Helen Hunt Jackson in Relation to Her Time.

Minerva Louise Martin

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses

Recommended Citation


This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses by an authorized administrator of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.
MANUSCRIPT THESSES

Unpublished theses submitted for the master's and doctor's degrees and deposited in the Louisiana State University Library are available for inspection. Use of any thesis is limited by the rights of the author. Bibliographical references may be noted, but passages may not be copied unless the author has given permission. Credit must be given in subsequent written or published work.

A library which borrows this thesis for use by its clientele is expected to make sure that the borrower is aware of the above restrictions.

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

119-a
HELEN HUNT JACKSON IN RELATION TO HER TIMES

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in The Department of English

By

Minerva Louise Martin
B. S., University of Alabama, 1931
M. A., Louisiana State University, 1937
1940
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I wish to express my indebtedness to Doctor Earl L. Bradsher, Professor of American Literature, Louisiana State University, for his kind assistance and valuable suggestions that have made this study possible.

I am grateful to Mrs. Rubie Banks, Director of the Inter-Library-Loan Service, for her willing helpfulness.

I extend my sincere thanks to Mrs. Talbot Aldrich, Boston, Massachusetts, and Mr. Garland Patch, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, for permitting me to use original letters of Helen Hunt Jackson.

I appreciate the splendid co-operation of the following libraries: Houston Public, University of Texas, San Diego, Yale University, Pasadena, University of California, University of Oklahoma, St. Louis Public, University of Chicago, University of Illinois, University of Missouri, Ohio State University, Oberlin University, University of Michigan, Columbia University, The Library of Congress, Amherst, Tulane University, University of Iowa, and especially Mill Memorial Library of Louisiana State University.

Last, but not least, I acknowledge deep gratitude to four dear friends—J., P., L., H.—whose encouragement and spirit have prevailed with me throughout this work.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENT</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. BIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. POETRY</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. TRAVEL</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. BITS OF TALK</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. SHORT STORIES</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Stories for Children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sanzolm Stories and Between Whiles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. NOVELS</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. &quot;No Name&quot; Series</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Colorado Novels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. INDIAN WRITINGS</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. RAMONA</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

As the field of American literature expands, there is a growing need for consideration of the minor figures. Frequently the scant and hasty treatment of the lesser writers has resulted in a warped view of them.

The purpose of this study is to give a fuller and more comprehensive picture of Helen Maria Fiske Hunt Jackson (1830–1885), in relation to her times than is commonly presented. If known at all, she is usually regarded as the writer of a single novel, though she wrote prolifically for a period of twenty years.

Writing was a decided social asset in the group to which she belonged. To write voluminously was more important than to write well. Hence the quality of her work has suffered because of the quantity. Although her poems are little known today, a few have survived to find their way into such anthologies as the Oxford Book of American Verse. Emerson admired her and carried around in his pocket her poems that he clipped from her periodicals. To the envy of her contemporaries her name was mentioned with that of Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

When one traveled at that time, it was customary to write his experiences. Helen Jackson was no different from the rest. From the travelogues that grew out of her travels through her native
country a student could reconstruct, at least in part, the development of the American railroad.

As a short story writer she followed the tradition of the fifties and sixties, but she pleased the war-weary Americans for whom she wrote and was regarded as the "most-talked-about-short-story-writer" of her day.

It was the vogue then for women to love "little ones." Undoubtedly Helen Hunt Jackson had a very sincere love for children. Besides writing stories for children she was a conscientious student of child psychology and took up cudgels in their behalf. She endeavored to educate parents in the fine art of rearing children through the medium of the magazine.

Her great interest in the Indians, who were championed after the negro problem was settled, led her to the Astor Library where she engaged in three months of intensive research that resulted in her A Century of Dishonor. Although this work did not gain for the Indians the consideration that the philanthropist hoped it would, for the student of American history it is an excellent reference book on the Indian question of the period.

Failure of her statistical study coupled with an ever deepening interest in the Indian resulted in her masterpiece. In the fervor of white heat she blended to best advantage all her good qualities hitherto evidenced at random in her earlier works. Her interest in humanity was responsible for her famous Indian patrol, that was intended as a novel of propaganda but that resulted in a localized
romance that has gained for her a permanent place among our local colorists who began their rise to fame approximately ten years before she wrote in that style.

The Publisher's Weekly reports that Ramona is still in the ten thousand a year class after sixty-six years. Thus we have a minor writer who was not only of her times but possibly will survive for several centuries.
CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHY

Nathan Welby Fiske, fourth son of Captain Nathan Fiske, was born in Weston, Massachusetts, April 17, 1739.\(^1\) His father was so concerned with earning a living for his family that he did not have much time to devote to educational facilities for his children. However, his mother instructed Welby in religion, and he studied Latin, geography and arithmetic in the winters, whereas in summers he attended a "female school," when he was not required to work on the farm. At the age of fifteen, through the persuasion of a cousin, Welby was permitted to tutor at Dartmouth College.\(^2\) He recorded there two characteristics that were to have the greatest effect on his life, namely, love of the classics and "full submission to God."

At the age of nineteen Welby graduated with high academic honors. At a salary of five hundred dollars, he accepted the principalship of the Lincoln Academy at New Castle, Maine. The following year he returned to his Alma Mater to continue his theological studies.

In the fall of 1820 he entered Andover Theological Seminary, where he remained until he was graduated three years later with Phi Beta Kappa honors and was ordained at the Tabernacle Church in Salem.

After a bit of disliked missionary work in Savannah, Georgia, four opportunities came to him almost simultaneously. He accepted the offer

---

of professorship of languages and rhetoric from Amherst Collegiate Institution.

While Walby was making up his mind about going to Amherst, Deborah Waterman Vinal was attending Mr. Joseph Emerson's school at Sangoa. She was the only child of David Vinal of Boston and Deborah Waterman of Seintate, and was born December 13, 1806. Shortly after Deborah Waterman Vinal was two years old her mother died. She became the "apple of her father's eye." From the death of her mother, she lived with various aunts in Marshfield, Charlestown, and Newburyport until at the age of fourteen she made her home with her Uncle Otis Vinal and his wife.

Just before Deborah was seventeen she was considered old enough to enter a boarding school. Her aunt selected for her that of the Reverend Mr. Joseph Emerson. In the summer of 1825 Deborah transferred to the Adams Female Academy at Londonberry, New Hampshire, to be with Miss Grant, a teacher, who had left Mr. Emerson's school.

When Deborah's school days were over, she returned to Boston. There she met Nathan Walby Fiske. This young man, who had turned from theologian to professor, was the only man she knew whose piety exceeded her own.

In November of 1828 Nathan Walby Fiske brought Deborah as his bride to Amherst. About a year after their marriage a son was born. He was christened David Vinal Fiske the day before his death that occurred when he was only a few weeks old. But Walby and Deborah were not destined to be childless long. For on October 15, 1830, approximately a year after the death of their son, Helen Maria was born.
When Helen was two years old, she had a baby brother, Humphrey Washburn; he, too, died in infancy as did the first son.

The attitude toward death assumed by Melby and Deborah is an interesting phase of their religion, and particularly interesting in the biography of their daughter, who is finally to become Helen Maria Flase Hunt Jackson. The same magnificence of fortitude is to be observed in Helen when she has a similar experience. A letter by Deborah and an excerpt from Nathan's journal illustrate this point.

Monday Evening

My Dear Aunt:

Humphrey is still living, but very low, as a last resort a blister was applied to his bowels last evening but it has (as I expected) produced no good effect—he suffers exceedingly at times, but sleeps much from the influence of opiate—I need not answer your sympathy and prayers—we are confident of both, do not be too much pained on my account & try to keep papa from feeling disheartened; it is true it is a "bitter cup" but God can enable us to drink it, and the Saviour drank one far more bitter to purchase redemption for our little one we love so much.

We must remember to

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a smiling providence
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err;
And see his work in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain.

"In the world ye shall have tribulation" is as much a promise as many others we much more readily believe—affliction
makes me feel the truth of it. I have every thing that heart can desire, but the life of my children & I ought to bear it with cheerful submission when God sees fit to take them to Himself, tho I often feel like Jacob when I look back upon the comfort & happiness we enjoyed in little Humphrey. "If I be bereaved of my children I am bereaved." Much love to Papa, Uncle Vinal & Martha. In haste

Yours very affectionately,

D. W. V. Flake

September, 1833

Let me put down some of the dealings of God with me and my family, that if I live, I may hereafter refresh my treacherous memory. God has lately appointed to me one almost continued series of trials; especially repeated alarming sickness in the persons of my dear wife and children, with distressing embarrassment as to how, to perform nursing and family labor. And now, last of all, He hath smitten the loveliest flower of our little garden. Our idolized son, Humphrey Washburn, we followed to the narrow house, having lived not quite a year. Three weeks today, I held him in apparent health, and in blooming loveliness and promise in my arms, in the sanctuary while our Pastor sailed over him the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. From that very day, as if to show us more fully the dealing of God in the matter, he began to decline. Whooping cough and a disease in the bowels terminated his life, after many days and nights of extreme suffering. Father, how mysterious Thy ways! 0 let my heart bow in humble, thankful adoration of Thy goodness, all along manifested. Yet how dark a moment was it, when in the last agonies of little H., I was obliged to give his wasted frame to the hands of strangers, in order to take into my arms my other child, suddenly smitten of a fever, as if God would take both at once. 0 most Holy and Righteous God, spare, spare, if it can consist with our well being and Thy glory. "Nevertheless, not our will but Thine be done" now and ever, amen.

I have melancholy apprehensions respecting my dear wife, fearing much, that in the extremely weak and exhausted state in which her affliction has come upon her, with whooping cough and a new cold, her tendency to consumption will be revived and fatally fired. But most merciful God, spare
this cup, if it can please Thee, and Thou canst otherwise secure her good and my best good and Thy glory.\(^1\)

Besides bringing out attitude toward both held by the Fiskes these quotations show two of the characteristics of the "genteel female" that Deborah possessed—piety and physical decadence.\(^2\)

At the early age of five Helen was sent to the children’s department, Mack’s Hall, of the Amherst Female Seminary. Up until this time her mother had taught her. Deborah had discovered that Helen learned easily enough, but her strong will did not make her very easy to handle. While Helen was at this school, she learned the principles of fine needlework. The characters in many of her stories are endowed with this talent, especially Alice Fisher in "My Tourmaline."

Despite the many sorrows that befell Welby Fiske he continued to surge forward in his professional duties, and he devoted much time to writing. His first work was the introduction to the fourth American edition to Pollock’s Course of Time. This work was completed in the summer of 1828.

When little Helen began her schooling, Welby Fiske started work on his translation of Escherburg’s Manual of Classical Literature. This kept him well occupied through its various editions until 1843. Other works of Professor Fiske are: The Bible Class Book, done in collaboration with Jacob Abbott; and two books for children, The Story of Alec or The History of Pitcairn’s Island, and Young Peter’s Voyage

\(^1\) Ruth Odell, Helen Hunt Jackson. (New York, 1939), pp. 155-156.
around the World. 1

On December 25, 1855, another daughter was born to Welby and Deborah Fiske. She was christened Ann Schlofield and was a shy, sweet girl in comparison to her older made-up sister who delighted in jumping rope, dressing up in odd things and hiding behind doors.

Helen's grandfather David Vinal probably understood her more than anyone else. He believed that brandy had marked medicinal qualities. He had unusual business acumen. His daughter accused him of loving money "Vinal-like." He wasn't so pious. After chiding Helen for not wanting to have her tooth pulled he gave her five dollars.

The incident in which Grandpa Vinal rescued Helen's Pussy from a tub of soft soap is preserved in Letters from a Cat. In the same work is related Helen's everlasting dislike for her Cousin Josiah who drowned Pussy, when she (Pussy) advanced in age. 2

When Helen was only five years old she received from her Aunt Vinal a copy of the Youth's Companion. Helen later contributed to this magazine.

Summer after summer Helen visited relatives in Boston, Weston, and Charlestown.

When Helen was not attending some private school—Miss White's, Miss Baker's, or Miss Nelson's—her mother taught her composition and her father taught her Latin at home.

Helen and Ann gave many parties and attended no small number of

---

2. Helen Jackson (H. H.), Cat Stories. (Boston, 1884) p. 24.
A particularly interesting party was one Christmas party given by the "Miss Perry" for their cats. This episode is related in "A Christmas Tree for Cats." 1

Deborah governed her daughters with love, but Welby preferred sterner methods. 2 One day Helen ran away with Mary Snell to Hadley. For this her father banished her to the attic. "The Naughtiest Day in My Life" recounts this prank of hers. 3

As Helen grew older, her mother grew weaker in strength. Before Helen was eleven, she was sent to Aunt Vinal's in Charlestown, where she went to Miss Austin's school. Contrary to the belief of her parents she was homesick very little. She made friends readily and pleased her teacher greatly. 4

In the summer of 1843 Helen was sent to Pittsfield. Deborah always carried on a steady correspondence with her daughter and never ceased trying to drum religion into her and to impress her with the belief of the necessity of living/Christ.

Not for long was Helen to enjoy the watchful eye and careful guidance of her dear mother. Succumbing to the scourge of tuberculosis, Deborah Fiske died on February 19, 1844. Helen was just a little over thirteen. In "The Naughtiest Day of My Life" Helen

---

1. H. H., Bits of Talk, in Verse and Prose, for Young Folks. (Boston, 1899), p. 65.
penned this description of Deborah: "My good and wise mother." 1

Helen was sent to make her home with Aunt Hooker in Falmouth, while Ann went to live with Aunt Vinal in Boston, and Professor Fiske lived alone on Pleasant Street.

He, too, was not very strong in health and his friends prevailed upon him to take a leave of absence and go to the Holy Land. He did. But before leaving he bound all the letters of his late wife and entrusted them to Aunt Vinal for Helen and Ann.

After twenty-two years at Amherst, Professor Fiske taught his last class on September 26, 1846. In November of that year he sailed for Beirut; he arrived there in January, 1847, and remained three months. Professor Fiske was a victim of the same dreaded disease that claimed his wife. It was in hopes of overcoming this that he consented to take the journey. However, it was from a very severe attack of dysentery that he finally died in Jerusalem, May 27, 1847. He was buried on Mt. Zion. 2

The orphaned children—Helen and her sister Ann—were not together when news of their father's death was received. From then on they were to see each other only during vacation time and when they visited each other after they were married.

Helen spent three years at Aunt Hooker's following the death of Deborah. At that time she went to Falmouth Seminary as a day pupil.

Ipswich Female Seminary in the next school Helen enrolled in by February, 1847. The textbooks used there by seniors were: Stewart's Mental Philosophy, Fally's or Wayland's Logic, Butler's Analogy, Comrie's Psychology, Kames's Elements of Criticism and Olmstead's Astronomy. Kames's text is the book that seemed to have most influence on Helen.1

The spring of 1849 found Helen going to another school. Helen was taken into the heart and home of "Mr. John" Abbott in New York.2 The Abbott Institute had its beginnings in 1845 in a building on the corner of Houston and Mulberry Streets. It was to John and Jacob Abbott that Helen owed many of the ideas she presented in her Bits of Talk about Home Matters concerning the training of children.

The orphaned daughters of Nathan Welby Flake were well taken care of by their grandfather David Vinal. He had his will drawn up in their favor. Deacon Julius A. Palmer was assigned their guardian. He was assisted by his brother Reverend Mr. Ray Palmer, who was the pastor of the First Congregational Church at Albany.

In August, 1851, Helen visited at the home of Reverend Ray Palmer. There she met Lieutenant Edward Bissell Hunt of the Coast Survey Department from Washington. He had come to Albany to attend the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

At the time Lieutenant Hunt was close to thirty. His was a studious

1. Odell, op. cit., p. 36.
and industrious nature and he promised a brilliant future. His
brother Washington was the governor of New York. The Hunts came
from a family of good yeoman English stock. Edward Bissell belonged
to the Northampton branch of Hunts. He was born June 15, 1822. In
1845 he graduated from West Point near the head of his class, after
which he did a year's engineering duty in New York. Subsequently he
returned to West Point as assistant professor in Engineering. From
there he became assistant engineer in the construction of Fort Warren,
Massachusetts, in August, 1849. His next move was to Washington in
May, 1851, where he was assigned to the office of the Superintendent
Alexander Dallas Bache of the Coast Survey. He remained there until
April, 1855, with the exception of a few trips to conventions and one
summer's duty at New York.¹

As a climax to the convention in Albany the governor gave a ball.
His brother, Edward Bissell, though disinclined to attend such func-
tions was well rewarded for consenting to attend this particular ball.
For it was at this function that he met the gracious, green-eyed,
attractive blonde, who was the cynosure of any gathering and who was
to become his wife—Helen Maria Piske.

Lieutenant Hunt didn't declare himself as immediately as Helen
would have liked, but he visited frequently during the winter and
spring of 1851-1852. It was in April that Helen openly admitted to
Mrs. Palmer: "I know now the depth of his interest in me, and I have

¹ "Edward Bissell Hunt," The National Cyclopedia of American
not one cloud of anxiety for the future....1

On October 28, 1852, Helen and Lieutenant Hunt were married at the Mount Vernon Church in Boston. They honeymooned at Hunt’s Hollow, the home of Edward’s father. 'Twas in the midst of a snowstorm, but the groom had this to say, "We now find climate in the heart, and it is summer there."2 At the end of the week they went to Albany to the home of the Palmers.

November 15th found them in Washington, where they made their home at Mrs. Reed’s boarding house.

The Hunts became friendly with Horace Daniel Conway, who occupied the pulpit of the First Unitarian Church. He, like Reverend J. S. C. Abbott before him, became Helen’s literary mentor. He thought she was highly educated, brilliant, and, at times, satirical.

Helen knew Hawthorne. Conway introduced her to Emerson, or at least she let him think so. He gave her a set of Emerson’s works.

Helen and her husband disagreed on one subject. He couldn’t stand an abolitionist and forbade Helen to defend Harriet Beecher Stowe when she heard someone accuse her of being "a talented fiend in human shape." However, Helen saw the brighter aspect of slavery after employing the services of a negro girl for five dollars a month.

On September 30, 1853, Murray Hunt was born in Washington. The

---

1. Odell, op. cit., p. 47.
2. Ibid., p. 50.
Following summer found Helen with the baby and black nurse in Tarrytown. At that time Lieutenant Hunt was in New York. The baby seemed to complete their happiness. He threw well, but on August 22, he died from tumor on the brain. His mother became seriously ill and blamed herself for the death of her child. Her spell of bereavement was broken when she became interested in her sister's approaching marriage.

From April, 1855, to October, 1857, the Hunts resided in Rhode Island. Major Hunt was stationed at various points there at work under the Lighthouse Board of the Engineering Department.

Their first summer was spent in Newport, where lived many men and women of talent, but Helen still unreconciled over the loss of her infant son did not mingle with them. She did make friends with Mrs. Vincenzo Botta, whose husband had come to Providence for the American Association for the Advancement of Science in August, 1855.

Before her marriage Mrs. Botta was Miss Anne Charlotte Lynch, who was credited with organizing the only authentic salons in America—one in Providence, later one in New York, where such "literati" visited as: Poe, Margaret Fuller, Lydia Maria Child, Ann S. Stephens, Elizabeth Cokes, "Estella" Lewis, Frances Osgood, Charles F. Hoffman, Fitz-Greene Halleck, R. P. Willis, George P. Morris, Bryant, Longfellow (occasionally), Bayard Taylor, the Stoddards, "Grace Greenwood," Zareh Godwin, Horace Greeley, Catherine Maria Sedgwick, Charles A. Dana, W. H. Furness, the Mipleys; in fact, all the intelligentsia were present for the "at homes." Helen was fascinated with her new friend, and after her return from Providence Helen visited her in New York.
Helen urged Mrs. Botta to come to Newport the following summer.

On December 11, 1856, Warren Horsford Hunt was born. He was nicknamed "Rennie."¹

On December 10, 1859, Lieutenant Hunt was ordered to Fort Taylor. He left Helen and the baby in New Haven. The following fall he spent two months on an assignment in California and Texas in preparation for the fortification of Lime Point, San Francisco, and Galveston Harbor. January, 1860, found him back in Florida. In July of that year he was commissioned captain and in March, 1863, he was made major.

On September 30, 1863, while experimenting with a projected sea mincer, a device of his own design, he met with a fatal accident² and died in the Brooklyn Naval Hospital. He was buried at West Point following a military funeral.³

Helen was not with her husband during the last five years of his life except in summer vacations. She did not accompany him while he fulfilled his various assignments in the South.

Shortly after Rennie was born, Helen met Sarah Coolidge ("Susan Coolidge"). She became Helen's closest friend. They were both of New England Brahmin heritage.

Since Edward was in and around New Haven in the summer of 1862,

¹ Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Contemporaries, (Boston, 1900), p. 146.
Helen joined her friend Sarah and other of her friends to do volunteer work in the Government Hospital there. Out of this experience Helen later wove the story, "Joe Hale's Red Stockings."

Likewise the story of Major Hunt's death is paralleled in "The Elder's Wife," the sequel to "Drazy Miller." Helen stood her husband's death bravely. But the second major disaster was almost more than she could bear.

Her son Rennie died from malignant diphtheria on April 13, 1865. He was nine years four months and eleven days old. Her grief over the loss of her son was so deep that her friends grew apprehensive about her reason, for she isolated herself from her relatives and closest friends.

That Rennie promised to communicate with his mother after death if it were possible is a rather thinly supported story, but the popularity of the pseudo-sciences at that time makes it possible that such was the case. Helen was always attracted by the supernatural. There are four instances in her interest in spiritism that appear in her works: the clairvoyant in "The Valley of Castein"; the mind reader, Rachel, in Hetty's Strange History; the picture of the dead girl that spoke in "Four-Leafed Clover"; and the strange communication of stones in "My Tourmaline."

In an endeavor to flee her own grief Helen began her literary pursuits. In October 13, 1865, a prose sketch appeared in the New York Evening Post: this was her first printed prose piece. Other scraps of verse had appeared in the Nation, for which she received no pay.
There was a craze for anonymity, in which Helen joined. The various pseudonyms used by Helen were Marsh, "H. H.", Rip Van Winkle, and Sara Holm. Not until Helen wrote A Century of Dishonor did she append her own name openly. More will be said about the numerous pen names Helen used in the chapters that treat the various works that appeared under the names.

The time at which Helen launched out on her literary career was the last year of the War and the barrenest period in the history of American literature.

The conservative group of the sixties and seventies looked skeptically at those who became suddenly rich as a result of the War. Many of the conservatives settled at Newport. They took pride in the fact that they were unlike the "fast" Saratoga group. "To Newport residents nobody was a lion and nobody a sensation. You were only important as you had acquaintance and made yourself an acquisition to their circle." To write was the best way to be admitted to the group. Quantity was placed higher than quality.

Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson came to Newport in 1861. He had been discharged from the army and was incapacitated by wounds. Colonel Higginson became the literary dictator of the group at Newport. He welcomed Mrs. Hunt very cordially when she arrived at Mrs. Deme's, the favorite boarding house in Newport. Helen's social position coupled with her charming personality made secure her place in the

---

2. Odell, op. cit., p. 68.
circle comprised largely of writers.

Sarah Woolsey continued to be Helen's most intimate friend, although she was as fascinated by Charlotte Cushman, eminent American actress, as she had been by Anna Lynch Hotta, eleven years before. Higginson became her literary mentor. Helen admitted that Higginson's *Outdoor Papers* had been her style manual. During her early period he revised many of her poems. He acted as her agent while she was in Europe and sold her verse and prose to editors. The extent of the influence that Higginson had on Helen is best evidenced in her "Procession of Flowers in Colorado" when it is compared with his "Procession of Flowers." In her essays, too, there is a marked resemblance of his thought and style. It was not until she weaned herself from his influence that she adopted the medium in which she did her masterpiece, namely, the novel. Nevertheless, Higginson loved, praised, helped and promoted Helen until her death.

"Hagar" was the first piece that Helen had printed in the *New York Independent*. For that journal she was to write altogether three hundred and seventy-one articles.¹

Helen experimented with translations. Victor Hugo's *Les Chansons des Rues et des Bois* was unsuccessfully done. Higginson points out that her French and Latin were always faulty. However, she continued her efforts with *Behismendi: A Persian Tale*. It was a translation from the French of Florio.

---

Juvenile literature was in great demand at this period. *Pathmendi* was her first book for children. More will be said about this in the chapter devoted to works for children.

Helen's output continued to increase. She was writing for the *Independent*, the *Post*, the *Nation*, the *Galaxy*, the *Riverside Magazine* for Young People.

Helen's religious attitude is reflected in *Mercy Philbrick's Choice*. She was undoubtedly greatly influenced by Higginson, who was quite Emersonian in his power to bring out latest genius.

Many of the characters in the "Saxe Holm" series are girls whose fathers were ministers: Margaret Warren, Dora Maynard, and the heroine in *Nelly's Silver Mine*. These girls all treat their father with pity tinged with contempt. Her attitude toward Catholicism blended with that of the New England Brahmin.

Two weeks travel in Nova Scotia in the late summer of 1867 resulted in a number of letters to the *Post* and the *Independent*. These were signed "H. H." or "Rip Van Winkle." One of these letters is specifically significant because it shows Helen's ability to do research which was evidenced later in *A Century of Dishonor*. The letter "A Morning in a Vermont Graveyard" is preserved in *Bits of Travel at Home*.

From November, 1868, until January, 1870, Helen traveled in Europe. Her journey was recorded in poems and sketches for various

---

1. Odell lists Draxy Miller, but Reuben Miller was a store-keeper, not a minister.

magazines and in a series of letters to friends. She was definitely living in a tradition. For a few generations a great body of travel literature accumulated in America. Outstanding among the contributors were Mark Twain and Hawthorne.

Characterized by a conversational tone were Nathan Welby Fiske's Journal and Jacob Abbott's New England and Her Institutions. Helen had access to these as well as the general body of travel literature. Excerpts from her letters were preserved in Bits of Travel.

Helen's first stop was in Queenstown, then Liverpool, finally, London, where she remained a few days. She continued on to Paris, a city which she despised; then to Rome by way of Nice and Genoa.

Although much of Rome was not unvisited by Helen, she isolated herself from her friends for a few hours a day. During that time she wrote lengthy letters that found their way to her friends in America.

Helen's original plans to go to Sicily in April, Venice in May, and to the Tyrol for the three summer months were greatly altered when in January she suffered from a bad attack of rheumatism, followed by a serious sore throat in March.

This necessitated Helen's leaving the metropolis for the hill towns for a month. She took with her a young Italian girl for a servant.

Helen returned from Albano in May. She met the Stearnses, with whom she had been traveling hitherto, and journeyed on to Venice.
There they remained five days. Next the three women visited Bavaria; the trip through the Ampezzo Pass figures in one of Helen's poems by that name.

Helen remained in Berchtesgaden for six weeks alone, while her friends traveled elsewhere. It was with regret that she left Rome and Venice, but soon fell in love with the place and the "honest, earnest, solemn country people of South Germany."

In August Helen met her friends again, and they left Salzburg. They visited Castein where again Helen was marooned for five weeks because of a malignant sore throat. This proved to be one of Helen's most highly cherished experiences. She recounts it in the "Valley of Castein," that has been preserved in Bits of Travel.

In August Helen left with Fraulein Hahleiner for a trip down the Rhine, and thence to London. This delightful experience is told in "A German Landlady." In London she joined her friends the Elliotts. Then she settled down for a month. Her impressions were recorded in a series of sketches for the Independent. Her letters dwindled in number, so many of her friends traveled to Europe themselves.

All the while Helen was in Europe, Higginson served as her advisor and literary broker. To the many periodicals that she already contributed were added Hearth and Home, and Hours at Home. By 1869 she was represented in Our Young Folks and Atlantic Monthly with one poem each. The Independent, though, printed the bulk of her work. In January, 1871, after her return to America the Atlantic Monthly
combined in one long article her Gastein letters. The same magazine ran parts from her "Encyclical of a Traveler," the following June, August, and September.

On the S. S. Russia, Helen sailed for home January 22, 1870. The feeling she experienced then has been crystallized in "Coming Across," a poem that appeared in the Independent, February, 1870.

Upon her arrival in Newport, she was seized by another severe illness that caused her to leave for the inland towns earlier than she had planned.

She made brief visits to Amherst and Springfield in the summer. From July to November she was in Bethlehem. There she busied herself revising her Gastein letters for the Atlantic Monthly, along with many other European letters. Several of these were incorporated in Bits of Travel.

Helen preferred the Atlantic Monthly, but she did business with the magazine that paid her the highest for her work. Lucinda expressed Helen's attitude toward selling when she said, "...If sellin' is honorable business for men, I don't see why it ain't for women 'n' children."¹ Helen was always of the conviction that "The men who writes must, if he needs pay for his work, write what the man who prints will buy."²


². Odell, op. cit., p. 112.
Richard Watson Gilder undoubtedly introduced Helen to Scribner's. She had previously gotten her to contribute to Hours at Home. She produced children's stories for St. Nicholas and Riverside Magazine.

1870 saw the publication of her first bound volume, Verses. It was put out by Fields, Osgood and Company; this was followed by Bits of Travel (1871) published by James R. Osgood and Company. Then she transferred to Roberts Brothers. With the exception of the "Saxe Holms" series, A Century of Dictionary, and four minor works, two posthumous, Roberts Brothers were responsible for all her books, although Helen paid for her own stereotype plates for her book of verses, as well as her first book of prose. The success of her first collection of prose encouraged her to have a second collection published, namely, Bits of Talk about Home Matters (1872).

Helen had a great enthusiasm for reviewing books. However, she was not very successful in this endeavor; she might think one thing today and the opposite tomorrow.

Helen had to leave Newport for the summers. She had longed to go to California ever since a friend of hers had selected Yosemite in preference to the Tyrol. The publications of her collections were sufficiently lucrative to make a trip to California possible, especially when combined with Independent's offer to buy her accounts of the journey and Sarah Woolsey's willingness to accompany her.

On May 9, 1872, Helen and Sarah left New York for Chicago. After spending one night in the Sherman House in Chicago, they continued to
Ogden by way of a Union Pacific train. From Ogden they detoured to Salt Lake City where they viewed the Wasatch Mountains and the Mormon Tabernacle. They completed their journey to San Francisco by way of the Central Pacific.

Helen's first impression of San Francisco was a disappointment. It was just another New York with lower-storied buildings and narrowed streets. She said there were only two worthwhile things to do in San Francisco, "to drive out of the city or to sail away from it." With the assistance of Bancroft's Guide Book she explored the city carefully.

Once out of the city limits, Helen was impressed by the beautiful and interesting scenery that California had to offer. She and Miss Woolsey visited the geysers. By rail, stage, and boat they managed to visit many points of interest—Vallejo, Mt. Tamalpais, Mt. Diablo, Callistogo Springs, Napa Valley, Santa Clara, San Jose. Through Santa Clara Valley Helen beheld a waving sea of yellow mustard the impression of which was utilized twelve years later in Ramona in one of the finest descriptive passages in the book.¹

After much deliberation, because of the hardships it would entail, Helen and her companion visited Yosemite, including Bridal Veil Falls, Sentinel Rock, Nevada Falls, Vernal Falls, Glacier Point, and South Dome. The Calaveras trees were their next attraction. Their final stop was at Lake Tahoe. In July when they left for New York, Helen

¹. This is discussed further in chapter on Ramona.
declared that she would return the next year to study the Old Missions. ¹

The remainder of the summer and the fall after her trip West were spent in the White Mountains at which time she turned out a quantity of work. But in January of the next year a very severe attack of sore throat, claimed to be diphtheria, followed by a severe relapse confined her to her bed for several weeks. Her friends recommended that she go to Colorado Territory for her health. This appealed to Helen not only because its climatic conditions were conducive to improving her health, but also because such an undertaking offered a wealth of material for writing. But misfortune befell her again by the way of a serious and prolonged illness; hence she was forced to abandon her western summer trip.

In a state of semi-invalidism Helen continued to work while lying flat on her back. She took the false step of moving from Princeton, Massachusetts, to Amherst. In seven months time she had had three sieges of "diphtheria" and an attack of dysentery. Her strength was so depleted that her doctor feared she would develop the dreaded sickness that was fatal to her mother. She was brought back to Princeton. Helen belonged to that group—Higginson, the Peabodys, the Hawthornes, and Harriet Beecher Stowe—who had faith in the homeopathic school. Her doctor, Dr. Cate, Amherst homeopathic doctor, insisted that she go to Colorado. She agreed. Accompanied by Dr. Cate and her personal

maid Emma, she journeyed on to Colorado Springs. Her first impression of the place was morbid. Colorado Springs was a thriving municipality not quite three years old and boasting of a population of three thousand people. Helen settled down at the Colorado Springs Hotel. As her health improved so did her impression of the new place. There she met among many other pleasant boarders a Pennsylvanian friend, William Sharpless Jackson. With him Helen took many long drives through the surrounding country.

Meanwhile she turned out a prodigious amount of work. She added to her list of publishers the Christian Union. She never ceased being a good business woman and demanded successfully thirty-five dollars for "A Christmas Symphony." Her Saxa Holm stories, though, were her most profitable production.

Improving health and remunerative literary output were not enough to keep Helen from becoming homesick for New England. She went to Bethlehem for two months' vacation—October and November. In December, 1874, she returned to Colorado, where she remained until July of the following summer.

She continued to earn her living by writing. She sent her best pieces to the Atlantic; Scribner's was her second choice. What they didn't accept was sent to Independent and Christian Union.

On October 22, 1875, she became the wife of William Sharpless Jackson, at the home of her sister in Wolfeboro, New Hampshire. ¹

¹ Higginson, op. cit., p. 153.
Helen's husband was six years younger than she. He was born in Kennet Square, Pennsylvania, on January 16, 1836. As a young man he launched forth on a very successful business life. After working with the ore building industry at Latrobe, Pennsylvania, he served as treasurer of the Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad in St. Paul, Minnesota. In 1871 he went to Denver, Colorado, with the Denver and Rio Grande. In 1876 he shifted over to the business affairs of the El Paso County Bank in Colorado Springs. He gained control of the bank the same year. He was one of the founders and directors of the Denver National Bank in Denver. From 1872 to 1874 he served on the school board in Colorado Springs. Furthermore, he was a trustee of Colorado College from the date of its founding, 1874. In 1913 he received from that college an honorary Doctor of Laws degree. The United States appointed his receiver of the Denver and Rio Grande in 1884 when it became insolvent. Shortly afterwards he was made president of the company. William Sharpless Jackson was very considerate of the temperament of his gifted wife.\(^1\)

After the wedding the Jacksons returned to Colorado Springs. There Helen made her home until her death.

Helen had the home to which her husband brought her at 228 East Kiowa Street altered to her own tastes. To it she brought her personal effects that she had accumulated throughout her years of travel—china, glass, rare vases, pictures gave her home an individualized touch.\(^2\)

---

It was not long before Helen had a host of friends from all walks of life. However, she still suffered from occasional nostalgia twinges. She did not attend church, but avowed that she preferred to worship in the Cathedral—Cheyenne Canyon. Her home was never wanting for visitors; Mr. Jackson, a charming host, loved to have his house filled with his wife's friends, as well as his own.¹

*Mercy Philbrick's Choice* was written during the winter and spring after her marriage. In the later part of the summer she went East to see about its publication.

While she was in the East Helen traveled through a number of towns gathering information to use in a book called *Explorations*. This plan never fully materialized.

In 1876 *Bits of Talk in Verse and Prose for Young Folks* was published. In 1878 *Nelly's Silver Mine* came out as did *Bits of Travel at Home*.

Much of the material in *Bits of Travel At Home*, particularly the portion devoted to Colorado, was boring and repetitions. Helen was decreasing her popularity instead of increasing it. Hence she, following the suggestion of Dr. Froeell whom she met in Bad-Gastein, turned to fiction. Helen selected a new signature for her new endeavors—Saxe Holm. The stories that appeared under this name are treated in chapter four of this study.

*Mercy Philbrick's Choice* was her first contribution to the

"No Name Series."¹ This occasioned much criticism, the nature of which is expounded upon in chapter six of this work. Despite the criticisms the book sold eight thousand copies in four months. This led Thomas Miles of Roberts Brothers to make Hetty's Strange History (1877) another "No Name" volume.

The second Saxe Holm Series met with as little favor as did Mercy Philbrick's Choice. Helen had a series of "rippers" with Dr. Holland, one in April, 1873, another in 1879. At the later date Helen wrote almost humbly asking Dr. Holland if he would not have use for a long novel, the scene of which would be partly laid in America and partly in Italy. This story, too, was never finished. It was Elspeth Dynor, and came to light in manuscript form in a Connecticut bookshop in the spring of 1932. Three chapters of Elspeth Dynor were published as the Inn of the Golden Pear, a story in the posthumous collection Between Whiles (1887), brought out by Roberts Brothers.²

Even though Helen had turned to fiction she continued writing travel sketches, occasionally poems and children's pieces. She edited her mother's Letters from a Cat.³

There are signs at this period that she was becoming mentally depressed. She longed for New England; her zest for Colorado cooled considerably; and she felt isolated from New England friends.

In the late summer of 1879, she left for Mt. Desert, Maine. She was to attend the birthday celebration of Oliver Wendell Holmes, in the form of a breakfast at the Hotel Brunswick in Boston on December 3.

¹ "No Name Series" is discussed in Chapter VI.
² Odell, op. cit., p. 142.
³ Not Letters to a Cat as Odell has it.
It was a gala occasion for Helen. At this gathering she met all the Brahmins. Among them were Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Julia Ward Howe, Rose Terry Cook, Mrs. James T. Fields, H. O. Houghton—toastmaster—Howells, Phillips Brooks, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Whitte, and Charles Dudley Warner. At this gathering Warner read Helen’s poem to the guest of honor. 

In November of the same year Helen’s first interest in the Indian was engendered after she heard a lecture by Standing Bear given at Boston. This was kindled by the attention throughout the country to the Indian question.

Thus Helen for the first time identified herself with a reform movement. She began writing letters and articles in behalf of the Poncas Indians. She filled columns for the Independent, Tribune and the Times. This growing interest resulted in a long tedious study, that required extensive research, fittingly called A Century of Dishonor. This arduous undertaking left her physically exhausted and nervous. She sailed from Boston, May 29, 1880, on the S. S. Parthia with a party of friends for England and Scandinavia, leaving her ever faithful friend, Colonel Higginson, in charge of the proof-reading of her manuscript.

She continued her practice of writing what she saw and did just as she had done twelve years ago.

On October 9th, she was thankful to land in New York.

---

and immediately she resumed her enthusiastic activity in behalf of the Indians. Many minor details had to be attended to before the publishing of *A Century of Dishonor*. The Preface was written by H. R. Halle, Bishop of Minnesota. The book was published by Harper's January, 1881. Helen believed this was her best book.

*Nanny Tittleback and Her Family* was the outcome of the Christmas Day, 1880, spent by Helen with her husband at Kennet Square, Pennsylvania.

Shortly after Christmas, accompanied by her husband, Helen went to Washington to interview various members of Congress and Army officers in the Indians' behalf. She hoped to stir the country to some activity. On January 27, 1881, a report of the President's Commission, favorable to the Indians was given to newspapers.

February 29, found Helen back in New York. It was suggested to her by J. B. Gilder, after the unsuccessful attempt of William Justin Hareh's Indian novel *Flushed Under*, that she was the proper person to undertake such a story that would do for the Indians what Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel did for the negroes. This idea fascinated Helen. She prepared immediately to go to California to investigate the life of the Mission Indians.

Her husband planned to accompany her to California, but he was forced to change his plans when he was called to Leadville, Colorado. This altered the California scheme. The summer was not fruitless, for

---
1. Preface to *Nanny Tittleback and Her Family*. 
with Mr. Jackson Helen went to New Mexico, where she was offered an opportunity to observe the Pueblo Indians, to visit Gunnison County, then Estes Park.

There are many contradictory accounts about the exact time that Helen Hunt Jackson arrived in California. She finally got there after much delay in the winter of 1881–1882.

Helen came to California well fortified with letters of introduction to Roman Catholics. One was to the Bishop of Monterey and Los Angeles, Right Reverend Francis More. In turn, he gave her a letter to Antonio Coronel and his wife. Don Antonio by virtue of his own experiences during the Revolutionary days and his service in the Mexican Government was well acquainted with the region, etc., and well fitted to supply Helen with the information she sought. After examining all the data she could from Don Antonio, his valuable antiquarian collection, and his friends, Helen moved in January from Los Angeles to Santa Barbara. She stopped one day at the Mission San Fernando, where she was cordially received by Don Antonio's good friend General Andres Pico. At Camulos ranch she remained only two hours. She was unfortunate in finding Mrs. Del Valle away from home. It is not certain that she ever revisited Camulos. It is to be kept in mind that the plot of her Indian novel was not formulated until a year and a half later; and that the data she was collecting were poured into articles for the Century.

At the Mission Santa Barbara she was graciously received by Father Sanchez, Father O'Keefe, and Father Francis. They lent her
books from the library. She visited every one of the Missions from San Diego to San Francisco.

R. W. Gilder allowed Helen the privilege of selecting her own titles for her articles. The last one printed August, 1883, was "The Present Condition of the Mission Indians in Southern California."

In March, 1882, she was back in San Diego. In the surrounding area she visited many more Missions—Father Junipero Serra's first Mission, Padre Peyri's San Luis Rey, and San Juan Capistrano on El Camino Real. Twenty-five miles inland was San Antonio de Pala, an appanage of San Luis Rey. Even more important than the Missions were Indians living throughout the hills and valleys who had at one time belonged to the Missions. When white squatters moved in, the Indians at once found themselves dispossessed and evicted.

Helen, established at Horton House, brought upon herself much criticism for interfering with the manager's way of rearing his children, and demanding one thing after another in the interest of her own comfort. From the hotel she made drives through the surrounding country that were to be reproduced later with great exactitude in her Ramona.

At this time Helen made the acquaintance of Father A. D. Ubach, a Catholic priest of San Diego, beloved by the Indians. He is sketched in Ramona as Father Gaspara.

April found her visiting the Indian school at Saboba. It was in the Saboba village that consisted of one-hundred and fifty Indians of
the Serrano tribe; it was situated in the San Jacinto Valley located at the foot of the San Jacinto Mountains. The last week in April she visited the Temecula Valley, Pala, Pauma, the Potrero, Rincon, and the Mission San Juan Capistrano. In many of these Helen saw only the remnants of what had once been an Indian settlement. Of Temecula only the graveyard remained.

From the teacher of the Saboba School, Miss Sheriff, Helen learned the fate that had befallen the Indians of Temecula and San Pasquale. In an effort to save the Saboba Indians from a similar disaster, by means of a communication with Secretary Fuller, Helen was appointed as a Commissioner of Indian Affairs July, 1883. She was assigned "to visit the Mission Indians of California and ascertain the location and conditions of the various bands."

May 1, 1882, saw Helen in Los Angeles again. At this time she met Abbot Kimsey.

In June she sailed with her husband from San Francisco for Oregon. Late summer found her accompanying him to Mexico. Poems and travel sketches continued to flow from her pen. Then, too, she wrote four essays on child training, very repetitious of her essays in Bites of Talk about Home Matters. The amount of work she turned out is incredible.

March, 1883, saw Helen back in Los Angeles. The first thing she learned was that the little Indian village of Saboba had been ordered

---

to move.

She and Abbot Kinney,¹ chosen to assist her as interpreter and
go to intimidate squatters, made a five weeks' tour of the Indian
settlements in the three southernmost counties in the state. Besides
gathering material for her official government report Helen got ac-
quainted with places and characters that made their appearance in

Remona.

In July the report,² fifty-six pages in length, went to Washington
from Colorado Springs, where Helen had returned. She did nearly all
the work of getting up the report. Following a long history of the
various bands were eleven specific recommendations.

All the Indian excitement added to Helen's stay in Colorado with-
out Mr. Jackson for three weeks in August incurred for Helen another
spell of illness.

At last she felt that she had the proper background for her
Indian novel, but she could get no story. Suddenly one October morn-
ing the plot flashed across her mind. She felt that she could not
work in Colorado Springs, so she went to New York in November; there
she settled herself at the Berkeley, and on December 1st she wrote
the first word of Remona.³

By April the Critic announced that Mrs. Helen Jackson ("H. E.")
would soon publish her first long novel. May 1st the Christian Union

¹. Louise Pound, "Biographical Accuracy and 'H. E.'", American
Literature, II (1921), p. 421.
². Mrs. Helen Hunt Jackson and Abbot Kinney, Report on the
Conditions and Needs of the Mission Indians. (Washington: Government
Printing Office, 1883).
noted that in two weeks it would begin the serial presentation of the
Indian novel Ramona.

Once Ramona was out of the way, Helen turned to other things,
but again her health failed her. She went back to Colorado Springs
in June. She worked incessantly against the doctor's orders, and had
plans of returning to New York in the fall. However, she fell down
the step of her own home and received a compound fracture of the hip
which crippled her for the rest of her life. But she bore this mis-
fortune with greater patience.

She continued to receive complimentary notices of Ramona. The
plate proofs of the Hunter Cats of Comoyloe were equally encouraging.

As the fall approached, Helen gave up the idea of going East and
decided to go to California instead. After much changing of mind,
she settled down in San Francisco.

She would not listen to her doctor's pleas for complete rest.
She carried on a heavy correspondence with her friends along with
"A Short Cut from Icicles to Oranges," "The Prince's Little Sweet
Heart," "A Rose Leaf," and "Habeas Corpus." She read parts of the
last two poems to the doctor.¹

Nothing short of death could stop Helen. Increased sales in
Ramona² encouraged her to write another Indian story.³ Along about

---
¹ P. E. Apponyi, "Last Days of Helen Hunt Jackson," Overland
² "Ramona and Helen Hunt Jackson's Centenary," Publisher's
³ Amanda B. Harris, "The Author of Ramona," Christian Union,
April she began to realize how seriously ill she was. She began preparing those she loved by gradually breaking the news to them. She had the unfinished manuscript of Zeph sent to Niles with notes that he was to forward to other people after her death. She requested that if anyone write an account of her life that it would be Hamilton Wright Mabie. Be never did.\(^1\) She left orders how to dispose of her personal belongings, etc.\(^2\)

She would not permit the doctor to send for Mr. Jackson until it was absolutely necessary. Mr. Jackson arrived August 2nd, ten days before she passed away. Almost the last conscious thing she did was to write this letter:

August 8, 1885

To Grover Cleveland, President of the U. S.

Dear Sir:

From my deathbed I send you message of heartfelt thanks for what you have already done for the Indians. I ask you to read my "Century of Dishonor." I am dying happier for the belief I have that it is your hand that is destined to strike the first steady blow toward lifting this burden of infamy from our country and righting the wrongs of the Indian race.

With respect and gratitude,

Helen Jackson\(^3\)

Her body was taken to Colorado Springs in October, 1885, and

---


buried on the summit of Cheyenne Mountain. It was removed to Evergreen Cemetery, six years later.¹

That she forgot herself and devoted her strength to the cause of others explains why her friend Emily Dickinson upon learning of her death could say, "Helen of Troy may die, but Helen of Colorado never."²

². Martha Dickinson Bianchi (editor), The Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson, (Boston, 1924), p. 83.
CHAPTER II

POETRY

Helen Hunt Jackson began writing in 1866. At that period the
North quaked with the great post war industrial boom; sylvan life was
deserted for more rapid pulsed urban living; great manufactures
sprang up; steel gained a foothold in America; cattle ranchers over-
flowed the plains; railroads rambled through the country; refrigera-
tion was invented; live stock and meat were efficiently distributed;
wheat mills displaced the old gristmills; the oil industry was develop-
ed; great commercial undertakings proceeded on a large scale.1 The
North saw the "flush of after-war prosperity."

But of this nothing is reflected in Poems. Were one confined
to H. H. 's verses to inform him of the tempo of the time in which she
wrote, he would emerge ignorant. He wouldn ' t even suspect that the
Union Pacific was completed May 10, 1869.

Why, then, did she write? What did she write about? How did
she write it? What was thought about it? What is her place in
American poetry? To answer these questions will be the endeavor of
this study.

Chapter I pointed out that by successive blows, wifehood, mother-
hood, home were wrenched from the life of Helen Hunt. The death of
her infant son was followed by that of her husband, Major Hunt.

---

1. Nevins, Allan, The Emergence of Modern America 1865-1875,
   (New York, 1928), pp. 31-100.
October 2, 1863; Rennie, her second son, died April 13, 1865. Sorrow dragged her to an abyss of lamentation, but not for long. Soon was to be heard "the short sharp cry of desolation, narrowly personal and feminine."¹

Fourteen lines of blank verse was the way cut for a cargo of pent-up emotions harbored in a bereaved heart. Perchance it was without asking, but Helen Hunt did what the Muse advised Sir Philip Sidney to do.

"Tossi said my muse to me, "look in thy heart and write,"

("Astrophel and Stella")

So she did, at least in her earlier literary manifestations and in many of her later verses.

The first part of "Lifted Over" reflects a mother's tender passion of love and sorrow.

As tender mother's guiding baby steps,
When places come at which the tiny feet
Would trip, lift up the little ones in arms
Of love, and set them down beyond all haps,
So did our Father watch the precious boy.²

As the poem continues the utter helplessness of human beings is brought to the fore.

Led o'er the stones by me, who stumbled of
Myself, but strove to help my darling on;
He saw the sweet limbs faltering, and saw
Rough ways before us, where my arms would fail;
So reached from heaven, and lifting the dear child,
Who smiled in leaving me, He put him down
Beyond all hurt, beyond my sight, and bade
Him wait for me!

H. H.'s complete recognition of His power, and her resignation are embodied in the final lines.

Shall I not then be glad,
And thanking God, press on to overtake?

Like the great free thinkers of her own time, Helen showed no denominational preference—just a marked lack of preference for Catholicism—, but a complete trust in the Almighty.

This poem appeared in the Nation July 20, 1865. It was signed "Helen." Two poems signed the same way preceded its appearance—"The Key of the Casket" was printed in the New York Evening Post, June 7, 1865; and "It Is Not All of Life to Live," June 16, 1865, in the same paper. Only two more poems were signed by that name; they were printed on August 4, and September 7 in the same year and paper as the first two. From then on all her poems were labeled simply "H. H."

Her verses searched out more stricken and weary lives and carried a vision of possible reconciliation between the real and the ideal into despairing hearts than any other body of verse of equal compass given to the world in her generation. To a multitude hidden in all the paths of human suffering, failure and aspiration, the past gives a message of hope and consolation.1

That "message of hope and consolation" caused the poet to receive numberless letters of comfort and inspired her to continue writing about the same sad theme. Poems that followed in this vein of pathos

---

are: "Best," "Not As I Will," "When the Baby Died." So we may
count relief as one of the reasons why Helen wrote.

Fortunately, while Helen was at Newport, Rhode Island, for five
winters, with the exception of eleven months, she mingled with a
society whose pursuits were literary. Her close friends urged her
to break away from her songs of grief and try some other theme. So
she did; and a steady stream of poems appeared in *The New York
Evening Post, New York Independent, Nation, Galaxy, Riverside
Magazine for Young People, Hours at Home, Our Young Folks, Old and New.*

Her close friend, confidant, and severest critic, took her poem
"Ceremonial," with her permission, to Mr. Fields, to be published, if
she were willing to pay the high price she asked for it. He was, and
Helen made her debut in the *Atlantic Monthly, February, 1869.* This
transaction throws light on another reason why she wrote, for
remuneration.

But that was not all. In Newport, "You were only important as
you had acquaintances and made yourself an acquisition to their circle.
One of the surest ways to do this was to write, not well, necessarily,
but voluminously if possible."  

It can be said that H. H. wrote for several reasons: first,
writing was a relief for her suppressed grief; second, writing was
lucrative; third, writing was "the style"; last, because she was en-
dowed with some natural gift and received the constant encouragement

---

2. Odell, *op. cit.,* p. 68.
of Colonel Higginson and her literary friends.

The many tributes Helen received from known and unknown friends—this experience is recorded in Nancy Philbrick's *Choice* (1876)—persuaded her to publish her little volume of *Verses* by "H. H." that was printed reluctantly by Fields, Osgood and Company (1870). Three years later *Verses* by "H. H." new and enlarged edition, Boston, Roberts Brothers appeared. These were followed by *Sonnets and Lyrics* by Helen Jackson ("H. H.") Boston; Roberts Brothers (1891); *A Calendar of Sonnets* by Helen Jackson, Boston; Roberts Brothers (1891), which is a collection of twelve sonnets of the months of the year that appeared in the previous collection. However, the sonnets are beautifully illustrated by Frost. Finally appeared *Poems* by Helen Jackson ("H. H.") Boston; Roberts Brothers (1891). This volume was comprised of *Verses* and *Sonnets and Lyrics*. Only two volumes of verse were published during her lifetime.

Grief that overloved the early poems hovered low until the end of her literary endeavors, which ran to the close of her life. And grief is quite evident in these volumes. Of the two hundred and three poems that appeared in *Poems*, as well as the ones that never found their ways into a bound volume, but reached her readers by magazines and newspapers, nearly all are personal and introspective.

After grief, love was the most common subject of her poems.

---

Helen's idea of love is obviously revealed in "Love's Largess."

Diviner air
Of beauty, and a grace more free,
More soft and solemn depths I see
In every woman's face, since he
Has called me fair.¹

It is further epitomized in "Last Words."

Do not adorn with costly shrub, or tree.
Or flower, the little grave which shelters me.

And when remembering me, you come some day
And stand there, speak no praise, but only say,
"How she loved us!" "Teas that which made her dear!"
These are the words that I shall joy to hear.²

And again she expresses herself unrestrainedly in "Flowers on a Grave."

Earth holds but one true good, but one
true thing,
And this is it—to walk in honest ways
And patient, and will all one's heart
belong
In love unto one's own.³

The citations from her poems on this subject may seem profuse;
yet one could hardly be omitted without practically distorting H. H.'s
view of love. In the first quotation we see the effect that love has
on one, namely, the victim looks at the world through rose-colored
glasses. In the second quotation we see how the poet desired to be
remembered—because of her wide love for people she was endeared to
them, and in the last line her frank opinion that the best and truest
thing on earth was to "belong in love unto one's own."

Other love poems that show imaginative fullness and extraordinary

¹. H. H., op. cit., p. 18.
². Ibid., p. 181.
³. Ibid., p. 188.

Death ranks next highest in the subjects that she chose to write about. Helen never really feared death. Immediately after the passing away of her "Rennie" she said of herself "And I alone am left, who avail nothing."\(^1\) But this was far removed from the truth. For she was to live long enough to write many poems on this grim subject. However, her attitude towards death was that of a challenger, a giber. Never did she let "Death" believe he had the better of her. She appeared always to have a welcoming smile for the inevitable visitor; she regarded his call as an opportunity to venture into the undiscovered. Her view on this subject is crystallized in one of her best poems, "Habees Corpus." Note the indifferent air with which the poem opens.

My body, oh? Friend Death, how now? Why all this tedious pomp of writ?

And the triumphant surrender of the closing stanza is arresting.

Ah, well, friend Death, good friend thou art; I shall be free when thou art through. Take all there is—take hand and heart; There must be somewhere work to do.\(^2\)

This half-lamentous, flippant air is a refreshing contrast to the more serious treatments of death, such as:

"So, better, age exempt From strife, should know, than tempt Further. Thou wittestest age; wait death nor be afraid!"

---

"Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same."

Solitude was the theme of a number of poems, two of the principal ones being "Solitude" and "Loneliness of Sorrow."

These are followed by poems on religious doubt, such as "Doubt."

That a large number of her poems dealt with childhood is no wonder. Helen had a profound and sustained love for children. She thought that each mother should see her own child in every other child.

The "Morning Glory" and "Two Sundays" illustrate this interest. In the first poem H. H. compares a morning glory vine to a baby in a cradle, and concludes that

Now the little one thrusts out his rosy hands;
Soon his eyes will open; then in all the lands
No such morning-glory!

Much occasional verse filled the pages of H. H.'s volumes. Some was a special tribute to friends, such as "Tribute, H. W. E.," which celebrated her meeting the "king;" "To, A. C. L. E.;" "With Them That Do Rejoice;" "Charlotte Cushman." Added to this type are poems to celebrate special days—New Year's Day, Christmas Day, Decoration Day.

Moreover she sang about birds, and bees, and flowers. She praised every month of the year. She wrote three poems on April, as many on September, and two on October.

That she showed an intimate sympathy with external nature is found in her meditative, out-of-door verses with their painting of beautiful

---
2. Helen Jackson, Poems, (Boston, 1939), p. 84.
Louis Swinburne said, "None of our poets, save Lowell and Longfellow, have reached such intuitive insight into the world of fields and meadows; and high as they are, neither of these singers ever felt the color of flowers as she did, nor described them with a delicacy so forcible." 1

Many poems could be cited in support of Mr. Swinburne’s comment, but one will suffice. In "September Woods," a poem composed of seventy-three lines of blank verse the poet uses twelve different colors—white, green, claret, scarlet, emerald, gold, yellow, crimson, purple, purple-spotted, red, and blue. Helen Hunt’s flare for color vies, at times, with that of Charles Egbert Craddock.

One can hardly mention nature poetry without thinking of Wordsworth. But before commenting on the difference in treatment of nature by the two poets the writer wishes to draw attention to an interesting observation.

In the works of Helen Hunt Jackson, Wordsworth is mentioned twice, once in "Draxy Miller’s Dowry." When Draxy was employed as a seamstress she would devote her noon hour to reading Wordsworth. Mrs. White, Draxy Miller’s employer, gave her a volume of Wordsworth’s poems. The second time Wordsworth is mentioned is in Mercy Philbrick’s Choice. In a conversation between Mercy and Parson Doxtrance we observe:

"You love Wordsworth, I hope," he (Parson Dorrance) said inquiringly.

"I've tried to. Mr. Allen said I must. But I (Mercy) can't. I don't care anything about him..."

"Ah," he replied, "...One comes of a sudden into the presence of Wordsworth, as a traveller finds some day, upon a well-known road, a grand cathedral, into which he turns aside and worships, and wonders how it happens that he never before saw it..."¹

But Parson Dorrance and Mercy were not the only characters in the novel to express their opinion about Wordsworth. So did Stephen White. He said,

"I think two thirds of Wordsworth's poetry is imbecile, absolutely imbecile."²

It is Mercy, though, who is Helen's counterpart. And whether Helen ever came upon the "cathedral" is not discernible in her works.

H. H. never found in nature

"...the language of the sense  
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,  
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul  
Of all my mortal being."³

Instead she takes the stand of the interrogator in "My Strawberry," as well as in many other poems. She never penetrates beneath the surface. Instead we find her saying,

"Ah, fruit of fruits, no more I pause  
To dream and seek thy hidden laws."⁴

² Ibid., p. 1.
Her treatment of nature is usually that of the photographer—work in technicolor.

However, the final lines of "Poppies in the Wheat"

"I shall be glad remembering how the fleet,
Lithe poppies ran like torchmen with the wheat."  

resembles slightly "I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud." The poppies running with the wheat will be remembered just as the daffodils flashed upon Wordsworth's "inward eye." Of course, the postess does not develop her theme as far as Wordsworth does his. She merely states that she will be "glad remembering;" whereas the poet not only remembers the scene but also gives the effect that the daffodils have on him.

Versatility of subject matter is not lacking in the poetry of H. H., but there is not much range in mood and emotion, and never a "spontaneous overflow of powerful emotion." The mediums of expression in this particular genre are as variant as the contents. As has been stated before, the use of the sonnet predominated. With what degree of success did H. H. use this intricate form is answered by no less eminent a man-of-letters than Ralph Waldo Emerson. He affirmed that no one had wrought to finer perfection that most difficult verse form, the sonnet.  

He carried poems by H. H. in his pocket-book and believed "Thought" to be her best. Naturally Emerson would be attracted to her

---

1. Ibid., p. 27.
more highly intellectual verse.

Since this sonnet is one of H. H.'s best and since it possesses such harmony of content and form and since one should be judged by the heights he reaches and not the depths to which he plummets, the poem will be cited here.

O Messenger, art thou: the king or I?  
Thou dalliest outside the palace gate  
Till on thine idle armor lie the late  
And heavy dew; the morn's bright scornful eye.  
Reminds thee; then, in subtle mockery,  
Thou smil'st at the window where I wait  
Who bade thee ride for life. In empty state  
My days go on, while false hours prophecy  
Thy quick return; at last, in said despair,  
I cease to bid thee, leave thee free as air;  
When lo, thou stand'st before me glad and fleet,  
And layest undreamed-of treasures at my feet.  
Oft Messenger, thy royal blood to buy,  
I am too poor. Thou art the king, not I."¹

One does not wonder at Emerson's admiration, nor why Higginson said that the uncontrollableness of thought by will has never been better expressed.

Other sonnets that show a touch of true imagination are "Poppies in the Wheat," "October," "Burnt Ships," and Ariadne's Farewell."

Though H. H. used frequently the Petrechian type, many imperfec-
tions are to be found in the octave. The rhyme scheme of which is supposed to be abba abba is often violated, as in "Found Frozen." She did not confine herself to this type of fourteen line verse.

Fourteen lines of blank verse are occasionally found, as in "Lifted Over," as well as in seven heroic couplets and in "Mordecai."
However, in the seventy-seven sonnets that H. H. wrote the number of good poems and the number that adhered to the true Petrarchan type outnumber by far those showing imperfections.

Some unsigned reviewer of Poems in the Critic said, "H. H. scorned indeed the musical jingle of the schools (one can imagine her sickening over Mrs. Hemans, or L. E. L.) and hewed out for herself an almost austere verse mould wherein her thoughts were cast..., they are not jingling sonorities or miscellaneous melodies that cleave for very sweetness—and stickiness—to the mind. Many of them contain profound thoughts, sometimes obscure from their very depths; and they do not yield up a facile meaning from the first touch."

Undoubtedly the reviewer had in mind the many fourteen line poems of H. H. that complied neither with the Petrarchan, Shakespearean, or Spenserian sonnet form when he credits her with having heewn her own "verse mould." That H. H. showed no preference for "musical jingle" will be affirmed by anyone who reads her poems, but to create the impression that she confined herself to one form in which to cast her thoughts is definitely misleading. For "Resurgam" and "The Funeral Hymn" represent her attempt with the odes. "The Ballad of the Gold Country" and "The True Ballad of the King’s Singer" exemplify her lack of ability in her only two attempts with that ancient form—the ballad. For "In the Fase" and in "Down to Sleep" she employed rhyme royal. "The Singer’s Hill" is a long poem in heroic couplet. "The Story of Boon,”

---

the longest narrative poem that H. H. wrote, and "My Tenants" were written in iambic tetrameter couplets. In her third poem that appeared in print, "Lifted Over," H. H. used blank verse. "The Village Lights" illustrates a stanza used by Wordsworth in "The Solitary Reaper," namely, eight lines of iambic tetrameter; and "My Lighthouses" illustrates another stanza used by the same poet in "I Wandered Lonely As A Cloud," namely, six lines of iambic tetrameter. Then, too, we must not overlook the innumerable stanzas she used that have no name. The ballad stanza ranks next to the sonnet in frequency of use.

Higginson classes the "Condiviads" as the most artistic among her verses. In this poem Venice is reflected in the movement and cadence of the poem. The same felicity of cadence is found in "Coming Across."

It is necessary to cite parts of and discuss at least a few more of H. H.'s better pieces in order that the reader can have some appreciation of the poems and a basis by which to judge the validity, or absurdity, as the case may be, of what has been and what is thought about them.

Her best earlier poem "Spinning" was highly praised by Higginson. He thought "no finer symbolic picture of human life has ever been expressed." He points out that the symbol drawn from common life assumes the sort of solemn expressiveness that belongs to the French Millet.¹ In the stanzas the poet gives a simile—comparing an individual blind to the purposes of life struggling on in faith with the blind

¹. Higginson, OP. CIT., p. 162.
spinner who treads from day to day:

Like a blind spinner in the sun,
I tread my days;
I know that all the threads will run
Appointed ways;
I know each day will bring its task,
And, being blind, no more I ask.

The next five stanzas take the spinner through life, blind to
the use of what he spins. The threads entangle and he fears for his
web; but he continues to spin, and although blind, he never feels
"secure," for God placed him here with a duty to perform. The spinner
never doubts the "bond divine" and finally hears His message from on
high:

But listen, listen, day by day
To hear their tread
Who bear the finished web away
And cut the thread,
And bringing God's message in the sun,
Thou poor blind spinner, work is done."

The poem "Coronation" is a lyrical narrative. The theme is faith
and trust brought out by the calling of a king to the "country beyond."

A beggar enters the king's gate when the guards fall into a
"drowsy slumber." The beggar finds the king unhappily watching the time
drag by.

4.

"Poor man, what wouldst thou have of me?"
...beggar...
Replied..."Of thee,
Nothing, I want the king."

5.

"O man, thou must have known," he the king said
"A greater king than I."

6.

"Shall I know when
Before his throne I stand?"

7.

The beggar laughed. Free winds in haste
Were wiping from the king's hot brow
The crimson lines the crown had traced.
"This is his presence now."

The writer has attempted to quote a sufficient number of H. H.'s
verses in whole or in part, to give the reader some basis on which to
form his own opinion of what her contemporaries and successors thought
about H. H. At the time of her death she was definitely a national
figure as can be inferred from the avalanche of articles that appeared
about her in magazines and newspapers from coast-to-coast. Some few
articles found their way into the Canadian Monthly, but "one swallow
doesn't make a summer."

In the same year that H. H.'s little book of Verses appeared a
reviewer, unnamed, in Scribner's Monthly extolled—"what has of
insects; what flutter of wings and whisper of trees; what breath of
fields and flowers; what blue summer sky it brings to us by the winter
side! ... how clear it is that this poet has won the secret of the
woods; that nature has kept back nothing (that may be told) from so
reverent a student and worshipper. Was there ever a delicate, sic
sense of her subtle alchemy; a tenderer sympathy; a truer interpretation?

Here are locust and wild honey; but, here, too, are the better

sacraments of friendship, love, religion."¹

This review over-emphasized the nature poems to the utter exclusion of H. H.'s really best poems.

Eight years later after the new and enlarged edition of Verses was printed another unsigned reviewer in the Canadian Monthly had this to say: "One of the acutest observers of her time in Mrs. Hunt Jackson—a true poet.... In this age of poets and poetry, and of so much good poetry, too, one must have genius to enlist attention and find readers. Mrs. Hunt gained both.... Her verses hold a place distinctly their own, among poetry of today. In pathos, in tenderness, in sweetness, and in delicacy they are unsupervised by any living American poet of her sex!"²

The following year found Higginson almost exasperated "to find that in England, for instance, where so many feeble American reputations have been revived only to die, there are few critics who know even the name of the woman who has come nearest in our day and tongue to the genius of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Jean Ingelow appear but second-rate celebrities."³

The most laudatory phrases written about H. H. are those comprising the body of such praise that circulated the same year or immediately following her death in 1685. Many of the articles are unsigned.

In the Critic is this brief, but sane and well-balanced comment:

"One of the rarest qualities of Mrs. Jackson's work was that sympathetic

touch which put her completely on rapport with her readers, gaining,
as in the case of this correspondent, their personal confidence as
well as their intellectual approval."¹

Another unsigned reviewer expressed his great chagrin in a subse-
quent issue of the same magazine: "Mr. Stedman, in a recent review
of poetry, gave Mrs. Jackson but a pitiful number of lines even as one
of the (woman poets), and many will agree with what Mr. Emerson's
criticism implied, that "H. E." wrote some poems that will live at
least as long as anything of Shattier's, or Longfellow's, or Lowell's."²

Many critics mention Emerson's estimate or reference to "H. E."
without giving specifically what Emerson did say. Hence the writer
quotes from page X of the Preface of Emerson's Parnassus (1875).

The poems of a young lady who contents herself with
the initials "H. E." in her book published in Boston
(1874) have rare merit of thought and expression and
will reward the reader for the careful attention
which they require.

Contrary to fact is Odell's statement that Emerson included three
of H. E.'s poems in Parnassus. He included five: "Ariadne's Farewell,"

In 1885 Hamilton W. Mabie maintained that she spoke of experience
and to experience; this is the secret of vitality which pervades her
work and makes it warm with sympathy, penetrating in insight, and
eloquent in form."³

¹ The Critic, IV (1885), p. 115.
² Ibid., p. 144.
³ Hamilton W. Mabie, "Helen Jackson," The Book Buyer, II (1885),
p. 195.
One year later Louis Swineburne, who must have had a profound admiration for H. H. praised her most fittingly with none of the gush that usually accompanies praise of the dead. In one line he sums her up: "She had practical thoughtfulness combined with poetic temperament." In the same article he brought out her love for flowers:¹ "None of our poets, save Lowell and Longfellow, have reached such intuitive insight into the world of fields and meadows; and high as they are, neither of these singers ever felt the color of flowers as she did, nor described them with a delicacy so forceful.... A touch of mysticism, which ran like a deep vein through a temper habitually pellucid, mingled with her love and thoughts of flowers."²

One more unsigned article in the Nation, also in 1886, is an advertisement of Sonnets and Lyrics, a posthumous publication. The reviewer waxed most figurative, in an attempt, maybe, to sell his ware. "The editor has wisely selected for a closing poem the verse called, 'The Song He Never Wrote,' with its exquisitely delicate and evanescent transitions and intershadings, subtle and exclusive as the tints upon a dove's wings."³

Here again two years after her death is an article fairly sprouting with laurels: "A great new woman poet was thus gained to the ranks of American literature, and from that hour--from about 1865-1866, when she began to write--it grew richer and more melodious with all the richness and melody which a genius of concentrated gifts could

¹. Ibid., p. 197.
². Swineburne, op. cit., p. 82.
In still the same year Rev. Professor A. B. Hyde had this pertinent comment to make after a long discussion of H. H.'s life and poetry: "She has redeemed from rebuke a generation called unpoetic." In 1927 printed in the Warner Library is: "It is as a poet, however, that H. H. is most vividly remembered." The inclusion by Carman Bliss, editor of The Oxford Book of American Verse (1927) of five of Helen Hunt Jackson's poems bears testimony that she is remembered as a poet, but the "most vividly" part is questionable, and will be discussed further in the chapter on Resona.

Furthermore, Norman Foerester in his chapter "Later Poets" in the Cambridge History of American Literature doesn't give Helen Hunt Jackson a place among those whom he considers the outstanding minor poets of the East: namely, Dickinson, Aldrich, Bayard Taylor, R. H. Stoddard, Stedman, Gilder and Novey. In fact, the only mention made of H. H. by Foerester is a parenthetical one in his discussion of Emily Dickinson, in which he says "--Helen Hunt Jackson, herself a poet of some distinction,"...

Indeed she was a poet of some distinction and she reached more than the select few attested for example in these lines: "As years went on Helen Hunt grew dear to many. Hundreds of obscure men and women in farmhouses and factories culled her poems from the newspapers,

---

memorizing them while at work, or posting them into homemade scrapbooks, or pinning them fast to the leaves of the family Bible."¹

CHAPTER III

TRAVEL

The traveling Helen Hunt Jackson did has been covered in chapter one. In summary her journeys through Nova Scotia, England, France, Italy, Germany, Norway, Denmark, and in her native country have been preserved in travel sketches and letters. It was Helen's plan when she went on her first trip abroad to write a series of letters each fortnight. On the first of each month she mailed her encyclicals, so called because they were mailed from Rome, to her acquaintances, and on the alternate fortnight she mailed letters to her more intimate friends; they were sent to Colonel Higginson, and he passed them around to Sarah Woolsey and George Edward Waring and other close friends of Helen's. The most interesting travel sketches and letters found their way into collections of which there are three: *Bits of Travel* (1872), *Bits of Travel at Home* (1873), and *Glimpses of Three Coasts* (1896).

The first of these, *Bits of Travel*, contains ten travelogues and *Encyclicals of a Traveller*. It escapes being ordinary by way of its uniqueness and truly it "is a series of rare pictures of life in Germany, Italy, and Venice. Everyone is in itself a gem. Brilliant, chatty, full of fine feminine taste, and feeling,—just the letters one waits impatiently to get, and reads until the paper has been fingered through" as described in the *Boston Courier*.

"A German Landlady" was the first travelogue to appear in the
Atlantic, (October, 1870). It is divided into two parts. In the first part we learn of the meeting of Helen Hunt and Fraulein Hahlreiner, who is the central figure in the sketch. She accompanies Helen on a trip down the Rhine from Munich, through Nuremberg, Cologne, and Rotterdam. The reaction of the fraulein toward things and people along the route constitutes the plan of part one. Whereas the second part is a biography of the German landlady. An example of the fraulein's reaction, that would naturally be noted by Helen Hunt, when asked if she accepted the belief of St. Sebald's miracle with the idol, was, quaintly enough:

"O no, I not. The Church [Catholic] ask too much to believe. If one would believe all one cannot do," and a minute later, "Have you read Renan, my lady?"

This astounded Helen. She found out after a volley of questions that the fraulein had not been to confession for two years because she would not give up her Renan. And when Helen asked if she had not been excommunicated from the church, fraulein replied:

"Yes, I think..., but I will not make lies. I will have my Renan. Then I read, too, the book against Renan; and he says St. Paul say this, and St. Peter say the other, but he go not to my heart. I love the Jesus Christ; more by Renan as in what the church say for him."

In the final analysis the sketch is more a portrayal of character than a travelogue. And "A German Landlady" has lost first place to "A Valley of Gastein." Even though Higginson was of the opinion that "It comprises so much,—such humor, such pathos,—such bewitching

quaintness in a dialect,—that I can at this moment, think of no American picture of a European subject to equal it. ¹

The dialect is the very part the Nation objected to; the broken English was questionable to them. Scribner's was still laudatory.

In "The Valley of Gastein" Helen paints a picture rather than depicts character. She begins by describing the trip from Salzburg to Bad-Gastein, including the troublesome experience of securing a place to stay, the slow mode of conveyance, and the thrill at the exquisite beauty of the valley. Everywhere Helen went she carried with her, her eye for natural beauty. Gastein was a small village famous as a health resort because of the curative powers of the mineral waters. Here people came to perpetuate their youth, if not to regain it. Dr. Froelich performed many experiments with the spring water to demonstrate to Helen its powers. Among others was brought out the power of the warm spring water to revive flowers, even after they had been dead a few days, so they would hold up their heads, regain shape, color, fragrance, and live for several days more. The following passage gives not only a glimpse of the most beautiful feature of Gastein, but also Helen's ability to pen such beauty for friends whose travels would be from cover to cover by way of pages.

For, knows the world any other green and snow circled village which holds a waterfall three hundred feet high in the centre? One hesitates at first whether to say

¹ Higginson, Short Stories, p. 42.
the waterfall is in the town, or the town is in the waterfall, so intricately mixed up are they; so noisy is the waterfall and so still is the town. Some of the houses hang over the waterfall; some of the threads of the waterfall wriggle into the gardens. The longer you stay the more you feel that the waterfall is somehow at the bottom of everything. From one side to other of this valley an arrow might easily fly. Both walls are green almost to the very top with pastures and fir woods, and dotted with little brown houses, which look as if birds had taken to building walled nests on the ground and roofing them over. To the east wall is an unbroken line. Behind it the sun drops early in the afternoon like a plummet. Sunset in Gastein is no affair of the almanacs. Every point has its own calendar."

The sketch is a profusion of just such pictures. And after reading it the reader does not feel as though he has missed much in the "only one Gastein."

Helen Hunt would have earned a place among the contributors of travel literature if she had written no other travelogues. But she wrote many more.

Of especial interest is a passage in the "Ampresso Pass" because here Helen employs a term that was used later in her Saxe Holm series. It was one of the striking clues that served in establishing the answer to, who is Saxe Holm? Herein is the phrase, "and everywhere wide stretches of vineyards, in which the vines were looped across from tree to tree, looking like an array of one-legged dancers." The story entitled after the last three words of the preceding quotation is discussed in chapter four.

The second half of Bits of Travel is not as fascinating as the first part. It, as mentioned before, is comprised of excerpts from

\[1\] Ibid., p. 45.
Peregrinations of a Traveler. The letters are tiringly vivacious. The
subject matter is made up largely of that of an unknown section of
Europe. Throughout the travelogues is evidenced a brightness of style,
a subtle humour; as one critic says, "it causes one to smile rather
than laugh;" then, too, there is a never failing keenness of observation
of the minute.

Her Venetian scenes are often even more picturesque than her
German descriptions. Always Helen remains a woman of thought and
contemplation. When she sat in St. Mark's Church in Venice gazing
from praying people to altars, and heard the reading of marriage banns,
she thought:

They were really alive then, and they married and were
given in marriage, the weird Venetians who made up the
spectacle at which I had been looking. I saw also that
a young girl nudged her neighbor and smiled scornfully
as one name was read. Ah, they had also envies and
scandals. From these, too, must come a deliverer. The
incense will not help them, nor the naming of saints,
or the keeping of days; only the Lord himself from
heaven. As I walked slowly out among the kneeling
figures, I thought of Paul in the Athenian temples, and
what glorious thrills must have warmed his blood when
he called out his watch-word of Christ in the midst of
the altars.1

The above quotation serves to bear out the opinion of an unsigned
critic in the Canadian Monthly that the subjects treated were homely
and unlikely to awaken enthusiasm, certainly not excitement. But the
author's charming style and spirit claimed first attention and finally
admiration from almost every class of reader. Her humor was delicate
and neat, her diction picturesque and faultless, and her fancy poetic

1. Ibid., p. 119.
and artistic.  

Moreover, it is the opinion of another undesignated reviewer in the Critic that Bits of Travel was a veritable well of Zam-Zam from which people draw even more refreshment, even more vividly wrought and astounding bits of poetry, than from "her strong, sweet, triumphant, but occasionally prosaic and argumentative verse."  

Published in magazines long before they appeared in book form were the sketches that are collected in Bits of Travel at Home that appeared in 1878. As the title indicates the material included in this volume was drawn from a home source. The style of the second book is that of the first. Yet it is fuller in description and more complete in narrative.  

The book is divided into three separate parts. The first is devoted to a description of California and life on the Pacific. It includes an account of the geysers. A vivacious and colorful picturization of a day in the wilderness concludes part one.  

Part two's calm New England winter is a relief from the highly colorful scenes of the West. Four minor parts make up this section of the book. They are characteristic sketches of New England. The first is "Hide-and-Seek Town." It follows the idea of a magazine puzzle. Each month an article was printed giving a narrative description and pictures. The readers were supposed to guess the place.

This was Helen's contribution. The idea never met with any degree of success. The second is "The Miracle Play of 1873, in Bethlehem, New Hampshire." It is the portrayal of an eastern autumn rendered with the same enthusiasm found in the western sketches. Here is enthusiasm at a feverish pitch.

I have seen old altar fronts on which generations and centuries of kings have lavished jewels, till they are so thick that not one more dot can be added; but I have never seen such flaming, shading, shaping, changing, lavishing, rioting of colors as in this death of the autumn leaves on these Bethlehem hills.

The third is "A Glimpse of Country Winter"; and fourth is "A Morning in a Vermont Graveyard."

Helen turned from New England to Colorado. Here she could indulge to the fullest in her passion for flowers and color. The third portion of the book is devoted entirely to Colorado.

Louis Swinburne says, "as a vast mining camp and grazing state, Colorado was already well known when she came to it, but it was this little cluster of outdoor studies that first opened the eyes of the Eastern world to its strange and grandiose landscape."

It is commonly believed that the last portion of the volume is perhaps the best and most attractive part of the whole, principally because it affords fine scope for Helen's play of emotion and feeling. Just a brief excerpt from "Cheyenne Canyon" will bring this out.

As I looked up from the ford to the mouth of the canyon, I was reminded of some of the grand old altar-pieces of

2. Swinburne, ibid., p. 76.
the early centuries, where, lest the pictures of saints and angels and divine beings should seem too remote, too solemn and overpowering, the painters used to set at the base, rows of human children, gay and mirthful, leaping and laughing or playing viola. So lay this sunny belt of sparkling water, glistening sand, and joyous blue blossom, at the base of the picture made by the dark mouth of the canyon, where two great mountains had recoiled and fallen apart from each other, leaving a chasm, midway in which rose a smaller mountain of sharp rocks, like a giant sentry disputing the way. Forest of pines fill the rift on either side this rock, and their dark lines stretch high up, right and left, nearly to the top of each mountain. Higher and ruggeder peaks rise beyond, looking as if they must shut the canyon sharply, as a gate closes an alley; but they do not. Past them, among them, in spite of them, the creek took its right of way, the mountains and rocks yielded, and the canyon winds.

"A Symphony in Yellow and Red" ushers the reader into the last portion of the book. It is followed by "Colorado Springs" and "Cheyenne Canyon"—all are descriptions from the heart.

A sure pleasure is "A Procession of Flowers in Colorado" to every lover of nature. A marked resemblance exists between that piece and Higginson's "Procession of Flowers." That, however, is by no means astonishing, for Helen accepted Higginson's judgment as the final word in her literary accomplishments.

Higginson's "Procession of Flowers" found in his Outdoor Papers opens with a comment on the floral beauty of "Cupid's Tears" in Cuba; then he points out that the march of flowers in any zone is comparable with the West Indian pageant, even in England. Subsequently, he wafts the reader from one floral panorama to another in New England changing

---

1. Ibid., pp. 255-256.
from month to month until the year has sped by, interspersed with an occasional pause because "each year the whimsical creature is in bloom on that little spot, when not another flower can be found open through the whole country round."

On the other hand Helen's sketch is like one walking through a flower shop, stopping to scrutinize each individual flower of which there are over thirty.

A somewhat over enthusiastic account of the Colorado sketches found in Bites of Travel at Home appeared in The New York Express: "She both describes and paints, and she intersperses her sketches of nature with charming pictures of human life on the frontier and in the new communities springing up there. All through the closely printed book are delicate little bits of description, cropping up like flowers in a meadow, which the reader longs to pluck for a bouquet of quotations."

Some of the "charming pictures of human life" the reviewer had in mind are the old white haired, thickly wrinkled bright-eyed hunter on Platte River; the miners; the mule-drivers; the cook; the hardmen; the guide; the hotelkeepers; the ranchers, but they are hardly distinguished from each other. Moreover, the Chinese laborers, Mexicans, Negroes and Indians are not very convincingly drawn.

"The descriptions of American scenery in this volume indicates the imagination of a poet, the eyes of the acute observer of nature, the hand of an artist, and the heart of a woman. H. H.'s choice of
words is of itself a study of color. Her picturesque diction rivals the skill of the painter, and presents the woods and waters of the great West, with a splendor of illustrations that can scarcely be surpassed by the brightest glow of the canvas. Her intuitions of character are no less keen than her perceptions of nature." Offered above is an excerpt from the New York Tribune which is a fitting conclusion for the brief comments on that delightful volume of travelogues

_Hits of Travel at Home._

_Glimpses of Three Coasts_ is the last of Helen Hunt Jackson's books of travel. It came out in 1886, the year after her death. The title is a bit misleading, despite the fact that the book is divided into three parts. The first part is comprised of four articles on California and one on Oregon; the second part is made up of only three articles, two on Scotland and one on England; whereas the third has six pieces, two are devoted to Norway, next is the "Katrina Saga" in two parts, following are "Encyclopaedia of a Traveller," then "The Village of Oberammergau" and "Passion Play of Oberammergau."

The first coast at which she glimpses is American, namely, Oregon and California. In an unusually pleasing manner, when one considers the topic, Helen Hunt instructs us of the divers outdoor industries of Southern California. Two articles pertain to the Indian Missions in Southern California. They will be taken up in a later chapter.

"Echoes in the City of the Angels" reveals the history of the founding of Los Angeles. "Chance Days in Oregon" offers a spattering of history—the transaction between Monsieur Antoine and King Louis—before it
reveals to the reader many quaint customs of the people of that section.

A bit of humour tinges some of the briefer accounts, such as, the

Oregonian's reply to Helen when she asked if the people did not get

fever after the water receded: "Oh, they got used to it. After

they've taken about a barrel of Quinins, they're pretty well acclimated."

The second coast, is England. It covers three places and subjects,

"A Burns Pilgrimage," "Glints in Old South," and "Chester Streets."

A new interest is engendered in the Scottish poet after one reads

the first piece of the second section. Helen reviews the people and

the country that Burns immortalized.

The third coast, or more accurately coasts since Denmark, Norway

and Germany are touched upon, is Scandinavia's. Helen's versatile

power is again exhibited in her portrayal of the inhabitants. The use

of minute details results in a picturization characterized by reality.

Considering all her travel sketches "The Village of Oberammergau" and

"Passion Play of Oberammergau" rank first. Both pieces are brief. They

afford excellent examples of Helen's vividness of speech. They are

brilliantly picturesque and appealing. The reader's reaction toward

them is very pleasing; he feels as though he is acquainted with and has

gained an insight into the hearts of people whom he has never seen.

In the "Katrina Saga" many quaint customs of the Norwegians are

unfolded to us through the device of conversation. Katrina, the

Norwegian girl whom Helen became attached to much as she did Marianina

in her travels through Italy several years earlier, gives a sparkle of

life to the article.
After a perusal of the three volumes of travel one feels that the criticism of the Literary World that Glimpses of Three Coasts shows the poet's power of close and varied observation and analysis; the warmth of her sympathies; the accuracy and beauty of her language; and her mysterious charm is applicable, also, to the two earlier volumes.
CHAPTER IV

BITES OF TALK

The year after Bites of Travel (1872) came out there appeared another book by (H. H.) identical in price and format with Verses and Bites of Travel. It was comprised of a collection of forty of the author's old didactic editorials that had appeared in the Independent. The collection was called Bites of Talk about Home Matters. This title is partially a misnomer because only the first half of the collection deals strictly with "home matters." The last half pertains often to the general conduct of life.

The Nation printed the opinion that "Her chief concern was with the treatment of children; and her remarks are addressed to (not to say aimed at) a class whose means permit them to take a summer board in the country; to go abroad and settle in English lodging houses... in short, to gratify most of their wants."¹

On the other hand Odell quotes that the collection was designed "to go into plain families to do good."

Regardless of whom the articles were intended for, they are short timely messages of reform suitable, in part, for both "plain families" and well-to-do. More theoretical than practical, are H. H.'s views on child training. She stresses the power of influence

¹ The Nation, XVI (1873), p. 373,
to the utter subordination of authority. Undoubtedly it was in such a manner that she reared her beloved "Rannie." In "The Elder's Wife" Draxy served to illustrate H. H.'s methods of handling children.

The first three articles illustrate three different types of "inhumanities of parents." She gives an example of each—corporal punishment, needless denials, and rudeness—and offers a method by which parents can avoid resorting to such "inhumanities."

In her article on corporal punishment, H. H. stirs to high pitch the sympathy of the reader with her story about the Presbyterian minister in Western New York who flogged his three year old boy to death for refusing to say his prayers. Then she expounds upon the affects that corporal punishment has upon a child, namely, it weakens his nervous system and exhausts his capacity to resist disease and thereby diminishes his chances for life.

H. H. succeeds in winning the greatest sympathy of the reader in this matter, and he is inclined to agree with her that blows inflicted by a parent on a child are an indignity, that the parent should not resort to such treatment, and that the child should not be subjected to it.

The next piece is based on "needless denials." It is the account of a little girl's day. Her parents who thought they were good and kind to her failed to take into consideration the number of times that they denied their child little things that she wanted to do and really made the little one unhappy, unknowingly. H. H. closes with one of her many biblical passages stating what Christ said of
him who would offend a little one, "It were better for him that a
mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the
depths of the sea."  

The article is a very sensible one and forcefully presented.

It opens the eyes of unthinking parents to one of their proclivities
that is a real fault, though it may never have been regarded in that
light.

The third article on the "inhumanities" deals with rudeness.

This exhibits one of H. H.'s shortcomings. She advocates that a
child should never be reproofed in the presence of others. Then she
illustrates this with an excellent instance of tact in a case where
reproof seemed almost inevitable. Here's the incident: Charley,
after a series of little annoyances at the table, took no heed of
his mother's repeated glances; he is beckoned by his mother to her
side. The mother whispers to him that he must return to his place
and shortly after asks to be excused. Charley does just that. "But
what would you do," asks 'H. H.' of the mother afterwards, 'if he
were to refuse to ask to be excused?' Then the tears stood full in
her eyes. 'Do you think he could,' she replied, 'when he sees that
I am only trying to save him from pain?'

H. H. doesn't take into account that all boys are not "Charley."
And she offers no suggestion as to how the case could be handled had

1. H. H., Bits of Talk about Home Matters, (Boston 1873), p. 27.
2. Ibid., p. 55.
Charley's reaction been a flat refusal. Her rules are acceptable, but she makes no provision for exceptions.

In a subsequent chapter she gives us another proposition difficult to accept because it is unqualified. She maintains that a parent has no right to require anything of a child simply because he is a parent. She disregards the idea of filial duty and the habit of obedience any further than a child can be made to assent to the justice and reasonableness of each act required by him. She thinks there is nothing reciprocal between parents and children. "The truth is," she says, "all the obligation, in the outset, is the other way. We owe all to them." Her idea is to substitute "influence" for authority or command. But in the Charley incident, just cited, she admitted that it didn't always work. The mother's influence failed to check with repeated glances her child's rudeness at the table. Hence she was forced to use her paternal authority when sheer "influence" failed. We have to admit that "influence" is ideal when it works, but there should be a reserve of authority for special emergency. H. H. says it is "Helplessness in the hands of power—that is the whole story."^2

Case after case occurs in which H. H. contradicts herself.

Anyone reading H. H.'s essays would appreciate her effort to reduce domestic harshness and violence; yet he is not blinded to the difficult problem of education with mistaken sentimentality and

---

1. Ibid., p. 78.
2. Ibid., p. 77.
illusions based on the deception of words.

The second part of the book is interesting and entertaining.

"Descendants of Nebel" is a lesson on how mothers can cure children of the habit of grumbling. It is humorously developed with this fitting climax that "Grumblers are the only thing in this world that it is right to grumble at."¹

"The Fine Art of Smiling" develops the idea that "The first use of the smile is to express affectionate good will; the second to express mirth."²

"Jog Trot" is a philosophical treatment of the art of being satisfied with one's age. H. H. believes "It would seem treason or idiocy to sigh for these old days.... We must be wrong if we are not in sympathy with the age in which we live. We might as well be dead as not keep up with it."³

"A Bill of Fare for Christmas Dinner" is an extreme example of her excessive enthusiasm. It contains the three main dishes of Gladness, Hospitality, and Mirth. The entrées are the delicacies of Love garnished with Smiles; Gentleness with the sweet wine-sauce of Laughter; Gracious Speech corked with Pleasant Reminiscences; Gratitude and Faith molded over night in Solid Trust and Patience; and finally bonbons of Good Cheer and Kindliness.⁴ This little essay is so over done that it is a failure; in fact, it's just a little

¹ Ibid., p. 93.
² Ibid., p. 167.
³ Ibid., p. 201.
⁴ Ibid., p. 179.
bit sickening. But it is singular.

The last article, "Wanted, a Home," excites one's desire to be a better member of a family and increases one's faith in the purpose of the home. H. H. believed that "A woman who creates and sustains a home, and under whose hands children grow up to be strong and pure men and women, is a creator second only to God."  

Whereas the volume contains a few too, too sentimental pieces, it does contain a few essays of sound thought, that if accepted and practiced by some autocratic parents would make this a more pleasurable world for children.

That H. H. was no advocate of the rod was again shown in "The Naughtiest Day in My Life, and What Came of It," in which she says, "...to-day I disapprove quite as much of the practice of whipping children as I did when I was a child...."  

She was a woman fifty years old when she wrote those lines.

In this little volume H. H.'s desire to right social wrongs is prominently evidenced. It is rendered in the same spirit that pervades her Indian writings.

Armanda B. Harris, a friend of H. H., who experienced a similar tragedy in the loss of her son, and who like H. H. had a very profound love for children, showed a genuine appreciation for H. H.'s work. "...she was easily kindled—a marvelously susceptible, elastic being, all ardor and fire. You see it all through her Rite of Talk

1. Ibid., pp. 236-237.
about Home Matters where she enters the lists, or charges as a free lance, in hot attack on those who are guilty of wrongs to children. Never did childhood have a more fearless a more valiant champion, and one can but think how injudicious parents must have winced under the pricks and thrusts of her weapon that pierced the stoutest mail. ¹

Other manifestations of H. H.'s feeling toward children are found in the volumes she wrote especially for them. Only one is discussed here, the others falling under different classifications.

It is Bits of Talk in Prose and Verse for Young Folks (1876). The contents are best suited to children between the ages of eight to fourteen. This is H. H.'s first work intended for juveniles. It is a minor contribution to that great mass of children's literature that had been accumulating and changing in tone and purpose with the times since John Cotton's Milk for Babes, drawn out of the breast of both Testaments. (1646).

Our first group of juvenile writers who did not write in the strict Sunday School vein sprang up in 1830-1840. It is with this line—Mrs. Sara Hale, Miss Eliza Leslie, Mrs. Sigourney, Mrs. Child, Miss Sedgwick—that H. H. fits in. To that group must be added two men whose influence on children's literature has been far more powerful. They are Jacob Abbott and Samuel Griswold Goodrich.

H. H.'s pieces show the influence of Jacob Abbott, whose works

¹ Harris, op. cit., p. 15.
show a conspicuous amount of common sense.¹


Her simple, clear style and consistently simplified language prove she is a writer for children. Moral stories of great interest are found in the poems. She uses most frequently the quatrains with the second and fourth lines rhyming. This very marked rhythm is appealing to children, particularly.

In "The Parable of St. Christopher" after the story of the saint is revealed H. H. devotes the last two stanzas to circling her purpose making it perfectly obvious to the young folks for whom she is writing. This is illustrated below in:

I think the lesson is as good
To-day as it was then—
As good to us called Christians
As to the heathen men.

The lesson of St. Christopher,
Who spent his strength for others,
And saved his soul by working hard
To help and save his brothers.²

Three other poems are based on stories of saints—"The Legend of St. Nicholas," "St. Martin's Cloak," and "The Palace of Gonsaforus: A Legend of St. Thomas." At the end of each the moral is as clearly outlined as in "The Parable of St. Christopher."

Three poems are about birds—"The Nest," "Colorado Snow Birds," and "My Broken Winged-bird."

² Bits of Talk in Verse and Prose for Young Folks. (Boston, 1889), p. 17.
A miscellaneous group "Morning-Glory," "Lizzy of La Bourget," "The Penny Ye Meant to Gie" complete the list of poems in the collection.

The last poem mentioned typifies the ethical mind of the poetess. It tells how a stingy man accidentally gave guineas instead of pennies to the church and upon realizing his error consoles himself by thinking the Lord will give him credit for it. But H. H. is of a varying opinion:

He keeps an account, no doubt, for the pair;  
But in that account he'll set down the sees  
No mair o' that golden guineas, my man,  
Than the one bare penny ye meant to gie.¹

The prose sketches are more versatile in subject matter than the poetry. In the main they include fairy stories, animal stories, accounts of insect life, travel talk, advice on good behavior, etc.

The book bears a resemblance to Irving's Sketch Book, though it does not equal his highly polished technique. Comparable with his Christmas stories are H. H.'s "The Festival of San Rustachio," "Children Preaching in the Church of Ara Coeli in Rome," and "A Christmas Tree for Cats."

In the last mentioned there is nestled, in that delightful and exciting account of a rendezvous of cats, an interesting autobiographical note. H. H. says, "It makes the tears come into my eyes even now, to remember how my papa and mama used to love each other."²

Another example of H. H.'s acceptance of the hereafter finds its way

¹. Ibid., p. 145.  
². Ibid., p. 22.
into the story. In speaking of her parents she writes, "They have
been in heaven a great many years." This attitude of mind has been
dwelt on at length in other chapters.

The great attraction of the prose element of the book lies in
the conversational tone and affectionate manner adapted throughout
the collection. An occasional sparkle of humor helps to sugar the
didacticisms. From the "Festival of San Bustachio in Rome" comes
this glimmer: H. H. berates an Italian driver for whipping his horse,
and jumps out of the vehicle telling him he should give his horse
more to eat. The Italian hastily retorts "Ahi Signora, he has more
to eat than I have."  

In "A Good Time" H. H. recalls Dr. Johnson’s ingredients for
happiness. They are: (1) health; (2) a little more money than
you need; and (3) a little less time than you want.  

And in "Cheery People" she gives us the qualifications of a
cheerful person—patience, sympathy, and humor mixed with love.  

This was undoubtedly an enjoyable book for children. The
versatility of form is among its attractions—short stories, fairy
tales, parables, and poems. Here and there a chapter of good advice
was wedged in, but given in such an affectionate and conversational
tone, that it was easy to take, despite the natural inclination to
scorn advice.

1. Ibid., p. 23.
2. Ibid., p. 35.
3. Ibid., p. 244.
4. Ibid., p. 175.
H. H.'s characteristic to improve people and things pervades throughout both works. That spirit we will see developed to its fullest when she becomes interested in the Indian question.
CHAPTER V
SHORT STORIES

Part I: Stories for Children

In discussing Helen Hunt Jackson's short stories the chapter naturally divides itself into two parts. In the first section the writer will take up the short stories written for children. The volumes first appeared separately under the titles Letters from a Cat (1879), The Hunter Cats of Connerlee (1884), and Nancy Tittleback and Her Family (1881). Then they appeared together in a volume called Cat Stories (1893). There is one more volume of stories for children Pansy Billings and Popsy. It, too, did not come out until 1896.

Letters from a Cat was written by Helen's mother. Helen edited it while she was in Colorado. The stories are a continuation of the pieces she had already written for children, such as were discussed in the preceding chapter. In all there are seven letters written by "Pussy" to Helen while she is away on a visit to her aunt's. In the epistles "Pussy" recounts the happenings of the day that concern herself.

In the first letter Pussy tells about eating flies and having to drink milk in an old blue saucer often tilted over by Josiah. In the second the cat admits that she is greatly puzzled by the house cleaning going on in the absence of Helen's mother. The third is
really only a note because Pussy is suffering from a fall, but not too, brief to include that the new cat at Nelson's, Caesar, is the talk of the town. In the fourth Mrs. Fiske returns home, and Pussy in her excitement jumps at a robin through the deceptively clean window, injures her nose and becomes the laughing stock of all guests. The fifth makes up for the brevity of number three, and we are told all about the tea given by Judge Dickinson's cat "who is a good hospitable old soul, in spite of her stupidity." Pussy doesn't fail to stress that Caesar showered her with his attentions and escorted her home; and, while the two were enjoying a chat under the window, they received an unwelcomed bucket of water from Mary that frightened Caesar away and caused Pussy to jump through the cellar window into a barrel of soft soap and was rescued after much "moaning" by grandfather. The sixth gives an almost heartbreaking account of grandfather's efforts to comfort her and restore her hair, and of poor Caesar's misfortune, who in trying to sneak in for a glimpse of Pussy is ushered out with the broom. From the last letter we learn that the hair restorer is a failure, but "Caesar pretends that he likes the looks of little spots of pink skin, here and there, in fur; but I [Pussy] know he only does it to save my feelings, for it isn't in human nature—I [Pussy] mean in cat's nature—that anyone should."

Each letter is a perfect gem. The reader is certain that if cats could write the letters would be exactly as Mrs. Fiske wrote.

1. Helen Jackson (H. E.), Cat Stories. (Boston, 1884), p. 86.
H. H.'s next "cat" story is *Mammy Tittleback and Her Family, A True Story of Seventeen Cats* (1881). At the outset the reader is provided with a complete "Genealogical Tree of Mammy Tittleback's Family." This is a ring of realism that sounds throughout the story. Mammy Tittleback spends her life in much the same way as any ordinary family pet would. She moves her kittens from the barn to the house and then to some other place when they are disturbed by inconsiderate members of the family. Mammy Tittleback is prolific. Cats is cats. Just as "Pigs is Pigs."

The reader is informed that the preface must be read last. It is uniquely placed at the end of the book. In it is revealed the origin of the story. H. H. heard the history of Mammy Tittleback rather piecemeal from several members of her husband's family, whom they visited on Christmas Day of 1880 at Kennet Square, Pennsylvania.

An especially attractive feature of this rollicking book for children is the large type in which it is written. A drawback, however, is that the story is related in third person; hence it lacks the delightfully personal touch felt throughout *Letters from a Cat*. However, *Mammy Tittleback and Her Family* provides younger readers with "a wonderfully real and jolly tale of a cat and her family."

---

The last of the cat stories like so many others was the account of an actual case. In a letter to Abbot Kinney Helen told him that he was George Connor saddled with two children.\(^1\)

This story was written after the appearance of Helen's two famous works in behalf of the Indian and is ample testimony that her interest in them did not end with the publication of *Ramona*.

A disappointment is in store for anyone who picks up *The Hunter Cats of Connorloa* anticipating a lively cat story, for first he must learn about George Connor who had traveled all over the world, practically, in search of a healthful place to live. Finally he settled in California, built himself a beautiful home thirty miles from the seashore, in San Gabriel. He spent much of his time collecting Indian handiwork and learning all he could about that race. How the "missions" were settled in California and were named is interestingly presented, but is irrelevant to cats. Neither the adoption of Bee and Jusy, niece and nephew of George Connor made orphans by the death of their father and mother, has much to contribute. The scene of the story changes from Southern California to the palace of the king of Italy where Bee and Jusy were reared. Black Jim, mulatto servant of George, went to Italy for the children. Not until they arrive at Connorloa, Connor's home, do we read one word about cats.

Then it is seventeen cats. They were acquired by Connor to

---

hunts gophers and rabbits in his orchard. They free the orchard of these types of pests. Subsequently the cats are trained to retrieve linnets, which were destructive to the fruit trees, as were the rabbits and gophers.

All of a sudden the cats drop out of the picture, and the remainder of the book (about forty-three pages) is devoted to another presentation of H. H.'s philanthropic attitude toward the Indian. The reader can hardly read the episode of Yeidro and Carmena without experiencing at least a tinge of sorrow for the fate of the old Indians, though that is only one example of what the whole race was suffering. A pathetic scene, indeed, is presented of old Yeidro and Carmena, an aged Indian couple, who were forced to leave the home "by the law" in which they had lived all their lives. An interesting Indian custom is brought to light as the old squaw brings a hand full of dirt from her old home.

"The Indian women often do that," he [Jim] said. "When they have to move away from a home they love they carry a little of the earth with them; sometimes they put it in a little bag, and wear it hanging on their necks; sometimes they put it under their heads at night."

"Yes," said Carmena, ..."One can sleep better on the earth that one loves."

As the conversation continues H. H. opens fire against the government for permitting the Indians to suffer so, and shows her

---

great indignation that the government has been so heedless of the existing conditions. She also gets in a few sharp criticisms of the organization of our government.

"... I Jusy didn't think how bad they'd Indians feel. Now if it were in Italy, I'd go and tell the king all about it. Who is there to tell here?"

"Mr. Connor smiled sadly. "The trouble is, there are too many," he said."

Witnessing the eviction of the Indians and hearing George Connor's explanation of our government convinced young Jusy what he was going to do when he grew up.

"I have made up my mind that when I am a man I shall not go to Italy, as I said I would, to be an officer for the King. I shall stay here and be an officer for the American President, instead; and I shall tell him about Ysidro, and about all the rest of the Indians."

It is quite obvious that H. H.'s mind was far removed from whether the cats retrieved a limnet or not when she ended her so-called cat story.

The book is just another true expression of her desire to right a social wrong, and the cat story is merely sandwiched in.

Yet the combination of cats and Indians does go to make up a "pretty, simple, little story in large type." And not once does H. H. soar above the level of a child's mind.

That H. H.'s stories for children were at one time quite popular

---

1. Ibid., p. 154.
2. Ibid., p. 155.
is attested by the Lathrop Publishing Company's publication of
Pansy Billings and Popsey thirteen years after her death. They
thought her name sufficient guarantee to print in book form two
stories that had appeared in Wide Awake.

The first story "Pansy Billings" is essentially a story of
character. It reveals how the sterling qualities of a little girl
led to her success as a florist when she grew up and is summarized
in the final line:

It has come about, first, from the dropped pansy,
but after that from a little girl's affectionate
good will, good cheer, honesty, and industry,—
qualities which never fail, in the long run, to
win.¹

The second story in the volume is Popsey. Strangely enough it
is the story of a Tennessee girl and her family. In the first part
of the story the reader is given a picture of a poor tobacco farmer's
family and their life on a Tennessee farm. The class of people
reflected in the story is described in one sentence:

Except in one matter of eating, there were no
distinctions between black and white, employers
and slaves, in hard-working farmers' families in
Tennessee, in those days.²

Popsey, after whom the story is named, is the fifth child of a
family of six. She is the duplicate of Nelly in Nelly's Silver Mine
and Pansy in Pansy Billings.

In the second part of the story the family moves from Tennessee
to Northeastern Illinois. The interesting experiences that the

². Ibid., p. 49.
pioneers encounter along the way are all centered around Popsy, who serves to hold the incidents together as well as to tell us of many. One of the many, and most unusual things Popsy witnessed along the way was the making of cider.

There stood the Irish woman, in a great wooden vat, half up to her knees in tossing apples and cider, her bare feet, as she jumped up and down, showing... black with mud.... In her two hands she held a big wooden pestle; and with this she beat and mashed the apples, all the while hopping and whirling about in the vat, and stamping with her feet, till the juice flew in all directions, and spattered her face and hair.  

Otherwise this smooth-running, simple story about very ordinary people is void of arresting passages. Here, however, is the usual moral lesson, mostly woven in, which is to be found in every story that H. H. created for children.

**Part II: Saxe Holm Stories**

The short stories penned by Helen Hunt Jackson were not confined to children's literature. For adults she contributed the Saxe Holm Stories that appeared in *Scraper's Monthly, The Youth's Companion*, and the *St. Nicholas* over a period of several years—September, 1871 to December, 1884. They have been hailed as "the great success of the middle seventies"; and their author has been called the "most-talked-about-short-story writer."

At the time these stories appeared two currents were evident in

---

1. Ibid., p. 100.
American fiction. One was leisurely going out to sea after two decades of flowing, and the other was rushing in from the West, Midwest, South, and the East.

By reading Helen Hunt Jackson's stories one would never suspect that a transition was taking place. For she cruised along in the same vein of feminine sentimentalism as did the stories in the two preceding decades that came before the reading public by way of Godby's Lady's Book, Graham's Magazine, then Harper's Magazine (1850), Putnam's Magazine (1853), and The Atlantic Monthly (1857).

Nothing thrown into the stream of fiction by Harte, Aldrich, and James toward developing the art of the short story is detectable in the stories that held the spotlight during the seventies.

The Civil War left the reading public divided in its taste with the majority of readers clinging to the older type of fiction. Fattée says, "A nation at work with the plow on millions of acres newly wrested from nature, demands if it reads at all, rather primitive methods."

"Tommy Billings," "Misadventure," "Farmer Werral's Case"—suggests that they are stories of situation rather than character. And a second glimpse will tell one that the characters did not wear silk hats or carry fans. No, these stories depict the passions, the experiences, the foibles of ordinary middle class people usually against the background of some small New England town.

The brief discussions of each story will show to what the reading public succumbed and with what Helen Hunt Jackson held the limelight while the writers of realism were rising up to the crest of the wave.

According to Ruth Odell six of the Saxe Holm Stories were drawn from actual experiences in Helen Hunt Jackson's life. The first "Whose Wife Was She?" twines around the fever epidemic witnessed by the writer of that story during her childhood at Amherst. George Ware, second cousin of Anne Ware and fifteen years older than she, courted her from her christening day until the date set for their wedding. Misfortune stems the tide of their plans when Anne falls the victim of a dreaded fever that resulted in partial amnesia.

She made no allusion to her wedding, the day for which had now been passed. She did not ask for George. The whole year had dropped out of her memory; part of her brain was still diseased. 1

The bereft fiancé is forbidden to allude to the events of the

year that Anne has forgotten. Heartbroken he leaves for the West. 

In the interval of his absence Anne falls in love with Edward Neal, a wealthy young man nearer her age. When George returns he learns of their approaching marriage. He leaves for India—disconsolate. 

Before leaving he sends a letter to Anne’s mother in which he says: 

...the sweet mother of my Annie, for mine she is, and will be in heaven, though she will be the wife of Edward Neal on Earth.¹

One year after Anne and Edward are married, she has a child and dies shortly after. But before dying she clips a curl from the baby’s head, places it in a locket, encloses a slip of paper with George’s name written on it. She had noticed the resemblance between George’s eyes and the baby’s. The locket is sent to George, who promises to return in ten years when he can be of help to the baby.

While Anne is dying we witness Edward’s sad experience.

“It seems sometimes as if I must be going mad, for I do not feel in the least as if she had ever been my wife.”²

Not infrequently did Helen Hunt Jackson express herself on death and immortality in her verses. In her first short story she gives a somewhat poetic description of Anne’s death.

The morning was just dawning, as the dark gray and red tints cleared and rolled away, and left a pale yellow sky, the morning star, which I could see from Anne’s bedside, faded and melted in the pure ether. Even while I was looking at it it vanished, and I thought that like it, Annie’s bright soul, disappearing from my sight, had blended in Eternal Day.³

¹. Ibid., p. 477.
². Ibid., p. 480.
³. Ibid., p. 481.
From this brief resume of the story can be constructed the pattern that Helen Hunt Jackson uses again and again.

Essentially "Whose Wife Was She?" is the story of the duration of a man's love for a woman. George Ware and Anne, the principal characters, are highly sentimental, as a quotation of George Ware's on page ninety-one illustrates. The heroine is ill at some time or other. The intimate friend of the principal character serves as a go-between, and she tells the story. The sub-plot reflects the main theme—the Dr. Fleming, Mrs. Ware love story—and violates the principle of the "singularity of effect" stressed so highly in the modern short story. Flowers are used in the background, sometimes to calendar events. This story runs from chrysanthemum time to chrysanthemum time. Furthermore, Helen Hunt Jackson uses flowers as similies. She compares Anne Ware to a pink daisy. And she indulges in her favorite proclivity, rambling, and thereby retards the progress of the story.

The second of the series of stories was suggested by the actual "incident of the finding of an old love letter upon a stairway" that "occurred in the Cheesboro Mansion at Newport."

In "Esther Wynn's Love Letters" again is depicted the duration of a man's love. It is that of Joseph Norton.

It was said...that his heart had been broken when he was little more than a boy by the faithlessness of a woman older than himself, and that he would never have married if he had not seen that another heart would be broken if he did not.

Joseph Norton's wife bore him four children and kept a good house for him, but she did not share his thoughts. Joseph Norton's niece, Nell, was very close to him. They understood one another. It was while Nell was visiting her uncle that a series of letters were mysteriously found on the fourth step of the cellar stair. Upon investigation Joseph Norton discovers hundreds of letters nailed in the step. He prises the steps open, recovers the letters, and he and Nell read them. In the letters are several poems. Nell concludes that Esther Wynn had poetic ability; furthermore, that Esther Wynn was in ill health.

Nell copies some of the letters and poems of Esther Wynn. Joseph Norton burned the rest of them and threw incense on the fire.

Four years later Nell, who in the interval was happily married and the glad mother of one child, was summering at a seashore resort. There she was attracted by an invalid woman who upon the receipt of a bouquet of clovers from her husband quoted:

I wonder what the clover thinks?
Intimate friend of the bob-o-links! ¹

Nell, recognizing these lines taken from Esther Wynn's love letters, develops a friendship with the "invalid" and learns from her the story of Esther Wynn's life.

When Nell tells Uncle John the story he exclaimed:

"Nell! Nell! your friend's mother is the woman of whom I once spoke to you! I might have known that the subtle kinship I felt between Esther Wynn

¹. Ibid., p. 175.
and her was no chance resemblance. I never heard of the name 'Eyn,' however. But you said she was only a half sister; that accounts for it. I might have known!" "Her aunt? I might have known!"

Here again we see a man whose passion endures through many years of life cluttered with domestic obligations, as well as one aroused to restlessness by the sheer resemblance that letters written by the aunt of the woman he loved bore.

The story, too, is not without its sub-plot. In it we are told that Esther Wynn was deeply in love, but, apparently because of ill health her love was never consummated; and she died alone in a foreign land.

Joseph Morton resembles George Ware not only in the similarity of his disappointment in love, but also in the sentimentality of his make-up. Here is a glimpse of him after he has read one of Esther Wynn's letters to his niece.

"Pet," he said, without opening his eyes, "that letter had the whole soul of a woman in it."2

And again we see him in a trance:

"I already felt, though I had not read one word of her writing, that I loved the woman called Esther...."3

Frequently when Helen Hunt Jackson's characters waxed confidential, they assumed the characteristic pose cited in the following passage.

1. Ibid., p. 176.
2. Ibid., p. 165.
3. Ibid., p. 187.
...and I sat down on the floor at his feet.\footnote{Ibid., p. 166.}

Moreover, this story resembles the first in that it is told in first person by a minor participant, who is a very intimate friend of the principal character.

Helen Hunt Jackson was not guiltless of demanding too much from her readers. With the assistance of the imagination we can accept the romantic elements, more or less, but the type of exaggeration, illustrated below, indulged in by Helen Hunt Jackson is far removed from a "vitaly compelling" fact.

In one of Esther Fynn's letters that had been for many, many years nailed in the steps, were found two flowers.

The other had two flowers in it—an Edelweiss which looked as white and pure and immortal as if it had come from Alpine snows only the day before.\footnote{Ibid., p. 166.}

Other examples of this type of exaggeration will be commented on as the stories in which they appear are discussed.

The third of the Saxe Holm series, "How One Woman Kept Her Husband" is not far removed in theme from the two preceding stories. It reveals the duration of a man's love for his wife through the temptations of a handsome widow who enjoyed the advantage of propinquity under the guise of a mutual friendship for John and Ellen Gray.

This story strikes an interesting note not sounded in the first two. It foreshadows the maturer Helen Hunt Jackson. The author of the story has a specific purpose in mind when she writes it, and she
informs the readers at once.

It is only one episode of their life that I shall try to reproduce here, and I do it because I believe its lesson is of priceless worth to men and women.¹

Here we see Helen Hunt Jackson in the early stages of writing with a purpose.

Another innovation in the development of this series of short stories is the obtrusiveness of Helen Hunt Jackson. She takes the stage to express her opinion about the "woman who kept her husband."

"Oh, my wise Ellen. Could Nana Long have done more subtly?²

Some more of Helen Hunt Jackson's frequent exaggeration is exhibited in Ellen's conversation with Sally about John's attentions toward Emma Long. Says Ellen:

"I have lost thirty-five pounds of flesh in four months, and nobody has observed it!"³

The high water mark of emotionalism, common in the Same Holm stories, is exemplified by Ellen Gray who faints not once, but twice, when she sees her husband after a year's separation from him. Unlike the first two stories this one ends happily.

"Drexy Miller's Dowry" ran in three installments. The short stories are growing into long stories. In those three installments we learn about Drexy Miller from her birth to her marriage, and in the sequel, "The Elder's Wife," that appeared nine months later, in

---

² Ibid., p. 470.
³ Ibid., p. 166.
two installments, we learn of her until death deprives Clairvend of one of its most influential citizens.

Obviously, Helen Hunt Jackson deals with people of a poorer class in the remainder of her stories with only two exceptions.

The contrasts between the weaknesses and failures of the minor participants emphasize the strength of the central figure.

One is dazzled by the courage, and strength, and common sense of Draxy Miller when she is compared with her father, Reuben, who was a failure because "he was too honest, too sympathizing, too inart," and her mother, Jane, who "was simply a shadow and echo of himself (Reuben)." Reuben's saving grace lies in his habit of reading—Virgil, Dryden's translation, Shakespeare, Homer, the Bible, Scott, and Byron. Then, too, his sense of humor inclines one to forgive him for his other weaknesses. Reuben was capable of doing such a thing as concealing the name of his daughter so as to attract customers to his country store through their curiosity, and entering under the head of "given" the purchases which he knew were not likely to be paid.

Elder Kinney is only one of the many preachers who play a part in the Saxe Holm stories. But he is by far the most sentimental of them.

More than once Seth Kinney laid his cheek on the stairs which Draxy's feet had just ascended.

And here in a spell of intense emotion he waxes poetic.

---

"Oh! Draxy, Draxy!" explained he, stretching out both arms toward her.

****

"My heart grows weaker and more weak
With looking on the thing so clear
Which lies so far and yet so near."

Draxy Miller was endowed with poetic ability—superior to the ability (?) illustrated in the three lines above. Helen Hunt Jackson—herself a poet—commented significantly on Draxy's talent.

The great successes of life are never made by the men and women who have no gleam of poetic comprehension in their souls. ²

Though two other stories appeared before the sequel to "Draxy Miller's Draxy," I shall comment on it here.

The incidents in "The Elder's Wife" are particularly interesting because they reveal incidents that parallel closely those Helen Hunt Jackson actually experienced. Elder Kinney was killed accidentally as was Major Hunt. After a brief interval of grief in seclusion Draxy by

****

her very nature was too healthy, too full of energy, and her soul too full of love, to remain in this frame long. ³

And so did Helen Hunt Jackson rise from her abyss of lamentation a few years after her husband's death and devoted the remainder of her life to literary work—mostly with a cause.

Draxy Miller spent her energies running a free school for her

---

1. Ibid., p. 502.
2. Ibid., p. 87.
3. Ibid., p. 205.
own son and the children of the neighborhood. But that is not all
Draxy Miller did. She filled the vacancy made by her husband. At
first it was only to oblige Dean Swift who had complained

"I never was a reader anyhow, 'n' now I've lost my
front teeth. Some words does pester me to get out."

The congregation was so impressed by Draxy's reading of her late
husband's sermons that by popular demand she was reading a sermon
on Sunday morning and giving a brief talk in the evening. She com-
manded the love and respect of the villagers; she changed them all.

Plummer "would go through fire for Draxy." And, as has been
mentioned before, one Sunday morning Draxy died suddenly leaving
Clairvand bowed in grief.

In Bites of Travel "The One Legged Dancers" is briefly given.

Dora Maynard has the same qualities Draxy Miller had in her
youth. She devotes her life to the care of her invalid brother,
orphaned by the early death of their mother and parson father,
another failure, because

....few people could understand him, and that was
the reason we never stayed long in one place.
People just got tired of hearing him preach."

The character of Dora's father is duplicated in the person of
Margaret Warren's father in "The Four Leaved-Clover".

The best example of the long-drawn-out descriptions that
cluttered the Saxe Holm stories and retarded their progress is
found in "The One Legged Dancers."

---

1. Ibid., p. 33.
At eleven o'clock the next morning I went to see her. I was shown into a room, whose whole atmosphere was so unlike a Roman apartment, that I could scarcely believe that I had not been transported to English or American soil. In spite of its elegance, it was as home-like and cozy as if it had been nestled in the Berkshire hills or stood on Worcestershire meadows. The windows were heavily curtained, and the furniture covered with gray chintz of a white ground, with moss-rose buds thickly scattered over it between broad stripes of rose-pink. The same chintz was fluted all around the cornice of the room, making the walls look less stately and high. The doorways, also, were curtained with it; great wreaths and nodding masses of pampas grass were above the doors; a white heron and a rose-colored spoonbill stood together on a large bracket in one corner, and a huge gray owl was perched on what looked like a simple old apple-tree bough, over an inlaid writing-table which stood at an odd slant near one of the windows. Books were everywhere—in low swinging shelves, suspended by large green cords with heavy tassels; on low bracket shelves, in unexpected places, pith deep-green fringes or flutings of chintz.

The above quotation runs on ad nauseam laden with the minutest details.

No wonder the reader gasps, "Thank Heaven!" when his eyes fall upon this sentence:

I will sic not describe Dora Maynard's bedroom.²

Nat Maynard is the poet in this story. He wrote "The Angel of Pain."

Helen Hunt Jackson begins to tell the story then turns it over to Dora, so that we will miss none of the struggle against the hardships of a life of poverty until she marries the wealthy son of the owner of Maynard Mills.

1. Ibid., p. 338.
2. Ibid., p. 339.
Ruth Odell points out that the incident which suggested

"A Four-Leafed Clover" to Helen Hunt Jackson was the courtship of
a Prussian sergeant imprisoned in Libby Prison and Roxana Foote
Beecher. She told it to Wentworth Higginson and probably many other
New port residents.

In that story Helen Hunt Jackson makes use of the supernatural
that is to reappear in "My Tourmaline."

The following quotation will show how Helen Hunt Jackson endowed
a picture with a certain unnatural power.

Ever since Margaret had occupied the room, she
had found a special fascination in this picture;
but now she was conscious of a new magnetism in
it. Every morning the first rays of the rising
sun slanted across the picture, bringing out
into full relief each line of the girl's head,
and still more, every fine, velvety fiber of the
snowy white edelweiss. The picture hung at the
foot of the bed, and sometimes when Margaret
first opened her eyes and saw the golden light
on the lake and the girl's face, and the edel-
weiss wreath, she fancied that there were
rhythmic sound in the light; that she heard
voices fainter than faintest whispers, and yet
clear and distinct as flutes notes in the air,
speaking words she did not understand. She
grew almost afraid of this picture; it seemed a
link between her and the unseen world. Yet, she
never believes that the link was with Karl.¹

Other than dabbling with supernaturalism Helen Hunt Jackson
used as a background for the first time the event from which a wealth
of American literature has evolved, namely, the Civil War. In only
one other story does she mention the war, and that is in "Joe Hale's

¹. Saxe Holm, "The Four-Leafed Clover," Scribner's Monthly, VIII
(1874), p. 220.
Red Stockings."

Karl Reutner has the same sentimental regard for Margaret that Elder Kimney possessed for Draxy Miller.

After placing a box of daisies at Margaret's feet, Karl says,

"They are but daisies, beautiful, Miss Margaret; that was the fitting flower, for it is like my love for you. It is low on the ground, but it would bloom for you always...."

Margaret misinterprets Karl's expression of love and rejects the proposal that he really never made.

Apologetically Karl offers an explanation to Margaret.

"...Miss Margaret, beautiful Miss Margaret, angel of God, I did only ask that the love and the daisies should lie together under your feet. I could die here before you in one second, if you do not believe that never, no never, in all this world I could have asked you what you have said to Annette. You are to me as I saw you in Heaven; you are angel of God in my brother's house. If you go away because I have said such love as this, then will I, too, go, and never shall my Wilhelm see my face again, so help me, my God."

But this is mild when compared with the state in which we find our "hero" after he wins Margaret.

He stooped still lower, kissed the hem of her gown on whose folds he had been kneeling...he crossed the room, and stood, silent, before her; then he lifted his hands high above her head, and opening them, let fall a shower of daisies: on her neck, bosom, lap, feet, everywhere rested the fragrant blossoms.5

Augustine W. Armstrong said "hundreds of obscure men and women

1. Ibid., p. 296.
2. Ibid., p. 298.
3. Ibid., p. 301.
in farmhouses and in factories" collected her poems. Undoubtedly
that same class helped to popularize the "Saxe Holm" stories as
well as the more privileged class. For in the words of Pattee,
America must not have been ready for naked realism as we to-day
define it. Fiction should deal with a refined and idealised society:
that was the unwritten law of the seventies.¹ This explains partly
why Helen Bunt's short stories are characterized by what we to-day,
in an age of rank realism, consider "gush." And not to be foregotten
is Helen's business acumen, commented on earlier in this study;
namely, she wrote what the publisher would print, and he printed what
he could sell.

"My Tourmaline" is written in the same sentimental vein as the
preceding story. It rambles over four installments. In this story
we find the parson's wife engaging in the romantic actions usually
endowed in the men.

For thirty-three years, she had every morning laid by
her husband's plate, before breakfast, a bunch of
flowers—or at least a green leaf, if, no flowers
were to be found.²

And similar to Margaret Warren's ability to hear faint sounds
from the picture, Ally has the peculiar power of communicating with
a stone. Moreover, "My Tourmaline" is suffused with unnatural con-
versation, not uncommon in the other stories, but particularly

¹ Fred Lewis Pattee, The Development of the American Short
² Saxe Holm, "My Tourmaline," Scribner's Monthly, IX,
(1874-1875), p. 254.
conspicuous here. Jim addresses Will:

"...you dear, old, honest, sturdy, strong, slow fellow, worth a thousand of me, any day." 1

From now on the stories, though not short, at least appear in single installments.

"Farmer Bassett's Romance" differs from other stories in that it is more a story of character than incident. In it we meet a "New England pagan" who accidentally attends a Methodist camp meeting where he becomes infatuated over a summer boarder from the city. Over a period of six weeks farmer Bassett's infatuation grows until he mistakes it for true love. He realizes that Fanny Lane is no mate for him when he sees her attired in evening clothes against the background of her luxurious city apartment. He returns to the country and marries the daughter of one of the tenants on his farm. She, like Anne Ware and Elder Kinney's first wife, dies from childbirth. Without much delay farmer Bassett marries the widow Thatcher because she's a "good housekeeper." Before Molly dies she writes a poem "A Wife's Reverie," cast away by the crude unsheathic housekeeper-wife, widow Thatcher.

"The First Time" is the only non-fictional piece in the Saxe Holm Series. It relates an incident that accords with one in the childhood of Helen Hunt Jackson.

In "Joe Hale's Red Stockings" Helen Hunt Jackson draws upon material from the Civil War. She is superior in striking the

---

1. Ibid., p. 227.
The prevailing situation in hospitals overrun by benevolent ladies.

The meek and satirical gratitude of the soldier who, being inquired of by one of these restless benevolences, if she should comb his hair for him, replied: "Thank you, ma'am, you can if you want to; there's nineteen ladies has done it already to-day..." 1

Too, this is one of Helen Hunt Jackson's few strokes of humor. Her stories have been void of humor since we met Reuben Miller in "Daddy Miller's Dowry."

"Susan Lawton's Escape" deals with the class of people dealt with in the first three stories—better than those of the Joe Hale-farmer Bassett caliber. The characters are less sentimental and the situations are not as intense.

In "Mrs. Millington and Her Librarian" Helen Hunt Jackson expresses her opinion about her characters again. She thinks Mrs. John Millington "was a woman wiser in her day than most of her betters." But she thought less of the other character who she called "Simple, Jerry."

As in "Whose Wife Was She," "Esther Wynn's Love Letters," "The One Legged Dancers," there is a story within a story, namely, the long drawn out story of Mrs. Millington's husband who is dead when the story begins.

The story repeats the theme of love at first sight and the duration of a man's love for a woman after fighting against it for a year and traveling around the world. Wilfrid Beddoes, though, is

---

an improvement over Elder Kinney and Karl Reutner as a lover. A
comparison of his manner with that of Elder Kinney and Karl Reutner
cited in this chapter will explain what I mean.

"Then you will love me," replied Wilfrid Badcoce, 
slowly, solemnly, looking into Jerry's eyes with 
a gaze which she felt compelling from her soul an 
inexplicable assent."¹

This has more virility to it than the "daisy scene."

Nelson Hart Jackson includes a piece of advice.

But it is as well to add, for a warning to all 
who, for any reason whatever, set themselves up to 
fight against the unconquerable forces of a true and 
great passion of love, to despoil it of its kingdom, 
or set a usurper in its place that it was never per-
mitted to Wilfrid Badcoce to forget that he had lost 
out of his life a whole year's happiness that he 
might have had.²

The story ends just like "Susan Laston's Escape"—both women 
marry the men they want.

"Tommy Billings' Misadventure," as the name suggests, really 
belongs to children's literature. It is the story of a little boy's 
scheme to see the circus that ends in a broken leg for him and in 
the addition of a clown to his father's hospital staff that in-
creases the doctor's practice by charming the patients. It is an 
improvement over the preceding stories in structure. 

"Farmer Worrall's Case," the last of the Saxe Hall Series, in 
my opinion, is the best story. It is really refreshing.

¹. Saxe Hall, "Mrs. Millington and Her Librarian," Scribner's 
Monthly, LXIII (1883), p. 123. 
². Ibid., p. 123.
The situation is comical from start to finish. The children of farmer Worrell, who is seventy-five years old, try to prove he is insane and to assign him a guardian. The children are afraid their father may remarry and his estate will fall into the hands of his wife. Farmer Worrell proves his sanity and in the same court room marries forty-six years old Lipsie McCloud, his housekeeper, whom he had never thought of marrying until it was suggested in the charge of insanity. The next Thanksgiving finds the family reunited except for the eldest son, instigator of the charge, all happy, and listening to the gurgles of the three month’s old “man-child” in the old cradle.

Besides the quality of humor that pervades throughout this story, Helen Hunt Jackson shows a marked interest in the use of dialect. Faint traces of it can be found scattered through the stories—the negro dialect in “Those Wife Was She;” a jargon of English in “Drazy Miller’s Dowry;” bits of Italian in “The One-Legged Dancer;” and abundance of German in “The Four Leaved Clover;” German—Jew in “Mrs. Millington and Her Librarian;” and Scotch in “Farmer Worrell’s Case,” that is used with a stroke superior to that in the preceding stories.

The same year that “Farmer Worrell’s Case” appeared two famous stories in dialect—“Marse Chan” and “In the Tennessee Mountains”—started the avalanche of dialect stories that were one phase of the era of local color. Though Helen Hunt Jackson was not affected by the work being done toward the perfection, or improvement, of the
short story, and the rise of realism, she did show an interest in the use of dialect.

These stories of feminine sentimentalism free of villainous characters and deeds were as splashed with flowers as Charles Egbert Craddock's were splashed with color. They floated out to see in the current of romanticism of figuratively—and literally. For they saw no second publication.

Wherein do these stories tie in with the general theme of this study? They all show the spirit of the propagandist. In fact, it is conspicuous in two incidents—'Whose Wife Was She?' and 'Mrs. Wilm-lington and Her Librarian,' ten years later. This is, indeed, a faint glimmer of the outburst of the propagandist that we are to witness in her later works.

However, the poetic spirit of Helen Hunt Jackson that had made her a literary figure before she ever wrote a short story and had claimed for her the admiration of Emerson still lived, a less abundant, but, nevertheless, a healthy life. In five of the stories appeared eleven poems: "A Song of Clover;" "Pomegranate blossoms!" (first line); "The End of Harvest;" "Three Kisses of Farewell;" "My little Tisarille" (first line); "The Morning Moon;" "Drany's Euny;" "The Angel of Pain;" "The Gospel of Mystery;" "The Love of God;" and "The Wife's Reverie."

It is most probable that Helen Hunt Jackson intended some of the stories that appeared in the posthumous collection Between Whiles as "Seree Holms." All of the stories in the collection appeared
posthumously in Harvard's or the Century except two—"Dandy Steve"

and "The Inn of the Golden Pear."

Just who decided upon the title of this collection of short stories cannot be ascertained. However, Hillel used the phrase in a letter to Thomas Bailey Aldrich six years before the publication of the book by Roberts Brothers. In the letter appears:

"...the paper was written in Cambridge, 'between whilsts with calls, callers, drives, etc.'"

But the title is of little moment compared with the contents of the book.

There are six stories in it. The first is of greatest interest and by far the best. It is "The Inn of the Golden Pear." At the end of the story is appended this note:

"The Inn of the Golden Pear" includes three chapters of a longer story entitled "Elephant Pygmy." The story of such noble and powerful lines as to deepen the reader's interest, has been added by another hand to round the episode of William Harvey's imprisonment, to conclusion.

Elephant's joy of existence is complete when the reader has concluded the chapter devoted to the novel.

Needless to say after the reader has concluded "The Inn of the Golden Pear," he finds himself wondering if H. E.'s conclusion would have coincided with the one given by the publisher.

1. Letter to Thomas Bailey Aldrich, The Bartleby, April 19, 1897.
H. H. shows in this story a very keen insight into characters different from her own and much unlike any of the genteel characters found in the Saxe Holm stories.

Jeanne Dubois, the daughter of a low-bred and evil disposed Frenchman who kept a small inn on the Canadian frontier, is most colorfully drawn. Equally well drawn is her illegitimate daughter Victorine, whom H. H. describes splendidly at the same time that she criticizes the Catholics—a not uncommon indulgence of hers.

If the whole truth had been known concerning the last four years of her life in the convent, it would have considerably astonished those good Catholics, if any such there be, who still believe that convents are sacred retreats filled with the chaste and the devout... Beyond an overflowing animal vitality, and a passion for having men make love to her, there really was not much to Victorine.1

With the assistance of her shrewd and uncouth mother Victorine succeeded in apeing all that was admirable and in realizing her one ambition—to marry a gentleman. Through her arch and ambitious coquetry she so blinded her victim that he could say of her: "Poor little girl!...she is of their blood, but not of their sort."2

In an announcement of Between Whiles, the Critic capitalizes on the initial story of the collection and wrote of it, "Seldom is a short story so full of light, strength, and color."3 And so it is.

The "Mystery of Wilhelm Rutter" reflects H. H.'s interest of

1. Ibid., pp. 23-24.
2. Ibid., p. 118.
many years in the Germans and their dialect. The characters compare
in class and in outlook toward life with those in "The Four-Leafed
Clover." The dialect of farmer Witebreck is identical with that of
Fraulein Hahleiner, who was commented upon in the chapter on travel.

Interesting to note is farmer Witebreck's opinion of Americans:

"...ven you come here, America it is dat nobody will
work, if he can help, and vismin ish shame to be seen
work. It is not shame to be seen work; I work, main
wife work too, an my children work too, py tea!"1

This is just one more distorted picture of the American seen
through the envious eye of the European.

The "mystery" lies in the reason why Wilhelm Rutter hanged
himself in Witebreck's barn. After he commits suicide, his motive
is unraveled at the end of the story.

The next two stories are more of the Saxe Holm type. In both
we have a case of love at first sight followed by a romantic pro-
posal and finally marriage. These two stories, however, are unlike
the Saxe Holm stories in that the setting of both is Prince Edward
Island instead of New England, and the characters are principally of
Scotch descent.

Again Helen Hunt excels in her snap shot of a rural settlement.

In "Little Bell's Supplement" she gives this description:

This is the way among the Scotch farming-folk in
Prince Edward Island. Children come tumbling into
the world like rabbits in a pen, and have to scramble
for a living almost as soon and as hard as the
rabbits.2

1. Ibid., p. 123.
2. Ibid., p. 181.
Of unusual merit are her picturizations of Charlottetown in
"The Captain of the Heather Bell" and of a small New England village
in *Hetty's Strange History*.

Rarely does a scene in any story compare with the rescue scene in*
The Captain of the Heather Bell*1. Captain Macintosh's rescue of Elspie from the
in *Hetty's Strange History*.

Throwing Elspie on the ground, he rolled her over
and over, crying aloud, "Oh, my darlin', if I break
your sweet bosom, it is better than the fire."2

The rescue affords Donald an excellent opportunity to propose
to Elspie. She accepts him. They are married. She dies of child-
birth just as Anne War did in "Thee Wife Was She?"—the first Saxe
Holm story.

"I'll never live to see it, Katie," she said again
and again. "It'll be your bairn, an' not mine..."3

The theme of "Dandy Steve" is the same as that found in *Hetty's
Strange History*. But in the short story the man leaves his wife
instead of her leaving him as Hetty left Dr. Williams. For eight
years Dandy lived the life of a hermit believing his/would be happier
without him because of their different financial standings. When
they meet, they realize what a mistake has been made.

Old Ben appendix the usual moral tag of the period, "'Tis foolish
to spend one's life in quarreling."4

The last story in *Between Whiles* differs greatly from the first

1. Ibid., p. 253.
2. Ibid., p. 263.
3. Ibid., p. 265.
fie five stories. It is a fairy tale. H. H. tells us at the end that
the story was woven out of a curious dream that she had.

On the whole the short stories of Helen Hunt Jackson are
mediocre. Whereas they enjoyed a great popularity in their own day,
now they sink to the level of obscurity; and when judged by to-day's
standards, they are formless, over-intense, sentimental, and artificial.
But in the day in which they appeared technique had not reached its
present high level, and it was an age in which the sentimental and the
artificial were at a high premium. H. H. fitted her audience, was in
reapport with her times.
CHAPTER VI

NOVELS

Part I: "No Name" Series

It isn't usually known that Helen Hunt Jackson wrote five novels. The first two belonged to the "No Name" series. Before taking up the novels the writer will comment briefly on the "No Name" series.

It is not known where Thomas Niles, Jr., head of Roberts Brothers, publishers of Boston, got his idea for issuing a "No Name" series, though it is obvious that the title of the series was derived from Wilkie Collins's popular novel, and the scheme of the series may have been copied from the "Wayside" series of Lockwood, Brock & Company of Boston, inaugurated in 1877, with E. L. Bynner's novel

Hispurnt. The publisher's advertisement stated:

These novels are to be written by eminent authors, and in each case the authorship of the work is to remain an inviolable secret.... No need will help the novel, or story, to success. Its success will depend solely on the writer's ability to catch and retain the reader's interest. Several of the most distinguished writers of American fiction have agreed to contribute to the Series.1

Helen occupied herself during the winter and spring after her marriage to Mr. Jackson writing Mercy Philbrick's Choice.

At the outset she intended it to be a "Saxe Holm" novelette of about eighty pages including twelve poems. She estimated it was worth ten hundred and eighty dollars, and asked Scribner's to send at once eight hundred dollars of the requested sum. The editors rejected the proposition. Helen enlarged the original to a full length novel, and it appeared as the first volume in the "No Name" series.¹

If one were just slightly cognizant of Helen Hunt Jackson's life, he would be instantly struck by the number of her personal experiences that were recorded in Mercy Philbrick's Choice.

In the very beginning of the book the clergyman gives a description of Mercy that fits Helen perfectly.

...heart-broken....but the most cheerful person in the town,—the most cheerful person I ever knew; her smile is the sunniest and most pathetic thing I ever saw.²

Mercy is pictured to us by Mrs. Garr, Parson Dorrance, and Harley Allen, and H. H. No contradictions exist in the collection of descriptions. The longest and most pointedly autobiographical is that of Harley Allen. The writer is of the opinion that this portrayal is Helen Hunt Jackson's opinion of herself.

In Harley Allen's letter to Stephen White recommending Mercy as a possible tenant, Allen says Mercy has the makings of a glorious woman and a true poet, but her environment and associates will be

---

¹ Odell, op. cit., p. 140.
² Mercy Philbrick's Choice, op. cit., p. 16.
responsible for the development of these qualities. She has an
unusual adaptability, and a loyalty to the every-day needs of every-
day life contrary to the usual poetic temperament. Allen expounds
at length upon her faithfulness and joyousness in mingling with com-
mon and uncultivated people. This characteristic manifested itself
in the travel sketches especially. Moreover, Allen, somewhat regret-
fully, points out that Mercy "is not at all a religious person."
Certainly this fits Helen. Finally, Allen expresses his belief that
Mercy has within her the power to write poems that will last.

Mrs. Carr reveals an interesting phase of Mercy's make-up when
she says, "You've got dreadful quick feeling's, Mercy....ain't you....
it's that makes you sech friends with folks...." ¹

Other characters in the book were drawn from Helen's friends.
Old man Wheeler might well have been her Grandfather David Vinal with
his innate love of money. Parson Dorrance is a combination of
Higginson, Conway and J. G. C. Abbott.

The situations in the story that paralleled incidents in Helen's
life are numerous. Mercy left the sea coast for an inland town
because the climate was more healthful for her just as Helen escaped
to Colorado. Mercy makes the best of a rather uninviting house in
Penfield similar to Helen's alteration of her home in Colorado Springs.
Mr. Allen sent Mercy's poems for publication without her knowledge in
the same manner as Higginson acted as Helen's intermediary. Much

¹ l. Ibid., p. 25.
apprehension prevailed among Mercy’s friends because she was not deeply religious and had no strong sense of a personal God. Helen’s friends were similarly perturbed. Mr. Allen was greatly disturbed because Mercy’s vivacious nature and her great delight in many activities and pleasures of life might hinder the development of Mercy’s intellectual side. Higginson experienced the same fear over Helen. Any one of the “Saxe Holm” heroines might be Mercy’s essential counterpart. The love scenes between Mercy and Stephen White and Mercy and Nansen Dorrance are the same as those that clutter the “Saxe Holm” stories.

When Helen’s first novel was published in 1876, it did not gain for her the praise hitherto brought by the early “Saxe Holm” stories. Her old friends—Higginson, Cassy, Cottis, Warner—were staunch in their praise, but not so kind were the other critics. The Nation declared that the story with its frigid Sappho heroine read like a Sunday-school tract.¹ The Literary World found that the story possessed all the essential qualities of style except that one of prime value—naturalness. The Saturday Review acknowledged the good parts, but concluded the book was an elaborate mistake.² And so it was as if it were judged by Marion Crawford’s idea of what a novel be, entertaining. It leaves the reader depressed. It is nothing but a

² Odell, op. cit., p. 141.
series of misfortunes experienced by none too wholesome characters that are related directly or indirectly to the principal character, who is the thread that holds this sad creation together. Of the principal characters—Mercy, Stephen White, Mrs. Carr, Mrs. White, Parson Dorrance, Old Man Wheeler—not one lives a sound, wholesome happy life. They all have some major affliction—physical or mental, or both. Stephen White was revolting. Parson Dorrance was over-drawn and unappealing. Earlier in this chapter the writer pointed out that Parson Dorrance was a combination of three of Helen's intimate friends among the intelligentsia. It can be added that the experiences of Parson Dorrance tally in a number of ways with those of Helen's father, Professor Nathan Welby Flake. Parson Dorrance, too, started life as a Congregationalist minister, but later became a professor in a small college. It is highly probable that Helen had her father in mind when she said, "Few lives of such simple and steadfast heroism have ever been lived," about Parson Dorrance. Moreover, Parson Dorrance's wife's prolonged illness caused him much anxiety. And after her death, contrariwise to prevalent opinion, "This will kill the Parson," the parson rose up from the terrible grief with renewed vigor and energy.

Only seven pages hand-running were devoted to the revelation of Parson Dorrance's goodness. This, however, did not govern the attitude of some critics who maintained that he, too, was to be avoided if possible. Evidently, with the relationship between Mercy and Parson Dorrance in mind, one reviewer went so far as to say,
"Those broad-chevroned, white-headed universal lovers, with the warm
fires of youth still burning beneath their snows may be seductive
even to their followers, but we would rather not see them too
paternally familiar with our own daughters."\(^1\)

HeLEN admitted to Commy that the wave of unfavorable criticism
hurt her. Nevertheless, the book sold over eight thousand copies.

And since financial returns was the interest of Roberts Brothers,
Thomas Miles of that company agreed to make \(\text{Hetty's Strange History}\)
another "No Name" volume.

Quinn remarks that \(\text{Hetty's Strange History}\) was unimportant and
that the Canadian village to which Hetty goes to hide herself is con-
ventional. But this is very slim.

The theme of the novel is prefaced in a poem at the beginning of
the book. The keynote is struck in a single line. "To give one's own
life up one's love to prove."

The story dwells on the self-sacrifice of love. Thirty-seven-
year-old Hetty Gunn married doctor Ebenezer Williams, six years younger
than she. They lived happily for eight years. Hetty was always
annoyed by the fact that she could bear no children. A series of small
incidents pointed to the possibility of her husband's love for one of
his beautiful young patients. Hetty, after much contemplation, decides
to stage a fake drowning and leave so that doctor Ebenezer Williams
would be free to marry Rachel if he chose. Her plan works. She goes

\(^1\) Odell, op. cit., p. 141.
to St. Mary's, Canada, and lives a full life, under an assumed name, in a very charitable vein among the French Canadians, who are enamoured to her. Meanwhile her husband lives unhappily over the loss of his wife. After many years of misery Rachel, endowed with clairvoyant powers, tells Dr. Williams that his wife still lives. Hetty is discovered by her husband when he stopped over at St. Mary's while enroute to England. She realizes the horrible thing she has done and that her husband still loves her. They are married again and set out to make the best of what little remains of their life.

In the conclusion Helen Hunt gives three reasons to substantiate the credibility of the story. She quotes the inscription on Hetty's grave in Walsbury; she gives a citation from a Canadian paper announcing the second wedding; and she says, "I know Hetty Williams."

Sara Hubbard writing for the Dial said that both novels are tragic. And some criticize Hetty's Strange History as being morbid and immoral, but it is no more so than Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter.

The sub-plot is definitely a story of retribution as this picture of Sarah suggests:

No, wonder! It was six years since she had returned to her native village, a shame-stricken woman, bearing in her arms the child whose birth had been her disgrace....when Hetty Guen had kissed her forehead and spoke to her with affection, no woman had ever said to her a kindly word [in six years].

Parts of the story are gripping. Helen shows superior power in

---

1. Helen Hunt Jackson (H. H.), Hetty's Strange History (Boston, 1904), p. 58.
importing the atmosphere of a small town.

If there be a pitiless community in this world, it is a small New England village. Calvinism in its sternest aspects, broods over it; narrowness and monotony make rigid the hearts which theology has chilled; and a grim Pharisaism, born of a certain sort of intellectual keen-wittedness completes the cruel inhumanity.¹

As is true of Mercy Philbrick's Choice many of the situations and characters in Hetty's Strange History can be likened to those in Helen's real life. For example, doctor Ebenezer Williams is a composite of Dr. Proell, of Bad-Gastein, and Dr. Cate, Helen's private physician. The panicky reaction of Hetty's when she realizes that she is aging parallels with Helen's feelings about herself, evidenced in her letters. Moreover, Hetty was six years older than Ebenezer Williams, as Helen was six years older than William Sharpless Jackson.

It is the opinion of the writer that Hetty's Strange History is a better story than Mercy Philbrick's Choice. Despite its essentially morbid tone, occasionally there is a much welcomed tinkle of humor, easily illustrated in Abraham Gunn's request for this inscription on his tombstone:

"Here lies Abraham Gunn, all but one leg."²

Part II: Colorado Novels

Helen Hunt Jackson shifts the scene from the East to Colorado in her third novel. She penned this one for children. Contrary to

¹. Ibid., p. 33.
². Ibid., p. 143.
custom, she shunned the barbaric side of Western frontier life and instead introduced the children to well-bred people of Colorado and to the exceptional character of the state.

Four characters illustrate the effect of the Colorado climate. The most striking is that of Mrs. Williams—none other than Helen Hunt Jackson herself—who says, "I came out here three years ago on a mattress, with my doctor and nurse....and I have been perfectly well ever since."¹

Other characters that show the influence of the climate are Mr. March, who never suffers from asthma anymore, Mrs. Plummer, and Rob March.

The account of the family's moving from Garland's to Wet Mountain Valley reveals the perils of the narrow mountain passes, the crudity of transportation, and the hardships of travellers. However, these are subordinated to the glorification of the beautiful scenery, countenanced along the way and continuously supplemented by the ramifications of the two March children, Rob and Nelly, who are the central figures in the story.

Unusual in this book are the characterizations of a few types of border life. They are not the conventionally swaggering and ruthless people. None the less interesting, however, are Jan and Ulrica, two Swedes; Dr. Kleeman, the Assayer; "Long Billy," the driver, and Lucinda, the helper. The actual miners appear sketchily

¹ Nelly's Silver Mine, op. cit., p. 119.
in the background.

Young readers are given in the book a truthful glimpse of a new
country in a pleasant smoothly flowing style.

The New York Tribune in a review of the story praised the creator
of it very highly when it printed "The sketches of life, especially
of its odd and out-of-the-way aspects by H. H., always possess so
vivid a reality that they appear more like the actual scenes than any
copy by pencil or photograph. They form a series of living pictures
radiant as sunlight and fresh as morning dew....In Kelly's Silver Mine.
Mrs. Helen Hunt Jackson has given us a true classic for the nursery
and the school room, but its readers will not be confined to any
locality. Its vivid portraiture of Colorado life and its truth to
child nature give it a charm which the most experienced cannot fail
to feel."

That the "sketches...possess so vivid a reality that they appear
more like the actual scenes than any copy by pencil or photograph" can
be debunked as supreme exaggeration with one quotation taken from the
Chinese and used recently by Randolph Hearst, namely, "One picture is
worth a thousand words."

However, that the book is "a vivid portraiture of child life"
and "that its truth to child nature gives it a charm which the most
experienced cannot fail to feel," are more reasonable estimates of
the work. Certainly the inevitable boyishness of Rob, who thinks he
can't live without the use of some mild invective to give him relief,
who slyly throws away the string of garlic because it stank, who can't
see the difference between "is" and "are" is true to child nature. Furthermore, the development of Nelly's character from the time she is twelve until she is fifteen manifesting at every turn the child's sweetness, unselfishness, and thoughtfulness, does make for charm.

The attitude with which Nelly accepts their dire poverty caused by the grasshopper plague and her willingness to walk to Rosita twice a week to peddle eggs, and butter to help support the family and the mental levity with which she accepts the disappointment that she did not discover a silver mine warrants the opinion of the Atlantic Monthly that "she [Helen Hunt Jackson] has done better than reward the patient little Nelly with material wealth; she has shown the expansion of a gentle character, and the reader discovers at the end that a pretty moral lies hidden in the title, --a moral which is not obtruded, but pervades the book as a delicate perfume."

The next complete novel to flow from the pen of Helen Hunt Jackson is her masterpiece, the Indian pastoral, Ramona, that will be treated in the last chapter of this work.

Elspeth Dy nor is an unfinished novel that came to light in a Connecticut bookshop in the spring of 1932. The manuscript was received by T. Miles of Roberts Brothers, August 5, 1885. No print of the novel is available. But the first three chapters appeared as a short story, "The Inn of the Golden Pear," in the posthumous collection Between Shilles.

On August 7, 1885, Helen Hunt Jackson mailed another unfinished novel, Zeph, to Mr. Miles of Roberts Brothers. To this, however, was appended an outline giving the incidents which she intended using in the conclusion and she penned this note:

I am very sorry I cannot finish Zeph. Perhaps it is not worth publishing in its unfinished state, as the chief lesson which I wrote it was to be forcibly told at the end. You must judge about this. I suppose there will be some interest in it as the last thing I wrote. I will make a short outline of the plot at the close of the story... Good-by. Many thanks for all your long good will and kindness. I shall look in on your new rooms someday be sure—but you won't see me—Good-by. Affectionately, forever. H. J. August 7, [1885].

And the judgment was made known shortly after in this announcement.

**Zeph**, posthumous novel of life in Colorado, by Mrs. Jackson ("H. H."). is shortly to be published by Roberts Brothers. It was written at Los Angeles during the winter of 1884-85, but the author, finding herself unable to finish it, sent the manuscript to her publisher with a brief summary of the way in which she intended the book to close, and with a touching apology written but a few weeks before her death.

When *Zeph* was made available to the reading public, they saw something under the name of Helen Jackson that they had never witnessed before—a story that dealt with really immoral people. *Zeph* is a long way from "Drazy Miller's Dowry." Of course, for every bad character there was a good one.

The setting of the story is Pendar Basin, a rapidly evolved Colorado town.

---
The characters are on the whole prosaic. Yet Rusky Riker might well have stepped from the pages of Bret Harte; she is several degrees lower than the "Cherokee Sel" calibre of woman. The entire plot is woven around her desertion of her good, forever-forgiving husband, Zeph Riker, whom she deserts for one of the most notorious characters of the town. In the end the good are regarded and the bad are punished. It is a torturous night for Rusky when her second husband burns their place of business with the hope of getting rid of Rusky's two children by her first husband. With its homely details the story seems almost true.

Without qualification the writer accepts as a final word on Zeph the opinion of The Academy that those who think that all the outrage and wrong are on the side of the man and all the suffering and endurance are on the side of the woman, cannot do better than read this sad and moving sketch. It is written by a woman; but never, I think, have I heard of more noble and self-sacrificing conduct than that of the much tried husband in the story; or conduct more vile and degrading than that of the woman who went by the name of his wife. Such stories tell how both sexes must forgive and forget.

There is a great difference between Zeph and Ramona in both intention and treatment.

It is regrettable that Helen Hunt Jackson did not enter the same in which she was to excel sooner than she did, for, although Heart's Philbrick's Choice is only an aggrandized "Gaze Holm" story, Zeph has
all the markings of a full-fledged novel as have the intervening longer works.
CHAPTER VII
INDIAN WRITINGS

Helen Hunt Jackson engaged in the popular practice of anonymity until she utilized her literary power in behalf of the Indian. The first work to which she openly appended her name.

Previously, she had made very casual reference to the redskin. In *Bite of Travel at Home* she talked about his being picturesque, and she showed great enthusiasm over Indian names.

But until the fall of 1879 was she impulsively stirred to take up the Indian cause. At the time she was visiting in the East, where the air was heavy with the ill-treatment of the Indian. Everyone was excited about the Ponca case. The lecture she heard by Standing Bear and Bright Eyes in an attempt to gain some recognition for the Poncas really fired the spark that kept her ablaze until the publication of *A Century of Dishonor* (1881) and that continued to burn until her death.

A clear conception of her rapid pulse-beat and her excited frame of mind that directed her to the Astor Library for three long months of tedious work that resulted in her statistical study of the Indian question—*A Century of Dishonor*—is easily seen in a few lines taken from one of the many letters that she sent to the papers in an effort to obtain for the Indians some consideration.

This letter was addressed to the editor of the paper.
Has the Indian any rights which the white man is bound to respect? We have answered this inquiry in the case of the negro affirmatively—after some delay, it is true. Standing Bear seeks also a response, and asks pecuniary aid to enable him to appeal to the courts to restore to his people the lands unconditionally ceded to them by the U. S., from which they have been so unjustly and barbarously expelled. 1


The Indians had no historian from their tribes. White men employed in the Indian bureau, a branch of the Interior Department, had kept records of the Indians. Helen Hunt Jackson set out on the task of collecting these scattered records from which, after diligent and conscientious reading, she wove a consecutive story of seven tribes—Delawares, Cheyennes, Nez Perces; Sioux, Poncas, Winnebogoes; and Cherokees.

She recounts the history and happenings of these tribes with great emotion, including all their sufferings and hardships.

One concrete example typifies the stories given in A Century of Dishonor:

In December of this year what the governmental reports call "a very unfortunate occurrence" took place in Nebraska. A party of Poncas, consisting of four men, six women, three boys, and two girls, returning from a visit to the Omahas, had camped for the night about twelve miles from their own reservation. In the night a party of soldiers from the Niobrara River came to their camp, and began to insult the squaws, "offering money with one hand, and presenting a revolver with the other." The Indians, alarmed, pulled up their lodge, and escaped to a copse of willows near by. The soldiers fired at them as they ran away, and then proceeded to destroy all their effects. They cut the lodge covers to pieces, burnt the saddles and blankets, cut open sacks of beans, corn and dried pumpkin, and strewed their

---

contents on the ground, and went away taking with them a
skin lodge-covering, beaver skins, buffalo-ropes, blankets,
guns, and all the small articles. The Indians' ponies
were hid in the willows. Early in the morning they returned
with these, picked up all the corn which had not been de-
stroyed, and such other articles as they could find, packed
their ponies as best they might, and set off barefooted for
home. After they had gone a few miles they stopped and
built a fire to parch some corn to eat. Some of the women
and children went to look for wild-beans, leaving the
women and a child at the camp. Here the soldiers came on
them again. As soon as the Indians saw them coming they
fled. The soldiers fired on them, wounding one woman by
a ball through her thigh; another, with a child on her back,
by two balls through the child's thighs, one of which
passed through the mother's side. These women were fired
on as they were crossing the river on the ice. The soldiers
then took possession of the six ponies and all the articles
at the camp, and left. The squaws and children who were
looking for beans were half a mile below; a little dog
belonging to them barked and revealed their hiding-place in
the willows. The soldiers immediately turned on them, dis-
mounted, and, making up to them, deliberately shot them dead
as they huddled helplessly together—three women and a little
girl."

The above citation illustrates the atrocities and outrages com-
mitted against the Indians. Page after page depicts just such
"dishonesties."

The accounts given about the seven different tribes are very
similar in form as well as subject matter. Following the portion of
the book devoted to the individual miseries suffered by each tribe is
a chapter on "Massacres of Indians by Whites." Three massacres are
narrated—"The Conestoga Massacre," "The Gnadenhutten Massacre," and
"The Massacres of Apaches."

In the history of the seven tribes Helen Hunt Jackson does not

---
1. Helen Jackson (H. H.), A Century of Dishonor. (Boston, 1891),
deny that the Indians retaliated for some of the bitter attacks of the whites. But in the description of the massacres the Indian is always pictured as submissive.

To the worst insults they the Indians made no reply, no attempt at retaliation or defence.¹

Then again after a large group of Indians had been huddled together and knew their fate, we see them:

Under a flood of tears, fully resigned to his will, they the Indians sung all praises unto him, in the joyful hope that they would soon be relieved from all pains and join their Redeemer in everlasting bliss.²

Following the chapter on massacres is the conclusion in which a brief summary is attempted of the material presented in the preceding chapters and a thorough lashing of the government, such as:

The history of the Government connections with the Indians is a shameful record of broken treaties and unfulfilled promises. The history of the white man's connection with the Indians is a sickening record of murder, outrage, robbery and wrong committed by the former, as the rule, and occasional savage outbreaks and unspeakably barbarous deeds of retaliation by the latter, as the exception.³

Characteristically Helen Hunt wrote with a definite purpose in mind, and at the end of the "conclusion"—by no means the end of the book—she presents her plea for governmental influence towards the rights of the Indians.

Cheating, robbing, breaking promises—these three are clearly things which must cease to be done.

One more thing, also, and that is the refusal of

1. Ibid., p. 310.
2. Ibid., p. 322.
3. Ibid., p. 339.
the protection of the law to the Indian's rights of property, "of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Till these four things have ceased to be done, statesmanship and philanthropy alike must work in vain....

Added to the main body of the work is an appendix, one hundred and seventy-two pages long. It is a collection of newspaper correspondence, the outcome of the Ponca case, testimonials of Indian character, more accounts of massacres, excerpts from reports found in the Indian bureau, digests of treaties, and a summary of the numbers, location, and the social and industrial conditions of each important tribe and band of Indians within the United States.

This laborious task almost broke the strong constitution of Helen Hunt Jackson. Before the work was prepared for publication she had to take a vacation, whence she departed with friends for Europe. Her manuscript was left with her good friend Higginson so that he could proof-read it, etc., and prepare it for the press.

The Right Reverend H. P. Whipple, Bishop of Minnesota, wrote the Preface. In it he praised Helen Hunt Jackson as "one whose noble heart pleaded so eloquently for the poor Red man." He quotes Secretary Stanton as saying, "...the United States never cures a wrong until the people demand it; and when the hearts of the people are reached the Indian will be saved." And a little further on he regretfully admits that even with the sad experiences of the past we

---

1. Ibid., p. 342.
2. Ibid., p. v.
3. Ibid., p. ix.
have not learned justice. The reader infers from the preface that even though Bishop Whipple recognized Helen Hunt Jackson's efforts as very noble he felt a strong doubt as to how much effect her labors would have.

Professor Julius H. Seelye of Amherst College wrote the introduction. He points out that the great difficulty was not with the Indian problem but with the Government and people of the United States. Moreover, that we have sought to exact justice from the Indian when we have exhibited no justice toward him. He avoids any direct comment on the work for which he wrote the introduction, thus leaving the reader entirely in the dark as to what he thought about it.

Not so evasive was the Nation. UnspARINGly it said, "The philanthropist who would gain the right to rebuke must show a remedy, and of remedies there has been a plentiful lack....Mrs. Jackson gives us no more light than her predecessors on this crucial point....Its [Century of Dishonor's] influence will work towards disunion when there ought to be the utmost solidarity of effort."1

But H. Le B. Goddard who reviewed the book for the Atlantic Monthly saw it quite differently. He professed that, "Whatever can be done for the Indians by an earnest purpose, careful study, logical statements, and righteous indignation H. H. has done in this book. She has a great subject, rich in all the picturesque, dramatic, and

tragic elements that tempt a writer, but she has resolutely put aside
the temptation to dwell on these elements, and has confined herself
with remarkable and praiseworthy reserve to the unimpeachable facts
of the official records. 1

Helen Hunt Jackson felt that her very life blood surged through
this statistical study of the injustices heaped upon the Indians, and
she desired above all to attract the attention of influential men who
were in the position to affect some reform. She sent a prepaid copy
of A Century of Dishonor to every congressman. The public was not
much moved to action, and she received much adverse criticism for her
deliberate stand for the Indian. 2

She was swamped by letters from people who tried to justify many
of the massacres and prove that Helen was wrong. She replied with
statements from official documents. Even her closest friends did not
"feel" the cause of the Indian. Probably the bitterest criticism
that she received is brought out in these lines: "In spite of all
her care in preparing A Century of Dishonor, she has seen its plain
statements set aside by mere civilian critics, such as Theodore
Roosevelt, as being merely feminine sentimentalism." 3

However, harsh criticism is not all the manifestations of her
philanthropic interest brought her. As one result of the book she

XLII (1883), p. 573.
was appointed by the United States Government as one of two commis-
sioners (Abbot Kinney being the other) to examine and report upon
"the condition and needs of the Mission Indians in California."\(^1\)

Before commenting on the report, a few words more about the

A Century of Dishonor are apropos.

In discussing writing and composition Helen Hunt Jackson once
said, "There is a little book called Outdoor Papers by Thomas Went-
worth Higginson,—I think it is out of print—that is one of the most
perfect specimens of literary composition in the English language.
It has been my model for years. I go to it as a textbook, and have
actually spent hours at a time, taking one sentence after another
and experimenting with them, trying to see if I could take out a word,
or transpose a clause, and not destroy their perfection."\(^2\)

It is apparent that Helen was not working under this spell when
she compiled A Century of Dishonor. In point of content it is un-
questionably her best piece of work, as she herself believed, but in
style it is her poorest. Hasty writing without revision is apparent
on every page. Some of the fragments are abruptly and floridly
treated and there is a conspicuous lack of transition.

This sentence illustrates her carelessness in structure and
diction: "The whole city was roused, the church—bells rung, bonfires

---

lighted, cannon fired....four more cannon were mounted....^1

This poor construction is common throughout the work, as well as a marked persistency in the use of the past participial form of the verb for the past tense.

This work on the whole is exceedingly dull, but accumulated statistics at its best could hardly result in more.

Very graciously in the Introduction Helen Jackson points out to Congress "the chance of a life-time" in her conclusion of the first chapter.

What an opportunity for the Congress of 1880 to cover itself with a lustre of glory, as the first to cut short our nation's record of cruelties and perjuries! the first to attempt to redeem the name of the United States from the stain of a century of dishonor.^2

"To cover itself with a lustre of glory" was of no apparent interest to Congress. It took no drastic steps to redeem the Indian situation.

As has been previously mentioned, Helen Hunt Jackson was appointed as a Commissioner of Indian affairs in November, 1882, to visit the Mission Indians in California and ascertain the location and conditions of the various bands.

Odell states, "There is much conflicting testimony as to just where and when the start was made for a five weeks' tour of the Indian settlements...."^3 But in a letter written to Thomas Bailey Aldrich on

---

2. Ibid., p. 31.
April 1, 1883, from Los Angeles, Helen Jackson wrote:

Next week I set off with my Co-commissioner Mr. Kinney on a tour among the Indian Villages, which will take two or three weeks.\(^1\)

Moreover, Odell wrote, "Returned to Los Angeles by the middle of May, the commissioners Jackson and Kinney secured...."\(^2\) However, the commissioners returned to Los Angeles before the middle of May, testimony of which is found in another letter to Aldrich written by Helen Jackson from Los Angeles and dated May 4, 1883. It reads:

We have just got back from our tour through the Indian villages; \(^3\) (18) in all--- my opinion of human nature has gone down 100 per ct. in the last thirty days.\(^3\)

From these citations the writer concludes that the inspection tour lasted from three and a half to four weeks at the most, and that the commissioners were back in Los Angeles by the first week in May and not the middle of May.

However long the tour lasted sufficient information was gathered for a fifty-six page report which was put into final form by Helen Jackson after she returned to her home in Colorado Springs. The greater part of the report deals with the Mission Indians in the three southernmost counties consisting of the Serranos, the Cahuillas, the San Luisenos, and the Diegamos. Then, too, brief statements pertaining to the wretched fugitive tribes on the outskirts of the

---

1. Letter to Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Los Angeles, April 1, 1883, from Helen Jackson.
Riverside Colony, San Bernardino, and the San Gabriel Valley, and a short history of these various bands are followed by eleven specific recommendations given in meticulous detail.

The most fruitful outcome of Helen Jackson’s sojourns through Southern California are not found in her Government Report, but in her classic of Southern California, which will be taken up in the next chapter.

All the time she was gathering material for her report she wrote articles for the Century. Many of these appeared afterwards in Glimpses of Three Coasts, discussed in the chapter on travel. The section of the book devoted to California appeared later in two single volumes, Glimpses of California and the Missions and Father Junipero and the Mission Indians. Both of these books contain the same articles, though there is a slight variation in title, that were first published in 1893. The writer is concerned here with two of the five articles that deal with Indians, the others having been taken up in chapter three.

"Father Junipero and His Work" is principally a biography, but he lived his whole life in service to the Indians and around his life is woven the foundation, prosperity, and ruin of the Franciscan Missions in California.

A somewhat graphic account of how a mission was founded is given. The routine was the same in all cases. A cross was set up; a booth of branches was built; the ground and the booth were consecrated by holy water, and christened by the name of a saint; a mass was performed; the neighboring Indians, if there were any,
were roused and summoned by the ringing of bells
suspended from limbs of trees; presents of cloth and
toys were given them to inspire them with
trust, and thus a mission was founded.1

The events of Father Junipero and his assistants leaving Mexico,
landing in upper California and founding the first Indian Missions of
1769 makes a gripping story. Helen Jackson credits the self-sacrificing
father with having laid the corner-stone of the civilization
of California on July 16, 1769.2

She maintains that the methods of the friars in dealing with the
Indians must have been both wise and humane since there was only one
serious outbreak in six years. And the reaction of the friars toward
it was one of forgiveness.

After quoting a long description of the physical structure of
the Mission from De Mofros, Helen Hunt gives us an excellent idea of
how the redskins lived.

The daily routine of the Indians' life was simple
and uniform. They were divided into squads of
labourers. At sunrise the Angelus bell called them
to mass. After the mass they breakfasted, and then
dispersed to their various labours. At eleven they
were again summoned together to dinner, after which
they rested until two, when they went again to work,
and worked until the evening Angelus, just before
sunset. After prayers and supper they were in the
habit of dancing and playing games until bedtime.3

She draws a sharp contrast between the treatment of the Indians
on the Atlantic shore and that on the sunny Pacific. The descendants
of the Puritans, weighed down by serious purpose, half grudged the

1. Helen Hunt Jackson, Glimpses of California and the Missions,
(Boston, 1919), p. 35.
2. Ibid., p. 17.
3. Ibid., pp. 53-54.
time for their one staid yearly Thanksgiving and drove the Indians farther and farther into the wilderness every year, fighting and killing them. Whereas, on the west coast the people of Mexican and Spanish blood troubled themselves about nothing, while their priests gathered the Indians by thousands into missions sheltered, fed, and educated them.

Then she recounts for us the misfortune of the missions that came with new governments, and finally the great change that occurred when California was annexed to the United States in 1846.

Following is a portrayal of the sorry plight of the Indian when the missions were no more and white settlers began to move in.

The second article in the volume is "The Present Condition of Mission Indians in Southern California." The subject matter is more or less the same as that included in the government report; of course, it is not written in documental form. It is a story, but a sad one in which we get glimpses of the homes, of the industry, the patience, and the long-suffering of the people who are about to become "homeless wanderers in a desert."

Helen Hunt Jackson's final words are another plea to the United States Government to protect the Indians in their rights.

In these two articles the idea of history presents itself, but the history gradually blends into fiction, and the reader becomes engrossed in the picturesque scenes and the sad fate of a helpless race before him. The construction of the missions is vividly
portrayed; their destruction is a gripping scene. On the whole the work is adventurous. It is history turned to literature.

Thus far Helen Hunt Jackson has written since November, 1879, when she was first obsessed with the Indian cause, a statistical account of a "century of dishonor," a requested government report, and a picturesque sketches—all in championing the Indian cause. And that brings us up to the work which she hoped would do what the A Century of Dishonor had failed to do.

The reception that her statistical study got is expressed by Joaquin Miller.

But the beating of drums drowned her voice.
Selfishness, noise, derision, mockery—these were the things she saw and heard in answer to her "Century of Dishonor."  

---

CHAPTER VIII

RAMONA

Helen Hunt Jackson was not the type to be daunted by derision, so she continued her fight in behalf of the oppressed race. But in her next attempt she "sugared her pill."

The placing of Helen Hunt Jackson's masterpiece will be facilitated by a brief mention of the dominant novelists who contributed to our vast literature of the American Indian from Edgar Huntly to Life Amongst the Modoces. Thus will it bring out the vicissitudinous shadings in the treatment of the red man and offer some basis for comparison.

This stream of literature had its start with Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810), a disciple of the Gothic school, who chose for his subject to terrorize his readers the story of the American Indian with its massacres and captivity. He believed that the Indians were far more capable of exciting the readers' passions and sympathy than the Gothic castles and chimeras which had been used before. Brown came closer to the real scenes of violence than his immediate successor. Around his Indians is no romantic haze; they are wily, bloodthirsty, virtueless savages. Whereas the white man has an intense fear of foes on the frontier, gives them no mercy, and seeks none, it is not without compunction that he slays them. After Edgar Huntly exterminated a number of savages in order to preserve his own life he says:
Three beings full of energy and heroism, endowed
with minds strong and lofty, pour out their
lives before me.1

Edgar Huntly, the first novel perhaps in which the American
Indian appeared, does not condemn the red man so strongly as did
later novelists who thought they were presenting the Indian in his
true light.

The stories of Washington Irving (1783-1859) about Indians have
lived a life of submersion by virtue of his more popular works. Yet
from Astoria, a book written, not from personal experience, but from
a collection of notes, we learn his conviction that almost every Indian
war could be found to have resulted from some vindictive act of a
savage, behind which the outrage of a scoundrelly white man who pro-
ved it was hidden in silence. Irving saw the bloodthirstiness of
the savage, but he saw, too, the reason for it.

In Captain Bonneville, written by Irving from the notes and
journals of the man for whom the book was named, he gives a favorable
picture of the Nez-Percés.

Simply to call these people religious would convey
but a faint idea of the deep hue of pious and de-
votion which pervades their whole conduct. Their
honesty is immaculate and their purity of purpose
and their observance of the rites of their religion
are most uniform and remarkable. They are certainly
more like a nation of saints than a horde of savages.2

1. Charles Brockden Brown, Edgar Huntly, or Memoirs of a
2. Washington Irving, The Adventures of Captain Bonneville
U. S. A. in the Rocky Mountains and the Far West, (New York, 1858),
p. 120.
The thievtry and degradation of the Indian tribes is noted by
Irving in his Journal. In summarizing his observations of his rela-
tions between the two races he said: "In general the frontiersmen
seem to think themselves imposed upon by the Indians, because the
latter, having lost nearly all their property, seek to hold on to
what is left. They have got the Indians coat and now begrudge them
the fringe."¹

This quotation embodies the same sentiment that we are to find
in Helen Hunt Jackson's work on the Indians. Irving's is a mere
reflection, whereas Helen Jackson's is used as a weapon.

In A Tour of the Prairies, Irving comments at length upon the
false impression often created of the Indians' stoicism. He believed
that the Indians were reserved, especially in the presence of the
white man, but he noticed among themselves that they were given to
gossip, story-telling, mimicking and other forms of amusement. And
in matters of real grief, such as the death of a loved one, no people
could weep and wail more profusely.

Following Irving was James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851) who came
in time to disprove John Bristed's statement that no novel could be
written describing the American barbarians, their miserable squaws,
and dirty papooses which would be very interesting to the American
people.² One needs only to recall the Leather-Stocking series to

¹. The Journals of Washington Irving, ed. Wm. P. Trent and
George S. Hallman, (Boston, 1913), III, p. 192.
². John Bristed, The Resources of the United States, (New York,
1818), pp. 355-356.
realize how thoroughly absurd the statement was. The absurdity is
further confirmed by more mention of three lesser novels, The Hunt
of Hieh-Tom-Eich, Eyandotte, and Oak Openings. General familiarity
with Cooper's treatment of the Indian makes any comment here seem
trite. Although he was a romanticist and leaned heavily toward the
presentation of the beau ideal, he, nevertheless, saw both sides of
the Indians; and he is well defended in these words:

Facts no less than fiction underlies the character
which, for all time, Cooper gave to the defeated
race of red men, who, no longer a menace as they
had been to the first settlers, could now take
their place in the world of the imagination, some-
times idealized as Uncas and Hard-Heart, but more
often credibly imperfect and uncivilized.1

William Gilmore Simms (1806-1870) with all his blood curdling
scenes does not fail to show both sides of the Indian, the man and
the beast, but it is upon the former that he places the greatest
emphasis. And after the final rebellion one regrets the vanquished
glory and pride of the Yemassee in Simms's book The Yemassee.

Up to now all the writers mentioned have at least recognized
some of the kindness inherent in the red men, but one writer particu-
larly contradicted Cooper's picture—Robert Montgomery Bird (1806-1854). His novel Nick of the Woods, or the Jibbamossey (1837) is a classic
in the darker interpretation of the Indian character. He used
Kentucky, "the dark and bloody ground," and the first region of the

great wilderness which was torn from its aboriginal possessors for
its setting.

Bird delineates the savage as so fierce that he was accused
of designing to influence popular sentiment against the wretched
remnants of the race which survived in his part of the world, though
he denied this charge. However, he felt the necessity of offering
some explanation for employing such dark hues in his Indian portraits.

But we confess the North American savage has never
appeared to us the gallant and heroic personage he
seems to others. The single fact that he wages
war—systematic war—upon being incapable of resis-
tance or defence—upon women and children, whom all
other races—no matter how barbarous consent to
spare, has been and will remain a stumbling block
to our imagination: we look into the woods for the
mighty warrior, "the feathered cinctured chief",
rushing to meet his foe and behold him retiring,
laden with the scalps of miserable squaws and their
babes.¹

Cooper saw the race in as dark a light as Bird; yet we remember
from Cooper the sterling qualities of his few good Indians, whereas
Bird's Indians are rather to be remembered for their hideous deeds.

To Bird the most despicable characteristic of the Indian was his
tendency to laugh at that which should provoke sympathy. He said:
"It is only among children (we mean of course bad ones) and savages,
who are but grown children, after all, that we find malice and mirth
go hand in hand,—the will to create misery and the power to see it
invested in ludicrous color."²

¹. Robert Montgomery Bird, Nick of the Woods. or. The
². Ibid., p. 219.
Bird's work is characterized by the complete absence of any redeeming virtue in the Indian. Yet it is Cooper who moulded the attitude of the world toward the Indian.

In Brown, Irving, Cooper, Simms, and Bird we have seen the Indian mirrored all the way from "a noble savage" down to a base and barbaric wretch. Every work gives the version of the white man. Of course, "The Indian owns no telegraph, employs no press reporter, and his side of the story is unknown to the people."\(^1\) Yet friends were soon to come to the fore and unreservedly express their attitude.

Joaquin Miller (1841-1913) in his Life Amongst the Modoces (1873) says: "This narrative....is not particularly of myself, but of a race of people that has lived centuries of history and never yet had a historian; that has suffered nearly four hundred years of wrong, and never had an advocate."\(^2\) "There is no one to speak for them now, not one. If there was, I should be silent."\(^3\)

One can gather from the above citations that Miller's picture of the Indian is a sympathetic one. The scene changes from that of the conqueror to that of the conquered.

Life Amongst the Modoces grew out of five years of Miller's living with the Indians. He makes the reader feel their grief. He was well equipped to say:

---

3. Ibid., p. 110.
These rude men love their lands and their homes. The homes for which their fathers fought for a thousand generations, where their fathers lie buried with their deeds mounting written all over the land, every mountain peak as a page of history; every mountain peak a monument to some departed hero; every mountain stream a story and a tradition. They love and cherish these as no other people can, for their land and leafy homes, are all they have to love.¹

And further we hear his plea:

And why did the Government insist to the bitter end that the Indians should leave this, the richest and finest valley of Northern California? Because the white settlers wanted it. Voters wanted it, and no aspirant for office dared say a word for the Indian. So it goes.²

Miller thinks it is unfair to take the border Indian as representative of the red race, especially after he has been debouched by the white man. He contends that the true Indian flees before the white man to the mountains and the forests. He draws a sharp contrast between the white man and the red man, and points out the admirable qualities in the latter, such as fidelity and gratitude. The very simplicity of their existence accounts for their brooding over disaster. Moreover, "Indians have their loves, and, as they have but little else, they fill up most of their lives."³

The quality of unreality coupled with the dream-like element of Miller's book keep it from being popular with his readers. However, it has its significance in portraying the other side of the

¹. Ibid., p. 111.
². Ibid., p. 264.
³. Ibid., p. 234.
story, the inner thought and life of the Indian, even though Pattee said of it, "He [Miller] moralizes, he preaches, he champions the weak, but he says nothing new, nothing compelling."1

This brings us to the next writer who attempted to use the novel as a weapon in behalf of the Indians.

Up to this time we see that two distinctly opposite points of view persisted in respect to the Indian as a subject for literature. One group regarded him as the romanticist's ideal. Certainly there was a glamour about the Indian that attracted the novelists and the poets and fired their imagination. Then there was the opposing faction who were moved particularly by the loathsome personal habits of the Indian and viewed him in a most unfavorable light.

Needless to say it was with the first group that Helen Hunt Jackson belonged. Where and where she collected the material for her novel has been mentioned in the preceding chapter. But the time and place at which she began to think about writing a story in behalf of the Indians has been hitherto unrevealed.

With the appearance of Ploughed Under, unsuccessful novel of William Justin Baraka, Helen regretted that the first Indian novel did not do for them what Uncle Tom's Cabin did for the Negroes. Her friend J. B. Gilder suggested to her that she was the proper person to write such a novel. She objected on the grounds that she did not have the necessary background, to which her friend countered that she

---

could spend the next ten years of her life acquiring it. To this she replied, "When you are as old as I am, you won't speak so lightly of ten years."

It was then February, 1881. Helen became very enthusiastic about going out to California to do a series of sketches for Harper's Magazine, but her plans to go West did not develop.

The next trace of her Indian story comes to light in a letter she wrote to Aldrich just after she returned from a tour of Southern California with Abbot Kinney to collect data for her Government Report. In this she says:

....My opinion of human nature has gone down 100 per cent. in the last thirty days. Such heart sickening fraud, violence, cruelty as we have unearthed here—I did not believe could exist in civilized communities and "In the name of the Law."

If I were to write a story with that title,—all Indian—would you print it? I have never before felt that I could write an Indian story. I had not got the background. Now I have, and sooner or later I shall write the story. Has anybody used that title?—Is it not a good one? If I could write a story that would do for the Indian a thousandth part what Uncle Tom's Cabin did for the Negro, I would be thankful the rest of my life....

Helen Jackson

In November of the same year, Aldrich hears from Helen again regarding the story.

....I am going to set to work immediately on a long story, and I do not want to break in on my work till

---

1. Odell, GE. Sitz., p. 169.
it is done. It will be three or four months hard work.—I want to ask you confidentially about its title.—Has anybody written a story called "In the Name of the Law"?—The title is so good, it seems to me, it must have been used, I hope not. I want it. No other will suit my purpose.—My story is all planned: in fact, it is so thought out it is practically half written: it is chiefly Indian—but the scene is in Southern California, and the Mexican life will enter in largely. I hope it be a telling book—and will reach people who would not read my Century of Dishonor.

Do you remember, of course you do, Warner's Story of the Doe?—Do you think the story of two human beings, husband and wife, fleeing from place to place seeking a chance of life, and a home, and never finding it, could be told as simple and unsupportedly as that was, and be effective?—I think so. That is what I am going to try to do.

Do not speak of this; I shall tell no one but Warner and Gilder. I want to make sure of my title, however, and must ask about that....

Six days after this letter was written, the novel that had been surging in Helen's brain began to take shape with great passion from her pen. It was composed at white heat. The conscientiousness and excitement with which she wrote was revealed to Aldrich.

....I have got this "concern" as the quakers say, on my mind, of my story:—and I am almost foolish enough to feel that I hold my own body, in trust as it were, till I have got the book done,—I shall not be outside the door after four o'clock—nor outside my bed, after ten, till it is done.—

I find that it is all so predestined in my mind that nothing remains but the writing down—and I am writing from 1000 to 2000 words a day, which for me is almost miraculous.—If you find out that "In the Name of the Law" has been used, my heart will be broken—Mr. Warner says,—not—I hope he is right. 2

The intensity with which she wrote was sustained to the very end of the story. A letter that explains the conception of the story was printed in several magazines after the death of Helen Hunt Jackson.

In a letter dated The Berkeley, February 5, 1884, we read:

....I am glad you say you are rejoiced that I am writing a story. But about the not hurrying it— I want to tell you something. You know I have for three or four years longed to write a story that would "tell" on the Indian question. But I knew I could not do it; knew I had no background—no local color for it.

Last spring in Southern California, I began to feel that I had; that the scene laid there—and the old Mexican life mixed in with just enough Indian to enable me to tell what had happened to them—would be the very perfection of coloring. You know that I have lived six month in Southern California.

Still I did not see my way clear; got no plot; till one morning late last Oct., before I was wide awake the whole plot flashed into my mind—not a vague one—the whole story just as it stands today—in less than five minutes as if some one spoke it. I sprang up went to my husband's room, and told him; I was half frightened. From that time till I came here it haunted me, becoming more and more vivid. I was impatient to get at it. I wrote the first work of it December 1. As soon as I began, it seemed impossible to write fast enough. In spite of myself, I write faster than I would write a letter. I write two thousand to three thousand words in a morning, and I cannot help it. It racks me with a struggle like an outside power. I cannot help being superstitious about it. I have never done half the amount of work in the same time. Ordinarily it would be a simple impossibility. Twice, since beginning it I have broken down utterly for a week—not with a cold ostensibly, but with great nervous prostration added. What I have to endure in holding myself away from it, afternoons, on days I am compelled to be in the house, no words can tell.
It is like keeping away from a lover, whose
hand I can reach.

Now you will ask what sort of English it is I
write at this lightening speed. So far as I can
tell, the best I ever wrote! I have read it aloud
as I have gone on, to one friend, of keen literary
perceptions and judgment, the most purely intellec-
tual woman I know--Mrs. Trimble. She says it is
smooth--strong--clear. "Tremendous" is her frequent
epithet.

...The success of it—if it succeeds—will
be that I do not even suggest any Indian history—
till the interest is so aroused in the heroine—
and hero—that people will not lay the book down.
There is but one Indian in the story.

Every now and then I force myself to stop, and
write a short story or a bit of verse; I can't
bear the strain; but the instant I open the pages
of the other, I write as fast as I am writing now—
as fast as I could copy! What do you think? Am I
possessed of a demon? Is it a freak of mental
disturbance? or what?

I have the feeling that if I could only read it
to you, you would know. If it is as good as Mrs.
Trimble, Mr. Jackson, and Miss Woolsey think, I shall
be indeed rewarded, for it will "sell." But I can't
believe it is. I am uneasy about it; but try as I
may—all I can—I cannot write slowly for more than
a few moments. I sit down at 9:30 or ten, and it is
one before I know it. In good weather I then go out,
after lunching, and keep out, religiously, till five,—
but there have not been more than three out of eight
good days since winter,—and the days when I am shut
up in my room from two till five alone—with my
Ramona and Alejandro—and cannot go along with them
on their journey are maddening. 1

These last two letters show us Helen Hunt Jackson immediately
after she began writing the story and after she had worked on it for

two months. In December she was writing 1000–2000 words a day; by
February she had increased from that figure to 3000–5000 words a day.

About one month later the story is all written and from the exhausted
pen of a conscientious worker came these touching words to Aldrich.

Since the 1st day of December, I have written I
suppose, over 200 letters—and 120,000—or 150,000
words on my story—Not to be called, after all
"In the Name of the Law," but "Ramosa"—I grudge
giving up the other title, but I am advised
strongly that it will be a mistake;—will "show
my hand," so to speak—The story is done—I finished
it last night at 11 P.M.—the first time in my whole
life that I ever wrote more than a letter, in the
evening!—but I could not leave off within ten pages
of the end—I am in a great doubt whether to print
it first as a serial in the Century or Harpers, or
bring it out as a book; if it hits well as a serial,
I strike my best blow. So; if not, I have thrown
my weapon away.—Some day I shall write a long story
without a purpose.—not a weapon.—and then I shall
hope most earnestly that you will like it well
enough to print it in the Atlantic.—But this one is
not for myself. 1

And now we are ready to investigate the story that was conceived
in the brain of a woman one October morning and transferred to paper
from December 1, 1883, to March 9, 1884, with lightening speed and in
the fever of white heat.

Plot, setting, purpose—all have been mentioned specifically in
the letters quoted, not to be overlooked is the whole-souled New
England intensity of purpose.

Ramosa is a beautiful tapestry woven with threads of fact and
fiction blending beautifully one against the other.

A panoramic view of the background is fleshed in this simple opening line:

It was sheep-shearing time in Southern California, but the sheep shearing was late at the Senora Moreno's.¹

Approximately the first half of the book is a series of picturesque descriptions, traditions, episodes, and incidents of Indian and Mission history. Helen's eye for natural beauty did not desert her here. The reader sees and feels the enchanting beauty of Southern California all through the book.

And the delicious, languid, semi-tropic summer came hovering over the valley. The apricots turned golden, the peaches glowed, the grapes filled and hardened like opaque emeralds being thick under the canopied vines. The garden was a shade brown, and the roses had all fallen; but there were lilies, and orange blossoms; and poppies, and carnations and geraniums in the pots, and musk,—oh, yes, ever and always musk!²

In the midst of this enthralling setting that really becomes an obsession with the reader is a gripping romance told in a rapid flowing style with no extraneous material.

Keeping the purpose of the story in mind let us look at the characters. But first see what Helen Jackson said, "What I wanted to do, was to draw a picture so winning and alluring in the beginning of the story, that the reader would become thoroughly interested in the characters before he dreamed of what was before him:—and would have

¹ Helen Jackson (H. R.), Ramona, (Boston, 1925), p. 1.
² Ibid., p. 123.
swallowed a big dose of the Indian question, without knowing it.\textsuperscript{1}

That happens. The reader becomes "thoroughly interested in the characters" to the utter subordination of the "dose."

There are four principal characters--Ramona, Alessandro, Senor Moreno, Felipe--and a train of minor ones--Juan Can, Madra, Father Salvierderra, Father Gaspora, Marguerita, Aunt Ri, Jos, Jim Farrar, Mr. Hartsel, Jose, Carmena, and the American doctor.

All show the skill of an artist and are marked by their Rembrandtism. Not the minutest detail is overlooked from the expression on the dog's face to the innermost thoughts of Alessandro.

One is instantly enamoured of Ramona, especially when she is pitted against the cold blooded tolerance of the Senora. Once more "a thing of beauty is a joy forever."

Helen Jackson allots the reader that pleasure unreservedly. One of the very memorable passages in the book is Ramona when she meets Father Salvierderra in the mustard patch.

Ramona's beauty was of the sort to be best enhanced by the wavy gold which now framed her face. She had just enough of olive tint in her complexion to underlie and enrich her skin without making it swarthy. Her hair was like her Indian mother's, heavy and black, but her eyes were her father's; steel-blue. Only those who came very near to Ramona, knew, however, that her eyes were blue for the heavy black eyebrows and long black lashes so shaded and shadowed them that they look black as night....She had looked to the devout old monk, as she sprang through the cloud of golden flowers, the sun falling on her bared head, her cheeks flushed,

\textsuperscript{1} Letter to Thomas Bailey Aldrich. 439 Pearl St., Los Angeles, December 1, 1884.
her eyes shining, more like an apparition of an
angel or saint than like the flesh-and-blood
maiden whom he had carried in his arms when she
was a babe.¹

But the physical beauty of Ramona is not all that endears her
to the reader. Even more forceful is her thoughtfulness of others.
She thinks about feeding the hungry sheep shearers, when Juan Can
would have let them go tired and unfed. She shields Marguerita's
disobedience from the Senora and mends the altar cloth to keep the
young servant from severe punishment. She hides the Senora's hatred
for her to spare Felipe's feelings. She has faith in God. Most of
all she loves Alessandro unrestrainedly. She proves this by giving
up her life of luxury for one of poverty and squalor. Through all
her hardships she is a loving wife and a devoted mother.

Alessandro enters the story without fanfare. "Alessandro, son
of Pablo Aaris, captain of the shearing band."² In the next instant
he is hopelessly and helplessly in love. "Christ, what shall I do?"³
he utters unconsciously as he beholds Ramona for the first time. From
then on every word that he utters every deed that he performs is a
revelation of his already-formed character. He was a wonderful
physical specimen; his skin was as light as that of Senor Felipe's.
He had been taught to read and write and sing and play the violin.
He shared the confidences of his venerable father, who prophesied the
fate of his people. "We must wait, we can do nothing."⁴ This strikes

¹. Jackson, op. cit., p. 48.
². Ibid., p. 50.
³. Ibid., p. 60.
⁴. Ibid., p. 60.
a tragic note. A sorrier plight one cannot be in. A mingled feeling of sympathy and admiration grows steadily in the reader as Alessandro presents the picture of his own people. To him they are the best sheep-shearers in San Diego County.

"...not a man of them but can shear his hundred in a day....and we don't turn out the sheep all bleeding, either; you'll see scarce a scratch on their sides."1

But to Helen Jackson "he [Alessandro] was not a civilized man" as she reiterates time after time in the book.

Through Alessandro's common sense and knowledge of the value of the California air the life of Felice is saved. He gives up the captaincy of the band to remain with the Morenos because they are in trouble. The novelist has him to say to the band of shearsers, "Father Salvierderra wishes it."2 The Indian shearsers accepted this as the reason, but the writer observes that on the fourth preceding page he told Ramona, "I will stay as long as you need me."3 On the next page, "he promised to stay as long as the Señorita Ramona should need him. Alessandro had remembered nothing but the Señorita's voice."4 Yes, the novelist makes a desperate attempt at giving Alessandro's true motive for having remained at the Moreno ranch instead of continuing on to Ortega's. "This change had not been a caprice, not been an impulse of passionate desire to remain near Ramona; it had come from a sudden consciousness that the Señor Felipe would be his friend."5

1. Ibid., p. 69.
2. Ibid., p. 85.
3. Ibid., p. 81.
4. Ibid., p. 96.
5. Ibid., p. 125.
Be that as it may, it was a good act. But it is difficult to accept that his reason for staying was not Ramona.

Alessandro is perplexed by the action of the Americans. He cannot understand them. He is looking for a justification that doesn't exist. "Many things... that these Americans do, are to me so strange..."

His bewilderment over the Americans turns into bitter hatred when they strike his Temecula home. "They are a pack of thieves and liers... and of murders, too." His hatred wells in his bosom until the very end, but not without reason. For he knows that eventually, "These Americans will destroy us all."

He is sensitive and is deeply offended when Ramona offers him money. He has a great love for his people and was absorbed in them. "I love them all. They are like my brothers and sisters."

Moreover, Alessandro is not selfish. He urges Ramona not to follow him. "I know it will kill you Senorita, to live the life we must live." A little later, "We can't take care of ourselves any better than the wild beast can, my Majella. Oh, why, why did you come with me? Why did I let you?"

Despite Alessandro's complete realization of his ultimate

---

1. Ibid., p. 150.
2. Ibid., p. 222.
3. Ibid., p. 227.
4. Ibid., p. 152.
5. Ibid., p. 226.
domination by the white man he found the strength to build another
home, harvest another crop and raise more stock in San Pasqual.

But eviction from his second home made him a changed man. "Hope had
died in his bosom." Re-establishment in Ojibola coupled with Ramona's
love and encouragement dispelled some of Alessandro's gloom. Again
he hoped, but not for long. The death of his child, and another
threatening invasion of the whites resulted in his mental deteriora-
tion that led to his destruction.

Alessandro was definitely a high type person—someone who was will-
ing to sacrifice himself for his people. When he is compared with
Felipe, he is without question the stronger of the two, not only
physically but morally, as well.

There were many things that Felipe knew, of which
Alessandro was profoundly ignorant; but there were
others in which Alessandro could have taught Felipe;
and when it came to the things of the soul, and of
honor, Alessandro's plane was the higher of the two.

Yes, the reader sympathizes with Alessandro's misfortunes, but
such sympathy is never sustained. Ramona is soon wafted out of misery
by her faithful suitor.

If the writer has succeeded in making clear the picture of the
only Indian in the novel by this great philanthropist, then the reader
should understand why Pattee said, "Uncle Tom was a typical negro;
but Alessandro is not a typical Indian."
It is more likely that the reader's reaction toward Alessandro is similar to this: "Ramona gazed after him...with no thought of his being an Indian...his skin was not a shade darker than Felipe's."  

When one pauses to consider how the Indian had been pictured to the reading public for a period of eighty odd years, it is not difficult to see why Alessandro was not accepted as a typical representative of his race. Yes, we remember Cooper's good characters, but always as Indians.

One also becomes conscious of the tremendous problem that confronted Helen Jackson. Her public had fixed ideas regarding the Indian.

The question immediately arises, Were the hero and heroine over idealized? The answer is no. First the reader must recall the circumstances under which the characters were reared. Alessandro was one of the Mission Indians whose barbarism was tempered for generations by work of the Franciscan Missionaries. He was not the Indian that Bird or Sims wrote about. He had been Christianized. The emotions of the Indian are no different from those of the white men's. Irving, Cooper, Miller have brought this out very plainly.

The success of the first part of Helen Jackson's plan was so overwhelming that it dominated the second part of the plan.

This is authenticated by her own words in a letter to Aldrich.

---

1. Jackson, op. cit., p. 34.
That you should have felt the Indian side of the story any more deeply, I could not, I suppose ask: but oh how I wish you had!\(^1\)

Aldrich was not the only one who did not feel the "Indian side of the story."

A tremendous amount of literature answering why one was not moved by the "Indian side of the story" has accumulated. Some of the best will be quoted here.

Scudder believed that the novelist made her hero distinguished, by differentiating him from the Mexican type, in order to soften the asperity with which Americans might regard him, for his own people recognized a superior and a lofty nature within him.\(^2\)

Professor Pattee says that the purpose failed because Ramona's Indian blood is not convincing. And he says Alessandro is a Spanish type. Moreover, he felt that Felipe's triumphal love overshadows the Indian sufferings.\(^3\)

Carl Van Doren wrote, "It was no longer possible to take James Fenimore Cooper's attitude toward the Indians as a lofty child of nature; since Cooper's day there had been the wars with the Sioux and the massacre of Custer. Mrs. Jackson eluded the difficulty by making Ramona the heroine, and her Temecula husband Alessandro so near to high caste Mexicans in color and nature that their wrongs as Indians seem

---

1. Letter to Thomas Bailey Aldrich. Los Angeles, January 10, 1885.
hardly typical of the real grievances of their unfortunate race."\(^1\)

Albert Keiser contends that the author did not succeed in making the work an indignant protest against the treatment of the red man and a flaming appeal in his behalf, as she had intended.\(^2\)

The Nation assumes that Mrs. Jackson made a great mistake in her unfortunate anti-climax, for the reader should be left oppressed with the burdens of the Indians; instead Ramona lives on in splendour, happiness and prosperity.\(^3\)

Arthur Hobson Quinn agrees that the book was intended to call attention to the oppression of the race, but Mrs. Jackson proved herself as a novelist instead of a mere propagandist by using the details of oppression to develop and reveal character instead of describing misery simply for its own sake.\(^4\)

On page one hundred fifty Helen Hunt Jackson's purpose was made clear quoted in a letter of hers to Aldrich.

Because of the similarity of purpose Ramona has often been compared and contrasted with Uncle Tom's Cabin. Juan del Rio believed that Ramona surpasses Uncle Tom's Cabin in verisimilitude, in dignity, and literary quality, and near to it in its genius of human sympathy. In connection with thought: "It has been their rare distinction to

---

compel hundreds of thousands of unwilling readers—who cared less for
the Negroes and Indians per se than they did for the fortunes of a
poodle—to thrill and smile, and turn dimeyed over the revealed humanity
of the accused Races."¹

Louis Stellman calls Ramona the Uncle Tom's Cabin of the Red Man,
and the Romeo and Juliet of the Indian race.

James compared the two problem novels. To him Ramona has less
humor, but more truthfulness, and a higher literary quality; each was
a flower of a crusade; both were translated into many languages; both
have truthful characters, but not real; and each is photographic in
local color. The novelists knew that great reforms are wrought by
public sentiment which is developed by a proper appeal to the emotions.

Davis and Alderson deny that there is a comparison between the
two great novels. Mrs. Jackson had to create sentiment, while Mrs.
Stowe had an already existing sentiment in her favor. Uncle Tom's
Cabin was longed for; Ramona forced itself on the public. Mrs. Stowe
had the solid North with her; no newspaper or friends dared champion
the cause of Mrs. Jackson.

It is clear that she failed in her attempt to write a story that
would do for the Indian what Uncle Tom's Cabin did for the Negro.

Yet it has survived these sixty-five years; it has had more than
three hundred printings; it is presented annually by the Hemet, California,
Pageant Association; it has been made into a motion picture four times;

¹ Juan del Rio, "The California Classic," Land of Sunshine,
XIV (1901), p. 6.
it has been dramatized unsuccessfully; and it has been considered for grand opera.

How then does one account for this long popularity? Certainly Helen Jackson was not an alleged member of the school of propaganda. There was another school that she fitted into whether by choice or not.

About ten years before Ramona appeared, several novelists began to work the rich mines of literature peculiar to certain sections of the country.

Bret Harte introduced us to the mining camp life of the far West. Sarah Woolsey pictured the French civilization of upper Canada. George W. Cable reflected the life and customs of the Louisiana Creole. Albion H. Tourgee reproduced the Northern carpet-bagger against the unreconstructed rebel. William Dean Howells gave us a glowing account of the meagre life of the New England Shaker settlement. Then came Helen Hunt Jackson to give us with rare fidelity the Spanish-American characteristics of the Southwest.

Up until that time California had been delineated as the gold-digger's paradise. In Ramona it is the Indian's lost inheritance and the Spaniard's desolated home. The great success achieved by the author in her picturization of these two decaying civilizations can be attributed to her intimate acquaintance and perfect sympathy with the life she describes.

For the first time the magnificent and colorful background of
Southern California was made the habitat of a tender and devoted love. The California scenery was in harmony with the domestic life of the lovers. Helen Jackson was one of the few novelists of her time who did not believe that love was dead. From her own life she knew that an honest, healthful passion was a universal and indestructible fact of human nature. Many years before she dreamed of writing a novel she wrote:

Earth holds but one true good, but one true thing,
And this is it—to walk in honest ways
And patient, and will all one's heart belong
In love unto one's own.1

It fell within the scope of her power to harmonize the life portrayed with the clear, dry air, the sharp outlines, strong colors, and hot hardening sunshine of the region she described.

We see the march of civilization. The relations of the Indians to the Spaniards and the Anglo-Americans to both are presented in such a manner that they cannot fail to command attention.

Through Senor Moreno's eyes we see the Mexican's opinion of the Americans. "The spirit of unbelief is spreading in the country since the Americans are running up and down everywhere seeking money, like dogs with their noses to the ground."2

We American's thought the Indians were beggars, and the Indians knew the Americans were thieves and liars and murderers:

They say the Americans when they buy the Mexican lands, drive the Indians away as if they were dogs.3

2. Jackson, op. cit., p. 15.
3. Ibid., p. 57.
Ramona is an interpretation of the hitherto unnoticed evolution of the new from the old that occurred on the southern border. It was inspired by genius and tempered by a love of justice. Moreover, Helen Jackson recognized the difficulties of the future. The work of the great philanthropist was as beautiful as it was rare.

One critic called her a "Murillo." That she was, although she protested on the grounds that "few Americans will know what 'a Murillo' is, was or 'ought' be!"\(^1\) Despite her protest, throughout her book one can find quotable passages that seem to have emerged from the paint box instead of the inkwell. One is made to feel the great breadth of landscape so uncommon in English literature.

The first red tints of the dawn were coming. From the eastern horizon to the zenith, the whole sky was like a dappled crimson fleece....Below--hundreds of feet below--lay the canon bottom, a solid bed of chaparral, looking soft and ever as a bed of moss. Giant sycamore trees lifted their heads, at intervals, above this; and far out in the plane glistened the loops of the river.\(^2\)

Such beauty as this distracts the reader's mind from the perils of the escaped couple and renders him oblivious of the solicited interest in the sorry plight of the Indians.

More than the beauty, the truth of the story is appealing. It has been stated before that the hero and heroine were fictitious characters and lived only in the mind of the author. And so they were. She herself said it. Susan Coolidge testified that in Berkeley the winter that Helen wrote Ramona there stood on her desk

---

1. Letter to Thomas Bailey Aldrich. Los Angeles, February 9, 1898.
an unframed photograph by Dante Rossetti. "The picture was that of
two heads, a man's and a woman's, set in a nimbus cloud, with a
strange beautiful regard and meaning in their eyes. They were
exactly her idea of what Ramona and Alessandro looked like, she
said. The characters of the novel never, I think, came so near to
materialization in her eyes as in the photograph. It was a purely
ideal story."¹

One should be cautious of the ballyhoo so prevalent in California
designed by the commercialists to trap the visitors about "this is
where Ramona was born," "this is where she was married," "this is
where she lived," etc., etc., when she was born, married, and lived
only in the mind of her creator.

As the writer stated before, Ramona is a mosaic of fact and
fiction. The parts that were true are worthy of, at least, brief com-
ment.

Helen Hunt Jackson told Joaquin Miller several years before she
wrote Ramona, or probably even thought about it, "What the world
wants and needs in poetry and fiction now is truth."²

On her own word is established the fact that she sought to give
much truth in her great work of fiction. She said exactly one year
after she wrote the first word of Ramona.

Every incident in Ramona (i.e. of the Ind. Hist.)
is true. A Cahuilla Indian was shot two years ago,

¹. George Wharton James, Through Ramona's Country, (Boston,
². Joaquin Miller, "Helen Hunt Jackson," San Francisco Call,
(September 18, 1892), p. 15, col. 7.
exactly as Alessandro is—and his wife's name was Ramona—and I never knew this last fact until Ramona was half written.¹

These few words certainly clear up the labyrinth of arguments set forth as to who was the real Ramona and who was the real Alessandro. It cannot be too often repeated that the hero and heroine were definitely fictitious, but many of the incidents parallel actual happenings and parallels have been found for a few of the minor characters.

The fact that these books and articles—The True Story of Ramona by Davis and Alderson; The Real Ramona by D. A. Hufford; "The Man who Inspired Ramona" by Louis Stellman; "Ramona's Homeland" by Margaret V. Allen—contradict themselves is sufficient proof that they have not hit upon the "true" or the "real," because in truth there is no conflict. However, the one work that is considered superior on the subject of Ramona is George Wharton James's Through Ramona's Country. In the Introduction to his admirable study, to which he devoted eleven years of careful preparation, he quotes a well known Southern California writer:

"The story of Ramona is, one ought not to need to say, pure fiction. 'Ramona' never lived, nor 'Alessandro,' nor the 'Senora Moreno,' nor anyone else in the book. The commonest and cheapest lies told in California are perhaps those of people who 'knew the original Ramona' or 'the half-breed Indian, Alessandro, who was killed for horse-stealing,' and all the rest of the silly basking

¹. Letter to Thomas Bailey Aldrich. 429 Pearl St., Los Angeles, December 1, 1894.
of the small in the sunshine of greatness.¹

It is to be remembered that James began his extensive tour of the Ramona country three years after Ramona was published and sixteen years after Helen Jackson first saw California. His book came out twenty-five years after Ramona was written. Then, too, the period of time covered by the novel is to be considered. It was from 1840-1880.

James says that at Camulos Mrs. Jackson saw a torn altar cloth, but she imagined the story of the artichoke patch. Mr. Gouts thinks Ramona come from the suggestion of an Indian girl on his mother's ranch. Hugo Reid, a Scotchman, is comparable to Angus Phial.

Ramona's Scotch father. Guajome is the birth place, but Camulos is the real home of Ramona.

Furthermore, James points out that the San Luis Rey Mission is nearer Guajome than Camulos, and the novelist chose that to throw readers "off the scent." Mrs. Jackson suggested using the home of the Coronels for her setting, but they said the Camulos ranch was the only one with an old Spanish "haciendado." Mrs. Jordan, Aunt Ri of the story, told that Juan Diego had a sick child and she made a coffin from boards torn from the barn. Mrs. Jordan and Aunt Ri are characteristically, but not descriptively similar. Don de Coronel, State Treasurer of California before American occupation, was the first to

¹ James, op. cit., p. xv-xvi.
know about Mrs. Jackson's purpose to write the story of the Indian. 1
He, himself, was a great friend of the Indians for they had saved
his life three times. Mr. Kinney says, "That report as you know, was
made by Mrs. Jackson and myself, and it was in the investigations
that led to the making of it that the book Ramona was born. We
actually saw some of the incidents described. Many of the facts were
developed by the witnesses, all of whom we examined under oath; we
met with many of the characters whose pictures were afterwards drawn
with startling fidelity by Mrs. Jackson in the pages of her book.
The Indians fairly longed to touch the hem of her garment they wanted
to sing and dance for her." 2

Juan del Rio, a personal friend of Mrs. Jackson's, states that
the setting is Camulos and that he knew every Spanish Rancho in
Southern California. 3

Auguste Wey thinks that the testimony of Coronel alone, to those
who knew him, should forever set at rest the needless question: "Where
was the home of Ramona?" 4

Juan del Rio proffered that it had always been a fly in his
ointment because the proper names in that noble book were so mis-
spelled and absurd. "Alessandro" he says is not Spanish, but Italian.
And he believed it should have been Alejandro because no American

1. James did not know that Helen Jackson had revealed her
intentions to Aldrich since May 4, 1883. See page 150.
4. Auguste Wey, "Sidelights in Ramona," Land of Sunshine, III
(June, 1895), p. 17.
Indian ever bore the other name. To him "Father Salvierderra" was as painful. There was a Father Zalvidea among the Franciscan missionaries; but seems to be a struggle for "Salvatierra."  

James, too, recognized the Italian form, but he believed that the novelist knowing that she was writing for a large class who were not expected to be familiar with Spanish pronunciations, and not wishing them to make clumsy attempts, or glib and incorrect "successes," she deliberately spelled the name in the way it is found, in order to indicate the pronunciation she desired.  

The mere problem of a name is interesting, but of small moment here.  

It is of more importance to see that the great philanthropist was able to picture the historical facts of two decaying civilizations and the rise of a money-crazed new one. The habits and customs of the Indian and old Spanish regime are artistically learned from fictitious lives. She welded the aim of a novelist with the aspiration of a reformer and produced a beautiful and lasting love story against an ever enchanting background, and thereby earned for herself a permanent place in American literature as a novelist of localized romance.  

It is not without a deep feeling of pathos that one reads from a letter she wrote shortly before her death, "I am leaving this earth with no regret except that I have not accomplished more work; especially

---

1. del Rio, op. cit., p. 10.  
2. James, op. cit., pp. 61-62.
that it was so late in the day when I began to work in real earnest.\textsuperscript{1}

Yet one is cheered by such praise as that of Tourgee, "Ramona is unquestionably the best novel produced by an American woman."\textsuperscript{2}

And one agrees with the estimation of Hamilton Wright Mabie, "What a difference separates her earlier from her latest work! It is this noble growth which one recalls with fullest satisfaction."\textsuperscript{3}

\begin{itemize}
\item[2.] Tourgee, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 246.
\end{itemize}
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Helen Maria Fiske Hunt Jackson used various pseudonyms. Her works are listed here under the pen-names used.

Readings


"Almae," The Independent, (June 6, 1876), p. 1-2; (June 13, 1876), p. 3-4.


"Arbutus," The Independent, (April 17, 1884), p. 1

"Archeas Casipoff's Reward," The Youth's Companion, CLIV (1881), 482.


"As a Tale is Told," The Independent, (March 26, 1874), p. 13.


"Bathmendi," Saint Nicholas, XIX (1866), 508-512.

"Bayard Taylor," The Independent, (January 2, 1879), p. 3.


"A Bit of Lace," The Independent, (August 28, 1884), p. 1

Bits of Talk about Home Matters. Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1891.

Bits of Talk in Verse and Prose for Young Folks. Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1889.

Bits of Travel. Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1891.

Bits of Travel at Home. Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1891.


"Border Lands," Atlantic Monthly, XLI (1878), 710.


"Bridges," The Independent, (October 5, 1871), p. 1


"Como," The Independent, (October 2, 1879), pp. 1, 2, 3.


"A Day with the Cahillos," The Independent, (October 11, 1883), pp. 1, 2, 3.


"Deeds and Words," The Independent, (June 24, 1875), p. 5.

"Deirdre," The Independent, (January 11, 1877), pp. 5-4.


"Double Acrostic," Riverside Magazine for Young People, V (1869), 336.

"Double Acrostic," Riverside Magazine for Young People, II (1869), 393.

E. H., "Down the Arkansas River to New York," The Independent, (October 3, 1876), pp. 1-2; (October 17, 1876), pp. 1-2, 3.

"Down the St. John's River," Hours at Home, XI (1870), 402.


"Estes Park II," Christian Union, (July 6, 1882), pp. 5-6.


"The Fate of Saboba," The Independent, (December 13, 1883), pp. 1, 2.


"The Gear that is Gifted," The Youth's Companion, XLIV, (1881), 50.


"Grey Friars Bobby," The Youth's Companion, CLIII (1880), 319-320.


"Health Resorts in Colorado," The Youth's Companion, CLIII (1880), 165-166.

"Health Seeking in Colorado," The Youth's Companion, CLIII (1880), 153-154.


"Hostages," The Galaxy, IX (1870), 831.

"How the Cats Went to Boarding School," Hearth and Home, II (1870), 844.


"In the White Mountains," The Independent, (September 13, 1866), p. 2.


"Justifiable Homicide in Southern California," The Independent, (September 27, 1883), pp. 1, 2.


"The King of Cherry Mountain," Hours at Home, XI (1870), 447-450.


"The Late Flower," The Youth's Companion, CLIV (1881), 319.


Letters from a Cat. Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1873.

"Literary Permican," The Independent, (November 2, 1875), pp. 2-3.

"Lost Houses," The Galaxy, X (1870), 697-698.


Mamy Tittleback and Her Family: A True Story of Seventeen Cats. Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1881.


"The Measure of Scorn," Christian Union, (September 8, 1875), p. 182.

"Necsa," The Independent, (February 24, 1875), p. 3.


"The Mine of Margaret Mayern," The Youth's Companion, CLIV (1881), 118.


"Mr. and Mrs. Chipping Bird's New House," Saint Nicholas, V (1883), 495.


"My Nasturtium," Scribner's Monthly Magazine, XXII (1876), 266.


Melly's Silver Mine. Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1873.


"Now and Then," *Hearth and Home*, II (1870), 216.

"The Old Gate," *The Galaxy*, VIII (1869), 753-754.


"One of the Early Indian Removals," *The Independent*, (May 20, 1870), pp. 2, 3, 4.


"Our Seven Lakes," *The Independent*, (May 1, 1879), p. 1, 2.


"The Pilgrim to the Crane," *Hearth and Home*, III (1871), 983.


"The Pot of Gold," *The Independent*, (July 24, 1873), pp. 1, 2, 3.


"Queen Eunice," *Christian Union*, (December 20, 1863), pp. 541-542.


"Rapide," *Christian Union*, (December 29, 1875), p. 533.


___. "The Sparrow and the Robin," The Youth's Companion, CLIII (1890), 354.


___. "Stamped by Stubbs," The Independent, (October 6, 1870), p. 3.

___. "Standing Bear and Bright Eyes," The Independent, (November 20, 1873), pp. 1, 2, 3.


"Thoughts on Decoration Day," The Independent, (June 12, 1884), p. 1.


"Too Late," The Independent, (June 10, 1875), p. 5.


Verses. Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1884.

---


---


---

"Wait! A New Time-Table for Boys and Girls," *Saint Nicholas*, XIII (1886), 447.

---


---


---

"Whose Fault Is It?" *The Galaxy*, III (1867), 541f.

---


---


---


---

Holm, Saxa, "Draxy Miller's Dowry," *Scribner's Monthly*, IV (1872), 65f; 205f; 290f.

---


---


---


---


---


---


---

"Mrs. Millington and Her Librarian," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, LXIII (1881), 103-125.

— "Tommy Billings' Misadventure," *The Youth's Companion*, (June 8, 1882), p. 239.

— "My Turnaline," *Scribner's Monthly*, IX (1874), 92f; 222f; (1875), 282f; 486f.


— "Susan Lawton's Escape," *Scribner's Monthly*, XV (1873),


Jackson, Helen Hunt, *Cat Stories*. Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1898.


— *A Calendar of Sonnets*. Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1891.

— *Mercy Philbrick's Choice*. Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1890.


Jackson (H. H.), Helen, *Between Whiles*. Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1887.


"Dreams." Christian Union, (July 24, 1884), p. 77.


Glimpses of Three Coasts. Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1891.


"How Dave Lincoln Taught His Grandfather," The Independent, (February 5, 1885), pp. 27, 28, 29.


Poems. Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1891.


Zeph. Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1886.


References


Brown, Charless Brockden, Edgar Huntly; or The Memoirs of a Sleepwalker, Philadelphia, David McKay, 1837.


Coolbrith, Ima D., "Helen Jackson," The Critic. IV (1885), 126.

"Current Criticism," The Critic. IV (1885), 22.


Del Rio, Juan, "The California Classic," Land of Sunshine, XIV (1901), 4-10.


Emerson, Ralph Waldo, Paraphrase. Boston, James R. Osgood, 1875.


"Helen Hunt," The Literary World, XVII (1886), 184.


____ , "To the Memory of H. H.," The Century Magazine, XXXII (1886), 47.


Nabie, Hamilton Wright, "Helen Jackson," The Book Buyer, II (1885), 195.


Miller, Joaquin, Life Amongst the Modos, Unwritten History. London, Richard Bentley and Son, 1873.

"Mrs. Helen Maria Fiske Jackson (H. R.)," Allibone's Dictionary of Authors, 1871, I (Supplement), p. 392.


"News and Notes," The Literary World, XVII (1886), 14.

"News and Notes," The Literary World, XVII (1886), 50.

"Notes," The Critic, IV (1885), 129.


"Ramona," The Literary World, XV (1884), 448-449.

"Ramona and Helen Hunt Jackson's Centenary," Publisher's Weekly, CXX (1931), 1701-1702.


"Review of Bits of Travel," Nation, XIV (1872), 407.


Rollins, Alice Wellington, "Helen Jackson," The Critic, IV (1885), 85-86.

"Some Helen's Stories," The Critic, VII (1887), 52.


Starke, Aubrey, "'No Names' and 'Round Robins'," American Literature, VI (1936), 400-412.


"Table Talk," The Literary World, XVII (1886), 136.

Thomas, Edith E., "To the Memory of Helen Hunt Jackson," Atlantic Monthly, LVIII (1886), 195f.


Letters

Letters by Helen Jackson to Thomas Bailey Aldrich available in the Aldrich Memorial, Portsmouth, New Hampshire:

March 15, 1881, New York.
April 10, 1881, New York.
April 19, 1881, New York.
April 25, 1881, New York.
May 4, 1881, New York.
May 6, 1881, New York.
June 29, 1881, Colorado Springs.
August 19, 1881, Colorado Springs.
September 15, 1881, Colorado Springs.
November 3, 1881, New York.
November 25, 1881, New York.
February 21, 1882, Santa Barbara.
April 12, 1882, Los Angeles.
April 21, 1882, Los Angeles.
May 5, 1882, Los Angeles.
May 13, 1882, Los Angeles.
July 3, 1882, Portland, O.
July 27, 1882, San Francisco.
August 17, 1882, Los Angeles.
September 2, 1882, Colorado Springs.
October 15, 1882, Colorado Springs.
November 4, 1882, Colorado Springs.
November 23, 1882, New York.
November 29, 1882, New York.
December 9, 1882, Newport.
December 19, 1882, New York.
January 15, 1883, New York.
February 12, 1883, New York.
February 15, 1883, New York.
February 12, 1883, Somewhere in Kansas.
February 27, 1883, Los Angeles.
March 23, 1883, Los Angeles.
April 1, 1883, Los Angeles.
May 4, 1883, Los Angeles.
August 13, 1883, Colorado Springs.
September 18, 1883, Salt Lake City.
October 15, 1883, Colorado Springs.
November 20, 1883, Colorado Springs.
November 24, 1883, New York.
December 15, 1883, New York.
January 25, 1884, New York.
Letters (Continued)

February 25, 1884, New York.
March 1, 1884, New York.
April 3, 1884, New York.
April 10, 1884, (No address)
May 10, 1884, New York.
May 18, 1884, New York.
May 25, 1884, New York.
September 22, 1884, Colorado Springs.
December 4, 1884, Los Angeles.
December 4, 1884, New York.
January 10, 1885, Los Angeles.
February 5, 1885, Los Angeles.
March 6, 1885, Los Angeles.
April 4, 1885, San Francisco.
April 6, 1885, San Francisco.
April 22, 1885, San Francisco.
June 25, 1885, San Francisco.
BIOGRAPHY

Minerva Louise Martin was born in Hahnville, Louisiana, where she lived until she graduated in 1925 from Hahnville High School. In 1931 she received a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Alabama. In the summer of 1935 she studied at Columbia University. In the fall of 1936 she entered Louisiana State University, where she received her Master's Degree in English. She has matriculated continuously at this institution since then and is now a candidate for a doctor's degree in English, June, 1940.
EXAMINATION AND THCESIS REPORT

Candidate: Minerva Louise Martin

Major Field: English

Title of Thesis: HELEN HUNT JACKSON IN RELATION TO HER TIMES

Approved:

Earl J. Bradsher
Major Professor and Chairman

Charles W. Phipps
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Earl J. Bradsher

Henry Basden

Thomas A. Kirk

W. J. Owen

A. J. Bryan

Date of Examination:

May 2, 1940