

can you put the bar sinister on *hear* and *woodpecker*? Indeed, I fail to see how you can help feeling that John Phoenix was unduly harsh when he rejected the poem of a Young Astronomer beginning, "O would I had a telescope with fourteen slides!" on account of the atrocious attempt in the second line to rhyme *Pleiades* with *slides*.

Just as every instance of bad grammar interferes with the force of prose, so in verse every needless inversion and every defective rhyme interrupts the impression which the poet wishes to produce. The greatest poets have accepted the obligation, and there is scarcely an imperfect rhyme in all Shakespeare's works and in all Milton's. And there are really very few in Pope's poems, although there may seem to be many, for since Queen Anne's day our language has modified its pronunciation here and there, leaving only to the Irish now the *tea* which is a perfect rhyme to *obey*, and the *join* which is a perfect rhyme to *line*.

Perhaps the prevalence in English verse of the intolerable "allowable" rhymes is due in part to an acceptance of what seems like an evil precedent, to be explained away by our constantly changing pronunciation. Perhaps it is due in part also to the present wretched orthography of our language. The absurd "rhymes to the eye" which abound in English are absent from Italian verse and from French. The French, as the

inheritors through the Latin of the great Greek tradition, have a finer respect for form, and strive constantly for perfection of technique, although the genius of their language seems to us far less lyric than ours. Théodore de Banville, in his little book on French versification, declares formally and emphatically that there is no such thing as a poetic license. And Voltaire, in a passage admirably rendered into English by the late Frederick Locker-Lampson, says that the French "insist that the rhyme shall cost nothing to the ideas, that it shall be neither trivial, nor too far-fetched; we exact vigorously in a verse the same purity, the same precision, as in prose. We do not admit the smallest license; we require an author to carry without a break all these chains, yet that he should appear ever free."

In a language as unrhythmic as the French, rhyme is far more important than it need be in a lilting and musical tongue like our own; but in the masterpieces of the English lyrists, as in those of the French, rhyme plays along the edges of a poem, ever creating the expectation it swiftly satisfies and giving most pleasure when its presence is felt and not flaunted. Like the dress of the well-bred woman, which sets off her beauty without attracting attention to itself, rhyme must be adequate and unobtrusive, neither too fine nor too shabby, but always in perfect taste.

Brander Matthews.

## THE FIRST BOOKS OF SOME AMERICAN AUTHORS

### I. HAWTHORNE, EMERSON, THOREAU, WHITTIER.

Great authors have generally begun writing and printing early in life. Their first books, often issued anonymously and in small numbers, are usually of comparatively little literary value in themselves, but as forerunners of more important work appearing in after years they are of some interest to the general reader and of great interest to the student of an author's work. Published when the writer was unknown to fame, they have a meagre sale in their little day, and

most copies are destroyed or lost; frequently too an author has made a special effort to gather in and destroy all procurable copies of some such early and premature work.

This was the case with Hawthorne, whose first published book, *Fanshawe*, appeared in Boston in 1828. He was then a young man, shy of disposition and little known, having published previous to this date, only a few short tales in New England magazines of small

circulation. He had projected a book made up of seven stories with the title *Seven Tales of My Native Land*, borrowing a motto from Wordsworth, "We are seven." The manuscript was sent to a publisher, who, after keeping it a long time and promising repeatedly to print it, returned it without, it is said, having read the stories. Hawthorne seems to have been disheartened and burned the manuscript. *Fanshawe* was printed at his own expense, and the edition must have been small, as his sister informs us that he spent \$100 in publishing it. It was undoubtedly a failure financially, as we find Mr. Goodrich writing him in 1830: "Had *Fanshawe* been in the hands of more extensive dealers I do believe it would have paid you a profit."

Later, when he had become better known, Hawthorne was ashamed of his first book and destroyed all copies upon which he could lay his hands, and further he enjoined the members of his family not to speak of the existence of the book. The matter must have been kept very quiet during his lifetime, as neither the title nor the date seems to have been known to Allibone, who, in his *Dictionary of Authors*, published in 1854, says: "His earliest volume was an anonymous romance, published in Boston in 1832 [really in 1828]. This book he has never thought proper to claim, so, doubtless, if it could be identified by the public it would be read with great interest and no little curiosity." *Fanshawe* was reprinted for the first time in 1876, twelve years after the author's death.

As it originally appeared it was a tall twelvemo, bound in boards with cloth back and paper label. It was never much read and when copies turn up they are usually in good condition unless damaged by water. The story is told of a copy being sold at auction in a Maine village for ten cents, and we know of a bookseller who bought a copy with some other books from an old library at twenty-five cents a volume for the lot. The last auction record was \$165, at which price a copy with the back slightly damaged was sold at auction in Boston last May. Mr. Foote's copy, rebound in levant morocco by Matthews, was sold in New York in 1894 for \$155.

Hawthorne's second book had the title *Peter Parley's Universal History*, and was

published in two volumes in 1837. It had been written, or rather compiled to order, for S. G. Goodrich, who, according to his own statement published in 6 volumes bearing the name of "old Parley" as author, and most of which he wrote himself. Hawthorne received \$100 for this number of the series. The book is rare, most copies having been read to pieces by the children for whom

## FANSHAWE,

### A TALE.

"Wilt thou go on with me?"—SOUTHEY.



BOSTON:

MARSH & CAPEN, 362 WASHINGTON STREET.

PRESS OF PUTNAM AND HUNT.

1828.

it was intended. Mr. Foote's copy bound in half morocco by Matthews was sold in two volumes for \$35 in 1894. In the original binding it would probably sell for much more now.

The first book to have Hawthorne's name on the title page was *Twice-Told Tales*, also issued in 1837. This volume consisted of eighteen stories, most of which had before seen the light in such publications as the *Boston Token*, the *Atlantic Souvenir*, etc. Mr. Goodrich paid him \$100 as royalty on the first edition

of one thousand copies. Mr. Bierstadt's copy in the original cloth binding was sold for \$18 in 1897, and Mr. Foote's copy rebound in levant morocco and with an autograph letter inserted, went in 1894 for \$22.

Emerson's first separate publication was an address delivered on September 12, 1835, at Concord, on the second centennial anniversary of the incorporation

## TWICE-TOLD TALES.

BY

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.



BOSTON:

AMERICAN STATIONERS CO.  
JOHN D. RUSSELL  
1837.

of the town. What is believed to have been his first appearance in print was "The Right Hand of Fellowship," printed with a sermon by James Kendall, in 1830. This *Historical Discourse* is, however, Emerson's first appearance in print by himself and the first book with his name on the title page. The Discourse itself is included in his collected works, but the long and interesting Appendix is not. The occasion seems to have been one of considerable importance in the historic town of Concord. Before the reading of the address, the children of the town, to the number of about five hundred, marched to the Common in

front of the old church and court house, and there opened to the right and left and awaited the procession of the military and citizens. There were ten surviving veterans of the battle of Lexington present. "But," adds the chronicler, "at sunset the company separated and retired to their homes, and the evening of this day of excitement was as quiet as a Sabbath throughout the village."

This *Historical Discourse* was issued as an octavo pamphlet of 52 pages. It was but an ordinary performance which any college bred New Englander might, perhaps, have carried out, and were it not for the author's later books this address would never be cared for except by the student of Concord history. Though moderately rare it does not bring a high price, and copies have sold at auction during the last three years for \$3.50, \$6 and \$8.

During the next year, 1836, was published *Nature*, the first collection of those essays which stamped their author's originality upon American literature. *Nature* appeared anonymously as a twelvemo volume, bound in blue cloth, with only the word "Nature" on the front cover and no lettering on the back. It has this motto from Plotinus on the title page: "Nature is but an image or imitation of wisdom, the last thing of the soul; nature being a thing which doth only do, but not know." On August 8, 1836, Emerson wrote: "The book of *Nature* still lies on the table. There is, as always one crack in it, not easy to be soldered or welded; but if this week I should be left alone, I may finish it." It was published in September.

Thoreau was another author whose first literary work was a financial failure. The story of his first book, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, published in 1849, is humorously related in his journal, where he wrote under date of October 28, 1853:

For a year or two past my publisher, falsely so called, has been writing from time to time to ask what disposition should be made of the copies of *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* still on hand, and at last suggesting that he had use for the room they occupied in his cellar. So I had them all sent to me here, and they have arrived to-day by express, filling the man's wagon—706 copies out of an edition of 1,000, which I bought of Monroe four years ago and have ever since been paying for,

## HISTORICAL DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE CITIZENS OF CONCORD,

19TH SEPTEMBER, 1835.

ON THE

SECOND CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

OF THE INCORPORATION OF THE TOWN.

BY RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

CONCORD:  
O. F. BEMIS, PRINTER.  
1835.

and have not quite paid for yet. The wares are sent to me at last, and I have an opportunity to examine my purchase. They are something more substantial than fame, as my back knows, which has borne them up two flights of stairs to a place quite similar to that to which they trace their origin. Of the remaining 200 and odd, 75 were given away, the rest sold. I now have a library of nearly 900 volumes, over 700 of which I wrote myself. Is it not well that the author should behold the fruits of his labour? My works are piled up in my chamber half as high as my head—my *opera omnia*. This was authorship. These are the works of my brain. There was just one piece of good luck in the venture. The unbound copies were tied up by the printer four years ago in stout paper wrappers, and inscribed, "H. D. Thoreau, Concord River. 50 cops." So Munroe had only to cross out "River" and write "Mass.," and deliver them to the expressman at once.

In 1862 James T. Fields bought the remainder from Thoreau's family, took out the old title and substituted one with the date 1862. Copies with the original 1849 imprint are, therefore, rare and seldom come up for sale. There is, however, comparatively little interest in Thoreau, among collectors of first editions, and \$14.50 is the highest auction record of which we know.

At the end of the *Week* is a leaf of advertisement: "Will soon be published, *Walden, or Life in the Woods*. By Henry

D. Thoreau." This volume, however, was not issued until 1854. Thoreau, perhaps, did not dare to undertake it until he had finished paying for his first unprofitable venture. It has as a vignette on the title page, a view of his cabin in the woods, where the larger part of the book was written, with the motto below it, quoted from the book: "I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, if only to wake my neighbours up." Only these two books were published during Thoreau's lifetime, though a set of his works now comprises eleven volumes, collected from magazines, addresses delivered on various occasions, and from his voluminous journal.

Whittier, according to tradition, wrote verse almost as soon as he could write at all. He is said to have covered his slate at school with rhymes, and while still a schoolboy verses of his were accepted and published in several New England newspapers. His first appearance in book form was a single poem, "John G.

## A WEEK

ON THE

CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS.

BY

HENRY D. THOREAU.

BOSTON AND CAMBRIDGE.

JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY

NEW YORK: GEORGE P. PUTNAM. PHILADELPHIA: LINDSAY

AND BLACKISTON. LONDON: JOHN CHAPMAN.

1849

## LEGENDS

OF

## NEW-ENGLAND

— "The aged crone  
Mixing the true and doubtful into one,  
Tells how the Indian scalped the helpless child  
And bore its shrieking mother to the wild,  
How drums and flags and troops were seen on high  
Wheeling and charging in the northern sky.—  
How by the thunder-blasted tree was hid  
The golden spoils of far famed Robert Kid;  
And then the chubby grand-child wants to know  
About the ghosts and witches long ago."

BRINARD

BY JOHN G. WHITTIER.

Hartford.

PUBLISHED BY HANMER AND PHELPS.

Sold by Packard & Butler, Hartford; Carter, Hendee & Babcock, Boston;  
O. & C. & H. Carrill, and E. Bliss, New-York; F. L. Carey, and  
A. Hart, Philadelphia; and by the Booksellers generally.

1831.

Whittier to the Rustic Bard," published in a volume of poems by Robert Dinsmoor, of Windham, N. H., known as "The Rustic Bard." This volume, the title of which was *Incidental Poems*, was published at Haverhill in 1828. It is scarce, having been sold at the Montgomery sale in 1895 for \$35 and at a sale in Boston in 1897 for \$30.

His first book was *Legends of New England*, published in Hartford in 1831. It was printed in the office of the *Hartford Review*, of which Whittier was then editor, and contains eleven poems and seven prose sketches. Only two of the poems, one of them with a new title, and none of the prose pieces were included in the last edition of his collected works prepared shortly before his death. In later life whenever he could obtain a copy of his first book he destroyed it. He is said on one occasion to have paid \$5 for a copy which he afterwards burned. He probably thought that a high price, but it is worth much more now. Mr. Bierstadt's copy brought \$41 and Mr. Roos's

copy \$31, both in the original boards, uncut, and Mr. Foote's copy, levant morocco uncut, bound by Matthews and with four lines in the author's autograph, was sold in 1894 for \$40.

Whittier's second book, *Moll Pitcher*, appeared anonymously in 1832. It was printed in Newburyport and published in Boston and is an octavo pamphlet of 28 pages. In the preface the author says: "Moll Pitcher (there's music in the name) is the offspring of a few weeks' such leisure as is afforded by indisposition, and is given to the world in all its original negligence, the thoughts fresh as when first conceived." He apparently endeavoured also to suppress this and with fairly good success, for it is now one of the rarest of American first editions. Mr. Bierstadt's copy in old half morocco, brought \$100 in 1897, and Mr. Foote's, bound in levant morocco, uncut, by Matthews, \$77.50 in 1894. This copy had two interesting autographs of the poet inserted, both relating to the book. In one of them he says: "The pamphlet described in thy note I am ashamed to own is mine. I hoped it had died out of print and am rather

## MOLL PITCHER,

## A POEM.

"If the seeker be of an haute and stomachful carriage, and maketh merric of the wisdom of thine art, thou mayest gain an empery over his orgulous and misbelieving spirit, by some full strange, and terrible misterie, or cunning device, wherest he may be snort with doleful mung'vings." C. Agripp. *Note to Alra kat Abra.*

BOSTON:  
CARTER AND HENDEE.  
1832.

sorry that old Moll has materialised herself."

The poem was reprinted in 1840 in a twelvemo pamphlet, with "The Minstrel Girl," but it is not included in the author's collected works, though a passage of 73 lines, with the title "Extract of a New England Legend," is included. A

reprint of the original edition as near a fac-simile as could be well made by the use of types, was issued a few years ago, and copies of this reprint have sometimes been offered as the genuine 1832 edition. The reprint, however, is on calendered paper and it has, in general, a fresh look.

*L. S. Livingston.*

## ONLY THESE

Love came by, a summer's day,  
 Wooed me tenderly and true;  
 Love was young and wondrous fair,  
 Hair of sunshine, eyes of blue.  
 "Hast thou gold?" I asked, "and lands,  
 Gems to deck me, breast and hair?"  
 "Steadfast faith and toiling hands,  
 Heart to love, and wit to please!"  
 "Only these?"  
 I said him nay!

Love came next an autumn day,  
 Older grown, yet stronger too;  
 Faded though the golden hair,  
 Eyes were clearer, lips more true.  
 "Wilt thou love me," said I now,  
 "Old and gray or fresh and fair,  
 Keep thee steadfast to thy vow?"  
 Love looked sad and murmured low,  
 "Loves love so?"  
 He went his way.

Glistening snowflakes, all the way,  
 Marked the day of Love's return;  
 "Give me food and fire," he said;  
 "Naught is here, O Love, to burn,  
 Save my heart, my life, my hope!  
 What have I to give for bread?  
 Just my thoughts, my dreams that grope,  
 Seeking—" Love smiled; "For mine ease,  
 Only these?"

I bade him stay.

*Katherine Pearson Woods.*