June 1944

Early Maine Imprints Of Pope

Carl J. Weber

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.colby.edu/cq

Recommended Citation
Colby Library Quarterly, series 1, no.7, June 1944, p.112-114

This Article 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 administrator of Digital Commons @ Colby. For more information, please contact mfkelly@colby.edu.
THE following selected titles would make the collection representative of Pope's entire poetic career. The majority are not expensive. To save minute description each item is identified by the number in Griffith's bibliography of Pope.*

2. An Essay on Criticism, 1711.
29. The Rape of the Lock, five-canto version, 1714.
151, 155, 159, 166, 170. The Odyssey, 1725, 1726. 5 vols.

EARLY MAINE IMPRINTS OF POPE

BY CARL J. WEBER

DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER, writing in the March, 1944, issue of The American Scholar, remarked: "I knew in my childhood a very old great-uncle, so venerable when I knew him, that his literary tastes were of the pre-Romantic school. To have come under the influence of someone who enormously admired Alexander Pope seems almost as strange an experience as if I had known someone who still believed in the Ptolemaic theory of the universe."

* In making this list I have been greatly helped by Professor Maynard Mack, editor of the Essay on Man in the Twickenham Edition.—F. A. P.
That being the case, it is extremely unlikely that the two
hundredth anniversary of Pope's death will be observed in
many places in Maine (or elsewhere, for that matter), but
there is little doubt that the name of Alexander Pope was
known one hundred years ago to a great many besides Mrs.
Fisher's great-uncle. In a period of thirty-five years just
before the first centenary of Pope's death, his *Essay on Man*
was issued under Maine imprints no less than eight differ­ent times. (How many more than eight there may have
been, I do not know.) I have been able to locate copies of
the following:

1. *An Essay on Man* (the same title for each of the follow­
   ing seven items): Portland, Maine, Thomas Clark & Isaac
   Adams, 1806. There is a copy in the Massachusetts His­
torical Society Library in Boston.

2. Hallowell, Maine: Ezekiel Goodale, 1811. The Bos­
ton Athenaeum Library has a copy.

3. Hallowell, Maine: N. Cheever, 1811. There is a copy
   in the library of the American Antiquarian Society,
   Worcester, Mass. (See R. Webb Noyes' *Bibliography of
   Maine Imprints to 1820*: Stonington, Maine, 1930.)

   Prayer By Alexander Pope, Esq." is printed with the *Essay
   on Man*. There is a copy in the New York Historical So­
   ciety Library.

5. Gardiner, Maine: P. Sheldon, 1824. This also in­
   cludes *The Universal Prayer*. There is a copy in the Hunt­
   ington Library, California.

6. Portland, Maine: Shirley & Hyde, 1828. The Hunt­
   ington Library has a copy.

twice the number of pages found in the Gardiner edition
(No. 5 above), and the explanation of this fact doubtless
also accounts for the apparent wide-spread interest in Pope
in Maine a hundred years ago. The poem is here equipped
"with notes illustrative of the grammatical construction,
designed as a text-book for parsing, by Daniel Clarke" (!). There is a copy in the Huntington Library.


Even this plentiful supply of Maine imprints did not meet the demand for Pope within the State. Four editions which have long been in the college library all bear witness on this point. When Charles E. Hamlin (who entered Colby in 1843, graduated in 1847, and for twenty years, 1853 to 1873, was Professor of Chemistry and Natural History) bought his copy of Pope's Essay on Man in Augusta, Maine, on May 1, 1840, he purchased a little 32mo. book published in New York by G. F. Hopkins in 1825. After Professor Hamlin's death Mrs. Hamlin gave the book to the library of "Colby University," as the college was then called. Meanwhile the Colby Library had wanted its own copy and had accordingly purchased a 16mo. edition of An Essay on Man as published by H. Benton in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1835.

Nor was interest in Pope confined to the Essay on Man. The Erosophian Adelphi of Waterville College—the same literary society that invited Ralph Waldo Emerson to be its orator in 1841—wanted Pope's Works in the society's library; hence, in 1845, they purchased from Phelan's Book Store in New York three volumes of Pope as published in 1828 in Princeton, New Jersey, by D. A. Borrenstein. After these books had served the society for thirty years they were turned over to the library of "Colby University." Similarly, the Literary Fraternity of Waterville College bought The Rape of the Lock in 1840. They obtained the edition put out by George Dearborn in New York in 1836. Forty-five years after its purchase by the Literary Fraternity, this book too found its way into the college library.

There is little room for doubting that in 1844 the name of Alexander Pope was as widely known in Maine as it was in London in 1744.