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Epilogue

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◆ *Editor's Epilogue* ◆

Who's Who: Dr. Perry D. Westbrook, with three degrees from Columbia, is now Professor of English in the State University of New York at Albany, after periods of teaching in Kansas, Georgia, and our own Pine Tree State. He has written perceptively about Celia Thaxter in the *New England Quarterly*, *Down East*, and in his book, *Acres of Flint: Writers of Rural New England, 1870-1900*. His next volume is a critical evaluation of the works of Mary Ellen Chase.

Miss Dorothy M. Vaughan is the Librarian at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and president of Strawberry Banke Corporation, formed for the purpose of restoring a section of that city to colonial vintage.

Miss Rosamond Thaxter, daughter of Celia Thaxter's son John, lives in the home her father built on Cutts Island in Kittery Point, Maine. A woman of numerous enthusiasms, she has made it a main point to perpetuate the family connection with the Isles of Shoals, and to keep the memory of her grandmother alive through such publications as *Sandpiper*, in two editions, and a reprint of *An Island Garden* from the original Houghton Mifflin plates. It is out of her devotion and benefaction that this issue of *CLQ* evolved.

Murder by the Book: Murder, the ultimate act any human being can commit upon another human being — or himself — exerts inexplicable fascination over the most unlikely persons. Celia Thaxter, for instance. No balmier soul ever existed. Yet she wrote, without blanching, one of the earliest classical reports on as brutal and senseless a pair of murders as has ever happened: "A Memorable Murder," in the *Atlantic Monthly* for May 1875 — the infamous axe-slayings on Smutty-nose Island. This brings to mind Edmund L. Pearson who was born in Newburyport, Mass., a town with which Mrs. Thaxter had long association. Librarian, bibliophile, and writer of boys' stories, Pearson nevertheless found in murder an appeal of invincible proportions. Seven of his sixteen books are exhaustive analyses of murders most foul. To make our tenuous analogy more binding, his second collection of bloody studies is entitled *Murder at Smutty Nose*, the same case so expertly chronicled half a century before by Mrs. Thaxter. His last is another New England epic of gore, *The Trial of Lizzie Borden*.