

BETWEEN THE COVERS RARE BOOKS

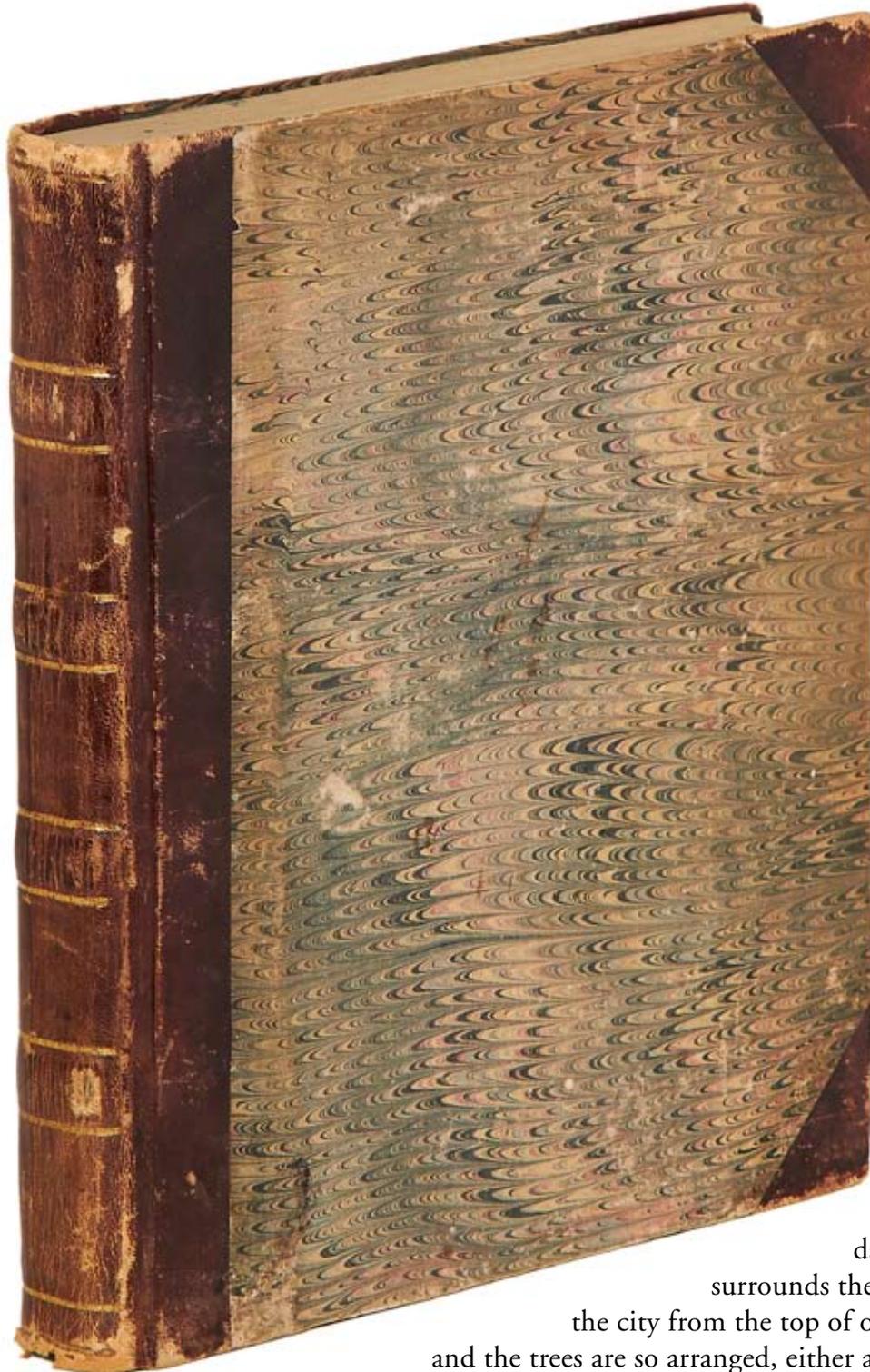
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James W. Metcalf and Maria C. Betts

1842-1845 Diary

New York: 1842-1845

\$9500



Small quarto. Blank book with lined pages. Half leather with marbled paper boards. Closely and legibly written on 191 pages consisting of approximately 50,000 words. Lightly worn edges and rubbing, very good or better. Marriage certificate signed by Gardiner Spring minister of the New York Old Brick Church and wedding guests, (Samuel R. Betts, Anna Metcalf, and A. J. Spring, etc.) and newspaper articles about William H. Metcalf laid in. An engaging diary written between 1842 and 1845, jointly written by James W. Metcalf and his wife, Maria C. Betts Metcalf. Maria was the daughter of New York State Judge and U.S. representative, Samuel R. Betts; and James was a clerk at the District Court, Southern District of New York. He was also the brother of noted art collector and amateur photographer, William H. Metcalf of Milwaukee.

The diary begins with their wedding day, July 12, 1842, in New York; “the great event is over at last we are one.” It continues with a detailed account of their adventures on their honeymoon with each of the pages numbered and dated; much of it describes the beauty that surrounds them. “There is a very picturesque view of the city from the top of one of the hills in the cemetery, near here, and the trees are so arranged, either accidentally, or by design, as to have the appearance of a frame to the picture, which produces a singular effect.” They traveled to several cities in Canada including Ontario, Montreal, and Quebec before returning home to New York.

1842

Tuesday July 12th

New York

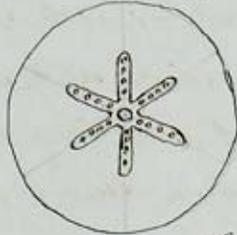
10 A.M. The great event is over at last - we are one and, according to the whispers of romance, all our troubles are over, tho' according to the sage counsels of our older friends, they have but just begun. The company, small & select, assembled at about 9 o'clock; every member of our respective families was present -

George had been sent for from college at Williamstown & had come with a glad heart, & a merry face. John had arrived from Nantucket in his best sea-land look. Fanny & Emily had returned from Newburgh full of expectation in regard to the solemn occasion - Mother herself & Julia had come down from Hyde Park to see the last of the single blessedness, & the first of the double-misery of their son & brother, and of their about to be daughter & sister. James came up from his lodging rooms at Brundage for the last time in a cab accompanied by Dr. Allen & Mr. Waddell, and arrived upon the ground at about 9 o'clock, & after having hastily shaken hands with some of the company already assembled, darted up stairs where Maria was in waiting, all dressed off for the occasion, in her best, as follows, to wit - a new striped silk dress with garter boots to match, a french worked cape, hair dressed simply, with a curl behind each ear, white kid gloves, in

August 6, 1842 ends their "Wedding Jaunt Times," and the entries tell of the couple's daily lives together. Many of the entries treat on identical subjects recounting their walks about the town, seeing family or friends, and the sermons they hear on Sundays. While most are well received there are some that James comments on later; "the sermon was not so well digested as I have heard them and is not so easily summed up. We are all mortal and if our fathers and even the prophets died, upon what grounds can we hope to escape? We should then prepare for death and that immediately." Both Maria and James write of her ill health, presumably from her first pregnancy, and she is often unable to attend church. It's only after having the child that she resumes her attendance. Their child is not talked about often in the diary but was born sometime in June, 1843. "This night our dear boy has been publicly dedicated to the lord. He was baptized... and named James Betts."

1842

Tuesday October 11th (St Marks place)
to me, nothing is so beautiful as the simple jet from
a single aperture of eight or ten inches diameter. The
fountain in the park is larger, more costly and more
extensive - This is the plan of it; -



The central jet throws up a column of some fifty odd feet
and the twenty four radial ones, of about half that height.
As apertures of any sort and pointing in any direction
and containing any number of holes can be fitted on
to each of the twenty five apertures in this fountain, of
course the variety that may be produced is very great.
These jets are a great ornament to the city as well as
an improvement to its health in tending to promote
a free circulation of cool, fresh air, - they should be
kept constantly in action and the number should
be increased.

When I came home to dinner, I found Julia here -
she and mother had called in the morning and Julia
remained to spend the day - Miss Morris also, daughter
of W. L. Morris was spending the day with Fanny

While James has written most of the entries in the beginning of the diary, Maria writes a significant portion of the later ones. During this time James is away on a business trip and Maria writes every day, from the time he leaves to the time he returns, about what has gone on. Many speak of his absence and waiting for his letters, "no letters this morning, therefore I have been quite sanguine in my expectations of seeing James tonight, I am not disappointed." When James returns the entries become spaced out over weeks to months rather than days apart as they had been previously. They write about business endeavors, the passing of loved ones, and how their child is growing. "Today our dear boy is nine months old. He can walk alone (for a short distance) and has cut his first tooth, a good size front one in the upper jaw."

An intimate and detailed accounting of the the daily lives of a New York City couple in the 1840s. [BTC#399477]

1842

Saturday August 6th (New York)

We arrived this morning at about five o'clock - and leisurely getting up to the house were admitted by the Judge in his dressing-gown and welcomed home and here ends our

"Wedding Tour."

Finis: ~~~~~

We found Mr & Mrs Holbrook at home and Mother and Charles preparing to start for Northampton on Tuesday next - They were all glad to see us - the girls have been heard from a few days before at Northampton all well. And now we settle down into a quiet, domestic life at No 16 St Marks place for the present - The Judge intends to leave town, if possible, shortly so that we shall be left alone to keep house -

Sunday August 7th

It rained all day to day and as we were both of us quite unwell we did not go out to Church. Our Church is closed in consequence of Dr McElroy's absence -

Monday August 8th

I went down this morning to business and received the