



Editorial

IN 1644, Massachusetts minister Thomas Weld released a tract stating that New England dissidents Mary Dyer and Anne Hutchinson had, around the time of the Antinomian Controversy (1636–38), given birth to “monsters.” Those deformed offspring, Weld claimed, were the very sign and emblem of Hutchinson’s and Dyer’s sophisticated transgressions. Seeking to influence debates in both old England and new, Weld cloaked his ostensibly objective narrative in sexual innuendo and played on popular superstitions to demonstrate that unorthodox views were at once physically, mentally, and spiritually corrupt and corrupting.

Weld enjoyed an advantage, for Hutchinson and Dyer had left no independent written record of the incidents he exploited. In New England, a region habitually given to intellectual reflection and justification, acts to enforce authority, like Weld’s, as well as acts to resist it were often preserved in print, or at least in writing. In their stormy correspondence, the man who would become the nation’s sixth president and his future bride repeatedly and often painfully tested one another. John Quincy Adams enforced restraint, worried about appearances, and sought to temper his fiancée’s high spirits. For her part Louisa Catherine Johnson, all the while amassing an impressive trousseau, insisted that she would willingly sacrifice luxury if her spouse’s rank and her country’s honor required her to do so. But although at first acknowledging her beau’s intellectual superiority, she soon exhibited a truly independent character by vigorously defending her own literary preferences.

Forty years later, as rank hardened into class, the working-women of Lowell explored *their* right to dress *how* and read

what they chose. Unlike Hutchinson, whose opinions were vulnerable to misappropriation, and unlike Johnson, consigned to pleading her case in camera before a lone, biased judge, the mill operatives confronted the contradictions and incongruities of their station publicly—in their self-authored magazine, the *Lowell Offering*. What, they asked, were the limits of virtuous desire? When did good taste, refinement, and self-development cross over into frivolity, vanity, and self-indulgence?

Navigating between the Scylla of vainglorious revelation and the Charybdis of vulgar display was also the fate of New England's emerging genealogical practice. In a republic that had cast off monarchical rule, hereditary boasting was suspect. Still, in New England, where colonial and Revolutionary heroes abounded and where pedigree and power remained linked, family pride was strong. Elites quietly began corresponding with informed individuals who could help them trace their lineages and serve as a cover for any potentially unseemly interest. By publishing the fruits of their labors, those emerging genealogists thereby gained their own measure of cultural influence and authority.

But, as William Dean Howells would learn, socializing among, corresponding with, and publishing on behalf of New England's elite did not make one a member of that select group. Neither did money, as Howells makes clear in his fictional account of Silas Lapham. Silas, whose ingenuity and hard work have granted him all that money can buy, fails to show that he has the qualities to comport with the less-well-to-do but established Coreys. Despite their latent disdain, the Coreys, however, do not snub the Laphams; rather, their power is so firmly entrenched and widely understood that they need do nothing to assert it.

Charles Francis Adams Jr. thought his influence was of that ilk. In his era, Boston politics were falling prey to Irish machinations, and so the city's elites looked further afield to make their mark. As the country evaluated its global role in the wake of the Spanish-American War, Adams watched his mugwump, anti-imperialist brethren grow increasingly irrelevant. He attempted to guide their cause along a pragmatic course, but he found to

his dismay that heredity, status, wealth, and power no longer guaranteed an audience susceptible to the elite's enlightened views.



Enlightened issues like the one you are about to read have, however, guaranteed *NEQ* an audience. In-depth research, cogent arguments, creative insights, and compelling writing characterize the essays *NEQ*'s editors offer their readers. And in return, you have done your part to support our enterprise. This year—and an economically gloomy one it has been—you have exceeded all expectations by contributing to our annual appeal at an unprecedented level. Although space limits us to listing only those individuals who have contributed one hundred dollars or more (see the next page), we assure you that each and every donation is warmly received and serves to further our scholarly endeavor, eighty-three years strong and still counting—thank *you* very much!

—LINDA SMITH RHOADS

DONORS TO *THE NEW ENGLAND QUARTERLY*
2009 Annual Appeal

(At the level of one hundred dollars and above)

John W. Adams	Patrick J. King
Robert J. Allison	Diana Korzenik
Virginia & Fred Anderson	Donald H. LaLiberte
Anonymous (4)	Henry Lee
Thomas R. Appleton	Ruby W. Linn Trust
Bernard Bailyn	Polly Longworth
Richard A. Baker	Pauline Maier
Frederick D. Ballou	Gloria L. Main
Georgia B. Barnhill	Louis P. Masur
Robert C. Baron	Robert Middlekauff
Mary Elizabeth K. & Winfred E. A. Bernhard	T. A. Milford
Mary Sarah Bilder	Ruth Miller Memorial Philanthropic Fund
Barney Bloom	Ellen G. Moot
Richard D. Brown	Edmund S. Morgan
Mr. & Mrs. David H. Burnham	Carla Mulford
John Cabot	Tom Mulvoy
Levin H. Campbell	John Murrin
Diego H. Castrillon	Jane & Richard Nylander
Joan R. Challinor	Russell K. Osgood
James W. Crawford	Nathaniel Philbrick
John W. Delaney	John Quincy Jr.
Eric Jay Dolin	H. Lewis Rapaport
Amy Domini	Linda Smith Rhoads
Michael S. Dukakis	Alan Rogers
W. Dean Eastman	Melinde Lutz Sanborn
Stephen Foster	Mark L. Sargent
William M. Fowler Jr.	C. W. Schaefer
Ebenezer Gay	Herbert T. Silbys II
M. Norman Graebner	Reiner Smolinski
Dr. Gerald R. Griffin	Lynne M. Spencer
Robert A. Gross	Charles M. Sullivan
Lilian Handlin	Bryant F. Tolles Jr.
Collier Hands	Len Travers
Francis W. Hatch	William W. Treat
William K. Healy	Alden T. Vaughan
Henry B. Hoff	Katheryn P. Viens
Carol Leighton Hull	Peter R. Virgadamo
Christopher Hussey	Maxine H. Wallin
David B. Ingram	Stephen J. Whitfield
Barbara Bullock Jones	John Taylor Williams
Michael Kammen	Thorp L. Wolford
Amalie Kass	Gordon S. Wood
Mary Kelley	Kyle F. Zelner