

# Colby



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## A Letter From Jacob Abbott

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### LONGUS IN THE VALE

By BENTON L. HATCH

IN reference to the desiderata note that appeared in the COLBY LIBRARY QUARTERLY for November, 1951, it can be announced that the Library has acquired the last of the pre-Vale Press volumes mentioned there. This is *Daphnis and Chloe, a most sweet and pleasant pastoral romance for young ladies, done into English by Geo. Thornley gent.*

The colophon is as follows: "Here ends this edition of the marvelous loves of Daphnis and Chloe by Longus. Reprinted from the translation by George Thornley gentlemen of the Greek original. The woodcuts drawn on the wood by Charles Ricketts from the designs by Charles Shannon and Charles Ricketts have been engraved by both. Begun in April of the year MDCCCXCII it was finished in April of the year MDCCCXCIII. Of this edition only two hundred and ten copies exist of which two hundred are for sale. The printing is by The Ballantyne Press, London and Edinburgh. Sold by Elkin Mathews and John Lane, At the Sign of the Bodley Head in Vigo Street nigh the Albany."

Our copy is bound in smooth olive green cloth with spine stamped: Daphnis | and | Chloe | The Vale. Since this volume is quite different in treatment from the *Hero and Leander* mentioned in the QUARTERLY of February, 1952, it represents a significant addition to our Charles Ricketts material.



### A LETTER FROM JACOB ABBOTT

IN his widely read volume entitled *This Book-Collecting Game*, A. Edward Newton told the story of a "Rollo Party" he once went to. On this occasion an eminent lawyer, Hampton L. Curson, "talked about the Rollo books

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with an enthusiasm which quite carried away his audience.”

Readers of this QUARTERLY will need no reminder of the fact that Jacob Abbott's Rollo books are still able to stir enthusiasm in the hearts of those who know them. Ten years ago there were perhaps half a dozen Abbott books in the Colby library; today there are nearly five hundred. This difference is the result of the enthusiastic response our readers gave to our appeal for help.

In our issue for January, 1946, we devoted pages 215-216 to Jacob Abbott, reporting that of his more than two hundred books we possessed hardly a score. The response was immediate and from widely separated places. In our issue for June, 1946, the librarian reported (see pages 244-246) that he had received many contributions to our Abbott Collection, and in October, 1946 (see pages 261-262) further additions were recorded. In August, 1948 we published a frontispiece portrait of Jacob Abbott and announced that “more than 400 copies of Abbott's books are now in the Colby Collection,” and in November, 1948 (see pages 132-133) John A. Humphry hailed “the first complete Jacob Abbott Bibliography”—Colby College Monograph No. 14—in which the entire Abbott Collection on Mayflower Hill was listed.

This *Bibliography of Jacob Abbott* makes it clear that, by the year 1840, there were ten titles in the series of Rollo Books—a series begun in 1835 when Little Rollo was first “entered” for copyright by John Allen & Co., of Boston. (The original title of the first book was *The Little Scholar Learning to Talk*. Later editions read *Rollo Learning to Talk*.) Shortly after the publication of the tenth volume in this series, Jacob Abbott disposed of the copyright to T. H. Carter, and in 1839 the ten Little Rollo books were newly “entered” for copyright. A year later Abbott, who had just moved from Massachusetts to Farmington, Maine, wrote the following letter:

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Farmington M[ain]e  
Sept. 26, 1840

Messrs G. & C. Merriam  
Booksellers  
Springfield, Mass.

Gentlemen

Yours of the 21st was forwarded to me from Roxbury, and I received it this day. I have no interest in the copyright of the Rollo Books, having sold the MS. outright to Mr. Carter. Were I the owner of the copyright, however, I should consider your making selections from the books an advantage and not an injury, and I have no doubt that Mr. Carter would take the same view of the subject. I am so confident of it, that I should not think it necessary for you to take the trouble to write to him. As to myself I feel gratified to learn that you considered any portions of the works worthy of a place among your selections.

I am

very sincerely y[ou]rs

JACOB ABBOTT.

The original holograph of this letter has recently been presented to the Colby Library by Mr. H. B. Collamore, M.A. (Colby) 1939, Library Associate, and a member of the Board of Trustees of the college.

Shortly after the date of this letter, Abbott was persuaded, presumably by T. H. Carter, to add four new titles to the Rollo series, and by 1842 the Rollo Books were being sold in a 14-volume set. In this form they made their way into thousands of American homes. "The Rollo books!" exclaimed A. Edward Newton. "No better books for boys were ever written."

In 1856 the fourteen volumes were newly provided "with finely executed engravings from original designs by Billings;" in the third volume of the series, one entitled *Rollo at Work*, the Billings engraving illustrated Jacob Abbott's statement: "When Rollo was between five and six years old, he was one day at work in his little garden, . . . digging holes in the ground. . . ." Part of this engraving was reproduced on the title page of *A Bibliography of Jacob Abbott* (Colby College Press, 1948), and it is here reproduced for the benefit of those who have never seen *Rollo at Work* and

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who have not seen a copy of the *Bibliography*, which is now out of print.



“This,” said Abbott’s publishers a hundred years ago, “is undoubtedly the most popular series of juvenile books ever published in America.”



### THREE MORE LETTERS OF SARAH ORNE JEWETT

*Edited by* CARL J. WEBER

**I**N 1947 the Colby College Press published thirty-three *Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett Now in the Colby College Library* in a volume later chosen by the American Institute of Graphic Arts as one of the Fifty Books of the Year. Two years later, six more letters by Miss Jewett were printed in the pages of this QUARTERLY, and in February, 1950, we published three additional letters from her pen. This brought the total at Colby to forty-two.

The library has now acquired three new Jewett letters—very cordial and characteristic compositions—written during the last two or three years of Miss Jewett’s life. (She died