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Roberts and Lorimer: The First Decade

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In their separate flights to fame, some men's trajectories soar over similar ground in each other's wake, eventually unite, move together for an indeterminate period, then diverge abruptly to resume their own appointed ways. This random magnetism which unaccountably conjoins independent careers operated strongly in the case of Kenneth Roberts, America's foremost writer of historical fiction, and George Horace Lorimer, America's foremost editor of a popular magazine. Born eighteen years apart, they pursued their individual destinies, stopping at different moments in time at the Boston Post, at Colby College, and converging via an indignant cable to the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1918. They rode in close parallel for the next ten years before a new fork appeared. Although Roberts set more or less his own course in the late twenties, the two remained intimates until Lorimer died in 1937.

By diligently disengaging strands out of Roberts' *I Wanted To Write* and John Tebbel's *George Horace Lorimer and The Saturday Evening Post* one can reconstruct the inexorable progress of each toward the other and both toward the *Saturday Evening Post*. Some thirty letters written between 1918 and 1927 by Lorimer to Roberts (recently made available to me by Mrs. Roberts and transcribed by Marjorie Mosser Ellis) add facets to our knowledge of their relationship and deepen our understanding of its quality. The facts and flavor of these letters, plus the interpolated recollections of Mrs. Roberts, substantially enhance this account of the first decade of Lorimer-Roberts association.

After a perfunctory year at Yale, George Lorimer bowed to Philip Armour's gruff, "Stop wasting your time at college. Come to work for me. I'll make you a millionaire." At the rate of $10 a week, his starting salary as mail clerk in the meat-packing

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1 Published by Doubleday & Company, Garden City, N. Y., respectively, in 1949 and 1948.
concern, prospects for Lorimer’s first million seemed somewhat remote. Within eight years, however, he had achieved junior executive status with a tenfold advance in pay, a considerable remuneration for those times. An itch to try his own wings in business, the intricacies of which fascinated him, led to some dismal experiences and a sober revaluation of his talents and expectations. His inherited appetite for reading (during his long editorship he read an average of 500,000 words a week in manuscript and, for pure diversion, topped these off with at least two books) attracted him to newspaper reporting, which in short order disclosed his obvious intellectual debility. To remedy this condition and ensure success in his chosen occupation, he registered in 1896 for a year’s academic training at Colby College.

Tebbel states that Lorimer “took courses in English and history under President Roberts, for whom the elder Lorimer had a great admiration.” This is partly true. It was President Butler whom the senior Lorimer admired; Arthur J. Roberts did not rise to the presidency until 1908. Official records note that Lorimer entered the Junior class as a “partial student,” receiving credit only for a course in Logic by Dr. Pepper.2 Several factors may explain this sparsity of curricular activity. He was now married; during his tenure at Colby he lived off campus in the Elmwood Hotel; his attention was distracted by the public library, by correspondence for Boston and Maine newspapers, and by an aborning novel, “The Search for Simpkins,” which never saw light in its intended form. But he never forgot this year at Colby and later repaid the college handsomely in service and in material gifts.3

2 I am obliged to Dr. Ernest C. Marriner, Historian of Colby College, for clarifying the record. He said in part:
“The older Lorimer was a close friend of President Nathaniel Butler of Colby, who had told the father that one of his younger professors, Arthur J. Roberts, was a brilliant teacher of writing. Lorimer himself afterwards praised the instruction he received from ‘Roberts and other professors.’ George Dana Boardman Pepper, former president of the College, had returned in 1894 as Professor of Biblical Literature, and at times relieved President Butler of some of the courses in philosophy, one of which was Logic. GHL was already a mature man, only one year younger than Roberts himself. Roberts must have treated him informally and given him special attention beyond the formal classroom work. It is possible that GHL never took examinations in any course except Dr. Pepper’s Logic.”

Tebbel was no doubt misled by the concidence that all three men involved — Pepper, Butler, Roberts — were presidents of Colby.

3 In 1912 Colby awarded him the honorary degree of Litt.D., and it is in this respect that Kenneth Roberts retraced his steps many years later. In 1935 Colby recognized the novelist’s stature by granting him an LL.D.
Upon leaving Colby he acquired a reporter's job with the Boston Post, creating a redoubtable reputation for himself in a brief span. Such was the density of both managing editor and publisher that, despite Lorimer's demonstrated excellence, he was released when he asked for a $2.00 increase in his weekly wage. He took a position on another Boston newspaper, but his heart was not fully in it; intimations of latent powers surged within him and he was impatient to exercise them. Opportunity arrived in a slim news bulletin that Cyrus Curtis had purchased the Saturday Evening Post and was in search of an enterprising editor. With minimal hope, Lorimer nevertheless telegraphed an application. To his astonishment, Curtis arranged to meet him in Boston instead of summoning him to Philadelphia. After ten minutes of palaver in a hotel lobby, Lorimer was hired as literary editor of the Post — and was on his way to apogee.

To adults who recall the Post in Lorimer's heyday as an opulent colossus, it seems almost inconceivable that it could ever have been anything else. As a matter of fact, Lorimer took the reins of a magazine that had had a long but indifferent history of ups and downs, and a current circulation barely exceeding 10,000. Worse, the material contained in its sixteen unillustrated pages was mainly extracted from British periodicals and was presented in narrow columns and listless typography. With incredible rapidity, Lorimer transformed this "elderly and indisposed magazine" (Irvin S. Cobb) into "America's biggest nickelodeon" (Will Rogers), paid circulation climbing into the millions. In a later day Kenneth Roberts ebulliently opined that "Lorimer's editorial genius made it the greatest of American magazines, and Cyrus Curtis wouldn't have traded him for the Philadelphia mint" (I Wanted To Write, 33).

From his earliest boyhood Lorimer was entranced with planting. Tebbel tells a priceless story about young George tearing up the family lawn and sowing it to pumpkins as a surprise for his parents. In an unsigned obituary editorial, Garet Garrett made use of this vegetation instinct to bespeak Lorimer's reverential attitude toward his work: "The Post was a tree. He grew it from a seed." In the nurture of this ill-favored little weekly, Lorimer expended all of his time and zeal and heart.

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*I Wanted To Write,* 33.

4 *Saturday Evening Post,* CCX (November 27, 1937), 22.
and brains. He secured articles, stories, and poems from Conrad, Kipling, Galsworthy, Stephen Crane, Bret Harte, O. Henry, Frank Norris, Edwin Markham, Vachel Lindsay; in direct repudiation of “the big-name fallacy” he offered tyro pieces by Willa Cather, James Branch Cabell, Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, Carl Sandburg, Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, Edna St. Vincent Millay — frequently against the protests of colleagues; and with unerring adroitness he discovered and developed such perpetual favorites as Mary Roberts Rinehart, Edna Ferber, Booth Tarkington, Ben Ames Williams, Joseph Hergesheimer, and Kenneth Roberts.

Lorimer touched highest eminence as Post editor during the equanimous reign of Calvin Coolidge and the happier phase of Hoover’s incumbency. In these halcyon days Lorimer stood as the sterling advocate of business ideology and middleclass mores. He had come by both predilections honestly, so he was not distressed by accusations that he was dealing in mediocrity and pandering to the generality. Confident that his vision and the American dream were one, he calmly intoned his credo: “The prime quality of being an editor is being an ordinary man.”

II

While Lorimer was streaking toward the apex of editorship, Kenneth Lewis Roberts of Kennebunk, Maine, was wending — not without some mischief — over a route curiously duplicate to Lorimer’s earlier journey. First stage: an Ivy League university (Cornell). Second stage: a job as assistant office boy in a wholesale leather house (if one may be permitted an irresistible pun — Shades of Armour & Company!) at $4.00 a week. Third stage: mirabile dictu, a reporter’s beat with the imperturbable Boston Post. Here he paused longer than would have been the case had Lorimer not preceded him there. The divinity that was shaping both their ends toward a crucial junction arranged a journalistic triumph for Roberts. Thus encouraged, he requested a slight dilation in stipend, the same sum of $2.00 which had brought curt dismissal to Lorimer. This time, however, the same publisher said to the same managing editor, “I guess you’d better give it to him. You remember what

5 New York Times (October 23, 1937), 17.
happened when we didn’t give Lorimer that two-dollar raise he wanted.” 6 The name Lorimer took on dynamic meaning from this moment, and a desire to meet this tutelary saint must have bloomed in Roberts’ soul.

As columnist and conductor of a full page of comic verse, parody, and political satire in the Sunday edition of the paper, Roberts grew illustriously in the next few years. But, like Lorimer, he hankered after larger stars. A period of free-lancing unencumbered by newspaper routine would provide the kind of time he needed to produce writings more satisfactory to himself. Keeping at bay the beasts of conscience and of aspiration that were warring in his head, he put his proposition of a six-months leave to his chief executive. Once bit, thrice shy, the publisher gave him his blessing. “After that, if you want to come back, we’ll have something for you. . . I’ve always been sorry we let Mr. Lorimer go the way we did. If you ever meet him, I’d be glad to have you tell him so.” Thrilled by liberation, yet sobered by the chasm ahead, Roberts ruminated glumly, “It . . . seemed obvious to me I’d never meet Mr. Lorimer” (I Wanted To Write, 67). This was 1917.

His pessimistic prediction was not to be fulfilled but it did prevail for two mettlesome years. In the interim he established a connection of sorts with the Saturday Evening Post, if not with its editor. One day he “surprised” himself by completing a short story, “a luscious, whimsical fantasy with a slender golden-haired heroine and an O. Henry twist.” His surprise “almost became apoplexy” when an author’s agent sold it to the Post. 7 The transaction was wholly impersonal from start to finish: Roberts had never seen the agent, nor did Lorimer write Roberts on this occasion. The procedure was repeated with a second story which was accepted. Early in 1918 Roberts sent off a third. This time the process faltered; the Post, “and all other magazines,” turned it down. He had not yet heard from Lorimer.

III

How drolly incomparable are the influences which seize men by the shoulders and impel them in the direction of their proper

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6 I Wanted To Write, 32.
7 Ibid., 68. The story is “Good Will and Almond Shells,” CXC (December 22, 1917), 12.
goals. For Lorimer it was a two-dollar rebuff; for Roberts, a worldwide holocaust. Roberts’ boiling point was notoriously low, but nothing roused him to dudgeon faster than bureaucratic foul play. As a captain of Military Intelligence during World War I he chafed under the regulation forbidding any member of the armed forces to write or to publish anything, under penalty of dishonorable discharge. In a fit of resentment, he dispatched a telegram to Lorimer, inquiring whether he would be interested in a report about Siberia, to which area Roberts had just been assigned. Lorimer’s response inaugurated a professional and personal relationship that was to endure uninterruptedly for some nineteen years.

The return telegram to San Francisco was simple but electrifying. Dated August 13, 1918, and signed with the staple “Geo. H. Lorimer,” it read: “THANKS FOR LETTER HOPE YOU CAN GET DESIRED PERMISSIONS AS AM VERY MUCH INTERESTED.”

Using this message as a wedge, and with the sympathetic support of his commanding officer, Major Rupert Hughes (at the time polishing off a novel with official permission), Roberts militated so strongly against the restrictive order that it was rescinded. His whoops could be heard clear to Siberia.

But it was not until after he shipped back and was restored to civilian status on March 23, 1919, that Roberts mailed his article on the Svetlanskaya Front to the Post. About a week later he presented himself tremulously at Lorimer’s office (see I Wanted To Write, 125-127). To Roberts’ jubilation, “that granite-faced but tenderhearted editorial genius” greeted him amiably, then proceeded to quiz him with typical brusqueness and acuity. Roberts lost no time relaying the $2.00 contrition of the Boston Post publisher, at which Lorimer grunted, “Best thing ever happened to me . . . Probably been there yet if they’d raised me to twenty dollars.” The ice broken, Roberts was treated to lunch in “the chaste private dining room on the top floor, just as if I were an author of repute.” Back in the office, Lorimer withdrew a handful of chocolate buds from the lower drawer of his desk and offered them to Roberts (who was later to learn that this was a mark of exceptional favor).

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8 This is the original wording. Roberts embellished it (I Wanted To Write, 78) for dramatic and expository purposes. Tebbel varied his version in order to implement a stock Lorimer procedure (George Horace Lorimer, 89).
Before this memorable meeting came to a close, Roberts had elicited Lorimer's interest in two articles and a play, all of which subsequently appeared in the Post. That Roberts had made a conquest is additionally attested by Lorimer's note to Rupert Hughes on May 20, 1919: "Roberts is a real one and we hope to have him in the Post often. I have three more articles by him that are coming along in early numbers."

From that point on the pace quickened. Roberts' byline turned up with prodigious frequency in the Post. He spent two winters in Great Britain, France, Germany, the Balkans, Greece, and Italy investigating immigration policies and practices. So thorough and lucid were his articles on this topic that they elevated him to first rank as a roving correspondent. Harper's published the initial series as Europe's Morning After (1921), and a year later Bobbs-Merrill issued the second series as Why Europe Leaves Home. Disgruntled by the sales of his maiden effort, Roberts always claimed that Harper's had "published the book secretly."

Lorimer next sent him to Washington, D.C., which Roberts found "financially profitable, but spiritually depressing." Thereafter he referred acidly to "the Washington stewpot." This interval was productive of some incisive political reporting and a profile of Calvin Coolidge, Concentrated New England (1924).

A so-called "Christmas present" of a month-long trip to Florida in the winter of 1921-22 and a longer sojourn in 1925 extended Roberts' growing list of publications by a score of articles and three more books: Sun Hunting (1922), Florida Loafing (1925), and Florida (1926). As to the title of the last book, Roberts raked Harper's again for their "startling originality."

Interspersed were studies of Italian and Bavarian fascism (gathered in Black Magic, 1924), an opera buffa joust as Mussolini's literary "ghost," and exploratory tramps through the

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9 His Siberia Report, "The Random Notes of an Amerikansky," was published in CXCI (May 17, 1919), 3; "The Super-Boobs," an early recognition of the aims of the Communist aristocracy "to impose their own murderous and destructive beliefs on the whole world," CXCI (June 7, 1919), 12; "Bringing Chaos Out of Order," an account of Aguinaldo and the potentially explosive situation in the Philippines, CXCIi (July 12, 1919), 16; and "The Brotherhood of Man," a one-act play about the expiration of the Russian royal family, written in collaboration with comrade-in-arms Robert Garland, CXCIi (August 30, 1919).
American Southwest and the celluloid labyrinths of Hollywood, California. Before Lorimer's retirement, Roberts had contributed to the Post over two hundred articles, about a dozen short stories and one-act plays, and three serialized novels. Roberts' indefatigability was one of the qualities that endeared him to Lorimer. Damon Runyon once said, "Steady production was the thing that appealed to . . . Mr. Lorimer."

As the pace quickened, the friendship thickened. The preferred treatment Roberts received in that original interview remained the keystone of their affiliation. Lorimer shrewdly assayed the temperaments of his stellar performers and drew from a mixed bag of tactics to keep them at their best. Some he badgered, others he jollied; some he ignored, others he preened. For Roberts he mingled succinct approval with off-hand levity. None of the first-decade letters which Roberts preserved are elaborate or extensive. The only lengthy letter from Lorimer which he could recall was the meticulous blueprint for the first series of immigration articles. "As a rule, his letters were five or six lines long."

These letters are short but not scant. The matter and the manner divulge Lorimer's sensibilities and, by implication, Roberts' too. Not only at the outset, but throughout the first decade, Lorimer struck sparks of the kind of encouragement that warms the heart of a writer, novice or veteran. Much of it was simple, straight praise:

Super-Boobs is a fine story and we are delighted to have it for the Post (April 28, 1919).

You can say that Admiral Smirnoff who was with Kolchak all through his Siberian campaign, has just called on us and more than confirms everything that you and the Princess Cantacuzene 10 have to say in your articles (June 17, 1920).

You struck twelve, and kept right on striking up to one hundred plus in this last story. It illuminated my whole evening and reconciled me to my hard life as a farmer (August 23, 1921). 11

The Hoover article couldn't have been better handled by anyone, including yourself (January 25, 1922). 12

10 Princess Cantacuzène, Countess Spéran ski, née Julia Dent Grant contributed articles on European affairs to the Post over a long period. Lorimer is referring specifically to "Siberian Impressions," CXCII (February 21, 1920), 6. In 1921 Scribner's published her My Life Here and There, reprinted from a series in the Post.

11 Possibly "They Sometimes Come Back," CXCIV (September 10, 1921), 12; recounts King Constantine's political woes on his return from exile to Greece.

You have given me many happy hours during the past year, but none happier than the one I just spent reading your last piece (September 27, 1923).\(^{13}\) The Florida article and the pictures from Lake City both came safely to hand this morning, and so our lives are saved. I think you did a fine piece on the automobile trip and successfully avoided the many pitfalls in the subject (October 30, 1925).\(^{14}\) The third of the Florida articles came safely to hand this morning and it is a mighty good piece (November 25, 1925).\(^{15}\)

Sometimes he indulged in deeper details:

I have heard from the Philippine boys direct and have written to them that, though we shall be very glad, of course, to receive a signed statement from Aguinaldo giving his views on the subject of Philippine independence, we have no intention of printing this roundabout, third person statement. Incidentally, every letter that we have received about your article,\(^{16}\) except those from the Philippine press agents, has backed you up strongly (September 3, 1919).

Sometimes he gave a lift through acquiescent suggestion:

I think a good josh story on movieized novels would work up well. Here's a great chance to kid titles and conventional plots as well (September 4, 1925).\(^{17}\)

And sometimes there was a fleck on the rose:

The introduction to this last article was, I thought, a little discouraging, but after the first two or three pages it trotted along in great shape (March 30, 1925).\(^{18}\)

Encouragement took subtler forms. Despite the alleged existence of a "Lorimer formula" upon which he was reputed to insist, Lorimer allowed Roberts extensive elbow room. Even the schematic instructions on the first immigration series contained this escape clause: "the way in which the articles shape up and their number depend entirely on what you find from actual investigation" (I Wanted To Write, 135).

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13 Probably "Swedish Punch," CXCVI (November 3, 1923), 16; a sallacious report on Scandinavian eating and drinking.
14 "Florida Fever," CXCVIII (December 5, 1925), 6.
15 "Good Warm Stuff," CXCVIII (January 9, 1926), 12.
16 "Bringing Chaos Out of Order," CXCII (July 12, 1919), 16.
17 See "Movie Mad," CXCIX (September 25, 1926), 14.
18 Possibly "The Great Commission Metropolis," CXCVII (May 16, 1925), 35; after a fairly pedestrian start, Roberts livens up this essay with an injection of the first person viewpoint.
Lorimer was discreet: "Get a copy of the new law before you go too far with the Old Hooch," he cautioned, "that is if you are planning to present any simple household recipes. Uncle Sam is notably deficient in humor" (September 12, 1919). But, in the pinches, he printed Roberts verbatim then protected him from undue pressure, as demonstrated in the Aguinaldo incident, in two delicate episodes that brought Roberts athwart Herbert Hoover and Senator George Wharton Pepper, and in this note of March 23, 1924:

Please go right ahead with the article on senatorial investigations. We should, however, be careful how we handle this subject and be a little judicial ourselves so as to not create the impression that we are against investigation of crookedness and wrong doing by public officials. I see by the Congressional Record that whenever a Senate Committee is criticized some Senator gets up to express the belief that the critic wishes to condone corruption and crookedness in public officials.19

But this is not to say that any author, even the most privileged, could assume carte blanche. "In the office," says Mrs. Roberts, "Lorimer was spoken of as the Boss, and that was what he was." Lorimer rarely cut or altered Roberts' work. Roberts remembered only the excision of a paragraph from one of his Hollywood pieces to avoid clamor from the Chamber of Commerce; and once he persuaded the prohibitively space-conscious Lorimer to expand a five-part serial to six. It is therefore extravagantly ironic that they came close to permanent alienation over editorial juggling of a single word. Roberts slighted the crisis, while Tebbel stages it animatedly (pp. 216-217). This is how Mrs. Roberts, with obeisance to forty intervening years, recalls it:

It must have been in the early twenties that Ken was in Warsaw, Poland, picking up immigration articles. Strong, splendid members of our consular service would be brought to tears as they saw Polish Jews in lines getting visas for the United States. They would claw and fight each other getting to windows and, though they would be deloused before embarking, it was a shocking sight. On his return he wrote an article about this. They were all Jews. When the article came out the word Jews had been changed to Poles. Ken was horrified about this, par-

19 Probably "The Great Cheese Investigation," CXCVII (January 3, 1925), 9: a satiric dialogue based on Senate investigation committee proceedings. For other instances of Lorimer's discretion, see I Wanted To Write, 164-165, in respect to Herbert Hoover; and Tebbel, 93, regarding Senator George Wharton Pepper.
particularly when a letter came in from a Pole protesting. He replied to this unknown Pole mentioning the change that had been made, and his distress about it. The Pole sent Ken's letter to Lorimer. A letter at once arrived from Lorimer saying it was not for him to criticize the Post's policy and that was the end of our association. Consternation!

We were just leaving for Maine and it was our custom to break the trip with a stop with the Atwater Kents in Ardmore. They were great friends of the Lorimers and we always had meetings. Gloom was intense. Ken did not feel he could go to the office. Mrs. Lorimer stepped into the breach — George was very upset and Ken was to go to see him. He went at once and years of close friendship ensued.

The most comforting species of encouragement to a free lance writer, however, lay in what may be called "the Lorimer cliché": CHECK BY TREASURER ON TUESDAY. "It is common knowledge," says Mrs. Roberts, "that when he took over the editorship of the S. E. P. he started the custom of reading all manuscripts within a week of their arrival. If accepted, a check was sent to the author on the following Tuesday. The readers on the Post were ordered to handle all manuscripts carefully; they were to be returned to the author, if rejected, in the same condition in which they were received, not man-handled or mussed up. Before that time magazines held manuscripts for months before the author would have an inkling as to what might happen, then payment was generally made on publication, and that could be an indefinite time later."

Lorimer's revolutionary practice kept Roberts financially above water in his shaky first days without regular employment and during his later bold venture into the field of the novel. "I cannot say too often that unless I'd been able to have the support of the Saturday Evening Post between and during novels, I couldn't possibly have written fiction of the sort I had set my heart on doing" (I Wanted To Write, 205). In one of his earliest notes (September 3, 1919) Lorimer showed a bantering awareness of young authors' uncertain economics. "Come to Philadelphia when Kennebunk Beach begins to feel a little chilly, so that we can discuss the League of Nations, the author's high cost of living, and the possibility of a little winter travel for the Post."

But he did not treat the actuality as a joke. For besides being prompt and considerate, Lorimer was generous, perhaps his predominant trait. "There was no more generous person than George Horace Lorimer," declares Mrs. Roberts unequivocally.
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“The Post authors were well paid. Lorimer did not wish his authors to be pinched, and said, more than once, that what they received was a small part of the expenses of the Post. He felt the same way about everyone under his own roof, servants or members of his family were to be in a position to be able to leave at any moment. No one ever felt the urge.”

Nevertheless, several of his regular contributors did at one time yield to the lure of larger pay checks from Hearst’s Cosmopolitan. Roberts strayed for a total of one article, was appalled by Ray Long’s blue pencil, and returned forthwith to the Post. Lorimer never forgave or readmitted Irvin S. Cobb for his defection, but it was different with Roberts. “If you will add the Saturday Evening Post and the Ladies’ Home Journal to your line, you will be above the necessity of writing little pieces for the papers” (October 7, 1919). “This does not mean there were strings attached to Post writers,” appends Mrs. Roberts. “Look at Ben Ames Williams. He wrote constantly for the Post yet wrote for many magazines.” And her statement is borne out twice in these communications from the Boss. “Go ahead and do a piece or two for the old man, but don’t spill anything that belongs in the Saturday Evening Post first” (June 23, 1922); “There is no reason in the world why you should not treat the Public Ledger like any other newspaper or periodical that applies to you for material. If you want to do it and the price is right, that is one thing; if you don’t want to and the price is wrong, that is yet another” (August 22, 1922). There is no denying Mrs. Roberts’ opinion that “Had Cobb discussed his plans with Lorimer their personal relations, undoubtedly, would have remained the same.” Roberts wrote another fifteen years for the Post, never once discussing the price to be paid for an article and enjoying steadily higher rates for acceptable material.

The lilt and tone of these letters make it obvious that the Lorimer-Roberts attachment fed on more than merely commercial interdependence. The business content is progressively suffused by comic and homely touches which Lorimer reserved for the inner ring, those few colleagues whom he also counted as familiars. The Post obituary cut to the core cleanly: “The only thing about him that was not quite what it seemed was the armor of Scotch burs that covered him completely.” Or-
ordinarily formal with most writers, Lorimer turned the twinkling
side of his nature to Roberts. "The date of your arrival in
Philadelphia is noted," he wrote, while national prohibition
was in effect. "We can promise you everything except a drink,
and even that isn't hopeless" (October 7, 1919).

His humor was unpretentious and inversely affectionate.
Typical is this note of September 8, 1921: "Under separate
cover, I am sending you a portrait of a gentleman, by Van
Dyke.20 Also, I am going to follow it in the flesh about
Wednesday, the 21st, and turn up in Kennebunkport on towards
dinnertime of the 22nd. I have asked Dere Mable 21 to kill
a frying chicken, but if she has left your inhospitable climate
by that time I shall depend on you to fry a steak. In any event,
I am going to graft at least one square meal from you." In
transparent attempts to mask his sympathy, he would resort to
mordant hyperbole, as in his postscript of April 28, 1919: "I
have told the Art Department that unless they get that pass-
port"22 safely back to you they will all be lined up against a stone
wall and shot"; or he could take a line of homicidal whimsy,
as on August 22, 1922:

Apparently you need someone to devise a system similar to the one that
I have in my office. You will remember that I can escape either through
Bigelow's office in the Art Department or through Miss Neall's to the
fire escape. Perhaps a short ways above your house in Kennebunk
Beach you can turn the road off through the woods and down into a
camouflaged quarry hole. It would be nice on quiet evenings to sit out
on the porch and hear them plunk.

He playfully jarred Roberts' funnybone with his plaint about
virtual eviction: "To-morrow we begin working on the addition
to the house and from now until Thanksgiving I may, I suppose,

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20 He is referring facetiously to a photograph of himself, upon which he
inscribed, "Born in old Kentucky, bred in Boston, toughened in Chicago, but
now resting quietly in Philadelphia." Mrs. Roberts presented this photo-
graph and equivalent ones of Kenneth Roberts, Ben Ames Williams, and
Booth Tarkington to Colby College. They hang in restored consortium in
the office of the Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts.
21 His pet name for Mrs. A. Atwater Kent. Dere Mable is Edward Streeter's
immensely popular volume of love letters by an army rookie, published in
1918.
22 The "passport" is reproduced on page 12 of the article, "The Super-
Boobs," CXCI (June 7, 1919), and was intended to illustrate the painful
stupidity of the revolutionary Russian government. A travesty of an official
document which contained such statements as "Good for one first-class coupé
in the Wagon-Lits from Wheresoever-Youarski to Moscow," it nevertheless got
a Polish native through Bolshevik lines from Petrograd to Vladivostok.
just as well plan to sleep on the lawn” (May 5, 1925). They seemed both to be plagued by providence with incessant and insoluble housing problems, so could wryly condole each other on their recurring tribulations. But it was on the subject of antiques that Lorimer truly bloomed. He took unholy pleasure in beating his fellow huntsmen to coveted items, then dangling his trophies before their eyes.

August 11, 1922

My dear Roberts,

Will you kindly break the news to Dere Mable that while she has been off the job here I have picked up a dinner set and a dessert set of old Worcester, about one hundred pieces, decorated in the best period of these well known works. I am going to knock her eye out the first time she dines with us.

I don’t wish to mention in this letter a dinner set of Crown Darby containing one hundred and sixty-four pieces, made in 1795 and decorated by Billingsley. I shall reserve mention of that for my next letter.

And in the same spirit of blissful malevolence he tweaked Roberts himself, no mean antiquary: “It causes me much pain to notify you that I have just found and purchased in Princeton, New Jersey, the best Sheraton sofa in America, not excepting that in the Metropolitan Museum” (June 14, 1926).

It is not to be assumed from this raillery that Lorimer or Roberts were dilettantes out for a laugh; they were rabid and dead serious antiquarians. This, in fact, forged another strong link of affinity between them. Together, and often buttressed by Joseph Hergesheimer, Hugh MacNair Kahler, and Edwin Lefevre, they scoured the countrysides of New England, Pennsylvania, and the Southwest for uncommon specimens of early American furniture, glass, porcelain, tapestries, and Navajo rugs. Tebbel and Roberts recount numerous anecdotes about these enraptured raids upon remote storerooms, but it is diverting to hear Mrs. Roberts reminisce over some points covered by neither.

Lorimer had a large farm a few miles from his home in Wyncote, with a large farmhouse on it. This served as a splendid place for handsome Pennsylvania Dutch Dower Chests, Indian rugs, and furniture that he had collected but had no place for in Wyncote. A huge attic in his large stone house in Wyncote was also filled with antiques which were put there to make room for finer and rarer pieces that he acquired.

He became an authority about anything he collected, and most of his Saturdays were spent going to antique shops in the country out from...
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Philadelphia and further afield in Eastern Pennsylvania, a large section noted for good antiques. Mrs. Lorimer considered this a healthy vice, even though her interest was lukewarm. On the return from one Saturday excursion, with an exceedingly rare lowboy in the back of the car, the chauffeur was sent into the house to see if Mrs. Lorimer were at home. She wasn’t, so the lowboy was carried to his room, and the lowboy there was shunted to the attic. He said Mrs. Lorimer could go into his room a dozen times and never notice the change.

Like all collectors, he found it hard to part with any possession. The breakfast room in Wynncote was panelled in white, the walls on each side of the door opened, revealing shelves filled with glass. These shelves held two blue George Washington flasks. We felt it would be nice for him to give us one. He mounted a chair, held these two flasks in his hands and studied them again and again in the light. Finally the faintest flaw was discovered in one; it came hard, but that one is now in our taproom.

He never liked to leave a shop without making a purchase. That problem was not hard to beat if he antiqued here in Maine. He could ease his mind by giving us a four-poster bed, a tip-top table, etc., etc.

Do you remember an article in a book of Ken’s, Antiquamania, called “A Tour of the Bottlefields?” It told of a trip Lorimer, Joseph Hergeshimer and Ken took antiquing. They were passing Gettysburg and Ken wanted to get out and see the battlefield. The order was given to drive faster, no time would be taken out to see battlefields. When Lorimer received the article he commented that Ken, of course, had made himself out as perfection, the true gentleman; but he enjoyed the article and asked for no changes in the portrayal of himself and Joe.

The depth and extent of Lorimer’s feeling about antiques are reflected in the abundance of allusions to them in his letters to Roberts. The following excerpts exude the scent of their mutual ardor.

I think I shall have to pay a special trip to Boston sometime between now and Thanksgiving and look over three or four shops that I missed in my hurry. My New England chickens are coming home to roost and I will have quite a flock of trained pitchers and other nicknacks to show you when next you visit Philadelphia (August 28, 1924).

The box-bush is now planted on my lawn at Wynncote, the oil jar on the terrace and the Dutch table has gone to the refinisher (March 30, 1925).

I have been so darned busy for the past fortnight that I haven’t bought a single solitary antique. However, Graeme and I are going to fare

23 Roberts’ original title for this essay was “So This Is Pleasure,” (see Tebbel, 94), but Lorimer recalled the battlefield spat and took an editor’s prerogative of turning the pun. Besides Antiquamania, published in 1928, Roberts drew upon these experiences to collaborate with Kahler and Tarkington in a burlesque volume, The Collector’s Whatnot (1923). “A Tour of the Bottlefields” appeared in the Post, CXCIX (November 13, 1926), 24.
forth to-morrow morning in an attempt to remedy this unprecedented condition (April 24, 1925).

Those burglars probably stole faked antiques. One of the amusing angles of this business is that the fakers every now and then fake each other (May 5, 1925).

Those $1800 and $3000 pieces are not for a poor editor unless he sees them first and beats the dealers to them. Just now values are tremendously inflated and I am laying off. P.S. If the Sandwich is early stuff $50 or $60 would not be a high price for it, but it is impossible to value it without looking it over. As you know the Sandwich works were in operation until somewhere along in 1885 and the late stuff is not particularly important or valuable (May 29, 1925).

I think that we can do something better for you than the spool dresser. My Shenandoah Valley scout has promised to lay aside for me any little knickknacks like decorated dressers or chests that turn up during the next few weeks, and I am planning to swing around the circle sometime early in September to see what's what. Go after Mrs. Ahern. I didn't see her and I am not particularly interested in iron work just now, though I may say that I have added to my collection four old iron-bound treasure chests chased with pictures of knights and ladies and with paintings of old ships under the inner lid. Also I picked out of the air day before yesterday an American three-chair Chippendale settee, though I didn't get it for $100. I never seem to be around where the $100 boys are operating (August 20, 1926).

I am a little shy about long distance buying of glass. All is not Jersey that is blue. In fact quite a lot of it is Mexican, and the shape of that vase is not too Jerseyish (May 24, 1927).

They shared other devotions that solidified their intimacy. Blueberry pie, for instance. Tebbel reports that they would go on gargantuan binges and then "come home with mouths that stayed purple for a week." More fundamental was their love of outdoors — the inspiratory features of natural scenery and the opportunities it offered for manly sports such as fishing and hunting. As relief from the surfeit that occasionally assails even the most pleasant of jobs, Lorimer fled by train to the Pacific coast. There he could unbend with Sam Blythe, Charles Van Loan, Harry Leon Wilson, and other Post authors who were also part of his small fraternal circle. One June 23, 1922, he wrote with ill-repressed expectancy: "I am off to California on July fifth . . . I shall have a look into the new Roosevelt-Sequoia Park, lying around Mt. Whitney, and then pass lightly over into the Glacier. They tell me there are golden trout in the Sequoia Park that hold all records for ferocity and edibility. Such a statement must be investigated." Mrs. Roberts avows that he had a passion for the Grand Canyon. "The wall at
the rear end of his office had a huge painting of the Grand Canyon. I wish I could remember who painted it, it might have been Maxfield Parrish, perhaps someone quite different.”

Lorimer had no apparent aversion to personal tributes and could acknowledge them with charming modesty. But he was so often singled out for public or official recognition — and he was well aware of the price for such — that he could after a while only respond irritably. Three of his grace notes to Roberts illustrate these reflexes and bring out Lorimer's basic reticence. The first relates to Roberts’ unvarnished dedication of his book “To George Horace Lorimer.”

March 24, 1924

My dear Roberts:

Years ago when Morgan Robertson was visiting me he had a copy of his new book [Masters of Men, 1904] and I was very much struck by the dedication: To My Wife, A Good Woman. I asked Robertson how his wife liked it and he said he didn’t know for, though it had been on the library table for a week, she hadn’t looked between the covers of the book. It was not until last night that I looked between the covers of “Black Magic” and found not only the written but the printed inscription, with which I need not add I am greatly pleased. There are some books that I would rather not have dedicated to me, but it is an honor to be identified with the sentiments expressed in “Black Magic”.

Black Magic (1924) is a not unsympathetic survey of Mussolini’s early accomplishments. Lorimer admired Benito’s show of no-nonsense efficiency and patently disallowed him as a threat to European or world peace. Nonetheless, he could not reconcile yet another gaudy citation. “Please call off your decoration dogs,” he pleaded on August 20, 1926. “I wouldn’t know what to do with another. I am afraid I haven’t the temperament to wear ribbons gracefully and to pay for them in printers’ ink. If I had an Italian one, I should probably feel that I should have to pan instead of praise Il Duce.” But the donor was not to be denied. In May 1927 Lorimer bowed to the ineluctable. On the 24th of that month he sent this slightly metallic acquittance to Roberts: “I received a letter from the Italian Ambassador last week saying that on his recommendation I had been made a Commander of the Crown of Italy, and shortly thereafter the Italian Consul came in and pinned the order to my bosom, remarking that on his recom-
mendation I had been made a Commander of the Crown of Italy. As I believe that I am indebted to you for the honor, I am sending herewith my regards and final thanks for it.” From the point of view of subtlety, this is the funniest of Lorimer’s letters.

His taste in music was bland but he did attend the opera “on command.” Normally robust, he could be depended upon to develop some disqualifying ailment — usually a cold — on Tuesday, the Lorimers’ regular night at the Metropolitan. So it comes as no wonder that the performance got short shrift as his mind wandered over people in the hall and post-show provender. “I went to the Ritz after the opera on Tuesday night and was disappointed at not seeing your party there. I had an idea that you’d get hungry after the theatre and look in for a little food” (April 24, 1923).

He paid conspicuously more attention to the drama, for the “legitimate” theatre explored territory nearer his heart — the world of current concerns out of which his Post articles and editorials drew so much of their sustenance. Even at second hand he reported with keener appreciation on straight plays than on lyric dramas.

April 2, 1925

My dear Roberts:

In looking over the New York play situation don’t under any circumstances pass over “What Price Glory”. I have not seen this play myself, and of course the cussing side of it, which is not the most important, has been greatly trimmed and repressed, but Britten Austin,²⁴ who spent the night with me, said that it was a burlesque and a travesty on the war as he knew it and furthermore, in his opinion, it was an unwarranted insult to the American Army. It has, of course, been very extensively touted by our pacifists and young intelligentsia.

Two final letters from this ten-year period underscore Lorimer’s boundless beneficence toward his friends, which he tried to conceal behind an easily penetrable show of bluff jocosity. On September 3, 1919, he wrote: “Please consider this your official appointment as a book agent to solicit subscriptions for the Van Loan books.”²⁵ A circular giving full information about

²⁴ Frederick Britten Austin, prolific English novelist — The Red Flag, The Road to Glory — and frequent contributor of articles and short stories to the Post, was a periodical guest at the Lorimers’ home.

them is enclosed herewith. All checks or orders that you can secure, either with guile or an axe, should be forwarded to the publisher, Mr. Doran. Five of us have started off the sale by subscribing to fifty sets apiece.” Nine days later he reaffirmed his proposition earnestly. “You are sole and exclusive agent for Kennebunkport. There ought to be at least three subscriptions there, your own, Tarkington’s and Wilson’s.”

Charles E. Van Loan, who rose to repute with such sports stories as *The Big League* and *Inside the Ropes*, was a steady contributor to the *Post* and a Lorimer crony. Although he earned a consistently good income over many productive years, Van Loan was chronically unable to keep outflow lower than inflow. Lorimer knew of these financial straits and regularly steered him out of them. Once, when Van Loan was given temporary editorial work at the *Post*, he more than repaid Lorimer by “discovering” Ring Lardner although the regular staff had returned his story. After Van Loan died, Lorimer induced his friend George Doran to issue this posthumous set of books in an effort to ease Mrs. Van Loan’s situation. Mrs. Roberts remembers that “When Van Loan died he was not affluent. An undertaker had preyed upon Mrs. Van Loan in her stricken state, and she committed herself for a $10,000 casket. As I recall, Lorimer heard of this in time and a modest casket took its place.”

Before concluding this section devoted to letters from only Lorimer’s side — and excerpts, in the main — it would be desirable to reproduce an exchange between the two men in toto. Two letters (which in turn were merely excerpted by Tebbel, p. 280) are hereby offered. Lengthier than usual and later than the 1918-1927 era, they are thus instructive for two purposes: 1) to demonstrate the tenor of the continuing personal and professional friendship; 2) to recertify the topics that fostered it. Worth nothing is the formality of their salutations, notwithstanding a dozen years of propinquity. (Practically no one

26 Booth Tarkington lived at least half the year in Maine during most of his mature years, always near Roberts and eventually his adjacent neighbor. Harry Leon Wilson (*Ruggles of Red Gap*), another of Lorimer’s core companions, was a Tarkington friend and collaborator, often visiting him and occasionally summering in Kennebunkport.

27 I am grateful to R. N. Williams of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania for sending me copies of these letters, and to Graeme Lorimer for permission to publish them and to quote freely from all the earlier letters.
ever got familiar enough to call Lorimer “George.” A quarter-century after his death, Mrs. Roberts continues out of indurated habit to speak of him as “Lorimer.”

September 29th [1929]

Dear Mr. Lorimer:—

I am very sorry to be so dilatory about this third billboard piece. I have had to provide bed, board and entertainment for the entire travelling public for the past three weeks, and have very nearly gone crazy. Maybe I did go crazy: at any rate, I got so sore that Anna and I beat it a hundred miles north of here and bought 250 acres at the mouth of the Georges River — 250 acres with two and one half miles of stern and rockbound water-front which lends itself admirably to pushing undesirable callers into the water. There is nothing on the place but a mortgage, so it may be many a long year before we get around to living on it; but I knew that if I didn't make a start at getting out of this dump, I would soon be the Chief Officer of the Booby Hatch.

Anyway, I will finish this piece the end of this week; and if you are going to be receiving along about Tuesday October 8th, I will put the world's largest three-mold pitcher into a hat-box, well-surrounded by Scott Tissue, and run over to the great city to have a little pea soup and cheese omelet with you. I take it for granted that you will be there, as I see by the papers that several others wont.

I had a telephone from Mabel proposing a run from Portland to New York in the good ship Alondra, leaving tomorrow. When I complained that I had to work and couldn't go, she assured me that I could work on the boat. Any time I fall so low as to do work while on a private yacht, I will consider myself an outcast from all human society.

I received some proofs from the POST a couple of days ago. The envelope was placed in the automobile all right; but I cannot recall ever seeing the proofs taken out. I have been correcting the 181 galleys of that championship long-distance novel ARUNDEL; and when I turned from them to the POST proofs, the POST proofs were nowhere to be found. I cannot imagine what has become of them; but the fact remains that we cannot find them. If there were any queries of importance to be answered, I think for safety's sake that another set had better be pulled and sent to me.

Rubenstein in Rockland had some swell stuff when we were recently there — one of the best-looking serpentine front chests of drawers with original brasses, huge ones, that I ever saw; and a very chaste Martha Washington chair in perfect condition. The latter he wanted $1200 for. The chest he hadn't set a price on. He sold me a blue bottle with fine white overlay spirals on it for $8. You would take some pleasure, I think, in keeping in touch with him.

McKearin heard that I had a big three-mold pitcher and wrote pleasantly, saying what a shame it was that it had a crack in it; but his con-
cern over the crack evaporated when I told him I had promised the pitcher to you.\textsuperscript{28}

With liturgical severity he signed this letter “Faithfully yours, Kenneth L. Roberts,” as Lorimer signed his response, “Yours sincerely, Geo. H. Lorimer.”

My dear Roberts:

Tuesday the 8th is fine. Hope you can stay over and look at a few additions that Eddie and I have picked up on tour. I have two very fine Martha Washingtons, one the best that I have ever seen, and I paid $175 and $250 respectively for them some five or six years ago. Since you were in Wyncote I have picked up six unusually fine Philadelphia Chippendale chairs, a tall Pennsylvania clock painted with tulips, and several other articles of virtue and some not so virtuous, but all above the average. Eddie spent a very productive week end with me and retired to New York with several rare examples of the bottle blowers art.

Sam Blythe blew in yesterday and left with the makings of four articles. I think he will be East for another month at least. Don’t bother about the proofs, as the article is going to the foundry to-day.\textsuperscript{29}

IV

The Lorimer-Roberts relationship did not terminate until Lorimer’s death in 1937, but the route they rode in tandem on the Saturday Evening Post from 1918 diverged a decade sooner. As early as 1919 the daemon that pushed Roberts from his safe mooring at the Boston Post into a shoreless future began to assert itself again. He could not rid himself of the notion that he was not yet writing along the line of his best ability. With the ever-resolute support of Mrs. Roberts, he told Lorimer of

\textsuperscript{28} Between October 13, 1928, and September 6, 1930, Roberts published four scathing articles in the Post on billboard desecration of the American landscape.

He comments corrosively on his Georges River and other real estate misadventures in “Confessions of a Small Investor: II,” Post, CCV (March 25, 1933), 8; reprinted in For Authors Only (New York, 1933), 254-260. His swipe at undesirable callers brings back the grim whimsicality in Lorimer’s letter of August 22, 1922.

The A. Atwater Kents (Mabel) maintained a summer home in Kennebunkport and a yacht in the harbor.

\textsuperscript{29} Edwin Lefevre wrote about Wall Street and other fiscal phenomena for the Post, and was a charter member of Lorimer’s larcenous gang of antiquers. Samuel G. Blythe was by all accounts Lorimer’s most cherished friend. The Post’s prolific man in Washington, “he wrote more and more from his home in California, as ill-health and age began to sap his vitality” (Tebbel, 122).

The proofs discussed in these letters are probably those of “Revolt in Billboardia,” CCH (November 2, 1929), 14.
his determination to ship off to Taormina and "try to write a book." Lorimer immediately sensed that Roberts was far from certain about his course. Reluctant to lose so sturdy a contributor, he mumbled a sly warning about winding up with a job in a pickle factory and tempted the wavering author with an extensive European itinerary at Post expense. Roberts succumbed to this pragmatic lure, and again in 1924 when he had more surely formulated his desire: to write a novel in Palm Beach. Lorimer convinced him that he was financially over-extended, and that one winter as Post Washington correspondent would put him on solid ground again. Through 1926 Roberts kept in abeyance his impulse to take a fling at fiction as Lorimer plied him with glamorous assignments in California, Mexico, and Italy. But in 1927 he took the irreversible plunge.

When Lorimer perceived that he could restrain Roberts no longer, he capitulated with typical magnanimity. "I can see you won't be satisfied until you've tried it, so go right ahead. We'll work out some light papers and a few side trips for you from time to time when the larder runs low" (I Wanted To Write, 181). Mrs. Roberts attests Lorimer's integrity. "When Ken started writing books there were lean times. So Lorimer would suggest some articles he could write, or accept Ken's suggestions, and we would be comfortably tided over. He never failed." He even tailored Post assignments to coincide with Roberts' current research. "I do not see how anyone could have been more fortunate than we," adds Mrs. Roberts, "having Booth and Lorimer for close close friends."

After Roberts' definite shift, he did not attempt to force his fiction upon Lorimer. He knew it was too long and doubted that it would please the Post constituency. Lorimer had forecast 200,000-word novels and later laughed about Roberts' "ten-pound books." But he kept a wise eye on Roberts' progress, and clipped reviews which he mailed with cheering sentiments. In time, he serialized three of the novels.

While Roberts was still working on The Lively Lady, Lorimer sent a message by his son Graeme that he had read about one-third of it and found it "better than Stevenson." "Hey, hey!" exulted Roberts. "Who would work for any other editor if he can work for Lorimer?" But things did not turn out so well as in the old non-fiction days. Lorimer telegraphed about
the necessity to cut down on length, to which Roberts agreed, begging that the surgeon be merciful. The novel appeared in six installments from March 7 through April 11, 1931, and Roberts perspired profusely “over the manner in which it had been hacked to hell” (I Wanted To Write, 204-208).

Lorimer had always instantly accepted or rejected Roberts’ product. Captain Caution incited his first case of vacillation. Several versions of the manuscript were shipped back and forth from Kennebunkport and Philadelphia half a dozen times in the space of some three years, despite Lorimer’s conviction that it was in a number of ways superior to The Lively Lady. He finally printed it in six issues from August 18 to September 22, 1934.

The last Roberts novel to come out piecemeal in the Post was Northwest Passage. First Lorimer thought of chopping it up into several short stories, then decided to publish the first part as a unit. This was late in 1936; Lorimer was ill at home and near retirement. Against all other suggestions raised by his staff, the Boss sent word that he “preferred to close his career with Northwest Passage, and they could all get busy and see that the art work, typesetting, checking and proofreading were rushed in record time” (I Wanted To Write, 319). Under the title “Rogers’ Rangers,” the first of seven installments appeared in December 26, 1936, the final issue of the Saturday Evening Post under Lorimer’s editorship. With this novel Roberts fixed himself firmly in the public mind as America’s pre-eminent writer of historical fiction. Lorimer died within the year. The coexistent arc in their separate flights to fame was concluded.

V

Durable testimonials to both these blunt, sardonic, ungovernable, creative men are manifest at Colby College.

On the highest point of the campus stands the Lorimer Memorial Chapel which George Horace built and dedicated as “a concrete expression of my father’s love for New England . . . and of Colby College.” The statement which Lorimer wrote for the ground-breaking ceremonies in 1937 contains this unstinted tribute: “I came to Colby during a transition period in my life, when I was giving up business and daily journalism, to take certain courses under Dr. Roberts, which I hoped would
further my ambition to get an editorial position on a periodical. His encouragement and teaching, as well as that of other professors under whom I studied, put me under a debt of gratitude to Colby. It was only a few months after I left Colby that my chance came to join the staff of the *Saturday Evening Post.*

As to Roberts, a full set of his first editions, most of them inscribed to his wife or his mother (together with approximately one hundred presentation copies of Booth Tarkington’s and Ben Ames Williams’ books), are among the most valued collections in the Rare Book Room. The immense ledgers in which he wrote and punctiliously revised *The Lively Lady* in crowded but strikingly legible script are also on display there.

A prize volume in the Roberts Collection is John Tebbel’s presentation copy of his Lorimer biography, inscribed on the front endpaper: “For Kenneth Roberts, who did so much to make it possible — with the most grateful thanks of John Tebbel, New York, April 1, 1948.” No sign of the Roberts temperament appears until page 303. Here he circled the entire first paragraph which treats with the earlier symptoms of Lorimer’s throat cancer, then in respect to the “throat specialist, who incredibly missed the diagnosis,” Roberts circled the word *incredibly* and wrote in the bottom margin, “Why incredibly? 98% of ’em miss it.” In the account of Lorimer’s funeral on page 304 Roberts circled the names of Tarkington, Hergesheimer, Lefèvre, Senator Pepper, Edward Stotesbury, John Gilbert, and said of them in the top margin, “Not there.” In this same paragraph he circled the name of A. Atwater Kent and wrote in the outer margin, “He and Mable drove me to Wyncote, but At. wasn’t.” And in the bottom margin of page 304 he noted heavily: “After the funeral there was a wake at Adelaide’s house — Sam [Blythe], [Garet] Garrett, May Wilson Preston, Adelaide [Neall], Mary Roberts Rinehart, & we all got stinko.” He added Lefèvre’s name to this clique and altered the wording somewhat in *I Wanted To Write,* but the quivering sense of loss was no less abysmal.

Colby College in proud to count among the many illustrious names on its honorary roll those of Kenneth Roberts and George Horace Lorimer.