

Jane Webb Loudon: *A miscellaneous collection of original items in a scrapbook.*

Collated by Webb for presentation to close friends / family members who were possibly joining the army or going to war, or sending loved ones to same, and then subsequently added to by unknown inheritors of the book.

The highlights include an elaborate hand-drawn title page by Webb; a previously unknown poem (also by Webb); a hand-pressed flower gathered from Waterloo by Webb; and lines specially composed for her wedding to the noted horticulturist, J.C. Loudon.

Other contributions – most of which require transcription - would appear to throw light on the Loudon's private life but require further research; for example, it would be useful to know why the intended recipients of the book would be interested in details about the Loudon's wedding. It would also be useful to identify the contributors. *NB. It is possible the book was subsequently returned to Webb years later.*

Description:

Brown leather-bound volume (larger than crown) featuring ornate designs to spine and covers. Slight spine lean, some moderate scuffing, overall in very good condition. Approx 70 pages, all edges gilt, half of which have been filled with poems, diary entries and autographs (all original).

Provenance:

The volume turned-up on Ebay in 2008 having been listed for sale by a furniture auctioneer based in Somerset. Previous history unknown.

Detail:

- 2pp blank.
- Elaborately designed title page with tissue-guard. Reads: 'To the / Misses or Messrs (?) Perry / as a Small Token of / Gratitude and Esteem / from their very sincere Friend / Jane Loudon / Feby 1831'. Interwoven amongst these titles are drawings of birds, snakes and dragonflies. Rear of title page blank.
- 2pp handwritten comprising 36 line poem entitled 'To The Misses (?) Perry' by Jane Webb, signed by her in the same hand 'J.W. Loudon' and dated 17 Feb 1831 together with 19-line note by J C Loudon in his hand of same date (also signed) which appears to comment on the reason for the book. The poem begins: 'Tis known, as all historians tell, Facts in fiction most excel, Then how shall I, whose humble muse, Needs every shadow of excuse...'
- page 3 – the autograph of Anne Marie Hale (?) together with an explanatory note in the same hand, dated January 24th 1831.
- 4 – blank.
- 5 – 12-line poem entitled 'The Onset' signed 'Jno. (?) Reynolds' and dated Feb 14th 1831. Very clear and attractive handwriting; a powerful and rousing call-to-arms. Begins: 'Rise! Rise! My brave Warriors, on, on to the fray / Be this to our Country a glorious day / Draw! Draw! The bright steel with thy uplifted hand / Strike down to the Earth every foe of our land....'
- 6 – 8 blank

- 9 – 28-line poem by J[ames] Rennie entitled ‘The Rose’. Signed and dated by him at Lee, Kent, 26th January 1831. The poem is written on a letter and has been mounted to the page and then tissue-guarded. Handwriting clear and legible. Begins: ‘I saw the rose in heavenly land / Amidst its mossy fringe....’ *NB. Rennie was the Professor Of Zoology at Kings College at this time; he authored a large number of books on botany and horticulture.*
- 10 – blank.
- 11 – 12. 5-line prose poem in French, signed by an unknown individual, in his or her hand. Also 12 line rhyming poem signed by Captain Martens aka ‘Conseil de Capitaine Martens’, also in French. These are undated but are almost certainly contemporary.
- 13 – 18. Six pages, handwritten and signed by ‘S.E. Richard (?)’, for ‘Miss J Loudon’. Comprises an introductory note dated and addressed from ‘Lindengrove, 21st Feb 1831’ in which the author explains that having ‘no genius’ for (presumably) poetry composition, he is instead contributing the ‘Journal Of A Wiltshire (?) Curate’. There follows a week’s worth of diary entries discussing the events in his parish.
- 19. Mounted autograph – I’m afraid I can’t decipher this – under which has been written the word ‘artist’ in another hand.
- 20. Blank.
- 21. ‘Lines written by [first two names indecipherable] Marian Porter, and presented with a bouquet of [.....] and geranium to Miss Webb on her marriage to Mr. J. C. Loudon.’ There follows a romantic 12pp poem which compares love to flowers that resist the summer downpours and spend the colder months in sheltering in ‘winter houses’.
- 22. Blank.
- 23. Juvenile pencil sketch / drawing of a young lady (possibly Jane Webb) sitting on a *chaise-longue* reading a book. The sketch is signed by an ‘Isabella [...] Martin’.
- 24 - 26. Blank.
- 27. A mounted pencil drawing depicting a pheasant breaking cover from a copse. Although accredited to ‘William Perry – aged 10 years’ the sketch is surprisingly competent.
- 29 – 30 blank.
- 31. 8 line poem of a gloomy & gothic nature signed ‘H.W.K. 1855’. Underneath, in a different hand, possibly Jane Webb’s, is written ‘George died of cholera’. The tomb of a George is referenced in the poem. *NB: Could ‘George’ have been one of the Perries to whom the book was dedicated?*
- 32. Blank.
- 33. A card-mounted pressed flower captioned ‘Gathered by Mrs Loudon at the Placin (?) of Waterloo, 1850’. Appears to be in Webb’s own hand.
- 35 – 36. Blank.
- 37. A card-mounted pressed flower captioned ‘From the border of a flower bed at Stroud, gathered for me by Mrs C.J. Moody(?)’. The date of 1855 or 1877 has been added later in a different hand or with a different pen, as have the initials ‘E.P.’.
- 38. Large autograph signature – ‘All good wishes, Robertson Hare’. *NB. Robertson Hare was a C20th stage and television actor.*

- 39. Mounted autograph of 'Reginald Tyrwhitt' together with loosely laid-in postcard of photograph quality of Admiral Sir Reginald Tyrwhitt, Baronet, ADC, DSO, KCB, GCB. A resume of Tyrwhitt's career and accomplishments has been written in to the book.
- 40 to end. Blank.