

1940

## College Books

University of New Mexico Press

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### Recommended Citation

University of New Mexico Press. "College Books." *New Mexico Quarterly* 10, 3 (1940). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmq/vol10/iss3/12>

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## College Books

*An Index to the Columbia Edition of the Works of John Milton*—Frank Allen Patterson—Columbia University Press, New York, 1940—\$12.50.

At a time when England, after 350 years of world supremacy and insular security, is fighting desperately for liberty, freedom, and the right of every man to plan his own life and choose his own career, America, fitly personified in the Columbia University Press, has at last brought together the first complete edition of the works of John Milton. Since life, property, and individuality itself are threatened with extermination in the name of the state, it is well that we have this monument to a life of thought, this memorial to a philosophy of individual self-development.

John Milton was primarily concerned with the qualities of righteousness and intelligence, the reasoning power being that faculty in man which makes for righteousness. Righteousness and intelligence are divine attributes and serve as common bonds between God and man. United in their purest essence they approximate Milton's conception of God. Forty-five pages of the index to this first complete edition of Milton's work are required to list his references to God, and there are other citations recorded under Creator, Father, Maker, Power, and Providence. Along with the space devoted to Divinity, other generous portions of the index are given to Liberty and to Free Will. These three great preoccupations of John Milton were really but three different aspects of the same thing. To Milton there was but one totalitarian power, but one binding authority on the individual. Man's sole obligation was to himself. His one duty was to obey the innermost laws of his own being. From the first to the last of life he was primarily the architect of his own soul. Thus, and thus only, could he fulfill the divine plan of creation.

To a Protestant like Milton, every man, when he has

his Bible in his hand, is a pope, is God's representative on earth. With the help of God's Grace, man's intelligence formulates the only laws which the individual need obey. When in conflict with this higher law, kings, governments, churches, and conventions have no claim on the individual. They are to be ignored or defied. No external force can be permitted to interfere with the development and the education of the man. Like Emerson, Milton believed that there should be as many churches as there are individuals. For, as Emerson says, in obtaining spiritual results, secondary or denominational sources may prove unreliable: the only safe way is "to acquaint yourself at first hand with the Divinity."

This two-volumed *Index* covers all proper names and all ideas and topics mentioned in any of Milton's poems or prose works. It serves as a concordance. The references are so specific that they may be used with any edition of Milton, short or long. It will give immediate answer to numerous questions arising in connection with Milton biography. For instance, we know that Milton cites Aristotle more frequently than he does Plato, there being four times as many references to the former as to the latter.

An *Index* crowns the work of a staff of Columbia scholars ably directed by Professor Frank Patterson. Of the eighteen volumes of text the first five contain all of Milton's poetry. With the close of the ninth volume or at the halfway point of the set, we have practically all of Milton's verse and prose that can be found in any of the ordinary editions of his works. The exception is certain passages from *The Christian Doctrine*, which occupies four impressive volumes toward the end.

The glory of the edition is its printing. As the reader continues to turn the ample pages, he is tempted by the generous type and the distinctive paper to dip into the little read *Logic* and the equally unfamiliar *History of Britain*. Milton's *Commonplace Books* come in for their share of attention, in the hope that they may prove as interesting as the

notebooks of Coleridge; but even with the Latin of the originals translated, they appear singularly unrewarding. After the dubious and apocryphal works which close the collection, one instinctively turns back to the beginning. It is pleasant to find Milton's summaries of the books of *Paradise Lost* printed, at last, in a size of type that does not degrade their importance.

The whole edition, with every variant found in every publication of Milton and with an entirely new rendering of his Greek, Latin, and Italian poems into the prose of present-day scholars, is relieved and beautified by numerous pictures of the poet and various plates of the title-pages of his famous editions. *An Index* rounds out and completes a work the magnitude of which is suggested by the fact that the first volume appeared in 1931.

DANE FARNSWORTH SMITH

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*Albuquerque*

*Philosophy in the Poetry of Edwin Arlington Robinson*—Estelle Kaplan—Columbia University Press, New York, 1940—\$2.25.

A handsomely bound, well-printed book, whose chief value lies in its clear and penetrating analyses of many of Robinson's poems; poems usually found difficult by most readers. The plan of the book, as set forth in the table of contents, is ingenious, though perhaps unnecessarily subtle. Miss Kaplan's own division of her work runs thus:

Part I: The Sources of Robinson's Idealism. A. Biographical Clues. B. Critics' Comments. (Query: Can "critics' comments" be a "source" of a poet's "idealism"?) C. Royce and Schopenhauer: Their Influence upon Robinson. D. Stages of Robinson's Intellectual Growth. (Query: Can the "stages" of a poet's "intellectual growth" be at the same time a "source" of that poet's "idealism"?)

Part II: Philosophical Analyses. I. Light and Shadows. A. *Captain Craig*. B. *The Man against the Sky*. C. *The Man Who Died Twice*. D. *Amaranth*. (Omissions: 1. There is

no analysis of *Lancelot*, wherein the most often used words are "Darkness" and "Light," the "Vision," and the "Gleam." The author has also failed to note the contrast between the last few lines of *Lancelot*, with its inspired ending, perhaps the most beautiful of all in Robinson's longer poems:

But always in the darkness he rode on  
Alone; and in the darkness came the Light.

2. The sonnet, "Credo," especially the last profoundly optimistic line, "I feel the coming glory of the Light.") II. Love and Castles. A. *Merlin*. (Omission: *Lancelot* and *Tristram*.) III. Love and Houses. A. *Cavender's House*. B. *The Glory of the Nightingales*. C. *Matthias at the Door*. D. *Tal-lifer*. (Omissions: 1. "Roman Bartholow," a long love-poem, in fact, Robinson's longest, crowded with images drawn from architecture and the building of houses. 2. "The March of the Cameron Men," Browning's *Pippa Passes*, in reverse.) IV. Dragons and Chimneys. A. *Dionysus in Doubt*. B. *King Jasper*. (Query: why not *Hamilton and Burr*, *Alexander and Genevieve*, *Dionysus and Demos*?)

Here are a few questions I should like to ask: Is any poet, any *true* poet, a philosopher in the sense that he sets forth a logical system of philosophy? I think not. Hence, it would seem more important to a reader for an analyst of Robinson's poetry to present the poet's philosophy of life: that is, (1) the poet's attitude toward God, together with such problems as faith, belief, and doubt; (2) his treatment of nature; (3) his attitude towards man, and the problems of life; though even such analyses are of doubtful value; for who can be sure that the views expressed in a narrative poem are not those of the characters instead of being the poet's? Besides, I should like to see a summary of the poet's philosophical ideas. Here are some other questions that occur to me:

1. Will this book create new readers for Robinson? It is doubtful.

2. Will it help those who already like him? Yes.

I resent the severely objective attitude of Miss Kaplan; for though many of the passages she quotes are remarkably beautiful, she never seems to be aware of this beauty.

Still, I am glad to see this book, since its appearance seems to indicate an increasing interest in the work of America's most distinguished poet; I should like it better if the author had even once avowed her liking for Robinson's poetry. Is this just another thesis?

GEORGE ST. CLAIR

*Ocala, Florida*

*Tableau's Narrative of Loisel's Expedition to the Upper Missouri—*  
Annie H. Abel, Editor—University of Oklahoma Press, Norman,  
1940—\$3.50.

Another excellent contribution to the history of the West is made by Dr. Annie H. Abel in the editing, and by Dr. Rose A. Wright in the translating, of the Tableau manuscript on experiences in the early days along the upper Missouri. From a most able introduction, one clearly gets the picture of the day, the international intrigues, trade conditions, previous expeditions, the position of Regis Loisel, and the biography of Pierre Tableau. This initial essay merits praise for the thoroughness of its documentation, its logical presentation, and its most satisfying tracing of the history of the manuscript.

The narrative itself is of importance, being connected, as it is, with the Spanish regime in Louisiana, with both the French and British in North America, and with the United States and its explorers of the upper Missouri, Lewis and Clark. Written by an expert trader and man of education who lived months among the Indians in the region, it describes the country, the river and the difficulties of traversing it, the flora and fauna, the Indians, their dress, customs, religious practices and ceremonies. A vein of humor pervades the narrative, as: "... if the Sioux is the man of nature so much praised by poets, every poetic license has been taken in painting him...."

The volume is concluded with valuable appendices including a genealogical table of the Tabeau family, the trade licenses, and papers on Loisel's trading record.

Although I was unable to judge the accuracy of the translation, since the French is not given, I found the document in its English version notably readable. A few minor errors occur, and the omission of a bibliography is to be regretted. The book is, however, well indexed and deserves commendation for its careful editing.

DOROTHY WOODWARD

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Albuquerque*

### Michelangelo Walks Again (Among the San Juan Sandstones)

By ALLISON ROSS

And dying, Michelangelo became  
One with the wind, and swept the cluttered land  
Looking for peace, wearied with wealth and fame  
And rested here upon this desolate sand.  
But wind and hungry hearts desire food.  
Not the white marble but the red sandstone  
Vital as blood and yielding to his mood  
Throbs from his fingers into flesh and bone.  
Again they march, the prophets in relief,  
Grave pilgrims, all the giants of his brain,  
And the two Marys at the tomb in grief. . .  
Sculpturing solace out of ancient pain  
Here does the tortured soul forget its scars  
Molding the cliffs under the desert stars.