The impending retirement of Professor Richard Cary from active service on the Colby faculty in June 1975 gives me an opportunity to make a few observations. I am among those colleagues of his who have admired his work for a good many years.

As a member of the Department of English, Professor Cary has devoted his energies to teaching and scholarship during the twenty-three years that he has served on this faculty. His major efforts since 1958 have been directed toward special collections in the Division of Rare Books and Manuscripts, of which he has been curator, and toward the editorship of the Colby Library Quarterly and the directorship of the Colby College Press. A scholar himself of impeccable thoroughness, he has carried on voluminous correspondence with other scholars, made known to the world the valuable holdings of Colby's collections, and brought to the college a wide variety of acquisitions from generous donors. Professor Cary has made many trips throughout Maine and up and down the east coast to inspect libraries in private homes or to talk to individuals who have indicated a desire to give valuable books or manuscripts to Colby.

His predecessor, the late Carl Jefferson Weber, established a reputation as one of the great scholars in Colby history. Thomas Hardy was the literary figure for whom Dr. Weber was best known as an authority. Professor Cary has not followed primarily the Hardy tradition, but he has surely been a worthy successor to Dr. Weber in every sense.

Professor Cary's major areas of investigation have been the works of Edwin Arlington Robinson and Sarah Orne Jewett,
and nine of the thirteen books he has written or edited have been devoted to one or the other of these two Maine literary figures. The other four books have had to do with Hardy (editions of two of the Hardy classics), Bayard Taylor, and Mary Murfree. In addition to the books, Professor Cary has published over one hundred articles and has made contributions to two encyclopedias, two volumes of his own editing (one on Robinson and one on Miss Jewett), and a volume in appreciation of John Greenleaf Whittier.

The range of Professor Cary’s scholarly investigation is not only the Colby Library Quarterly, for which he has been the mainstay in just about every issue for seventeen years, but in at least a dozen other publications, has been as broad as the spectrum of American literature and culture. The scholar who wishes to pursue serious study of Henry James, Willa Cather, Mark Twain, William Dean Howells, Henry W. Longfellow, or James Russell Lowell will find that Richard Cary has followed some of the same paths. If his tastes run to the more nearly contemporary, he will find Cary articles on Kenneth Roberts, Booth Tarkington, Ben Ames Williams, Mary Ellen Chase, and Robert P. Tristram Coffin. If he looks back into American history he will find a Cary article or two on Ben Franklin or General Ben Butler. Edgar Allan Poe and Walt Whitman appear in the canon, and if one chooses to look abroad one finds evidence of Professor Cary’s investigations in the scholarship surrounding not only Hardy but Huxley and Pope, Housman and Bernard Berenson, to say nothing of Vernon Lee (Violet Paget, a writer well represented among the Colby manuscripts collections). Among the Irish writers included in the splendid Healy Rooms at Colby, Professor Cary has published in a range that includes Yeats, Shaw, Sean O’Casey, and James Stephens. His versatility has also extended to the works of Thomas Mann. Indeed, every major literary figure represented in the special collections at Colby has been at one time or another the object of Professor Cary’s meticulous scrutiny.

It is not simply the bibliography, however, that is impressive. Richard Cary has a compelling literary style of his own, and he has shown a knack for the graceful phrase that can illuminate a complex body of literature. He is at his best in the books and
articles he has published about Sarah Orne Jewett. His edition of Deephaven and Other Stories is prefaced by an informative and readable introduction that puts this remarkable Maine writer in clear perspective. His Appreciation of Sarah Orne Jewett, a collection of essays comparable in scope and perceptiveness to the more recent Early Reception of Edwin Arlington Robinson, gathers into one volume a number of critical reactions to that fine writer’s publications. The Uncollected Short Stories of Sarah Orne Jewett brings to light a number of treasures, including a haunting Christmas story that breathes the air of the Maine winter. My own favorite, I think, is the edition of Sarah Orne Jewett Letters, not simply because I have a special penchant for letters but also because this volume is superbly edited. As was the custom in a more leisurely age than ours, Miss Jewett corresponded widely, with family, friends, editors, or aspiring writers. Her letters are a revealing adjunct to her published works. The final paragraph of Richard Cary’s introduction to this edition is worth quoting:

So, in mosaic fashion, out of a welter of matching facets, evolves the portrait of a lady. Miss Jewett’s catalogue of attributes, perceptible in her public writings, becomes more strikingly manifest in these private disclosures. The luminous heart, the discriminating ideals, the profound compassion, and the uncomplicated vision tremble closer to the surface in these unguarded, unaffected personal testaments. For the more formal occasions, Miss Jewett chose her habiliments with utmost care. Here she appears in casual apparel.

The various editions of both the published and the unpublished works of Miss Jewett are indispensable complements to the biography Professor Cary published more than ten years ago. Today Sarah Orne Jewett enjoys a wide and honorable reputation as a major literary figure, in contrast to her relatively unknown status when the late F. O. Matthiessen published his seminal study in 1929. Much of the credit for her emergence is due to the researches and sensitive criticism of Richard Cary. I have chosen to dwell more upon the Jewett scholarship than upon the books and articles about Robinson. Here, after all, is a recognized giant of American letters, and it is fitting that the Colby Rare Book Room is named in his honor. The scholarship of Richard Cary has added to the fund of knowledge about Robinson, both the works themselves and our un-
understanding of his growing reputation. Not every young writer had an early work reviewed in print by a President of the United States (Theodore Roosevelt), and Professor Cary has included that review in the *Early Reception of E.A.R.*, which I have already cited. But there is a special quality in the Jewett scholarship because in this instance the critic himself conveys the excitement of discovery.

Colby will always be grateful to Professor Cary for his perceptive editorship of the *CLQ*, for his management of the Press, and for his teaching and scholarship. It is a pleasure to have the opportunity of expressing that gratitude, both personally and officially, in this final issue published under his care.

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**RICHARD CARY: A CHECKLIST**

Richard Cary received bachelor's and master's degrees from New York University, and a doctorate in American literature from Cornell. He came to Colby College in September 1952 as a member of the English faculty, and he retires in June 1975. During that interval he published the following titles.

I. BOOKS WRITTEN AND EDITED


