Vorträge, Reden und Berichte aus dem Europa-Institut / Nr. 110

herausgegeben

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SOILED FISH AND RIDICULOUS MICE

Vortrag vor dem Europa-Institut der Universität des Saarlandes

Saarbrücken, 19. Dezember 1985

87-VI-1324,1
EF 1-110

V o r w o r t

Im Europa-Institut ist es inzwischen gute Tradition, vor Weihnachten alle Teilnehmer des Aufbaustudienganges "Europäische Integration", die Dozenten, Mitarbeiter und Freunde zu einer nicht-juristischen Veranstaltung einzuladen*). Im Dezember 1985 hat uns ein Ehepaar - beide unterrichten an der Colgate University im Staate New York - doppelt beschenkt: literarisch und musikalisch.

Joseph L. SLATER, Head of the English Department, und Edgar W.B. FAIRCHILD, Professor of American Literature, forschen seit langen Jahren über Ralph Waldo Emerson (1830 - 1882) - Hauptvertreter des amerikanischen "transcendentalism" -, der wie keiner seiner Zeitgenossen europäisches Denken an Amerika vermittelt hat. Die auf sechs Bände angelegte kritische Ausgabe seiner "Gesammelten Werke" (Harvard Edition), an der Professor SLATER seit 1963 maßgeblich mitwirkt, soll im Jahre 1990 abgeschlossen sein. Sie gab Anlaß zu den (nun niedergeschriebenen) heiter-ernsten Betrachtungen über "editing" allgemein.

Vivien H. SLATER, Pianist in Residence, von Schallplatten bekannt und schon seit 1958 immer wieder auch in Europa zu hören, ist Schülerin eines Schülers von Franz Liszt, dessen Lehrer Carl Czerny Schüler Beethovens war. Unter dem Titel "Große Lehrer - große Schüler" wählte sie deshalb einige Kabinettstücke ihrer "Ahnen" aus... und bezauberte uns durch ihr kristallenes und zugleich so sensibles Spiel.

Thank you, Vivien! Thank you, Joe!

M.R.W.

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*) Vgl. das Vorwort in Nr. 42 unserer grün-weiß-grünen Reihe: Carola L. GOTTZMANN, "Die Brüder Grimm: Märchenhafte Zufälle der Forschung - Bemerkungen zu den Umständen der Herausgabe der Edda" (1985).

SOILED FISH AND RIDICULOUS MICE

In American literary scholarship the middle years of the 20th century have been an Age of Editions - new, multi-volume editions of complete works, collected letters, manuscript journals, manuscript sermons, everything - the works, as a short-order cook would say. Not perhaps since the last days of the library of Alexandria in Egypt has a literature been so exhaustively and meticulously preserved. In 1945, when scholars of my generation were emerging from the Army and the Navy and going back to their graduate schools, there was only one American writer, if I remember accurately, who could be read in a complete and modern edition. That was Sidney Lanier in the sumptuous ten-volume Centennial Edition which the Johns Hopkins University Press published that year and which is still a monument of scholarship and book-making. Forty years later, in December 1985, when the Modern Language Association's Committee on Scholarly Editions published a list of projects to which the National Endowment for the Humanities had given financial support, there was not a single classic American writer I can think of - with the exception of Henry James - whose works did not stand in stately, uniform, certified splendor on the shelves of American libraries, or were not marching shelfward with slow but certain tread. (Among these there were even some, like Harold Frederic, whose claim to classic status would be questioned by stern judges - though not by me.)

Well, why? Why such a saturnalia of editing? I can think of many reasons, of which national pride is chronologically the first, the sort of emotion that later on engendered American Studies programs in our colleges, Bicentennial flags in every hamlet, and Lady Liberty festivities in New York Harbor. There was a lot of such feeling in the air of 1945.

. . .

Another reason was our discovery that the editions in which we had read our classic writers were not to be relied upon. The most shocking and influential example of such untrustworthiness is to be found in a minor novel by Herman Melville, White Jacket: or, The World in a Man-of-War, which was first published in 1850. Melville's works, even his masterpiece Moby Dick, had been badly treated by readers and publishers in his latter years - ignored, undervalued, misread, allowed to go out of print. It was therefore an occasion for rejoicing as well as an embarrassment that between 1922 and 1924 a London publisher, Constable and Company, brought out the first complete edition of his works. It was handsome and sturdy - and available in every serious library in the land. Naturally it became the edition through which young literary historians and critics discovered a lost master. F.O. Matthiessen, for example, used the Constable edition for the chapters on Melville in his great book American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman of 1941. In those good old days of what used to be called New Criticism, Matthiessen gave microscopic attention to the texture of literature, to words and sentence structures and rhythms - as in this analysis of a brilliant passage at the end of White Jacket where the narrator describes himself sinking into the sea after a fall from the mast-head of a man-of-war:

> "Purple and pathless was the deep calm now around me, flecked by summer lightnings in an azure afar. The horrible nausea was gone; the bloody, blind film turned a pale green; I wondered whether I was yet dead, or still dying. But of a sudden some fashionless form brushed my side - some inert, soiled fish of the sea; the thrill of being alive again tingled in my nerves, and the strong shunning of death shocked me through."

Matthiessen quoted the passage and then analyzed the art of it:

> "...hardly anyone but Melville could have created the shudder that results from calling this frightening vagueness some 'soiled fish of the sea'. The *discordia concors*, the unexpected linking of the medium of cleanliness with filth, could only have sprung from an imagination that had apprehended the terrors of the deep, of the immaterial deep as well as the physical."

Brilliant criticism. It seemed to me in 1941 and later to be the very model of critical insight and extension. Not until 1948 or 1949 did a young graduate student, John W. Nichol, at Ohio State University, the hot-bed of textual studies, discover that the Constable text was corrupt at this very point and that Matthiessen's key word "soiled" was merely a printer's error. "Coiled" was what Melville had written, "some inert, coiled fish of the sea" - meaning, presumably, just a dead fish!* You can imagine the seismic waves that were felt

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* Anmerkung des Herausgebers: Eine jüngere deutsche Version, die ihre Vorlage nicht identifiziert, legt offenbar "coiled" zugrunde: "... irgendein träger, sich windender Fisch des Meeres." - Hermann MELVILLE: "Typee, Omoo, Weissjacke", Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1970 (Übersetzung von Richard MUMMENDEY), S. 985.
Dem Übersetzer scheint der Fisch also noch nicht ganz tot zu sein - bliebe ein Fischkundiger zu befragen.

American Literature

A Journal of
Literary History, Criticism, and Bibliography

Volume 21

1949-1950

MELVILLE'S "'SOILED' FISH OF THE SEA"

JOHN W. NICHOL
Ohio State University

IN CHAPTER XCII of *White-Jacket,* Melville describes his fall into the sea from the yardarm of the U. S. frigate *Neversink.* F. O. Matthiessen selects this passage to illustrate the manner in which Melville, the artist, worked.[1] His discussion is an excellent example of judicial and appreciative critical comment, but on one important point Mr. Matthiessen is the victim of a rather unlucky error. After setting forth the series of trancelike moods which Melville employs in describing his experience of falling, Matthiessen quotes, evidently from the Constable Standard Edition of Melville's *Works,* the following passage in which Melville relates his feelings while still under the water:

> I wondered whether I was yet dead or still dying. But of a sudden some fashionless form brushed my side—some inert, soiled fish of the sea; the thrill of being alive again tingled in my nerves, and the strong shunning of death shocked me through.[2]

Commenting on these lines, Matthiessen says:

> But then this second trance is shattered by a twist of imagery of the sort that was to become peculiarly Melville's. He is startled back into the sense of being alive by grazing an inert form; hardly anyone but Melville could have created the shudder that results from calling this frightening

[1] *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (London and New York [1941]), pp. 390-395.
[2] *The Works of Herman Melville* (London, 1922-1924), VI, 497.

vagueness some "*soiled* fish of the sea." The *discordia concors,* the unexpected linking of the medium of cleanliness with filth, could only have sprung from an imagination that had apprehended the terrors of the deep, of the immaterial deep as well as the physical.[3]

The unlucky error of all this lies in the fact that Melville in all probability used the adjective *coiled* rather than *soiled* in describing his "fish of the sea," and that it was some unknown typesetter, rather, who accounted for the "shudder" and the "*discordia concors*" of the "unexpected linking." If, as is probable, Constable made up the *Works* from first editions, then the word "soiled," which Matthiessen quotes correctly from his source, is really a misprint for Melville's "coiled," for both the American and English first editions of *White-Jacket* printed the latter word.[4] It is interesting to note that the change in this case does not invalidate the general critical position arrived at by Matthiessen; it merely weakens his specific example. However, such a textual slip could, in the proper context, have promulgated an entirely false conception.

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[3] *American Renaissance*, p. 392.

[4] I am indebted to Dr. Howard P. Vincent for checking a copy of the English first edition.

in every English department from Columbia to Stanford when Nichol published his embarrassing discovery in the journal American Literature in November 1949.

You can hear the very words of anxious resolutions made in library carrels: "From now on I'll verify texts before interpreting them."

* * *

Similarly, though less dramatically, we came to realize that nineteenth century culture was no longer ours and that nineteenth-century and even early twentieth-century texts would sometimes need annotation of the sort long necessary for Elizabethan ones. Greek and Latin were gone with the wind, French had ceased to be everybody's second language, the Bible was a closed book, even phrases from Shakespeare and Milton were no longer instantly recognized and thus no longer were sources of counterpoint and irony. Here is an example of how the changes in our culture robbed a great nineteenth-century classic of meaning and fun - or rather deprived us of some of the values it once had. In paragraph two of the chapter of Walden called "Visitors", Thoreau wrote:

> "I am surprised when the herald blows his summons before some Tremont or Astor or Middlesex House to see come creeping out over the piazza for all inhabitants a ridiculous mouse, which soon again slinks into some hole in the pavement."

Clear enough - when you know that in New England "for" once meant "in lieu of" and that "Tremont" and "Astor" are also modifiers of "House" and thus make three hotels altogether. But why the word "ridiculous"? Thoreau was a precise and laconic writer, not given to redundancy; why should he spell out the ridiculousness of the creeping, slinking mouse? Most readers of 1854 would have known immediately that Thoreau was evoking Horace's *Ars Poetica*:

"Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus"
(The mountains are in labor, a ridiculous mouse will be born.)

which usually comes into English without its adjective. Without "ridiculous", however, we have no Horatian connection, no mountainous hotels, no joke about poetic labor, no fun - or not nearly so much fun. Thus, for us, in these Latin-less, Scripture-less days, copious annotations, even to a work as recent as Walden, are a necessity. They are another reason, second only to the need for authentic texts, why this is an age of editions.

As would be obvious to you from a glance at one volume of any modern edition, these books are enormously expensive, not just to buy but to make. So many pages, such opulent paper and bindings, such complicated type-setting, it's a wonder the university presses that produced them haven't gone broke. Maybe some have. Even Harvard declined to publish more than sixteen volumes of The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson! I never open or see one of these utterly indispensable books without gratitude to our universities for heroic deeds in conserving this part of our heritage. And similar gratitude should go to the federal government for its generosity and wisdom in granting dollars to scholars. The actual sums may seem rather small - on the average,

UNIVERSITÄT DES SAARLANDES

Musik im Europa-Institut

VIVIEN HARVEY SLATER

spielt

„Große Lehrer – große Schüler"

19. Dezember 1985, 17.30 Uhr, Musiksaal – Bau 11

EUROPA-INSTITUT

I think, about $ 25,000 per volume – which we have used to buy reduced teaching loads, secretarial help, research assistance, photocopying, long-distance telephoning, travel to distant libraries, and other small necessities. But never have tax dollars been more properly spent than those that have supported new editions of Whitman, Hawthorne, Cooper, Franklin, and other bright stars of our first constellation.

• • •

And now I want to illustrate the problems and the range of this kind of editing with some particular details about the work I have done on the Harvard edition of The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, a title that means essentially the works that were published during Emerson's lifetime, as distinct from those, like letters, journals, and sermons, that were still in manuscript when he died. I have been involved with that project since 1963 when the first planning sessions for it were held, have written historical introductions and informational notes for Volumes II and III (Essays: First Series and Essays: Second Series), and am now about half-way through the informational notes for Volume VI (an 1860 book of essays called The Conduct of Life) which we hope to publish in the spring of 1990. Six volumes in twenty-seven years! Emerson took only twenty-four years to write and publish those volumes! I think I need not say that we are thorough.

Our way with texts is cautious and conservative. We mean, of course, to sort out and throw back into the sea all the soiled fish that have swum into our nets during a century of printing and to establish a text that Emerson at the end of his career wanted – or would have wanted. In the essays you probably know best, like

ESSAYS:

BY

R. W. EMERSON.

BOSTON:
JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.

MDCCCXLI.

My life should be unique; it should be an alms, a battle, a conquest, a medicine. I ask primary evidence that you are a man, and refuse this appeal from the man to his actions. I know that for myself it makes no difference whether I do or forbear those actions which are reckoned excellent. I cannot consent to pay for a privilege where I have intrinsic right. Few and mean as my gifts may be, I actually am, and do not need for my own assurance or the assurance of my fellows any secondary testimony.

What I must do, is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder, because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

The objection to conforming to usages that have become dead to you, is, that it scatters your force. It loses your time and blurs the impression of your character. If you maintain a dead church, contribute to a dead Bible-Society, vote with a great party either for the Government or against it, spread your table like base housekeepers, — under all these screens, I have difficulty to detect the precise man you are. And, of course, so much force is with-

drawn from your proper life. But do your thing, and I shall know you. Do your work, and you shall reinforce yourself. A man must consider what a blindman's-buff is this game of conformity. If I know your sect, I anticipate your argument. I hear a preacher announce for his text and topic the expediency of one of the institutions of his church. Do I not know beforehand that not possibly can he say a new and spontaneous word? Do I not know that with all this ostentation of examining the grounds of the institution, he will do no such thing? Do I not know that he is pledged to himself not to look but at one side; the permitted side, not as a man, but as a parish minister? He is a retained attorney, and these airs of the bench are the emptiest affectation. Well, most men have bound their eyes with one or another handkerchief, and attached themselves to some one of these communities of opinion. This conformity makes them not false in a few particulars, authors of a few lies, but false in all particulars. Their every truth is not quite true. Their two is not the real two, their four not the real four: so that every word they say chagrins us, and we know not where to begin to set them right. Meantime nature is not slow to equip us in the prison-uniform of the party to which we adhere. We come to wear one cut of face and figure, and acquire by degrees the gentlest asinine expression. There is a mortifying experience in particular which does not fail to wreak itself also in the general history; I mean, "the foolish face of praise," the forced smile which we put on in company where

/x

"Self-Reliance", such fish are mainly small fry, variants in punctuation, spelling, and capitalization imposed by printers, a few errors in Greek that were possibly Emerson's own, and similar minor blemishes. In "Self-Reliance", however, there was one crux. In the first edition of that essay, in 1841, Emerson wrote one of the noble slogans of the Sixties, the Nineteen Sixties:

"But do your thing and I shall know you."

In the second edition, of 1847, he changed "thing" to "work":

"But do your work and I shall know you."

Which should we choose? You won't be surprised to hear that we were under considerable pressure from people to whom the Sixties were still the Age of Gold. "If you guys change 'thing' to 'work'", one friend of mine wrote, "I'll never speak to you again." But we were dauntless. We made the change - because we thought it was Emerson's own, not a printer's change, and because he stuck with it in all later editions. (The Sixties friend relented, you'll be glad to know, and is still a friend.)

Our way with ridiculous mice is to explain them - amply, copiously, perhaps excessively, maybe self-indulgently, although so far no reviewer has used the last two disagreeable adverbs. What we're after is not just facts or identifications but rather contexts. We try to give our readers the knowledge and overtones Emerson assumed his first readers would have and hear. When, for example, Emerson wrote in "Art" the phrase "barbaric pearl and gold", our note doesn't sparely say, "Paradise Lost, II, 1-5", courteously assuming that people are going to reach for their chair-side Miltons

and see what those lines say. No, we print the lines out, discourteously perhaps, as if no one really knows them any more:

> "High on a throne of royal state, which far
> Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,
> Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
> Show'rs on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,
> Satan exalted sat..."

And generally we tell people a lot about things and words and ideas that we ourselves have found obscure, risking the fate of the ornithologist to whom a youthful reader is said to have written, "Thank you. You've told me everything I wanted to know about penguins. In fact you've told me more than I wanted to know."

The next-to-the-last sentence in the essay "Art" illustrates better than any other I know the kinds of textual annotational problem presented by this sort of editing. It comes at the end of a paragraph asserting the identity of the useful arts and the fine arts, and it reads:

> "The boat at St. Petersburgh which plies along
> the Lena by magnetism, needs little to make it
> sublime."

A textual editor, seeing that sentence, would feel his emendation finger twitch. Few things in his trade are more satisfactory than striking out a printer's blatant, ignorant nonsense and replacing it with what the author must have intended. St. Petersburgh on the Lena? Absurd! St. Petersburgh lay a thousand miles west of the Lena. Surely - I thought at first - this was a slip of Emerson's pen - or, more likely, a misreading of his

that can be formed; for the hand can never execute any thing higher than the character can inspire.

The art that thus separates, is itself first separated. Art must not be a superficial talent, but must begin farther back in man. Now men *do not see nature to be beautiful*, and *they go to make a statue which shall be*. They abhor *men as tasteless, dull*, and inconvertible, and console themselves with color-bags, and *blocks of marble*. They reject life as prosaic, and create a death which they call poetic. They despatch the day's weary chores, and fly to voluptuous reveries. They eat and drink, that they may afterwards execute the ideal. Thus is art vilified; the name conveys to the mind its secondary and bad senses; it stands in the imagination, as *somewhat contrary to nature*, and struck with *death from* the first. Would it not be better to begin higher up, — to serve the ideal before they eat and drink; to serve the ideal in eating and drinking, in drawing the breath, and in the functions of life? Beauty must come back to the useful arts, and the distinction between the fine and the useful arts be forgotten. If history were truly told, if life were nobly spent, it would be no longer easy or possible to distinguish the one from the other. In nature, all is useful, all is beautiful. It is *therefore* beautiful, because it is alive, *moving, reproductive*; *it is therefore useful*, *because* it is symmetrical and fair. Beauty will not come at the call of a legislature, nor will it repeat in England or America, its history in Greece. It will come, as always, unannounced, and spring up between the feet of brave and earnest

men. It is in vain that we look for genius to reiterate its miracles in the old arts; *it is its instinct* to find beauty and holiness in new and necessary facts, in the field and roadside, in the shop and mill. Proceeding from a religious heart it will raise to a divine use, the railroad, the insurance office, the *joint stock* company, our law, our primary assemblies, our *commerce*, the galvanic battery, the electric jar, the prism, and the chemist's retort, in which we seek now only an economical *use*. Is not the selfish, and even cruel aspect which belongs to our great mechanical works, to mills, railways, and *machinery*, the effect of the mercenary impulses which these works obey? When its errands are noble and adequate, a *steamboat* bridging the Atlantic between Old and New England, and arriving at its ports with the punctuality of a planet, — *is* a step of man into harmony with nature. The boat at St. Petersburgh, which plies along the Lena by magnetism, needs little to make it sublime. When science is *learned* in love, and its powers are wielded by love, they will appear the supplements and continuations of the *material* creation.

X

THE END.

manuscript. Emerson's small "n's" are indistinguishable from his small "v's" and his capital "N" might easily seem like a capital "L". Perhaps he wrote "Neva" and a weary Boston printer read "Lena". Unfortunately, no manuscript for "Art" survives, and so we have no documentary evidence, but ... but ... hmm ... Yes, it's true that neither river seems to have been mentioned in his journals or his letters, and so we can't check the handwriting that way, as we often can do. Besides, he read proof a dozen times for later editions of Essays: First Series and never corrected the error. Perhaps he really thought St. Petersburgh was in the frozen wastes of Siberia! Ultimately we decided this was not a soiled fish, and we left it as it was in 1841. Chances are it will cause no more comment in its second century-and-a-half than it did in its first. Which was none.

But a boat that plies its way by "magnetism": what sort of science fiction is that? I envisioned an enormous magnetic stone left by the glacier near what was to be the Nevsky Prospekt, drawing boats towards it like the Lorelei on the Rhine - but that vision faded. I imagined, briefly, a magnetized boat. But then the clouds blew away, and I realized that by "magnetism" Emerson had meant "electro-magnetism" or, in modern English, just "electricity".

Plain, familiar old electricity, however, raised problems of a different sort. Could there have been an electric boat in Russia, or anywhere else, in 1841? And if there was, how did Emerson and his readers find out about it?

The end of all this, as well as the end of my autobiographical account of the editor's trade, is what we call an informational note:

218.31 THE BOAT AT ST. PETERSBURGH . . . ALONG THE LENA BY MAGNETISM "Lena" is perhaps a slip of the pen for "Neva", or perhaps a printer's misreading of Emerson's manuscript, but in all later editions the error went uncorrected. "Magnetism" here means "electromagnetism". After Faraday's theoretical publications of the early 1830's, European and American technologists turned eagerly to what the Potsdam physicist Moritz Hermann von Jacobi in an article of 1835 called "l'application de l'électromagnétisme au mouvement des machines" (*Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*). In 1836 the editor of the Philadelphia *Journal of the Franklin Institute* reported cautiously on a Belgian experiment: "A very successful trial of a locomotive impelled by magnetic force is said to have been made by M. Lemaire of Brussels" (n.s., XVII, 365). In 1837 Thomas Davenport, a learned blacksmith of Brandon, Vermont, applied for a patent on "an application of magnetism . . . for propelling machinery (*ibid.*, XX, 340). In the autumn of 1838 Jacobi, who had been called to a professorship in the Imperial Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburgh, successfully conducted "experiments in navigation on the Neva, with a ten-oared shallop furnished with paddle-wheels, which were put into motion by an electromagnetic machine" (*The Selected Correspondence of Michael Faraday*, ed. L. Pearce Williams, 2 vols. [Cambridge, The University Press, 1971], I, 345).

> News of Jacobi's triumph spread slowly even among European scientists. Faraday himself did not learn of it until Jacobi wrote to him early in the following summer (*ibid.*, 343), and Emerson probably knew nothing of the St. Petersburgh experiments until February 1841, when he was correcting and revising the last proofsheets of this book. In that month *The Journal of the Franklin Institute* first carried news of what "Professor Jacobi of St. Petersburgh" had accomplished with "magnetism developed by the application of the galvanic current". The editor's report was detailed: "In the last trials made in propelling a boat twenty-eight feet long, seven and a half wide, and drawing two feet and three quarters of water, on the Neva, a velocity of three miles an hour was kept up. The boat carried twelve persons" (3rd series, I, 135).

Lengthy, I realize. But like the man who knew all about penguins I couldn't stop. Perhaps I ought to revise the publication date for The Conduct of Life. Nineteen ninety? Let's say, the year two thousand.

* * *

And now here is the list of the editions I have been talking about, which includes both the volumes actually published by the end of 1985 and also those that are still in various late stages of planning and preparation. "Forthcoming" - as we confidently say. The organizations that inspected each volume and bestowed on it a "seal of approval" were both agencies created by the Modern Language Association of America, the M.L.A.. The first,

chronologically, was the Center for Editions of American Authors, known to its intimates as the CEAA. The second was, and is, the Committee on Scholarly Editions, or CSE – whose boundaries were enlarged to take in British literature, as a glance at the beginning and the end of the list will demonstrate. Most of these editions have been supported in part by Federal grants, from the National Endowment for the Humanities, or NEH. A wonderful world of Oz it must seem to you, an alphabetical Emerald City where authority trickles down from the MLA, approval is given by either the CEAA or the CSE, and dollars are granted by the NEH. How Mencken would have relished the absurdity of those names! Nevertheless, what the names represent seems to me and would have seemed to Mencken one of the wisest of governmental benefactions since schools and universities became free for all.

EDITIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE COMMITTEE ON SCHOLARLY EDITIONS AND THE CENTER FOR EDITIONS OF AMERICAN AUTHORS

Volumes published and forthcoming.
Corrected to 12/85.

WILLIAM BLAKE, ed. David Erdman.
Doubleday and Company, 245 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10167
Published:
Complete Prose and Poetry, 1982.

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN: The Bicentennial Edition, ed. Sydney Krause and S. W. Reid.
Kent State University Press, Kent, OH 44262
Published:
Wieland and "Memoirs of Carwin", 1977.
Arthur Mervyn, 1980.
Ormond, 1983.
Forthcoming:
Edgar Huntly, CSE approved 1982.
Clara Howard and Jane Talbot, CSE approved 1983.
Alcuin and "Stephen Calvert", CSE approved 1984.

JOSEPH CONRAD, ed. David L. Higdon and Bruce Harkness.
Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, England
Forthcoming:
Almayer's Folly, CSE approved 1978.
The Secret Agent, CSE approved 1984.

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER, ed. James F. Beard.
State University of New York Press, State University Plaza, Albany, NY 12246
Published:
Gleanings in Europe: Switzerland, 1980.
The Pioneers, 1980.
The Pathfinder, 1981.
Gleanings in Europe: Italy, 1981.
Gleanings in Europe: England, 1982.
Wyandotte, 1982.
The Last of the Mohicans, 1983.
Gleanings in Europe: France, 1983.
Forthcoming:
The Deerslayer, CSE approved 1981.
Gleanings in Europe: The Rhine, CSE approved 1981.
The Prairie, CSE approved 1981.
Lionel Lincoln, CSE approved 1981.
The Pilot, CSE approved 1981.

STEPHEN CRANE: The University of Virginia Edition, ed. Fredson Bowers.
University Press of Virginia, Box 3698, University Station,
Charlottesville, VA 22903

Published:

1. Bowery Tales: Maggie and George's Mother, 1969.
2. The Red Badge of Courage, 1975.
3. The Third Violet and Active Service, 1976.
4. The O'Ruddy, 1971.
5. Tales of Adventure, 1970.
6. Tales of War, 1970.
7. Tales of Whilomville, 1969.
8. Tales, Sketches, and Reports, 1973.
9. Reports of War, 1971.
10. Poems and Literary Remains, 1975.

JOHN DEWEY: The Works, ed. Jo Ann Boydston.
Southern Illinois University Press, Box 3697, Carbondale, IL 62901

Published:

The Early Works: 1882-1898

1. 1882-1888: Early Essays and Leibniz's New Essay concerning the Human Understanding, cloth 1969, paper 1975.
2. 1887: Psychology, cloth 1967, paper 1975.
3. 1889-1892: Early Essays and Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics, cloth 1969, paper 1975.
4. 1893-1894: Early Essays and The Study of Ethics, cloth 1971, paper 1975.
5. 1895-1898: Early Essays, cloth 1972, paper 1975.

The Middle Works

1. 1899-1901, 1976.
2. 1902-1903, 1976.
3. 1903-1906, 1977.
4. 1907-1909, 1977.
5. 1908: Ethics, 1978.
6. 1910-1911, 1979.
7. 1912-1914, 1979.
8. 1915, 1979.
9. 1916, 1980.
10. 1916-1917, 1980.
11. 1918-1919, 1982.
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WHITE JACKET

OR

THE WORLD IN A MAN-OF-WAR

BY

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CHAPTER XCII

THE LAST OF THE JACKET

ALREADY has White Jacket chronicled the mishaps and inconveniences, troubles and tribulations of all sorts brought upon him by that unfortunate but indispensable garment of his. But now it befalls him to record how this jacket, for the second and last time, came near proving his shroud.

Of a pleasant midnight, our good frigate, now somewhere off the Capes of Virginia, was running on bravely, when the breeze, gradually dying, left us slowly gliding toward our still invisible port.

Headed by Jack Chase, the quarter-watch were reclining in the top, talking about the shore delights into which they intended to plunge, while our captain often broke in with allusions to similar conversations when he was on board the English line-of-battle ship, the *Asia*, drawing nigh to Portsmouth, in England, after the battle of Navarino.

Suddenly an order was given to set the main-top-gallant stun'-sail, and the halyards not being rove, Jack Chase assigned to me that duty. Now this reeving of the halyards of a main-top-gallant stun'-sail is a business that eminently demands sharp-sightedness, skill, and celerity.

Consider that the end of a line, some two hundred feet long, is to be carried aloft, in your teeth, if you please, and dragged far out on the giddiest of yards, and after being wormed and twisted about through all sorts of

intricacies—turning abrupt corners at the abruptest of angles—is to be dropped, clear of all obstructions, in a straight plumb-line right down to the deck. In the course of this business, there is a multitude of sheave-holes and blocks, through which you must pass it; often the rope is a very tight fit, so as to make it like threading a fine cambric needle with rather coarse thread. Indeed, it is a thing only deftly to be done, even by day. Judge, then, what it must be to be threading cambric needles by night, and at sea, upward of a hundred feet aloft in the air.

With the end of the line in one hand, I was mounting the topmast shrouds, when our captain of the top told me that I had better off jacket; but though it was not a very cold night, I had been reclining so long in the top, that I had become somewhat chilly, so I thought best not to comply with the hint.

Having reeved the line through all the inferior blocks, I went out with it to the end of the weather-top-gallant yard-arm, and was in the act of leaning over and passing it through the suspended jewel-block there, when the ship gave a plunge in the sudden swells of the calm sea, and pitching me still further over the yard, threw the heavy skirts of my jacket right over my head, completely muffling me. Somehow I thought it was the sail that had flapped, and, under that impression, threw up my hands to drag it from my head, relying upon the sail itself to support me meanwhile. Just then the ship gave another sudden jerk, and, head foremost, I pitched from the yard. I knew where I was, from the rush of the air by my ears, but all else was a nightmare. A bloody film was before my eyes, through which, ghost-like, passed and repassed my father, mother, and sisters. An unutterable nausea oppressed me; I was conscious of gasping; there seemed no breath in my body. It was over one hundred feet that I fell—down, down, with lungs collapsed as in death.

Ten thousand pounds of shot seemed tied to my head, as the irresistible law of gravitation dragged me, head foremost and straight as a die, toward the infallible centre of this terraqueous globe. All I had seen, and read, and heard, and all I had thought and felt in my life, seemed intensified in one fixed idea in my soul. But dense as this idea was, it was made up of atoms. Having fallen from the projecting yard-arm end, I was conscious of a collected satisfaction in feeling, that I should not be dashed on the deck, but would sink into the speechless profound of the sea.

With the bloody, blind film before my eyes, there was a still stranger hum in my head, as if a hornet were there; and I thought to myself, Great God! this is Death! Yet these thoughts were unmixed with alarm. Like frost-work that flashes and shifts its scared hues in the sun, all my braided, blended emotions were in themselves icy cold and calm.

So protracted did my fall seem, that I can even now recall the feeling of wondering how much longer it would be, ere all was over and I struck. Time seemed to stand still, and all the worlds seemed poised on their poles, as I fell, soul-becalmed, through the eddying whirl and swirl of the maelstrom air.

At first, as I have said, I must have been precipitated head foremost; but I was conscious, at length, of a swift, flinging motion of my limbs, which involuntarily threw themselves out, so that at last I must have fallen in a heap. This is more likely, from the circumstance, that when I struck the sea, I felt as if some one had smote me slantingly across the shoulder and along part of my right side.

As I gushed into the sea, a thunder-boom sounded in my ear; my soul seemed flying from my mouth. The feeling of death flooded over me with the billows. The blow from the sea must have turned me, so that I sank

almost feet foremost through a soft, seething, foamy lull. Some current seemed hurrying me away; in a trance I yielded, and sank deeper down with a glide. Purple and pathless was the deep calm now around me, flecked by summer lightnings in an azure afar. The horrible nausea was gone; the bloody, blind film turned a pale green; I wondered whether I was yet dead, or still dying. But of a sudden some fashionless form brushed my side—some inert, soiled fish of the sea; the thrill of being alive again tingled in my nerves, and the strong shunning of death shocked me through.

For one instant an agonising revulsion came over me as I found myself utterly sinking. Next moment the force of my fall was expended; and there I hung, vibrating in the mid-deep. What wild sounds then rang in my ear! One was a soft moaning, as of low waves on the beach; the other wild and heartlessly jubilant, as of the sea in the height of a tempest. Oh soul! thou then heardest life and death: as he who stands upon the Corinthian shore hears both the Ionian and the Ægean waves. The life-and-death poise soon passed; and then I found myself slowly ascending, and caught a dim glimmering of light.

Quicker and quicker I mounted; till at last I bounded up like a buoy, and my whole head was bathed in the blessed air.

I had fallen in a line with the main-mast; I now found myself nearly abreast of the mizen-mast, the frigate slowly gliding by like a black world in the water. Her vast hull loomed out of the night, showing hundreds of seamen in the hammock nettings, some tossing over ropes, others madly flinging overboard the hammocks; but I was too far out from them immediately to reach what they threw. I essayed to swim toward the ship; but instantly I was conscious of a feeling like being

pinioned in a feather bed, and, moving my hands, felt my jacket puffed out above my tight girdle with water. I strove to tear it off; but it was looped together here and there, and the strings were not then to be sundered by hand. I whipped out my knife, that was tucked at my belt, and ripped my jacket straight up and down, as if I were ripping open myself. With a violent struggle I then burst out of it, and was free. Heavily soaked, it slowly sank before my eyes.

Sink! sink! oh shroud! thought I; sink forever! accursed jacket that thou art!

'See that white shark!' cried a horrified voice from the taffrail; 'he 'll have that man down his hatchway! Quick! the *grains*! the *grains*!'

The next instant that barbed bunch of harpoons pierced through and through the unfortunate jacket, and swiftly sped down with it out of sight.

Being now astern of the frigate, I struck out boldly toward the elevated pole of one of the lifebuoys which had been cut away. Soon after, one of the cutters picked me up. As they dragged me out of the water into the air, the sudden transition of elements made my every limb feel like lead, and I helplessly sunk into the bottom of the boat.

Ten minutes after, I was safe on board, and, springing aloft, was ordered to reeve anew the stun'-sail halyards, which, slipping through the blocks when I had let go the end, had unrove and fallen to the deck.

The sail was soon set; and, as if purposely to salute it, a gentle breeze soon came, and the *Neversink* once more glided over the water, a soft ripple at her bows, and leaving a tranquil wake behind.

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