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CONTENTS

List of Illustrations vii
Preface ix
Acknowledgments xv
1. Sky Farm Home 1
2. Berkshire Farewells 15
3. Serving the Sioux 26
4. Love and Marriage 41
5. Your World or Mine? 52
6. Back in New England 72
7. The Writing Game 86
8. Flower of the Forest 95
9. Stresses and Separation 106
10. Life Goes On 121
Notes 135
Bibliography 161
Index 169

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PREFACE

My first acquaintance with Elaine Goodale occurred many years ago when I found an old volume of poems in my favorite antiquarian bookshop. *Apple-Blossoms: The Verses of Two Children* was the title, and it included two beautiful steel engravings of its young authors, Elaine Goodale (born October 9, 1863) and Dora Read Goodale (born October 29, 1866). These girls lived at a place called "Sky Farm" in the tiny town of Mount Washington, high in the Berkshire hills of western Massachusetts. The book was published in 1878.

My initial interest in this book stemmed from a long-standing project that involved cataloguing poetic references to the flora and fauna of New England. *Apple-Blossoms* was replete with such references, and, surprisingly, the poetry itself was quite good. A little investigation revealed that the book had been a remarkable success in its day and that both young poets were included in Stedman's classic turn-of-the-century *American Anthology*. One selection that the book featured was Elaine's lovely "Ashes of Roses," which remains her most widely known poem.

A question that intrigued me then, and that eventually led to this biography, was that of how people who are outstandingly successful as children manage to live out the rest of their lives. Elaine, for example, had published four books of verse (three with sister Dora) before she was eighteen years old. Yet today one rarely finds any references to her poetry – even in works specifically devoted to female American poets. Whatever happened to Elaine?

Later on I would learn that Elaine had indeed lived a long and productive life. After leaving Sky Farm she made her first mark as an Indian reformer, then married a Sioux Indian, Charles A. Eastman (Ohiyesa), and went on to rear six children. She would be best known as a collaborator and editor of her husband's books, but she also continued to write and publish books and articles of her own throughout her long and active life. Before I learned any of this, however, Elaine was a mystery to me, and I began searching for information at my local library in Amherst, Massachusetts.

A quick search at the Jones Library revealed that they had some materials on both Elaine and Dora Read Goodale in their Special Collections. These women, it seems, were considered Amherst authors. Amherst? Where I have lived for most of my life? I rushed up to Special Collections and asked the

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nonplused curator to bring me anything they had about either Elaine or Dora Read Goodale from their time in Amherst. A quick search turned up a copy of Dora's *Test of the Sky*, a volume of poetry published in 1926. A letter was tucked into this book and I read this first. In it, Dora thanked the Jones Library for their interest in her book and then pointed out that she had lived in Amherst for five years, from 1892 to 1897. "Out near the Belchertown line," she wrote, "where the stone house now stands." That sentence changed my life.

I began a search for the stone house. The Belchertown line was three miles east of the center of Amherst, just beyond Harkness Road on Route 9. A little driving back and forth – and then – *yes*! Hidden behind hemlocks, fifty yards off the road, was a stone house – with a car in the yard. I drove in and knocked on the door. A woman opened it, and I stumbled through some kind of explanation as to why I was there. The woman was pleasant and said that she knew about Dora – and Elaine – and Charles – and Henry – and Robert – and Rose. . . . She was, she noted, the widow of Rose's grandson. Rose? Elaine's sister Rose.

That was my first meeting with Miriam Dayton, the present owner of the home she calls "Lodestone." This was also the first of many history lessons. I learned, for example, that Elaine's father, Henry, and her brother, Robert, had built this stone house around 1900. Rose was responsible for the name Lodestone – which was intended to describe its magnetic attraction for family and friends over the years. Elaine's mother and sister Dora had actually lived at this site before the present stone house was built, in a small wooden cottage that burned down in 1897. Then Elaine, with her husband and six children, lived in Lodestone for about eight years, from 1911 to 1919. Rose had lived here in the 1940s and was responsible for most of the landscaping and plantings around the house. Finally, as my head was spinning, Miriam mentioned that there was "a trunk full of letters upstairs in the attic" that Rose had left behind when she died in 1965.

A trunk full? Needless to say, this visit was followed by many more. The trunk proved to be a treasure trove. There were hundreds of letters, yes. But there were also scrapbooks, journals, diaries, brochures, newspaper clippings, and photographs. Some things were organized, especially certain groups of letters that were tied together and labeled; for example, "letters from Dora in Tennessee," "Theo's camp letters," "love letters from Red." Many of the photographs were also grouped, including an important "Sky Farm collection." Others, however, were scattered – though most of the photographs had iden-

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tifications in Rose's handwriting on the back. Miriam was most kind and generous, permitting me to go through everything, take notes, and work at Lodestone whenever I wanted.

For the next two to three years, I spent at least one morning a week at Lodestone. My primary interest centered on Elaine's letters, of which there were perhaps one hundred, most written to Rose, that spanned 1892 to 1948. There were many other related letters, including hundreds from sister Dora to Rose, and others from people such as Henry Sterling Goodale (Elaine's father), Dora Hill (Read) Goodale (her mother), Robert Goodale (her brother), and Charles Eastman. One of my aims was to organize these letters by author and date – or estimated date. I also filled several notebooks with quotes and made photocopies of the letters that I considered the most important.

Meantime, I was learning a great deal about Elaine's life after she left Sky Farm. The letters helped, though Elaine never dated her letters and Rose almost always threw the envelopes away. Elaine's handwriting was also a challenge; fortunately, she typed most of her letters, especially in her later years (after 1920). I quickly learned that Elaine had become an Indian reformer after leaving Sky Farm. She had taught at the Hampton Institute in Virginia then traveled and taught in day schools on the Great Sioux Reservation and became the first government-appointed supervisor of education for the Sioux nation in 1890. That same year, she met Charles Alexander Eastman ("Ohiyesa"), a Santee Sioux who had grown up as an Indian but who had since graduated from Dartmouth College and gone on to obtain his MD from Boston University. Charles had recently been appointed the government physician at the Pine Ridge Reservation.

Charles and Elaine immediately fell in love, and they announced their engagement at Pine Ridge on Christmas Day 1890. The Wounded Knee massacre occurred shortly thereafter, and both Charles and Elaine were deeply involved in caring for survivors. However, they went through with the wedding in New York City in June 1891. This dramatic event attracted wide attention, though some members of Elaine's family, and particularly her mother, had vigorously opposed the marriage from the outset. Part of this opposition was certainly based on racial bias, but there was also some concern that Elaine was giving up the chance for an independent literary career. Many issues surrounding this wedding were addressed in the letters Rose preserved, and I felt privileged – and grateful – to have access to them.

The early years of the Eastman marriage were very difficult. Charles failed as a government physician in the Indian Service at both Pine Ridge and Crow

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Creek and in his one attempt to establish a private practice (in Saint Paul, Minnesota). Other efforts, including as a lobbyist in Washington DC and an outing agent at the Carlisle Indian School proved similarly unsuccessful. Finding gainful employment as an educated Native American was proving to be nearly impossible. Meanwhile, Elaine bore a child every other year. From her perspective, the first ten years of her marriage had yielded five children, no real home, and almost no money. Something had to be done, and Elaine now took charge.

Her first decision was to move the family to Amherst, Massachusetts. Here, the children could be properly educated and Charles could concentrate on a new career – writing about his Indian reminiscences. That career had actually already begun. Back in Saint Paul, Elaine had urged Charles to write down some of the stories that he had been telling his young daughter Dora. Eventually, with Elaine's editorial assistance, some of these stories were published. Indeed, Charles's first book, *Indian Boyhood*, was published in 1902, well before the Eastman's move to Amherst. However, the remainder of Charles's nine books were written in Amherst, as were three of Elaine's seven books (written while she was Elaine Goodale Eastman). The Amherst years, and especially those spent at Lodestone, were clearly productive.

Despite this productivity, and even taking Charles's success as a lecturer into account, the Eastmans were still in fairly dire financial straits. There were college expenses for two of the daughters – Dora at Mount Holyoke and Virginia at Wellesley; Irene, who had a remarkable singing voice, was taking advanced voice lessons. To help with these expenses, the Eastmans opened a summer camp for girls, Camp Oáhe, in Munsonville, New Hampshire, in 1915. This effort was a family affair, with Charles serving as the resident Indian, Elaine as manager and bookkeeper, and the various children as workers, counselors, and campers. Overall, the Amherst years were exciting – the children were popular and successful, Lodestone was conducive to Charles's and Elaine's writing efforts, and Charles was rapidly becoming the best-known Native American in the country. Fortunately, a good deal of information and insight into this period comes from two sets of letters that Rose preserved – the correspondence between herself and her two sons, James and Theo, who attended college in Amherst and remained in close contact with the Eastmans throughout their college careers.

The Eastman marriage had been under tremendous stress almost from the outset. Financial difficulties were always part of the problem, but other matters – including the fundamental differences between Charles and Elaine

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in terms of their backgrounds and personalities – were equally important. The Amherst years, while appearing successful, served only to exacerbate some of these problems. In particular, Charles's absences from home – long a source of discontent for Elaine – became more frequent as his lectures became more popular. Elaine's letters to Rose became more critical of Charles and her complaints more sustained. Communication between Elaine and Charles was apparently impossible, and the marriage seemed largely a matter of perseverance. This state of affairs might have continued indefinitely, but events soon dictated otherwise.

A significant event in the eventual breakup of the Eastman marriage was the tragic death of daughter Irene in the flu pandemic of 1918. Irene was just at the threshold of a promising musical career, and her death devastated both parents. Neither could console the other, however, and the distance between them remained. Then, sometime shortly after Irene's death, Charles apparently had a brief affair with another woman. This was seemingly not the first event of its kind, for rumors and allegations of sexual impropriety had arisen before, but this was the first time that there were charges of an illegitimate child. Elaine learned of this and, satisfied that the facts implicated Charles, demanded that he leave the marriage. The separation was abrupt – and permanent. Charles died and was buried in Detroit in 1939. Elaine died in Hadley, Massachusetts, in 1953 and was buried in nearby Florence, Massachusetts.

Elaine's side of this story is told in her letters, and it is basically consistent with her fictional account of a similar episode in her last novel, *Hundred Maples* (1935). Elaine remained embittered by this experience for the rest of her life. She essentially denied that Charles had ever existed, and removed all references to him from the materials that she donated to Smith College in 1950. But Elaine did not stop writing. The last thirty years of her life, most of which were spent in the homes of her two married daughters in Northampton, Massachusetts, were quite productive. She wrote four books after the separation: *The Luck of Old Acres* (1928) (a fictional account of a summer camp, modeled after Camp Oáhe); *The Voice at Eve* (1930) (a volume of poetry); *Pratt: The Red Man's Moses* (1935) (a biography of Richard Henry Pratt); and *Hundred Maples* (1935) (her final novel). In addition, Elaine wrote numerous articles, letters, and book reviews that appeared in a variety of magazines and newspapers. She was interested in many of the issues that concerned post–World War I America, though she continued to concentrate on topics relating to Indians and Indian reform.

Hundred Maples was Elaine's most ambitious work and stands today as an

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important historical treatment of the seemingly eternal dilemma for women: choosing between family and career. Here Elaine writes of three women who made different choices – early marriage, late marriage, and no marriage – and compares the advantages and disadvantages of these choices. In the end, and despite the difficulties and ultimate failure of her own marriage, Elaine recommends marriage – but "only if a man grants his wife the independence and opportunity for self-expression that he demands for himself." Here Elaine sounds thoroughly modern.

Elaine's letters to Rose became more frequent after her separation from Charles. These late letters reveal Elaine's thoughts on many of the events in her life and include her impressions of many people who shared in these events. It is very rare, I believe, to have such a body of letters, and I must acknowledge once again the remarkable opportunity that I was given and the women who made it possible. Rose Sterling (Goodale) Dayton set the stage, of course, and her foresight and courage are hereby applauded. Miriam (Johnson) Dayton then displayed great generosity, along with admirable patience and gentle encouragement, without which this book could not have been written. Miriam has also ensured that all the materials that Rose so carefully accumulated will now be widely accessible, as she has donated them to the Sophia Smith collection at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. This collection, known as the Eastman–Goodale–Dayton Papers, augments the extensive materials that Elaine herself left to the Sophia Smith Collection in 1950. This latter collection is referred to as the Eastman Papers and has been kept distinct from the Eastman–Goodale–Dayton Papers in order that scholars may compare materials from the two different sources. At any rate, it is important to note that the Eastman–Goodale–Dayton Papers will always bear witness to Rose's industry as a collector of family documents and to Miriam's appreciation of their lasting historical importance.

Elaine Goodale Eastman has become, in my view, a more interesting person with the passage of time. Her early and bold decision to marry a Native American has attracted renewed attention as interest in such interracial marriages has increased in recent years. At the same time, more attention is being focused on her writings, and particularly her mature poetry, as these seem to provide especially revealing glimpses into her own personal world. Finally, by reason of both her writings and the actual practice of her life, Elaine is receiving long overdue recognition as an important forerunner in the women's studies and feminist movements. Beyond all this, however, she was an interesting woman who lived in interesting times.

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CHAPTER ONE

Sky Farm Home

But you and I were farmhouse born . . .
— Dora Read Goodale, "Jewelled Morn"

Elaine Goodale was born in a century-old farmhouse, high on the side of Fray Mountain, in the tiny Berkshire town of Mount Washington, Massachusetts. She was the first child of Henry and Deborah Hill (Read) Goodale, who, in keeping with their literary inclinations, named her after Tennyson's lovelorn heroine. The year was 1863, and the Civil War raged on – though with little effect on daily life in the Berkshire hills.

The old colonial farmhouse in which Elaine was born, together with its seven hundred surrounding acres, had been named "Sky Farm" by Henry Goodale. Here he hoped to make a living at potato farming, though this ambition was never fully realized. However, the farm was home for Elaine until she was eighteen years old. Later, Elaine described this site as "a rugged hill-top farm, lying at one end of a sparsely settled township in the Berkshires, three to five steep mountain miles from church or store, doctor or post-office."[1] It was here, in this remote mountain setting, that Elaine would become, along with her sister Dora, a famous child poet.

Elaine's father, Henry Sterling Goodale, had been born in nearby South Egremont, into a family that traced its American heritage back to 1632. He was "Yankee to the backbone," as Elaine would say.[2] He was also a studious, if rather frail, young man who had graduated from Williston Academy in Easthampton, Massachusetts, and hoped to go on to Yale. His frailty deemed otherwise, however, and after a year-long trip through the West, he took up teaching – first at the village school in Egremont and then as an assistant principal in a boarding school in Nassau, New York. While he was teaching at Nassau, his father decided to give him the seven-hundred-acre farm in Mount Washington that was to become Sky Farm.[3]

Henry's father, Chester Goodale, had settled in the Berkshires around 1820 and was a highly successful businessman who now owned and operated a

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marble quarry in South Egremont. He was not entirely convinced that his poetically inclined youngest son would ever succeed in business and probably felt it best to encourage Henry's budding interest in farming by giving him a farm. Henry was delighted, for he had always loved this beautiful property, and he quickly moved into its old, woodbine-covered farmhouse.

Soon Henry began to think about finding a young woman with whom he could share his life on the mountain. A letter to his young niece, Caroline Goodale, describes the fruition of that search – and, incidentally, reveals Henry's loving and romantic nature:

> Carrie. my dear, dear girl: –
>
> For two or three weeks after you went away I was so sorry and missed you so much that I really grew quite pale and shadowy. . . . Something or other must be done. What *should* I do, dear Carrie, since you had left me?
>
> I'll tell you (in a whisper) what I did do. I brushed my hair perfectly smooth one fair morning, stopped in the boat in Hudson and sailed thoughtfully down to New York. Now where on earth should I look for a brilliant little lady who would love me always and go and live with me on the blue mountain? Well, while I was wondering and wandering about, looking into all the pretty bonnets on the streets, I suddenly found a face that pleased me very much. It had a low forehead and black hair and thoughtful dark eyes and a red mouth quite like yours, Carrie. Yes, it really was a nice bright sweet-mannered girl & called itself Dora. So all that evening I was real good to Dora in a quiet bashful way, and Dora was rather good and pleasant to me and half promised to ride up to Berkshire sometime and look about.[4]

Thus, Henry describes meeting "Dora" and goes on to describe Dora's first visit to the Berkshires, especially a tryst by "a happy waterfall." He concludes with, "that October day & that happy waterfall will always be pleasant things for me to think about as long as I shall live." Years later, Elaine, writing about her parents, said, "Their romance culminated on a gorgeous October day, beside the silver thread of a 'nameless waterfall' deep in many-colored woods."[5] In recollecting this story, undoubtedly told to her by her father, Elaine reveals, as she often would, her closeness to him.

Elaine was seemingly never that close to her mother. In her memoirs, she describes her mother as "the pretty, penniless daughter of an old Colonial family" and "a city-bred girl of fine and fastidious tastes, passionately craving beauty and distinction, unused to hard work and indeed somewhat spoiled as

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the 'baby' of a large and affectionate household."[6] On the other hand, she admired some of her mother's qualities, especially her "genuine love of knowledge" and freely admitted that she "adored her as a child."[7]

Henry Goodale and Deborah ("Dora") Hill Read were married on August 14, 1862, and immediately set up housekeeping at Sky Farm. Elaine would conclude, years later, that her mother was "hardly born to fit so primitive a setting."[8] Events eventually proved the point, but at the outset of the marriage Dora struggled valiantly with the demands of her rugged mountain home. As Elaine recalled:

> The ancient farmhouse, solidly built, sat as close to the ground as a bird to her nest. There were four fireplaces, the great one in the kitchen unused since stoves were available. Most of the bedchambers were unheated, defying the fierce cold of a mountain winter. Water was all fetched in pails from an outdoor pump and wood from a shed close by. Kerosene lamps had to be trimmed, cleaned, and filled daily. Great washings were done by hand and hung to dry in the open air. Butter was churned by hand and bread baked at least three times a week. Such were a few of the tasks confronting a dainty city girl.[9]

After one year of marriage, however, Dora seemed happy enough, as witnessed by these comments to her sister Ella: "I must tell you something about our anniversary, although now more than a week past – it was a very happy day – lovely weather, and we took a fresh early morning drive to MossGhyll, our troth-plight brook – had a dear, loving, and happily serious *talk* by the waterfall – ate our lunch, home at 12 pm – a resplendent *tea* in the afternoon."[10]

When Elaine was three years old, a second daughter, Dora Read Goodale, was born. Dora, or "Baby Doe," as she was called early on, would quickly become Elaine's constant companion. "Dora and I were inseparable both by night and day. We slept, studied and played together. Together we wandered for long blissful hours over pasture and meadow, canvassed the secrets of beast, bird and tree, and came as near to sharing every thought and dream as two sisters can."[11] A third daughter, Rose Sterling Goodale, was born when Elaine was seven, and her only brother, Robert Chester Goodale, was born when she was fourteen. By the closeness of their years, however, Elaine and Dora maintained a childhood bond that essentially excluded these younger siblings.

The only other resident at Sky Farm during Elaine's childhood years was her maternal grandmother, Eleanor (Lyon) Read (1802–78). This elderly woman

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was sometimes described as a "household saint," and she exerted a profound effect on Elaine's later views on women and their "lot." One senses her significance in one of Elaine's earliest poems, which Rose later annotated as "written probably in 1871, when Elaine was seven or eight – I was the baby."

GRANDMA'S ROOM

Sitting by the evening fire,
In a quiet, cosy, room,
Little think we of the storm,
Or of winter's cold and gloom.

Grandma in her easy chair
Smiling sits, the centre bright,
Of the happy children there,
Of the comfort and the light.

Baby lies upon her lap,
Playing with her little toes
While the firelight shining so
Dances oer her cheeks of rose.

Dodo, on the little stool,
Bits of silk and cotton rends,
While nearby, between the two,
Jenny Goslin sits and mends.

And Elaine, with nimble pen,
In her sweetest verses writes,
Of the circle round the fire,
Of their happy, busy, nights.

When we sit in Grandma's room,
We should kind and gentle be,
And be careful of her joy,
Whom we may not always see.[12]

This poem captures some of the seemingly happy home life at Sky Farm during Elaine's early years. There were, however, signs of discontent in the Goodale household, even at this early date. One line of evidence is found in the pages of the journal that Grandmother Lyon kept in 1866. Here, for example, is her entry for April 14: "Saturday morning – lovely – Dora busy in

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the kitchen, which makes *her* unhappy – consequently others. Elaine suffers some from the cloudy day. How very desirable an enduring, self denying spirit is, my own spirits flag. depressed beyond controll almost, strive hard to conceal my feelings."[13] Other entries note such things as "Dora complains almost incessantly" and "Henry's patience is called into exercise." On July 8 she wrote, "Dora lies in bed until evening." One Sunday entry says, simply, "H and D go to church after great trouble." Clearly there were problems in the marriage, and they would get worse with time. Despite these problems, however, home life at Sky Farm was reasonably normal, at least to outward appearances, during Elaine and Dora's childhood years.

Henry, especially, appears to have been a loving parent who tended to spoil his precocious daughters. A number of his handwritten poems to both Elaine and Dora survive, and this one, written to Elaine in 1875, is typical:

In seven days – or less – from date,
I promise to pay our Laureate
For value every day received –
Assertion meant to be believed –
Fifty-five cents, with interest
(At 10 percent, if she insist.)
The bearer to be soundly – kissed.
Papa[14]

Elaine's mother, on the other hand, came across as a more demanding parent, especially as she took on the task of educating her young daughters. The girls were not permitted to attend the district school that was only a mile away; Dora, a former schoolteacher herself, devised a demanding schedule of home lessons that emphasized the standard and classical literature. The girls were also trained in Greek and Latin, and an artist friend of the family instructed them in sketching and botany.

It is not surprising that Elaine and Dora showed extraordinary early promise in writing, especially in writing poetry. Both parents were poetically inclined and, genetics aside, they provided the girls with many homespun examples of the craft. Mother also made certain that their daily readings included large doses of classical poetry. However, it was probably the social isolation from other children of their own age that really forced the issue. Elaine and Dora had to devise their own amusements – and one of the things that they quickly settled on was preparing a hand-done journal, called the *Child's Monthly Gem*, with a prominent "Poets' Corner." These efforts were read

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aloud at family gatherings beginning around 1870 when Elaine was six or seven and Dora no more than four years old. The practice continued for some eleven years, though the name of the journal was changed to the "somewhat more mature" (in Elaine's words) *Sky Farm Life* in 1876.

Henry Goodale, proud father that he was, could not resist copying some of his young daughters' poems to send on to some of his literary friends. In this way, a number of the girls' poems eventually reached Mary Mapes Dodge, the well-known author of children's books and longtime editor of *St. Nicholas Magazine*. Dodge was favorably impressed and asked Henry's permission to publish some of the poems in her magazine. Permission was granted, somewhat reluctantly, and the December 1877 issue of *St. Nicholas* included six poems by Elaine and Dora under the heading, "Poems by Two Little American Girls."[15] One of the poems was Elaine's melodic "Ashes of Roses," written when she was eleven. This has since become her most frequently anthologized work.

Reaction to these poems was enthusiastic, and it was now readily apparent that these Goodale girls were truly exceptional children. There was, however, one other totally unexpected outcome, and that involved a charge of plagiarism against Elaine with respect to "Ashes of Roses." The basis for the charge was the appearance of a very similar poem, entitled "Attar of Roses," in the *Louisville Courier-Journal* soon after Elaine's poem was published in *St. Nicholas*. This similar poem was copied rather widely and at some point the name of F. W. Bourdillon, a contemporary English poet, was appended to it. This led to editorials in several prominent newspapers that accused Elaine of "precocious plagiarism." Eventually, the editor of the *Courier-Journal* conceded that the "Attar of Roses" lines had been written *after* Elaine's poem had appeared, and Bourdillon himself denied any connection with either poem.[16]

It was at this point that the girls' parents began to realize how precocious their young daughters were, and this led to much soul-searching as to how these girls should be treated and, specifically, whether publication of their poetry should be encouraged. To answer these questions, the parents sought advice from many of their friends and relatives, as well as from some of the most prominent luminaries of the day.

Of particular interest is a long letter they received from Thomas Wentworth Higginson, the highly respected colonel, clergyman, and author, perhaps best remembered today for his association with Emily Dickinson.[17] Higginson, in responding to a letter from Henry Goodale, provides both a review of the kinds of questions that the Goodales were asking and his own personal opinions regarding their talented daughters. The letter begins:

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> Dear Sir
>
> I have rarely been so much interested by any letter as by yours. You may be surprised to hear that I had already been told of your children, & had even heard the names of some of these poems. A friend of your wife's had heard of them from a New York lady who knows you & who had some of the verses, especially "Ashes of Roses."
>
> They are certainly the most remarkable verses I have ever seen from writers so young, & all you say of your children is intensely interesting. It is a very serious responsibility to have charge of any children, & when they are so gifted, it becomes almost formidable.[18]

The letter goes on to assure the Goodales that precocity itself should not be seen as alarming, but that some thought might be given to making some changes in the girls' circumstances. He cautions that "over seclusion & the privation of childish companionship is a serious evil & threatens future danger, especially in very gifted children." This leads him to suggest that the girls "should in some way enlarge their horizon of acquaintances," perhaps by attending a village school, or even a good boarding school. In the latter event, he notes, "I should think the atmosphere of Boston on the whole more favorable than [that] of N.Y. – the children one meets at school are simpler."

Higginson also expresses grave reservations about the Goodales' efforts to prohibit the girls from reading fiction, especially novels. Here he is very clear: "In view of the isolated lives of your children, the prohibition of fiction seems to me an evil, not a safeguard & keeps the world afar off, even from the imagination. We get a sort of vicarious experience of life from fiction, & it enlarges our area of sympathy & knowledge very much." Finally, Higginson cautions against encouraging the girls to pursue literary careers to the exclusion of an "active" vocation, such as teaching. He concludes with the recommendation that "nothing of theirs should be published yet. There is time enough for that."

As we now know, most of Higginson's advice was not followed. The girls were eventually enrolled for two terms (1881) in a boarding school in New York City. Elaine later summed up that unhappy experience: "Our schoolmates were hardly congenial, our teachers wholesomely critical, and we unaffectedly homesick."[19] But except for sending the girls to a boarding school, the Goodales seemed to ignore Higginson's suggestions, and novel reading was never allowed in the home.

Despite the rather widespread opinion that early publication might harm

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the young poets in the long run, the decision was made to go ahead and publish a volume of their poems. Part of the reason may have been financial. The Goodales were in rather dire straits during most of their Sky Farm tenancy because Henry's farming efforts almost invariably failed. Even Chester Goodale's largesse could barely keep the family afloat. We also know that Dora Goodale received a check for seventy-five dollars from *St. Nicholas Magazine* for the six poems published there in 1877, and this was a fairly substantial amount of money at that time.[20] So, when the Putnam publishing company made an offer for the girls' poems, Henry succumbed to temptation. A respected friend at the *Springfield Republican* described the offer as "a liberal proposition," and subsequent events suggest that that opinion carried the day.[21]

Apple-Blossoms: Verses of Two Children, complete with steel-engraved portraits of Elaine and Dora, was published in 1878.[22] The book was an instant success and went through five editions in the next two years. Total sales amounted to some ten thousand copies – a remarkable total for those days. Contemporary reviews were laudatory, and Henry Goodale kept all of them, together with letters from admirers and well-wishers, in "bursting" scrapbooks – taking, as Elaine would say, "greater satisfaction in this wholly unexpected outcome of his romantic 'Sky-Farming' than in any more personal success."[23] Most gratifying, certainly, were the unsolicited praises of some of the leading poets of the day. Thus, Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote, "What miracles these young Goodales are!"[24] Helen Hunt Jackson added, "Really there has never before been a time in literature when a young thrush and a bobolink have printed a book!"[25]

It is perhaps worthwhile to examine *Apple-Blossoms* a little more closely at this point. The book was 255 pages long and included sixty-two poems by Elaine, seventy-one poems by Dora, and three that were jointly authored. Elaine's poems tended to be more stylized – she had, for example, mastered the sonnet, and her selections included seven examples in that form. Dora's poems, on the other hand, were less studied – partly owing, no doubt, to her younger age – but many reviewers felt that Dora was the more naturally poetic of the two, and this had probably always been true. Both girls devoted most of their poems to the natural world around them – to the seasons, and to the birds, trees, and wildflowers of their Sky Farm home. Surprisingly, perhaps, they both generally avoided the moralizing overtones that characterized much of the poetry of their day, and we find little evidence of the "lessons" that many poets drew from their observations.

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