



Donn Piatt: Gadfly of the Gilded Age (Adst-Dacor Diplomats and Diplomacy Series)

Peter Bridges

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Born in 1819 in Cincinnati, Donn Piatt died in 1891 at the Piatt Castles that still stand in western Ohio. He was a diplomat, historian, journalist, judge, lawyer, legislator, lobbyist, novelist, playwright, poet, and politician—and a well-known humorist, once called on to replace Mark Twain when Twain's humor failed him. A staunch opponent of slavery, Piatt campaigned in 1860 for Abraham Lincoln, who briefly took a liking to him but found him too outspoken and later cursed him when, as a Union officer, Piatt recruited slaves in Maryland.

Having served credibly as an American diplomat in France during the 1850s, Piatt had a strong and influential interest in foreign affairs as a Washington insider. After the Civil War, Piatt became famous nationwide as an editor in Washington. In his newspaper, *The Capital*, Piatt attacked President Grant and Congress fearlessly, and his witticisms and criticisms were carried in papers across the country.

Over the years Piatt mocked both Catholics and Protestants, attacked millionaires, and defended workers, yet ended his life as a Catholic and a rich man. He ridiculed both the Democratic and Republican parties. He wrote a play mocking lobbyists, but his own ethics came into question after he became a Washington lobbyist while remaining a journalist.

Author Peter Bridges presents the life of an American who in his day was both famous and influential, and, through Piatt, sheds light on much of the corruption and injustice of the Gilded Age. This biography is the latest volume in the ADST-DACOR series on Diplomats and Diplomacy.

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