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Robinson's Prose: A Retraction

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In the Colby Mercury for December, 1941 (VII: 69-72), I printed “three short articles, Robinson’s authorship of which has been previously unknown.” Although in printing them I clearly stated that “in their original sole previous printing, the articles appeared without Robinson’s name,” I felt that the marks of his authorship were reasonably clear. The article on “the next ‘great poet’” with its reference to “a comet or an atmospheric disturbance” sounded (and still sounds) to my ears like the work of the author of the Sonnet

Oh for a poet — for a beacon bright  
To... flush Parnassus with a newer light.  
. . . . Shall there not one arise  
To wrench one banner from the western skies...?

And the quotation from Matthew Arnold, in the same prose essay, recalled Dr. James L. Tryon’s statement, in his Harvard Days With Edwin Arlington Robinson (Colby Phi Beta Kappa Address, April 16, 1940, p. 11), that “Arnold he liked best of all and from him he most frequently read aloud.” The other two prose articles seemed likewise, if not equally, Robinsonian in sound; and all three had appeared in a New York paper in which E. A. R. admitted (in a letter) having had some of his prose printed.

In the December, 1942, issue of the New England Quarterly evidence was presented by Mrs. Alice M. Williams to support a claim that Robinson was the author of an entirely different piece of prose—an editorial on William Jennings Bryan. After reading her article I feel impelled to retract my claim of authorship by Robinson for the three pieces printed in the Colby Mercury. They still sound au-
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thentic, but Mrs. Williams’s argument and evidence have left me with no proof to support my claim of 1941 and I therefore here withdraw it.

NOTES AND QUERIES

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HE college library has received, as a gift from Mrs. Pirie MacDonald, three splendid photographs of the poet, Edwin Arlington Robinson. They were made in 1929 by Pirie MacDonald, Hon.F.R.P.S., New York “photographer-of-men.” They will eventually find a place in the Robinson Treasure Room on Mayflower Hill.

Shortly before Christmas 1942, The Southworth-Anthoensen Press of Portland issued, as its Keepsake 16, an attractive volume entitled Thomas Hardy in Maine, by Carl J. Weber. Among the distinctive features of this holiday publication was an original wood engraving by Percy Grassby, showing Hardy’s birthplace in Bockhampton. Through the generosity of Mr. Fred Anthoensen, President of The Southworth-Anthoensen Press, the wood block has been added to the Hardy Collection in the Colby Library. It is now in the company of the wood blocks by Miss Clare Leighton (D.F.A., Colby 1940), engraved for the special Limited Edition (1929) of The Return of the Native.

In the first number of this QUARTERLY there appeared a short centennial notice of Tennyson’s Poems of 1842, the book in which “Locksley Hall” and other favorites appeared for the first time. From 1842, Tennyson “took his place as the leading poet of his age in England.” At the time of the publication of his Poems, there was at Oxford a student named John Ruskin. He graduated that year, and in May, 1843, made his own first appearance in English literature with the publication of the first volume of Modern Painters, “by a Graduate of Oxford.” In May, 1943, the Colby library can exhibit no copy of this famous publication, for it has none. Will some Associate supply this want?