



Editorial

WHEN Samuel Eliot Morison announced the inaugural issue of *The New England Quarterly*, he envisioned a place where wide ranging inquiries into New England's history and literature were justifiable subjects "for the generous minded investigator." I think Morison would have approved of our selection of these essays for this, the last issue of our second year with the *Quarterly*. All four of our essays expand upon traditional topics and, in the course of their inquiries, explore the unpublished works of New England artists and "the solutions of biographical or critical problems and questions of authorship," two of the many paths he laid out for us in his opening announcement. In so doing, they shed light upon less explored areas of women's lives and the complicated impact of the printed word.

Two of our essays reflect the broadness of Morison's original vision in asking for us to take familiar subjects in new directions. Jennifer Gurley's essay leads us into an area not usually associated with Louisa May Alcott, her poetry. Through a reading of Alcott's poetry, Gurley finds a more complicated, ironically hard-minded sentimentality that demonstrates Alcott's distinction from Emerson while revealing her unique Transcendentalism. Where Gurley worked on a subject familiar to our readers, Myra Glenn's essay uses a familiar biographical method to examine the life of a lesser-known early woman physician, Harriot Keiza Hunt. Glenn complicates the story of women and the professionalization of medical practice. Largely self-taught, Hunt illustrates the messy process of women gaining access to formal medical training during the early nineteenth century. Glenn points out that prior to Elizabeth Blackwell's

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graduation from the Geneva Medical College in 1849, Hunt already had a flourishing medical practice. Blackwell's achievement was limited as Hunt discovered when she too sought formal training at the Harvard Medical School. Indeed, after Blackwell's graduation, Geneva announced it would cease admitting women students. Despite the support of the dean, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Hunt was ultimately denied admission to Harvard Medical School lectures after vigorous student protest. The denial, Glenn found, was rooted in not only gender bias but also white students' concerns over the admission of black men to the lectures.

Like those of Gurley and Glenn, our other two essays—by John Saillant and Daniel Koch—explore traditional topics and move them into new areas of inquiry. Both explore the circumstances of publication to shed light upon the way in which we understand text. Koch explores the first translation of Emerson into French, discovering that it was by an expatriate Pole, Adam Mickiewicz. Through a detailed textual exegesis, discovering heavy editing of Emerson's text, and research into Mickiewicz's career, Koch reveals the attempt to make political use of Emerson as a commentary on recent events in Poland. Saillant's essay explores the layered, racialized meanings to be found in print culture's treatment of black sexuality. By using the story of a Vermont church's treatment of premarital sex and a collection of essays commenting on it, he first parses out and identifies one of the authors as a black minister. Like Koch's, Saillant's textual analysis allows him to expand his perspective and see the ways in which the dictates of nineteenth-century print culture provided the language for conceptualizing and expressing sexuality as an attribute of black lives.

All four essays reflect the enduring nature of Morison's original vision, but almost certainly in ways he might not have anticipated, of the importance of the study of New England; more especially they demonstrate its vitality, of the capacity for combining intensive work on familiar topics and the development of new perspectives that confirm New England's

importance to the history and letters of the nation, if not the world.

—Jonathan M. Chu

In Memoriam

The Quarterly sadly notes the passing of a friend and colleague, James Oliver Horton, Benjamin Banneker Professor Emeritus of American Studies at George Washington University. Professor Horton and his wife Lois Horton, emeritus professor of history at George Mason, were instrumental in establishing the vital field of New England African American history. When they first began their research on Boston's antebellum African American community, Lois Horton recounts being told, "That's not possible, there was no community, and the documents aren't there."¹ Their work illustrates the ways in which diverse and creative perspectives demonstrate historians' capacities to see beyond the superficial and the obvious and serve to remind us of the importance of local and regional history in the telling of the American story. We hope that Jim and Lois would be gratified to know that recent articles in the *Quarterly* provide ample evidence of the vitality and originality in a field to which they contributed so much.

—Jonathan M. Chu

¹Quoted by Monica Mercuri, in, *The GW Hatchet*, February 27, 2017.