Charles Halyday (c. 1789 – 1860) was a Dublin merchant, banker, financier, public benefactor and prolific book collector. He retired as a bookseller in London.

After the death of his elder brother he returned to Dublin in 1813, living at Arden Quay. His brothers' death-in-law invited him to take over his business as a reformed and unique merchant, a profitable venture from which Halyday made his fortune. He figured prominently in the Dublin business scene, as secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, member of the Board of Trade, director and president of the Bank of Ireland, Consul for Greece and a Justice of the Peace.

He campaigned for better living conditions for the poor, writing letters and pamphlets on social issues and business affairs. He also undertook historical research, and the College Board commissioned him to write a history of Dublin. From 1845 to 1867, he served on the Committees of Antiquities. His Sandemanian kingdom of Dublin was published posthumously in 1882.

In 1813 he bought Monkstown Park, which he rebuilt. His new villa had a large library and study to accommodate his collection. He noted in his journal: "I have had too little time to read, but I must not therefore neglect to read, before it is [it] in the morning or after 10 at night. I may read a few pages, and with the help of God [I] will do so. If I mark the date on which I read each book it may stimulate me by keeping before me a register of time lost or employed."

Halyday died at Monkstown Park on 14 September 1866 of an illness contracted during his charitable and statistical work in the slums of Kingsman (Kins Laggan). He is buried in Carrickfergus cemetery, Monkstown, Co. Dublin. His entire library was donated to the Royal Irish Academy in 1867, by his wife, Marianne, who died shortly after in 1868.
The pamphlet collections of Charles Haldy (1749-1860) are among the best known and most highly valued materials in the Royal Irish Academy Library. Haldy, a Dublin merchant, was an avid collector of books, pamphlets and manuscripts, particularly those of Irish interest. Acquirers were given their catalogues. The manuscript section of Dublin would wait for him outside his offices, bringing him books, pamphlets, broadsides and other ephemera. At auctions he bid through an agent if he attended in person he feared prices would increase. He organised his pamphlet collection chronologically and used his library extensively for his own social campaigning and historical writing.

After his death on 14 September 1866 his widow presented his unique collection of pamphlets, books and manuscripts to the Academy Library. The Academy welcomed the handsome donation, which will form an important accession to the Library of the Academy and prove a beneficial force in drawing to the readers of Irish history.

The library of the day, John T. Gilborn, retrieved the collection intact as a separate collection. Gilbert directed the cataloguing of the pamphlet collection in large manuscript ledgers, and his handwritten catalogue, containing errors from almost every month, today, the collection held by the Royal Irish Academy stands at over 33,000.

With generous funding from Atlantic Philanthropies, under the International Access to Academy Library Holdings (IAALH) project, retrospective cataloguing of the collection has now been completed, with a detailed record of each pamphlet now accessible worldwide on the Royal Irish Academy Online catalogue.

The pamphlets are invaluable for the study of the history (social, economic, political, cultural), literature and antiquities of Ireland.

Chas. Haldy

The Royal Irish Academy. 14th June 1866.

A letter from Richard Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington, regarding the donation of his late husband's library to the Royal Irish Academy. 1847.
The Act of Union came into force on 1 January 1801, creating the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and abolishing the separate Irish parliament. Debates surrounding the Union generated much political writing both in Ireland and England. A pro-Union pamphlet published in 1798 and attributed to Edward Cooke entitled *Arguments for and against an Union* set in motion a pamphlet war which saw at least 50 pamphlets on the subject of a union published in that year alone. On each side of the debate, the key players, newspaper writers, poets, pamphleteers, merchants and politicians banded themselves with quills and ink to supply the printing presses.

Pamphlets on the Union and on the campaign for its repeal are well represented in the Holiday collection, amounting to well over 800 items. Although Holiday was pro-Union and anti-Repeal, the collection contains material from both viewpoints. Charter Holiday's own views on the Union were made known in various pamphlets and especially in a series of letters to newspapers in response to Daniel O'Connell's letters on Repeal. Holiday was remiss, however, in his replies to O'Connell's arguments, relying on factual information gained from his wide reading habits and extensive library.

In response to the Act of Union, the Repeal movement led by Daniel O'Connell (1775–1847) gained momentum, and O'Connell organized 'monster meetings' to promote the cause. Holiday's pamphlet collection burdened over 180 items relating to Repeal, including words by Daniel O'Connell himself and the reports of the Local National Repeal Association. The speech at the Irish national Repeal of 1822 was delivered in the same year, containing a lovely copperplate engraving of a large procession of people on O'Connell Street, Dublin, showing O'Connell in his drapery and crowds of jubilant people lining the way.