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of Mr. Beston's introduction for the 1951 edition of Thoreau's famous book on *Cape Cod*.



MUCH ADO ABOUT BROWNING

THE recently published *New Letters of Robert Browning*, edited by DeVane and Knickerbocker (Yale University Press, 1950), contains the text of a letter which Browning wrote from Paris in October, 1855, to his London publisher, Edward Chapman. It has to do with the publication of Browning's *Men and Women*, which Chapman was about to issue in two volumes. At the suggestion of American friends, Browning had previously written to James T. Fields, of Boston, proposing to send him proof sheets of *Men and Women*, as soon as Chapman would have them ready, so that Fields might arrange for a simultaneous American edition. Chapman had just written to tell Browning, in Paris, that Fields was not only ready to accept Browning's offer, but would pay ready money. This was so uncommon an event in Browning's experience that, in writing his letter of October 31, 1855, he referred to "that miraculous Mr. Fields." The result was that Ticknor & Fields of Boston issued *Men and Women* in one volume early in 1856. This was, apparently, Browning's first appearance in America. And now we come to the Colby connection with all these bibliographical details.

Among the eventual purchasers of a copy of Browning's *Men and Women* was a young man named William James. Ticknor & Fields apparently did not sell Browning's poems with any great rapidity, and in 1861 (when William James was nineteen years old) he was able to purchase a copy of the Boston 1856 edition of *Men and Women* to give as a Christmas present "To my young Friend Thomas S. Perry." This young friend was, of course, Thomas

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Sergeant Perry, who (a dozen or thirteen years later), married Lilla Cabot, niece of James Russell Lowell (see the COLBY LIBRARY QUARTERLY for March, 1943, page 19). By generous gift of their daughter, Miss Margaret Perry, this copy of Browning's poems, with William James's autograph inscription to his friend Perry, is now a highly prized item in the Colby College Library.

One would like to be able to show this book to all readers of *The New Colophon* for 1950, because of its article by Richard D. Altick (pages 78-81). This article deals with the printing of Browning's poems in twenty-three issues of the timetables of the Chicago and Alton Railroad, beginning in December, 1872. Mr. Altick is, of course, talking about the publication of Browning's *complete* works, but careless readers of his article are likely to conclude that there had been no previous American publication of Browning. On page 78 the railroad is called "the first American publisher of Browning's collected poems," as if Ticknor & Fields had not published a volume of his collected poems more than sixteen years previously. On page 80 in *The New Colophon* one reads of "this forgotten first American reprint of Browning's works"—i.e., the 1872 timetable—but one can safely trust the statement *only if* one remembers that "works" means *all* the works, and not merely the poems in *Men and Women*.



WE'RE READY FOR DARWIN!

THE December, 1950, issue of *The Johns Hopkins Magazine* contained an article on "This Matter of Freedom" by Dr. Sidney Painter, Professor of History in The Johns Hopkins University. He pointed out that the political ideals for which the United States stands today rest on two basic conceptions. "One of these is the belief that the