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# The Chronology of Melville's Short Fiction, 1853-1856\*

Merton M. Sealts, Jr.

**B**ETWEEN THE PUBLICATION of *Pierre* in 1852 and that of *The Confidence-Man* in 1857, Herman Melville was a frequent contributor to two American periodicals: *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* and *Putnam's Monthly Magazine*. Determining the sequence of composition for his fifteen individual contributions to these magazines — the intention of this study — is largely a matter of inference, since most of the pieces are unmentioned in surviving correspondence or records and those named were not necessarily published in the order of their writing and submission. Even so, there is enough objective evidence now at hand on which to base a probable chronology of Melville's short fiction during these years.

The first magazine piece to be named in Melville's known letters of 1853-1856 to Harper & Brothers, the New York publishers of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, is "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" (1855); on 25 May 1854, he acknowledged payment of "\$100 on acct: of the 'Paradise of Bachelors &c.'" <sup>1</sup> Since their magazine had already published "Cock-A-Doodle-Do!" in the issue of December 1853, and had presumably paid for it long since, the sum of \$100 "on acct:" must have represented an advance payment for the entire group of Melville's later contributions that began to appear in the spring and summer of 1854: "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs" (June 1854), "The Happy Failure" (July 1854),

\* This study, copyright © 1980 by Merton M. Sealts, Jr., was prepared during a research leave underwritten by the Research Committee of the Graduate School, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Its substance will appear in another form in the "Historical Note" to *THE PIAZZA TALES and Other Prose Pieces, 1839-1860*, forthcoming as vol. IX of *The Writings of Herman Melville*, ed. Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and The Newberry Library, 1968- ).

<sup>1</sup> Melville to Harper & Brothers, 25 May 1854, in *The Letters of Herman Melville*, ed. Merrell R. Davis and William H. Gilman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), p. 168.

"The Fiddler" (September 1854), and — seven months later — the one item actually mentioned by name in his letter of acknowledgment, "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" (April 1855). The payment was evidently calculated on the basis of total wordage rather than by the printed page unless these pieces had actually been set in type by this time; in their printed form the four items ran to 19½ pages in all, worth roughly \$100 at the rate of \$5.00 per printed page that Melville evidently commanded.

When had Melville written and submitted these four compositions? Certainly well before 25 May 1854, since "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs" was scheduled for the June issue; from its inception *Harper's* had appeared "in all parts of the United States on the first day of every month" and was sent to press about the tenth day of the month preceding.<sup>2</sup> The four pieces must have been dispatched from Pittsfield to New York no later than the early spring of 1854; two of them, it would seem, were probably sent along with "Cock-A-Doodle-Do!" on 13 August 1853, when Melville wrote to Harper & Brothers enclosing "three articles which perhaps may be found suitable for your Magazine." That these were his first submissions is suggested by his request that they be given "early attention" and that he be apprised "of the result."<sup>3</sup> The Harpers evidently returned a favorable answer concerning "Cock-A-Doodle-Do!," which was used in the

<sup>2</sup> *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, VIII (January 1854), 145.

<sup>3</sup> Davis and Gilman, *Letters*, p. 171, tentatively date the letter "13 August [1854?]." In attempting to identify the "three articles," they cite three pieces which subsequently appeared in *Harper's*: "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" (April 1855), "Jimmy Rose" (November 1855), and "The 'Gees" (March 1856). But the two-part article had already been paid for, as noted above, by 25 May 1854, and "Jimmy Rose" and "The 'Gees" appear to be the "brace of fowl — wild fowl" that Melville sent to Harper & Brothers "by Express" on 18 September [1854?] (*Letters*, p. 172). Thus the letter of 13 August clearly fits the circumstances of Melville's magazine writing of 1853 rather than his situation in the following year. He had evidently agreed by the early summer of 1853 to contribute to *Harper's*: according to his wife's stepmother, Hope Savage Shaw, writing confidentially on 27 July to Samuel H. Savage, "the Harpers have persuaded Herman to write for him [*i.e.*; them]; and he is admirably paid." (Mrs. Shaw's letter is quoted in Frederick J. Kennedy and Joyce Deveau Kennedy, "Additions to *The Melville Log*," *Extracts / An Occasional Newsletter* [The Melville Society], No. 31 [September 1977], 8.) Moreover, as Davis and Gilman acknowledge in their textual notes, p. 354, Melville's letter of 18 September (No. 115, now in the Pierpont Morgan Library) "is written on different paper [white] from that of the other letters to the Harpers" that they assign to 1854, all of which are on blue paper.

December number; if the other two pieces were "The Happy Failure" and "The Fiddler," which are shorter and less well developed than any of the other compositions named and may well have been Melville's first attempts in the new medium, they were held for later use — in July and September of the following year.

Melville had also been in touch with G. P. Putnam & Co. about a possible contribution to *Putnam's Monthly*. By September of 1853 he had a first manuscript ready for *Putnam's* and either a fourth contribution for *Harper's* or a revision of one of the three manuscripts submitted in August, but apparently he erred in addressing his communications to the magazines. On 20 September Charles F. Briggs, the editor of *Putnam's*, wrote to Harper & Brothers forwarding a "Ms. and note" intended for *Harper's* but "directed to *Putnam's Monthly*"; Briggs also inquired whether, "as something was expected from Mr Melville perhaps he may have misdirected it to you."<sup>4</sup> The manuscript Briggs was expecting must have been that of "Bartleby, the Scrivener," which subsequently reached *Putnam's* in time for publication in the November and December issues. During the summer of 1853 Melville had thus written at least three magazine pieces for *Harper's*, "Cock-A-Doodle-Do!" and probably "The Happy Failure" and "The Fiddler," and another for *Putnam's*, "Bartleby." Between September and the following May he submitted four additional contributions: presumably "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs" and "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" to *Harper's* and "The Encantadas" and "The Two Temples" to *Putnam's*.

Meanwhile, Melville had also projected another book, which he proposed to Harper & Brothers in a pivotal letter of 24 November 1853 that deserves quotation in full, since it bears not only upon the chronology of his writing in 1853 and 1854 but also upon his relations in these years with the Harpers.

Gentlemen: — In addition to the work which I took to New York last Spring, but which I was prevented from printing at that time; I have now in hand, and pretty well on towards completion, another book — 300 pages, say — partly of nautical adventure, and partly — or, rather, chiefly, of Tortoise Hunting Adventure. It will be ready for press some time in the coming January. Mean-

<sup>4</sup> His letter (now in the Pierpont Morgan Library) is quoted in part by Davis and Gilman, *Letters*, p. 172, n. 3; their conjectural date, "Sept 20 [1854?]," is obviously in error, since in March of 1854 George Palmer Putnam sold his magazine to Dix & Edwards, and Briggs lost his editorship at that time.

while, it would be convenient, to have advanced to me upon it \$300. — My acct: with you, at present, can not be very far from square. For the above-named advance — if remitted me now — you will have security in my former works, as well as security prospective, in the one to come, (*The Tortoise-Hunters*) because if you accede to the aforesaid request, this letter shall be your voucher, that I am willing your house should publish it, on the old basis — half-profits.

Reply immediately, if you please,  
And Believe Me, Yours  
Herman Melville<sup>5</sup>

The opening sentence of this letter would seem to indicate that Melville had still "in hand" the unpublished work of the previous spring; if so, he had not at this point destroyed the manuscript. That he expected to finish by "some time in the coming January" another book of "300 pages, say" means that he had already been working on it during the fall of 1853 — presumably after dispatching his first magazine pieces to *Harper's* and *Putnam's*. That he proposed his new book for publication by the firm "on the old basis — half profits" attests to his assumption that by this point the Harpers might be less hesitant about bringing out another of Melville's works in the wake of *Pierre*. Their reply to his letter of 24 November has not survived, but an in-house report on the sales of Melville's books (filed with his letter to the firm) apparently justified their decision to send the requested advance on 7 December. Three days later, on 10 December 1853, the firm suffered a disastrous fire at their New York establishment in Cliff Street which destroyed nearly 2,300 bound and unbound copies of Melville's books though not the plates; as Melville explained later to his father-in-law, this meant a loss to him of "about \$1000" that would otherwise have come from his share of profits and royalties.<sup>6</sup>

Melville's more immediate response to news of the loss may have been to open negotiations with G. P. Putnam & Co. for use of some or all of his account of "Tortoise Hunting Adventure" in *Putnam's Monthly*, perhaps in the belief that the Harper firm would be unable to publish the projected book because of the fire. All that is known is this: on 6 February 1854, he wrote a now-unlocated letter to Putnam on an unknown subject;<sup>7</sup> on 14 February the *New York Post* an-

<sup>5</sup> *Letters*, pp. 164–165.

<sup>6</sup> Melville to Lemuel Shaw, 22 May 1856; see Patricia Barber, "Two New Melville Letters," *American Literature*, XLIX (November 1977), 420.

<sup>7</sup> *Letters*, p. 169, n. 8.

nounced that "The Encantadas" would begin in the March number of *Putnam's Monthly*; <sup>8</sup> the March installment included an account of tortoise-hunting in Sketch Second. Meanwhile, Melville wrote to Harper & Brothers in late February about the book he had proposed two months before. When he "procured the advance of \$300," his letter began, he

intimated that the work would be ready for press some time in January. I have now to express my concern, that, owing to a variety of causes, the work, unavoidably, was not ready in that month, & still requires additional work to it, ere completion. But in no sense can you loose by the delay.

I shall be in New York in the course of a few weeks; when I shall call upon you, & inform you when these proverbially slow "Tortoises" will be ready to crawl into market.<sup>9</sup>

Melville may have been in New York for his brother Allan's birthday on 7 April, when a work used in Chapter XXIII of his *Israel Potter* was charged to his account with the Harpers; <sup>10</sup> if so, there is no record of what he may have said about the delayed book or its relation to "The Encantadas," which continued to appear in *Putnam's* for April and May. In any event, he repeatedly sought word about "the 'Tortoises' extract," as he termed it in his letter of 25 May 1854, that he must have sent to the firm at some time after his February letter.<sup>11</sup> He had received no reply by 22 June, when he wrote again to inquire "whether it be worth while to prepare further Extracts":

Though it would be difficult, if not impossible, for me to get the entire Tortoise Book ready for publication before Spring [*i.e.*, of 1855], yet I can pick

<sup>8</sup> Jay Leyda, *The Melville Log: A Documentary Life of Herman Melville 1819-1891*, 2 vols. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1951), I, 484-485. Melville had probably composed Sketch Eighth, the longest of the ten sketches of "The Encantadas," before 24 November 1853, when he reported to Harper & Brothers that his proposed book was "pretty well on towards completion." In "The Sources and Genesis of Melville's 'Norfolk Isle and the Chola Widow,'" *American Literature*, L (November 1978), 398-417, Robert Sattelmeyer and James Barbour have shown that his tale of Hunilla is based in part on one or more newspaper accounts of an Indian woman recently rescued from a Pacific island eighteen years after her abandonment there (p. 399). A front-page story of this "female Robinson Crusoe" appeared in the *Albany Evening Journal* for 3 November 1853; the Springfield, Massachusetts, *Republican* printed "a more complete but otherwise identical piece" on 22 November (p. 400).

<sup>9</sup> *Letters*, pp. 167-168.

<sup>10</sup> *The Melville Log*, I, 486.

<sup>11</sup> *Letters*, p. 169.

out & finish parts, here & there, for prior use. But even this is not unattended with labor; which labor, of course, I do not care to undergo while remaining in doubt as to its recompence.<sup>12</sup>

Presumably the Harpers asked for additional extracts and Melville responded by writing on 25 July to say that he was sending by express "a parcel . . . containing M. S. S. for you."<sup>13</sup> The "M. S. S." must have been "parts, here & there," of the projected book rather than additional magazine pieces, since his last two contributions to *Harper's*, "Jimmy Rose" (November 1855) and "The 'Gees" (March 1856), were not ready for submission until September of 1854. Whatever the nature of these extracts, it seems evident that Melville wrote more about "Tortoise Hunting Adventure" for the Harpers than he had published in Sketch Second of "The Encantadas" in the March number of *Putnam's*. But there is no further information concerning the fate of the "Tortoise Book," which — like that of "the story of Agatha" — can only be conjectured.

When Melville wrote to the Harpers on 25 May 1854, acknowledging their payment for magazine articles and inquiring about their response to the extract he had sent, he also broached another subject: "When you write me concerning the 'Tortoises' extract, you may, if you choose, inform me at about what time you would be prepared to commence the publication of another Serial in your Magazine — supposing you had one, in prospect, that suited you."<sup>14</sup> By this time he was obviously well along in composing *Israel Potter*, "the Revolutionary narrative of the beggar" he had thought of "serving up" more than four years before when he bought an old map of London for possible use in writing it.<sup>15</sup> Evidently failing to interest Harper & Brothers in "another Serial," he addressed George Putnam on 7 June 1854, advising him of the shipment "by Express, to-day," of "some sixty and odd pages of MSS," part of "a story called 'Israel Potter.'" His proposal was for serial publication in *Putnam's Monthly* "at the rate of five dollars per printed page."<sup>16</sup> Putnam agreed to all of Melville's several

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 170-171.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>15</sup> *Journal of a Visit to London and the Continent by Herman Melville 1849-1850*, ed. Eleanor Melville Metcalf (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948), p. 75 (entry for 18 December 1849).

<sup>16</sup> *Letters*, pp. 169-170.

stipulations except one, that of a requested advance of \$100 on acceptance of his proposal. A place was found for the first installment of this "Fourth of July Story" in the issue then in press, that of July 1854; *Israel Potter* continued to appear through March of 1855, when Putnam issued the story in book form as Melville's eighth book. The nine installments ran to 82 ¼ pages, for which Melville received a total of \$421.50 in the form of monthly payments. For his earlier contribution of "The Encantadas" he was paid \$150, also in monthly payments, but still another story, "The Two Temples," was rejected in May of 1854 on the ground that "some of our church readers might be disturbed" by its "point."<sup>17</sup>

Both Putnam and his editor, Charles F. Briggs, wrote Melville to apologize for their decision not to print "The Two Temples"; Putnam, in addition to asking Melville for "some more of your good things," also requested "some drawing or daguerreotype" to be used "as one of our series of portraits."<sup>18</sup> Melville was unable to supply a likeness, he replied to Putnam on 16 May, saying also that he had already written Briggs concerning "The Two Temples" and would soon "send down some other things, to which, I think, no objections will be made on the score of tender consciences of the public."<sup>19</sup> The opening portions of *Israel Potter* were to follow on 7 June; "The Lightning-Rod Man," published in the August number, probably accompanied this or a later segment of the longer work. Putnam's prompt acceptance of *Israel Potter* and his apologetic letter about refusing "The Two Temples" both indicate his interest in having Melville as a contributor to his magazine. During the first six months of its existence *Putnam's Monthly* received 389 manuscripts, and 980 in all by the end of its first year;<sup>20</sup> clearly Putnam and Briggs singled out Melville's contributions for special handling as well as special payment.

From the evidence just reviewed of Melville's dealings with both Putnam and the Harpers it is possible to draw up a probable chronology

<sup>17</sup> *The Melville Log*, I, 487-488.

<sup>18</sup> Putnam to Melville, 13 May 1854; *ibid.*, I, 488.

<sup>19</sup> See Catalogue 68 (1970), Paul C. Richards Autographs, Brookline, Massachusetts, Lot 1, for a full transcription of the letter and an accompanying facsimile reproduction. The letter itself is now in the Barrett Collection of the University of Virginia Library.

<sup>20</sup> See the publisher's notes at the end of the first bound volume (I, January-June 1853, unpagged) and the beginning of the second (II, July-December 1853, [iii]).



of his magazine writing between the publication of *Pierre* in 1852 and the serialization of his eighth book, *Israel Potter*, in 1854 and 1855, though with one major reservation: there is no basis other than purely internal evidence for determining the sequence of individual compositions within certain groupings. From manuscripts by Melville on hand an editor may have selected a particular story because of its length, given the amount of space available in the next monthly issue of his magazine, rather than the period of time since its submission: was a long piece or a short one needed to fill out a number? "Cock-A-Doodle-Do!" was the first story by Melville to appear in *Harper's*; it was not necessarily the first submitted or even the first written, since Melville may previously have tried his hand at other pieces which are shorter and less complex, such as "The Happy Failure" and "The Fiddler." "The Two Temples," first mentioned in letters to Melville from Putnam and Briggs in May of 1854, has affiliations with Melville's other two-part pieces — "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs" and "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids," which were apparently paid for by *Harper's* in that same month. Does it follow, then, that all these pieces were written and submitted at about the same time? Or was one or more than one held for an extended period before they were acted upon? Answers to such questions must necessarily be conjectural at best.

Here is the probable chronology through the summer of 1854:

*Winter of 1852-1853:* Work on "the story of Agatha," in all likelihood the manuscript that Melville submitted to Harper & Brothers in the spring of 1853 but was "prevented from printing."

*Spring and summer of 1853:* (1) Composition, copying, and submission to *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (on 13 August?) of "Cock-A-Doodle-Do!" (published December 1853) and two other pieces, probably "The Happy Failure" (published July 1854) and "The Fiddler" (published September 1854). (2) Either revision and resubmission of one of these pieces or submission to *Harper's* of a fourth contribution (before 20 September), misdirected to *Putnam's Monthly Magazine*. (3) Composition, copying, and submission to *Putnam's* (after 20 September?) of "Bartleby, the Scrivener" (published November, December 1853).

*Autumn of 1853 and winter of 1853-1854:* (1) Work on the "Tortoise Book" proposed to Harper & Brothers on 24 November but apparently never finished. (2) Work on "The Encantadas" for *Putnam's* (possibly submitted, at least in part, on 6 February; announced as forthcoming on 14 February; published in

March, April, May 1854). (3) Work on "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs" (if not already submitted), "The Two Temples," and "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids."

*Spring and early summer of 1854:* (1) Acceptance by *Harper's* of "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs" (probably paid for in May 1854; published in June 1854) and "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" (paid for in May 1854; published in April 1855). (2) Submission to *Putnam's* of "The Two Temples" (rejected on 12 May 1854). (3) Work on *Israel Potter* (proposed 7 June? 1854; serialized in *Putnam's*, July of 1854 through March of 1855; issued in book form in March 1855). (4) Preparation of extracts from the proposed "Tortoise Book" (submitted to Harper & Brothers on 26 July?). (5) Composition, copying, and submission to *Putnam's* of "The Lightning-Rod Man" (published August 1854).

Between November of 1853 and March of 1855, when Putnam sold his magazine to Joshua Dix and Arthur Edwards, Melville earned \$674.50 from *Putnam's Monthly* alone, as shown by ledger entries recording its payments to authors. During this same period he probably received an additional \$145 from *Harper's*, allowing for an estimated payment of \$45 for "Cock-A-Doodle-Do!" (nine printed pages at \$5.00 per page) in addition to the \$100 for other contributions that he acknowledged in May of 1854. There is no reason to suppose that he was paid for occasional reprintings in newspapers and magazines; for example, the *Western Literary Messenger* of Buffalo, which reprinted "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs" in August of 1854 and also copied two chapters of the serialized *Israel Potter*, was eclectic in a large degree and did not pay its authors.<sup>21</sup> For Melville's remaining contributions to *Harper's* and *Putnam's* in 1855 and 1856 there is only one known record of an individual payment, but if the magazines continued to pay at the same rate during these years the probable total was over \$400: approximately \$32.50 for two pieces in *Harper's*, "Jimmy Rose" and "The 'Gees" (total 6½ pages), and \$377.50 for five pieces in *Putnam's*, "The Lightning-Rod Man," "The Bell-Tower," "Benito Cereno," "I and My Chimney," and "The Apple-Tree Table" (total 75½ pages). The grand total of these several estimates is \$1,329.50 for all of Melville's magazine writings of 1853-1856, a larger sum than that formerly reckoned before it was

<sup>21</sup> Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, 5 vols. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1930; Cambridge: Harvard University Press and The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1938-1957), II, 20, 116.

known that his contributions commanded \$5.00 per printed page.<sup>22</sup> In addition, he received at least one payment of royalties for *Israel Potter* in book form: \$48.31 on 8 October 1855.<sup>23</sup>

As this survey indicates, Melville sent more of his contributions to *Putnam's* than he did to *Harper's*; on the whole, his longer narratives went either to Putnam or Putnam's successors, Dix & Edwards, while his shorter pieces were awaiting action by Harper & Brothers. The fact that the Harpers held his manuscripts for such long periods, coupled with his difficulty in obtaining a decision concerning the projected "Tortoise Book," may have something to do with his apparent preference for dealing with *Putnam's Monthly*. If "Jimmy Rose" and "The 'Gees" constitute the "brace of fowl — wild fowl" mentioned in the letter headed "Sept: 18<sup>th</sup>" that Melville apparently wrote on that date in 1854,<sup>24</sup> then it must be observed that "Jimmy Rose" remained unpublished for the next fourteen months and "The 'Gees" for eighteen — just at the time when Melville's contributions to *Putnam's* were appearing regularly. "Jimmy Rose" has affiliations with two other pieces sent to *Putnam's* rather than *Harper's*: "I and My Chimney" (published in March 1856) and "The Apple-Tree Table" (May 1856); since "I and My Chimney" is known to have been in the hands of Dix & Edwards by July of 1855,<sup>25</sup> it appears that the three stories were written in sequence at some time between late summer in 1854 and the summer or fall of 1855. "The 'Gees" is like both "The Encantadas" (1854) and "Benito Cereno" (1855) in its association with Melville's knowledge of the sea, but it also looks forward to *The Confidence-Man* (1857), which Melville completed in 1856. That "The 'Gees" was written as late as 1856, when Melville was occupied with both *The Piazza Tales* and *The Confidence-Man*, seems unlikely, however, and indeed there is some internal evidence for placing its composition as early as July or August of 1854 on the ground that it is in part a response to an article that appeared in the July issue of

<sup>22</sup> In 1943 William Charvat estimated that Melville received "a little over \$725" in all for his magazine work of this period, or "an average of about \$240 a year." See Charvat, "Melville's Income," *American Literature*, XV (November 1943), 255; reprinted in *The Profession of Authorship in America, 1800-1870: The Papers of William Charvat*, ed. Matthew J. Bruccoli (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1968), p. 194.

<sup>23</sup> *The Melville Log*, II, 509.

<sup>24</sup> *Letters*, p. 172; see n. 3 above.

<sup>25</sup> *The Melville Log*, II, 504, 507.

*Putnam's*.<sup>26</sup> In short, both "Jimmy Rose" and "The 'Gees" might well have been ready for submission by mid-September of that year.

Melville's correspondence with Dix & Edwards on 7 and 10 August 1855 concerning payment of \$37.50 for "The Bell-Tower" (7½ printed pages) indicates that the new owners of *Putnam's Monthly* continued to pay him at the rate of \$5.00 per page.<sup>27</sup> He had evidently submitted the manuscript of "The Bell-Tower" by late May or early June of 1855, since it was included with other contributions that Joshua Dix forwarded to his editorial advisor, George William Curtis, in time for Curtis to comment on the story in his letters of 18 and 19 June;<sup>28</sup> the story was included in the August issue and paid for immediately upon publication. "Benito Cereno" was not handled so promptly. The longer work, probably composed during the winter of 1854-1855, may have been submitted to *Putnam's* early in 1855 before George Putnam sold his magazine to the new firm, since it had evidently been set in type by March of that year. On 1 April Melville wrote Dix & Edwards returning "the proof last sent" and requesting "the whole as made up in page form";<sup>29</sup> obviously he had been correcting proof of an unnamed article of some length probably intended for serial publication, and "Benito Cereno" is his only contribution published in *Putnam's* after this date that appeared in installments. Dix forwarded the story to Curtis in mid-April and received a favorable report on it, although Curtis disliked "the dreary documents at the end" and observed that Melville "does everything too hurriedly now."<sup>30</sup> For some reason Dix did not begin serializing "Benito Cereno" until the October number; on 31 July 1855, Curtis had urged him to use it in September, adding that "You have paid for it."<sup>31</sup> Thus "Benito Cereno" may be exceptional on at least two counts: it is the one story that Melville is known to have read in proof before its publication (there may well have been others) and the one for which he was paid in advance by *Putnam's*.

The first of Melville's two remaining stories for *Putnam's*, "I and My Chimney," was included in a batch of manuscript contributions that

<sup>26</sup> See Carolyn L. Karcher, "Melville's 'The 'Gees': A Forgotten Satire on Scientific Racism," *American Quarterly*, XXVII (October 1975), 421-442.

<sup>27</sup> *Letters*, pp. 173-174.

<sup>28</sup> *The Melville Log*, II, 502.

<sup>29</sup> *Letters*, p. 173.

<sup>30</sup> *The Melville Log*, II, 500-501.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 504.

Dix forwarded to Curtis in July of 1855. Curtis held the manuscripts until 7 September, when he singled out "I and My Chimney" for praise as "thoroughly magazinish,"<sup>32</sup> but Dix did not use the story until March of 1856 — after the serialization of "Benito Cereno" in the October, November, and December numbers and subsequent planning of the collection that became *The Piazza Tales*. "The Apple-Tree Table," unmentioned in Melville's surviving correspondence or that between Curtis and Dix, did not appear until May of 1856. As noted above, both of these stories have affiliations with "Jimmy Rose," published in *Harper's* for November 1855, but apparently written as early as the summer of 1854. The narrator of "I and My Chimney" suffers from sciatica; Melville himself had an attack of "severe rheumatism" in February of 1855 and was treated for sciatica in the following June, when he may have been finishing work on his story.<sup>33</sup> "The Apple-Tree Table" was probably written later in the year, either just before or just after the "severe illness" from which he was reported as recovering in mid-September.<sup>34</sup> It was in December of 1855, after the final installment of "Benito Cereno" had appeared in *Putnam's*, that Melville proposed collecting those of his stories which had been published in the magazine up to that time, and in January or February of 1856 he composed "The Piazza" as a title piece for the volume. "About having the author's name on the title-page, you may do as you deem best," he told Dix & Edwards on 19 January; "but any appending of titles of former works is hardly worth while."<sup>35</sup>

The probable chronology of Melville's writing for the magazines can now be extended to summarize the remainder of this period:

*Summer of 1854:* Composition, copying, and submission to *Harper's* (on 18 September?) of "Jimmy Rose" (published November 1855) and "The 'Gees'" (published March 1856).

*Winter of 1854-1855:* Composition, copying, submission to *Putnam's*, and proofreading of "Benito Cereno" (apparently in proof before 1 April 1855; publication delayed until October, November, and December 1855).

*Spring of 1855:* Composition, copying, and submission to *Putnam's* (by late

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 507.

<sup>33</sup> Elizabeth Shaw Melville, "Herman Melville," in Merton M. Sealts, Jr., *The Early Lives of Melville: Nineteenth-Century Biographical Sketches and Their Authors* (Madison and London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1974), p. 169.

<sup>34</sup> *The Melville Log*, II, 507.

<sup>35</sup> *Letters*, p. 177.

May or early June) of "The Bell-Tower" (published August 1855) and (by July) of "I and My Chimney" (published March 1856).

*Summer or fall of 1855:* Composition, copying, and submission to *Putnam's* of "The Apple-Tree Table" (published May 1856).

*January-March, 1856:* (1) Revision (by 19 January) of the magazine pieces collected in *The Piazza Tales*. (2) Composition, copying, and submission to Dix & Edwards (on 16 February) of "The Piazza." (3) Proofreading (by 24 March) of *The Piazza Tales*, published in May.

Before writing "The Piazza" Melville was already well along with *The Confidence-Man*, his tenth book, which he had apparently begun during the previous summer;<sup>36</sup> there are several correspondences between its early chapters and "The Apple-Tree Table." When he finished the book later in 1856, he arranged for its publication by Dix & Edwards rather than the Harpers.<sup>37</sup> As a number of commentators have pointed out, there are episodes in it that might well have been published separately as magazine pieces, but no evidence exists to suggest that Melville offered *The Confidence-Man* or any of its chapters for magazine publication.

<sup>36</sup> Elizabeth Foster, Introduction to *The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade* (New York: Hendricks House, Inc., 1954), p. xxiii, notes that "Chapter 13, about one-fourth of the way through the book," was evidently written before 8 October 1855, and that Chapter 24 apparently alludes to a costume picnic given at Pittsfield early in September.

<sup>37</sup> "Don't have the Harpers," Melville was to tell his brother Allan four years later, on 22 May 1860, when he wrote a memorandum "concerning the publication of my verses" (*Letters*, p. 198).

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