SARAH ORNE JEWETT'S INTERPRETATION
OF
MAINE LIFE

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One of the principal pleasures in writing this thesis has been the anticipation of having it pass under the criticism of Doctor Turner. To her evaluation of the ideas from their first groping toward formulation to their present state, is due whatever merit this slight study may have.

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Mrs. Hoyt D. Foster has supplied me with information which no one else could give. Her personal acquaintance with two of the authors has thrown light upon their interpretations which has proved invaluable.

Mr. Edwin Arlington Robinson very kindly responded to an inquiry telling me where I could be sure of Maine in his poetry.
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Bibliography
There is in Maine a kind of state-consciousness which makes a guest of all who come from other places, no matter how welcome they are made to feel, nor how long they remain. Maine has an atmosphere of distinction which condenses in such phrases as, "This is a typical Maine winter", "That's the Maine way of doing it", "He's a typical Maine character." To say that a person is a typical New York State character would mean nothing at all. Maine has a collective personality that is not altogether elusive, if we know how to come at it. Robert Frost captured something of another State's less distinct character in his poem New Hampshire.

From my undergraduate days, I found a new interest mapped for me in literature by Professor Ellsworth Huntington's theories of the effect of geography upon human character and behavior. How does literature reflect character and behavior, and to what extent is the nature of the writing due to geographic influence? Were any of the ideas that were occupying the British mind in the Eighteenth Century due to geography? Was the fever for the exotic due in any way to satiety with the interest in their small island? Did the pushing back of the frontiers in America yield anything to the romantic movement? Were any of the political writings free from the central idea that England is an island? Sometimes such an idea baffles the attention, but sometimes it clamors impatiently for admission.

Later, Professor William McDougall's theory of action extended the boundaries of the new interest. How are these instincts which he considers the springs of all human activity, affected by climate and soil, and how do people write whose innate dispositions have been subjected to these influences? No one can read an account of the hardships of the early days in Maine without being convinced of the strength in the English settler of the instincts of pugnacity and curiosity and self-assertion. It was his curiosity that sent him venturing to a new world, his pugnacity that made him fight his way in a hostile and discouraging environment, his instinct of self-assertion organized into the system of a strong
self-respect that appears in his magnificent self-reliance. According to the characterizations of Sarah Orne Jewett, his descendants, after more than two centuries of unsuccessful struggle, have no zest for investigation, a decidedly weakened initiative, a fighting spirit that is wholly absorbed in the daily struggle for existence. But they have not compromised their ideals; through disappointment and sacrifice, through danger and suffering, they have relied upon themselves alone.

Maine offers a unique temptation for speculations of the nature I have indicated. The University has allowed me to submit as a Master's thesis in English a study of the way the state is represented by Sarah Orne Jewett, and by some of the living writers whose knowledge of its traditions and whose artistic integrity qualify them as reliable witnesses. In gathering material, I found six authors who agree upon several essentials of characterization. One would be utterly defeated in trying to find in the poetry and drama and fiction of the natives of New York State any consensus of opinion upon character, or social and economic conditions. No other Eastern State has the same homogeneity.

The history of my interest in this subject is stated to throw light upon the type of material which I have considered significant. I have drawn no conclusions which an amateur could not safely infer, but I have brought into relief, I hope, the opinion of the authors themselves upon the relation of geography to the characters and behavior of the people that they represent.
INTRODUCTION

Maine is the only New England state whose development has been sufficiently distinctive to give meaning to a study of the way it is interpreted by authors who have been born and educated in its self-conscious atmosphere. Such a study reveals surprising accord in content with geographic expectations. Even certain aspects of style have a look of inevitability.

Like New Hampshire and Vermont, Maine borders the French settlements of Canada on the north. Like these states it is subject to the double pressure of a stimulating climate and an unwilling soil. In contrast to them, however, it has an extended seacoast and a low altitude. The climate makes little provision for relaxation. The struggle to keep abreast with necessity has a selective effect upon the dispositions of the people; only those with a margin of vitality have a forward look. In the writings of Maine authors, by far the greater number of characters are defeated or passive or depressed. Sarah Orne Jewett, who makes the largest contribution to a study of Maine in literature, has no illustration of the forward urge of a central male character, and she wrote before the Wordsworthian faith in the virtue of rural life was quite out of fashion.

Though the characters are defeated, they are not often cowed. No story is centered about the emotion of fear, nor are the characters even incidentally fearful. As an emotional motive, it
has very little fascination for Maine writers. This tradition has a remote origin in geography. From its earliest settlement, Maine, because of its physical character, has faced hardship and danger. The wealth of its northern forests, enhanced by the facility of shipping down the navigable rivers, spoke the same message to two opposing interests. No wonder that the Frenchman and the Englishman whose timber had been drawn upon for over six centuries, looked covetously upon the territory which was to become Maine.

No wonder that the preoccupied English rulers gave comprehensive grants that could be established only by fighting. It is not surprising that the French exploited the hostility of the Indians to oust the incumbents. What is almost incomprehensible is the determination of the Englishman to hold on. The English settler who survived the tension of Indian warfare, who established his claim over

1 A few of these grants which brought about confusion are quoted here from Williams, William D., The History of the State of Maine.

April 10, 1606, King James granted to the North and South Virginia Company territory between the 34°45' north latitude, and all islands within a hundred miles of the coast. p. 198

November 3, 1620, King James issued another patent of land between 40°48' north latitude, and from sea to sea. p. 221

The third article in the Treaty of St. Germain gave the French king a right to dispute English possessions in northern Maine. pp. 246-248

Cromwell's patent to La Tour were grounds for endless confusion and conflict. p. 364

Charles II granted to his brother James on March 12, 1664 all territory between St. Croix and Pemaquid. p. 407
French opposition, who found time to harvest enough to sustain his family through the tedious and uncompromising winter, established a tradition of fearlessness and self-reliance which the characters of today seem unconsciously to emulate.

Self-reliance shades rapidly into aloofness, one of Maine's outstanding characteristics. This also has its roots in geography. Maine's climate and Maine's location do not invite year-round population. In thinly settled districts men are forced into the habit of thinking things out for themselves. A man's problems are more completely individualized. He distrusts the ability of another to judge for him. Moreover, mistakes cost too much. He must defend his mind against captivating changes. This encasement is the aloofness of the uneducated. There is another type which also has a geographic foundation. Coastal Maine, until the Embargo of 1807, was in direct communication with Europe and the Orient through trade. On fortunes made on the sea, a privileged class arose, which, together with the more fortunate descendants of the clergy, developed into a formal aristocracy, used to authority, accustomed to travel, not looking chiefly to Boston like the rest of New England, but quite over its head to London and Paris.

1 For a description of the First Embargo Act, see Channing, Edward, A History of the United States, Vol. IV, p. 399
For Maine's reaction to this act, see Williams, William D, The History of Maine, Vol. II, pp. 603-604
For the effect of the act upon the development of Maine, see, Jewett, Sarah Orne, Deephaven, pp. 64, 93, 159; The King of Folly Island, pp. 237-238; The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 101; The Life of Nancy, p. 277
For the effect of all the Embargo Acts upon Maine, see Varney, George J. The Young People's History of Maine, p. 224
But even European prestige did not influence them to any great extent. Foreign traditions did not fit Maine's conditions. The aloofness of both classes unites in Maine's strong conservatism.

In speech and in conceptions, as well as in behavior, geography has had its influence. Incomes from dwindling estates, and incomes tediously drawn from the soil are not to be inconsiderately spent. Educational budgets are carefully planned to meet the minimum requirements of native teachers. Hence peculiarities of speech have longer life. We find the dialect conservative, rather than inventive. Compared to the rich imagery of the Southern negro's speech, the language is faded, though we should expect to find it elaborately colored with expressions from the sea.

In the characters represented, the imaginative level is low, not only in speech, but in conceptions. Of the writers themselves, few are brilliantly imaginative. If we attempt to account for this poverty by saying that the mind is so completely entrapped in reality that there is no opportunity to dream, we think at once of the Norwegian folklore with its insouciant abandonment. For some reason the native of Maine does not attempt to escape his environment by means of imaginative flights.

While it satisfies our curiosity to see to what extent the characteristics analyzed accord with geographic predictions, we shall attempt to prove that geography is responsible for them.
Our aim is to find out how the authors whose knowledge qualifies them to speak, and whose integrity places them above the possibility of exploiting their knowledge interpret this conservative and highly individualized state.

No Maine writer makes a more satisfactory analysis of social and economic conditions in the light of modern geography than Sarah Orne Jewett. Her mind is scientific; her imagination is never wholly released from logic. She is able to record with accuracy and clearness what she has seen and heard. She can reconstruct with admirable skill, characters from bits of human nature she has found here and there. But they must move within the range of their own mental and physical limitations. They can never travel with the Norwegian East of the Sun and West of the Moon. On the east there is the sea for fishing, and the ledgy hillsides to be plowed on the west, and the stories lie between. But however logical and accurate her interpretation of Maine may be, it is no textbook of history or sociology. Her sketches are much closer to poetry in tone than to science. When an observation passes through the mind of Sarah Orne Jewett, it comes out not fact, but truth. Miss Jewett's gift is the ability to round out an impression. She can measure and direct our emotional reaction with such finesse, that we come out of her pages, not with information, but with something very like experience. It is with the utmost difficulty that we can dispel\text{'} the illusion.
We know that these people once lived, just as we know that the
junipers and the bayberry and the sweet fern are really there.
We know Mrs. Peet as well as if we had bought butter of her for
years.

No lady bountiful attitude ever produced anything so
real as these old men and patient children and busy old ladies.
Charles Miner Thompson, in his essay in the Atlantic for May, 1904,
does Miss Jewett's art an injustice in suggesting that her atti-
tude was that of Lady Bountiful, and he goes to some pains to es-
tablish his position. If ever there were a true aristocrat, Miss
Jewett was one. There is never the slightest suggestion of patron-
age in all the Maine sketches. In a letter to Mr. Thompson, Octo-
ber, 1904, she says, "It is hard for this person (made of Berwick
dust) to think of herself as a 'summer visitor'."¹ She was an
aristocrat, but not in a narrow social sense, alone. She had the
most genuine ideals for her art, and would never compromise with
any silly pose. The summer visitor was merely a literary device
to take her to Deephaven and to Dunnet's Landing, but once there
she has the confidence that only the daughter of the country doc-
tor could have. Lady Bountiful could never reach the depths that
she sounds. We are confident, too, that her literary endeavor was
not motivated by the desire to create a better understanding be-
tween the summer visitor and the native. That was a justification
tag which her Victorian conscience demanded. She came to have few

¹ Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett, p. 194
illusions about some of the summer visitors. In a letter from Poland Springs she writes, "The best of them look as if keeping things just right and according to at this high rate, were almost too much effort...It is the kind of rich creature who are more at home in big hotels than in fine houses...what my old grandfather who had travelled wide, meant when he said, 'Oh, they're not people, they're only images!'". If any incentive beyond the delight in writing were needed, we think it is hinted at by Doctor Leslie in "A Country Doctor," "But I wish we understood the value of all these old news loving people. So much local history and tradition must die with every one of them if we take no trouble to save it." Preserving local tradition was undoubtedly part of her pleasure in writing.

We know much less than we wish about the life of this artist, and Mr. Mathiesson gives us nothing, as he says in a note at the end of his book entitled Sarah Orne Jewett, except what has already appeared in her writings. We are at liberty, then, to fancy her climbing into the carriage with her father, the country doctor.

"Did you see the queer kitty, father? William sets by her on account of her havin' a bob tail. We don't deem it advisable to maintain a cat just on account of its having a bob tail. Do we? We prefer a proper mouser."

Sarah probably catches the intonation so well that they both chuckle. Somehow she managed to store in her mind not only the

1 Ibid., p. 160
2 A Country Doctor, p. 140
dialect vocabulary, but the constructions and what is still more difficult, the intonations and the word combinations which make intonations inevitable. Her skill in making proper names sound familiar is worthy of a separate study.

Sometimes the two friends, father and young daughter, drive away sadly from the cottage because everything looks so hopeless, but they do not allow their emotions to furnish them any entertainment.

When she has become a young lady, we can see her busily scribbling away, trying to capture on paper these old people whom she enjoys so much, and when she has written anything that suits her, she runs to her sister and asks, "Who does this sound like, Mary?" "Why old Mis' Nate Evil Beckett, for all the world."

Nothing in her letters indicated that she wrote for any other reason than the pure delight of creating. That is why we feel that her interpretation of Maine is entirely reliable.

If her society stories are weakened by a Boston consciousness, her Maine sketches are characterized by a genuine Maine aloofness. The surest proof of her aristocratic attitude toward her art is her resistance to the influence of recent and contemporary idols.

At a time when the literary qualities of Emerson and Lowell and Thackeray and Dickens were the criteria for merit, Miss Jewett in her South Berwick home wrote of the little corner of the world as she saw it, or remembered it, without distortion, or satire, or sentimentality, or vagueness or Anglo-consciousness. She was one of the first American writers.
Apart from the great abundance of reliable material that Miss Jewett's sketches contribute, they have another value. They furnish the only evidence of a phase of American life which has suffered complete erosion. Her Maine stories are laid in a little section of the southwestern part of the state, sometime after the war of 1812. She represents a young country dying of old age, the losing struggle of man against environment.

No other writers whose works we have examined have been so immersed in Maine as Miss Jewett, yet their writings yield material to compare with her interpretation.

In his two volumes of poems, Maine Coast and the Inner Harbor, Wilbert Snow definitely portrays Maine seacoast life, its activities, its characters, its language. He is "salvaging dominion for the sea". Owen Davis states in his preface to Icebound, "I am now turning toward my own people, the people of northern New England, whose folklore, up to the present time, has been quite neglected in our theatre. Here I have at least tried to draw a true picture of these people, and I am of their blood, born of generations of Northern Maine small-town folk, and brought up among them....They are neither buffoons nor sentimentalists, and at least neither their faults nor their virtues are borrowed from the melting pot, but are the direct result of their own heritage and environment."
The setting of Uplands is Maine, the Bluehills region. Miss Chase's interpretation is from the point of view of her characters. Since they do not use the dialect, but the familiar or colloquial, the characters do not sound out of the ordinary to each other. The economic struggle is seen from their angle, not from an observer's. The landscape is usually for them, the weather, too. How they look, we can never know, for their looks did not matter to them beyond the fact that Martha's appearance gave her two lovers pleasure. All we can know is what they thought and experienced after the story opens. There are few generalizations. The novel is as free from literary encumbrance as a problem in Euclid. It is a flawless composition, but for its very unity, it deprives us of material which would have been invaluable for this study. Miss Chase is in a position to know the dialect as it is spoken today, and her contribution would have been that of a reliable and qualified witness.
Character and Characterization

Descendants of the English settlers occupy Miss Jewett's attention in the sketches of Maine. She sees, however, in the faces of those present at the Bowden reunion, traces of French ancestry, and she attributes to French blood their grace of manner.\(^1\)

Other aristocratic traits are due to the descent from the ecclesiastical families of New England.

"I have often noticed in country villages the descendants of those clergymen who once ruled New England sternly and well, and while they may be men and women of undeveloped minds, without authority and even of humble circumstances, they yet bear the mark of authority and dignified behavior."\(^2\)

However gracious, or dignified, the characters are, they have lost the robustness and initiative of the English pioneer settlers. The little world that Miss Jewett describes is as passive as the hills that hem it in, and it suffers disintegration with no more active resistance. These are pictures of the fragments of a once solid and imposing society. In this broken world, only one story centers about a constructive effort; Farmer Finch's daughter turns the power of her young intelligence into the service of the farm, and makes good her father's losses. Most of the other stories deal with concessions to the environment. We

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2 The King of Folly Island, p. 82
have, however, as incidental or antecedent narrative, accounts of women who have stared the wolf out of countenance, and have single-handed brought their families to maturity. If ever anything is accomplished, it is done by a woman.

To be sure, there are two or three vigorous, middle-aged men in this feminine world, but they are either raisonneurs, or merely background. Doctor Leslie is a combination of educational theory and conservative rationalizing, rather than a bespattered country doctor with a horsey smell. Israel Owen, however, has much more personality than his faultless daughter, but he merely sets her off in the novel. John Hilton, who took his little girls on a holiday, is also a reality, and a character on his own account, too. There are the two good natured hunters of the coon, whose chuckle is infectious. ¹ We should like to meet all of Miss Jewett's old fishermen and the captains when we go to Deephaven, or to Dunnet's Landing. We hope that we shall be spared the young men. They embarrass our imagination as they do the author's. Miss Jewett is ill at ease with dynamic youth of either sex. Hers is no moving-picture imagination. She must have quiet old people who will sit for their portraits.

Though stubbornness is a characteristic of inertia, Miss Jewett presents only three significant cases, two of which are probably pathological. ² The King of Folly Island, unable to make

¹ The Queen's Twin, p. 170
² The King of Folly Island
the necessary adjustment to his neighbors, sacrifices the happiness and then the life, first of his wife, and next of his daughter in a bleak exile on a far-off island. Instead of forgetting her sorrow in service to others, poor Joanna, disappointed in love, does penance for the unpardonable sin in solitude.\(^1\) In Law Lane the resources and the comfort and the happiness of both families are sacrificed to an unreasonable and enduring feud.\(^2\) There are a few other less significant cases.

Of adjustments requiring constructive force rather than passive resistance, we have two examples. The Dunnet Shepherdess, outside the sketch, endures almost unbelievable nervous and physical hardship to raise sheep on the ledgy hillside farm. We have already mentioned Farmer Finch's daughter. The Only Son\(^3\), dodging the slurs of his nagging family, perfects a patent which brings about the happy denouement.

In characters for whom initiative is difficult, we expect cunning to be traded for effort. Miss Jewett is conscious of some of the small dealing which is known as Yankee shrewdness. She says, "One could only forgive and pity their petty sharpness which showed itself in trifling bargains when one understood how much a single

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1 The Country of the Pointed Firs
2 The King of Folly Island, p. 115
3 The Only Son, Tales of New England
dollar seemed where dollars come so rarely." 1, "Yet the older people had a hard look, as if they had always to be on the alert and must fight for their place in the world. " 2 But her stories show very little deceit. The delight in retributive justice to "Brer Fox in the negro folk-lore reflects an envy of his cunning. The three or four allusions here to petty underhandedness are told without much relish, and in such a way that it is clear that the general level is above it.

"The cake was of a kind peculiar to its maker who prided herself upon never being without it; and there was some trick of her hand or secret ingredient which was withheld when she responded with apparent cheerfulness to requests for its recipe." 3

"It had been reported that when the elder Thatcher had given away cuttings he had always stolen out to the orchard the night afterward and ruined them." 4

The trickery that functions in the plots is not very subtle nor very convincing. In Going to Shrewsbury, a rascally nephew cheats his poor aunt out of her farm. 5 That he could accomplish his crude deceit shows either a very naive society or a lack of ingenuity on the part of the author. A Landless Farmer lets his son-in-law and two daughters trick him out of his property. 6

1 Deephaven, pp. 190, 189
2 Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 237
3 A Country Doctor, p. 11
4 A Country Doctor, p. 12
5 Best Short Stories, Vol. 11, p. 90
6 A Landless Farmer, Atlantic Monthly, Vol. LI
pathos of the Dulham Ladies is heightened to catastrophe by the
flattery and deceit of the wig maker. The plot centers about a
robbery in Dark New England Days, but given a sea chest, and gold,
and two dull old ladies what author could write anything else?
Mrs. Bonney, the hermit, recounts her accusation of a petty thief
who was experiencing his annual conversion. Robbery, however, is
not a common annoyance. Almira Todd shuts her door to keep out the
dust, but carries the key of the unlocked door in her pocket.

On the positive side, we find the sense of honor on a high
plane. It has already passed out of the foreground of conscious
effort and become a habit of thought and action. When Farmer Finch
is enumerating his obligations, the responsibility of his share in
supporting the minister is spoken in the same breath with the legal
obligation of paying his taxes. Farmer Finch is but an ordinary
representative. To be ruined financially at the end of a lifetime
of penny by penny advances is a grievous experience, yet neither
the loss of the money, nor the disgrace involved, compared to the
agony of disappointment that the old selectman felt in the appearance
of dishonesty in An Only Son. It is by this indirect method of
assuming a high standard of honor, not by direct discussion of a
point, that Miss Jewett establishes unquestionably the moral level
of her characters.

1 Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 64
2 Strangers and Wayfarers
3 Deephaven
4 The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 144
After having read these sketches, we found ourselves marvelling that we could have been so ignorant of the force of public opinion in rural communities. It seems to be in inverse ratio to the density of the population. In crowded cities, where criticism is generalised, social sanction has nothing like the compulsion that it has in the country. We draw our conclusions from statements like this:

"They [the children] looked thin and pitiful, but even in that lonely place, where they so seldom saw a stranger or even a neighbor, they showed that there was an evident effort to make them look like other children, and they were neatly dressed though there could be no mistake about their being poor."¹

And from the symbolism of the "Best Room" as Miss Jewett sees it.

"It was indeed a tribute to society to find a room set apart for her behests out there on so apparently neighborless and remote island."²

When we consider what a disproportionate amount of space in the house was closed to the occupants, and how great, in relation to the incomes, the cost of furnishing it, not for the family to enjoy, but as a symbol, a certificate of membership, to the fraternity of the respectable, we begin to appreciate the force of social consciousness in Miss Jewett's rural Maine. Conspicuous waste is certainly not confined to a sophisticated society.

Based on this strong social consciousness, is an intense and often unreasonable pride. The characters refuse to acknowledge

¹ Deephaven
² The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 64
either financial or physical disability. Father Hayden will not "live in the chimbly corner of another man's house."¹ Aunt Cynthy Dallett lets her niece help her only when she discovers that she will thereby help the niece.² The country doctor considers it a fall of pride to call counsel.³ When a family has risen above the common level, it feels constrained more than ever to keep up appearances, since it has the additional burden of shining for the benefit of those below. The Dulham ladies bought their wigs because they thought that they owed so much consideration to the parish.⁴ The mother and sister "thought of Leonard Jaffrey's ancestry as if it were a solvent bank of distinctions and emoluments in which he had a noble credit account."

To follow any but the action patterns of the group is to acknowledge inferiority, hence the elaborate conventions of both the town aristocracy and the farmers. But out of the desire to appear like the rest also arises a habit of self control. The death scene of Adeline in A Country Doctor illustrates the nervous stability of the ordinary character. Those who took care of her went about the sad business as if it were a part of the regular routine. The stories are full of instances where nerves are put to test. All emergencies like sickness, and fire and death become social, rather than individual or family responsibilities. Just as the neighbor must leave behind his own work to help, so he leaves

¹ The Life of Nancy, p. 164  
² The Queen's Twin, p. 195  
³ A Country Doctor, p. 141  
⁴ Best Short Stories, vol. II, p. 73-74
behind his nervous peculiarities.

It is the social consciousness which accounts also for the lack of neurosis in the stories. In view of the fact that so many of the plays of Ibsen and Strindberg are centered about neurotic characters, it is surprising to find that in this tense northern struggle for livelihood, there is so little abnormality. Poor Joanna, the King of Folly Island, and Leonard Jaffrey are the only characters unable to make the social adjustment. The ego at war with his surroundings is not part of Miss Jewett's picture of New England. Even the insanity which we are told is so common among the lonely farmwives is not emphasized, and Miss Jewett was the daughter of a country doctor.

Just as there is nervous stability, there is emotional equilibrium. This emotional poise is a target for the envious thrusts against New England by those who fail to understand it. It is popularly sneered at as emotional suppression. The stories of Miss Jewett show an even flow of emotion, rather than a suppression of it followed by an outburst of violence. She herself rejoiced in the volcanic figure, though her stories reduce the volcano to papier mâché and candle energy. When she introduces

1 The Country of the Pointed Firs, p.98
2 The King of Folly Island, p.1
3 Ibid., p.238
the account of the Bowden Family Reunion, she says,

"Such is the hidden fire of enthusiasm in New England nature that once given an outlet, it shines forth with almost volcanic heat and light."¹

There follows an account of an eruption of ministers' speeches, gingerbread, pies, and poetry. We recall an outbreak of enthusiasm November 11, 1918.

Miss Jewett had previously used the figure in A Country Doctor, following the account of the romance of the mother of Nan, Dr. Ferris, a globe trotter, comments, "I tell you Leslie, that for intense, self-centered smouldering volcanoes of humanity, New England cannot be matched the world over ..... By and by you will all have blown up, you quiet descendants of the Puritans."²

We looked for an emotional outbreak.

In Law Lane the emotion of hate flowed constantly through generations:

"Barnets and Crosbys had gone to their graves with bitter hatred and sullen desire for revenge in their hearts. Perhaps this one great interest outside the simple matters of food and clothing and farmers' work had taken the place to them of drama and literature and art."³

There the emotion of hate expressed itself adequately, and as the author indicates, it had its use.

¹ The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 156
² A Country Doctor, p. 100
³ Old Friends and New, p. 139
Grief has no violent expression in these pages. Nowhere have we read a more touching rendering of father love than was expressed in the grief of the father for *An Only Son*. Elijah Tilley's tender reverence for the memories of his dead wife showed where the stream of emotion had flowed.

So much service is demanded of love among the rural poor that the emotion is easily expended in action. Almost every variety of the tender emotion is illustrated in these Maine sketches. The love between father and daughter is sympathetically implied in *A Marsh Island* and in *The Hilton's Holiday*. There is almost dramatic energy in the father-son love in *An Only Son*. Mother love escapes the sentimental treatment it is so likely to suffer. Except in the spoiling of Leonard Jaffrey, it is scarcely exploited at all. A mother's extravagant love for her son is given, after her death, as the explanation of her antagonism to her daughter-in-law, but it has no part in the plot. The dutiful care of her paralyzed mother by the Dunnet Shepherdess, and William's thoughtfulness for his mother would give Doctor Freud nothing to work upon. We detect, however, an undercurrent of antagonism between the mother and daughter, an anticipation of the Freudian school, perhaps. We have, also, the

1 *A Village Shop in The King of Folly Island*, p. 229
2 *The Country of the Pointed Firs*
3 *A Marsh Island, The Hilton's Holiday*
story of the love of a young servant for the niece of her mistress
told in something of the romantic manner. 1 Three women 2 love
worthless men; one, a younger man. In A Marsh Rosemary there is
the reversal of the Enoch Arden theme. The love of old men for
their lost wives is twice rendered 3 with Miss Jewett's usual
sensitiveness for the feelings of older people. The emotion of
two marriageable young people taxes her ability. The one out-
standing exception to her failure with sex love is Jim's Little
Woman 4, where the courtship is completed for the opening incident
and the remainder of the story is the frantic efforts of the
little woman to hang on to the tag ends of love. There is one
jealous lover, but he only sulks. The humorous situation in
several of the stories of widows or widowers arises out of their
failure to conceal the practical basis of their courtship. It may
be that Miss Jewett's shyness of the two explosive forms, sex love
and maternal love, explains the lack of violence in the stories.
On the other hand, the author may have seen life in Maine as we see
it, moving along steadily and quietly without much that is shocking
or sensational.

1 Martha's Lady, The Queen's Twin, p. 135
2 The Lost Lover, A Marsh Rosemary, Jim's Little Woman
3 A Second Spring, Along Shore
4 A White Heron, p. 86
5 A Native of Winby, p. 65
6 A Marsh Island
Of the emotion of fear almost nothing is said. The fear of death determines the outcome in Law Lane. No other story is involved with fear of any kind, either physical or moral. Twice, however, Miss Jewett does say that she has noticed a fear of the deep woods among older people that is more than a fear of bewilderment, and hints that it is a hangover from the time of the Indians.1 Aside from this mention of the emotion and a jeer in the country doctor that some one is afraid of the dark, there is a striking absence of any reference to it. The descendants of men who "have rounded the Cape of Good Hope and braved the angry seas of Cape Horn in small wooden ships"2 are not going to quail at the dangers that beset every day life. An old woman lives all alone far from help of neighbors and is unafraid;3 the Dunnet Shepherdess stays out all night with her flocks; a little girl gets up long before daylight and climbs to the top of a tall pine to see the White Heron.

This almost total absence of fear checks perfectly with our own experience in Maine, and with what we have learned of its tradition. The only fear is the fear of social criticism, the fear of being thought afraid. There is a story about the time when the first dynamite was used to break up a log jam. When the signal was

1 The Queen's Twin, p. 17, and Strangers and Wayfarers
2 The Queen's Twin, p. 1
3 Ibid, p. 195
given to rush from the scene of the explosion, two lumberjacks stood still in their places. No one was going to twit them for running. Timidity in either sex is looked upon with little patience. We do not know where we could go to parallel the experience of seeing middle aged and even elderly people with poise and no perceptible increase in speed, cross a road before an oncoming automobile.

If not extinct, volcanoes are dormant in Miss Jewett's Maine. Emotional outbreaks in her stories would surprise us almost as much as an actual eruption of Mount Agementicus. The volcanic figure is an unfortunate one, for the stories tend to establish another theory, the theory we should like to call applied emotion. It is not that under the surface of our being are seething fires that "will someday blow us all to pieces," but rather that the current of emotion is generated as it is used. The Teuton, the Celt and the Latin, accustomed to advertise their feelings, fail to understand the "quiet descendants of the Puritans" who prefer to have theirs go unnoticed. So long as he may express his emotion in activity, the New Englander is at ease, but when he must speak and tell it, he becomes embarrassed. Almiry Todd had no language but deeds for her feelings. When she felt tender she was gruff.

Although Miss Jewett represents a passive society, it is by no means a negative one. The virtues are those of positive and strong characters, crippled, but unwilling to acknowledge defeat.
For emotional stability, for a highly developed sense of honor, for a completely socialized conscience, these Maine stories are above the level of expectation.

The tradition of fearlessness is undoubtedly an outcome of geographic conditions. It is not quite so easy to account for the emotional stability. It looks like a direct inheritance from English ancestry. Judging from literature, the Irish, who are under an equally difficult economic strain, are far more explosive than these Maine farmers. The Canadian French who have settled here show more excitability today than the descendants of the English settlers.

It is possible that the age of the characters may account partly for their poise. Those who have survived have put in to an untroubled harbor. The young people outside the bar of Miss Jewett's interest, for all we know, may be battling with violent and destructive emotional forces.

Two children of excessive vitality worry this quiet world. Joel, in *Law Lane*, creates the mischief that resolves the feud and ends in the happy union of the lovers. Nan, in *A Country Doctor*, endears herself to the doctor, but furnishes the village gossips with a perpetual fund of mischievous anecdotes. One neighbor sums her up thus:
"She's wild as a hawk, and a perfect torment. One day she'll come strollin' in and beseechin' me for a bunch of flowers, and the next she'll be here after dark scarin' me out o' my seven senses . . . . She'd better be kept to school, 'stead o' growin' up this way; but she keeps the rest o' the young ones all in a brile, and this last teacher wouldn't have her there at all."

Other children are small elderly people. There is one while sketch devoted to little Georgie, the lobster boy. It is the kind of story that would have been "sweet" under any less restrained treatment. Georgie's life and personality are respected. Beyond the present of a knife, and an excursion inland, Miss Jewett does nothing to "make him happy." She says of him:

"I could hardly believe that he was twelve years old, he was so stunted and small; yet he was a strong little fellow; his hands were horny and hard from handling the clumsy oars, and his face was so brown and dry from the hot sun and chilly spray, that he looked even older."

She watches the little fellow between the great oars row far out into the twilight, and learns that he is not likely to return before ten o'clock. When Georgie tells her that he intends to go to the banks to fish in the winter, and she protests that it will be too cold, he answers, "Hol' rest o' the men never froze." We were prepared to weep a little over Georgie. It would have been so easy to have had that clumsy boat dashed against the ledges one night, and the little fisherman's life swallowed up by the great sea that had been his only playfellow, but Miss Jewett does not ask for a
She doesn't ask for even a sigh. This ending to the sketch is the sign and seal of Miss Jewett's solid merit:

"A solemn, careful, contented young life, with none of the playfulness or childishness that belong to it, — this is my fisherman whose memory fades of whatever tenderness his dead mother may have given him."

The courageous little girl in A White Heron is also a lonely child. A single hint of sentimentality at the end makes this story tremble on the verge, but the author does not press it. It is still a credible story, and well within the limits of child conduct.

There are two other pictures of lonely childhood. A little girl and boy who live with their grandparents, are serious youngsters:

"There was no sign that they ever played like other children, no truckle cart in the yard, no doll, no bits of broken crockery in order on a rock. They had learned a fashion of life from their elders and already could lift and carry their share of the burdens of life."

The Deephaven tragedy left four little children to be "fetched up" by already overburdened and almost resentful relatives. They are forlorn little souls. One little girl has a string of blue and white beads which are the dearest things in all her world.

One day on a long drive, the author passed a thin and busy little gardener who was unable to give them more than a half glance as they passed. Her small garden will be struggling along many years in our memory:

1 Old Friends and New, p. 226
2 Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 267
"The only puzzle is what she proposes to do with so long a row of sage. Yet there may be a large family with a downfall of measles yet ahead, and she does not mean to be caught without sage tea."¹

The two little girls in The Hilton's Holiday are most engagingly pictured on their way:

"The little girls sat on the back seat dressed alike in their Sunday hats of straw and blue ribbons, and their little plaid shawls pinned neatly about their small shoulders. They wore gray thread gloves and sat very straight. It seemed at first like going to church in new clothes or to a funeral; they hardly knew how to behave at the beginning of a whole day of pleasure."²

Little French Mary, the child of the first foreigner in Dulham,

"seemed to fulfill all the duties of her childish life by some exquisite instinct and infallible sense of fitness and propriety." ³

In these very fragmentary pictures of childhood we are given an insight into the condition of the whole society, one in which the resources could not quite cover necessities, in which there was no margin of vitality, so that there was neither money nor strength to spend upon the entertainment of the children.

These fragments indicate also the power of Miss Jewett's hand. Dickens had played Little Dorrit, and Nell and Paul and David, and the rest, and had swept the boards. All that Miss Jewett had to do was to expand any one case or to restore a bright and

¹ Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 261
² The Life of Nancy, p. 109
³ The Life of Nancy, p. 209
shining childhood to these waifs to have won the sentimental world.
But with true Maine aloofness, she held fast to her own ideals of
art. She wrote simply and sincerely of life as she saw it or

Children and people of middle age or past inspire Miss
Jewett's best. Her portraiture of the old is done with decision
and ease.

The strong old souls in the Maine sketches have distinct
personalities in spite of their conformity to social standards. If
Miss Jewett's critics cannot defend her insecurity of plot, they
may offer adequate compensation in the firmness and vividness of
her characterization of country folk. Sometimes they are sketched
as in a cartoon, with a restraint of humor that touches reality much
closer than caricature. Sometimes a passing phase of expression, or
a single concrete act reveals the whole nature. Generalizations or
habitual action frequently show up the personality. There are some
full portraits that have the quality of oils for creating atmosphere
as well as searching the soul beneath the exterior. Such is the
richness of her paintings of Mrs. Todd. We even wonder if the
influences of Elihu Vedder inspired the full-length studies of this
powerful, strange soul.

Simplicity and economy of line and a delicate sense of
humor produce these appealing cartoons:
"She was a straight flat little person, as if, when not in use, she kept herself, silk dress and all, between the leaves of a book." 1

"A boy arrived from the back country - a willing thick headed young person in the process of growth. He was standing by expecting rebuke almost with an air of interest." 2

"Mrs. Todd bestowed great care upon seating us [in a carriage] as if we were taking passage in a boat." 3

"Mrs. Fosdick did not look at first sight like a person of great social gifts. She was fashionable in her dress, but it was a curiously well preserved provincial fashion of some years back." 4

With the decisiveness of pen and ink the author gives a view of the whole nature of a person in a single concrete act, or in one expression:

"Mrs. Barnet crushed an offending beetle with her thimble in a manner that disgusted Ezra." 5

"And then appeared a poetess whom Mrs. Todd regarded with wistful compassion and indulgence." 6

We like to glance at the following views, not because they are so penetrating, but because they are so efficient.

"In a large chair facing the window sat a masterful looking old woman with the features of a war-like Roman emperor, emphasized by a bonnet-like cap with with a band of green ribbon." 7

"She darted like a pickerel when she moved about." 8

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1 Life of Nancy, p. 218
2 Ibid, p. 172, 173
3 Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 176
4 Ibid, p. 90
5 The King of Folly Island, p. 183
6 The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 176
7 The Queen's Twin, p. 58
8 Deephaven, p. 38
Sometimes we have surprisingly clear sketches done in abstract qualities, or in generalizations, or in summaries of conduct:

"Ezra himself was made up of inadequacies."¹

"Mrs. Powder was not a woman who could live altogether in the present, and whatever she did was done with a view to having it cleared out of the way of the next enterprise on her list."²

"He worked his farm as he had sailed his ships by using tact and discretion, and with true seaman's philosophy he never fretted."³

"She was sometimes indirectly reproachful of her daughter's easy-going ways and set an indignant example now and then by a famous onslaught of unnecessary work, and always dressed and behaved herself in the plainest farm manner."⁴

"Captain Peter Lunn may have indulged in no sense of his own consequence and uniqueness as an invalid; but his wife bore herself as a woman should who was the heroine in so sad a drama."⁵

Habits of silence amuse the author of the Country of the Pointed Firs. The four old sea men and William, Almiry Todd's bachelor brother, waste no words.

"There was enough excitement for most occasions in hearing William speak three sentences at once."⁶

We have never seen a painting of fishermen with more vitality and depth than Miss Jewett's study of the four old men at

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1 Tales of New England, p. 143
2 Tales of New England, p. 159
3 Tales of New England, p. 81
4 Strangers and Wayfarers
5 Life of Nancy, p. 277
6 The Queen's Twin, p. 45
Dunnet's Landing. Winslow Homer's and Charles Hawthorne's imply not half so much.

"There were four of these large old men at the landing, who were survivors of an earlier and more vigorous generation. There was an alliance and understanding between them, so close that it was apparently speechless. They gave much time to watching one another's boats go out and come in; . . . . and when a boat came in from deep sea fishing they were never far out of the way, and hastened to help carry it ashore, two by two, splashing alongside, or holding its head as if it were a willful sea colt . . . . Arguments and opinions were unknown to the conversation of these ancient friends; you would as soon have expected to hear small talk in a company of elephants as to hear old Mr. Bowden or Elijah Tilley and their two mates waste breath upon any form of trivial gossip."1

In regard to these same fishermen, Miss Jewett says much more that gets entangled in our memories like seaweed. This is one passage that we cannot forget:

"It (the salt brine from the mackerel kites) had also affected the old fishermen's hard complexions, until one fancied that when death claimed them, it could only be with the aid, not of any slender modern dart, but the good serviceable harpoon of a seventeenth century woodcut."

The cartoons delight us, and the decision of line in the pictures where only one phase of the character does the work of pages of narrative fills us with admiration. Moreover, we appreciate the skill of one who can work in the medium of abstractions and generalizations and get definite results. But when we hang the portraits of Mrs. Todd in juxtaposition and realize the soundness

1 The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 186, ff.
of the composition and the richness of the atmosphere she creates around the figure, we know that Sarah Orne Jewett had talent that at least stepped on the heels of genius. As in her landscapes she furnishes us not only the objective form, but suggests also our reaction:

"She stood in the centre of a braided rug, and its rings of black and gray seemed to circle about her feet in the dim light. Her height and massiveness in the low room gave her the look of a huge sibyl, while the strange fragrance of the mysterious herb blew in from the little garden."

"Mrs. Todd standing before us like a large figure of Victory."

"There was something lonely and solitary about her great determined shape. She might have been Antigone alone on the Theban plain."

"Close at hand, Mrs. Todd seemed able and warm-hearted and quite absorbed in her bustling industries, but her distant figure looked mateless and appealing, with something about it that was strangely self-possessed and mysterious."

We like to see this little cartoon also, near the rest.

"'I counted on the chaise,' she said, turning her back to me and roughly pushing back all the quiet tumblers on the shelf as if they had been impertinent."

When two forms of art coincide upon any characteristic, we feel assured of its correctness. Charles Hawthorne, a native painter of Maine, is obsessed with the far-away look of the seamen.
His emphasis grows tedious. Nothing can keep his people on land; whether he paints a bride or a mother who has lost her sailor husband, or a man who has caught a haddock, he makes the eyes search eternity. We were checked in our impatience of his insistence by finding that Miss Jewett, never grows blindly romantic, reports the same characteristic:

"There was in the eye a look of anticipation and joy, a far-off look that sought the horizon, inherited by girls and boys alike from men who spend their lives at sea, and are always watching for distant sails or the first loom of the land."

Hawthorne's figures do not have the look of joy which Miss Jewett sees, but the anticipation and the searching eyes are unmistakably there.
The Trousseau
by Charles Hawthorne

Metropolitan Museum
Fisherman and Daughter

by

Charles Hawthorne
The Widow

by Charles Hawthorne
Shades of difference in the characters of a highly socialized group where differences are watchfully suppressed, is the special problem of Miss Jewett. Like her, Wilbert Snow delights in distinguishing personalities. In order to see to what extent the later writers confirm Miss Jewett’s interpretation we must consider their approach to character. In Uplands, character study is subordinated in order to focus attention upon the attempt of the two young people to forestall spiritual bankruptcy. Miss Abby, the only distinct personality, is the string that controls the initial movements of Martha and Jarvis. Owen Davis displays a family that has run out. For generations their souls have been replenished no more than their hungry land. Edwin Arlington Robinson’s characters are not exactly mortals. We have a feeling that Isaac and Archibald, ignoring Death, will stride at last upon a Theban plain. There is no defeat for them, no resignation, no depression. Both are militant, both secretly guarding against the invidious enemy, and both gloating over signs of relaxation in the other. No matter what happens to them, they will be victorious. They are not easy to come at. Archaic, Mr. Robinson suggests, but they are Maine, too. We have seen striding old men like them, and like Miss Jewett’s fishermen and her Almiry Todd, who will require of Death some ingenious device to translate them from the field of action. Roman Bartholow is more in the key of Ibsen. He and Gabrielle are not people, but souls and
intellects trying to find themselves. Bartholow dreams as Ibsen's characters dream of a better order to be brought about not by any surrender of their desires, but by bending or breaking other natures to fit their ideals. Bartholow's absorption in his own resurrection left no place for Gabrielle except as an accessory to his new soul. Bartholow is the one un-American figure in the Maine writings.

One imposing element in this study is the fact that we have represented in the literature of Maine, a people who have not been sunk in the melting pot. A foreign element has not yet influenced the habits of life or the outlook of the characters who are represented. Wilbart Snow has one Swede and a good sprinkling of the Irish, but the larger number of his characters are Maine born of English descent. Even the Canadian French are not so prominent in the literature as they are in reality, and the Jewish element is absent entirely. The authors are intentionally preserving American tradition just as Miss Jewett undoubtedly was. Because the characters are not people but souls and intellects, we can discount Edwin Arlington Robinson's Roman Bartholow, Gabrielle, and Umfraville, but Isaac and Archibald are unmistakably Maine. In all the writing, the only outside influence seems to be that of the summer colonist.

There is scarcely more knavery in the characters of the later Maine writers than in Miss Jewett's. Miss Abby searches her
grandfather's sermons to see if there is some viewpoint that she may safely present as her own at the next prayer meeting. In Icebound, the Jordans are grasping, and probably would be under-handed, but lack the initiative and the social liberty even for that. The undertaker in Wilbert Snow's Country Funeral imposes upon the bereaved old man. We are, however, indebted to Wilbert Snow for the confirmation of our opinion that the rural native is not quite so unsophisticated as he appears. From Zeb Kinney on College Professors, we gather that he knows what it is all about:

"Here comes one now through Amariah's field
To see how we behave when we set here
And talk all mornin' long; he'll listen to us,
And then go back and tell how quaint we be."³

Edwin Arlington Robinson portrays some downright rogues, but he does not assign them definitely to Maine.

"Born thieves and liars, their affair
Seemed only to be tarred with evil
The most insufferable pair
Of scamps that ever cheered the devil."⁴

But the greater evidence is in favor of a society very well behaved.

Social consciousness is as strong in most of the later writers as in Miss Jewett's studies. In Uplands, there is a tacit horror of attracting attention. Both lovers assumed that it would be necessary to go away to be married, and that they must keep their

1 Uplands, p. 31
2 Maine Coast, p. 46
3 The Inner Harbor, p. 58
4 Collected Poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson, p. 18 (Old King Cole)
marriage secret. "It was true that even North Dorset married and was given in marriage, though each who accomplished it was a mystery to his neighbor." For us who have not been reared under such restraint, these remarks between Jarvis and Martha are illuminating:

"'He's funny, besides just being a Catholic. Once when he used to come here and we played in the woods, he wanted us to sing - just us two out there alone!'"2

"'I think he's happier than us, because he does what he likes. If he wants to write poems, he does. I never do what I like, do you?'"3

When Jarvis is dead, Martha dared not go to the funeral for fear of betraying her relation to him. In Icebound there is the same intensity of desire to conform. Henry's morality and religion, are the social need.

"'Decent people don't reason about religion; they just accept it.'"4

Even if that quotation sounds a little too well directed toward Broadway ears, nevertheless, it summarizes Henry's mentality, one that would not experiment with an idea. Ben recognizes the force of public opinion and despises Nettie for her cowardice. He says, "'Nettie - that couldn't stand the gaff - that run out on me when I was in trouble.'"5

1 Uplands, p. 60
2 Ibid., p. 27
3 Ibid., p. 28
4 Icebound, Act I, p. 15
5 Ibid., Act II, p. 2
In these later writers there is a significant departure from the interpretation of Sarah Orne Jewett. While the individual is keenly aware of the group, the group does not assume a responsibility for the individual as we saw that it did in Miss Jewett's Maine. There a neighbor's trouble or sickness had precedent over all other demands upon time or thought. Edwin Arlington Robinson and Owen Davis and even Miss Chase show a society as contemptible as Main Street, a society envious and merciless. The author says that Tilbury Town is a shadowy place but probably had its origin in Gardiner. Captain Craig had the experience of finding the community quite indifferent to him.

"There was a time
When he had fancied, if worse came to worst
And he could do no more, that he might ask
Of whom he would. But once had been enough.
There was just a false note in the Tilbury tune
A note that able-bodied men might sound
Hosannas on while Captain Craig lay quiet.
They might have made him sing by feeding him
Till he should march again, but probably
Such yielding would have jeopardized the rhythm
They found it more melodious to shout
Right on, with unmolested adoration
And keep the tune as it had always been;
To trust in God and let the Captain starve. 1

There is kindness in Uplands, a sort of officious kindness that took away from Sarah Craig the work which would have been a comfort to her in the loss of Jarvis. It would seem as if the community were more ready to sympathize with misery than to endorse individual

1 Collected Poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson, p. 114
happiness. The two innocent lovers went away "far from the
desperate and skeptical eyes of North Dorset, from their loosened
and curious tongues."\(^1\) The group in the poems of Wilbert Snow is
more like that of Miss Jewett's sketches, else we might account
for the differences in interpretation between hers and the later
writers' on the grounds of a change in the literary fashion of look-
ing upon society from its more favorable view in the nineties, to
its ugliest aspects in 1920. Wilbert Snow's characters have an
inclination for fun, and more time to loaf, hence we see less envy
and better esprit de corps. There is a social consciousness, but
not a fearful one, and scarcely a tangible one.

Though there is some disagreement about the social con-
sciousness of the characters, there is agreement among the various
authors on the subject of repression. All recognize some form of
it. The most convincing illustration is in *Uplands*, where we see
Jarvis struggle with himself to tell his mother about his new
happiness, where Sarah Craig, deprived of the chance to express her
love for her son in service, finds it unnatural and next to impossible
to express it in tears. Miss Chase speaks many times of the habit
of repression:

"Not for nothing had North Dorset bound them with its
triple forged chains of repression and reserve."\(^2\)

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1 Uplands, p. 104
2 Uplands, p. 92
"To Sarah Craig, shackled by the restraint of years on the North Dorset Hills."¹

"She longed to touch Martha, to beg her confidences, but the restraint of years held her back, compelled her to forgo these things."²

"Alarm seized her at such a display of feeling in her kitchen which had never known such abandon."³

Edwin Arlington Robinson makes discretion, not pride, the motivating factor:

"but a few
Say five or six of us had found somehow
The spark in him, and we had fanned it there
Choked under like a jest in Holy Writ,
By Tilbury prudence."⁴

Owen Davis rather brutally analyzes what has gone by the name of repression:

"Most folks quiet because they've said all the things they've got to say a hundred times; other folks talkin' about nothing. Sometimes somebody sort of laughs and it scares you; seems like laughter needs the sun same as flowers do. Icebound, that's what we are all of us inside and out."⁵

To gather these interpretations together and tie them with Miss Jewett's is a delicate task. Theoretically, Miss Jewett and Miss Chase hold to the traditional belief in New England repression. Practically, however, they divert emotion into some form of action channel. Miss Jewett speaks of the sister of a sea

1 Ibid., p. 137
2 Ibid., p. 140
3 Ibid., p. 141
4 Collected Poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson, p. 113
5 Icebound, Act II, p. 66
captain who loved him in the repressed New England fashion, then
goes on to tell how her devotion to him took the form of perpetual
naggings about thrift and church attendance, and social observance.¹
In Uplands Sarah Craig always translated her emotion into action.
"In a pathetic attempt to substitute the material for the spiritual,
she had prepared for him and his father the dinner they liked best—
stew with generous dumplings, hot doughnuts, apple pie with home-
made cheese."² Repression with Sarah Craig was expression in
service. When Jarvis had died, and she could no longer serve him,
she did not know how to express herself in the futility of tears.
She longed for her housework, her big Monday washing, anything that
would satisfy the habit demand for activity. Owen Davis dispels
the illusion of repression, by presenting his characters as
bankrupt spiritually and intellectually. They feel nothing keenly;
they have no ideas to express, and what seems like reserve is
stupidity. We ourselves have often wondered if the lack of
expression were due to repression or lack of feeling. From this
strange bouquet of impressions, we seem to smell, not a fragrance,
but a dry odor of thought too long kept. There is need of some
fresh ideas on the subject of emotion in New England.

However confusing is the analysis of the emotion of these
New England adults, as they are presented by the different authors,
the interpretations of childhood are uniformly simple and under-

¹ Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 158
² Uplands, p. 54
standing. Miss Millay's little girl visiting the insane asylum reveals in a line the whole difference between the child's world and ours.

"There were a thousand windows,
All latticed up and down.
And up to all the windows,
When we went back to town,

The queer folk put their faces,
As gentle as could be;
'Come again, little girl!' they called, and I
Called back, 'You come see me!'" ¹

Edwin Arlington Robinson's "I" is a little boy of twelve who knows his Homer. We are more grateful than we can ever tell Mr. Robinson for this little boy. He is not like Roman Bartholow, just intellect and spirit, but a thirsty, hot little boy well protected with intuition

"figuring to find
How long those ancient legs [Isaac's] would keep
The pace that he had set for them."

He becomes real for us at the start.

"And I with a small boy's adhesiveness
To competent old age, got up and went."

What perfect comprehension of childhood this reticence bespeaks:

"Of words, and they would have been comforting
To Isaac, spite of my twelve years, I think;
But there was not in me the willingness
To speak them out." ¹

¹ Harp Weaver, p. 21
The satisfaction to his boyish pride expressed in this!

"That was a joke
To Isaac, and it pleased him much;
And that pleased me - for I was twelve years old."

He is better educated in the classics than our twelve-year olds, for his Ulysses and his Agamemnon are very real to him.

"So I remember even to this day
Just how they sounded, how they placed themselves
And how the game went on while I made marks
And crossed them out, and meanwhile made some Trojans.
Likewise I made Ulysses after Isaac
And a little after Flaxman. Archibald
Was injured when he found himself left out,
But he had no heroics and I said so.
I told him that his white beard was too long
And too straight down to be like things in Homer."¹

Wilbert Snow has a little lobster boy, but not a grown-up one like Miss Jewett's. This is a child without responsibility.

"As soon as he could walk he played around
Old fishing barrels on the beach.

How he loved the sand
That filtered in between his toes, ticklish
And warm beneath the goaring sun!

At ten...

they dived and swam,
And raced along the beach like savages,

Filling the woods with pagan shouts of joy
Until the ebb tide chilled the shallow cove,
And chilled their rigid faces blue as whetstones.

At fifteen years he bought his first small boat,
And rigged her up with leg-o-mutton sail
And center board to beat against the wind
Over the dancing waves he spanked along
Singing rough chanteys to the singing breeze."²

1 Edwin Arlington Robinson's Collected Poems, p. 180
2 Maine Coast, The Lobster Catcher, p. 34
Icebound sets on the stage a little boy with a cold in his head and itching flannels on his back. Small town Maine has produced nothing beautiful for Owen Davis, not even a child. Miss Jewett's children are quite as well portrayed as these. There has not been so much improvement in the technique of portraiture as in that of environmental description. The look that is in the eyes of the children and wives of seamen is noted again by Wilbur Snow.

"had spread about him
His seaward gazing countenance - a look
Found nowhere but in men who breast strong tides."

Miss Jewett has a pirate, and there is one in Edwin Arlington Robinson's poetry and one in Wilbur Snow's.

"And one who twitched a pirate's hardened mouth."2

"Never again will he come, with rings in his ears like a pirate."3

Swift delineations of character are not abundant in these later writings about Maine. Edwin Arlington Robinson makes a few rapid characterizations.

"My father was to me a mighty stranger,
Fearsome, but always on the side of right
As he discerned it."4

"And when you met, you found his eyes were always on your shoes
As if they did the talking when he asked you for the news."5

1 Maine Coast, p. 3
2 Ibid., p. 56
3 Collected Poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson, p. 335
4 Ibid., p. 735
5 Ibid., p. 45 (157)
"And at the pump, he thanked God for all things
That he had put on earth for men to drink
And he drank well."\(^1\)

"The broken voice, the withered neck,
The coat worn out with care
The cleanliness of indigence,
The brilliance of despair."\(^2\)

"He was a gentleman from sole to crown
Clean favored and imperially slim."\(^3\)

"And when he spoke there came like sudden blows
Through scattered fangs a few snarled words and close."\(^4\)

There is atmosphere in these portraits that follow:

"for he strode along
Like something out of Homer - powerful
And awful on the wayside."\(^4\)

The clerks

"I did not think that I should find them there
When I came back again; but there they stood
As in the days they dreamed of when young blood
Was in their cheeks and women called them fair.
Be sure they met me with an ancient air, -
And yes, there was a shop-worn brotherhood
About them; but the men were just as good,
And just as human as they ever were."

Wilbur Snow portrays a noble man.

"He thrilled to see his weather-beaten father
How gray and hardy, a New England oak,
Four-square to life's bleak-beating Northeast gales.
Nobility in every deep-lined seam
That scarred his face for sixty Spartan years."\(^5\)

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1 Ibid., p. 173
2 Berwick Finzer, p. 55
3 Richard Cory, p. 82
4 Collected Poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson, pp. 179, 90
5 Maine Coast, p. 72
Miss Jewett's interpretation of a group highly socialized and lacking in initiative is confirmed by the later Maine writers. Her opinion of altruism which operates extensively in her group is not supported by later characterizations. True emotion, as it is shown in all the characters, is accompanied by an impulse for action, often in an unrelated activity. One author questions the repression which the others accept. Childhood is happier and less responsible in the more modern writings. Miss Jewett has greater facility in characterization than the writers of this generation.
CULTURE

For Mrs. Bonney, literature meant the almanac. For Leonard Jaffrey, it represented difficult by-paths of history and philosophy reached through the Greek and Hebrew languages. Between these extremes were Doctor Leslie, a "scholar and thinker in other than medical philosophies," Captain Littlepage, who knew his Milton and Shakespeare, Mrs. Graham, who quoted French authors, the Queen's Twin, an authority on the history of Queen Victoria, and Santin Bowden, whose knowledge of military tactics deserved higher recognition than the honor of marshalling the Bowden family at their reunion. No one is actually handicapped with illiteracy, although poor Mrs. Peet was cheated out of her farm because she found the reading of the handwriting of the deed too tedious.

A high-school graduation was looked upon as an event of importance. Polly Finch had graduated from Normal School. Nan's decision to study medicine was a shocking departure from the approved pursuits of young women. Occasionally a boy managed to send himself through college, though higher education was usually reserved for the upper class. Because all his forebears had graduated

1 Deephaven, p. 200 7 Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 165
2 King of Folly Island, p. 271 8 Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 103
3 A Country Doctor, p. 28 9 A Native of Winby, p. 142
4 Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 94 10 A White Heron, p. 74
5 A Country Doctor, p. 132 11 A Country Doctor, p. 9
from Harvard, Leonard Jaffrey went there as a matter of course. 1

Leonard Jaffrey was a bibliomaniac, willing to sell the family silver to buy books that he had to store on the canopy of his bed in order to make room for more. 2 His opinion of the reading habits of the book club in the town of Grafton did not insure his popularity as a librarian of the newly founded public library which was presented to the town. 3 The Jaffrey ships had made Leonard's education possible. The prosperous owners of other ships had built houses with libraries which their descendants were able to enjoy. 4 The Brandon house, one of the homes of the "Venetian Aristocracy", furnished the two young visitors the customary array of religious and sentimental literature together with a few volumes of outstanding and enduring worth. 4 The magazines that are mentioned are Littell's and the Atlantic Monthly, which was called the "new magazine." 5

In an old farmhouse of the better sort were found: Law's Serious Call, Rise and Progress, Sermons by New England Divines,

Townsend's Arrangement of the New Testament. 6

One little girl had as a New Year's present from her father, the
*Life of General Lafayette.* 1 A woman who had been left a widow
when her children were still young collected during the course of
her life, a hundred volumes of history and biography and travel.
Almanacs supplied almost all literary needs. They were read and
reread. 2 The *Semiweekly Tribune* 3 and the * Agriculturist* 4 were
periodicals to be saved. From one of the newspapers Georgie's
aunt had cut Whittier's "Telling the Bees." Captain Littlepage's
quotations of Milton and Shakespeare and this reference to Whittier
are the only indications of any interest in poetry unless
we count the applause of the "faded garland of verse" at the Bowden
family reunion. 5 We should have supposed that collections like
"The Royal Gallery" 6 would have been cherished in bindings of black
and gold on the "best room" table.

Captain Littlepage had memorized much poetry. He ex-
plained that nearly all the captains came to specialize in some
one branch of knowledge; some studied medicine, some agriculture,
some bee-raising. Culture of a broader sort than can be acquired
through reading alone belonged to the ship masters and their fam-
ilies. In the opening of 'Strangers and Wayfarers,' the author writes:

1 *The Queen's Twin,* p. 217
2 Atlantic Monthly, Vol. XLVIII, p. 21 and Deephaven, p. 200
3 A Marsh Island, p. 664
4 A White Heron, p. 74
5 Country of the Pointed Firs, p.
"The sea captains and the captains' wives of Maine knew something of the wide world, and never mistook their native parishes for the whole instead of a part thereof; they knew not only Thomaston and Castine and Portland, but London and Bordeaux, and the strange mannered harbors of the China Sea." 1

Captain Littlepage, lamenting the loss of shipping, said that in the old days, a good part of the best men knew a hundred ports and the ways folks lived in them. 2

Yet there were also amazing limitations. Mrs. Peet was surprised to find decent people like herself riding on the trains. The next township to which she was travelling might have been across the Rocky Mountains for all the consciousness that she had of its real existence. 3 Mrs. Goodsoe regretted that letters were coming at every hand's turn, and that people were leaving their proper business to answer them, or "jiggiting off" on the trains to visit a distant relative. 4 The widow Moses never could see why her nephew left so many privileges to go off to Lynn, when he lived here within a cable's length of the meeting house. 5 Another thinks it strange how folks feel contented in "them stray-a-way places." The enlightening influence from the other side of the world was of comparatively short duration. Travel drove into the intellectual and religious satisfaction of these descendants of the Puritans, a wedge that did not drop out for another generation. They remained uncomfortably

1 The Queen's Twin, p. 2  
2 The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 27  
3 Best Short Stories, p. 99  
4 Tales of New England, p. 257  
5 Deephaven, p. 64
aware of religious and social institutions as vigorous and as productive as their own.

Even those whose minds had been liberated by travel brought home no effective antidote to the Calvinistic prejudice against music. Music had as little attention as poetry. In stories of rural life a reader may legitimately expect at least one romance with a singing-school background. Our impression that, even before the time of the publication of The "Telling of the Bees," social life was centered about the singing school is confirmed by an anonymous gentleman who writes rather flippantly in the Religious Magazine and Monthly Review, 1872, about the singing school of fifty years ago:

"And many unsuspected attachments warming and strengthening into union for life began in the beat of music which fell upon the ear week by week, aye trembled tenderly through many folds of winter clothing in those evening walks not accidental."

But no one in Miss Jewett's stories must hurry off to singing school, no one frets about a niece who should be home from one, no inmate of the poor farm takes refuge in the happy memory of gay evenings there.

Even if singing school had not become popular enough in Maine to have reached Deephaven or Dunnet's Landing, the church choirs might have furnished some material for at least a conflict.

1 The Queen's Twin, p. 137
We hear only one choir in all the stories, and that is merely a detail in the mellow interior of the Deephaven church. The author even furnishes it with a bass viol to create an English atmosphere, and then tells of it in a manner faintly reminiscent of Washington Irving's rural England. Interest in music has no social development. Even as a private and personal indulgence it has little importance. My Lady Brandon has the custom of opening her piano at twilight. Helena, in "Martha's Lady" sings enchanting old songs to the tune of her guitar. In only one sketch does music have primary position. In the Old Singers, we have again one of Miss Jewett's carefully measured emotional appeals, one of her exquisite balances away from sentimentality. The stage, all set for pathos; a rarely used parlor in an old house on a lonely island; the characters, the aged mother, a bashful old man. But the very first mention of the quality of William's voice is reassuring:

His voice was a little faint and frail, like the family daguerreotypes."

The sketch is firm and rugged like one of Zorn's etchings of peasant life.

In The Only Rose, we have a reference to the voice of Mrs. Bickford's first husband:

1 Deephaven, p. 47
2 The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 82
3 Ibid
"a lovely voice to sing; they said there wa'n't no such tenor voice in this part o' the State. I could hear him singin' to himself right out in the field a ploughin' or hoein', an' he didn't know it half the time, no more'n a common bird would." 1

But Mrs. Bickford seemed a little ashamed of laying too much stress on this gift of her first husband. There may be a clue here to the general attitude toward music. Since musical ability is a distinction, it separates the possessor from the herd. Hence it bears bitter with the sweet. As we have already observed, the desire to conform is a very powerful influence. Ordinary ability is not nursed into distinctive ability for fear of isolating the possessor. A singing school would be necessarily selective, not socially inclusive like the church and the funeral. It would seem like showing off for a few to indulge in anything in which the majority could not participate.

We are not surprised to find, however, some one whose love for his art is stronger than his fear of criticism. We hear about the traditional fiddler, with the nimbus of praise obscuring his actual merit. 2

"Fiddle! He'd about break your heart with them tunes of his, or else set your heels flying up the floor in a jig, though you was the minister o' the First Parish, and all wound up in a funeral prayer."

1 Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 256
2 Tales of New England, p. 260
The references to music in these sketches indicate that it was of no primary importance, that it is a matter of private enjoyment rather than a socializing factor.

The lack of interest in music is a part of the general lack of merriment for which the climate and the type of religion is largely responsible.

It would have been an easy slip for Miss Jewett to have attributed a keener appreciation of beauty to her farmers than she did. If nothing else were an index to her general reliability, her restraint in this respect is convincing. She herself has an artist's eye for atmosphere and detail, but she rarely shows us beauty through the eyes of her characters. When, however, she sends an artist to the farm in A Marsh Island, a city-bred man. To be sure, the farmer to whom he goes is one whose "sentiment and discernment were delicate enough to follow far in his aesthetic enthusiasm", but Miss Jewett assures us more than once that the Owens were above the common level. Farmer Owen says:

"I'm glad I left that little white birch for ye. I was obliged to clear up the pasture some time last fall, but somehow or 'mother I didn't meddle with that. They're tender lookin' things, them birches."

1 A Marsh Island, p. 352
In other characters a spark flashes now and then in an unexpected manner. William is convinced that there "ain't no such view in the world" as his view from Green Island. 1

Mrs. Todd stops now and then to behold a beautiful "prospect". 2

Mrs. Bonny, the hermit woman in Deephaven, considers the lowlands topped with fog "sightly". 3 Sarah Ellen Dow, much upset at the death of Sister Barsett, steps out of the house and notices the pretty sky. 4

In one instance, aesthetic appreciation indirectly influences the plot. Polly Finch, returning home at the close of a disheartening day, notices some dry and spoiled barberry as it undergoes a transformation in the setting sun.

"The sun was shining pleasantly now that it had sunk below the clouds, and in these late golden rays the barberry bush had taken on a great splendor. It gave Polly a start, it cheered her not a little, this sudden transformation, and she even went back along the road a little way to see it again.... There are more than two ways of looking at more things than barberry bushes." 5

The encouragement that this thought gave her helped her in the resolution that turned her into Farmer Finch.

We have already attempted to point out why so little is said about music. Yet we know that there is some enjoyment of beautiful sound. Mrs. Hilton says that her little girl would stand

1 The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 71 4. A Native of Winby, p.156
2 The Queen's Twin, p. 4
3 Deephaven, p. 200
4 A Native of Winby, p. 156
5 The White Heron, p. 40
and "hark" all morning to a bird. ¹ Little Silvy in *A White Heron* thought sickeningly of the dead birds with their throats hushed. ² Mrs. Bickford, apologetically says that she is not one who has much fancy, but that she knew that Albert's was a pretty voice, and nothing ever sounded so sweet to her. ³

The fact that Miss Jewett did not attribute to her characters an aesthetic appreciation which they probably did not have goes far toward establishing our confidence in her sincerity and her fidelity to conditions as she knew them. Judging from the way the farmers built their houses with the out-buildings shutting out the most inspiring views, we realize that beauty had at least at best only a second place in their lives.

So far we have seen in the Maine sketches no escape from the dull routine of everyday existence either in reading, or music, or aesthetic appreciation.

Humor is also a kind of escape from reality. Great pressure upon an individual's ability results in a breakdown of effort in the form of playfulness. But these characters do not play much or joke. Their conversation is matter of fact and grave. The author's eyes twinkle, and a smile flickers, and even a faint chuckle escapes but she doesn't laugh. Yet her pages are delightfully amusing. It is the deliciousness of something that grows, not of something that is made. The humor arises, however, not out of the effort

¹ *The Life of Nancy*, p. 101
² *The White Heron*, p. 22
³ *The Life of Nancy*, pp. 145-167
of the characters to make their own fun, but out of their seriousness.

It is probably on account of this seriousness that there is so little humorous anecdote, though a reader would expect something of a treasure chest of it from the sea. One of the best is told by Israel Owen to smooth his wife's ill temper. A querulous old farmwife is trying to justify herself for wishing to buy a cap. "I ain't got no decent cap to my back; if I was to die tomorrow, I ain't got no cap that's fit to lay me out in."

"Blast ye!" said her husband, "Why didn't ye die when ye had a cap?"

Another anecdote is significant because it shows a society sophisticated enough to see its own foibles. "I 'spose you've heard the story about the old ladies that set out for a funeral and found they'd missed the day, and asked the folks if they didn't know of a funeral they could go to."

To illustrate the character of a certain stingy man, the speaker says:

"but he's too stingy to live. Folks was tellin' to him how he'd got a real good stiddy man to work with him this summer. He's called a very pious man, too, a great hand in meetin's."

"an!" says he, "I'd have you recollect he's pray-ing out o' my time."

1 A Marsh Island, p. 148
2 The White Heron, p. 208
3 Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 70
The half humorous anecdote of the whole congregation rising when the little bond girl ran in and said, "Miss' Bowden! your baby's in a fit" has the genuine ring of folk humor.

It is really difficult to account for this poverty of amusing anecdote except on artistic grounds. As a little girl at dinner in her grandfather's house, Sarah Orne Jewett could have heard her grandfather's guests tell of their adventures at sea, and what would have been suitable for the little girl to hear would have fitted in with the general refinement of these sketches. Then her father, a country doctor, would undoubtedly have known the countryside legends, some of which could not have missed being funny. Stories could not have reached more appreciative ears, for there is abundant evidence of a sensitiveness to humor that detects the slightest indication of amusement. Her feeling for atmosphere undoubtedly restrained her from introducing much that would cause anything like hilarity in the reader.

The nature of the mood that envelops the characters is analyzed as a heavy and stupid sort of fun that lacks real merriment. The women have an odd rough way of joking though there is sometimes quaint humor and now and then a flash of wit. This is precisely the way the author has represented the conversation, not only among the women but among the men as well. Old Elijah Tilley

1 Matthiessen, Francis O. Sarah Orne Jewett, p. 8
2 Old Friends and New, p. 243
gives a "satisfied chuckle" when he sees the sleepy little pilot boy thrown overboard. But he has his own harmless fun. He explains the use of the bright painted stakes in his bit of narrow field.

"Well, as for them painted marks, them's my buoys. I struck on to some heavy rocks that didn't show none, but a plow'd be liable to ground on 'em, an' so I ketched holt an' buoyed 'em same's you see." 2

One joke seemed to be very funny to the listening character.

"They say Elder Bickers over to East Sanscrit's been and got married again to a gal that's four years younger than his oldest daughter."

"Seems to me it was fool's business."

"I view it so. There's goin' to be a mild open winter for that fam'ly."

"What a joker you be for a man that's had so much responsibility." 3

The old postmaster in The King of Folly Island had his own way of chiding a careless passenger who gave the boat a sudden roll.

"Did a flaw strike her?" asked Jabez Pennell who looked curiously at the sky and then at his passenger. 'I've known of a porpoise h'isting a boat, or mought be you kind o' shifted the rudder?'

Whereupon they both laughed.

Mrs. Todd also had her formulae for putting an offender in his place. As she was setting off in a dory, a voice from the

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1 The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 185
2 " " " " " " p. 193
3 Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 8
4 The King of Folly Island, p. 3
wharf called out, "'She's lo'ded bad, your bo't is,—She's heavy behind's she is now!'"

Mrs. Todd turned with some difficulty and regarded the anxious adviser.

'That you, Asa? Good mornin', she said politely, 'I al'ays liked the starn seat best. When'd you git back from up country?'

Miss Jewett adds that this allusion to the adviser's origin brought a chuckle of laughter from the shore.

Another bit of repartee that brought a response from the hearers is recorded by Mrs. Bonny, the hermit woman in Deephaven, who is boasting of her reproof of a penitent at his annual conversion.

"'I've been a wanderer.'

'Yes, you have, I'll back you up on that, Ben; Ye've wandered around my woodlot and spoilt half the lively young oaks and ashes I've got.'

"An' the folks laughed out loud!"

At times the Country Doctor displays a sense of humor, very like Miss Jewett's own. He thinks that it is a very great misfortune for a town to be disappointed in its milliner. With the doctor's concise way of making a statement, and a doctor's tolerance and impatience at once he said half to himself and

1 The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 51
2 Deephaven, p. 196
3 A Country Doctor, p. 130
half to Marilla that here is another person who expects him to
cure old age. 1

When a little boy comes frightened to the doctor and says,

"They want you to come over quick's convenient.
She don't know nothin."
"Never did", the doctor grumbled. 2

Wit seldom reaches even this level, When Israel Owen
introduces himself, he adds, "Owin' only in name." 3 In speaking
of a woman whom he disliked, he suggests that he doesn't know
whether she was driven ashore, or whether "he took her on a trawl." 4

The hero of A Winter Courtship belittled his rival by
unfavorable criticism of the way he used his"pipes" [windpipes]

"It won't never do for him to deal so with callin' of his cows; they'd be so aggravated 't'would be more'n any butter business could bear." 5

These are not only fair examples of the kind of wit and
humor that the characters are able to create, but almost the only
ones. Nearly all the humor of the sketches is based on Miss Jewett's
observations of the trifles that distinguish these farmer folk. None
of the appeal of these sketches could be transferred to the screen.
Some of the humor is delicate and poised on the slightest incongru-
ity apparent only to a mind sensitive to mere suggestion. The char-
acters behave with dignity and propriety, and that is the root of
some of their absurdity. Their very seriousness upon occasions

1 Country Doctor, p.69 3 A Marsh Island, p. 43
2 Ibid., p.68 4 Ibid., p. 160
5 Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 67
where a degree of relaxation is demanded makes them ridiculous. Sometimes it is only the tone of voice or the manner of saying a thing that makes the remark funny, as:

"I suppose that money is some object," gently inquired the passenger.
"Waal, yes," answered Jabez, without much apparent certainty. 1

"I wish there wa'n't quite so many. Sister Eliza's very lavish with her flowers; she's always been a kind sister, too!" said Mrs. Bickford vaguely. 2 Sometimes the humor arises out of the futility of the effort made by the characters, as in these examples:

"And after the station master had looked his ticket office door and tried the handle twice, with a comprehensive look at me, he went slowly away." 3

Once when the raconteur is on a lighthouse island, she is shown a "system of barring and bolting the wide foredoor which would have disconcerted an energetic battering ram." After all this work being expended, Mrs. Kew informed them that it was usually open all night in summer weather. 4

Miss Jewett's comments on the little gardener could never be flashed on the screen: "The only puzzle is what she proposes to do with so long a row of sage. Yet there may be a large family with a downfall of measles ahead, and she does not mean to be caught without sage tea." 5 The little boy who was expecting rebuke almost with an air of interest would be equally meaningless in the moving pictures.

1 The King of Folly Island, p. 4 3 Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 60
2 The Life of Nancy, p. 132 4 Deephaven, p. 27
5 Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 261
Many times the confusion of land and sea habits of mind furnish the incongruities. Georgie, the little lobster boy, was allowed to row out in the harbor after dark to tend the traps, sometimes returning after ten o'clock, but his father felt that it "might be a great risk to let him go off inland to stay all the afternoon." 1 Mrs. Todd arranged the passengers in the chaise as if they were taking passage in a boat. 2

The limited outlook of the characters also amuses us.

One honest old woman says:

"Now instead of doin' their own housekeepin' and watchin' their own neighbors, they drop everything and git on their best clothes and off they jigget on the cars." 3

Rustic ignorance of town conventions is an ancient source of humor. Miss Jewett has refined the type to the most fastidious exactions. If we let our imagination dwell for a moment on the situation, we find this one of the most amusing bits in all the sketches:

"She presented me to several of her friends with whom she had been talking as she came up. 'Let me make you acquainted,' she said, and every time I bowed she bowed, too, unconsciously." 4

Mrs. Kew goes to the circus with the two young visitors at Deephaven:

"She wore her best Sunday clothes, and her manner was formal for the first few minutes; it was evident that she felt we were meeting under unusual circumstances, and that, although we had often met before on the friendliest terms, our having asked her to make this excursion in public required a different sort of behavior at her hand and a due amount of ceremony and propriety." 5

1 Old Friends and New, p. 238 3 Tales of New England, p.257
2 The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 144
4 Old Friends and New, p. 240 5 Deephaven, p. 123
Not only the rural ignorance of the city point of view, but the rustic conventions are infallibly amusing. When the two guests go to make their call upon Mrs. Timms, they get into the spirit of the occasion on their way, and speak in a formal language:

"She would be very sensible to the compliment, and could pass it off if she didn't feel to indulge us." 1

A rudimentary type of humor is based upon the idea of dress. The human mind has never been accustomed to the idea of clothing, and the slightest variation from the conventions of the day, as a pair of buttoned boots, when laced are in fashion, or a glance at any ten-year-old photograph of even our dearest friend will amuse us. As we should expect, Miss Jewett uses great restraint in the exploitation of this type, and her results are charming:

"She wore her large cameo pin, and this with a long watch chain, gave an air of proper mural decoration." 2

The characterization of Mrs. Todd is bright with humor. We have already mentioned the pushing back of all the quiet tumblers as if they had been impertinent. 3 When her bachelor brother drives miles inland to make his annual call upon his fiancée, Almira besmears his face with a lotion of pennyroyal. Some time after he has gone, she remarks to her guest:

"'It serves to keep the mosquitoes off' she said, And a moment later it occurred to my slow mind that she spoke of the pennyroyal lotion." 4

1 Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 199-3 Country of the Pointed Firs, p.238
2 " " " Vol. II, p. 198-4 The Queen's Twin, p. 41
Trees have personalities to her: "Ash trees is very likely to have poor spells; they ain't got the resolution of other trees!"  

She reaches for her whip as if she were compelling public opinion.

The comic spirit does not romp in her pages, but some of the plots depend more on humor than pathos. All My Sad Captains is the story of the manoeuvers of three seamen to win the favor of a knowing widow. In A Late Supper the situation is extremely amusing, but the author's inattention to plot in her early stories ruins the promise of this one. An elderly woman returning home with a borrowed pitcher of cream for unexpected guests finds a train blocking the road. In her impatience, she attempts to cross the platform, but before she can descend, the brakes are released and the train carries her off with her pitcher of cream to the next station. When Sister Barsett is passing away, she reaches out from the coverlet of her dying bed, a thumb and forefinger to see if her sister's dress is all wool. When her good nurse is dismissed and she finds that her sister has anticipated her death by appropriating her green quilted petticoat, she postpones the sad occasion and orders a good supper instead. The News from Petersham is plainly suggested by Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe, though the story is not enlarged. The Coon Dog has almost no pathos. It is fun from start to finish. An overvalued hound is proved to be gun-shy.

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1 Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 150
2 "  "  "  "  "  "  "  p. 146
Yet however funny the stories are, the humor is based largely upon the author's amusement at the behavior of the characters. She represents them as almost lacking in the desire to make fun and incapable of creating it. Their very seriousness is one of the elements of humor.

People who lack a sense of humor very often lack imagination, though the converse is not true. Shelly was quite lacking in humor. A humorous suggestion becomes more and more funny as the imagination embellishes the idea. Imagination and humor are both conspicuously weak in the characters. Of pleasant imagination and reverie, there is only one example. The Queen's Twin dwelt lovingly on the parallels between her life and Queen Victoria. 1 Little Nan in A Country Doctor used to dream of her father's sister. Mrs. Todd personified trees, but fancy does not occupy much of the time of either of these characters. 2 Captain Littlepage was the victim of hallucination. 3 Of the imaginative faculty, either normal or morbid, very little is said. Miss Jewett herself builds up her stories with the scientific type, the kind that is never wholly freed from reality.

Though these people are not highly imaginative, they sometimes possess the sensitiveness that is the accompaniment to

1 The Queen's Twin, p.
2 The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 150
3 " " " " " " p.
an imaginative nature. We are equally surprised by instances of blunted feelings and very fine sensibilities. The stranger in The Country of the Pointed Firs is embarrassed to find that subjects of the most intimate nature were not withheld from her ears any more than if she had been "a shell on the mantelpiece." 1 The family does not consider the stranger on A Marsh Island when the daughter's love affair takes an unpleasant turn. 2 One of the inmates of the house tells about a previous funeral that was a "fair pleasant occasion." 3 To Andrew it was "like a tornado that had blown through his life, but everybody else appeared on the whole to be enjoying it." 4

Mrs. Thatcher talking to a child, says, "'You'll think of it when you see me layin' dead, what a misery you'd been." 5

In the Second Spring the poor old farmer has to hear how many people came to the funeral.

"We could reckon what a sight o' folks there was here this afternoon by the times we had to make new tea." 6

Of the farmer himself, Miss Jewett says,

"His sensations, even of grief, were not very distinct to him; there was only a vague sense of discomfort of being disturbed in his quiet course." 7

His grief, however, became very real to him, and his mourning is one of the most pathetic touches in the sketches.

1 Ibid., p. 93 5 A Country Doctor
2 A Marsh Island, p. 778 6 The Life of Nancy, p. 60
3 Andrew's Fortune, p. 20 7 Ibid. p. 158
4 Ibid., p. 30
Elijah Tilley chuckles when the sleepy little boy is tossed overboard, but when he shows his visitor a broken bit of tea cup that his wife had hid from him, saying it was the only secret between them, he indicated a very sensitively adjusted home life.

Mrs. Todd refrains with charming sympathy from pointing the obvious connection between her mother's illness and the hard work which preceded it. Mrs. Flagg does not leave a jar of jelly because she said that it might look as if she were trying to repay her friend's hospitality, but as a matter of fact, it had been intended as a gift for another and Mrs. Flagg had the fineness of feeling not to present the token to a second choice.

The examples of nice feeling are limited to a few individuals, but where there is a lack of sensitiveness it is usually in groups, as at the funerals. This blunting of feeling is undoubtedly a protective shell developed in a country where there are too many demands upon sympathy.

Religion is vital. The church is not only the social center but the chief source of whatever there is of abstract thought. There are criticisms of the minister, but no criticisms of the religious doctrine of the pulpit. A somewhat literal interpretation

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1 The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 185
2 Best Short Stories, Vol. I, p. 200
3 The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 62
4 Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 220
of the text of the Bible is accepted.¹ The people are God-respecting rather than God-fearing, and sincere although there seems to be no display of religious zeal in the stories, except the incident mentioned of the annual conversion of the wanderer whom Mrs. Bonny reproofs.² Grace is asked before meals, and prayers are offered when the occasion demands.³ The mistress of one of the fine old homes in Deephaven interrupts a call to announce that prayers are offered at nine.⁴ The two young girls in the novels, resort to prayer in making their important decisions.⁵ Nan feels that God has directed her at last.⁶

Doctor Leslie is almost as much interested in ethics and religious philosophy as in medicine. He considers that we are sure of two things at any rate, "love to God and love to man."⁷

"When we let ourselves forget to educate our faith and our spiritual intellects, and lose sight of our relation and dependence upon the highest informing strength, we are trying to move our machinery by some inferior motive power."⁸

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¹ "and a vague thought flitted through the good man's mind (Israel Owen's) that perhaps this had been one of the idle words for which he must give account." A Marsh Island, p.147

² "I have committed the unpardonable sin;....I was in great wrath and trouble, and my thoughts were so wicked toward God that I can't expect ever to be forgiven." Country of the Pointed Firs, Best Short Stories, Vol. I, p. 120

³ Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 72. "Then he resolutely asked a blessing in terms we could not understand." Best Short Stories, p.119

⁴ "After a while the elder sister said, "My dears, we always have prayers at nine." Deephaven, p. 79

⁵ The girl was long at prayer in the cold little chamber." A Marsh Island, p. 783 ⁶ A Country Doctor, "It was best as God had planned it." p. 341 "I don't know why God should have made me a doctor." p.327

⁷ A Country Doctor, p. 106 ⁸ Ibid., p. 111
None of Doctor Leslie's observations shows the slightest scepticism. He was well acquainted with the scientific theory of his day, but his training had not disturbed his faith in religion.

Religion in these sketches is emphatically Protestant.

The Brandon family could scarcely endure the disgrace they felt in having a son go over to popery. Theology is Calvinistic, although some of the sterner doctrines are neglected. There is evidence that it was considered better from a social standpoint to belong to the English Church. Nan seemed to be relieved to be able to tell her imperious aunt that she had been confirmed. Most of the people must have belonged to the dissenting churches because the celebration of Christmas is looked upon by the older people as an innovation.

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1 A Country Doctor
2 "Miss Katherine's youngest and favorite brother had become a Roman Catholic while studying in Europe. It was a dreadful blow to the family, for in those days there could have been few deeper disgraces to the Brandon family than to have one of its sons go over to popery." Deephaven, p. 26
3 The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 123. "we don't seem to hear nothin' about the unpardonable sin now, but you may say 't was not uncommon then." Deephaven, p. 196, "Parson Reid, he's a worthy creature, but he never seems to have nothin' to say about foreordination and them p'ints."
4 A Country Doctor, p. 31
5 Tales of New England, p. 195. "The Day before Christmas, a festival which seemed in that neighborhood to be of modern origin. The observance of it was hardly popular yet among the elder people, but Christmas had been appropriated, nevertheless, as if everybody had felt the lack of it."
The Free Will Baptists are mentioned, but in the same conversation, the speakers state that they themselves are Orthodox.¹ The First Parish Church cannot be fixed from the text in any denomination, but since the author refers to the people as descendants of the Puritans, the sect was probably Congregational.

Superstition has reached the stage of refinement where ghosts are sifted down to spirit warnings, and only an insignificant residue of signs and portents influence actions.

Around the fire in the kitchen, three farmwives in A Country Doctor knit and discuss the weather and their aches and their feelings. Mrs. Martin says that she can't get over the feeling that they are "watching" with somebody. Something has been hanging over her all day. Her sister thinks that the conversation is taking a rather low turn and that they will be talking of ghosts next.² Their fear of ghosts does not seem to be a very sound one.³ Dreams and inexplicable phenomena have a great fascination for a few characters.⁴

"What persuasion?," inquired the fellow traveller, with interest. "Orthodox," said Miss Pickett quickly.... 'I ain't Orthodox,' announced the stranger.... 'I was brought up amongst the Freewill Baptists.' 'We're well acquainted with several of that denomination in our place,' said Mrs. Flagg, not without an air of patronage.
2 A Country Doctor, p. 8
3 Ibid., p. 9
4 Deephaven, p. 80 and 166. Ibid., p. 83
Friday is still a day of ill omen. 1 Signs have meaning for the observers only in retrospect. 2 Church attendance on Sunday is supposed to prevent ill luck during the week. 3 The general sincerity and reliability of Miss Jewett's interpretation of New England life make us think that the incident of the felling of the Bees is not borrowed, but introduced, perhaps, for the sake of "comparing notes" with Mr. Whittier. 4

1 Deephaven, p. 80 "There was an almost heathenish fear of doing certain things on Friday."
2 Andrew's Fortune, p. 22. "I told our folks last night there was going to be a death over this way....I was looking out of the window over this way last night just before I went to bed, and I see a great bright light come down; and I says, "There's a blaze fallen over Dennet's way, and my father always said it was a sure sign of death!"
3 A Native of Winby, p. 145 "In my early days I used to like to get out to meetin' regular, because sure as I didn't I had bad luck all the week."
4 Old Friends and New, p. 260 "I saw some bits of black cloth fluttering over the little doors where the bees went in and out, and the sight touched me strangely. I did not know that the old custom still lingered of putting the hives in mourning, and telling the bees when there had been a death in the family, so they would not fly away. I said half to myself a line or two from Whittier's poem which I always thought one of the loveliest in the world, and this seemed almost the realization of it."
Miss Jewett's world does its thinking in overalls and gingham aprons. Learning does not often venture beyond the necessities. A kind of culture which had been the byproduct of commercial travel was wearing off at the time represented in these sketches. Beauty has no importance in the lives of the farmers and fishermen and their wives, either in the form of literature, or music, or in nature. Neither humor nor imagination opens a way of escape from the uninspiring reality of every day potatoes and haddock.

It seems strange that such unflinching realism should have escaped the critics when such furor attended the introduction into this country of the French and Russian realism. The Maine sketches were finished fully twenty years before the publication of Maine Street, that book which marked the height of excitement over American realism, yet not a critic of Miss Jewett has summarized what she has really said about rural life. Her books seem to leave the impression of something rather pleasant on the whole, and her readers are taken with the suggestion of Charles Miner Thompson that she is one who finds the arbutus on the snowy hillside. As a matter of fact, the society which she interprets is not a flowering life. It is scarcely more forward-looking and hopeful than Uplands though it is by no means winter killed like Icebound. Through its veins runs a kindness, however disappointing its flowering. Adjustment and concession rather than inspiration and achievement characterize the social effort.

Later Maine writers agree with Miss Jewett that reading plays no very important part in the lives of the people. Umfraville
and Roman Bartholow are the exceptions, for Umfraville says, "Books are my life." ¹ Bartholow's Library was one where "there were only books that few could read in any light." ² The little twelve-year-old in Isaac and Archibald knew his Homer, probably in translation, for he uses the Latin name for Odysseus. ³ Martha in Uplands was accustomed to walk three miles to the village to do an errand or to get a book from the library. ⁴ Dora Thorne and one East Lynne indicate the literary taste in Wilbert Snow's Dominion. But Zeb Kinney On College Professors says:

"They read the books that other people don't
And never talk about the books they read,
Leastwise to us."

The statement implies that they themselves read something and talk about what they read.

Education has practically the same range that it has in Miss Jewett's sketches. Umfraville is a scholar and Bartholow understands obscure references, or goes home and reads them in the language in which they are quoted. ⁵ Colin Halliday in Uplands is being educated in a Catholic college. Jarvis had one painful term at the academy, painful to him not because of stupidity, but because of selfconsciousness. The pious little maid in Wilbert Snow's 'Prayer Meeting' had had

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¹ Collected Poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson, p. 852
² Ibid., p. 832
³ Collected Poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson, p. 178
⁴ Uplands, p. 38
⁵ Inner Harbor, p. 37
⁶ Ibid., p. 57
her "senior year." The Lobster Catcher "squares himself" to write to a distant friend about his baby's first tooth.

Unlike Miss Jewett's characters, people do not travel and have forgotten the sea-faring traditions, except Jarvis in Uplands, who used to play at going to Mozambique because his grandfather had been there, and the old sailors in Wilbert Snow's Maine Coast, who recall the old schooners.

It happened that one of the first impressions of Maine was that there was an unusual enthusiasm for music. We can find no trace of a community interest in it in the later Maine writings. People do break into a song, and whistle going down a lane after the cows, but nobody loves a violin, or a piano, no one goes anywhere to sing or to hear music. Wilbert Snow is the most generous in allowing his people a measure of lightheartedness in the chanteys and the Irish songs at the quarry, at the night of a Northeaster:

"A sailor tried the keys
Of his harmonica in various ways,
And cleaned it out by thumping on his knees.
A ballad singer feeling quite at ease
Warbled of John B. Gordon, Maimie White,
Bold Whiskey Johnny, and a bracing breeze
Of western ballads...." 7

1 Uplands, p. 38  5 Uplands, p. 91
2 Inner Harbor, p. 76  6 Ibid., p. 61
3 Uplands, p. 167  7 Inner Harbor, p. 88
4 Maine Coast, p. 57
Of aesthetic consciousness other than music, there is a far more liberal assignment to these characters than Miss Jewett allows. The theme of Uplands is the triumph of the abundant life over the meanness of the land. That abundant life comes with love and aesthetic appreciation. From the morning when Martha knew that she must float the wild pear blossom on the amber brook, to the declaration shortly before her death:

"But when we kept learning how beautiful things were, even here in these hills, we just knew we'd beaten North Dorset." 1

We watch her love of beauty grow into almost painful acuteness. Jarvis has what we suspect few country boys have, an eye for the colors of shadows. He even sees a relationship between color and sound:

"He saw the flaming of the elderberries against the gray stone walls and felt the harmony between their hot scarlet and the high shrilling of the locusts. "In winter he watched the shadows marching across the snow and caught the violet tones." 2

Jarvis must have inherited this sense from his mother, who had an appreciation of beauty, though one not sturdy enough to endure throughout her dreary life in North Dorset.

Whether Miss Chase believes that an acute appreciation of beauty is one of the graces of the average youth, or whether she selected two young whose artistic temperament was far enough above the average to make possible a triumph over the dreariness of

1 Ibid., p. 279
2 Ibid., p. 60
the life which faced them, the novel does not indicate. Judging from superficial observations, we should decide that the average young person of Maine, or of any other state, for that matter, would not have within him a love of beauty which would even lessen such hardships as she described.

But we find that another author confirms Miss Chase. The son of a fisherman has a love of beauty that would lift him above sordid necessity, though his father has become submerged.

"And when a pollock in his eagerness
Leaped high into the air and caught the sunlight,
The boy would shout delirious exclamations,
Perhaps come to, and realize where he was.

More often, though, his father brought him to,
Yelling, 'Come, cut more bait, this bucket's empty;
What do you think I brought you out here for, anyway,
To play with them turd-pollock? They won't get you anywhere or bring you anything,--'

The pollock overside had brought him something,
Had got him somewhere,--but the father's tone
Had cast him out of that ecstatic land." 1

In another poem of Wilbert Snow's is an older man whose love of beauty triumphed over the restraint of years, and set him to tearing down a signboard that spoiled the view. 2

Miss Chase allows Jarvis and Martha some imagination. When they are picking blueberries they try to fancy who will eat them. Jarvis, as a child, used to play games that required imagination, but he had never thought of fairies. Martha ventures first into fairyland with Colin Halliday. She sees the house thatched with the blue wings

1 Inner Harbor, p. 13  
2 Ibid., p. 44
of birds. Wilbert Snow illustrates in Thelma Maloney the only instance of a character who escapes reality by means of day dreams.

The little boy in Isaac and Archibald has the power to reconstruct the days of Homer to his satisfaction. In Roman Barthelow, the characters talk figuratively throughout the tragedy. Their imagination is intricate though substantial, and carries them through the clouds with scarcely a landing. In general, people on the lower level think in terms of plain fact as they do in Miss Jewett's sketches. Fancy is meaningless to them.

Just as there is agreement in the interpretation of the imagination so there is agreement in the sense of humor. In The Country of the Pointed Firs and the other sketches, we found that the characters made very little fun for themselves. More merriment is in Inner Harbor and Maine Coast than in the other writings, but when we examine this fun closely, we found that the author, not the characters, had made most of it. They take themselves as seriously as do Miss Jewett's characters. Downright masculine fun tumbles through some of the poems. Aunt Cal put cleanliness uppermost.

When men in dripping oilskins brought her drowned husband home, she

"Cried like a loon through the kitchen screen
'Put him on the piazza and let him dreen!'"

To be sure, the Ballad of the Sand Peep Ghost tells of a practical joke.

1 Uplands, p. 36
2 Inner Harbor, p. 38
3 Collected Poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson, p. 839
4 Maine Coast, p. 31
Good satire winks in Crump Hook and deviltry creates a tough sort of humor that Miss Jewett could not trust in her sketches. But her tenacious subtleties have a grip on our memories as certain as the bold humor of Manse. Manse is a general storekeeper, postmaster and barber when mackerel are out of season.

"One afternoon when fish were furrowing
The lilac harbor just beneath his window
While he was shaving Lawrence Tarreton
The Middle Western novelist who came
Each summer to depict New England life
In its decline for Middle Western readers,—
One could not call it wholly strange that Manse
Without a word of warning left his charge
With one cheek shaved, the other fully lathered
And made a bee-line for his seine and dory.

A neighbor seeing Manse knee-deep in fish,

Stood down and whispered in his good ear, 'Manse,
Did you by any chance forget a man
You left half-lathered in the barber-chair?'
'My God, is he there yet? The pesky fool,
I thought he'd finish up the job himself!'

When Manse had taken the personal reproof, and the novelist said,

"No wonder you poor natives drag along
Year in, year out, and never get ahead;
You don't know what it is to tend to business;
Without the summer folks you'd almost starve."

—Manse replied:

"I know I left
Without much ceremony—but if you think
I'd let a chance to get a school of mackerel
Slip through my fingers for a ten-cent shave
You're mightily mistaken.

I guess I won't shave off the other side,
It wouldn't be quite safe the way I'm feelin'".

1 Inner Harbor, p. 31
The same kind of humor that Miss Jewett loves takes Prayer Meeting out of satire and slips it under sympathetic amusement. Any one who has accompanied a grandmother to prayer meeting will have his pleasure in reading the poem enhanced by the thought that he is not enduring the embarrassment of those pauses.

"Three-quarters through the hour pauses fell
That no amount of ingenuity
The pastor summoned could alleviate;

He took his silver watch out and began
To rub the crystal with his long right thumb
Until I used to fear the glass would break
Before his very eyes and leave him rubbing
The minute hand toward long past eight

'There still is time,' he always told his flock.
He might have said eternity for all
The help he gave the clock that ticked away
So slowly and so faintly on the wall
We often fancied she was running down." 1

After the benediction, and Tom, the janitor, had shooed the people out, "smiles broke into laughter." 1

Peopledo really laugh in Inner Harbor, though they do not often in Uplands, and only occasionally in the pages of Miss Jewett.

Wilbert Snow's people are very much like those whom we meet, not altogether hard, not altogether gentle. In Country Funeral the neighbors show more consideration for the mourner

1 Inner Harbor
than they do in either Miss Jewett's pages or in Uplands. Martha, in Uplands has those very fine feelings which go with an acute appreciation of beauty. Sarah Craig shows a delicate sympathy with her bereaved husband. Sensibility in Roman Bartholow nearly reaches the turn of pathology.

On the subject of religion, the authors are in accord. In Uplands, and in Inner Harbor it is Protestant, probably evangelical. In Isaac and Archibald, where Isaac praises the Lord generally there is the spirit of Wesleyanism. The Catholic religion is something new and strange to Martha and not very familiar to Jarvis, who tries to explain it to her. In the Maine Coast, there is a religious controversy in which superstition has the weight of evidence; the wooden leg of Cyrus is proof that he should have heeded the warning dreams. The Soo praised Ingersoll. Religion in Icebound is merely the social code covered with a church roof. Religion gives place to philosophy of a Nietzschean cast in Roman Bartholow.

"Sometimes I have a robust apprehension If we were all honest cannibals, And not such anthropophagous hypocrites— If we should feed on one another frankly And with no cloud of custom in the way Of clarity and advancement,—we should climb Higher than yet we are, with all the bones Of all the weak beneath us." 3

With a survey of the religious attitude of the characters, we close our study of their intellectual life. We find that their

1 Uplands, p. 26  
2 Maine Coast, p. 22  
3 Collected Poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson, p. 839
reading is as limited as it is with Miss Jewett's characters; that education has nearly the same range; that music has no social importance, and scarcely any individual importance. Miss Chase and Mr. Snow allow the characters more aesthetic appreciation than Miss Jewett believes consistent. Humor lies generally more with the author than with the characters.
Social and Economic Conditions

Nothing can so convince us of the real seriousness of the economic struggle of the Maine farmers of this section as to collect from the various sketches all that Miss Jewett has to say about the difficulty of making a living.

It was never possible for her to look upon the landscape with the detached pleasure of a visitor. From her youthful travels with her father, the doctor, about the countryside, the meaning of the barren ledges had spread in her consciousness like a disturbing growth. She gives Mrs. Todd a chance to express her opinion of one farm:

"I've known three good hard workin' families that come here full o' hope and pride and tried to make something o' this farm, but it beat 'em all. There's one small field that's excellent for potatoes if you let half of it rest every year; but the land's always hungry."¹

Of another place Miss Jewett says:

"The land was uneven and full of ledges, and the people worked hard for their living, at most laying aside only a few hundred dollars each year. Some of the more enterprising young people went away to work in shops and factories; but the custom was by no means universal, and the people had a hungry discouraged look."²

The story of the next is the same:

"There has been much hard work spent on the place. Every generation has toiled from youth to age without being able to make much beyond a living. The dollars that can be saved are but few, and sickness and death have often brought their bitter cost."³

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¹ The Queen's Twin, p. 16
² Deephaven, p. 189
³ Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 263
And even again:

"If ever there had been a prospect of making much off the farm, something interfered. One year a piece of woodland had been cleared at considerable expense. The fire got it. There was no insurance and no remedy."[1]

One of the most convincing forms of literature, as Defoe discovered, is the financial statement. The sad one of Farmer Finch, ill with pneumonia, is almost too convincing. We should prefer to believe that the struggle had not been quite so unequal:

"There's winter coming, and I'm likely to be laid up any day with my rheumatism, and I don't see how we can afford even to take a boy to work for his board and clothes. I've got a few trees I can cut, and one cow I can sell; but there are the taxes to pay, and the minister, and money to lay out on the fences come spring. The farm ran behind last year, too."[2]

In the faces of the people she meets, Miss Jewett sees records of the struggle:

"The older people had a hard look, as if they had always to be on the alert and must fight for their place in the world."[3]

"Beauty in age is rare enough in women who have spent their lives in hard work in a farm house."[4]

"There was all the remembrance of disappointed hopes, the hardships of winter, the lonesomeness of singlehandedness in her look."[5]

"Her face showed that she had waged a bitter war with poverty and sorrow."[6]

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1 The White Heron, p. 48
2 The White Heron, p. 50
3 Deephaven, p. 189
4 The Queen's Twin, p. 22
5 Ibid., p. 71
6 A Native of Winby, p. 24
Sometimes the warfare lasts until disease or old age forces surrender; sometimes the combatant is driven off the field:

"The thought of winter, and of the little children, and the struggles he had already come through against poverty and disappointment were terrible thoughts; and like a boat adrift at sea, the waves of his misery brought him against the rocks and his simple life was wrecked."¹

That Miss Jewett appreciated the effect of geography upon disposition and character is indicated in this sentence:

"Most of the men in that region were hard men; it was difficult to get money, and there was little real comfort in a community where the sterner, stingier forbidding side of New England life was well exemplified."²

To their desperate minds there were only two legitimate ways of earning a livelihood, from the sea or from the farm.

"He'd no natural turn for the sea, 'Lisha hadn't; but I might have kept him with me if the land was good for anything."³

We see that the geography hemmed in the lives of the earlier farmers with bitterly cruel limitations. Can this be a picture of rural New England, written when almost everyone had a virtuous belief that somehow country life produced all the wholesomeness and hardiness and sweetness that was missing in crowded cities?

The diseases which complicate the struggle are rheumatism,⁴ and pneumonia,⁵ consumption and apoplexy.⁶ There is not so much

¹ Deephaven, p. 216
² Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 237
³ Ibid., p. 215
⁴ Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 263
⁵ A White Heron, p. 50
⁶ Deephaven, p. 125
insanity as we should expect. Five borderline cases and one that is unmistakable are scattered among the sketches. The King of Folly Island is plainly neurotic, as is Joanna;\(^1\) Captain Littlepage has hallucinations; the host in \textit{The Landscape Chamber}\(^2\) is suffering from an obsession; Miss Chauncey\(^3\) has become feeble minded through age; Lady Ferry\(^4\) is acknowledged as insane. Statistics in regard to insanity for the period between 1807 and 1860 are not available, and even if they were, we should not be able to check upon the section which Miss Jewett included in her stories. Miss Jewett's interpretation is probably correct. She was the daughter of a country doctor, who would have heard about the crazy people shut up in the far-away chambers of the farmhouses. Her story of Lady Ferry proves that she was not squeamish about the subject. Had there been enough cases to have saddened her at all, she would not have ignored them. The census for 1920 shows a population in Maine of 768,014, and the number of persons cared for in insane hospitals is 2,000.\(^5\) If these conditions prevailed at the time of Miss Jewett's stories, she has not half enough, but if we remember that she is writing about the survivors of a very hardy race of English pioneers, before the invasion of any weaker stock, we may accept her interpretation of the emotional and nervous stability of the rural people.

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1 \textit{Country of the Pointed Firs}, p. 31
2 \textit{King of Folly Island}, p. 80
3 \textit{Deephaven}, p. 331
4 \textit{Old Friends and New}, p. 176
5 \textit{The Maine Book}
It is well that the struggle was not complicated by the care of insane patients whose lives of dependence are long and comfortless. It is drawn from the stories that a relative, however distant, had a claim of support, not legal, but endorsed by social sanction. When no relative is available, the township assumes the responsibility for the care of those no longer able to support themselves. In some places they are boarded out among private families, as in The Town Poor. In others they are taken care of in a poor house. In Deephaven the orphaned children were taken by a poor, discouraged relative, who felt, apparently, that she had no choice. There are references to children who have been bound out.

Antecedent to the stories there had been a time when the inhabitants of the coast villages had fared better than the farmers.

The Jaffrey ships had furnished enough money for the Jaffrey descendants and the remainder of the community to live on for a long time, supplemented with the yearly produce of the farms and by local commerce. The Jaffreys represent the sea merchant-aristocracy, who increased in wealth until the Embargo acts staggered Maine's carrying trade. No one can read the stories of the sea-side villages and escape the depression for which the unfortunate

1 Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 224
2 Ibid., p. 22
3 Deephaven, p. 87, Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 157
4 The King of Folly Island, p. 238
law of 1807 is held responsible. ¹

¹ Country of the Pointed Firs; p. 43, "Oh, yes, shipping is a very great loss. There was hardly a man of any standing who didn't interest himself in some way in navigation."

Deephaven, p. 64, "Deephaven is utterly out of fashion. It never recovered from the effects of the embargo of 1807, and a sand bar has been steadily filling in the mouth of the harbor."

Ibid., p. 65, All Deephaven looked more or less out of repair.

Ibid., p. 93, Deephaven used to be a town of note, rich and busy, as its forsaken warehouses show.

The King of Folly Island, p. 238, "But it is a long time since anybody had chosen the business of sailor - there were only a few slippery old sticks of oak timber left in the river mud, and the fortunes have all dwindled away."

Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 101, "There how times have changes; how few seafarin' families there are left."

Deephaven, p. 159, "Old Captain Carew .... did a smart thing in the time of the embargo. Folks got tired of it, and it was dreadful hard times; ships rotting at the wharves, and Deephaven never was quite the same afterward."

Embargo of 1807


"To preserve our neutrality, the honor of our flag, and the rights of sailors inviolate, in this complication of difficulties, Congress, Dec. 22, 1807, laid a general embargo on all the shipping in the different ports and harbors of the United States. This policy which has been denominated, the first part of the Restrictive System was not only opposed and derided by the federalists; but it was utterly condemned by them as ruinous to our national character, as well as to our commerce and shipping; and designed to prevent the English from searching for their own seamen, a right, the exercise of which, they never would surrender."
To no portion of the Union, was the preservation of Sailors' Rights viewed with more intense interest than by our eastern inhabitants. For we had a numerous body of seamen; the amount of our tonnage was altogether disproportionate to our wealth or even population."


"The population of Maine was now over two hundred and twenty-eight thousand, while her exports were about eight hundred thousand dollars in yearly value, and she had shipping afloat amounting to one hundred and fifty thousand ton. With such an amount of exports and shipping, of course the embargo told very severely on our interests; and there were many who opposed the war, believing it to have been declared more to aid the French than because it was a necessity for the country."


"First Embargo Act, December 22, 1807. This law laid an embargo on all vessels within the limits of the United States bound to any foreign port; no clearances were to be furnished to any vessel so bound except under the immediate direction of the President: provided that any foreign vessel might depart in ballast or with cargo actually on board. No coasting vessel could leave port without giving bond to double the value of the vessel and cargo that the cargo shall be landed in some port of the United States, Dangers of the Seas excepted."
"The Embargo gave a killing blow to the prosperity of Grafton, and spendthrifts and foolish men and foolish men and women and the wear and tear of time had been undermining the once secure investments ever since."1

"The decline of shipping interest had cost this worthy ship master not only the better part of his small fortune, but also his health and spirits."2

References to these losses hold the stories in a twilight of discontent.

Though several families have no more visible means of support than a balloon, it is not surprising that they can live on so little when they have so little to spend money for.3 Board on John's Island cost two dollars a week.4 A dollar had no immediate value in the winter when supplies were laid in and the owner could not get out to spend it.5 Abby Pendexter paid twelve dollars a quarter for her house.6 The town paid five dollars a

1 King of Folly Island, p. 238
2 The Life of Nancy, p. 277
3 Deephaven, p. 68
4 King of Folly Island, p. 7
5 Ibid -
   "Take it in cold weather, when you've got pork enough and potatoes and them things in your sullar, an' it blows an' freezes so 'tain't worth while to go out, most all that money's good for is to set an' look at it."
6 Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 286 -
   "'Twas all I could to pay my last quarter's rent, twelve dollars. I sold my hens, all but this one."
month for the board and room of its two poor.\textsuperscript{1} Once in a while
the roomer in Mrs. Todd's house would take in for her two dollars
and twenty-seven cents in one day during the summer season.\textsuperscript{2} Five
thousand dollars was no longer considered a fortune because of the
increase in the demands for luxury.\textsuperscript{3} One farmer was overrated as
being worth fifteen thousand dollars and the farm besides.\textsuperscript{4}

At the time of these stories, fishing and farming and
local commerce are the only sources of income. Most of the farms
are too poor to support the owners without the aid of fishing.\textsuperscript{5}
One fisherman takes to knitting socks for the Boston market in the
lull between the close of the season's fishing and the time to
begin mending the nets for the next.\textsuperscript{6}

Except for shopkeeping, women's work is almost entirely
domestic. Weaving and spinning,\textsuperscript{7} making candles,\textsuperscript{8} rugs, and
clothing are included in a housekeeper's duties as well as cooking,
washing, making butter. Women who must support themselves do
various domestic services. One woman hooked rugs, and turned
carpets, helped with house cleaning and at great festivities,

\textsuperscript{1} Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 286
\textsuperscript{2} The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 8
\textsuperscript{3} A Marsh Island, p. 160
\textsuperscript{4} Tales of New England, p. 51
\textsuperscript{5} Deephaven, p. 64, 93, Life of Nancy, p. 267
\textsuperscript{6} The Country of the Pointed Firs, Along Shore, Best Short Stories, Vol. I, p. 202. "They say our Dunnet stockin's gettin' to be celebrated up in Boston, - good quality o' wool and even knittin' or somethin',. I change off to nettin' long towards spring."
\textsuperscript{7} The Queen's Twin, p. 33, A Country Doctor, p. 6
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid.
nursed, brewed teas of medicinal herbs, took charge of funeral arrangements in case the patient did not live.\textsuperscript{1} It is very likely that the same woman could perform the services of a midwife, but there are no births in these sketches, and the profession of nursing confinement cases is not mentioned. We do not know whether the kind of things which gossiping old women would be saying about childbirth was not suitable to include in a story to be submitted to William Dean Howells, or whether the subject was out of harmony with the general atmosphere of despair. The insistence upon the funeral and the illnesses of old age makes us suspect that Miss Jewett's reasons were artistic rather than prudish. Nursing the aged, keeping shop,\textsuperscript{2} making straw mats,\textsuperscript{3} hooking rugs, tailoring little boys' clothes,\textsuperscript{4} and being helpful and agreeable enough to be invited out for meals\textsuperscript{5} were considered fitting employment for a woman. Entering any profession except that of teaching was making one's self socially undesirable. The Dunnet Shepherdess raised sheep,\textsuperscript{6} and Polly Finch had taken over the management of her father's farm,\textsuperscript{7} but neither of these shocked the community as did Nan when she decided to become a doctor of

\begin{flushleft}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Deephaven, p. 48
\item The Village Shop, in The King of Folly Island, p. 229
\item Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 58
\item A White Heron
\item A Native of Winby, p. 137
\item The Queen's Twin, p. 67
\item A White Heron, p. 36
\end{enumerate}
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medicine. A modern reader finds it hard to understand the significance of the theme of *A Country Doctor*. It seems like much ado. To the reader of 1884 it would have been a challenge.

Though fortunes have been reduced and the great families have dwindled to one or two representatives, we shall make an unjustifiable mistake if we assume that this is a democratic society. It is far from it. In all the sketches which deal with the "aristocracy" we are conscious of an over-exertion to keep class lines brilliantly distinct. In so far as leadership was given to the clergy or their descendants, aristocracy was, from the middle-class point of view, real as well as ideal. It meant for them the leadership of the best in the Platonic sense. But only three times in the eighty sketches is reference made to such leadership. The *Dulham Ladies* illustrates the conscientious patronage of the clergyman's descendants.

"I have always made it my object to improve and interest the people at such times; it would seem so possible to elevate their thoughts and direct them into higher channels."^2

But even the mere wealthy in whom Miss Jewett glories take their social position very seriously. In *A Country Doctor*, Mrs. Graham, the doctor's friend and adviser, states the social creed:

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1 *A Country Doctor*, pp. 103, 136, 249, 277
2 *A White Heron*, p. 124
"When I was a young woman, it was a most blessed discovery to me ... that besides being very happy myself and valuable to myself, I must fit myself into my place in society ... We must learn to understand the subjects of the day that everybody talks about, and to make sure of a right stand upon the highest common ground wherever we are. Society is a sort of close corporation, and we must know its watchwords, and keep an interest in its interests and affairs. I call a gentleman the man, who either by birth or nature belongs to the best society. There may be bad gentlemen and good gentlemen, but one must feel instinctively at home with a certain class, representatives of which are likely to be found everywhere."¹

This is the most complete statement we have seen of the faith of the New England society woman. We cannot help wondering if Miss Jewett² was not caught with the glamor of the Boston society into which she was introduced, and carried back to her village aristocrats some of the lofty idealism which she has them express. They were, after all, many of them newly made rich, and their taste was by no means impeccable as the description of the best chamber shows³, yet she has an almost childish delight in pointing out their superior manners, and their elegance and social grace.

¹ A Country Doctor, p. 133
² Matheisson, F. O. Sarah Orne Jewett, p. 63. "Boston certainly raised no question about considering her a fully arrived celebrity after the appearance of Deephaven, for she was among the distinguished guests invited to Oliver Wendall Holmes's seventieth birthday party."
³ See page
Miss Jewett is very much at home with the simple manners of the rural folk, but she speaks of aristocratic society with the air of one "saving it for last."

The village aristocrats keep servants, and live in a stately fashion. Miss Harriet Pyne in Martha's Lady, conducts her lonely housekeeping with the most rigid formality, making no explanations of any of her orders to her old and trusted servants. Yet they do not always maintain their balance on such narrow levels. The young lady who comes to visit her second cousin in A Lost Lover questions a servant about her hostess's past. The same servant refrains from speaking her mind to her mistress not because of the impropriety of it, but because of the futility.

A Lost Lover bridges the gap from the relationship between mistress and servant among the aristocracy to that on the farms, where the distinction is not recognized except on "rare and inharmonious occasions." Women who do domestic service are not treated like servants by the middle class, but more like unimportant relatives or uninteresting guests.

1 Deephaven, p. 63, "There were formerly five families who kept their coaches in Deephaven."
Deephaven, p. 62, "I think Kate and I were assured at least a hundred times that Governor Chantrey kept a valet, and his wife, Lady Chantrey kept a maid."
Ibid., p. 37, "And it seems to me that it is a great privilege to have an elderly person in one's neighborhood, in town or country who is proud, and conservative, and who lives in stately fashion; who is intolerant of sham and useless novelties, and clings to the old ways of living and behaving as if it were part of her religion."
4 A Marsh Island, p. 452
2 The Queen's Twin, p. 135.
3 Tales of New England
5 The Passing of Sister Basset, A Native of Winby, p. 137, Deephaven, p. 48
On the whole we should say that the sketches show a distinct line drawn between the "great people" and the broadly inclusive middle class. Divisions within the middle class are not clear. Whether the social ranks that maintain at sea are defined on land as well, and whether the families of sailors are also ranked, the tales do not give us the slightest hint. We do know that there is a substratum\(^1\) Captain Littlepage speaks of "loafers". Mrs. Bonny has hens in her kitchen, and she relates a tale of a fight in which a boy had a part of his ear bitten off. The owner of the coon dog lives upon "loans" from the neighbors\(^2\). This lowest class

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\(^1\) Captain Littlepage, The Country of the Pointed Firs, in Best Short Stories, Vol. I, p. 27, "I see a change for the worse even in our town here, full of loafers now, small and poor as 'tis, who once would have followed the sea, every lazy soul of them."

Life of Nancy, p. 300, "I see every night, when I go after my paper, the whole sidewalk full o' louts that ought to be pushed off to sea with a good smart master, they're going to the devil ashore. Every way you can look at it, shippin's a great loss to us."

Tales of New England, p. 144, "The young man had known the horrors of its most primitive housekeeping and the dreary squalor of that level of society which does not rebel at the companionship of hens."

Deephaven, p. 194, "There were only two rooms in the house; we went into the kitchen, which was occupied by a flock of hens and one turkey."

Deephaven, p. 195, "One of the boys got fighting, the other side of the mountain, and come home with his nose broke and a piece o' one ear bit off."

The Coon Dog, The Queen's Twin, p. 173, "'taint much for a well off neighborhood like ours to support that old chirpin' cricket."

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\(^2\) A Native of Winby, p. 43, "Drink was his ruin". Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 118, "Led her a terrible life with his drunkenness and shiftlessness."
appears in a central position in only two of the sketches; in the sketch in Deephaven called Mrs. Bonny, and in The Coon Dog in the collection called A Native of Winby.

A kind of superstratum is mentioned as well as the sub-stratum. Captain Littlepage said that formerly there was scarcely a man of any standing who did not interest himself in some way in navigation, and yet Almira Todd's first lover was above being a seafaring man. "He prospered more than most and came from a high family." 2

Four classes of society, rather than the usual three are referred to: those who looked down upon the merchant aristocracy, the merchant aristocracy, the middle class, including the villagers and the farmers and fishermen, and the submerged.

As we should expect, there is a wide disparity in good breeding and social training as there is in culture, and, as we still find everywhere, good manners are not confined to those who have the best social opportunities, nor are the manners of the latter infallible. The aristocracy has its claim, but the villagers too, have their code and a formal language for formal occasions, though they do not have the general principles and theories to carry them over situations where there are no

1 Captain Littlepage, The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 43
2 Mrs. Todd, The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 10
3 Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 74, "The mistake was in treating sister Harriet as if she were on a level with the rest of society." Deephaven, p. 75, "There was a house where one might find the best society and the most charming manners and good breeding." The Queen's Twin, p. 137, "In these days of New England, life held the necessity of much dignity and discretion of behavior."
precedents. The limitations of the knowledge of etiquette have served as a basis for some of the humor of the stories, as we have already shown. Yet the inability of the aristocratic code to expand to meet the changing conditions furnishes both humor and pathos in the Dulham Ladies.

It is an interesting commentary on the change in standards of good manners to notice the prominence which Miss Jewett gives to formality. She admires the formality of Miss Chauncy, who, we suspect, had been pressed into perfection in the same school as the aunt of Oliver Wendell Holmes. Such formality is a little oppressive for the twentieth century. To have sat next to Miss

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1 See page 55
2 The Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 64
   Ibid., p. 72, "It was like the sorrows in many a provincial chateau in the Reign of Terror. The ladies looked on with increasing dismay at the retrogression in society. They felt as if they were a feeble garrison, to whose lot it had fallen to repulse a noisy irreverent mob, and increasing band of marauders who would over-throw all landmarks of the past, all etiquette and social rank."
3 Deephaven, p. 231, "I have seen few more elegant women than Miss Chauncy. Thoroughly at her ease she had the manner of a lady of the olden times, using the quaint fashion of speech which she had been taught in her girlhood. The long words and ceremonious phrases suited her extremely well."
   "They braced my aunt against a board
   To make her straight and tall;
   They laced her up, they starved her down,
   To make her light and small, etc."
Dobin, "originally D'Aubigne," at a meeting of the sewing society while she was holding "the standard of cultivated mind and elegant manners high as possible" by relating for the tenth time her mother's experience at Governor Clovenfoot's tea,¹ would set a pragmatic test to good breeding. Life would be far easier with the Queen's Twin,² a beautiful old lady with a lovely quietness and genuineness of manner without a trace of anything pretentious about her. Yet the Queen's Twin was a humble farmwife on a lonely inland farm. Mrs. Blackett, on Green Island, the mother of Mrs. Todd and William, the fisherman farmer, had that exquisite gift of hospitality which surrenders to the guest herself and everything that is hers for the time being.³ Mrs. Blackett is a Bowden, and Miss Jewett observes that they have an inheritance of good taste and a certain pleasing gift of formality, and do things in a finer way than most country people would do them.⁴ Poor Joanna, who has beautiful quiet manners and dresses for the afternoon on her lonely island where she neither wishes or expects callers graciously listened to the minister's officious prayer and made no indication of annoyance at his unwelcomed visit.⁵ These characters with truly good manners are not from the higher ranks of society.

¹ The Best Short Stories, Vol. II, pp. 72-74 inc.
² The Queen's Twin, p. 22
³ The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 73
⁴ Ibid., p. 172
⁵ Ibid., pp. 116, 119
Of those who have social opportunities, Mrs. Graham is the only one who appears to advantage. She has humor and sympathy and tact enough to draw little Nan's irrational individualism into social responsibility. The Dulham Ladies lack adaptability. Routine engulfs Harriet Pyne; Esther Jaffrey is uncomfortably virtuous, and her brother unpardonably indifferent. Miss Chauncy moves unknowing in the sad twilight of her former grandeur. The two dear sisters who read in their library the new magazine called "The Atlantic" make a pretty picture and do nothing that beggars their good breeding, but Nan's aunt and her friends are insuffrably ill mannered. The pride of these characters, with the exception of Mrs. Graham, might have furnished the author with more amusement had she not been quite so impressed with the splendor of their settings.

The Owens, on Marsh Island, are, Miss Jewett tells us, above the general level of society in the neighborhood. The daughter, it is true, bears herself with dignity and poise. Her mother's ways, however, are crude, and her taste bad.

1 A Country Doctor
2 The Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 64
3 Ibid., p. 158
4 A Village Shop in A White Heron
5 Deephaven, p. 231
6 Deephaven, p. 66
8 A Marsh Island, p. 661, 655, 778.
In these Maine characters, good manners and bad ones break across the strata, much as they do elsewhere. Conduct is generally decent, though there are six references to drunkenness, five of which are of a serious nature.  

The wealthy had their card parties, and teas, and dinners, and balls. None of these is pictured, but mentioned as the glory of the past. We are allowed to witness two afternoon teas, both highly disagreeable. One was a tribunal for the heresy of Nan, who was studying to become a country doctor, and the other was deliberately snobbish, "ordered to mock and astonish the girl who could not have been used to such ways of living."

Among the middle class, even calls had better be justified by an errand, although there are a few friendly ones. Callers are

1 Deephaven, p. 61, "He has a high temper and naturally so much drink did not make it much better." p. 140, "The father had been tempted to drink more whisky than was good for him."  
A Native of Winby, p. 43, "Drink was his ruin." Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 118, "Led her a terrible life with his drunkenness and shiftlessness." Deephaven, p. 211, Country of the Pointed Fire, p. 167.

2 Deephaven, p. 63, "There were balls at the governor's and regal entertainments at other of the grand mansions." p. 66 "He went to play whist with the Carews every Monday evening." p. 54, "It used to be gay here, and she was always going down to the Lorimers or the Carew's for tea, and they coming here." p. 55, "Old Captain Manning ... used to have 'em all to play whist every fant-night, sometimes three or four tables, and they always had cake and wine handed round, or the cap'n made some punch, like's not, with oranges in it, and lemons, he knew how."

3 The Country Doctor, p. 277.
4 The Country Doctor, p. 220.
likely to be "visitors" expecting to be invited to a meal. Israel Owen and his family on a Marsh Island expect the neighbors to gather for a casual hour or two on Sunday evenings. The old seamen who gather in the sun every pleasant morning, gossip, consume tobacco in fabulous quantities, and take their eleven o'clock bitters, have their own social relations.

Nothing in these sketches is more impressive than the fact that there is never a conscious effort for community pleasure. There are no gatherings which we usually associate with country life of the past, no quilting bees, nor spelling matches, nor singing schools, nor barn dances, nor weddings. Only one reference is made to country dances. There is one golden wedding in *An Only Son* to which we are not invited. In *Tales of New England*, the author says that the elder generation of New England knew less of society and human companionship and association than we can comprehend. Her stories illustrate this tremendous force. The only social intercourse

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1 *A Marsh Island*, p. 654
2 *Deephaven*, pp. 81–82, *Little French Mary*, in *The Life of Nancy*
3 *An Only Son*, *Tales of New England*
4 (The fraternal order of the Odd Fellows was established before 1877, for reference is made to the members marching in a body to a funeral in *Deephaven*.)
5 *Tales of New England*, p. 82
among the farmers at the sale, the sewing circle, the family reunion, church and the funeral.

Sad as is the thought of someone's having to give up a home, the farmers and their wives still derive an unlovely sort of pleasure in visiting a sale of household goods. They talk long afterwards of the bargains and of the goods that are sold for more than their worth. The women have the privilege of going over every bit of the house and they "commit to their tenacious memories every detail of the furnishings." We are witnesses at one sale, when little Georgie and the summer visitor go inland to visit his is aunts. A crowd gathered in front of the house of an old woman. There is a sale, and we see a farmer's wife climb up on a chair and peer into an upper shelf of a cupboard. The discovery of a broken pitcher draws forth a train of conjecture and reflection. For significant realism nothing else in the sketches can exceed this

1 Old Friends and New, p. 243
2 The Dulham Ladies, Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 73
   Andrew's Fortune, p. 20, "No wonder a New England woman cheers herself by leaving her own sewing and going to the parish society to sit close to an upright stove and sew for other people."
3 The Country of the Pointed Firs, The Bowden Reunion.
4 Deephaven, pp. 68, 70, Country Doctor, p. 115
7 The Country of the Pointed Firs, Chapters, XVI-XIX
pathetic act. Pages of exposition could never so convince us of the poverty of intellectual interests as the satisfaction and amusement that this old woman finds in the discovery of the broken pitcher hidden away.

There is a great deal that would seem very dull, but nothing unlovely in the family reunion. We do not remember ever reading with so much interest the account of anything that would be so fatiguing to us in reality. From the seating in the carriage to the return to Mrs. Todd's we move on through the pages with pleasant anticipation and finish, still looking for the hidden fire of enthusiasm that shines forth "with volcanic heat and light."

Somehow we missed the volcanic heat but we felt the warmth of the holiday spirit. The reunion takes place yearly in summer, out of doors. A soldierly little figure marshals the family in columns of four. The author says that they might have been a company of ancient Greeks going to celebrate a victory, or to worship the god of harvest in the grove above. There was a generous feast with architectural cakes and literary pies. The creator of the model of the Bowden homestead made in gingerbread said modestly, "like many an artist before her" that it wasn't all she had expected it to be. There were speeches by the ministers, and a long history of the family embellished with anecdotes, which the author very unkindly withholds from us. A poetess, the only one between there and Rockland, read a "faded garland of verse". There is something truly
remarkable about Miss Jewett's technique in the account of this reunion. It is something actually very dull, yet she is able to clothe the festival with such dignity and genuineness and seriousness that it becomes a poem. Reunions are held only once a year.

A weekly view of one another is provided by the church. The villagers and the aristocracy come together here, but apparently they do not mingle. Miss Jewett says that it is the only chance for the first families "to display their unquestioned dignity in public."¹ The old farmers drive in creaky wagons, but the newly married sometimes arrive in shiny new ones, and the men bring in their smart whips and stand them up in the rear.² From the islands the parishioners sail in boats. The picture is delightful:

"Think of the families in our parish that was scattered all about the bay, and what a sight o' sails you used to see, in Mr. Dimmick's day, standing across to the main land on a pleasant Sunday morning, filled with church-going folks."³

For a person to whom religion was as real as it evidently was to Miss Jewett, the following is a singularly clear analysis of the motives for churchgoing.

"Most parishioners felt deprived of a great pleasure when after a week of separation from society, of a routine of prosaic farm work, they were prevented from seeing their friends parade into church, from hearing the psalm-singing and the sermon, and listening to the news afterward. It

¹ Deephaven, p. 68. "I don't wish to ignore such a great gift as this God has given me." Letter to Mr. Scudder, 13, July, 1873, Math. p. 43
² Ibid., p. 70 ³ The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 113
was like going to mass and going to the theatre, and the opera, and making a round of short calls and having an outing in one’s best clothes to see other peoples all rolled into one; besides which there was (and is) a superstitious expectation of good luck in the coming week if the religious obligations were carefully fulfilled. 1

It is strange that church should fill the purpose of a reception, but more strange still that a funeral could be a source of social pleasure. Nothing will serve to show how important is the country funeral in the lives of the farmers and fishermen as an enumeration of the times they are detailed. Three times we watch with the dead; 2 we see parts of six funerals; 3 and we hear something of the details of another. There are thirty-one references of one sort or another to funerals. Yet these stories are not morbid. One would even say that on the whole they are not actually depressing. We learn of three different kinds of funerals, the walking funeral, 4 the boat, 5 the coach funeral. 6

1 A Country Doctor, p. 118 ff.
2 Andrew’s Fortune, p. 20
Miss Tempy's Watchers, (this story is laid in New Hampshire)
A Country Doctor 5 The King of Folly Island, p. 36
3 Andrew's Fortune  The Country of the Pointed Firs, 124-125
A Country Doctor (two) Deephaven, p. 218
The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 15
The King of Folly Island, p. 136
Deephaven, p. 218
The Life of Nancy, p. 60
4 Country of the Pointed Firs, pp. 15-17, Andrew's Fortune, p. 28
5 A Country Doctor, p. 40
In *A Country Doctor* and *Andrew's Fortune*, and *The Country of the Pointed Firs* we watch the mourners walking with the bier across the fields to the burial ground.

"They watched the sad proceedings of the afternoon with deepest interest. He [the doctor] saw it crossing a low hill; a dark and slender column with here and there a child walking beside one of the elder mourners. The bearer went first with the bier; the track was uneven, and the procession was lost to sight now and then behind the slopes. It was forever a mystery; these people might have been a company of Druid worshippers, or a strange northern priests and their people."¹

In *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, the author says that

"the little procession in the foreground looked futile and helpless on the edge of the rocky shore."²

In *Andrew's Fortune* it is a windy day:

"They walked two by two across the wind-blown field to the little family burying ground. He [the doctor] shivered and grumbled as he walked with her to the grave, 'I shall be out every night for a week after this, looking after lung fever.'³

Poor Joanna is carried from her island in a boat, and the mourners in separate boats accompany hers. Little Phoebe, on her lonely island, watches with spy-glasses a funeral from a neighboring island:⁴ The visitor also looked on.

"He could see the coffin with its black pall in a boat rowed by four men, who had pushed out a little way from shore, and other boats near it. From the low gray house near the water came a little group of women stepping down across the rough beach and getting into their boats; then all fell into a rude sort of orderliness, the hearse boat going first."

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¹ *A Country Doctor*, p. 40  
² *Country of the Pointed Firs*, p. 17  
³ *Andrew's Fortune*, p. 28  
⁴ *The King of Folly Island*, p. 36
Funerals on land or sea had a very rigid etiquette.\(^1\) The precedence must be correctly assigned, giving the blood relatives first place, and the relatives by marriage, a second place. Someone was heard grumbling about a mistake after the funeral at Deephaven.\(^2\) The guests are served with supper.\(^3\) Everyone who can possibly come is expected to turn out to show respect.\(^4\) Friends and neighbors come to watch with the dying or the dead before the funeral.\(^5\) This watch is described in Miss Tempy's Watchers, and in Andrew's Fortune.

"It was a little like a funeral already, and they did not care to be cheerful, though ... they solemnly drank a pitcher of old Mr. Dennet's best cider, urging each other to take some, for there was no knowing that there might not be a good deal for them to do before long. With this end in view of keeping up their strength, they had also shared a mince pie and a large quantity of cheese. When some doughnuts were brought out they ate those also, all trying in vain to think of some apology for such good appetites at such a moment; but since they had to be silent, the feast was all the more solemn."

Only those closest to the deceased are greatly afflicted.

The others derive a kind of satisfaction from the importance of the

\(1\) Deephaven, p. 219
\(2\) Deephaven, p. 49
\(3\) Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 244, "The borrowed chairs were being set out in a little group; even the funeral supper had been eaten." Life of Nancy, "We could reckon what a sight o' folks there was here this afternoon, by the times we had to make new tea."
Andrew's Fortune, "We had to set the supper table five times."
\(4\) Life of Nancy, p. 60, "Well 'twas natural for all who knew her to show respect." Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 125, "'But most had real feelin'! and went purpose fo show it."
Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 42, "All showed respect who could."
\(5\) Andrew's Fortune, p. 29.
occasion. They boast of the number of times they have to set the
supper table, of the number of wagons that bring the guests. In
the Country of the Pointed Firs, the author says that even funerals
are not without their social advantages and satisfactions.

There are two analyses of the interest in funerals in
these sketches, and since neither overlaps the other but supplements
it, we wish to quote both:

"A funeral in the country is always an era in a family's
life; events date from it and centre in it. There are so
few circumstances that have in the least a public nature
that these conspicuous days receive all the more attention."

"They pay homage to Death rather than to the dead; they
gather from the lonely farms by scores because there is a
funeral, not because their friend is dead."

1 Andrew's Fortune, p. 29, "I know we set the supper table over five
times; mother always said it was a real pleasant occasion."
P. 30, "It was like a tornado that had blown through his life,
but everybody else appeared to be on the whole enjoying it, and to
have a great deal to talk about."
Life of Nancy, p. 60, "We could reckon what a sight o' folks there
was here this afternoon by the number of times we had to make new
tea, if there wa'n't no other way. I don't know 's I ever see a
larger gathering on such an occasion. Mis' Stevens an' me was
trying to count 'em. There was twenty six wagons hitched in the
yard an' land so William said, besides all that come on foot; and
a few had driven away before they made the count."
Andrew's Fortune, p. 29, "But she needn't have burned the paper o'
names for the procession; they're usually kept. I know we got 'em
to our house for every funeral that's been since I can remember:
gran'ther's and grandm'am's and old Aunt Filly's, and all. She
had an awful sight of folks follow her.
Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 178
The Country Doctor, p. 38
Deephaven, pp. 220-221.
"Before the people had entered the house there had been
I am sure, an indifferent business like work, but when
they came out, all that was changed; their faces were
awed by the presence of death, and the indifference had
given place to uncertainty. Their neighbor was
immeasurably their superior now. Living, he had been a
failure by their own low standards; but now, if he could
come back, he would know secrets, and be wise beyond
anything they could imagine, and who could know the
riches of which he might have come into possession."

The social importance of the funeral is also illustrated in
casual references:

"She was dressed in her best clothes as if she had been
away on some important affair, perhaps a funeral."

"The occasion was so much more important than anyone
had foreseen that both little girls were speechless. It
seemed at first like going to church in new clothes, or
to a funeral."

"Yes, says I, 'but think of Thanksgibin' time an'
funerals!".

"The families were severed beyond the reuniting powers
of even a funeral."

"A funeral had such attractions for her that nothing
short of her own deathbed would divert her attention, or
keep her at home."

Funerals in the stories affect us somewhat as they do the
characters. Our emotions are in no way taxed. The lack of
sentimentality in the treatment of this feature of the social life is
characteristic of Miss Jewett's poise.

1 Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 37 5 Tales of New England, p. 186
2 A White Heron, p. 40 6 Atlantic Monthly, Vol. LI, p. 760
3 The Life of Nancy
4 The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 171
Miss Jewett has made a study of a society economically wrecked. Over the driftwood, sometimes dried and falling apart, sometimes beautifully carved and well preserved, she has cast the gracious even light of her sympathy and intelligence. So entirely free is she from bias, or egotism, or sentimentality, that her interpretation of social and economic Maine will have an ever growing value as a source of information concerning our English-American settlements.

Miss Jewett relates one custom which is characteristic of the salt marshes, and Wilbert Snow writes of another which we believe is peculiar to Maine.

In *A Marsh Island*, haying becomes, at least for the reader, a charming and romantic adventure. The old hay boat which has been stranded upon the mud all winter is floated at high tide. The haymakers pole the boat down the creek.

"At some distance, a broader inlet was shining in the morning sunlight, and another boat and its company presently emerged from behind the point of the Marsh Island and floated placidly away to the eastward."  

Haying by boat is a custom that few inland dwellers have had the pleasure of seeing. Another custom which is distinctly characteristic of this part of the world, but far more commonly seen than the spectacle of *Marsh* haying, is the winter banking of the houses with hemlock or spruce to keep out the cold. Nothing can be

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1 *A Marsh Island*, pp. 155-156
prettier than the white cottages set about with green boughs. One of the most delightful things that Wilbert Snow has written is his *Taking Away the Banking*.

"When March winds carried prophecies of June,  
And gray days were no longer winter-killed  
We all went out and worked till afternoon  
To take the spruce-limb banking off, and filled  
The air with shouts, heaping what soon would be  
A bonfire blazine by the willow-tree.

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But looking on it now I think the days  
We coaxed the spring along, and felt the rays  
Of March intensify the balsam smell  
In those green boughs, and saw the underpinning  
Exposed once more, and children run pellmell  
To hunt for crocuses, set the fancies spinning  
More rapidly than blooming hours of May  
When all the hills of God kept holiday."

Without arousing the least suspicion of a forced optimism, Wilbert Snow tells of a far pleasanter country life than the other writers. To find out whether his outlook is due to his own personal disposition, or whether life is really more cheerful in his corner of Maine would require a complicated investigation. For our purposes it will be safe to assume that Professor Snow has seen concerted effort for relaxation, and change of environment. Twice he tells of country dances, in *Maine Coast*. It is a recollection. In *Inner Harbor* the evening is detailed, from the first hint in the gathering of the old men in the store below the dance hall, to the scraping of the iron tire on the bar of the buggy as the couples leave for home.
The bashful boys who do not venture on the floor lay in a grist of peanuts that will last throughout the evening. The fiddler's "calling out" sounds like something hauntingly familiar:

"Right hand to your partner, grand right and left
Sashay out and form a line
Turn your corners; downward and back:
Promenade...You're doing fine.
Ready once more, now eight hands round;
Lead to the right, and do-si-do:"

It is not hard to imagine the exhilaration induced by that rhythm. That there is a sort of desperate abandonment is indicated in these lines:

"A few had sought release without the blooming;
Despairing souls who heard the gnawing rats
Of misery invade their homes at night;
Determined to invoke forgetfulness
They thrust their chins out willfully and stormed
Their way through measures in a mood that told
Theirs was a losing fight."

And in these:

"The hours went zooning by on airy wings
That failed to open through the drudgery
Of six days at the sink or in the wherry."

We had heard that babies were brought to the country dances, and Wilbert Snow confirms the report:

"Others with infants stretched in smiling sleep
On brown settees that trailed around the room."

Both the watch and the funeral are described in the poet's two volumes. Funerals have lost some of their social importance, but death has a sobering effect upon the community as a whole.

1 The Inner Harbor, p. 66
"Impassioned grief for those who die in youth,—
The grief that holds the village in a mood
As spell bound as a frozen Arctic river,
Was absent here; and only vague relief,
Mingled with tenderness. ............... 1

Another time the community's reaction is noticed:

"And as I neared the house I felt the spell
That always filled out village when the dead
Were lingering among us in deep silence." 2

"The Funeral" is a poem in the Eighteenth Century manner:

"Bewildered comes the aged father up
To verify the heavy news he hoped
Would never reach his ears; he calls her name
So piteously the neighbors turn away
And leave him for a minute all alone.
The children venture in, one, wailing loudly,
No longer tries to hold her pent-up anguish;
Another calms herself, but chords that swell
Along his neck betray his grief no less." 3

The affectation of style in this poem is undoubtedly intentional,
and recognizing it as an imitation, we do not feel that the
emotional appeal weakens Mr. Snow's interpretation in general.

The funeral of Jarvis in Uplands was a walking funeral,
to the family burial ground. 4 There was no social satisfaction in
it for anyone, though Miss Abby had the personal gratification of
directing someone else's affairs.

1 Inner Harbor, p. 10
2 Maine Coast, p. 22
3 Maine Coast, p. 46
4 Uplands, p. 134
Uplands does mention church suppers and grange socials, but the characters do not attend either in the novel. The moving pictures are a source of entertainment in Uplands. Owen Davis also mentions them.

No author except Mr. Snow recognizes any community attempt at play. The authors are too much concerned with the economic question.

Uplands tells of a source of income important in Eastern Maine, the blueberry crop:

"Buyers from the canning factories along the coast left their Fords in back yards to dicker over the crop at barn doors with farmers who only recently realized that the most unlikely of pastures after purging with fire might yield their increase." 

Jarvis explains what this means to them:

"At four they're coming from the factory for the last berries, and they'll pay in full. Five hundred dollars." 

Women earn pin money by knitting baby socks. We have been told that one of the best known firms in New York City has many of its baby socks knit in Maine.

The economic struggle is not minimized by any of the later writers. It is the contending force in Uplands. It is the raison d'être of the Jordan family. Only Edwin Arlington Robinson

1 Ibid., p. 264
2 Uplands, p. 104
3 Icebound, Act. III, p. 97
4 Uplands, p. 117
5 Ibid., p. 126
6 Ibid., p. 38
is silent. His two farmers, Isaac and Archibald, appear to have done very well on the whole. Roman Bartholow has apparently endless wealth. But it is hard to believe that any of these characters is a mortal who would be affected by the economic situation. In the minds of all the other writers there is not only the almost insuperable difficulty of earning a livelihood, but the relationship between the struggle and the spiritual outlook of the characters. Owen Davis says through Ben, his raisonneur:

"Then there's the farm, big and poor, and all worked out. The Jordans have been taking their living out of this soil for more than a hundred years, and never putting anything back."

He realizes the relationship between the land and the people:

"That's what nature's done for us Jordans,—brought us into the world half froze before we was born. Brought us into the world mean, and hard, so's we could live the hard mean life we have to live."

Wilbert Snow does not concentrate so much upon the poverty of the land, but the feeling of hopelessness characterizes his poetry. The shutting down of the stone quarry, rather than the loss of shipping is the definite blow that wrecked the part of Maine that Wilbert Snow chooses as his dominion:

"Ah them was jolly days: I never thought They'd leave us as they did: The price went down And cities paved with asphalt stead o' blocks, The young folks moved away, but we were old, Too old to think of other towns as home.

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1 Icebound, Act II, p. 87  2 Icebound, Act II, p. 65
Perhaps it's just as well. A hundred hens,  
A little garden truck, a chance to fish,  
And time to talk of pranks we did as boys -  
One way of life's as good's another, I guess.  
If we just take it right, that's all that counts.¹

This old man's resignation is not quite so pathetic as the utter despair of the old father in *Country Funeral*:

"A few weeks later comes a courteous letter  
With entries totalling four hundred dollars.  
The bent old father whitens as he reads  
This mortgage on his future life and home;

... ... ...

And in a scrawling hand he makes reply,  
Signing the paper which he finds within,-  
Surrendering his last, lame broken days  
To ruthless perpetuity of debt."²

*Uplands*, of course, emphasizes the relationship between the hardship of the body and the impoverishment of the soul. We can quote only a few of the many references to the struggle.

"She had been beaten from the beginning by North Dorset,  
its rocky acres, its long silent winter, their six months' fight each year against the land. With all her being she had hoped that Jarvis might escape it."³

"It's the same thing over and over, the land beating you by inches."⁴

"And then the winter here! Don't tell me! I know them! They freeze your soul up worse'n your body."⁵

From the point of view of this study, *Uplands* dodges the issue. Martha and Jarvis, the only two characters who had within

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¹ Maine Coast, p. 4  
² Ibid., p. 50  
³ Uplands, p. 52  
⁴ Uplands, p. 158  
⁵ Ibid., p. 158
them the power to beat North Dorset, the power of an abundant life, are both excused from the trial of old age. We have no confidence whatever in the redemption of Ethan and Sarah Craig, who turn again past middle age to face the problem of bringing up another child in an absolutely unchanged environment, and not even the strength of youth to reinforce them. We have more confidence in Ben in Icebound, who is tough enough and selfish enough to face the problems of existence, but he is already rich. We should have preferred to see the drama begin at its close. If he had grown spiritually, then we should have known that it is wealth, not aesthetic appreciation, that can overcome the hardships of the climate.

It is not pure presumption to claim this little poem for Maine. Miss Millay composed it before she had left Maine at all.

"I cannot but remember
When the year grows old
October-November
How she disliked the cold!

She used to watch the swallows
Go down across the sky
And turn from the windows
With a little sharp sigh.

And often when the brown leaves
Were brittle on the ground
And the wind in the chimney
Made a melancholy sound,

She had a look about her
That I wish I could forget
The look of a scared thing
Sitting in a net."

1 Renascence, p. 65
There is something far more surprising about the accord of these writers than about their disparity in interpreting the social and economic conditions. Only one writer has seen the community uniting in an effort to make merry. But it is an effort, and those who participate abandon themselves in a kind of desperate hope to stave off dull hours that await them at the end. The group in Miss Jewett's Maine had still the pioneer spirit of helpfulness. In the later writers that spirit has deteriorated to a more perfunctory social service. Two types of hardship divide Miss Jewett's stories; the hardship of loss, and the hardship of failure to attain. Wilbert Snow recognizes the same types. Miss Chase and Owen Davis present people that have been beaten by their environment. Ancestors of the Jordans had wrested a fortune from the land, but it had taken their souls in payment. Sarah Craig has surrendered to it one after another of her dearest hopes, but has never bought it off. At the close of the tragedy, we are not at all certain of the victor. The depression of economic failure pervades the atmosphere of these four interpretations like the smell of rot in the autumn forests.
The Countryside

Never for a moment does Sarah Orne Jewett allow us to imagine that we are in Massachusetts or Rhode Island or Connecticut. We are always in Northern New England. Though the days are warm, the woods and pastures green, though bees hum and birds sing, and the tide water plashes in the inlets, we know that we must bring our wraps. It is not by telling us that we are in Maine, nor by calling our attention to this or that characteristic detail, but by recreating the literal atmosphere of the North that Miss Jewett sustains our consciousness of location. One of the most subtle strokes in her technique is this atmospheric certainty. Her use of color suggestion is skillful, but her arrangement of light is masterly.

In Shelley's Stanzas Written in Dejection Near Naples, the poet establishes the atmosphere of southern noonday by a certain quality of light, its *swiftness*. "The waves are *dancing fast and bright*, "Like light dissolved in star-showers thrown."

"The lightning of the noon-tide ocean
Is *flashing* round me."

By combining rapid motion with light, Shelley creates the southern atmosphere.

Miss Jewett produces the opposite effect of northern

1. Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 1
atmosphere, by the steadiness of the light; as, "a lovely light had gathered."¹, "the warm yellow glow of the sun"², "there was something shining in the air and a kind of lustre on the water."³, "a flood of golden light"⁴, "the far horizon was like an edge of steel."⁵ In case she does use a word suggesting warmth, as, "the world was all sparkling and glistening", she immediately corrects the impression by a phrase suggesting cold, as "if it were a great Arctic holiday."⁶, "The sky was clear dazzling blue, and the air was cold and still."⁷

Another device which Miss Jewett uses for keeping out warmth is that of making sharp contrasts; as, "sails strangely white against the deepened blue of the sea"⁸, "a white village sprinkled on the shore"⁹, "long frost whitened ledges that made the hill with strips of green turf and bushes between."¹⁰ "black cracks in the ice."¹¹

Sometimes she uses pen and ink, or etching devices to suggest cold; as, "brown tops of the dead asters and golden rods stood out in exquisite silhouettes against the sky."¹². "The

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¹ A Marsh Island, p. 39
² Ibid., p. 41
³ The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 207
⁴ A Marsh Island, p. 41
⁵ The Life of Nancy, p. 247
⁶ A Marsh Island, p. 79
⁷ Ibid.
⁸ Ibid., p. 351
⁹ The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 152
¹⁰ The Queen's Twin, p. 55
¹¹ A Marsh Island, p. 79
¹² A White Heron, p. 40
crooked boughs of the apple trees and the longer lines of the walnuts and ashes and elms came out against the snow in clear beauty."

Language is full of figures which suggest the kindliness of nature, as, "mother nature", "the lap of nature", "bosom of the earth", but Miss Jewett pictures no gentle and kindly country. Hers is a penurious grandfather earth, and she clothes him in the sad colors of old age:

"A great fading countryside spread itself wide and far."¹

"The marsh grass was wind-swept and beaten until it looked as soft and brown as fur."²

"The sky was gray and heavy, except in the west where it was a clear cold shade of yellow."³

"Some tattered bits of blackberry vines held still a dull glow of color."⁴

"The hills were no longer green with their coverings of pines and maples and beeches, but gray with bare branches and a cold dense color, almost black where the evergreens grew thickest."⁵

By suppressing color suggestion, and by indicating a slow and diffused light, Miss Jewett succeeds in establishing the impression of a northern atmosphere. Unlike the more recent

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1. A Marsh Island, p. 351
2. A White Heron, p. 36
3. Ibid., p. 40
4. Ibid.
5. Tales of New England, p. 194
writers, she appeals chiefly to the sense of sight, depending upon color and light rather than upon shape.

Though Miss Jewett's technique of recalling the visual image is distinctly her own and due largely to her independence in her method of writing, her appeal to the sense of sound shows little individuality. No description of this section of Maine can omit the sounds of the ocean. Strangely enough, however, the great noises of the sea do not stimulate Miss Jewett's imagination. The sea "breaks with a great noise." The breakers "roar." The sea "beats and calls and is unanswered." Some of the lesser sounds show no more ingenuity. "The displaced water splashed among the coarse grass of the shore." "The tide runs splashing in and out of the weedy ledges." "The ditches are filled with grayish ice, that was sinking and cracking as the tide went out." There is, however, some improvement in, "The tide runs splashing in and out of the weedy ledges."

The inland sounds are principally the songs of the birds. Miss Jewett is not a "bird lover", but she notices the songs incidentally and appreciatively. The birds "pipe clear and untroubled from the thicket.", and two trashes, "answer each other with the sweetest voices from tree to tree." Once

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1 The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 194
2 Deephaven, p. 241
3 The Queen's Twin, p. 54
4 A Marsh Island, p. 155
5 Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 1
6 Ibid.
7 A Marsh Island, p. 344
she comes on the verge of sentimentality. "The song sparrows sang and sang as if with joyous knowledge of immortality."\(^1\)

Sometimes a combination of sounds and silences felicitously, as

"There was silence in the schoolhouse, but we could hear the noise of the water on the beach below. It sounded like the strange warning wave that gives notice of the turn of the tide. A late golden robin in the most joyous and eager of voices was singing close by in a thicket of wild roses."\(^2\)

Although her combinations of sounds are often worked out with care, occasionally, she leaves hanging a ragged end like this:

"I could hear no voices, but those of the birds, small and great, - the constant song sparrows, the clink of the yellow hammer over in the woods,"

and then this untidily conceived impression,

"and the far off conversation of some deliberate cows."\(^3\)

Frequently she pays too little attention to the quality of a sound, as when she generously called the chant of the whip-poor-will a song:

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1. The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 18
2. Ibid., p. 18
3. Ibid., p. 143
"All night the door of the little house stood open and the whip-poor-wills came and sang upon the very step." ¹

"For the village was so still that I could hear the shy whip-poor-wills singing that night as I lay awake." ²

Of course the grouping of these sound descriptions from Miss Jewett's sketches does them an injustice. In their proper setting their mediocrity is scarcely noticed. Their value becomes real in a passage like the following:

"On the coast of Maine where many green islands and salt inlets fringe the deep-cut shore line; where balsam firs and bayberry bushes send their fragrance far seaward and song sparrows sing all day; and the tide runs plashing in and out of the weedy ledges, where cow bells tinkle on the hills and herons stand in the shady coves." ³

Just as it does in reality, the freshness and sweetness of the Maine countryside again and again counteract the impression of dreariness. The pages are redolent of the woods and the pastures and the beaches. Miss Jewett's sense of smell is keen but selective. The unpleasant odors which we know must have hung around the fish houses, the sweaty laborers, the farm animals, she ignores. In eighteen references to odors, she uses the word fragrance, eight, and the word sweet, six times. The

1. A White Heron, p. 15
2. The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 18
3. Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 1
sweet fern, the bayberry, the balsam, the pine, and the sea have most attention. The nearest approach to an unpleasant odor is in reference to the damp wharves:

"There was a strong flavor of tar and hard wood, a clean dry odor which contrasted with the dampness that rose from the black side of the wharves."\(^1\)

"There was a musty odor of innumberable drops of molasses which must have leaked into the hard earth there for half a century: There was still a fragrance of dark Liverpool salt, a reminder of even the dyestuffs and pepper and rich spices that had been stowed away."\(^2\)

Not a fragrance, nor a really disagreeable odor is described here:

"The clear frosty smell of the open fields was changed for the warmer air damp with the heavy odor of moss and fallen leaves."\(^3\)

Miss Jewett's gardens are scented with rare herbs:

"and the sea breeze blew into the low end window of the house laden with not only sweet-brier and sweet-mary, but balm and sage and borage and mint, wormwood and southernwood."\(^4\)

There were some strange and pungent odors that roused a dim sense of and remembrance of something in the

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2. The Life of Nancy, p. 322
3. The Queen's Twin, p. 186
4. The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 3
forgotten past. 1

Nothing that she notes is better proof of her really intimate knowledge of Maine than:

"The delicate fragrance of the everlasting flower was plainly noticeable in the dry days that followed each other steadily." 2

Though Miss Jewett's technique of conveying sense impressions other than sight is somewhat unformed, her ability to relay the mood that a certain sight stimulates in her is unsurpassed by other Maine writers. The marshes, the rocks, the islands, characteristic features, are more real than reality, because of a nicely measured emotional reaction insured by the author.

In 1885, Miss Jewett, apparently entranced by the salt marshes, wrote about them in a somewhat aimless novel. A regard for Boston's delicacy was still on Miss Jewett's conscience, and the refinement of her character spoils their reality. But she did not slight the marshes, and gave so generously of scenes in all sorts of weather and times of day that she has made us know very nearly what it would be like to live on them the year round.

One of her most efficient figures of speech is the simile

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1. The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 3
2. A Marsh Island, p. 350
The marshes looked as if the land had been ravelled out into the sea.\(^1\)

There is nothing outstanding in the sentence which follows, but it gauges exactly the feeling she wishes us to have when she shows us long stretches of marsh land:

"the marshes seemed to stretch away to the end of the world."\(^2\)

In *A White Heron*, a literal statement produces the sense of desolation that might happen to be crowded out of our consciousness at the very moment if we were actually looking upon the scene:

"There is nothing to hide either the sunrise or the sunset. The lowlands reach out of sight into the west and the sea fills all the east."\(^3\)

We cannot escape a sense of discomfort in reading this:

"Eastward on the bleak downs, a great flock of sheep nibbled and strayed about all day and blinked their eyes at the sun."\(^4\)

Through the emotion, rather than through the eyes, Miss Jewett makes the sand-dunes vivid,

"There was only this desert waste of sand, white as bone, deep and bewildering, and the coarse grass and hungry heather clung to the higher heaps of it here and there."\(^5\)

1. *A Marsh Island*, p. 151
2. Ibid., p. 38
3. *A White Heron*, p. 25
4. *A Marsh Island*, p. 350
5. Ibid., p. 784
And again from *A Marsh Island*.

"Beside her were some old apple-trees that the shifting dunes had waged war against and defeated."¹

To the west of the marshes are hills which displease Miss Jewett. She has nothing to say in their praise, and much in their disfavor:

"At all times of the year they seemed inharmonious and unrelated to the sea-meadows."²

"Behind the marshes there were some low hills looking as if they were solid stone to their cores and sparingly overgrown with black and rigid cedars."³

Again she selects our emotional reaction to them:

"There was no reserve and no secret; the hills were like the telling of some sad, unwelcomed news in their harsh insistence and presence."⁴

Though Miss Jewett was fascinated by the marshes, she really loved the rocky shore, all covered with the "army of the pointed firs, darkly cloaked and standing as if ready to embark."⁵ Through their ranks the grey ledges, softened here and there with bayberry and wild roses, face the salt spray that even in quiet weather reaches high up the cliff.

1. *A Marsh Island*, p. 784
3. *A White Heron*, p. 36
4. *A Marsh Island*, p. 357
5. *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, p. 45
A typical experience in travelling along the coast of Maine is described in The Country of the Pointed Firs:

"When I thought we were in the heart of the inland country, we reached the top of a hill and suddenly there lay spread out before us a wonderful view of well-cleared fields that swept down to the wide waters of a bay....There was a schooner with all sails set coming down the bay from a white village that was sprinkled on the shore."\(^1\)

That surprise which comes with an unexpected view of the ocean is one of the most delightful features of travel here. Usually a glimpse of the sea includes an island or two.

For Miss Jewett, the islands of Maine are not merely enchanting detail in the summer ocean though she saw them with poetic vision. For her they become symbols of the nature of the men and women who could with poise face the hardship of life on their meagre soil.

"There was something peculiarly unresponsive about their quiet island in the sea, solidly fixed into the still foundations of the world, against whose rocky shores the sea beats and calls and is unanswered."\(^2\)

On the island, the small farm and the wood lot furnish not quite enough for the family to live on without

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1. The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 45
2. Ibid., p. 76
harvesting from the sea. The long weirs stretching far out into the water and the fish house on the shore tell the story. On the shoulders of the ledges sheep find scant pasturage.

"There were all the thick scattered grey rocks that kept their places, and the gray backs of many sheep that forever wandered and fed on the thin, sweet pasturage that fringed the ledges."¹

In another sketch, Miss Jewett finds to her amusement that what she had supposed to be rocks moved and turned into sheep.²

While the islands have a meaning for Miss Jewett that the casual observer never imagines, the sight of the inland farms creates in her a sadness that she cannot cast off. Nearly all of her inland descriptions are touched with hopelessness:

"The farms all wore a look of gathering age, though the settlement was, after all, so young. The fences were already fragile, and it seemed as if the first impulse of agriculture had soon spent itself without hope of renewal. The better houses were always those that had some hold upon the riches of the sea. A house that could not harbor a fishing boat in some neighboring inlet was far from being sure of every day comforts. The land alone was

¹. The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 59.
². The Queen's Twin, p. 55
not enough to live upon in that stony region; it belonged by rights to the forest and to the forest it fast returned.\(^1\)

Swamps and ledges and the army of the fires that encroaches steadily complicate the struggle that the climate alone would make difficult enough.

The note of defeat that accompanies the description of the inland farms governs Miss Jewett's selection of characteristic detail. One of these is a familiar sight even today.

"I had driven over three miles of road, and passed only one house that was tenanted and cellars or crumbling chimneys where good farm houses had been. The lilacs bloomed in solitude, and the fields, cleared with so much difficulty a century ago, all going back to the original woodland from which they were won."(S&W.P.279)

How this little half-humorous touch insists upon the futility of all effort!

"The tiny flat bottomed boats were pulled up on the shore as if their usefulness were over, not only for that season, but for all time."\(^2\)

Even in this whimsical figure, which looks so irresponsible, there is the suggestion of age:

"There was a solemn company of lobster coops... They seemed like droll old women telling each other secrets."\(^3\)

Where we least suspect it, Miss Jewett has slipped

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1. The Queen's Twin, p. 55
2. A White Heron, p. 36
3. Deephaven, p. 86
in some suggestion of age or resignation.

She selects as the visible symbol of the force that is at war with man, not the soil, nor the blighting frosts, nor the insect pests, as we might expect, but trees, trees gaining ground like a barbaric horde creeping up on cultivated land. On the way to visit the Queen's Twin, Mrs. Todd and her boarder pass through pasture land overrun with firs. Mrs. Todd says:

"I tell you, those little trees mean business."

Miss Jewett's humor flickers like sunlight in the woods:

"I looked down the slope and felt as if we ourselves were likely to be surrounded if we lingered too long."

Again she continues the characterization of the warriors:

"There was a vigor of growth, a persistence and savagery about the sturdy little trees that put weak human nature at complete defiance. One felt a sudden pity for the men and women who had been worsted after a long flight in such a lonely place."

Not only the hemlocks and spruces, but the cedars as well are in the opposition. We know of no place in literature where our reaction to an object of nature is anticipated with greater precision than in this description of the cedars:

"These cedars stood erect from the least to the greatest, a most unbending and heartless family, which meant to give

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1. The Queen's Twin, p. 16
neither shade in summer nor shelter in winter. No wind could shake them for their roots went down like wires into the ledges, and no draught could dry away the immost channels of vigorous though scanty sap that ran soberly through their tough, unfruitful branches.  

Sometimes Miss Jewett's personification is not so perfect. Her imagination is frequently carried away with the possibilities of the figure, as when she says that it is as if the savage fights with the winter winds had made some pitch pines hard hearted, and when she develops too tediously the pretty conceit of some old apple trees dancing a minuet. But now and then her sense of humor produces something whimsical like this:

"a long lane unshaded except here and there where ambitious fence posts had succeeded in changing themselves into slender willow trees."

From one who cared so much for trees as her letters prove that Miss Jewett did, it is not surprising that we should have such delightful and intelligent characterization. Their habit of possessing neglected acres makes the symbolism of the fir tree especially significant. Land wrested from the forest by the most severe and tedious labor, returning again to the forest, always saddened the writer, more than the thought of the agents which forced the surrender. The climate which shortens the growing season by two good months and limits the farmers'

1. A White Heron, p. 37
2. Deephaven, p. 204
3. Old Friends and New, p. 259
4. Tales of New England, p. 61
crops escapes condemnation. She says of herself that being a New Englander, she must talk of the weather, but it is the weather of the comfortably housed, economically free New Englander. Storms are refreshing or spectacular rather than a focus for emotion, as they are likely to be in stories of the sea coast. Fogs and mists are seen from an aesthetic point of view. There is no artificiality or lack of sensitiveness in her descriptions of the climate, but she does not hold it responsible for the condition of the farm lands. In only one story does the weather influence the plot. On that November day that made one feel as if summer were over forever, and as if no resurrection could follow such unmistakable and hopeless death, the father of Polly Finch contracted pneumonia. It was his illness that made it necessary for the daughter to assume the responsibility of the farm, and become Farmer Finch.

As setting, winter is not really depressing. The snow goes "hurrying in long waves across the buried fields. On Christmas day, "the sun shines bright on the sparkling snow and the eaves drip." An ice storm makes the world like an "arctic holiday." After a day or two of snow that turned into rain and was followed by warmer weather,

1 A Country Doctor, p.57; Old Friends and New, p.239; Tales of New England, p.240; Deephaven, p.251
2 The King of Folly Island, p.1: A Country Doctor, p.348; Ibid., p.30
3 A White Heron, p.40
4 Tales of New England, p.250
5 Ibid., p.210
6 A Marsh Island, p.79
came one of the respites which keep up New England hearts in December.¹

But the actual hardship of winter travel is written by the daughter of a country doctor, who has experienced it:

"The December thaw [was] followed by a blast of cold weather."² "The deep mud had become like iron, rough and ragged and jarring the people who tried to travel over it."²

Though Miss Jewett does not insist upon the relation between the climate and the economic situation, she does show, either consciously or inadvertently, the attitude of the community towards its environment in the type of house which it evolved. She recognizes who these little Maine cottages catch the reaction of the builders to the life that faced them:

"The few houses which seemed securely wedged and treenailed in among the ledges of the landing.....made the most of their seaward view, and there was a gayety and determined floweriness in their bits of garden ground; the steep gables were like knowing eyes that watched the harbor and the far sea-line beyond."³

"Determined floweriness" reveals the whole situation.

"It was one of the houses that seem firm rooted in the ground, as if they were two thirds below the surface like icebergs."⁴

"All the weather-beaten houses of that region face the sea apprehensively like the women who live in them."⁵

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1. Life of Nancy, p. 263
2. A White Heron, p. 36
3. Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 2
4. Ibid., p. 59
5. Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 197
"It was a representative house for that somewhat primitive farming region, though it had fallen out of repair and wore a damaged and resourceless aspect."

Miss Jewett's reaction to the sight of the houses is seldom esthetic. The charm of the architectural simplicity of some of them, which we may see today, is never mentioned. She always looks straight through the walls, even into the secret cupboards.

"In spite of the serene and placid look of the old houses one who has always known them cannot keep from thinking of the sorrows of these farms and their almost unmitigated toil.

"Heaven only knows the story of the lives that the gray old New England farmhouses have sheltered and hidden away from the curious eye as best they might. Stranger dramas than have ever been written belong to the dull-looking quiet homes, that have seen generation after generation live and die."

In these Maine stories, the force of intelligence in survival is acutely illustrated. Those who were keen enough to make no attempt to drag from the earth what the earth had not to give, but who turned to the abundance of the sea were richly rewarded. In the inland sketches we cannot escape the bitterness of the sense of failure, indicated by the encroaching firs, the "resourceless aspect of the houses". But the stories of the coastal villages are told in the afterglow of prosperity. The houses are snug and amusing, or they reflect the glory of an aristocracy no

1. Tales of New England, p. 78.
2. Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 263.
3. Atlantic, Monthly, Vol. XI, 768.)
When Miss Jewett described the houses inland, her humor is submerged; but at the sea-shore, her depression turns to a sympathetic amusement, and in this lighter mood she strikes off their homes. Elijah Tilley's house was a "neat, sharp-edged little dwelling." Miss Bickford's was "topped by two prim chimneys that stood up like ears." 

Humor and reverence mingle in her descriptions of the interiors. With affectionate respect she points out the significant detail, and with amusement, the significance of the insignificant in furnishings. Some of her descriptions are so detailed that they have almost documentary value.

"It was a comfortable old kitchen with a beam across its ceiling, and two solid great tables, and a settle at one side the fire, where the two men sat who were going to watch. The fire place took all one side of the room; the wood work around it was painted black, and at one side, the iron door of the brick oven looked as if it might be the entrance to a very small dungeon. There was a high and narrow mantle-shelf, where a row of flat-irons were perched like birds gone to roost; also a match box, and a turkey wing and a few very dry red peppers, while a yellow covered Thomas's almanac, much worn, it being December, was hanging on its nail in one corner."

There are four detailed descriptions of the "best room". We especially enjoy the one in Mrs. Patton's house in Deephaven:

2. The Life of Nancy, p. 129.
"[It was] unmistakably a best room, and not a place where one may make a litter or carry one's everyday work. You felt at once that somebody valued the prim old-fashioned chairs, and the two half-moon tables, and the thin carpet, which must have needed anxious stretching every spring to make it come to the edge of the floor. There were some mourning pieces by way of decoration, inscribed with the names of Mrs. Patton's departed friends, two worked in crewel to the memory of her father and mother, and two paper memorials, with the woman weeping under the willow at the side of the monument. They were all brown with age; and there was a sampler besides, worked by 'Judith Beckett, aged ten' and all five were framed in slender black frames and hung very high on the walls. There was a rocking chair which looked as if it felt too grand for use."

What Miss Jewett has to say about the best room shows no cheap spirit of ridicule but a sensitive mind quick to see the underlying meaning.

"The best room seemed to me a much sadder and more empty place than the kitchen; its conventionalities lacked the simple perfection of the humbler room and failed on the side of poor ambition: It was only when one remembered what patient saving and what high respect for society in the abstract go to such furnishing that the little parlor was interesting at all.""

Though the full description of the Brandon house is by no means tedious, it is far too long for quotation. However, we cannot pass by the dignity and grandeur of the hall. Those who have climbed the tiny steep stairways of the old Connecticut

1. Deephaven, p. 50.
houses will understand how far from bare necessity these man-
sions of the merchant aristocracy of Maine have spread.

"There were four very large rooms on the lower floor and six above, a wide hall in each story and a fascinating garret over the whole.

The rooms all have elaborate cornices, and the lower hall is very fine, with an archway dividing it, and panelling of all sorts, and a great door at each end through which the lilacs in front and the old pensioner plum trees in the garden are seen exchanging bows and gestures. Every step of the stairway is broad and low, and you come halfway to a square landing with an old straight backed chair in each farther corner, and between them a large, round topped window with a cushioned seat, looking out on the garden and the village and the hills far inland, and the sunset beyond all. Then you turn and go a few steps more to the upper hall. There were more old chairs and a pair of remarkable sofas. The wide window which looks out on the lilacs and the sea was a favorite seat of ours. Facing each other on either side of it are two old secretaries, and one of them we ascertained to be the hiding place of secret drawers."

The West parlor has a great fireplace framed in blue and white Dutch tiles "which ingeniously and instructively re-presented the careers of the good and the bad man." Miss Jewett describes the tiles in detail. Her description of the what-not gives immediately the atmosphere of the room:

1. Deephaven, p. 15
2. Ibid., p. 19
"There was a large cabinet holding all the small curiosities and knickknacks there seemed to be no other place for, - odd china figures and cups and vases, unaccountable Chinese carvings and exquisite corals and sea-shells, minerals and Swiss wood-work and articles of vertu from the south seas. Underneath were stored boxes of letters and old magazines, for this was one of the houses where nothing seems to have been thrown away."¹

The room was large enough to contain a great deal of furniture besides the what-not cabinet. There was a high square sofa large enough for two to lie on at once. It must have been brought in in pieces and built in the room.²

The best chamber disillusions us about the taste of the merchant aristocrats. The carpet is enough.

"It was most singularly colored with dark reds and grays and brown, and the pattern after a whole summer's study could never be followed by the eye."

The only picture was of the Maid of Orleans tied with an "unnecessarily strong rope to a very stout stake."³

The parlor bed rooms of the cottages seem to give Miss Jewett more pleasure. In one she sees "a plump looking bed like a well risen loaf"⁴, in another a beautifully quilted white coverlet instead of the blue homespun on the four-posted

¹. Deephaven, p. 19
². Ibid.
³. Ibid., p. 16
⁴. A Marsh Island, p. 44
bed. She thinks how pleasant the little island bedroom is with its brown unpainted paneled woodwork.

Delf and china, and hooked rugs and braided ones, India prints, and oil paintings, and mahogany chests, and chairs and tables thrill: the heart of the lover of antiques. One chest American, for it dated back to the period before the importation of India prints and shawls and mahogany. It was "stoutly timbered as if it were built in some shipyard, and there were heavy wrought iron hinges and a large escutcheon for the key hole that the ships blacksmith might have hammered out."³

In 1832, a Mr. William D. Williamson of Bangor wrote The History of Maine in which he laments the extravagance of 1820.

"The spirit of economy it is true attended the people through the Revolution, regardless of fashion and unambitious of ornament or display. But that period was succeeded by an overflowing influx of foreign fabrics; and when a passion for finery pervaded the community, families aspired to destination by means of luxury and extravagance. Our indigenous cherry, black birch and curl maple, which received so fair a polish in the service of our grandmothers, were shoved from the parlour and setting room, to admit articles of foreign mahogany, and perhaps of foreign workmanship."⁴

1. The White Heron, p. 228
2. The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 83
3. The White Heron, p. 228
4. The History of Maine, Vol. 11, p. 703
We are glad that the spirit of economy did not continue, for we enjoy the remnants of this luxurious period. We even like the "faint ancient odor of plum cake and madeira wine."\(^1\) The smell of "haircloth and woolen carpets"\(^2\) in a closed damp room is not quite so romantic, but it indicates an asceticism which labored and sacrificed to produce that which it abstained from enjoying.

Like the people who built them, the villages take their time. Miss Jewett thinks that their deliberation is the reason for their "delightful completeness" when once they have "matured."\(^3\) Only the little fishing villages grow helter-skelter like "soldiers who have broken ranks."\(^4\) The towns move from the church outward, the outer dwellings stray "somewhat undecidedly toward the world beyond."\(^5\)

Deephaven does not grow at all.\(^6\) In Barlow Plains the older inhabitants look with mingled disdain and pride at a new house in the French manner,\(^7\) and "Oldfields was just beginning to wake from a fifty years' architectural sleep, and

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1. The King of Folly Island, p. 97
2. A Marsh Island, p. 660
3. A Country Doctor, p. 119
4. Atlantic Monthly L. 83
5. A Country Doctor, 121
6. Deephaven, p. 93
7. A Native of Winby, p. 40
rub its eyes and see what it thought about a smart little house with a gabled room and much scalloping of its edges.¹
In Dulham even the old houses remain tenantless when once they are vacated. There the population dwindled steadily.²

The foreigners had not yet begun to make their homes in Miss Jewett's Maine villages.³ Dulham was not used to hearing the voices of foreigners on its streets until the father of little French Mary came there to work.⁴

The outstanding building is the church. All that Miss Jewett says about the church at Oldfields is that it was 'very white and held aloft an imposing steeple, and strangers were commiserated if they had to leave town without the opportunity of seeing its front by moonlight.'⁵

There is a painting of Willard Metcalf of the facade of a white church in Maine.

One very complete description of a village has the atmosphere which Miss Jewett often secures in the landscapes and in her best portraits:

"The high houses of sea-captains, the pride and circumstance of meeting-houses, the business of shipbuilding, and the almost Venetian privilege of waterways won his

1. A Country Doctor, p. 120
2. The Life of Nancy, p. 203
3. Deephaven, p. 93
4. The Life of Nancy, p. 203
5. A Country Doctor, p. 118
heart completely. There was a long bridge which seemed like a hawser that held the two parts of the town together, and stray seamen who lounged there in the morning sunshine spoke in voices that had caught some notes from the creak of rigging and sounds of wind and wave. Here and there a half finished schooner pushed its bowsprit far ashore, and the incessant knocking of the ship builders' hammers was heard in a sort of rhythm... There was a strong flavor of tar and hard wood, a clean dry odor which contrasted with the dampness that rose from the black sides of the wharves and the sticky mud in the creeks. The tide was going out; the foundation of the village seemed insecure piles and slender seabitten timbers, between which one could look as if they were great cages, for long since escaped marine monsters. Olive colored and brown seaweed clung to their old wood, while here and there was hanging a brilliant strand of green moss like floss silk shining and heavy with water.

The outstanding achievement of Miss Jewett's description is the atmospheric certainty. Probably the chief merit of her technique is the measured emotional appeal, and the principal value of her contribution to this study is her knowledge of the significance of what she sees.

To find out how Miss Jewett's interpretation compares with that of more recent writers, we must subtract from the latters' side the variation in technique due to changes in literary taste in the last two decades. We shall look at some of the poems of Edna St. Vincent Millay where Maine is

1. A Marsh Island, p. 359
clearly indicated or probably felt, Owen Davis's *Icebound*.

*Uplands* by Mary Ellen Chase, Wilbert Snow's *Inner Harbor*, and *Maine Coast* and Edwin Arlington Robinson's *Isaac and Archibald* and Roman Bartholow.

Whether or not the slowness of the light, and subdued colors are part of our consciousness in thinking of Maine, they do contribute to the illusion. Miss Chase's *Uplands* is full of color. Except for the choice of characteristic detail, the novel might have been laid in Rhode Island or Connecticut. The north is there, and the sea is there, but we must remember it. There is color in The *Country of the Pointed Firs*, but it is nothing to brood over, as in this selection from *Uplands*:

"A dove color which would never stay long enough for her enraptured eyes. Day by day she tried to ascertain exactly what color it was. In it was the blue of her fairy book, and the deeper blue of the early violets in Miss Abby's pasture; the lilac of the June blossoms by their door, the warm gray of a blue jay's breast. It was the color of serenity and peace, and compared to it the gorgeous sunrises and the billowing gold-edge clouds of purple which sometimes on clear sunsets swept the horizon were flamboyant and garish indeed."

Sometimes in *Uplands*, Miss Chase paints the rare effects which occasionally enrich Maine skies, but she makes

1. *Uplands*, p. 284
us forget that we are cold.

"In the west lingered an afterglow of apple green and near the horizon a single dark cloud floated, a purple island in a mystic sea."¹

"Sometimes the uniform grayness was put to rout by a flaming sunrise of rose, violet, and amber, which clothed the hills in apocalyptical splendor and transformed the sea, if there was an early tide, into those fabulous waters that encircle the purple islands of Polynesia."²

Color in *Uplands* is changing color, the ripening chokecherry, the sumach, the blueberries. Blue is symbolic. Through Martha's enchanted eyes, we concentrate upon its loveliness in the landscape, the pools in the hollows of the path holding the blue of the sky, the wings of the bluejays, the ripening blueberries. The tragic note in *Uplands* is accented by the beauty of the setting. Although the colors are rich, there is no heaviness. One of the details which charms us most is the tendrils of the woodbine, whose delicacy is in almost painful contrast to the cruel barbed thorns of the land.

In contrast to the perfected harmony of color which Miss Chase sees in Maine, and the exquisite grace of line, we have in Wilbert Snow's *Autumn Country*, a man's downright patchwork of color, startling but effective, whether it may or may not be characteristic:

1. *Uplands*, p. 20
"Land of waving goldenrod and lovely russet apples,
With little cedars on your slopes and driftwood on your shores;
Land of blue-fringed gentians and a million purple asters,
Land of bright red astrakhans and spice brown groves of spruce."

More truly characteristic of the coast, and more distinctly northern is this *Low Tide* from Edna St. Vincent Millay:

"These wet rocks where the tide has been,
Barnacled white and weeded brown
And slimed beneath to a beautiful green,
These wet rocks where the tide went down
Will show again when the tide is high
Faint and perilous, far from shore."

Glorious color is not associated with Maine in the mind of Miss Millay any more than in Miss Jewett's.

There is plenty of sunlight filtering through trees, and spreading on the hills, plenty of sunsets and moonlight in the various pictures. The stars have a fascination for Miss Chase which Miss Jewett did not feel.

"The tremulous rays of the first bright star made a tiny cross in the vastness of the sky."

"One bright star rode high in the sky above gisudding, billowy clouds of dark blue mist."

1. Maine Coast, p. 111
2. Second April, p. 34
3. Uplands, p. 21
4. Ibid., p. 144
"Suddenly a star fell with its faint trail of silver, and almost immediately another in its wake."¹

These stars become symbolic; Martha says:

"Yes, and the stars were little, so they were young. Maybe they loved each other - like us."

"Tough luck then, I'll say, to die like that!"

"Oh, I'm not so sure!" she cried.

Later Jarvis is killed, and Martha follows in his path.

Just to see the difference in the manner of the author, it is enlightening to see what they have to say about the same things.

Light on the wings of gulls delights the eyes of three of them. Miss Jewett says in her unstudied way:

"Some gulls were flashing their wings in the sunlight."²

— Miss Chase speaks of it twice:

"He paused to catch the silver on the wings of the gulls circling about in the sunlight."³

"Sometimes the widespread wings of a gull sailing overhead caught the sun and gave it back to them in silver light."⁴

— Wilbert Snow notes:

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1. Uplands, p. 107
2. A Marsh Island, p. 151
3. Uplands, p. 296
4. Ibid., p. 95
"Or some bright burst of sunlight hit
beneath
A sea gull's wing directly overhead."¹

The later writers are not content with visual images; they must appeal to hearing and smell.

There is no doubt that Miss Jewett's auditory memory was remarkably keen. No one could write dialect with such perfection with ears untrained to catch and remember slight variation in tone and sound, yet Miss Jewett's sound suggestion is barren compared to the other Maine writers in this study. Two probabilities may account for the difference. There is an unstudied unity in Miss Jewett's sketches. She makes a carefully measured emotional appeal in place of a rounded sense appeal. Her inability to describe sound shows noticeably in the noises of the ocean, where she has little or no imagination. But her sea was a fisherman's sea, not one to sit and listen to in the relaxation of a summer vacation. Analysis of sound is somewhat modern. The sudden popularity of Stevenson, who realized the value of sound and touch and smell, set the writing world to listening and feeling and smelling and analyzing its reactions. Miss Jewett's aloofness kept her from experimenting with the technique of others. But by the time Edna St. Vincent Millay was venturing into poetry,

¹. Inner Harbor, p. 56
a recognition of the value of a rounded sense appeal was the heritage of writers. We have now those, who like Miss Chase, can acquaint us with their world by our ears and our noses.

In Uplands we hear almost as much as we see. Sounds and silences are ingeniously selected. If we were living on a farm, we might not, perhaps, be aware of hearing the milking, but now and then for some reason, the sound would have our attention, as in the novel.

"She awoke early one morning to hear in the barn the familiar sound of the milk streaming into the pail, its first metallic strikings losing themselves in soft, foamy murmurings."

Numerous domestic sounds like the long hiss of the iron on wet wool, the gurgling of the clothes as they are lifted from the boiler, the crackling of the wood in the stove, sounds which are difficult to describe, because they are too familiar, but rich in suggestion of indoor atmosphere, produce reality as vivid, if not more vivid than an appeal to sight. We see almost nothing of interiors in Uplands, but sounds and smells call up a whole train of association which makes real the surroundings for us.

With the larger out-door sounds and silences Miss Chase has the same perfection of image:

1. Uplands, p. 16
"He somehow sensed its boundlessness, the rhythm of its deep solemn motion, its great noiseless breathing that filled the silent air."¹

"A schooner, making for the open and finding her sails useless, started her motor, which shattered the motionless air with its quick hard thumps."²

Mr. Snow is fascinated with the ocean sounds, but his reproductions and suggestions are sometimes too labored:

"In never ending roar of deafening slavos
The artillery music of storm-bitten caves."³

"The lesser notes that ripple on this silence
Intruding, yet not harsh nor melancholy,
Like wavelets slushing on white sandy beaches
Or clink of bell-buoys over sunken ledges
Are gentle overtones to seagull music."⁴

With her usual ease, Miss Millay suggests two familiar shore sounds:

"Far from the sound
Of water sucking the hollow ledges
Tons of water striking the shore."

"People that waves have not awakened
Spanking the boats at the harbor's head."⁵

The lesser out-door sounds illustrate very well the improvement in the technique of sound description, the very care with which writers of today select these details marks

1. Uplands, p. 12
2. Ibid., p. 255
3. Maine Coast, p. 39
4. Inner Harbor, p. 12
5. Second April, p. 49
a change in the attitude of the descriptive writer. We recall how Miss Jewett noted a number of bird songs, and then ended her sentence with "the far off conversation of some deliberate cows."

The meticulous care with which Miss Chase finishes incidental description is illustrated in her choice of contrasting detail:

"The song sparrows were singing in a wild antiphonal chorus [Compare Miss Jewett's 'sang and sang as if with joyous knowledge of immortality.'] and from a fir thicket came the mellow, bell-like notes of a thrush. Under the corduroy bridge he caught the swift rustle of water rats in the dry old grass."¹

Miss Jewett's whip-poor-wills sing, Miss Chase speaks of the occasional "wheezing dry", but only the poet can really tell us what it is:

"Whippoor-wills wake and cry
Drawing the twilight close about their throats."²

Who has not heard the cry of the gulls in Maine? Three of the writers attempt to record it. Wilbert Snow hears them like the sound of bagpipes,³ Miss Chase calls their cry at once plaintive and querulous,⁴ and Miss Millay says:⁵

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1. Uplands, p. 68
2. Second April, p. 18
3. Inner Harbor, p. 12
4. Uplands, p. 58
5. Second April, p. 68
"Hear once again the hungry crying
Overhead of the wheeling gulls."

Miss Jewett quite ignores the very little sounds.
Miss Chase speaks of the wistful even trill of the frogs. Miss
Millay does not describe it but records her emotional reaction
to the music of the peeper.

"I had forgotten how the frogs must sound
After a year of silence, else I think
I should not so have ventured forth alone
At dusk upon this unfrequented road."

"I am waylaid by beauty. Who will walk
Between me and the crying of the frogs?"

The shrill of insects, so characteristic of rural
sounds finds a place in most of the writings except Miss
Jewett's and Owen Davis's. In Roman Bartholow, the moths that
beat against the screen are symbolic:

"Where the moths plunged and whirred eternally
Torn by their own salvation."

"Now she could see the moon and stars again
Over the silvered earth, where the night rang
With a small shrillness of a small world
If not a less inexorable one."2

Not a sound of anything, but a silence of very small
things, Mr. Robinson mentions with poetic skill:

"Red leaves of autumn, flying silently,
Become a scattered silence on the grass."

The combination of sounds that make rural Maine,
Miss Millay has gathered into one charming pastoral:

"If it were only still!-
With far away the shrill
Crying of a cock;
Or the shaken bell
From a cow's throat
Moving through the bushes;
Or the soft shock
Of wizened apples falling
From an old tree
In a forgotten orchard
Upon the hilly rock!"¹

It is impossible to quote even the best of the sound descriptions. Sound has a prominence today that only the keenest of the Victorians accorded it. Ways of suggesting odors are one of the most undeveloped phases of our techniques. These writers never miss a good chance to complete the sense appeal.

The bayberry must be acknowledged as one of the characteristic odors of Maine. Wilbert Snow says that the bayberry scattered incense on their way.² Edna St. Vincent Millay is Maine homesick having left the sea behind her, and built a house on upland acres, "smelling never of bayberry hot in the sun."³ She speaks of "Jim shady woodruff, redolent of fern and bayberry."⁴

The blueberry has a part in the plot of Uplands.

1. Second April, p. 30
2. Maine Coast, p. 2
3. The Buck in the Snow, p. 23
4. Second April, p. 18
"On these lower slopes there was a fragrance which the wind stole away from the higher ridges. The grass held the heat of the sun and give it to the berries within its meshes; and as they were pulled, they gave forth a perfume, warm and rich like that of vineyards in more kind and fruitful lands." 

Other fragrances are plentiful in Miss Chase's picture, the meadow sweet and hardhack, and the spicy fragrance of the wild pear.

In the *Inner Harbor*, Wilbert Snow stretches on the moss to drink the "lush ferny fragrance". In the poem *Morning World* he would not miss

"The drenching fragrances of caraway
And red-top clover from the pastures wind
At the rim of dawn." 

Miss Jewett spoke of the caraway and the tansy, too. It grew in her schoolhouse yard in *The Country of the Pointed Firs*. We all remember Miss Millay's haunting couplet

"Nor linger in the rain to mark
The smell of tansy in the dark." 

With the same simplicity she suggests the smell of the sea:

"Wanting the sticky, salty sweetness
Of the strong wind and shattered spray." 

This simplicity is in strong contrast to the labored

1. *Uplands*, p. 120
2. *Inner Harbor*, p. 95
3. *Harp Weaver*, p. 3
4. *Second April*, p. 66
analysis of beach odors by Wilbert Snow:

"From the windy, wave-battered beach
With its iodine odor of kelp
And its salty infiltrate of freshness."¹

—-This more direct statement of his is better:

"How he loved
The pungency of tar, the smell of laths,
The fragrant pitch of spruce boughs bundled up
For arching pot-lims."²

Edwin Arlington Robinson has been

"Faintly aware of roses and syringas."³

While color and light and sounds and smells are valuable
in conveying to the reader the impression that the writer wishes
him to have, detail which is characteristic must be selected.

When it comes to a discussion of that subject, there is a temp-
tation to let Miss Millay do the talking. Her power to choose
that one object which will bring the whole scene to the mind of
the reader is almost magic. But there are suggestions from the
others which are too characteristic to be omitted. From Maine
Coast, we have "Sleek porpoises as black as naval guns."⁴ Three
little hints from Uplands bring the surroundings very close to
us: "a fat dandelion by the well curb."⁵, "the small eager

¹ Inner Harbor, p. 23
² Maine Coast, p. 34
³ Collected Poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson, p. 769
⁴ Maine Coast, p. 99
⁵ Uplands, p. 36
leaves of the Canada mayflower."¹ A fruit jar in the dry 
brown earth of the grave."²

A description from Second April, without a touch of 
color, has detail that brings back all our memories of beaches 
and rain on the water:

* "The rain that flattens on the bay, 
   And the eel grass in the cove; 
The jingle shells that lie and bleach 
   At the tide line, and the trace 
   Of higher tides along the beach."³

Both Mr. Snow and Miss Millay speak of the wild sweet 
pea. In Second April, Miss Millay says:

"Always before about my dooryard 
Marking the reach of the winter sea 
Rooted in sand and dragging driftwood 
Straggled the purple wild sweet pea."⁴

In two poems there is an interesting similarity 
between the descriptions of spring growing: Mr. Snow in 

The Inner Harbor, writes:  "When the juicy resilient boughs 
   Are stickily soft." ⁵

Miss Millay says in Second April, 
"You can no longer quiet me with the redness 
Of little leaves opening stickily."⁶

An artist painting a Maine hillside could, without 
affectation, sprinkle a few sheep about. Miss Chase gives them

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1. Uplands, p. 295
2. Ibid., p. 156
3. Second April, p. 66
4. Ibid.
5. Inner Harbor, p. 75
6. A Second April, p. 66
pasturage on the hills of Uplands. They fascinate Miss Jewett.

In Elegy before Death, Miss Millay sees them:

"Among the mullein stalks the sheep
Go up the hillside in the sun"¹

One of the few generalizations which Miss Chase makes in Uplands is in connection with the very common sight of a burial ground in a pasture.

"His roving eyes saw the small graveyard on the hill opposite, a graveyard belonging to the Craig family, and, as is still the custom among many New England families lying but a few rods from their generous roofed farmhouse. Within the white enclosure the few stones were stark and ugly, though the maple above them gave them kindly shade and the shadows growing longer lent an atmosphere of peace."²

Two more details that are really indispensible are:

"See once again the bobbing barrels
And the black sticks that fence the wiers."

Trees are not personalities with the younger writers. They arouse in Edwin Arlington Robinson something that Porphyria stirred in her lover. The destruction of the trees in Roman Bartholow is symbolic.

Bartholow says:

"If we are to believe we have a river,

¹. Second April, p. 35
². Uplands, p. 9
We must apply the cruel axe, I fancy.
Rivers and trees are an old harmony,
And we, who are not old, may quite as well
Enjoy as lose it."

Gabrielle smiled at him
Impassively. "And we may quite as well
Enjoy as lose each other, I dare say
And with each other lose all our bad acting

We know each other just enough, my dear,
To be a little sorry for ourselves,
And so a little careful. Get an axe,
And let the river and the world look in
Upon us and our joy. I'll sit and watch
The deed, imagining that you are Gladstone."

Penn Raven, who talks with Gabrielle while her husband
is cutting away the tree, is disappointed in her reply:

"And it was of a savor to endure
As long with him as were the strokes he heard
Of an unconscious and relentless axe
Below him and unseen. He counted them
As if he were the tree on which they fell
Feeling them apparently as the tree did."

The stroke of that unconscious and relentless axe be-
comes the keynote of the blind tragedy. Gabrielle, whose nature
could not be pruned to landscape the dreams either of her hus-
band or her lover, is unmeaningly destroyed by them. At signifi-
cant moments in the tragedy, the cutting of the tree, or the
trees, are mentioned. Gabrielle ends a "brief and shadowy journey
Down there among the trees and memories".

2. Ibid., p. 754
3. Ibid., p. 805
After the tragedy, Umfraville, the hermit scholar, reflects:

"Nature is here apparently to suffer" and

"What ugliness and emptiness of change
Has been the aftermath of silly triumph."

When all is done, Bartholow

"gazed, and saw the water through the rift
His axe had made that morning in the spring."

"Knowing that he had seen for the last time
The changeless outline of those eastern hills
And all the changing trees that flamed along
A river that should flow for him no more."

Not only in Roman Bartholow, but in Archibald's Example we suspect a fascination for the destruction of what is really loved. Archibald's example looks like a famous justification.

"My green hill yonder, where the sun goes down
Without a scratch, was once inhabited
By trees that injured him—an evil trash
That made a cage and held him while he bled.

Gone fifty years, I see them as they were
Before they fell. They were a crooked lot
To spoil my sunset, and I saw no time
In fifty years for crooked things to rot.

Trees, yes, but not a service or a joy
To god or man, for they were thieves of light.
So down they came. Nature and I looked on,
And we were glad when they were out of sight.

Trees are like men, sometimes; and that being so,
So much for that."

Collected Poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson, p. 492
General views are often disappointing. Miss Jewett has written one of the most compact and wholly satisfying ones that we have examined. In Isaac and Archibald, Edwin Arlington Robinson shows us an inland stretch.

"I know I lay and looked for a long time
Down through the orchard and across the road
Across the river and the sunscorched hills
That ceased in a blue forest, where the world ceased with it."¹

In Uplands we have a description of Blue Hill:...

"They lay in mellowed green under the September sun, their rocky angular surfaces cut here and there by gray log fences, against which in sunlit patches a few sheep browsed in scanty pasture. In the small valleys between them were straggling farm buildings of white or gray, snug enough to the casual observer, with the hills behind them and in front the long tumbling slopes mounting to other summits or falling helter-skelter towards the marshes and the sea."²

Miss Millay's simple and unforgettable opening stanza in Renascence describes Penobscot Bay at Camden:

"All I could see from where I stood
Was three long mountains and a wood;
I turned and looked another way,
And saw three islands in a bay.
So with my eyes I traced the line
Of the horizon thin and fine,
Straight around till I was come
Back to where I'd started from:
And all I saw from where I stood
Was three long mountains and a wood."³

2. Uplands, p. 165
3. Renascence, p. 1
In her descriptions of weather, Miss Jewett does leave out some characteristic types, which the later writers include. Miss Jewett's frozen ruts are matched by Edwin Arlington Robinson.

Miss Jewett says:

"The deep mud had become like iron, rough and ragged and jarring the people who tried to travel over it."

and Robinson comments:

"A windy dreary day with a cold white shine
Which only gummed the tumbled frozen ruts
That made us ache."

Edwin Arlington Robinson knows how to tell about the heat also:

"There was a stillness over everything
As if the spirit of heat had laid its hands
Upon the world and hushed it; and I felt
Within the mightiness of the white sun
That smote the land around us and wrought out
The fragrance from the trees, a vital warmth
And fullness for the time that was to come
And a glory for the world beyond the forest."

Miss Chase presents Maine in very nearly all kinds of weather, storms, mists, cold days, heat. She speaks of the fine

1. A White Heron, p. 36
3. Ibid., p. 179
4. Ibid., p. 742
spell that September ushers in. She realizes the inconvenience of the mists which Miss Jewett thought only agreeable.

"The mist had been reinforced by a heavy fog, which obscured earth and sky alike and foretold a change of weather. It was hard to see the road through the fine drizzle on the windshield, and the lights, instead of piercing the obscurity, contracted into a glare."¹

Wilbert Snow has experienced the dismal fog horns:

"And soon the deafening blasts or deep toned bells Begin to fire at the oncoming host Exploding screams or booming dismally In fierce bombardment through the long dark night Enough my boy's heart felt, to scare the fog Itself to an unstrategic wild retreat."²

Spring tides such as these are not to be ignored, yet Miss Jewett has nothing to say of them:

"Strong tides flowed in as only tides of spring In that bleak northern land can flow; they rise Full sixteen feet above low water mark Overflow the wharfs, and loosen old dried rockweed Stuck through with sticks tossed up the year before."³

Houses which shelter men from the extremes of weather have very little attention in these later writers. In the Inner Harbor, one house is characterized

"The square New England house Blinked in the winter sunshine Like its outward gazing companion At rest on the spruce limb banking. Eighty New England winters Have mortised the house to the landscape."⁴

¹. Uplands, p. 207
². Maine Coast, p. 51
³. Ibid., p. 9
⁴. Inner Harbor, p. 83
It is atmosphere which Edwin Arlington Robinson contributes:

"The cottage of old Archibald appeared
Little and white and high on a smooth round hill
It stood with hackmatacks and apple trees
Before it, and a big barn roof beyond;
And over the place—trees, houses, fields and all
Hovered an air of still simplicity
And a fragrance of old summers—the old style
That lives while it passes."

Roman Bartholow's very fine ancestral home surpasses any of Miss Jewett's in setting:

"He walked away over the footworn flags
And over the long driveway of new gravel
Circuitously through acres of young grass
As the iron gate..."

Of interiors we have far less than in Miss Jewett's writings. Owen Davis does not see anything at all lovely about the "best room" of the Jordans which is now called the parlour:

"The room in which they wait is as dull and drab as the lives of those who have lived within its walls. Here we have the cleanliness which is next to godliness but no sign either of comfort or beauty, both of which are looked upon with suspicion as being signposts on the road to perdition."

Wilbert Snow finds the "Angelus" and the "Gleaners" on the walls of a house where he goes to watch.

We go down cellar in Isaac and Archibald:

1. Collected Poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson, p. 73
2. Roman Bartholow, ibid., p. 73
5. Icebound, p. 73
"Out of the fiery sunshine to the gloom,
Grateful and half sepulchral, where we found
The barrels like eight potent sentinels,
Close ranged against the wall."

It seems to us that the principal difference in the interpretation of the coast of Maine is a matter of technique, rather than any vital difference in reports. Miss Chase sees the land with less emotion than Miss Jewett. The younger writers make a rounded sense appeal. The treatment of nature in Edwin Arlington Robinson's poem is symbollic, rather than realistic.
Dialect

It is scarcely possible to over-praise Miss Jewett's use of dialect. Dialog itself is difficult enough to manage, as one who has made even the most superficial study of it in the foremost plays will know, but to carry forward the plot by means of an unusual language and have the result free from artificiality, requires ability that can scarcely be overestimated. Miss Jewett throws a large share of the burden of the story upon the speech of the characters. They use words that are quaint and even obsolete, and unfamiliar constructions, yet we read the sketches without being primarily aware of dialect. This is not true in many New England stories, especially the sea-coast stories, where the dialect is likely to be obtrusive. It is as if the stories came to Miss Jewett in those very words. We are never aware of an attempt to make a saying amusing in itself. In Wilbert Snow's poems we recognize that he is "salvaging" a little of the language as well of the customs. He publishes a glossary with Maine Coast. Miss Chase refrains almost entirely from the use of dialect. Her characters use the familiar or colloquial, such as "funny," and "guess," etc. Edwin Arlington Robinson hints at dialect in "right smart," "master," and open "rollway." Owen Davis uses the provincial constructions, and draws from the fund of common sayings, but has nothing unusual in the vocabulary.
Dialect Notes

Pronunciation is not regularly indicated, and sometimes when it is indicated the author's intention is not perfectly clear. Miss Jewett writes " pritty " to show the colloquial pretty. Boat is " bo't". We should need to be already acquainted with the dialect to understand the value of the o. Great is " gre't". The final silent e in nature and creature is indicated by an apostrophe, as if it would otherwise be pronounced. There is apparently no way of depending upon the spelling of the dialect.

Whenever the spelling is a guide, as in "cheer" for chair, "ferce" for fierce, " aim " for earn, "gals" for girls, and "git", " ben", " closet" " sence", two tendencies are illustrated, one to bring the pronunciation as far forward as possible, and the other, to cling to the earlier forms, as in "gals".

As in most New England dialect, the ending "in" is substituted for " ing". The contraction for " was not " is frequently " wa'n't ". In Uplands Miss Chase uses it, " and she ought to be thanking Him, too, that her boy wa'n't maimed for life." Wilbert Snow and Owen Davis both record it.
house-work. Little gals! I do' know now but what they must be about grown, time does slip away so. I expect I shall look outlandish to 'em. But there! everybody knows me to home, an' nobody knows me to Shrewsbury; 't won't make a mite o' difference, if I take holt willin'.'

To appreciate the cadences of the passage, contrast the author's words in the passage which follows:

"I hoped as I looked at Mrs. Peet, that she would never be persuaded to cast off the gathered brown silk bonnet and the plain shawl that she had worn so many years." 2

The voice in the second passage could intone with only the most glaring affectation, while it would be almost impossible to maintain a monotone in the first selection.

To overhear a conversation between two Maine women of the older generation is to be convinced of the correctness of Miss Jewett's records of the tonal quality of the speech. It seems as if it must have been "written aloud." She says of the speech:

"It may be only a fancy of my own that in the sound and value of many words, with their lengthened vowels and doubled cadences, there is some faint survival on the Maine Coast of the sound of English speech of Chaucer's time." 3

It is reasonably safe to question Miss Jewett, that it is a fancy of her own that there is a survival of Chaucerian English. One is interested in her comment on the quality of the vowels and the cadences. It has a distinctive quality which belongs to an era not our own.

1 Going to Shrewsbury, Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 103
2 Ibid.
3 The Queen's Twin, p. 64
While the grammatical peculiarities have much in common with general low colloquial speech, there are a few forms whose age or rarity enrich the flavor of the dialect. The verb *rise* has a transitive use. Professor Arthur Leonard of Bates confirms this form in *Dialect Notes*¹; "Did you rise many ducks?" A sailor in Deephaven tells how he had been cared for by nuns in France: "There were days I couldn't lift my head and she would rise it on her arm."² There is a simple economy in, "I couldn't rise the hill"³ and "You'll mind it, risin' the hill."⁴ We should have to say, "make or 'climb' or 'get up the hill.'"

Another economy of speech flourishes today even among the younger generation in Eastern Maine. The verb *like* is used intransitively. "If they both continued to like, they could get married."⁵ "But I guess he will make out to come back if he don't like."⁶ The pronoun *he* has the privilege of appearing without an antecedent meaning the principal male of the household. "'He' took me over to Wareham Corners," ⁷ "sence he died",⁸ "He didn't mean no hurt."⁹

¹ *Dialect Notes* Vol. IV, Part 1
² Deephaven, p. 105
³ The Queen's Twin, p. 199
⁴ The Life of Nancy, p. 153
⁵ Tales of New England, p. 270
⁶ A Marsh Island, p. 11
⁷ Deephaven, p. 134
⁸ Ibid, p. 194
⁹ Ibid, p. 52
That use of he continues today. When our baby came, the title which the native nurse had previously applied to the father, was instantly transferred to the child. Some economies have an even more restricted use, as, "Why don't you keep with me this year?"\(^1\) Keep means keep Thanksgiving. "John didn't call'late to cut up till Monday."\(^2\) "Cut up" means to butcher. Sometimes clauses are syncopated, as, "She said she'd fetch 'em home something real pritty, and so did."\(^3\) "And money to lay out on fences, come spring."\(^4\)

These economies are offset by a large number of wasteful expressions, as, "I come near giving of you up",\(^6\) "She wouldn't miss of it",\(^7\) "In case he revives up",\(^8\) "Why ain't she helpin' of you?",\(^9\) "I never went to work to blame Joanna."\(^10\)

The indiscriminate use of the preposition to indicates an attempt to spare mental effort to the speaker, but it is no true economy as the variety of uses will indicate: "Any news to the landin'?,"\(^11\) "glad I wasn't born up to Paisley."\(^12\) "Her niece was goin' to graduate to the high school"\(^13\)

\(^1\) A Country Doctor, p. 13
\(^2\) Deephaven, p. 130
\(^3\) Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 30
\(^4\) A White Heron, p. 50
\(^5\) Life of Nancy, p. 102
\(^6\) The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 89
\(^7\) The Atlantic, Vol. XLVIII, p. 24
\(^8\) Ibid. p. 21
\(^9\) A Marsh Island, p. 46
\(^10\) The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 111
\(^11\) The Queen's Twin, p. 61
\(^12\) Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 37
\(^13\) A Native of Winby, p. 142
"provide for herself accordin' to", 1 "I don't know as Peggy would rally herself quite so much accordin' to if she had her eyes fixed", 2 "I know there's plenty of sickness might be saved to folks if they'd quit horseradish and such fiery exasperatin' stuff." 3 There is little that is distinctive about the use of to except the ingenuity used in making it supplant so many other prepositions.

More distinctive is the preservation of historical forms. The singular number in measurements is almost regularly used, as "nine year old", "twenty year". Like the historical form is the term outdoor, "When I am outdoor", "When I can git outdoor again". 5 That form is still used today mostly among the uneducated. In contrast to giving a singular form to outdoor, a plural form is used in somewhere, as "somewhere"6 "meanwhiles"7 "someways"8 and "I have never been but dreadful little ways from home." 9 Somewhere is used by Owen Davis in Icebound: "Of course he could sit somewheres else."10 The historical eat is preferred to the modern ate or eaten. "I never saw the kitty after she eat her supper." 11

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1 Atlantic, Vol. I, p. 86  
2 Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 57  
3 Tales of New England, p. 253  
4 Country Doctor, p. 13  
5 Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 49  
6 A Marsh Island, p. 778  
7 Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 72  
8 Tales of New England, p. 202  
9 Old Friends and New, p. 262  
10 Icebound, Act 1, p. 7  
11 Deephaven, p. 106
"By now the old horse will have eat his dinner." 1 "I ain't never eat no such pie as this sence I was a girl", 2 "He eat as good breakfast as common." 3, etc.

There are some interesting survivals, as withouten, "She wouldn't go withouten me." 4 mought for the past of might, " or mought be you shifted the rudder." 5 begreched," She so begreched to wear a good alpaca " 6 wrapped for the past of wrap. 7

False analogies such as, uprooted, 8 knowingest, unreasonable 9, onsteady, onbelievers, 11 are not distinctive. Wishful 12 and vagabone 14 look as if they had grown out of the soil though there may be specimens that have had roots in different localities. "Katy is shy feelin' and wishful." has the look of something home grown. The sentence which follows has the appearance of a word that has grown unlocal soil, a confusion of bond and bones which has something of poeti imagery in it, "He was onsteady poor wandering vagabone." 10

1 Life of Nancy, p.123
2 Ibid., p.184
3 Atlantic Monthly, Vol.XLVIII, p.21
4 The King of Folly Island, p.31
5 Ibid., p.3
8 Strangers and Wayfarers, p.150
9 Deephaven, p.108
10 Life of Nancy, p.190. "Don't talk that way it's unreasonable."
11 Atlantic Monthly, Vol.XL, p.764
12 Tales of New England, p.267
13 Life of Nancy, p.100, Strangers and Wayfarers, p.39
As we have seen in the brief glance at false analogies that there is a tendency to cling to the past, so we see in the idiom an effort to resist change. In order to get an idea of the prevalence of an expression, we have recorded each use of the term which we have found.

The regular expression for bringing up a child is "to fetch up."  

"I shouldn't think her husband's folks would want the child to be fetched up here in them boardin' houses."  A Country Doctor, p. 26

"And here are these (children) to be fetched up."  Deephaven, p. 212

"Her and me was the same year's child and fetched up together."  Atlantic Monthly, Vol. XLVIII, p. 25

"And fetched up her family herself."  The Flight of Betsy Lane, Best Short Stories, p. 29

"Though 'tain't everyone has the strength to fetch up a child after they have reached your years."  Country Doctor, p. 37

The expression for a little in excess of is rising.

In the New England Dictionary, the editor says that this term was first used in this sense in literature in 1817.

"He is going to weigh risin' five hundred."  Deephaven, p. 130

"rising forty-five year."  Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 140

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1 Fetch is used in many other senses, as, "William thought he'd better fetch across beyond Bird Rocks."  Country of Pointed Firs, p. 141. "She'd fetch them home something pritty, and so did."  Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 30.
"She'd got to be rising eighty." Old Friends and New, p. 258

"No, forty year; it must be risin' forty." Atlantic Monthly, Vol. XL, p. 478

"Jonas, he's got risin' a hundred dollars laid up." Atlantic Monthly, Vol. XLVIII, p. 25

To lay in a sog
This is a rare expression which is used in only one other place, according to Murray's New English Dictionary. To be unconscious is to "lay in a sog." The expression is of obscure origin. 1870, S. P. Fox, Kingsbridge edition of the West Cornwall Gloss records, "She is in a sweet sog." The New Dictionary quotes from Scribner's Magazine, Vol. II, p. 738, "Ezra waved a limp hand warningly toward the bedroom door, 'She's layin' in a sog.'" This is Miss Jewett's Law Lane. The expression occurs again in the Atlantic Monthly, Vol. XLVIII, p. 21, "He's layin' in a sog" and "layin' in a sog" said Betsy Morris for the twentieth time that day.

To lay out to
To plan or to begin is to "lay out", or to "lay about." This is recorded by E.J. Bangs Chase in the Dialect Notes, Vol. III, A Word List for Aroostook, p. 411.


"He always lays out to get converted." Deephaven, p. 196

"She laid out to go over and see her aunt." Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 259.
To be idle is to be out of time.

"I can work as well as anybody, and now I'm out of my time." Life of Nancy, p. 152

"It was the fall after his father died, and Henry was out of his time the spring before." Atlantic Monthly, Vol. LI, p. 478

To sag on

To depend upon someone's help, or to lean upon someone one is to sag on. [This expression is used by Longfellow in Kavenaugh "except little Alfred who was tired and cross and sat sleepy and sagging on his father's knee." 1]

"I ain't goin' to sag on to nobody." Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 151

"Let Miss' Dow sag onto me." Best Short Stories, p. 63

"The best most of us could do was to sag right on to the old folks." A Native of Winby, p. 45

To pray some one by

To wish someone to pass without stopping is to pray him by.

"Some folks prays him by." Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 76

"There, do let's pray her by." Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 28

To feel to

Feel is used in combination with an infinitive to express the wish or the state of.

"I feel to have had a very wearin' afternoon." The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 47

"I feel to covet a good supper." Life of Nancy, p. 178

"I feel to be very grateful." " " " p. 196

"I feel to be very thankful." " " " p. 202

"If she didn't feel to indulge us." " " " p. 219

1 Murray's New English Dictionary, under "sag"
"Everyone feels to do what they can." Life of Nancy, p.233

"I don't feel to change my situation." " " " p. 313

"I feel to go." Strangers and Wayfarers p. 67

"I feel to hope" " " " p. 215

"I have always felt to hope certain." Native of Winby, p. 144

"I felt to repent after I had gone but a rod." Native of Winby, p. 147

"If she had felt to remember me." " " " p. 152

"If he does feel to come back." " " " p. 175

Not much is usually expressed by no great. The Dialect Notes record this term in Vol. IV, p. 77, Rural Locutions for Maine and New Hampshire.

"'Twas never called no great of a fishing ground." The Country of the Pointed Firs, p.106

"She never was no great of a visitor." Life of Nancy, p. 187

"I don't value it no great." Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 141

"I don't feel heartened about no great of a welcome." Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 144

"Never thought no great of his judgment." Old Friends and New, p. 242

"Didn't favor us no great." A Marsh Island, p. 777

"But it don't look as if she was goin' to make out no great." Country Doctor, p. 24

"She won't be troubled with them no great." Tales of New England, p. 140

"She never was no great of a mouser." Deephaven, p. 42

"I never made out no great." Deephaven, p. 12

"Now I don't have no great of an appetite." Deephaven, p. 137

"I never set no great by him." Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 1, p. 85

"Stories are never any great of a temptation." Native of Winby, p. 35
To value is to set by.

"There's nobody I set so much by."
A Native of Winby, p. 155

"She would set everything by you."
A Native of Winby, p. 165

"I set everything by Mary Lizzie Gifford."
Life of Nancy, p. 51

"An' set everything by each other."
Life of Nancy, p. 145

"I never see anyone who set so much by her minister."
Ibid, p. 161

"She come to set everything by Marilly."
Ibid, p. 164

"Set so much by the old place."
Old Friends and New, p. 248

"She set a great deal by the house."
Deephaven, p. 10

"She set a great deal by a cat."
Deephaven, p. 42

"He sets by her on account of her having a bob tail."
Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 58

"An' 'Twas one of the things that made me set a good deal by Nathan."
Ibid, p. 171

To be gathered

A dead person is "gathered."

"Sister Willett will be gathered."
Country Doctor, p. 180

"When the old fellow was gathered."
A Marsh Island, p. 159

The same year's child

Two people born the same year, "the same year's child."
The homely idiom is sturdy and meaningful, and everyday sort of talk. For rare occasions, like going to a funeral, or out to call, or to a circus, there is another vocabulary. Words are borrowed from the pulpit. Some of the humor of the sketches depends upon the incongruity between the literary language and the simplicity of the ideas expressed, as,

**Deem**

"I don't deem it advisable to maintain oats just on account of their havin' bobbed tails."
*Country of the Pointed Firs*, p. 58

"I don't deem it necessary to cook potatoes when I'm goin' to have dandelion greens."
*Best Short Stories, Vol. II*, p. 219

"I deemed her to be troubled with nerves."
*A Native of Winby*, p. 141

In *All My Sad Captains*, the widow awaiting a formal proposal discusses the purchase of potatoes and says that she deems it best to wait until the late potatoes come into market. *Life of Nancy*, p. 316-7

**Maintain**

Maintain is the formal for keep. "Maintain oats, trees." It also means to hold to an opinion:

"Mother used to maintain."
*Tales of New England*, p. 255

**Covet**

Where we should say wish, these characters say covet.

"I've been so covetin' a chance to get to see 'em."

"I coveted to encounter."

"I feel to hope 'Lisha will do as well as we covet for him."

**Condemned**

Mrs. Todd does feel condemned for having such hard thoughts.

1 *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, p. 142
Mrs. Bickford felt condemned because she had'nt taken 1 up her sitting room carpet yet. Someone else is condemned 2 because she hasn't begun her fall housecleaning yet.

Condemned takes the place of our ashamed. We should probably say, "I feel ashamed for having such hard thoughts."

Divert

Diverting is scarcely used in colloquial speech today. Here it clearly means entertaining.

"They sort of divert me." Tales of New England, p. 84

"But he was well meanin', Mr. Wallis was, an' full of divertin' talk." Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 122

"There, 't will be something laughable to tell Miss' Timms. I never see anything more divertin'." Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 207

Other dignified expressions

When Mrs. Bickford is arranging the bouquets for the graves of her three husbands, her talk is very nearly as "fluent as Mr. Wallis's, so diverting that it used to be eight o'clock on winter evenings before she knew it. She says that Mr. Wallis and a stranger "engaged in talk" 3 After he died she managed to get considerable preaching after all, "by going to church on rainy Sundays when her clothes were proper enough." 4

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1 The Life of Nancy, p. 131
2 A Native of Winby, p. 141
3 Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 120
4 Ibid. p. 199
Mrs. Flagg, who makes the momentous call upon Mrs. Timms, has a vocabulary equal to the occasion.

"My pocket's so remote, in case I should desire to sneeze or anything, that I thought 'twould be convenient for carrying my handkerchief and pocket-book; an' then I just tucked in a couple o' glasses o' my crabapple jelly for Mis' Timms. She used to be a great hand for preserves of every sort, an' I thought 't would be a kind of an attention, an' give rise to conversation. I know she used to make excellent drop cakes when we was both residin' to Longport."  

In this same speech she makes the suggestion that her friend ask her hostess for the recipe for the drop cakes. Mrs. Timms would be "very sensible to the compliment and could pass it off if she didn't feel to indulge" them. Her companion is also equal to the occasion.

"'Twas certain very polite of her to urge me to come. I did feel very doubtful at first. I didn't know but she thought it behooved her, because I was in your company at the conference, and she wanted to save my feelin's, and yet expected me to decline."  

The dialog of the whole sketch is one of the most delightfully humorous combinations of trivial notions and dignified language. No other sketches sustain this type of dialect so well, but there are many instances of the use of the formal language, as,

"An' that day an' the next an' all through they was constant." Tales of New England, p. 264

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1 Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 199
2 Ibid. p. 200
3 Ibid.
"We were reflected on a good deal for going to that caravan; some of the old folks didn't think it was improvin'." — Deephaven, p. 135

"I shall have to advise him an' get him off for a good rest." — Country of the Pointed Firs

"There's a beautiful prospect." — The Queen's Twin, p. 4

"You wouldn't discern the hill." — Ibid.

"I've often heard her allude to the facts." — The Queen's Twin, p. 7

"That I've never been demeaned to." — Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 150

A number of words are used in the dialect of these sketches in a manner slightly different from the way that we are accustomed to use them.

Master

The word master is a striking example of this class. It is used either as an adverb or an adjective or a noun.

"A master hand for squirrels." — Old Friends and New, p. 287

"They have to get a master grip with their teeth through the coon's thick pelt." — The Queen's Twin, p. 189

"A master lot of rosb'ries." — Deephaven, p. 194

"They had a master sight of trouble." — Deephaven, p. 211

"She used to carry a master cargo for her size." — Deephaven, p. 153

"Them sisters of hers is the master for unfeelin' hearts." — A Native of Winby, p. 142

"I was master afraid she wouldn't be there." — Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 161

"What the country people would call a master smart woman." — Old Friends and New, p. 235

"She'll stiffin up master." — Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 16

1 The uses of master are too numerous to record fully. We counted over twenty adjective and adverbial uses of the word.
Edwin Arlington Robinson uses this word three times in two poems, in Isaac and Archibald, and in Stafford's Cabin.

"The tale of Stafford's cabin which was good, Though master chilly - after his own phrase Even for a day like that." 1

"And said it was a master day for sunstroke." 2

"Someone on the mountain heard far off a master shriek." 3

Considerable

The word considerable is not only more commonly used than we find it today in general colloquial, but it has an adverbial use, and an adjective form.

"She'd had considerable many strokes." 4

Old Friends and New, p. 258

"You are considerable young to know about the weather." 5

Deephaven, p. 111

"I feel considerable warm to what I did." 6

Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 7

"Elder Fry's preachin' stayed my mind considerable." 7

Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 68

"I suppose the mug would be considerable of a curiosity."

Sight

Sight means a large amount of, or a great deal, a "lot" of

"A monstrous sight of chiny." 8

Deephaven, p. 40

"She's a sight improved from what she was." 9

Life of Nancy, p. 186

"He's got a sight of resolution." 10

A White Heron, p. 203

"She had an awful sight o' folks follow her." 11

Andrew's Fortune,

Atlantic Vol. XLVIII, p. 29

1 Collected Poems, Edwin Arlington Robinson, p. 176
2 Ibid. p. 179
3 Ibid. p. 15
Modern colloquial speech would use stay where this uses stop.

"They wanted us to stop longer."
Tales of New England, p. 93

"I don't know but I should have stopped all night if I could have got word to you."
The Queen's Twin, p. 16

"I'd like to have had her come prepared to stop two or three days."
Ibid. p. 211

Spell is much more generally used to indicate a duration of time than we use it now.

"There was a spell he lived to home."
Tales of New England, p. 268

"A spell of weather."
Deephaven, p. 141

"Quite a spell ago."
Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 172

"No great spell."
Tales of New England, p. 203

"I sat there a long spell."
The Queen's Twin, p. 4

In Icebound Owen Davis has Henry say, "She's been here quite a spell."
Act I, p. 10

Fetch quite regularly takes the place of bring, meaning get and bring.

"Them as fetch a bone will carry one."
The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 55

"She said to some she'd fetch 'em home something real pritty, and so did."
Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 30

"William thought he'd better fetch across beyond Bird Rocks."
The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 141

1 Fetch means also to rear a child, cf. p.
Wilbert Snow uses fetch in the sense of travelling.

"And yet in spite
Of all our fears, we somehow pick our way
And always fetch the cove we started from."

Near apparently means stingy or close.

"She's near." Atlantic Monthly, Vol.XL, p.631
"He's near." Strangers and Wayfarers.
"He's gettin' nearer every year."
King of Folly Island, p. 10

Rule

Today we frequently hear Maine women ask for the rule for a cake. Both rule and recipe are used by the speakers in this dialect.

"When you asked for the rule."
Deephaven, p. 219
"Your rule was it?"
Life of Nancy, p. 184
"Why can't you say sort of innocent, that I have always spoken frequently of her drop-cakes, ain't ask for the rule?"
Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p.199

Proper

Proper has an adjective and an adverbial use much more liberal in meaning than we allow it today. A similar use of it is recorded in Vol. II, p. 239 of Dialect Notes. "They'll come proper handy next time."

"She's a proper cosset, ain't she?"
A Country Doctor, p. 9
"Now ain't you proper glad you come."
Life of Nancy, p. 228

1 Maine Coast, Wilbert Snow, p. 55
"She's a proper mouser," Strangers and Wayfarers, p.145
"That's a proper hat." Life of Nancy, p.126
"Use mullein leaves in proper season." Tales of New England, p.253
"I see how he never had no proper chance." Best Short Stories, p.122

Smart

The use of smart is much more unrestricted than in modern use. It seems to mean "doing well" or being intelligent, or being in good health. One application of it is perfectly clear in meaning, but one is unusual, as "a smart property."

"Five thousand used to be called a smart property." A Marsh Island, p. 160
"None of us could be so smart as common." Life of Nancy, p. 137
"How's William's folks?" "They're smart." "And I think you let yourself down speaking so smart to me afore folks." Atlantic Monthly, Vol.I,p.89
"I don't say but she's a good woman and smart." The Queen's Twin, p. 14
"An' I told him we was smart." A Marsh Island, p. 781

Edwin Arlington Robinson uses smart in Isaac and Archibald, "And said it must have been a right smart walk." 1

Clever

Clever means kind or agreeable, in these sketches of Miss Jewett's, not "easily managed," as Mrs. Shapleigh explains it in a word list for Maine, Dialect Notes, Vol. III, p. 55.

1 Collected poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson, p. 174
"Father was clever to him." 
Deephaven, p. 178

"Now you draw right up to the table. That's clever." 
Life of Nancy, p. 160

"I was brought up to be clever to dumb beasts." 
Deephaven, p. 101

There are a few terms which we have not seen elsewhere, and none of these is recorded in any word list published in Dialect Notes.

**Pipes**

Pipes seem to mean the bronchial tubes or the windpipe.

"I asked her if she had any bad feelin's in her pipes." Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 246

"He bawled more'n any pipes could stand." Ibid. p. 67

**Drarves**

Drarves seem to be something that is used to draw out the pain.

"And use mullein drarves in proper season." Tales of New England, p. 253

"Everybody clamorin' that nothin' wouldn't do no kind o' good but her choice of teas or drarves to the feet." Ibid. p. 257

**Least ones**

Least ones mean the youngest. [i.e. smallest, a survival]

"I've got to take the two least ones." Deephaven, p. 210

There is a possibility that the expressions "pipes"and "drarves" as they are used in these quotations are peculiar to Maine dialect.
An expression which is not frequently mentioned, is shared with the New Hampshire dialect. It is reported in Dialect Notes, Vol. LV, p. 187, Rural Locations for Maine and New Hampshire. Bangeing place is a lounging place. It seems to have a slightly different meaning in this dialect.

"I don't bange on them, I pay my way."
Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 71
"It was a great bangeing place for the Indians."
Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 100
"Last winter she got the jay-birds to bangeing here."
Tales of New England, p. 146

Some of the images used in the dialect are brilliantly suggestive, so colorful that the language has suffered a loss in allowing them to fall out of use. Take for instance, "laying in a cog." ¹ The picture is at once before us, without an explanation, or if an explanation is needed, the image is unforgettable. Miss Jewett has fitted the image so perfectly in the dialog that it looks like the inspiration of the moment, though it is apparently drawn from the common store.

"I guess they was only thornin' of me up."
Tales of New England, p. 190
"Mis' Barnet was a Sands and they're toppin' sort o' folks."
Tales of New England, p. 170
"Something sprung her mind."
Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 59
"Oh, to think how spry I was in my young days, an' here I be now, the full of a door."
Ibid.

¹ For an account of this expression see page 9
"It keeps her stubbib' an' trippin' against everything, beakin' and gasin' up the way she has to."

Ibid. p. 57

"Let Miss Dow sag onto me."

Ibid. p. 63

"Sliver[the porgies] for the trawls."

"And we soon found out what 'slivering' meant, by seeing him take them by the head and cut a slice from first one side and then the other in such a way that the pieces looked not unlike smaller fish."

Deephaven, p. 99

Sliver is mentioned in Dialect Notes, Vol. III, p. 419 in an addenda to the Cape Cod list.

"He never could work hard and get forehanded."

Deephaven, p. 179


"Do tell'. You needn't be so forth-puttin' as I know on!"

Deephaven, p. 198

"I'd ha' got my ears took off if I had been so forthputting when I was young."

Tales of New England, p. 226

"A good meat tea."

Deephaven, p. 198

"They're all in a dazzle with the new teacher."

Life of Nancy, p. 99

"But she has a kind of gorpen look to me."

Life of Nancy, p. 160

A Word List for Aroostock, Dialect Notes, Vol. III, p. 411, gives the word "gawpin."

1. Forehanded is used in a Second Sprind. "I've always been forehanded."
"I'm goin' to provide me with a good hoe; min's gettin' wore out an' all shackly."

*Life of Nancy*, p. 104


"He's been growin' fast and looks peaked."

*Life of Nancy*, p. 130

"It would be a great thing for you to have a stirrin' wife."

*Atlantic Monthly, Vol. XLVIII*, p. 23

"Mary Liddy is a poor draggin' creature."

*Atlantic Monthly, Vol. XL*, p. 631

"Stephen seemed to be all wizened up."

*Atlantic Monthly, Vol. XLVIII*, p. 21

"She's dreadful folksy for a girl that's had to live alone on a far island."

*The King of Folly Island*, p. 21

"George's mother's folks had a kind of punky spot somewhere in their heads."


"That's the only thing I feel cropin' about."

*Best Short Stories, Vol. II*, p. 35

This is explained as meaning niggardly in *Dialect Notes, Vol. IV*, p. 70, under *Rural Locutions of Maine* and *New Hampshire*.

All these expressions show not so much imagination as experience, not so much originality as worth. "A poor draggin' creature", "all in a dazzle with the new teacher", "a stirrin' wife", "a punky spot in their heads", all have the strength and value of a hand wrought tool.

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1 Stirrin' is frequently used to describe women. Plenty of smart stirrin' women, *Old Friends and New*, p. 231. Sometimes it means feeling well. "How are you?" "Stirrin'" *Deephaven*, p. 194

2 The New England Dictionary asks if cropin' could have originated from croppy? Croppy a round head, a person who has had his hair cut in prison.
The images have been used for generations. There are certain impressionistic words that have come from over-seas, but they lack a certain homeliness that characterize the images. These words indicate the speaker's nervous reaction to a situation or an object, rather than describe or suggest it. Sometimes we admit the exhaustion of our vocabulary by the use of such a word as "hifaluten" which presents no image whatever of the object we wish to comment on, but shows our state of mind in contemplating it. Hifaluten is an impatient word, so also is gallivanting and trapesing. Sometimes in extremities we invent words, but we find very few inventions in the list of impressionistic words in this collection. Some of them are unfamiliar, but most of them have histories.

**Gallivanting**

"I can't spare no time to go galivantin'."  
*Life of Nancy*, p. 187

Murray's New English Dictionary suggests that gallivanting may be derived from gallant. It appears first in literature in 1823.

**Trapesing**

"I don't see why fellows wants to go trapsin' off."  
*Life of Nancy*, p. 106

The New English Dictionary says that this word has been in use during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is first recorded in 1649. In 1710, Swift writes in the *Journal* to Stella, "I am to go trapesing with Lady Kerry and Mrs. Pratt to see the sights."

Wilbert Snow in *Maine Coast uses traipsin'*.  

"I tell you ropes and anchors counted little  
When that storm got to traipsin' down the coast."
Jiggit

"An' off they jiggit on the cars."
Tales of New England, p. 258

"Jiggitin' gals."
Strangers & Wayfarers, p. 165

Mrs. Behn in Lucky Chance, 1687, "Come, my Lady Fulback, the night grows old upon our hands, to dancing, to jiggiting."

Hifaluten

"I've heard hifalutin' folks say that love should still be lord of all."
Tales of New England, p. 176

This word does not seem to have very great literary age. According to the New English Dictionary it is American slang that appears in 1848 in a speech by L. Coombs in New York, on September 29. The dictionary also suggests that it may be a whimsical pronunciation of fluting.

Pudjicky

"Women folks is dreadful pudjicky about their cookin'."
Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 13

This word appears in Dean Chase's word list for Aroostook Dialect Notes, Vol. III, p. 414.
It is also in a word list for Nebraska published in Dialect Notes, Vol. II, p. 64.

Wamblecropped

"I thought you looked dreadful wamblecropped."
Tales of New England, p. 95

This word appeared in literature in the sixteenth century in Huloet, 1552. In America it appears in 1798 in Massachusetts Spy, for September 5, "I feel a good deal wamblecropped about dropping her acquaintance."

Murray's New English Dictionary defines it as, affected with nausea. In the Word List for Aroostook, Dialect Notes, Vol. III, p. 411, it is defined as, irritated.
Kickshaws

"An' John, don't you go an' buy me no kickshaws to fetch home."

Life of Nancy, p. 110

Kickshaws had its origin in "quelque chose." In this form it is found in 1598. In 1642, in Dippers Dipt it appears as kicke-shose. "I made bold to set on the board kicke-shoses." In 1597, in Shakespeare's Henry IV, 2, VI, 1, 29, "A joynt of mutton and any pretty little tine kickshawes." In the Tatler, Addison uses kickshaws, but Swift in 1722-3 uses quelque chose. It means something dainty or elegant, but unsubstantial or comparatively valueless, a toy, a trifle, or gew-gaw. 1

Flummery

"No flummery."

Life of Nancy, p. 178

In 1772, Lady Luxborough in a letter to Shenstone, 29 November, writes, "This word flummery, you must know, Sir, means in London flattery and compliment." The meaning seems to have altered in America, for it is defined by Webster as trash or nonsense.

Spudge

"There, do spudge up a bit, Jonas."

Atlantic Monthly, Vol. XL, p. 477

There is no record of spudge in the New English Dictionary, in Bartlett, or in the word lists of the Dialect Notes. Its meaning is perfectly clear.

Touse

"There, what a touse I be in."

Best Short Stories, Vol. II, p. 154

"She said that she couldn't see why everybody made such a touse about his going out fishing, anyway."

Atlantic Monthly, Vol. L, p. 88

Wilbert Snow uses touse: "Hauled on my pants and said, 'Don't make a touse, boys!'"

Touse is recorded in the Dialect Notes, Vol. IV, p. 76. There it is defined as a row or fight. With Miss Jewett, it means apparently an unpleasant time, a fuss, or a confusion.

1 Murray's New English Dictionary under Kickshaws.
2 Ibid. under flummery.
"I'm sick of your meechin' talk."

_Tales of New England_, p. 118

"And he looked as meechin' as ever you see."

_Ibid._ p. 273

"And she come meechin' round."

_Atlantic Monthly, Vol. LX_, p. 629

Meaching seems to have two spellings in Miss Jewett's own writings. It is spelled meeching or niching by Bartlett. He calls it a Shakespearean expression. It is in the Dialect Notes, _Vol. LV_, p. 76. There it is defined as cringing. Wilbert Snow uses it in _Maine Coast_, p. 31. "Her lobster catcher husband, poor Meaching Gene-."

These impressionistic words have age and standing, although they seem so flimsy. There is another set of words which we associate with poetry and old books. Miss Jewett says: "We often heard quaint words and expressions which we never had known anywhere else but in old books.... there were many peculiar provincialisms, and, among the people who lived on the lonely farms inland, we often noticed words we had seen in Chaucer."

Expressions of great age do occur, but none of these appears first in the writings of Chaucer, though some are from the fourteenth century.

"She'd toll off half the school into the pasture at recess time."

_A Country Doctor_, p. 61

"She's tolling her chicks off t'a'ds the swamp."

(This is said by a little irresponsible country boy) in _Tales of New England_, p. 162
Toll in the sense of attracting or alluring is in a Bestiary of 1220 in the Old English Miscellany. "Tolled me to him wid his onde." In the Owl and the Nightengale, 1250, it is again used. William Dean Howells uses it in the dialect in the Rise of Silas Lapham. A Country Doctor was written previous to the Rise of Silas Lapham. In Rural Locations of Maine and New Hampshire, Dialect Notes, Vol. IV, p. 81, it is spelled tole.

Batten

"I should think they'd see to him to home; not let him batten on the neighbors so."

Tales of New England, p. 167

Batten is first found at the end of the Sixteenth Century. It occurs in Shakespeare in 1602.

Harp

We still use harp when we imply an unnecessarily tedious prolongation of a subject. It is used in these sketches in a much less restricted sense. It means to talk as well as to talk at length.

"But she harps too much, I'd lay half of that away for next time."

Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 177

"He's long-winded and harpin'."

"An' then we harped no more that day as I remember."

Misbeholden

"He never give me a misbeholden word."

Tales of New England, p. 70

Beholden

"She hasn't spoken six beholden words to me."

"Andrew never give him a misbeholden word."

Atlantic Monthly, Vol. XLVIII

Thomas Heywood, 1600, 2d. part of Edward IV, 1,11, "nor render him one misbeholden word."

Beseech

Beseech is used in familiar conversation in place of ask.

"How he'd beseech to go with me," spoken of a little boy. "They (the little girls) beseeched me after supper."

Life of Nancy, pp. 98-9
"It makes me ache to think those nice Bray girls has to brock it here."

Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 44

Brook appears first in literature in 1550.

"They had a long stent with the old gentleman."

Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 244

This term was by no means confined to New England.

"And the crew done their work by dint of hard driving."

The Country of the Pointed Firs, p. 26

"They used to collect up there an' rap on the winders, and they'd turn out all the deacon's hens 'long at nine o'clock o' night, and chase 'em all over the dingle."

Tales of New England, p. 272

Dialect Notes, Vol. IV, p. 70 defines this word as the open space between the cook room and the bar room. This is a private home, not a lumber camp. What is meant by dingle here is not at once apparent.

Belike dates from 1533 where it appears in Frith Purgatory. "Belike this man hath drunk a merry cup."

New English Dictionary.

"Belike they don't."


This term has much greater crispness than our "very likely, they don't."

"She's a proper cosset, ain't she."

A Country Doctor, p. 9

This is applied to a cat that is fond of petting. "I go to all the trouble an' cossettin' of 'em just so as to have you ready to meet such occasions."

The Queen's Twin, p. 6

The articles cosseted here are herbs.

Cosset, a noun was in the Shepherd's Calendar, 1579. Literary use was chiefly in the nine-

ay, New English Dictionary.
"Dan's wonted here, too."  *A Marsh Island*, p. 454
"But old Miss' Wallis; she's wonted here."
*The Country of the Pointed Firs*, p. 241
"She's wonted here."  *Old Friends and New*, p. 24
"Obliged to live out of where she was wonted."
*King of Folly Island*, p. 10

The word 'wonted' remained a long time in familiar use. Miss Jewett in describing Harriet Pyne says that she was the last of her family and wonted to live with people much older than herself. Lowell, in 1870 in *My Study Windows* writes, "I had crows....They grew so wonted as to tolerate my near approach."


We sometimes use 'bespeak' in fun, a sort of hang-over of campus talk.

"They are not among folks they can parley with."

*Parley* is used today but chiefly in connection with diplomacy. Sometimes it is used in a slang sense.

"But I suppose they were all so bewattled they didn't know which end they was on."

These quaint expressions which Miss Jewett said she had heard before only in books, belong to the speech of the inland farmers. In the little seaside village of *Deephaven*, she says that there was a great deal of *sealingo* in use. "Indeed, we learned a great deal ourselves, unconsciously, and used it afterwards to the great amusement of our friends."  

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1 *Deephaven*, p. 73
Miss Jewett used either a very great restraint in the dialog of the seamen, or else she felt herself not sufficiently acquainted with it to reproduce it. There is little of the sea in the speech of the fishermen. It may be that Miss Jewett's scattered nautical expressions are more true to the speech than the almost unintelligible jargon commonly attributed to the Maine seamen. No glossary would be necessary at the end of any of her sea-coast sketches.

"I was slushing the mizzen-mast."  
Deephaven, p. 152

"There's more folks than me can tell about it, and if you were goin' to keel-haul me next minute, and hang me to the yard arm afterward, I wouldn't say it different."  
Ibid.  p. 175

"When I get going I slip along as easy as a schooner wing-and-wing afore the wind."  
Ibid.  p. 176

"There's some scud coming in a'ready."  
Ibid.  p. 110

"If I should be hove on a sick an' dying bed."  
Life of Nancy,  p. 304

"Both of them old sea-dogs is steerin' for the same port as I be."  
Life of Nancy,  p. 296

"Come, come! Ain't we gettin' into the doldrums."  
Life of Nancy,  p. 304

We feel sure that Miss Jewett had really heard some old man say these very words:

"He had been a master strong man in his day, and his timbers held together well."  

1 Deephaven, p. 89
Not so unconscious, but very characteristic of
the well practised humor of old age is the retired
captain's explanation:

"I've been a-farming this twenty years; have to
go down to the shore and take a day's fishing
every hand's turn though, to keep this old
hulk clear of barnacles."

The preacher of this impromptu sermon must have
been very proud of himself:

"The great pint about gettin' on in life is being
able to cope with your head winds. Any fool
can run before a fair breeze, but I tell you a
good seaman is one that gets the best out of
his disadvantages."

He continues:

"If a vessel's built out of sound timber, and has
good lines for sailin' why, then she's sea-
worthy; but if she ain't, she ain't; an' a
mess o' preachin' ain't goin' to alter her over."

We have a reversal of the landlubber's view point,
"all at sea" in:

"I did feel all ashore, when I found you'd promised
to take him in."

There are some expressions that belong to the lum-
bering and shipping period, as, "They was takin' a deck
load of oak knees down by the packet." 4

Wilbert Snow is far less restrained in his use of
the sea-lingo. He kindly furnishes us with a glossary at
the end of Maine Coast.

1 Ibid. p. 84  
2 Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 205  
3 Ibid. p. 314  
4 A Country Doctor, p. 15
Some idea of what Miss Jewett might have used if she had wished, can be discovered in this list:

"seads of coots" 1
"I reeved my tollers" 2
"When the mists scaled up" 3
"gunk hole" 4
"Squinting towards the toggles in the sunlight" 5
"and always fetch the cove we started from" 6
"There ain't two things I know so much alike as gettin' by and jiggin' through the fog" 7
"hookers scootin' round" 8
"barkentines" 9
"morphrodite brigs" 10
"leg bailed it for the house" 11
"On August mornin's when the shedderin' a
And weather has us all a-feelin' good" 12

Zeb Kinney makes a nautical criticism of college professors.

"That's what professors need - a good sharp scraper
To clean the rubbish off their garboards, clear
The gubber from their engine-valves and pipes,
To perk them up so they'll get back their sprawl." 13

It is clear to see that a woman is recording the speech in the first quotations, and that a man is using the second. Whether the atmosphere of the poem is helped by the use of so many terms unfamiliar to most inland readers is a question that only a comparison with Miss Jewett's method can answer.

1 Maine Coast, p. 25 8 Ibid. p. 57
2 Ibid. 9 Ibid.
3 Ibid. p. 28 10 Ibid.
4 Ibid. p. 38 11 The Inner Harbor, p. 59
5 Ibid. 12 Ibid. p.
6 Ibid p. 55 13 Ibid. p. 58
7 Ibid.
One's faith in the integrity of Miss Jewett's representation of these farmers and fishermen of Maine is almost whole, but one is not quite assured that her respect for William Dean Howells and Thomas Bailey Aldrich did not make her suppress some of the truth, and truth that had too much vitality to be sacrificed. No oath is recorded that is any more expressive or imaginative than "Good King Agrippy." Ex-sea men should have a colorful vocabulary, one that conveys strong feeling with the utmost speed. One didn't ask Miss Jewett to make her neat old ladies swear, but if she is going to have sailors and fishermen at all, and old men rich in experience on all the seas, she had better let them say something with more meaning than "Good King Agrippy."

This list of exclamations shows how vapid and colorless Miss Jewett's selfconsciousness, or Boston-consciousness made these expressions which should have been spontaneou.

"My lawful sakes, I" Tales of New England, p. 175
"Dear sakes alive!" " " " " p. 263
"Now dear heart." p. 260
"Land o' compassion." " " Deeplaven, p. 38
"Land sakes alive!" " " p. 52
"Lor' sakes!" Best Short Stories, Vol II, p. 32
"Good King Agrippy!" A Country Doctor, p. 26
"Good King Agrippy." Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 214
"Oh, my sakes!" Life of Nancy,
"Do tell!" Deephaven, p. 198
"Lady!" " " p. 193
Wilbert Snow in Maine Coast uses "By guess and by God." p. 54.

Do tell is in a word list for Hampstead, New Hampshire, Dialect Notes, Vol. III, p. 186.

The terms of opprobrium have more character and age than the restrained exclamations.

"Mis' much-afraid." Tales of New England, p. 177
"Come in here you lout." Tales of New England, p. 190
"A whole sidewalk full o' louts." Tales of New England, p. 300
"Them was the louts that was hanging around the barn." Atlantic Monthly, Vol.XLVIII, p. 30
"That Crosby Miss." Tales of New England, p. 190
"I can't make nothin' out of that poor shoot of a boy." Life of Nancy, p. 176

The New English Dictionary dates this word from 1413.

Lout is an awkward, ill-mannered fellow. It appeared in literature in 1548. Today it seems to imply something more odious than an awkward, ill-mannered fellow.

Like the terms of opprobrium, the saws and maxims have age. They are homlier and more virile than the exclamations. One or two of them look like local growth.

"When it rains porridge, hold up your dish." The Life of Nancy, p. 221
"Hot haste makes a long road back." A Marsh Island, p. 781
"It's a cold world when you've nothing to give." Atlantic Monthly, Vol.XLVIII, p.30
"Them as fetch a bone'll carry one." The Country of the Pointed Firs, p.53
"A growing moon chaws up the clouds." A Marsh Island, p. 151
"All talk and no cider." Is this local?
"It was betwixt hay and grass with 'em."


This saying appears in a Central Connecticut Word List in Dialect Notes, Vol. III, p. 90.

Icebound furnishes a number of homely sayings.

Henry especially likes to use borrowed and established wisdom.

"You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear."
Act. I, p. 5

"What's past is past."

"Folks that plant the wind reap the whirlwind."

"There's no use crying over spilled milk."
Act. III, p. 98

"Them that touches pitch gets defiled."
Emma, Act. III, p. 97

Besides the proverbs, there is a fund of common sayings of a critical nature:

"He won't never set the river on fire."
A Marsh Island. p. 789

"He wants all the town ladders out to get him over a grain of sand."
Ibid.

The common sayings which Owen Davis uses in Ice-bound sound rural and homely, and lack artificiality.

"She's as tight mouthed as a bear trap."
Act. I, p. 12

"There never was a Bevan yet didn't have his tongue hung in the middle."
Act. II, p. 49

"He's the spit and image of her."
Act. II, p. 56

"Every time I listen to that girl I get fur on my tongue."
Act II, p. 60

"There's things I can't abide, her and cucumbers."
Act II, p. 60
Similes belong to the fund of common sayings.
They are rarely original in these sketches. The store of comparisons show an astonishing poverty of imagination and mental energy. Only a few have significance, fewer yet have color.

"straight as a mast"
"savage as a hawk"
"tougher than eelum roots"
"purr like a Dolphin"
"older than the ten commandments"
"lazy as a flounder"
"lean as a meeting house fly"

The following have a little more vigor:

"I tell ye I feel as if I was tied in a bag o' fleas."
"I'd as soon put to sea under a Monday's clothes line."
"I shouldn't pick out Andrew for his self alone.
I'd as soon live on b'iled rice the year round." ¹
"My head felt that day as if the whole world was gone." ²
"I ain't goin' to live here no longer like a toad under a harrow." ³

The metaphors are made fresh from experience, rather than borrowed from the common fund.

"'Woman's the weaker vessel.'
"Hang her! Let her carry less sail then!"
Tales of New England, p. 274
"Let him think he had his own way, stead of arguing everything to the bare bone."
The Country of the Pointed Firs, p.169

¹ Atlantic Monthly, Vol. XLVIII, p. 29
² Strangers and Wayfarers, p. 151
³ Atlantic Monthly, Vol. L, p. 84
"A little parrot of a midshipman."
   *Deephaven*, p. 90

"Something sprung her mind."
   *Best Short Stories*, p. 59

"I don't know when I've been so sharp set for breakfast."
   *A Marsh Island*, p. 147

"But she harps too much, I'd laid half of that away for next time."
   *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, p. 177

From the common fund, also, comes the synecdoche:

"I ain't goin' to live in the chimblly corner of another man's house."
   *The Life of Nancy*, p. 164

Some examples of metonymy come from the general fund.

"Susan had an eye to the win'ward."
   *Atlantic Monthly, Vol.*XLVIII, p. 29

"I've always heard she was a great hand to make a poor mouth."
   *Strangers and Wayfarers*, p. 47

"If he hadn't wanted to stand well in Cap'n Joe's books."

"I ain't goin' snappin' through torment in a hemlock coffin to please that old cheat."
   *Tales of New England*, p. 205

Examples of understatement are not abundant, and these are usually independent of the current phrases.

"Marilla's taste is not what one might call commonplace."
   *The Country Doctor*

"The Dyer neighbors are far from being reticent."
   *The Country Doctor*, p. 136

"I ain't more than satisfied with what I've been gettin' o' late years."
   *Life of Nancy*, p. 136

"I don't love to have you gone so late."
A certain number of euphemisms belong to the
dialect. The characters seem to hesitate to say that
anyone is drinking. Instead, they say:

"Stim'lates." Country of the Pointed Firs
"I guess he had his nipper aboard." Atlantic Monthly, Vol. L, p. 85

There are a few ways of avoiding the word death.
One story is entitled, "The Passing of Sister Barsett"
Doctor Leslie in A Country Doctor says that they must drive
a little faster or Sister Willet will be "gathered." 1
The term is repeated in A Marsh Island. "When the old
fellow was gathered." 2 But life was not so pleasant
that death could not be spoken of openly. There is some-
thing unfeeling and barren about, "Ain't you heard nothin'
about your ma'am's being took up for dead?" 3 Mrs. Thatcher
says to her naughty little granddaughter, "You'll think of
it when you see me laying dead, what a misery you've been." 4
The term "death struck," while brutal, is far more vigorous
in expression than any evasion.

We do not say that these are all the figures of
speech used in the dialect of the eighty sketches, but
we consider that we have selected a just sample. They
show minds that depart very little from the literal truth.

1 A Country Doctor, p. 180 3 Tales of New England, p. 199
2 A Marsh Island, p. 159 4 A Country Doctor
They indicate honesty and experience rather than imagination or originality.

This dialect, furnished with homely idiom, vivid with practical images, animated with impressionistic expressions, well supplied with sayings indicating a common experience, is the language of a society closely bound together, with little leisure, with minds well encased against the influence of the world outside.
"I always think of her as one who, hearing New England accused of being a bleak land without beauty, passes confidently over the snow, and by the gray rock, and past the dark fir tree to a southern bank, and there brushing away the decayed leaves, triumphantly shows to the faultfinder a spray of the trailing arbutus." The trailing arbutus? Something fresh and vigorous and symbolic of the awakening of life? If it must be a flower that Miss Jewett finds, why not the blue fringed gentian that hides in lonely inaccessible places, and blossoms when summer is done, something hardy and lovely, but assuredly not forward looking? The Queen's Twin and Mrs. Blackett, Betsy Lane and Mrs. Peet are no harbingers of spring.

But Miss Jewett does not go out to find beauty at all. Beauty in the Maine sketches is incidental. We have discovered no effort on her part to defend New England. She would be one to shrink from a responsibility so presumptuous. New England is the part of the universe that she knew well enough to reproduce for her own artistic satisfaction and for our pleasure and enlightenment. She loves the lean beauty of the landscape, but she knows that it is a country hungry for man's body and thirsty for his spirit. She recognizes that the good men and women who

1 Atlantic Monthly, May, 1904
live on the farms and along the coast are honest and fearless, but swathed in cramping bands of social consciousness and tradition, and prejudiced against relaxation in humor or imagination, or aesthetic enjoyment. There is no mirth in her Maine, no fun except of her own creation.

Miss Jewett acquaints us with her country through a delicately measured and subtle emotional appeal. Miss Millay's method is more frankly subjective. Like Miss Jewett in her appeal to the sense of sight, she suppresses color. All of these Maine born writers accord Maine a generous share of beauty, all but Owen Davis, who for the purpose of unifying the atmosphere of his drama, makes it unvaryingly dreary.

All of the authors who deal with the economic problem at all watch the land await its time to claim body and soul of those who would master it. They are all acutely conscious of the relation of geography to the characteristics they set forth. All of them have found a spot in these United States where the tradition of the English settler has been allowed to grow, practically undisturbed for nearly two centuries. They see a people socially bound, and emotionally balanced, in spite of the fact that they are unable to create for themselves relaxation in the form of music or reading or humor. They are not even allowed the almost enforced relief of imaginative flights.
Edwin Arlington Robinson alone pictures the romantic ego absorbed in the discovery of itself, the only exotic figure in the whole composite of the interpretations of Maine. All agree to a general lack of initiative. Not one character in the writings of the six authors, except Polly Finch in Miss Jewett's sketch, makes a constructive effort. There is an almost uniform passivity, and a uniform sadness in the pictures of Maine.

As we should expect, the authors themselves do not conform regularly to the generalizations that apply to the characters that they represent. All of them, however, are New Englanders of English descent. They have said that the characters are unimaginative on the whole. Only two of the authors are highly imaginative.

Has any other state been so protected by its geographic situation that it could have preserved traditions and language, and shaped the characters of its people in such a way that six authors in different fields, over a period of fifty years could agree upon so many essentials? All of them find a rare beauty in the country side. They represent a section of America where the traditions of its British pioneer settlers still live undisturbed. Their characters are inured to hardship and danger, socially and traditionally bound, lacking in humor and imagination and the enjoyment of music. Of this country, and of these people with one accord they write in an atmosphere of sad finality.
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Where Pennyroyal Grew
The Old Singers See Vol. I
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The Hermitage
On Shell-Heap Island
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A Country Road
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Aunt Cynthy Dallet

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1 *A Dunnet Shepherdess
   *The Queen's Twin
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