

James Miller's Autograph Book

Reference and contact details: GB 779 RCSEd GD/25

Location: RS L4

Title: James Miller's autograph book

Dates of Creation:

Held at: The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh

Extent: 1 autograph book

Name of Creator:

Language of Material: English.

Level of Description: item

Date(s) of Description: 2005

Notes: Researched by Dr Mark Summers



Administrative/Biographical History:

James Miller (1812-1864) gained the licence of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh in 1832 and was subsequently elected to the Fellowship. He was appointed Professor of Surgery at the University of Edinburgh in 1842 and went on to become surgeon-in-ordinary in Scotland to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Outside of medicine, Miller was heavily involved with the Church, siding with Thomas Chalmers and the Free Church party at the disruption of the Presbyterian Church in 1843, and in his later years devoted much of his energy to the temperance movement. As a writer, Miller is best known for his *Principles of Surgery* (1844) and *Practice of Surgery* (1846), along with articles on surgery in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (7th and 8th editions) and numerous pamphlets on social, religious and professorial topics. Miller married Penelope Garden Campbell Gordon in 1836. Their son was Alexander Miller, also a surgeon, and their eldest daughter married Sir Patrick Heron Watson, twice President of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh.

The Miller Autograph Book is a collection of correspondence ephemera, consisting of many letters, envelopes, memos &c. Some of the items are lengthy epistles whilst others are simply a signature cut from a larger item.

The book is on long term loan to the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, having been placed there by the owner, reflecting the close link between the College and James Miller, one of its former Fellows. The authors range from several of the Victorian Prime Ministers, through musicians and churchmen, to untraceable unknowns. It appears from the contents of the book that James Miller, eminent Edinburgh surgeon and professor, took time to write to some of the worthies of the day, perhaps to alert them to some apparent mistake in their writing or to enclose a pamphlet on a development in medicine (see the letters of Charles Dickens). In addition to his own correspondence, the autograph book contains letters addressed to others, notably the memorandum of Florence Nightingale and a letter written to Lord Shrewsbury by the Duke of Wellington.

The Chronology of the Autograph Book

Many of the items appear to have been collected by Miller up to his death in 1864 and these were added to subsequently, most likely by his son, Alexander - the oldest item is from Lord Southesk (1828) and the youngest is a letter from Joseph Lister that dates from 1901. It is not absolutely clear whether James Miller started the book or whether his son collected together his correspondence after his death and compiled the book.

Pointing towards a probable compilation date of c.1870 are the following points:

1. There is a clear alphabetical order A-S over the first 53 pages. The range of dates is 1828-69 with a few exceptions. After this, the ordering becomes more haphazard and the dates range from 1839-1901 with most letters being post-1880.
2. A letter by James Miller is placed on first page.

3. Post-1864 letters within the A-S ordering (the exceptions mentioned above) appear to have been inserted subsequently, behind, above or to one side of letters of the first ordering – their placing is less than ideal – or on the even numbered pages that may have been left blank at first. Such letters are those from William Gladstone and Jenny Lind-Goldschmidt.

The **binding** of the autograph book itself is in a state of disrepair. This reveals what appears to be scrap paper used in its making and on this an advertisement for an 1866 Almanack can clearly be seen. If this is the original spine then a date for the book would probably be c.1866-7 and this would support the conclusion that this autograph book was compiled after James Miller's death in 1864.

Physical Description

It is a maroon, hardback book, approximately 24cm in height x 19cm in breadth and, if fully bound, would be about 5cm deep. It has the word "AUTOGRAPHS" stencilled in gold on the front board. The front cover of the book has been detached along with the first few pages - there is some spoiling (speckling) on the book's own pages throughout. Most of the letters and notes inside are attached to the book's interior, although not all are attached on both sides (i.e. some are connected only to the inside spine). Some are currently lying loose. Although most of the pages inside the book are intact, the book's spine is in particularly poor condition and appears fragile. The front and back hard boards are both intact, but slightly frayed around the edges with some scratching and decolourisation on both.

Full list of writers

Abercrombie, John; 1780-1844, physician and surgeon
Aberdeen, Earl of; George Gordon, 1784-1860, Prime Minister
Acworth, William; ?-?, Vicar of Rothley, father of the railway economist
 Sir William Mitchell Acworth
Ailsa, Marquis of
Anglesey, Marquis of; Henry Paget, 1768-1854, soldier and politician
Atkinson, Richard
Auduban, Monsieur [Audubon?]
Balfour of Burleigh; Alexander Hugh Bruce, 1849-1921
Ballantyne, Robert; 1825-1894, author
Bangor, Earl of;
Banks, Sir (William) Mitchell; 1842-1904, surgeon
Bayne, Peter; 1830-1896, journalist and author
Bedford, Duchess of; prob. Adeline Mary Russell, 1852-1920, penal reformer
Begbie, James; 1798-1869, physician (or his son James Warburton
 Begbie, 1826-1876, physician)
Begg, James; 1808-1883, Free Church of Scotland minister
Bersier, Mon.
Blantyre
Boyd, Rev. A.K.H.; 1825-1899, Church of Scotland minister
Breadalbane, Marquis of; John Campbell, 1796-1862, politician and courtier
Brewster, Sir David; 1781-1868, natural philosopher and academic administrator
Brisbane, Sir J.
Brodie, Sir Benjamin; 1783-1862, physiologist and surgeon
Brougham, Lord Henry; 1778-1868, Lord Chancellor
Brown-Séguard, Charles Edouard; 1817-1894, physiologist and neurologist
Bruce, Lady Augusta; 1822-1876, courtier
Brummel, C.M.
Buchanan, Robert; 1802-1875, Free Church of Scotland minister
Campbell, H.H.
Campbell, Lady
Candlish, Robert; 1806-1873, Free Church of Scotland minister
*Cardwell, Edward; either 1813-1886, politician or 1787-1861, ecclesiastical historian

*Carpenter, William; either 1813-85, biologist and university administrator or 1797-1874, journalist and compiler of religious books

*Castlereagh, Lord; son? of Robert Stewart, 1769-1822, Foreign minister (letter 27.4.35)

Chalmers, Thomas; 1780-1847, (Free) Church of Scotland minister

Christison, Sir Robert; 1797-1882, toxicologist and physician

Clanranold

*Clarendon, Lord; George Villiers, politician (letter ?)

*Clark, George; either 1823-1873, thread manufacturer and philanthropist or 1861-1935 shipbuilder and politician

Clark, Sir James; 1788-1870, physician

Close, Francis; 1797-1882, Dean of Carlisle

Cobbett, William; 1763-1835, political writer and farmer

Compton?, Sir Philip

Cook, Joseph

Cowan, Sir John; 1814-1900, paper manufacturer and political organiser

Crockett, S.R.

Cunningham, William; 1805-1861, Free Church of Scotland minister

Dalhousie, Earl of; George Ramsay, 1806-1887, naval officer

*Davidson; poss. John, 1834/5-1881, Free Church of Scotland minister (married to Hugh Miller's daughter)

Dickens, Charles; (1812-1870), writer

Dods, Marcus; 1834-1909, United Free Church of Scotland minister and biblical scholar

Drummond, Thomas; 1797-1840, administrator in Ireland and military engineer

Drummond, Prof.; poss. James 1835-1918, Unitarian minister and theologian

Duncan, John; 1796-1870, Biblical scholar and missionary to the Jews

Duff, Alexander; 1806-1878, missionary

Dunmore, Earl of; Charles Murray, 1841-1907, traveller

*Dunmore, Lady; poss. but unlikely Catherine Murray, 1814-1886, wife of Charles Murray

*Dykes, J. Oswald; poss. 1823-1876, composer and Church of England clergyman

Elibank, Lord; Alexander Murray, 1780-1871

Elmslie, W.J.;

Erichsen, Sir John; 1818-1896, surgeon

Farre, Sir Arthur; 1811-1887, obstetrician

Ferguson, Prof. W.

Fife, Duke of; Alexander Duff, 1849-1912, politician

Forbes, Dr. John; 1787-1861, physician and medical journalist

Gairdner, John; 1790-1876, surgeon

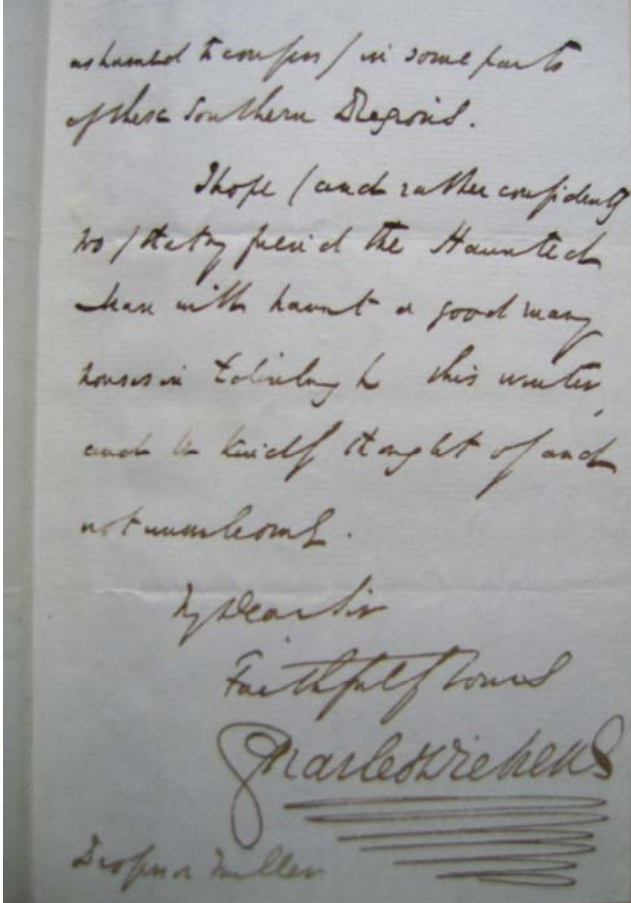
Galloway, Earl of; Randolph Stewart, 1800-1873

Gemmel, John

Gladstone, William; 1809-1898, Prime minister and author

Glenelg, Lord; Charles Grant, 1778-1866, politician

Gordon, Robert; 1786-1853, Free Church of Scotland minister



as handed to me / in some parts
of these Southern Depositions.
I hope / each rather confidently
to / the very first of the Haverhill
Mass with haunt a good many
houses in Salisbury in this winter
each to kind of thought of each
not unnumbered.
By please Sir
Faithfully yours
Charles Dickens
Drops in Miller

Signature of Charles Dickens

Gordon, Duke of; George Gordon, 1770-1836
Gordon Cumming, A.P.; poss. Sir Alexander Penrose Gordon-Cumming,
1816-1866, certainly a flyfisher
Gough, John; 1817-1886, temperance lecturer
Gratton, Henry
Grey, Charles; 1804-1870, army officer and courtier
Grey, Earl; Henry Grey, 1802-1894, politician
Guthrie, Thomas; 1803-1873, Free Church of Scotland minister and
philanthropist
Haldane
Hall, (Christopher) Newman; 1816-1902, Congregational minister
Hamilton, Duke of; Alexander Douglas Hamilton, 1767-1852
Hamilton, James; 1814-1867, Presbyterian minister
Hamilton, Sir William; 1788-1856, philosopher
Hamilton, Lady Mary
Heath, Christopher; 1802-1876, surgeon
Henderson, William; poss. 1819-1905, Dean of Carlisle
Herbert, Sidney; 1810-1861, politician
Hill, David Octavius; 1802-1870, painter and photographer
Holmes, Timothy; 1825-1907, surgeon
Hopetoun, Earl of; John Alexander Hope, 1831-1873
Horn, Robert
Jeffrey, Lord; Francis Jeffrey, 1773-1850, writer and judge
Jenner, Sir William; 1815-1898, physician
Kean, Charles; 1811-1868, actor and theatre manager
Keith, Thomas [FRCSed]
Keith, Dr. W.
Ker, John; 1819-1886, United Presbyterian Church minister
Kintore, Earl of; Francis Keith-Falconer, 1828-1880
Knox, Robert; 1791-1862, anatomist and ethnologist [FRCSed]
Lang, Andrew; 1844-1912, anthropologist, classicist and historian
Lauder, Sir Thomas Dick; 1784-1848, author
Lawrence, Sir William; 1783-1867, surgeon
Lind-Goldschmidt, Jenny; 1820-1887, singer
Lister, Sir Joseph; 1827-1912, surgeon
Jex-Blake, Sophia; 1840-1912, physician and campaigner
for women's rights
Maxwell, Dr.
Meadowbank, Lord; Alexander Maconochie, 1777-1861, lawyer and politician
McAll, R.W.; 1821-1893, Congregational minister? Son of Robert Stephens McAll
Miller, F. Max
Miller, Hugh; 1802-1856, geologist, evangelical journalist and writer
Miller, James; 1812-1864, surgeon
Monod, Adolphe-Theodore; 1802-1856, French reformed minister and theologian
Monro, Alexander (tertius); 1773-1859, anatomist
Montrose, Earl of; James Graham, 1799-1874, politician
Morley, Arnold; 1849-1916, politician
Morley, Samuel; 1809-1886, politician
Muir, Sir William; 1819-1905, administrator in India and Islamicist
Murchison, Sir Roderick; 1792-1871, geologist and geographer
Murray, W.H.; possibly William Henry, 1790-1852, actor and theatre manager

Murray

Macaulay, Lord; Thomas Babington Macaulay, 1800-1859, historian, essayist and poet

Macewen, Sir William; 1848-1924, surgeon

McIver, Sir Lewis; politician

Mackay, Charles; 1812-1889, poet and writer

McLaren, Duncan; 1800-1886, politician

Napier, Lord; William John Napier, 1786-1834, naval officer and trade envoy

Nightingale, Florence; 1820-1910, reformer of Army Medical Services
and of nursing organisation

North, Brownlow; 1810-1875, preacher

O'Connell, Daniel; 1775-1847, Irish nationalist leader (known as the Liberator)

Paget, Sir James; 1814-1899, surgeon

Palmerston, Lord; Henry John Temple, 1784-1865, Prime minister

Parkes, Edmund; 1819-1876, physician

Peel, Sir Robert; 1788-1850, Prime minister

Ponsonby, Sir Gerald

Préssensé, Mon. de

Quincey, Thomas de; 1785-1859, essayist

Radcliffe, Reginald

Rajah Gopaul

Ramsey, Dean

Robertson, Lord Patrick; 1794-1855, judge

Roseberry, Earl of; Archibald John Primrose, 1783-1868, politician

Roseberry, Earl of; Archibald Philip Rimrose, 1847-1929, Prime minister

Roslyn, Lord

Roslyn, Lady

Russell, Sir James

Rutherford, William; 1839-1899, physiologist

Ryle, John; 1816-1900, Bishop of Liverpool

St. Albans, Earl of

St. Vincent, Viscount; Edward Jervis, 1767-1857

Sandeman, Rev. R.J.

Say & Sele, Lord

Scott, Lord John; poss. 1751-1838, Lord Chancellor

Scott, Sir Walter; 1771-1832, poet and novelist

Sinclair, Catherine; 1800-1864, novelist and children's writer

Southesk, Earl of; James Carnegie, 1827-1905, poet and antiquary

Spencer, Earl; George John Spencer, 1758-1834, politician and book collector

Stair, Earl of; John Hamilton Macgill Dalrymple, 1771-1853, army officer and politician

Derby. Earl of; prob. Edward Henry **Stanley** (Lord Stanley), 1826-1893, politician and diarist

Steel, Lord

Toynbee, Joseph; 1815-1866, ear surgeon

Turner, Sir William; 1832-1916, anatomist and university administrator

Valentine, Dr. Colin

Wakeley, Thomas

Watson, Rev. Charles

Watson, Sir Thomas

[Wellington](#), Duke of; Arthur Wellesley, 1769-1852, army officer and Prime minister

Wightman, Julia; 1817-1898, temperance activist and author

Wilson, John; 1800-1849, singer

Wilson, Prof. John

Wilson, Prof. George; ?1818-1859, chemist and museum director

Transcription of letter from Julia Bainbrigge Wightman to James Miller
by Mrs Meegan Griffin, West Midlands, B74 4HX

Shrewsbury
Feb. 15/61

My dear Sir,

I gave your Prescription to a man who signed the pledge on a Monday, & died of delirium tremens on the following Saturday. He took brandy again. Poor fellow ---- he lost it I suppose. Would you kindly send it me again? I enclose a letter from a Clergyman who has been abstaining since Jan. 1st or a week before, after reading my Annals. I am going to send him *Nephalism* by this post & wish to send him your prescription.

Would the same do for a working man who feels low towards the Spring season? Last year I feared he would have returned to drink, but he was persuaded by me to take half an hour's walk at 9 o'clock daily, and he dined in our own kitchen for a fortnight, & the meat & fresh air restored him, he is the "John Ithell" of my Ann () a tailor.

My good husband has not made a second trial yet. The Clergy met together 6 weeks ago to "consider whether Mrs Wightman was doing mischief or good".

It is so vastly amusing with the facts from their own parishes close around them. They could not decide the question at the first meeting! At the second meeting the incumbent of a country parish of some importance announced his intention of beginning my plan in his parish, so he invited all his drunkards together, and asked me to let two of my men address them – 360 persons (not all drunkards of course) were present and 27 signed the pledge that first evening. Was not that good?

Believe me

My dear Sir

Yours sincerely

Julia B. Wightman

Julia B. Wightman

NOTES

() Missing text

Annals of the Rescued, by Mrs. C. Wightman (Julia Bainbrigge), published 1858

Nephalism, The True Temperance of Scripture Science and Experience, by James Miller, published 1861 by Scottish Temperance League