

# Colby



Colby Quarterly

---

Volume 8  
Issue 4 *December*

Article 4

---

December 1968

## Epilogue

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/cq>

---

### Recommended Citation

Colby Library Quarterly, series 8, no.4, December 1968

This Back Matter is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Colby. It has been accepted for inclusion in Colby Quarterly by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Colby.

216 ◆ *Editor's Epilogue* ◆

**To Howells with love:** It is through the kindness of Mrs. John Mead Howells that Colby's collection of over 270 Howells editions — first, limited signed, illustrated, revised, and variant — has been supplemented by more than a score of volumes inscribed to him by authors appreciative or hopeful of his attention. The better known among these include Edmund Gosse (“with the author's love”), James Whitcomb Riley (“with grateful esteem”), Robert Underwood Johnson (“with the regard of many years”), Charles G. D. Roberts (“with great admiration”), William Stanley Braithwaite (“in admiration of his many-sided genius”), Thomas Sergeant Perry (already noted), and Madison Cawein, who resorted to a quatrain on the endleaf of his *One Day and Another; A Lyrical Eclogue*:

To William Dean Howells

Here is a sort of tale in verse, —  
 Something you told me once to try;  
 It could be better, it might be worse,  
 But the one to set it right's not I.

After which he signed with a flourish and added “Louisville, Ky. / July 1901.”

Another unique inscription is by Howells himself in a familiar maroon-cover copy of his *The Quality of Mercy* (Harper & Brothers, 1892 edition). The book is badly warped and waterstained, the circumstance of which he explains on the front endleaf: “Sent me because it passed through a horrible cyclone in the West, (Minnesota, I think) and was dug up out of the wreck.” Signed “W. D. Howells / K[ittery] P[oint], / July 27, 1915.” On the front endpaper is pasted a printed label headed: NEW RICHMOND LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, and containing five rules for withdrawal and return of books. Howells' conjecture that this unfortunate hamlet might be in Minnesota is not borne out by my admittedly up-to-date gazetteer, which lists midwest towns of that name in Ohio, Indiana, and Wisconsin. It might well be that a cyclone with no regard for *The Quality of Mercy* (O ineluctable paronome!) would just as crassly have pulverized New Richmond out of existence.