Sarah Orne Jewett

THE COUNTRY OF THE POINTED FIRS

and Other Stories

Selected and Introduced by

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Introduction to the Norton Edition

Willa Cather considered Sarah Orne Jewett's *The Country of the Pointed Firs* with *The Scarlet Letter* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as the three American works most likely to achieve permanent recognition. "I can think of no others that confront time and change so serenely," she wrote. "I like to think with what pleasure, with what a sense of rich discovery, the young student of American literature in far distant years to come will take up this book and say, 'A masterpiece!' "[1] Implicit in Cather's prediction that *Pointed Firs* would survive the ages is a sense that it would require "a young student of American literature in far distant years" before Jewett's book would actually earn its place in the canon of American literary classics.

Cather was both perceptive and propheti 1925, when she made these statements, as most critics have for too long considered Jewett's novel of minor importance. The major anthologies

of American literature have not, until their 1979 editions, included selections from Jewett's stories, and she, with her contemporary Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, has been viewed by literary historians as representative of what V. L. Parrington termed "New England in decline" and Van Wyck Brooks described as "New England Indian Summer."[2] Even those few critics who have begun the task of interpreting her work[3] have done so with the understanding that although *The Country of the Pointed Firs* is considered Jewett's masterpiece, it is a "little one," limited in scope, like the size of its cult of readers. Most of these critics echo Henry James's assessment of the book as Jewett's "beautiful little quantum of achievement."[4]

One of the few critics in recent decades to accept fully Willa Cather's assessment is the Maine writer Mary Ellen Chase, who first contributed an essay on Jewett to David Bonnell Green's volume, *The World of Dunnet Landing* (his title refers to the fictional Maine setting of Jewett's novel),[5] and then, in 1968, introduced the illustrated text of *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, which is reprinted now, with Chase's original introduction, in this paperback edition.

Chase agrees with Cather's evaluation of Jewett, but she chose to give readers Jewett's novel as it originally appeared, not as Cather edited it. Willa Cather, perhaps following the lead of a publisher's posthumous 1919 edition, reordered Jewett's own chapters, placing three later Dunnet Landing sketches ("A Dunnet Shepherdess," "The Queen's Twin," and "William's Wedding"), all of which include both the novel's narrator and its central figure, Mrs. Todd, as part of the novel itself. It seems unlikely that Jewett would have approved of this change, because *Pointed Firs*, without the later sketches, is already unified and complete and because the three additional sketches are much longer than most of the original twenty-one chapters, thereby, in the view of some critics, radically altering the balance and design of the work.[6]

The present edition makes it possible for readers to assess *The Country of the Pointed Firs* as it originally appeared in 1896, then to read the additional Dunnet Landing stories. There are

four of these, not three, as Willa Cather's 1925 edition implied; and it is very likely that Cather simply did not know that a fourth story—"The Foreigner"—even existed, since it had not been reprinted, after its original 1900 publication in *Atlantic Monthly*, until David Bonnell Green's 1962 volume. (This fourth story, Warner Berthoff writes, "may truly be called one of the mislaid treasures of American writing."[7]) The collection also allows the reader to place *Pointed Firs* within a representative larger context of Jewett's work. Both "A White Heron" and "Miss Tempy's Watchers," short stories included here, antedate *Pointed Firs* by ten years; "Martha's Lady" and "Aunt Cynthy Dallett" appeared after *Pointed Firs*, in 1899; "William's Wedding," one of the four Dunnet Landing stories, remained uncompleted at Jewett's death (all the more reason for not including it as a chapter in the earlier, completed novel) and was not published until the following year, 1910.

It may be as a result of Cather's 1925 edition that critics have debated the question of whether or not *The Country of the Pointed Firs* is a series of sketches rather than a novel. Jewett herself contributed to the controversy in her descriptions of her own work. In one letter, composed more than twenty years before *Pointed Firs*, she wrote: "But I don't believe I could write a long story as [Howells] suggested, and you advise me in this last letter. In the first place I have no dramatic talent. The story would have no plot. I should have to fill it out with descriptions of character and meditations. It seems to me I can furnish the theatre, and show you the actors, and the scenery, and the audience, but there never is any play!"[8] And one of her earliest biographers, F. O. Matthiessen, described *The Country of the Pointed Firs* "as a full-length book, [which] carries greater weight than her single stories, but it is not a novel. For the conventional novel structure, as her two or three attempts had shown, she had no gift. But here, in these loosely connected sketches, she has achieved a structure independent of plot. Her scaffolding is simply the unity of her vision."[9]

This controversy resembles in kind, if not in magnitude, the

critical debates over Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* (1851) and Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919), and Jewett's work stands between these two both chronologically and in an artistic sense. All three works have failed the standard test of strict structural unity (although it should be clear from the interpretation of *Pointed Firs* that follows these introductory remarks that Jewett's novel is much more than "loosely connected"). Even so, Melville's book, by virtue perhaps of its sheer bulk, is conventionally referred to as a novel, if an anomalous one, while Anderson's book is usually considered a collection of short stories, albeit an experimental one that possesses more structural unity than most collections of short fiction. In theme and unity of vision, as well as controversy over its form, Jewett's work resembles *Moby-Dick*, yet some critics might feel Melville slighted by the comparison. In length as well as in its experimental quality, *Pointed Firs* resembles the shorter *Winesburg, Ohio*, yet I have never seen anyone make this connection; Anderson, not Jewett, receives credit as being the father of twentieth-century American fiction. There is no indication that our century's literary giants (Faulkner, Hemingway, Fitzgerald) had even read Jewett. Clearly, in accepting Matthiessen's early judgment of Jewett's novel, we have allowed *Pointed Firs* to fall into an abyss between nineteenth-century themes and twentieth-century technique. A more balanced assessment would recognize her book as a pivotal one that recalls earlier nineteenth-century themes, yet, in narrative structure and point of view, looks ahead to the century critics have come to term "modernist."

One of the puzzling problems, for critics who reread the novels and short stories by the late-nineteenth-century women writers, the so-called "local color" or "regional" writers of New England and the South, is that they depict at first glance a domesticated, romanticized, even sentimentalized world that, literary historians charge, lacks universality. Feminist critics hypothesize that the women writers of the late nineteenth century adopted conventionality as a form of self-censorship, as evidence of their implicit

awareness of combating sexual proscriptions in publishing. And it is true that while William Dean Howells took the credit for "discovering" Jewett and Mary Wilkins Freeman, and by virtue of his position as editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* was able to publish them, he also freely criticized their work, subjecting it to his own personal taste for gentility in portraits of late-nineteenth-century life.

Yet these same nineteenth-century writers—Harriet Beecher Stowe in *The Pearl of Orr's Island* and *Oldtown Folks* (published in the 1860s); Freeman in story collections *A New England Nun* and *A Humble Romance* and in *Pembroke*, a novel (published in the 1880s and 1890s); and Jewett in *Pointed Firs*, together with Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Rose Terry Cooke, and Alice Brown, and southerners Mary Noialles Murfree ("Charles Egbert Craddock") and Kate Chopin—were our earliest American realists. Stowe, popularly known only for her polemical novel against slavery (*Uncle Tom's Cabin*), was in fact the founder of American realistic fiction, decades before William Dean Howells and Henry James would become its self-designated American theoreticians. There seems little better way to resolve the question of Jewett's contribution to American fiction than to read her ourselves and form our own interpretations.

It is often the case that a writer's later work may shed light on her earlier themes and concerns. "The Foreigner," that long-buried fourth Dunnet Landing tale, does just that. I single it out from the other short stories included in the present edition because it teaches us how to read *The Country of the Pointed Firs*.

In "The Foreigner," Jewett makes explicit the motifs of strangeness and isolation that pervade *The Country of the Pointed Firs* as evidence that women, separated from their mothers by raging gales, death, and distance, struggle to ease anxiety and to regain inner peace by becoming reunited with them. In this tale-within-a-tale-within-a-tale, Mrs. Todd (who will become familiar to readers of *Pointed Firs*) eases her own worries about "Mother" being alone on Green Island during the season's first "nor'easter"

by relating the story of a "foreigner," whose name is Mrs. Tolland. In her story, Mrs. Todd describes the experience of seeing, with her dying "foreign" friend, the ghost of Mrs. Tolland's own dead mother. When she sees how calm and reassured the dying Mrs. Tolland has become, knowing she is about to enter her mother's presence, Mrs. Todd herself becomes calm. She tells her listener (and our narrator) that she felt " 'lifted to somethin' different as I never was since' " (p. 186).[10] She affirms the consolation of the mother's presence and tells Mrs. Tolland, " 'You ain't never goin' to feel strange an' lonesome no more' " (p. 186). She learns from her experience that " 'There's somethin' of us that must still live on; we've got to join both worlds together an' live in one but for the other' " (p. 187).

In the hands of Jewett's contemporary, Henry James, such a tale might have become a ghost story, and for readers new to Jewett, the absence of terror and dramatic suspense in "The Foreigner" may seem a flaw. For in Jewett's story, the ghost only momentarily frightens Mrs. Todd. But by the time she has finished relating this tale to her listener, the nor'easter has calmed and her own anxieties concerning her mother's safety on Green Island have passed. By the end of "The Foreigner," Jewett has taught her readers how to feel a different kind of suspense than they might have expected to find in a ghost story. Here the action is a consequence of Mrs. Todd's anxieties, produced not by the ghost in the story she tells, but by her separation from "mother." The climax occurs, then, not with the appearance of the ghost, but in Mrs. Todd's recognition that Mrs. Tolland has been reunited with her mother.

The tension of separation from and reunion with the mother gives this story both its dramatic suspense and its narrative frame. For the narrator, initially agitated by Mrs. Todd's own anxieties, is also calmed by the story's end. Jewett suggests in "The Foreigner" that the relationship that exists between storyteller and listener resembles the ties that link mother and daughter. The device of tale-within-a-tale-within-a-tale creates a

hierarchy of listeners. The narrator's own listener has nothing to contribute to the telling of the tale, but provides the essential link between "generations" of storytellers, just as a granddaughter feels the ties, through her mother, to earlier generations of grandmothers and great-grandmothers.

The process of transmitting the story, and hence both its power and its consolation, to younger generations (turning the reader into the "youngest" generation of all) helps the reader to understand *Pointed Firs*, in which the same separation from the mother exists. In *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, though, the "mother" who is the source of Mrs. Todd's anxiety in "The Foreigner" becomes the object of a quest. A quest novel is one in which a protagonist sets out in search of something, whether or not she knows in advance what she will find. Mrs. Todd's own mother, Mrs. Blackett in *Pointed Firs*, serves as a literal object of quest in the scene in which Mrs. Todd and the narrator take a boat out to Green Island (where Mrs. Blackett lives), but she assumes a mythic dimension for the narrator as the novel progresses.

For our narrator, an unnamed woman who first arrives in the pastoral world of Dunnet Landing as a summer visitor, is a refugee from city life and a foreigner—to Mrs. Todd and, as she discovers, to herself. Her very return to a place she once caught a glimpse of while passing by in a boat identifies her summer visit as a quest. She is looking for something, although she does not know in advance what she will find, and although she does not even know, as the novel opens, that she is looking for anything. Yet her return to Dunnet Landing is motivated by anxieties produced by metaphysical isolation—the same kind Mrs. Todd feels in "The Foreigner" when she worries about her mother at sea, and the same kind that led Melville's Ishmael on his quest more than forty years earlier in American literary history.

On the same coast, a half century later, in an era of decline of the whaling and shipping industries, Sarah Jewett becomes our first writer to portray life "at sea"—the inner isolation, alienation from community, and quest for lost peace characteristic of

the world of Dunnet Landing, where most of the men are dead or gone and those who are left are cut off from the world of action. A whale hunt is impossible for the characters of Dunnet Landing. Jewett's attention turns inward, focusing not on the lives of the men, who have lost their accustomed focus of activity, but on the women, whose lives past shipping's decline have fundamentally changed very little. Women, her fiction shows, have long been accustomed to perceiving inner conflict as life's arena. Women did not cease to exist when their husbands, brothers, or fathers went fishing. To the extent that they worried and watched and lived with reports of menfolk buried at sea, their lives and those of the men just touched; but the rhythms of their lives were different.

The Country of the Pointed Firs chronicles, in part, this difference. Visits between women lead to dramatic encounters; groups of women knit to occupy their hands and free their minds; women alone worry; women put kettles on to boil and dig potatoes for chowder; some women, like Mrs. Todd, become herbalists and healers; and, as the narrator learns from Mrs. Blackett on the way to the Bowden family reunion, the home graves mostly belong to women. Women struggle to achieve clear vision by confronting directly and daily the necessity to maintain inner balance.

The use of an outside narrator allows Jewett to place *Pointed Firs* in the local-color tradition and then to move beyond that convention, since her narrator has much in common with her reader. At first glance, the narrator does not take in the fact of the town's decline, described so often in the literary, social, and economic histories of the period. For some readers, such an apparent initial error of perception heralds the sentimentality and nostalgia characteristic of most of the local-color writing done for the magazines of the late nineteenth century, but for Jewett's narrator, the "unchanged shores of the pointed firs" (p. 2) preserve Dunnet Landing unvitiated by those forces that make the

city a place she wishes to escape. Like this city dweller, we, too, live in a world in which inner isolation, alienation from community, and quest for lost peace characterize our human condition. In responding to the world of Dunnet Landing and in learning the things she learns, Jewett's narrator follows her instincts and teaches the reader how to do the same. She becomes the reader's pastoral guide in the process of making her own quest; and in her love for all things quaint and remote, she discovers new values both in country living and in the lives of women. Jewett's pastoral art has been analyzed by some critics;[11] what has not yet been explicated is the way her pastoral longings lead her to her view of a world apparently lost to modern women but that, in the art of storytelling, may be found again and taught to new generations of readers.

In the description of Mrs. Todd, early in the novel, the reader can find lingering evidence that this world has not been altogether lost—just domesticated. For from the beginning of our introduction to Mrs. Todd in *Pointed Firs*, she is associated with her herbs. The narrator somewhat humorously states that wherever Mrs. Todd treads in her herb plot, the fragrance of that particular herb makes its presence known, and that it was possible to tell in what corner of the garden she was at all times. But even our narrator, a stranger to the world of herbs, seems to recognize the existence of Mrs. Todd's power. "There were some strange and pungent odors that roused a dim sense and remembrance of something in the forgotten past. Some of these might once have belonged to sacred and mystic rites, and have had some occult knowledge handed with them down the centuries; but now they pertained only to humble compounds brewed at intervals with molasses or vinegar or spirits in a small caldron on Mrs. Todd's kitchen stove" (pp. 3–4). The lost world in *The Country of the Pointed Firs* is not the world of shipping, but a world in which women were once united with their mothers and inherited their mothers' powers.[12]

The few men who populate Dunnet Landing and who appear in Jewett's novel directly contribute to the narrator's growth in identity. The village doctor, for example, represents both the world of men and the world of modern science, and yet he respects Mrs. Todd and her herbal remedies. He does not dismiss her knowledge or her effectiveness. When they meet, "the conversation became at once professional after the briefest preliminaries" (p. 4). He serves as a model for a modern man, yet he inhabits a world in which men cannot make a living.

Captain Littlepage, who seeks the narrator out in the schoolhouse she has rented as a refuge, is the first to relate for her the closing of the shipping industry and the decline of the region. He introduces himself by quoting from *Paradise Lost*, which provides the metaphor for the "terrible loss" of shipping for the life of the region. The captain then tells a story of a mysterious arctic town populated by "blowing gray figures" who seem "neither living nor dead" (p. 25). The significance of Littlepage's arctic town is that it is a way station to vision, a "waiting place," as the chapter is entitled.

Littlepage's story comments on the narrator's visit to Dunnet Landing; for the Maine coastal town with its inner and outer islands becomes her own "waiting place" until she earns the right to share both the community and the vision of Mrs. Todd and Mrs. Blackett. The narrator can see that the captain's vision is incomplete. His characterization that "the worst have got to be best and rule everything" (p. 21) fails to account for Mrs. Todd and the strains of wisdom and strength that she represents. Although the narrator appreciates the captain's story with its voyage of discovery (she herself has made such a voyage to Dunnet Landing), it is Mrs. Todd rather than the captain who becomes her visionary—and practical—guide. Such is masculine paradise lost, indeed, when the young woman recognizes, even if still unconsciously at this point in the larger work, that her hope for vision rests not with the old man but with the old woman. " 'Oh, he used to be a beatiful man!' " Mrs. Todd comments on the captain (p. 29).

One day the narrator voyages to Green Island with Mrs. Todd to meet Mrs. Blackett, and in the course of the afternoon, she becomes acquainted with Mrs. Todd's brother William. Throughout the scene on Green Island, it is clear that Mrs. Todd, in her role as guide, herbalist, and priestess, is here helping her summer visitor to go directly to the source of all vision and inspiration. And Mrs. Blackett's house, within its "complete and tiny continent" at Green Island, seems to be the center of the world. It is surprising to find that it is not a daughter but rather a celibate son who is truly the "priest" at the rustic shrine. Yet Mrs. Blackett describes William as both son and daughter since Mrs. Todd married and left Green Island. William has been satisfied to remain, and by his very presence he gives the narrator a more completely human view of Mrs. Todd, who would have been "restless" to live her life on Green Island. Mrs. Todd's mysticism is finally no mystery; her art is after all not magic; and her source of strength is not unique to herself but inherited and, therefore, may be passed on. The kind of vision "mother" possesses gives her daughter the wisdom of her ancestral and mythical mothers, as well as the inner strength to carry this with her as she leads her own life "in a large place where more things grew" (p. 52).

After her initiation into personal vision at Green Island, the narrator makes a pilgrimage to the shrine of solitude on Shellheap Island, where "poor Joanna" made her home, and then, in the dramatic climax of the novel, consummates a ritual kinship with Mrs. Blackett's ancestors. In joining Mrs. Blackett in her own pilgrimage of renewal, the narrator participates in the deep community that briefly, and only once a year, must serve as a bulwark against the stark isolation of life in the region. What is significant about the Bowden reunion is that the most important male characters in *Pointed Firs* do not attend. Without seeming to exclude the men, the narrator continues to focus on the community of women, who have gathered with Mrs. Blackett at their symbolic head. Images of "mother" dominate the scene. Even the Bowden house still stands "in its green fields as if it were a motherly brown hen waiting for the flock" (p. 97). By implica-

tion, the "motherly brown hen" participates in the pastoral world of "green fields," and the Bowden reunion, then, becomes a threefold symbolic return—to origins, to paradise, and to "mother." The effect of the ritual, of the symbolic return, and of Mrs. Blackett's presence leads the narrator to write, "I came near to feeling like a true Bowden" (p. 110).

The word "near" is important because it implies that vision for the narrator of *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, like vision for Ishmael in *Moby-Dick*, is temporary and transient. Throughout the feast, the narrator hints that her sense of belonging is not perfect. In distancing herself she prepares the way for her own return to city life, just as the family prepares for its return to isolation. The rhythms of community and isolation have been established—for the Bowdens by their reunion, and for the narrator by her entire summer at Dunnet Landing. It is these ryhthms that create the consolation of vision and that lead her to conclude, "Clannishness is an instinct of the heart" (p. 110).

What prevents the narrator from viewing vision as tragic because it is temporary, as Melville's Ishmael does, is the clear metaphor of connection between land and sea. Jewett's shore knows that the tide goes out, but it also comes in. Vision recedes, but it also returns, like the annual Bowden family reunion and the pattern of visits between women that prevails throughout the novel.[13] Mrs. Blackett's strength is that she does not lose the power to evoke vision even when the narrator no longer has her literally in view. The links to the past, and to her heritage as a woman capable of vision, are possible for the narrator to recreate, just as Mrs. Todd does in her dual arts of healing and storytelling. Mrs. Blackett, as the symbol of "mother," manages to fuse the realistic world with the symbolic one, and Mrs. Blackett, Mrs. Todd, the narrator, and the women of Jewett's world are more than witnesses. They live their lives as individual links to "mother." Therefore, even the culinary art of cake baking, at the Bowden reunion, comes to seem an "essay" in cookery, and the

eating of the gingerbread replica of the Bowden house becomes a ritual of communion.

But the narrator is finally a visitor to Dunnet Landing. Before she leaves, the narrator has the opportunity to test her sense of belonging and her powers of consolation. She finds herself walking along the shore, watching a "weather-beaten lobster smack" which seems to have no one at the wheel. The boat is the old *Miranda*, and watching it provides the narrator with a brief opportunity of making Elijah Tilley's acquaintance. Her momentary friendship with this isolate, and the story of his life which he relates to her, allows the narrator to extend her vision. She emerges from her immersion in the world of women with a new sympathy for and understanding of the world of men.

The reference to the *Miranda*, which brings the narrator together with Elijah Tilley, is not a casual one on Jewett's part. The narrator, describing the old shipmates who are Elijah Tilley's friends, resembles the wide-eyed daughter of Shakespeare's Prospero in *The Tempest*, who, upon seeing men for the first time, cries, "O brave new world / That hath such people in 't!"[14] Shipwreck, in Shapespeare, becomes the prelude, the entrance, to a magical, visionary island world. The wreck of shipping, in Jewett's work, creates equally strange creatures.[15] But the narrator, like Miranda, has experienced a sea change. The only other ship referred to by name in *Pointed Firs* is Captain Littlepage's *Minerva*. Jewett has chosen well, for the wisdom that her narrator acquires at the hands of Mrs. Todd and Mrs. Blackett comes also to possess Prospero's magic. Minerva and Miranda combine their qualities in Jewett's narrator.

The "brave new world" that the narrator sees, at the end of *Pointed Firs*, contains both women and men. Much as she finds the reticence and the ways of the old shipmates occasions for wonder, the narrator does not disparge them. She wants to understand the "ancient seafarers," of whom she writes that though they "had houses and lands not outwardly different from

other Dunnet Landing dwellings, and two of them were fathers of families, . . . their true dwelling places were the sea" (p. 115). Men have their own rituals which, like the men themselves, were " 'always just as you see 'em now since the memory of man' " (p. 115). The final stage in the development of her vision, and a necessary one before her departure from Dunnet Landing, is the sense of completion that her view of Elijah Tilley provides. For Elijah Tilley has had an experience that enables him, like the narrator, to bridge the worlds of men and of women. After the death of his wife, Elijah has become, for his own consolation, both woman and man. He knits a yarn stocking; he is a very good housekeeper; and he has cleared his land and uses painted stakes as "buoys" to mark heavy rocks and so protect his plow. The narrator tells Mr. Tilley, " 'You haven't been to sea for nothing' " (p. 120). He is as adept at patching his old coat as in mending the *Miranda*'s mainsail. He has learned the arts of both land and sea, and combines the skills traditionally divided, in Dunnet Landing, between women and men.

His vision, too, includes the woman's view. He himself exists in a "continual loneliness," and he tells the narrator how he has come to understand his dead wife's anxieties. " 'I used to make light of her timid notions. She used to be fearful when I was out in bad weather or baffled about gittin' ashore. She used to say the time seemed long to her, but I've found out all about it now' " (p. 123). Mr. Tilley, through his "continual loneliness," through the memory of his wife, and through the heritage of the mother who taught him how to knit, illustrates that the inner lives, anxieties, and visions of women can be shared by men. They have only to "find out" about them in order to share them.

Still, at the last, it is the "mateless" but "appealing" figure of Mrs. Todd that impresses itself on the narrator's and the reader's own vision. *Pointed Firs* portrays a world in which women are alone but not tragic. Jewett, singularly among nineteenth-century American writers, does not share the literary historians' fiction of

a New England in decline. The apparent loss of male paradise in the American literary imagination in the years following the American Civil War simply serves as a contrast to the fecundity and depth of imagination in Jewett and her female contemporaries.

The world of Dunnet Landing is, above all else, a world in which women learn to belong again. They cease to be foreigners. They meet, in Mrs. Todd and Mrs. Blackett, living examples of what women might once have been and might again become. In portraying a world in which most of the men have left, are dead, or have become silent, Jewett reveals a world of women, every bit as ancient and unchanged as the world of the self-contained old fishermen, but a world of which only the memory has been lost. *Pointed Firs* reminds us that there still exists a country—and a world—where the vision of women is not only vital, but can be shared.

Marjorie Pryse

Knoxville, Tennessee
April 1981

[1]Willa Cather, "Preface," in Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Best Short Stories of Sarah Orne Jewett*, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1925), I, p. xix. Later references in my introduction to Willa Cather's 1925 edition are to this collection.

[2]V. L. Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought*, vol. III, *The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America, 1860–1920* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1930), and Van Wyck Brooks, *New England: Indian Summer (1865–1915)* (New York: Dutton, 1940).

[3]Richard Cary has collected some of the best criticism on Jewett's work in *Appreciation of Sarah Orne Jewett: Twenty-nine Interpretive Essays* (Waterville, Maine: Colby College Press, 1973).

[4]Henry James, "Mr. and Mrs. James T. Fields," *Atlantic Monthly* 116 (July 1915):30.

[5]Mary Ellen Chase, "Sarah Orne Jewett as a Social Historian," in *The World of Dunnet Landing*, ed. David Bonnell Green (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1962).

[6]Francis Fike notes that Jewett's publishers were the first to include additional sketches, in two editions which appeared, after her death, in 1910 and 1919 ("An Interpretation of *Pointed Firs*," in Cary, p. 179, n. 2). Fike's essay is reprinted from *New England Quarterly* 34 (December 1961):478–91.

[7]Warner Berthoff, *The Ferment of Realism: American Literature, 1884–1919* (New York: Free Press, 1965), p. 98.

[8]Letter from Sarah Orne Jewett to Horace Scudder, 13 July 1873, reprinted in F. O. Matthiessen, *Sarah Orne Jewett* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1929; rpt. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1965), pp. 43–47.

[9]Matthiessen, p. 101.

[10]Page numbers in parentheses refer to the edition that follows this introduction.

[11]See in particular Robin Magowan, "Pastoral and the Art of Landscape in *The Country of the Pointed Firs*," in Cary, pp. 187–95, reprinted from *New England Quarterly* 36 (June 1963): 229–40; and David Stouck, "*The Country of the Pointed Firs*: A Pastoral of Innocence," in Cary, pp. 249–54, reprinted from *Colby Library Quarterly* 9 (December 1970):213–20.

[12]For a full discussion of such rites and powers, see Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (New York: Norton, 1976).

[13]Paul John Eakin, "Sarah Orne Jewett and the Meaning of Country Life," reprinted in Cary, pp. 203–22, is particularly interesting in his discussion of "the visit pattern" in *Pointed Firs*. (The essay is reprinted from *American Literature* 38 [January 1967]:508–31.)

[14]*The Tempest* V.i.183–84.

[15]Harriet Beecher Stowe's *The Pearl of Orr's Island* (1862) provides a significant link between Jewett and *The Tempest*. Jewett often commented on her memories of reading *A Pearl of Orr's Island*. Like Shakespeare's play, this novel opens with a shipwreck and, in the romance that unfolds between Mara and Moses, children in an island world, echoes both the atmosphere of *The Tempest* and some of the characterization of Shakespeare's Miranda and Ferdinand.

Contents

CONTENTS