

The inscription reads:

I am a Doctor tho' I take small Fees

I am a Doctor tho' with ! Degrees

I am (no thanks to Academick Proctor)

The poor man's & the widow's fav'rite Doctor.

This humorous poem is dated December 1794, and signed "W.D. Roberts, on Board The Favourite Nanny". The book is also signed by "William D. Roberts" at the foot of two leaves of text. We have not yet been able to identify this William D. Roberts, but The Favourite Nanny was an actual ship of the British fleet, a "tender", or cargo ship, plying the waters between Dublin and Southhampton in the 1790s and 1800s. Perhaps Roberts was the ship's doctor? We are hopeful that further research will help resolve this mystery. We have no other documentation to show how this book came to Kingston.

The volume is quite imperfect, lacking many leaves, and showing old tidal lines of damp and mold. Many leaves are damaged and/or are very fragile. Yet this is a remarkable survivor and will repay further study once it has received conservation treatment.

Alvan Bregman

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