



March 1963

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Recommended Citation

Colby Library Quarterly, series 6, no.5, March 1963, p.208-217

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revealed itself in his criticism and later in the poetry of Longfellow the American mythmaker. The study of the past is probably the most efficient means of increasing the imagination's stockpile of latent images, and hence is of great value to anyone who would practice the associationist technique. Second, the associationist doctrine that the more simple image is the more effective — in evoking the train of analogous images within the imagination — is perhaps the basis for Longfellow's lifelong preference for simplicity in his poetry. Finally, and most important, the associationist emphasis upon the active role of the beholder, upon man's internal nature rather than upon externalities, probably helped Longfellow realize that man, not external nature, is the only subject worthy of the serious poet's interest. This is explicitly stated in *Kavanagh* (1849); but as early as January 1832, when his review of Sidney's "Defence of Poetry" appeared in the *North American Review*, Longfellow's attention is centered upon man, upon the "national character," and while the particular external environment may help to form this national character, Longfellow does not consider these externalities as poetic ends in themselves.

Thus, a knowledge of Longfellow's debt to Alison both presents an important aesthetic point of view appearing in his writings before 1835, and helps to account for certain fundamental aspects of his poetry.



LOWELL TO CABOT

By RICHARD CARY

THE occasion was convivial. The Midwinter Dinner of Holy Cross Alumni in 1910 had already begotten its quota of scintillant toasts, but not until John Collins Bossidy rose and recited *his* piece did the evening achieve immortality. In ringing tones, he proposed this quatrain, now favored by many ironists and all midwesterners:

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And this is good old Boston,
 The home of the bean and the cod,
 Where the Lowells talk only to Cabots
 And the Cabots talk only to God.

There are those who contend that Bossidy overstated the degree of exclusivity, and others who express doubt as to the ultimate communicant. Be that as it may, we leave them to cavil happily *en famille*. Our concern here is with a particular Lowell and a particular Cabot — James Russell Lowell and Lilla Cabot (later Mrs. Thomas Sergeant Perry). If neither James nor Lilla confirmed Bossidy's rigid dialogistic pattern, neither did they confute it entirely. There prevailed between them over the years a steady traffic of conversation, correspondence,¹ books, and dedicatory poems. We turn to the fortunes of three volumes that passed from the former to the latter (and eventually to the Colby College Library).²

Lilla Cabot was the daughter of an eminent Boston surgeon, Samuel Cabot, and Hannah Jackson, a cousin of Lowell. From early girlhood Lilla exhibited ebullience of spirit and brilliance of intellect, quickly establishing herself as a poetess and painter. Lowell was drawn to this gifted niece of his, who was also a devoted companion to his daughter Mabel. More than once he openly lauded her frolic independence, her "alert nature," and her "scorn of ignoble things." She possessed withal a combination of qualities which unleashed the element of gayety in him. (He signed his letter of February 11, 1890, blithely "*Zoilus-Troilus Lowell*.") When her engagement to Perry was announced in June of 1873, Lowell sent from Paris a playful, congratulatory note. When they were married in the next year, he puffed Perry for having won such "a pearl of a wife."

Lowell's *The Vision of Sir Launfal* was first published in 1848, a year memorable in the United States for the discovery of gold in California, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ending

¹ There are twenty-two letters from Lowell to Lilla in the manuscript files of Colby College Library. They range from September 14, 1869, to January 6, 1891, a few months before his death. Several have been published in part.

² They are among the thousands in the personal library of Thomas Sergeant Perry which his daughter, Miss Margaret Perry, generously presented to the college.

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the Mexican War, the death of sixth president John Quincy Adams and election of Zachary Taylor the twelfth, the elevation of Wisconsin to statehood, the first American publications of *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*, the passing of John Jacob Astor, the arrival of Andrew Carnegie, and the first commercially sold chewing gum (by John B. Curtis of Bangor). For Lowell, 1848 was equally impressive. It has so often been designated his *annus mirabilis* that one cringes to reapply the term. In that year he produced three books besides *Sir Launfal* — *Poems, Second Series*; *A Fable For Critics*; and *The Biglow Papers, First Series*. As extraordinary in quality as in bulk, these four volumes firmly ratified him in the public mind as poet, wit, literary critic, political satirist, and reformer. (By what droll connivance of the Parcae, 1848 was also the birth year of Lilla Cabot.)

Lowell had long ruminated the motif of *Sir Launfal*. Two prior poems, "A Parable" and "Rhoecus," contained germs of its mystical tone and theme. He is reputed to have spent less time and said less to his friends about *Sir Launfal* than any of his other major works. Completed in a forty-eight hour frenzy of composition, during which he scarcely ate or slept, it launches perhaps his most lyrical flight: "And what is so rare as a day in June? / Then, if ever, come perfect days." The critics, oracular as always, split in their opinions of its worth. Oliver Wendell Holmes declared that although the little book had "not much more thickness to it than a consecrated wafer," one might still get more nourishment from it than from many a whole loaf. Lowell's biographer Ferris Greenslet espied in it unparalleled "visionary faculty . . . poetic background and variety of music." But these bubbles were crudely pinched by a reviewer who found it "deservedly popular with children." Shrewdest was the judgment of Charles F. Briggs, who felt that "its merits are of a kind that can be appreciated by the superficial as well as the thoughtful readers."

In 1867 the Boston firm of Ticknor and Fields brought out *Sir Launfal* in a small, illustrated edition, the first such treatment accorded any of Lowell's works. The poet was moved to no ecstasies by this dubious glorification. In fact, he mumbled some minor abominations. Nevertheless, he singled out a copy

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of this issue to present to his niece, inscribing on the flyleaf: "To / Lilla Cabot / with the affectionate regards of / J.R. Lowell / Xmas, 1866."

The initial and terminal letters *l* of the signature meander off in discreet flourishes.

The book measures 7 x 5 inches and is bound in russet cloth, the title in gilt within elaborate borders on the front cover and spine. In point of issue it is actually the fifth edition, containing the poem in twenty-nine pages, preceded by an explanatory "Note." The text appears only on the right-hand pages, within a red rectangular frame. Illustrations by S. Eytinge, Jr., and engravings by A.V.S. Anthony are of two kinds: the littler ones — mostly of vases and foliage — adorn the lines of verse, while the larger ones — of characters and episodes — face the text from the left-hand pages. Too many blank leaves meet the eye, invoking an effect of disadvantageous void. When all is said, however, this was the poem that endeared Lowell to the average reader and vitalized a career not hitherto marked by public acclamation. The poet himself had correctly forecast that *Sir Launfal* was "more likely to be popular than what I write generally."

Miss Cabot's copy of *Under The Willows and Other Poems* (Boston, 1869) was inscribed for her before the official publication date. It was customary in that era to anticipate the coming year in the printed date on the title page. This was intended to impart fresh appeal to the volume and stimulate Christmas sales. The book is a duo-decimo, bound in dark green cloth, with a vignette of willows in gilt on the front cover and the same merely stamped on the back cover. On the verso of the front endleaf, in his neat penscript, Lowell wrote: "To Lilla Cabot, / With the author's love. / Elmwood: 20th Novr, 1868."

In the first edition, first issue, a slip ("Erratum. Page 224, 2d stanza, 3d line, *for* Thy read Its.") was bound in facing page 286. This slip has been torn out, but the correction stands in pencil, evidently made by Lowell. The error was rectified in the second issue.

Although the volume includes the "Ode Recited at the Harvard Commemoration," it cannot on the whole be counted among Lowell's better efforts. After a third of the book was

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in type, Lowell confessed his private misgivings to James T. Fields: "I can't make out whether the author is a poet (though he would like to be)," then took heart and avowed, "but I have got so far as to think humbly that he is not altogether an ass, at any rate." William Dean Howells buoyantly uncovered elements "everywhere expressive of the poet's life, his creedless faith in heaven and man, his sympathy with nature, his love of country, his tenderness for home," and hailed the titular poem as "the finest rural poem in our literature." One latter-day critic says flatly, "A dull and unimportant book."

The seed for the project was cunningly strewn by publishers Fields, Osgood and Company. No collection of Lowell's poems had appeared in twenty years, and the time seemed ripe for a bumper harvest. "The papers say I am to publish a volume of poems this autumn," he wrote to Charles Eliot Norton, "and I think I shall." He corralled pieces printed in periodicals and annuals since 1848, and refurbished some written even before that. All but two of the final selection had been published wholly or in part. Lowell hoped that because of their relative senescence they might prove a novelty to most readers, as an old joke is new to successive generations. But he entertained slight illusions about their value as poetry. To Norton, dedicatee of the volume, he lamented: "But they seem so poor when I come to look them over! What can I do? . . . At least I mean well in the dedication. So you must take them as my mother used to take the little nosegays I brought her from the fields . . . with the one merit of being at least home-grown and native in the main."

Most amusing circumstance about the book was the germination of its title. At the outset Lowell proposed to call it *A June Idyl* — the first verse of his opening poem ends with the paean: "June! Dear June! Now God be praised for June!" When apprised by Fields that Whittier intended to issue a volume entitled *A Summer Idyl*, Lowell immediately jettisoned his idea and cast about for a less homologous name. Fields complaisantly suggested *Elmwood*, the poet's home, as a possibility. To which Lowell testily retorted, "I can't bear 'Elmwood,' and the more I think of it, the more I can't bear it." He settled finally upon a clump of beckoning willow trees, a pet rendezvous of students on the bank of the Charles River. When queried on

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the significance of *Under The Willows* as a title, he said: "It means everything and nothing." He maintained that he chose it because it would stir curiosity and sales among basket weavers, gunpowder makers and the general public, in that order. The crossruff maneuver took on a farcical air when Whittier decided, after all, to call his book *Among The Hills*.

Our third Lilla Cabot copy of Lowell poems is most heavily freighted with biographic and bibliographic associations. *A Year's Life* (C. C. Little and J. Brown, Boston: 1841) is of the first edition, in light brown boards with paper label on the backstrip. The motto *Ich habe gelebt and geliebet* embellishes the title page below the author's name, and there is no "Errata" slip tipped in facing page 182. This would indicate one of the early few which were released before the flaws were detected. The book is bare of illustration.

It came to Miss Cabot by indirection. On the flyleaf preceding the half title is inscribed "H.L. Jackson from J.R.L." in a thick, square hand quite unlike Lowell's later meticulous calligraphy. The recipient, Hannah Lowell Jackson Cabot, was cousin to the poet and mother of Lilla. Mrs. Cabot kept the book for an unspecified number of years, then presented it to her daughter in 1875, signifying "For Lilla C Perry" on the front endleaf. Directly below appears: "I think all the markings in this book are J.R. Lowells"; signed *Lilla Cabot Perry* and dated 1930. The markings referred to are some three-score vertical lines, thinly penciled to the left of the text, extending in length variously from a single line of verse to an entire page. Overly numerous and indiscriminate, they suggest no pattern of selection. Curiously, four pages (91-2, 93-4) in the middle of "Bellerophon" are unopened along the top edge. One wonders what might have been going on in the poet's mind as he browsed, apparently absentminded, through his book, not even troubling to dis sever these inimical unions. The scribbled notation "Jan 1840" at the conclusion of "Serenade" — which describes a dark and chilly night in the life of a lovelorn youth — touchingly documents a tragic experience.

A Year's Life was Lowell's first book of poems, published when he was twenty-one. Remarkable for its humanitarian fervor and romantic preoccupation with death, it resounds with more than accidental echoes from the works of Keats, Tenny-

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son and Shelley. In tacit recognition of their juvenility, Lowell retained only nine of these seventy-one poems in his later collected editions. As its title implies, this volume is the poetic register of an exceptional twelvemonth. In the several years before 1840 Lowell suffered almost continuous mental and emotional turbulence. He oscillated morbidly between the careers of law and literature. An affair of the heart which went badly impelled him to press a cocked pistol to his head with solemn intent to end all. But he refrained from pulling the trigger, and by the winter of 1839 he met Maria White.

Maria, the "spirituelle reformer," changed the complexion of his tendency. She coordinated his unkempt energies and ultimately married him. *A Year's Life* is his testimonial to the enchantment of their first season together. With sufficient reason he could blazon Schiller's line — "I have lived and loved" — across the title page; with proper Spenserian ardor he could compare her to "the gentle Una . . . the snowy maiden, pure and mild" in his "Dedication." Lowell's triumph, nonetheless, cost him some supplemental agony. On the brink of entering the practice of law, he found it necessary to wrestle with the old contentions. To his companion George B. Loring he complained:

They tell me I must study law,
They say that I have dreamed and dreamed too long;
That I must rouse and seek for fame and gold;
That I must scorn this idle gift of song . . .

He likened himself gloomily to Goethe's young Werther, to Dante at the vestibule of Hell. At this point he might well have sunk into another fen of irresolution. But now there was Maria. What iron she injected into his soul can never be certainly known, but to Loring on November 24, 1840, Lowell exulted: "I shall print my volume. Maria wishes me to do it, and that is enough." And so it was.

Within six weeks the book took its place among the new year's offerings. With the conspicuous exceptions of William Cullen Bryant and mordant Margaret Fuller, the critics obliged with helpful notices. A spurt in sales roused Lowell's hopes for a second edition, but no more than three hundred copies were sold and no subsequent issue materialized. In August 1845,

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not yet securely a luminary, Lowell engaged the lion Longfellow with nostalgic hesitancy:

I wonder if Mrs. Longfellow remembers (I suppose she does not) meeting me at Dr. Channing's once — it is now four years ago. I was then a bashful, shy youth (I am not much better now), and remember keenly the shivering awe with which I plunged into the responsibility of entertaining her. Yet in that conversation . . . she made my heart warm towards her. . . . She was the first stranger that ever said a kind word to me about my poems. She spoke to me about my "Year's Life," then just published. I had then just emerged from the darkest and unhappiest period of my life, and was peculiarly sensitive to sympathy. My volume, I know, was crude and immature, and did not do me justice; but I know also that there was a *heart* in it . . .

Nurtured by his recent marriage to Maria, Lowell's confidence burgeoned perceptibly. He did not have long to wait: it was less than three years to 1848 — and glory.



Laurels for Lovejoy: Physical tributes to the inviolable courage of Elijah Lovejoy — in the form of plaques, memorial shafts, buildings — are in plentiful evidence from Albion (Maine) to Alton (Illinois), and points west. Ten years ago a distinction less tangible but more to the point was conceived at Colby College. The ELIJAH PARISH LOVEJOY AWARD, presented annually by the College to a member of the newspaper profession, was inaugurated in 1952 with this statement of purpose:

1. To honor and preserve the memory of Elijah Parish Lovejoy, America's first martyr to freedom of the press and a Colby College graduate (1826) who died bravely rather than forsake his editorial principles.
2. To stimulate and honor the kind of achievement in the fields of reporting, editing, and interpretive writing that continues the Lovejoy heritage of fearlessness and freedom.
3. To promote a sense of mutual responsibility and cooperative effort between a newspaper world devoted to journalistic freedom and a liberal arts college dedicated to academic freedom.

The selection committee for the AWARD is currently composed of Herbert Brucker, editor of the *Hartford Courant*; Erwin D. Canham, editor of the *Christian Science Monitor*;

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Dwight E. Sargent, editor of the editorial page of the New York *Herald Tribune*; President Robert E. L. Strider of Colby; and Reginald Sturtevant, chairman of the Colby board of trustees. The committee makes its choice of recipient on the basis of:

1. Integrity, without which no newspaper can function in its traditional role as a public servant.
2. Craftsmanship, without which no man can succeed as a journalist.
3. Character, intelligence, and courage.

The recipient may be an editor, reporter, publisher. It is important only that he be a bona fide newsman, regardless of title, who, in the opinion of the judges, has contributed to the country's journalistic achievement.

A dinner and reception, to which many prominent journalists are invited, precedes the Convocation at which the AWARD is made. This latter event is attended by the entire town and gown community.

The roster of recipients to date:

- 1952 James S. Pope, executive editor of the Louisville *Courier Journal* and Louisville *Times*.
- 1953 Irving Dilliard, editor of the editorial page of the St. Louis *Post Dispatch*.
- 1954 James Russell Wiggins, managing editor of the Washington *Post*.
- 1955 Charles A. Sprague, editor and publisher of the Oregon *Statesman*.
- 1956 Arthur Hays Sulzberger, publisher of the New York *Times*.
- 1957 Buford Boone, publisher of the Tuscaloosa *News*.
- 1958 John N. Heiskell, editor of the Arkansas *Gazette*.
- 1959 Clark R. Mollenhoff, Washington correspondent for the Cowles Publications.
- 1960 Ralph McGill, publisher of the Atlanta *Constitution*.
- 1961 Bernard Kilgore, president of the *Wall Street Journal*.
- 1962 Thomas More Storke, editor and publisher of the Santa Barbara *News Press*.



LOWELL TO CABOT

A lost autographed photograph which was "rescued" by Louise Imogen Guiney and restored to Lilla Cabot Perry in 1897.