

## NOTES FROM THE LIBRARY

*WHITTIER AND MRS. PIATT*

ALL American poetry readers of the latter half of the nineteenth century were familiar with the work of Sarah Morgan Bryan Piatt. Bred from pioneer stock, she had grown up in Kentucky, reading the English romantic poets and, at an early age, contributing poetical pieces to the southern papers. In 1861 she moved across the river to Ohio when she married another young poet, John James Piatt. Before long they moved to Washington, where they both continued their poetical work while Mr. Piatt held a clerkship in the United States Treasury Department. When Mr. Piatt took a position with the *Cincinnati Chronicle*, they moved back to Ohio, though they were again in Washington when he was librarian of the House of Representatives. Finally, from 1882 to 1893, when he held the post of United States consul at Cork, they lived in Ireland. In these years the Piatts met such English literary folk as Jean Ingelow, Edmund Gosse, Austin Dobson, and Alice Meynell. When the consulship ended, the Piatts retired to Ohio.

In these years of busy domestic life and foreign travel, Mrs. Piatt, whose first book *Nests of Washington and Other Poems* appeared in 1864, wrote several volumes of poetry, of which *An Irish Wild-Flower* is a pleasant example. Her husband had first written *Poems of Two*

*Friends* in collaboration with William Dean Howells in 1859-60, and in the next half century produced nearly a dozen more volumes.

For some years, as Mrs. Piatt moved about among literary people, she kept a memory book in which she persuaded various well-known authors to write quotations from their writings or sentiments of one kind or another. On the 17th of November, 1881, she met, apparently for the first time, the venerable John G. Whittier and asked him to inscribe something in her book. The result was an original ten-line poem. Through the kindness of Mrs. Piatt's son Mr. Cecil Piatt of Glen Ridge, New Jersey, the Library has received an exact copy of that poem, and since it has never been published, we shall print it here. Having been written, as it was, in a memory book, it has no title, so we shall call it after the person to whom it was addressed:

## "DEAR WESTERN GIRL"

The pictured face before me lies,  
 And on a young fresh world thy eyes  
 Look forth with not unpleased surprise.  
 Dear Western girl, to whom belongs  
 The birthright of those household songs,  
 Whose sweet and tender echoes reach  
 New England's farthest hill and beach,  
 And many an Eastern fireside make  
 More happy for their gracious sake,  
 This poor rhyme from a stranger take!

JOHN G. WHITTIER

Boston 11<sup>th</sup> Mo 17 1881

R.K.

### MR. METTLER'S GIFT

AN IMPORTANT recent addition to the Library's collections is the gift by Mr. John Wyckoff Mettler, a member of the Class of 1899 and for many years a Trustee and an honorary Doctor of Laws of the University, of a group of books illustrating English architecture. Although these books had been in the Library, available for use by members of the faculty, since their purchase for Mr. Mettler by Mr. Alexander S. Graham, a good many years ago, they are now being catalogued and made a part of our permanent possessions.

The most striking set of books in this group is the *Mansions of England in the Olden Time* by Joseph Nash, 1839-1849. The four volumes of mounted pictures have been handsomely bound in eight parts and include one hundred hand-colored, lithographic views of old English houses and interiors, to which we may properly add the four title pages of the original bindings, thus bringing the total number of illustrations up to one hundred and four. This magnificent set of volumes is not only of value to historians and students of literature, in that it brings before them the forms of architecture and modes of dress of the Tudor period, which Nash's romantic talent so successfully recaptured, but it is also of significance to the lover of art, for Nash was one of the notable lithographers and water-color painters of the early Victorian days. Another distinguished work by Nash, which is also included in Mr. Mettler's gift, is *Windsor Castle*, con-

sisting of twenty-five views of Windsor which Nash executed especially for Queen Victoria in 1848.

Of possibly more general interest than any others in the group are Ackermann's *Histories of Oxford and Cambridge*, 1814 and 1815. These splendid books were produced by the London publisher and bookseller Rudolph Ackermann, a German by birth and training, who later migrated to England and became one of the prominent bookmakers of his time. He conceived the plan of issuing histories of the two universities which might in their format and, above all, in their magnificence of illustration be comparable in the book world to the splendor of Cambridge and Oxford in the university world. The results are examples of illustrated books which have been collectors' items for the past century and a quarter.

Other titles which Mr. Mettler included in his gift are Sir William Chambers's *A Treatise on Civil Architecture*, 1768, two volumes of F. O. Morris's *A Series of Picturesque Views of Seats of Noblemen and Gentlemen of Great Britain and Ireland*, [1866-1880], John Claude Nattes's *Bath*, 1806, S. D. Swarbrick's *Sketches in Scotland*, 1839, and Thomas T. Bury's *Colored Views on the Liverpool and Manchester Railway*, 1833. To this fine array of old titles we may add the series of modern works on English decorative art by Margaret Jourdain and Francis Lenygon.

R.K.