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Recent Gifts to the Library

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of the two brothers, James seems to have impressed his contemporaries as the Smith with the greater talent and the finer wit. Perhaps it is because of his public geniality that the myth of James's constant and unwaivering optimism arose. John Timbs, one of Smith's biographers, even goes so far as to expand the legend, telling us that the popular punster led an "easy, social bachelor-life" despite his chronic and painful gout. He bore his suffering, we are told, without complaint, because illness was a questionable luxury in the life of a man whose raison d'être was to dispense drollery.

A letter of Smith's, addressed to the popular English actor, Charles Mathews (1776-1835) and now in the possession of the Colby College Library, may well lead a reader to ask how far John Timbs' picture of James Smith may be regarded as accurate. The letter reads:

18 Austin Friars [London]
Friday [circa 1829-1833]

Dear Mathews

I regret extremely that I cannot fulfill my business with you tomorrow. I am suffering with such a debility of the lower limbs that I have not been able to quit my bedroom floor for about a fortnight past.

Believe me to remain
Yours very truly
JAMES SMITH.

RECENT GIFTS TO THE LIBRARY

A recent reference to preparations to observe the centenary of Whittier's *Snow-Bound* has resulted in a number of Whittier gifts, the most interesting of which is a copy of his *Poems* as published in Boston by Benjamin B. Mussey & Co. in 1849. (This Mussey firm has made its appearance in our library long before this, for B. B. Mussey was one of Jacob Abbott's publishers.) We are indebted
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to Professor Richard Cary for this copy of Whittier. Bibliographers call it the "First Collective Edition." It is nicely illustrated, though (curiously enough!) one of the proofs that Dr. Cary's gift is the "first state" of this edition is found in the fact that it does not contain one of the illustrations added later: this copy lacks the "Star of Bethlehem" plate.

The Library has also received as a gift from Professor Cary a copy of the first edition of Mary E. Wilkins' *A Humble Romance, and Other Stories* (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1887). This well-known book was published when its author (later Mrs. Freeman) was a young woman of twenty-five.

From Professor Waldo H. Dunn (Scripps College, Claremont, California) the Library has received two welcome privately-printed brochures: (1) *Indenture between John St. Alban and Richard Blackmore* (Wooster, Ohio, 1955), one of 125 copies; and (2) Louis Mitchell's *Donald Grant Mitchell* (Claremont, California, 1947), also one of 125 copies.

Our growing Mosher Collection has been enriched by a gift of eight items from Mr. Benton L. Hatch: Mrs. Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, published by Mosher both in 1900 and in 1901; William Sharp's ("Fiona MacLeod's") *The Distant Country*, 1907; Rossetti's translation of Dante's *New Life*, 1900; Richard Jefferies' *The Pageant of Summer*, 1909; Katharine (Tynan) Hinkson's *Little Book of XXIV Carols*, 1907; William Sharp's *Isle of Dreams*, 1905; and Isabelle Howe Conant's *Gabriel*, 1912.

To Mr. Harper MacKay of the Department of Music, University of California at Los Angeles, we are indebted for the manuscript of *Five Songs*, settings composed by Mr. MacKay for five poems by Thomas Hardy. At the Waterville Community Concert, in November 1956, Margery MacKay, mezzo-soprano, sang "In Time of 'The Breaking of Nations'," Hardy's well-known war-poem set to music
by Harper MacKay; and it is the composer's autographed manuscript of this song, inscribed “To the Colby College Library, with warmest regards, January 1957,” which has now come to be added to our extensive collection of Hardy Music. The other four of Mr. MacKay's Five Songs call for detailed comment:

“Waiting Both” is the title of the first poem in Hardy’s 1925 volume of verse, *Human Shows*; a photograph of the manuscript of this poem has been on exhibition in the Treasure Room of the Colby Library for the past ten years. It is this poem which Harper MacKay has set to music, and the composer's manuscript is the second in this group of five.

The third composition is entitled “My Spirit will not Haunt the Mound”—Hardy's poem addressed to the memory of his first wife.

Mr. MacKay's fourth setting is for “The Oxen”—Hardy's oft-quoted Christmas Eve poem. The composer's manuscript carries his annotation: “This poem is based on an English country legend that at midnight on Christmas Eve the oxen kneel in their stalls. The song should be sung quietly but fervently.”

The fifth of Mr. MacKay's Five Songs from Hardy is “When I Set Out for Lyonnesse”—Hardy's name for Cornwall, where he met his wife. This manuscript provides us with the *eighth* musical setting of this popular poem, for our Hardy Collection has previously received copies of the music composed for it by Frederic Austin, John Duke (his manuscript is dated 1950), Gerald Finzi, Sidney Harrison, Christopher LeFleming (his manuscript is signed by the composer), Katharine E. O'Brien, and Charles A. Speyer.

Nearly ten years ago we expressed the wish that our Music Department would arrange a Tannhäuser-like Tournament of Song so that a Colby audience might hear and compare all these settings for “When I Set Out for Lyonnesse,” but thus far our wish has remained only a wish!