

NOTES FROM THE LIBRARY

ROBERT ADRAIN'S FIRST ANALYST

ONE of the interesting facts about the development of mathematics in the United States is the zeal for establishing mathematical periodicals shown by a number of the early workers in this field. A half dozen periodicals were begun before there was a sufficient mathematical constituency to support them; naturally none of them survived long. The history of these early abortive attempts to found mathematical journals is confused and obscure.

Among the early editors and publishers was Robert Adrain, one of the few Americans of the early nineteenth century who had some claim to mathematical distinction. Adrain was Professor of Mathematics in Queen's College from 1809 to 1813 and again for one year in 1826. In the interim he held a similar position at Columbia and, subsequent to 1826, at the University of Pennsylvania. The Rutgers Library possesses two numbers of one of Adrain's journals. From an examination of these it is possible to correct an error which has crept into what is probably the standard work on the history of American mathematics, *A History of Mathematics in America Before 1900*, by David Eugene Smith and Jekuthiel Ginsburg, 1934. This volume is number five of the *Carus Mathematical Monographs* published by the Mathematical Association of America.

In this monograph appear two con-

flicting statements concerning Adrain's journal, *The Analyst*. On page 87 it is stated: "A little later (1808) there appeared in Philadelphia a short-lived and relatively unimportant journal, *The Analyst or Mathematical Museum*, of which only a few numbers were published. It is not to be confused with *The Analyst* which Robert Adrain edited and which began a more distinguished career in New York in 1814, or with the periodical by the same name edited from 1874 to 1884 by J. E. Hendricks." On page 92, in a paragraph devoted to Adrain appear these words: "He founded *The Analyst* (1808) . . ."

That the correct date is 1808 and that the title was *The Analyst; or, Mathematical Museum* is established by reference to the numbers in the Rutgers Library, viz., Part I, No. III and No. IV. These are clearly Adrain's; on the fourth cover page under the heading "Rules to be Observed by Contributors," appears the following: "1. All communications must be post paid and directed to Robert Adrain, Editor of the Analyst, Reading, Pennsylvania." The front cover bears the title and date as given above. These facts are correctly given in David Eugene Smith's *History of Mathematics*, I, 532.

In his article "Robert Adrain, and the Beginnings of American Mathematics" in the *American Mathematical Monthly*, XXXIII (1926), 66, Professor J. L. Coolidge calls

Adrain's journal, *The Analyst or Mathematical Companion*, which seems to be an error—unless, of course, the title of number I or II, or both, which are not in the possession of the Rutgers Library, was different from that of numbers III and IV. This seems unlikely, since no hint of such a change of title is given by any writer. Furthermore, Coolidge's description of the contents of numbers III and IV agrees with the contents of the Rutgers numbers.

The *Mathematical Companion* is a totally different journal with which Adrain was not associated. The writer knows of only two references to it. In a paper entitled "Historical Sketch of American Mathematical Periodicals" by David S. Hart of Stonington, Connecticut, in Hendricks's *Analyst*, II (1875), 137, appears the following: "John D. Williams became editor of the 'Mathematical Companion' in 1828 and continued it 4 years." And in one of a series of articles in the *National Mathematics Magazine* dealing with the history of American Mathematical periodicals, B. F. Finkel, (XV [1940-41], 90), refers to the *Companion*, stating that he had examined the only known copy (in the Harvard Library)—which may indeed have been a prospectus rather than the first number of the journal itself. It is clear from his statement that this was not one of Adrain's journals.

Finally, we can settle the source of

the date 1814 mentioned by Smith and Ginsburg. Coolidge has correctly stated (*loc. cit.*, p. 71), "In 1814 Adrain had another try at serial publication, the attempt being to continue the *Analyst*." This attempt was confined to one short number. Finkel in another of his articles (*Nat. Math. Mag.* 14 [1939-40], 404) confirms the statement of Coolidge.

Thus, Adrain published *The Analyst; or, Mathematical Museum* in 1808; there were four numbers. In 1814, he published *The Analyst*; there was one number. The more important of these journals was certainly the first, not only because it lasted for four numbers, but because in it was published Adrain's derivation of the exponential law of error—"the first broad principle of pure mathematics discovered in America" (Coolidge, *loc. cit.*). Obviously, Smith and Ginsburg are correct when they say that there is no connection between Adrain's *Analyst* (they should say, *Analysts*) and Hendricks's *Analyst*, which did not appear until 31 years after Adrain's death. Finally, Coolidge is in error in attaching to Adrain's 1808 journal the sub-title, *Mathematical Companion* instead of *Mathematical Museum*.

Because the confusion warned against in the Carus Monograph seems inadvertently to have crept into the book itself, the evidence presented here is worth putting on record.

ALBERT E. MEDER, JR.

BYRON'S DON JUAN

Byron's Don Juan, a Critical Study, by Elizabeth French Boyd. Rutgers University Press.

WHEN Byron wrote that his purpose in *Don Juan* was only "to giggle and make giggle," he did himself and his poem rather less than justice, as he was to recognize before he had finished—or broken off without finishing—that strange and fascinating medley of seriousness and burlesque, idealism and cynicism. Though he did succeed in being "a little quietly facetious on everything" in that epic satire, the total impact of the rambling story of "love, tempest, travel, war" is greater than that of any light literature which merely titillates by giving sudden release to the common hidden desire for the scandalous or shocking.

Don Juan succeeds, as Miss Boyd admirably demonstrates, because it appeals to the intellect and squares with our sense of honesty and the truth of things in a world where "What, after all, are all things—but a show?"

This study of the poem is a painstaking and scholarly work which throws much light on Byron's amalgamation of experience and reading in the crucible of artistic genius. It will be indispensable not only for the study of *Don Juan* but for the understanding of Byron's whole personality and poetic method. It assembles valuable data on the history of the poem, its general plan (including a neat summary of the tangled rambling story full of digressions), its style, themes, and literary background.

In spite of some necessarily pedestrian chapters, like that on Byron's reading, it is written with obvious verve and excellent critical sense. There is much acumen displayed in Miss Boyd's analysis of Byron's themes—particularly the love theme—in *Don Juan*, and in her concluding remarks on the poem in which she gives what is almost the quintessence of Byron in three sentences:

"Here is the evidence that the mind of Byron, brooding on his own strange fortunes and explaining himself in the story of Don Juan, is the mind of a true poet. Imprisoned like every human being in the mystery of life on this planet, and that imprisonment made doubly bitter for him by the peculiarities of his physical nature and by his errors which he interpreted fatalistically, he could nevertheless give voice for common human nature to the mystery and the bitterness. That Byron the poet rose with such urbanity and such triumph over the limitations of Byron the man is the final act in the drama, the act which makes the drama a tragedy in the true sense."

LESLIE A. MARCHAND

AN UNPUBLISHED WHITTIER LETTER

THE Stanton Memorial Collection of the New Jersey College for Women contains a manuscript letter written by John Greenleaf Whittier, which, as far as I can ascertain, has not been previously printed. It is not, for instance, mentioned in Samuel T. Pick-

ard's *Life and Letters* of Whittier or in T. F. Currier's bibliography, nor is it recorded in the Oak Knoll Collection of Whittier manuscripts at Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts.

The letter, dated January 10, 1858, is addressed to Henry B. Stanton, who failed to include it in his *Random Recollections*. A note written on the letter by Theodore Stanton, son of Henry B. and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, states that when Whittier and the elder Stanton were "young men, starting in life, they were joint secretaries of the first American Anti-Slave Society, and later, they were associated in Massachusetts politics."

A brief account of this secretarial work for the Anti-Slavery Society appears in Pickard's biography,¹ in which the author asserts that in 1837 Whittier and Stanton had desks in the same office, at 143 Nassau Street, New York City,² and that there they edited *The Emancipator* and the *Anti-Slavery Reporter*. There too they wrote tracts, personal letters to public men, and petitions to Congress in opposition to interstate slave trade and to the annexation of Texas.

The joint activities of Whittier and Stanton were not limited to editing and writing. In 1837 the two men attended the Essex County Anti-Slavery Convention at Newburyport, Massachusetts. When the meeting was broken up by a crowd of unsympathetic townspeople, Stanton had the buttons torn off his coat, and Whittier, as he wrote, escaped "at an undignified trot."³ Then two years later,

in June, 1839, they with Joshua Leavitt went to another anti-slavery meeting at Albany.⁴ And toward the end of the same month the poet and Stanton began a journey to schools and theological seminaries in eastern Pennsylvania to obtain German-speaking lecturers for the abolitionists' cause in that state.⁵

Through their close association during these years, Whittier developed a high regard for his fellow worker, a feeling which he expressed when he dedicated his volume of *Poems*, issued in November, 1838, by John Healy, to Henry B. Stanton "as a token of the author's personal friendship, and his respect for the unreserved devotion of exalted talents to the cause of humanity and freedom."⁶

This feeling of friendship Whittier reiterated twenty years later, while announcing his mother's death, in the letter to Stanton now in the library of New Jersey College for Women:

Amesbury 10th 1st Mo 1858

My dear Stanton

I scarcely know anything that cld have given me more pleasure than the sight of thy signature to thy note. It came to me like a kind voice from an old friend, & at the right time. For

¹ *Op. cit.*, I, 205.

² Whitman Bennett, *Whittier, Bard of Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press [c.1941]), p. 113.

³ Bennett, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

⁵ *Ibid.*; see also Pickard, *op. cit.*, I, 250, and Albert Mordell, *Quaker Militant, John Greenleaf Whittier* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1933), p. 105.

⁶ Quoted by Pickard, *op. cit.*, I, 239-40.

our dear Mother—(I need not tell thee how good she was.) left us the 28th of the last month.⁷ It is a heavy sorrow to us, as thou mayst well suppose.

I did not get the paper referred to. It was probably neglected at the office. I should be glad to see it, if I could do so without too much trouble on thy part.

Excuse the brevity of this note, and believe me ever & truly

thy fd

J. G. Whittier

My Sister Elizabeth sends her love and good wishes.

W.

Similar expressions of sorrow at the death of his mother, Abigail Hussey, are found in other Whittier letters at this time. On January 1, 1858, the poet, writing to James T. Fields concerning revisions of his poem "The Old Burying Ground," said:

The entire piece has now to me a deep & solemn significance. It was written in part while watching at the sick-bed of my dear mother—now no longer with us. She passed away a few days ago, in the beautiful serenity of a Christian faith—a quiet & peaceful dismissal. The mighty bereavement

overwhelms us. May God enable us to bear it, & improve its holy lesson!⁸

And on January 11th, the day after his letter to Stanton, Whittier wrote to Charles Sumner:

During the last few wks. I have been watching at the bedside of my dear mother,—following her in love & sympathy to the very entrance of the valley of shadows. She is no longer with us. The end was one of exceeding peace—or quiet & beautiful dismissal. We are stunned by the great bereavement. The world looks far less than it did when she was with us. Half the motive power of life is lost. . . .⁹

Other than expressing Whittier's grief at the loss of his mother and his friendship for a former political and anti-slavery associate, the letter to Henry B. Stanton cannot be said to have great importance; yet it may be of interest to Whittier scholars, and it will contribute to the collections of Whittier manuscripts.

RAYMOND M. BENNETT

⁷ Mordell gives December 27th as the date of the death of Whittier's mother. *op. cit.*, p. 329.

⁸ Quoted by Pickard, *op. cit.*, II, 412.

⁹ Quoted, *ibid.*, II, 413.