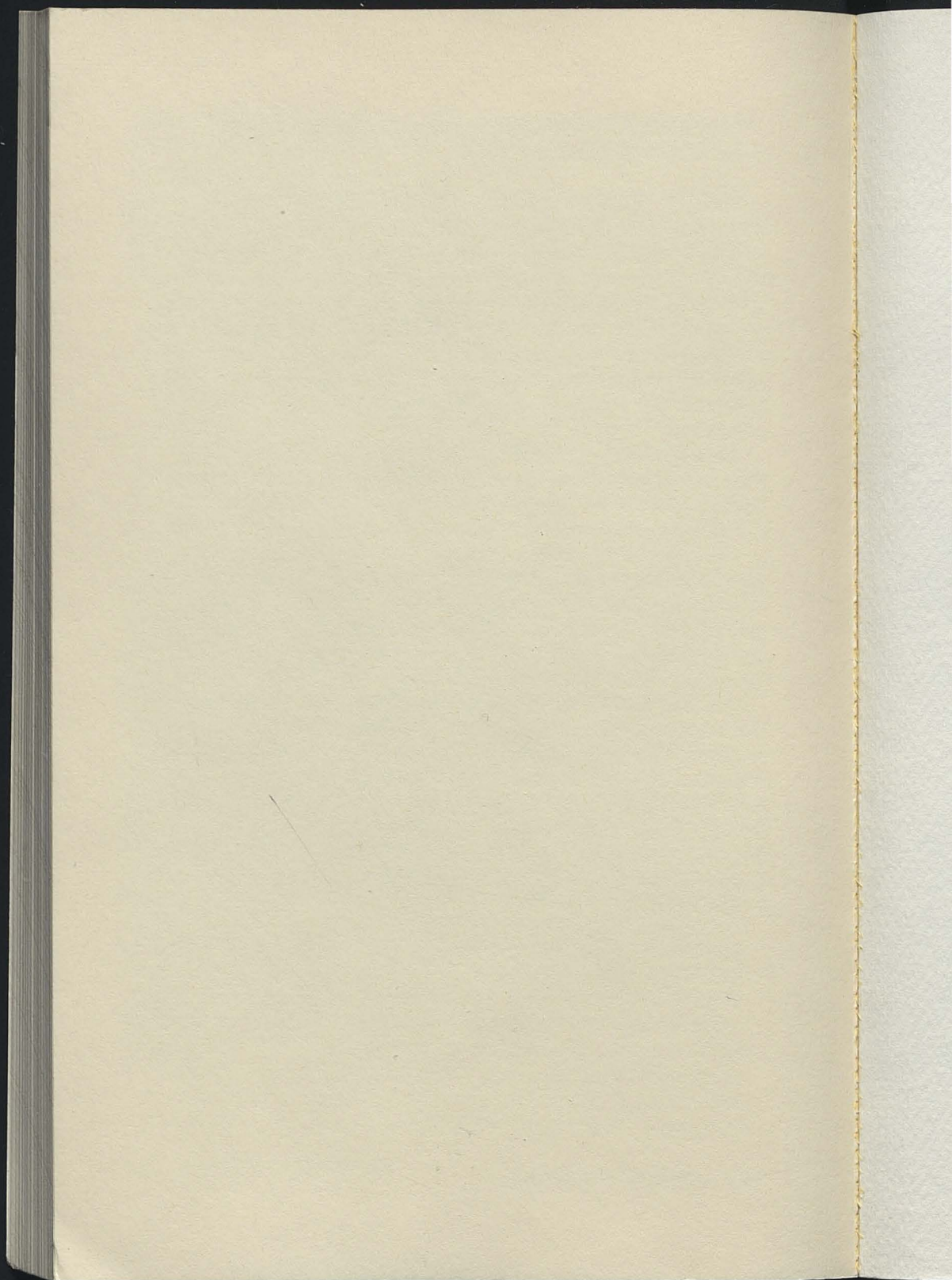
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