

ings,' and with this free time 'I hope to be able to spend some time in your library.' Upon retirement he spent a year at the Institute for Advanced Study and soon became a Newberry Guggenheim Fellow.

In 1956, a year when he was president of the Modern Language Association, Chinard was asked by us to give a paper at our meeting the next year which was to be in conjunction with an exhibition of Lesueur drawings at the Worcester Art Museum. Chinard accepted and offered to do what he could to help, even if it meant deferring an appendectomy, as 'I am not anxious to put myself through the meat grinder and there is no emergency.' The meeting went off without a hitch but we were never able to get him to send us the paper and it never appeared in our *Proceedings*. This was Chinard's first and last appearance at one of our meetings although he continued to write to us.

Gilbert Chinard died on February 8, 1972, in Princeton Hospital at ninety years old. His wife of nearly sixty years had died in 1967, and he is survived by a son Francis of Montclair, a daughter, Mrs. Lucienne Clemens of College Park, five grandchildren, and a large number of colleagues and students who long have admired him and his work.

J. E. M.

SAMUEL FOSTER DAMON

S. Foster Damon, disciple of William Blake, was born in Newton, Massachusetts, on Washington's Birthday, 1893. His father, Joseph Neal Damon, was descended from Deacon John Damon, a founder of Reading, Massachusetts; his mother, Sarah Wolf (Pastorius) Damon, from Francis Daniel Pastorius, the founder of Germantown, Pennsylvania, whose largely unpublished folio manuscript, 'The Beehive,' will yet place him in the first rank of early American poets and intellectuals. Foster attended the Newton schools and began to educate him-

self at the public library. About 1907 he discovered Blake's poem 'The Tyger' in a pulp magazine and memorized it without divining its meaning; thereafter he studied, researched, published on, and taught the works of that 'modern Trismegistus.'

In 1910 he entered Harvard College where he spent all but two of the next seventeen years: as undergraduate (A.B. cum laude 1914), graduate student (M.A. 1927), and assistant in the English department (1921-1927). He was elected captain of the University Fencers' Club and president of the *Harvard Musical Review* where his essays on contemporary music were published. Together with e.e.cummings, John Dos Passos, and Robert Hillyer he was one of the *Eight Harvard Poets* (1917), and he and Hillyer, who spent 1920-1921 in Copenhagen with him translating an anthology of Danish verse, edited *Eight More Harvard Poets* (1923). Rooming with Hillyer and John Marshall he researched recipes in the Widener stack, and began to practice that simple, savory cuisine that delighted his friends and guests throughout his life. He formed his taste for German restaurants: Jake Wirth's, Locke-Ober's, and Luchow's. When America joined the World War he was rejected twice by the draft although he had served as corporal and bayonet instructor in the Harvard R.O.T.C.; he then taught French to the soldiers in Boston, went to New York to work in an airplane factory which 'evaporated,' and climaxed a frustrating season by creating the role of a ghost (non-speaking) in Eugene O'Neill's 'Where the Cross Is Made' (Provincetown Players, November 22, 1918).

Two of his lectures in English A were revised as 'A Lot He Knew' in George Weller's classic Harvard novel, *Not to Eat, Not for Love* (1933). There he said 'The ideal of Harvard ... is selfeducation.' Without a mentor in the English department he was educating himself, but not to the neglect of his students and schoolmates. He had a knack for introducing to his contemporaries works by avant-garde or long-forgotten

geniuses that changed their lives. To Malcolm Cowley he gave Jules Laforgue, Ezra Pound, Stephen Crane, and Herman Melville; to Virgil Thomson the critical works of T. S. Eliot, piano works of Erik Satie, and Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons*; and to Cummings the paintings of El Greco and the books of William Blake. Cummings said later 'Practically everything I know about painting and poetry came to me through Damon.' Foster published articles on alchemy and delighted Sir Arthur Conan Doyle by his spiritualistic interpretations of the literature, touring him through the folklore section of Widener Library, only to disappoint him later by investigating and exposing, with other Harvard graduate students, Margery the Medium.

When Sampson's edition of Blake's *Poetical Works* made most of the texts accessible in 1913 Foster got an interleaved copy in which he entered all the critical interpretation he could locate, an exercise that failed to penetrate Blake's secrets. He brushed aside the authorities and confronted the originals, ever the hallmark of his scholarship, by uncovering Blake's literary sources and tracing out his system of symbols. In 1916 he met and gained the friendship of Amy Lowell, first by his essay on free verse and imagism, then by his poetry and his enthusiasm for Blake. (He was her guest at Sevenels on that frightening evening in 1920 when she opened her safe to discover her collection of manuscripts water soaked and mildewed, and while aiding in the drying-out process in front of the roaring fireplaces he saved 'The Eve of St. Agnes' from going up the flue.) In 1919 and 1920 he seized the opportunity to handle Blake originals by helping to mount the Blake exhibition at the Grolier Club and Harvard, lecturing at both places, and in 1920 he was able to examine Blake materials in England. He began to write his Blake commentary in 1919, and he valued the outspoken criticism that Miss Lowell offered as he read parts of the manuscript to her in sessions that lasted until three or four o'clock in the morning. She found a publisher

and won the dedication. *William Blake, His Philosophy and Symbols*, published in 1924, redeemed Blake's stature and gave its author an international reputation. Only the Harvard English department failed to notice that its young assistant had resolved to a consistent philosophical system a complex canon of art and poetry that had baffled all others. Graduate students don't publish books, let alone get front-page reviews in the *TLS*!

The book begat countless theses and dissertations, but it earned no degree for its author. His talents, impatient for expression, were spouting off in all directions; no advisor could have channelled them into anything resembling the requirements for a doctorate. Three years later his cousin Lindsay Damon whisked him away to become an assistant professor in the Brown University English department where he taught until three years before his death. He was married in 1928 to Louise Wheelwright, sister of his classmate Edmund March Wheelwright, Jr., and of his good friend John Brooks Wheelwright, the inspired but erratic poet, critic, and social revolutionary. Louise was a painter whose oil portraits, still lifes, and Providence views charmed friends and visitors to the Damon household in the old William Greenman house at 24 Thayer Street.

Next to Foster's discovery of Blake the most influential event of his life was his appointment in July 1929 as Curator of the Harris Collection of American Poetry and Plays, the first collection of American literature to be installed in a college library. The nucleus of 6,000 volumes was formed in the middle years of the nineteenth century by C. Fiske Harris and bequeathed to Brown University by Senator Henry B. Anthony in 1884. Through the enthusiasm of the Brown librarian, Harry Lyman Koopman, the collection swelled to 57,000 volumes and included a sheet music department so that American authors who confined their verse to song lyrics could be included. Moses Coit Tyler, E. C. Stedman, and William Ellery Leonard

had used the collection to advantage, but altogether it was an embarrassment to the university: too many books on a subject unfit for academic study. The challenge suited Foster; he settled in with a vengeance to augment the collection and to show what could be done with it.

While publishing crucial articles on Melville's *Pierre* and Joyce's *Ulysses* he joined Professor Lewis Chase in the study of the forgotten Southern poet Chivers, 'the supreme example of a genius wholly unregulated by any talent whatsoever,' and the resulting *Thomas Holley Chivers, Friend of Poe* was published in 1930. Three years later he delivered before the Bibliographical Society of America a paper on 'The Negro in Early American Songsters.' This exemplary performance traces the subject from eighteenth-century English comic operas to early black-face performers, Minstrels, spirituals, blues, and jazz; its authority has not been supplanted. In 1936 he edited a *Series of Old American Songs* from the Harris Collection, fifty facsimiles annotated with folklore, local history, and other learning. He was made an associate professor in 1930 and a full professor six years later. He was awarded in 1932 the Golden Rose of the New England Poetry Society, of which he was an honorary president, and in 1934 he was elected a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. His biography of Amy Lowell, documenting her period of influence and including a remarkable chapter on 'American Poetry from 1874 to 1912,' was published in 1935. The Providence WPA orchestra performed his suite 'Crazy Theater Music' three times in 1938, and he wrote a ballad opera which is lost. By the end of the decade he had nearly completed a long epic composed of poems and songs in various verse forms and metres on the legendary Yankee Faust, Jonathan Moulton of Moultonboro, New Hampshire. *The Moulton Tragedy* was finally published in 1970.

During the barren 1940s, dark years of loneliness and despair at the outset of his wife's illness, he reached out for com-

panionship in new ways. Since his youth he had summered in an old Cape Ann house on Lobster Cove, Annisquam, and beginning in 1945 he coached the local youngsters in manipulating his childhood set of hand puppets in a Punch & Judy show as part of the annual Sea Fair. His text for the show, with notes and bibliography, was published in 1957. In Providence he organized into clubs (Chippewa Tribe of Friendly Indians, etc.) the mischievous kids of his neighborhood, 'on the verge of the second toughest district of the city,' and taught them boxing, songs, and square-dancing, the new-found hobby horse with which he entertained for several years the members of the Brown library staff. He was childless, but the children flocked around him; and more than one son of his friends and relatives was named Damon in his honor. To journalists he was always 'good copy,' and often they attributed to him the authentic twinkle of Santa Claus after he had traced for them the development of Santa's image on sheet music covers, a favorite interest of his, from the thin, soiled figure of the 1840s with its scraggly beard to the rotund, sparkling saint of later years.

In 1948 he was elected to the American Antiquarian Society, the only professional membership he took seriously; he attended meetings long after his deafness made the papers inaudible—the spread and the fellowship could still be relished; in 1952 he delivered his extraordinary paper on 'The History of Square-Dancing.' In thirty-five printed pages he traced the subject from Playford to the present, documenting his points from dance books, sheet music, and obscure novels and memoirs.

His play, 'The Witch of Dogtown,' won the Russel Crouse Award and was produced in Gloucester in 1954, and the first hint that he might be 'discovered' came in 1955 when he was asked to speak at the annual dinner of the William Blake Society in London. In 1959 appeared his definitive study of 'Yankee Doodle': thirty years of notetaking compressed to

a bare twelve pages of texts, facsimiles, notes, and comment. His ability to express the essentials succinctly is also illustrated in the final statement of his Blake interpretation, *A Blake Dictionary* (1965). In 1963 he became Curator Emeritus of the Harris Collection and some of his major acquisitions for the collection were described. They included collections of Whitman and American hymnbooks; papers of Albert Gorton Greene, Anne C. L. Botta, and Sarah Helen Whitman; manuscripts of Bird's 'Gladiator' and Thompson's 'Old Homestead'; and the Skillern music sheet of 'Yankee Doodle.' Equally impressive was the growth of the sheet music collection to over 125,000 pieces, most of it an extraordinary array of bibliographical variants of music sheets with lyrics by Americans, and nearly all of it sorted out, compared, and filed by Foster himself. He had always been generous to the library, but he began to turn over some of his own collections, the rest following later: American tales of the imagination (none better than his own *The Day after Christmas*, 1930), American spiritualism, Frank R. Stockton, alchemy, his beloved detective stories—especially the Perry Masons—, and the books that delighted his bibliophilic friends, such as the shimmering dust jacket copy of Roth's *Call It Sleep*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the extra-gilt gift binding, and G. W. Harris's annotated copy of Sut Lovingood's *Yarns*.

In 1964 Harvard elected him to honorary membership in the Massachusetts Alpha of Phi Beta Kappa, but 1968 brought the highest honors and proudest occasions. By then the young people had found him, and they got the Brown English department to produce a Foster Damon festival to celebrate his seventy-fifth birthday. Students performed scenes from 'The Witch of Dogtown,' his piano compositions were performed, and Foster read his poems and participated in a Blake seminar while his own writings and his Blake collection were displayed in the library. Then, day of days, commencement brought a Brown Litt. D. Afterward he stood in his living room, proud

as a great eagle, in cap and gown and hood drinking champagne with his friends, a scene reminiscent of his Hallowe'en parties when he officiated in velvet smoking jacket while his wine fountain glimmered and bubbled some secret concoction over in the corner. Next came *William Blake; Essays for S. Foster Damon* (1969) with an eighteen-page bibliography of his writings, but a series of strokes and debilitating complications had already set in and he spent his last year in a nursing home where in 1971, as his wife reported, 'The gods took Foster on Christmas Day.' His memorial service in Manning Chapel included Blake hymns and readings of his poems and poems in his honor by members of the English department. His bronze bust by Gilbert Franklin now stands beside Hiram Powers' bust of C. Fiske Harris in the Harris Room.

Foster surprised his friends in 1964 by publishing privately and pseudonymously a volume of sonnets: *Nightmare Cemetery; a Hallowe'en Frolic by Samuel Nomad*. Just as he had hoped, he failed to get a response from the review copies he sent out. When news of his death reached his friends, how many of them sought out their copies, just as he had hoped? It was his confessional, his testament, his revelation of things otherwise ineffable: 'The Deep in me cries out to the Deep in you.' He once wrote of William Blake: 'Such brave reticence, such faith in the future, may yet be rewarded.'

R. E. S.

RICHARD HARRISON SHRYOCK

Richard Harrison Shryock, historian of medicine, was born in Philadelphia on March 29, 1893, son of George Augustus and Mary Harrison (Chipman) Shryock. He grew up in Philadelphia but spent part of his summers at his mother's ancestral home in Connecticut. Graduating from high school in Philadelphia, he spent two years at a local teachers college and taught in the public schools for a while before going over to

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