Who Will Brighten Their Grave Faces?
19th-Century Popular Literature
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Who Will Brighten Their Grave Faces? 19

20th-Century Popular Literature
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2021
Cover Image

Title Page Image

Acknowledgements
Photographs: Patrick Warner.
Catalogue design: Rochelle Baker and Patrick Warner.

ISBN: 978-0-88901-504-3
**Introduction**

Taking as its subject English 19th-century popular literature in print form, this catalogue looks at a range of publications aimed at mass audiences, including works of a religious or political stripe, self-help literature, as well as fiction. Numerous social forces influenced both the content of this literature and its production. The struggle for more democratic institutions and for better education and freedom of expression gave rise to increased reading appetites and a demand for different types of reading materials. New business models and new printing and book-manufacturing technologies drove explosive output in the publishing world. Nowhere was this more evident than in newspapers and periodicals, which rapidly became the medium through which the public voiced its opinions (Altick 322). The publishing world in the 19th century was both competitive and contested. Who should read and what should they read? Was it the task of writers and publishers to cater to readers’ appetites, no matter how sensational, or should the reading public be given only what would better them? And if the latter, who decided? Such ideas informed the development of both popular literature and the mass reading audience in the 19th century and set the parameters for the media revolutions that followed.

**The Social Context**

The 19th century, and the Victorian era in particular, was a time of intense social upheaval in England. Over the first half of the century, the population increased from approximately 9 to 18 million and doubled again to over 32 million in the next 50 years (Altick 81). Industrialization prompted massive rural-to-urban migration, which came with an increased demand for both skilled and unskilled workers. The proportion of civil servants and other white-collar workers grew, as did other segments of the population that would have had the time and opportunity for leisure reading, for example, the population of domestic servants increased to over 1 million by the 1860s (Altick 83). Overall literacy, which stood at about 50 per cent in 1801, increased to almost 100 per cent by the end of the century.

The reading horizons of the working classes expanded in response to changing social conditions. Contributing social factors included a shortened workday and work week, better elementary education, Sunday schools, and the secular exertions of the mechanics institutes, as well as more practical improvements such as better indoor lighting and the availability of reading glasses.
(Altick 87–93). In response, writers and publishers steadily increased the amount and variety of affordable reading materials.

In the publishing world, the copyright battles of the 18th century introduced the concept of the public domain and for publishers the chance to reprint out-of-copyright materials. In the 19th century, cheap reprints were to play an important role in making more affordable books available to the general public, which soon put an end to the established practice of publishing houses issuing small, high-priced editions. Cheap magazines, newspapers, and books issued in penny parts found an enormous untapped readership. Other economic factors which reduced the price and therefore increased the availability of printed material included the repeal of the stamp tax and paper taxes after the mid-century (Howsam 118).

With many more publications available and at ever more affordable prices, the question became one of deciding what an ever-expanding readership wanted to read. The answer to this question played out in the context of two powerful social movements: evangelical religion and utilitarianism. Both sought the betterment of mankind: the former working to impose Christian morality, the latter looking to impose its secular program by propagating scientific and practical knowledge. Both camps invested heavily in the printed word.

At the same time, other purely commercial publishers grasped that many people wanted to read for pleasure, as opposed to reading what was instructive and thought to be good for them. It was these publishers who seized on the mass market potential of fiction.

All of these publishers, no matter their ideological or commercial aims, took full advantage of the new printing technologies ushered in by the Industrial Revolution: machine-made paper, steam-press printing, stereotyping, typesetting machines, case binding, chromolithography (which brought colour to mass market publication), and later, toward the end of the century, electrotype plates and photography.
Popular Literature 1800–1850

Publishing in the early 19th century catered almost exclusively to upper- and middle-class readers. A typical press run for books during this period was small, usually a few hundred copies. Books were expensive, even for middle-class readers to purchase, and this was especially true of the novel, which was typically released in three volumes, or as a “triple-decker,” with each volume priced at 10s and 6d (Altick 297). In response, the avid middle-class reader often found access and variety through book clubs. The most popular alternative to purchasing expensive volumes, however, was the circulating library, where readers could pay a yearly subscription and be guaranteed access to a steady stream of triple-decker novels and other reading materials. The most famous of the circulating libraries was Mudie’s, established in the 1840s (Figs. 9–11). Mudie’s advertised extensively, and for a subscription fee of 1 gn per year, subscribers could visit the premises on Oxford Street or have the latest publications delivered to them (Altick 296–297).

Disadvantaged doubly by both the high price of books and high lending library fees, the literate working-class man or woman still had access to reading materials in the form of blue books, usually abridgments of gothic novels sown together between soft blue covers, and sold at 6d (32 pages) or 1s (72 pages) (Figs. 7–8) (Dalziel 6). Other examples of cheaper literature included political and religious tracts and pamphlets (Figs. 3–5), illegal and radical newspapers (Fig. 32), and almanacs. Most popular, however, were the chapbooks and single sheet or broadside publications sold on the streets by hawkers and which covered a variety of subjects: religion, romance, horror, crime, astrology, and revolution, to name a few (Dalziel 7) (Figs. 1–2).

Broadside ballads were enormously popular, with sales running into the hundreds of thousands and occasionally into the millions (Neuburg 143). This was the true literature of the urban working class in the early 19th century. Sometimes sentimental in casting a backward glance toward rural life, these broadside ballads and chapbooks focused mostly on sensational subjects, royalty, sex, and particularly crime (Neuburg 143). In many ways, they were the forerunners of tabloid newspapers. Among the most famous of the broadside printers was Scottish-born James Catnach, who founded his printing empire in the Seven Dials area of London (Fig. 1).
As literacy grew, so did the market for affordable reading materials. Several developments in the early decades of the century catered to the demand and the supply. Perhaps the first of these, and one that had its roots in the pamphlet, chapbook, and newspaper trade, was the publication of penny magazines and books in penny parts. The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge promoted cheap literature that was neither religious, trivial, radical, nor overly aesthetical in its aims (Dalziel 8). The year 1832 saw the first publication of Charles Knight’s *Penny Magazine* (Fig. 30) and *Chambers’ Edinburgh Journal*. Knight’s magazine included information about practical matters that the publisher thought his readers would find interesting; Chambers’ offered similar educational material but included sketches and stories. Both soon established enormous circulations, with the *Penny Magazine* hitting a circulation of over 200,000 within its first year (Dalziel 8). At the same time, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge published the *Saturday Magazine* (Fig. 31) to compete with Knight’s publication (Dalziel 8). Ultimately, both the *Saturday Magazine* and *Penny Magazine* failed to hold the working-class reader’s attention; both ceased publication in the mid-1840s. Meanwhile, *Chambers’ Edinburgh Journal* continued to publish until the mid-20th century. The lesson was clear: the growing readership wanted fiction.

**The Penny Revolution**

Though printed works in serialized form had existed for some time, the serial publication in 1836 of Charles Dickens’s *Pickwick Papers* tapped into and exploited a convergence between the traditional small press-run book publication and the voluminous periodical and newspaper publication of the period. Selling as many as 40,000 copies per part issue, the serialized *Pickwick* demonstrated to publishers the enormous untapped market for fiction (Altick 279). Not only could novels be sold in serialized penny parts or in magazines, but the individual numbers could then be gathered together in different editions to be sold as books (Howsam 183).

The opportunities afforded by this new market attracted a host of commercial publishers, with none savvier, in terms of marketing and sales, than those whose printing premises congregated around Salisbury Square in London. Foremost among these publishers was Edward Lloyd, the mastermind behind the “penny periodical” and the “penny dreadful” book. These were tales of
terror, violence, sexual aberration, and crime that had their roots in the gothic novel. Lloyd also commissioned authorized plagiarisms of Dickens’s novels (Figs. 17–18).

Lloyd championed J.F. Smith, J.M. Rymer, Pierce Egan Junior, T.P. Prest, and Emma Robinson, all best-selling authors in their time. None was more popular, however, than the prolific George M. Reynolds. Between 1841 and 1856, Reynolds wrote 34 novels that appeared in penny weekly numbers or six penny monthly parts, including *The Mysteries of London* and the *Mysteries of the Court of London* (Figs. 19–20). He also wrote a penny weekly journal entitled *Reynolds’s Miscellany* (Neuburg 170–175). Edward Lloyd’s “penny” success demonstrated a publishing and marketing model that others soon followed. Notable among his imitators were John Dicks (Figs. 18, 33), George Vickers (Figs. 32–33), and William Millner.

**The Backlash**

The success of the so-called Salisbury Square publishers and other publishers of sensational literature raised a moral objection among both religious and secular readers, who called for a better literature for the masses (Dalziel 46). Charles Dickens responded with his weekly publication, *Household Words*. Other new publications of the period included *The London Journal* (Fig. 29), *Family Herald* (Fig. 28), *Cassells’ Illustrated Family Paper*, and *Eliza Cook’s Journal*. Publishers produced reprints of less sensational novels: William Milner founded the *Cottage Library Series* and the *New Novelist’s Library*, both of which offered an alternative to the “penny dreadful” (Neuburg 178).

About half the number of the cheap periodicals that appeared between the mid-1840s and mid-1850s were put out by religious organizations or demonstrated positive religious opinions. Among these were the *Christian Ladies Magazine*, the *Family Treasury of Sunday Reading*, and *The Leisure Hour*, all of which included fiction (Dalziel 11).

The backlash had its effect. By the 1850s, George M. Reynolds began to write less salacious material. Edward Lloyd went on to have a more conservative career as a newspaper publisher, and the publisher John Dicks began to put out more high-quality lines, including *Dicks’ English Novels* (Fig. 33) and *Dicks’ English Library of Standard Works*. 
Popular Literature 1850–1890

The moral backlash notwithstanding, publishing in the 1840s and 1850s brought into focus a new readership and revealed a high demand for cheaper literature. Initially, this market was satisfied by serialization in periodicals and newspapers and by publication in penny parts, but as the readership developed, there was also an increasing demand for new novel-length works at affordable prices (Dalziel 4).

At the same time, England was undergoing a railway boom, which transformed the distribution networks for newspapers, periodicals, and books. Publishers and retailers set out to exploit the new market. In November 1848, WH Smith and Son opened their first bookstall at Euston station, and by 1850 they had similar stalls along the various British rail lines. They even opened a circulating library that would allow a reader to borrow a book at one railway branch and return at another (King 122). Publishers such as Routledge began publishing 1s or 2s single-volume railway library editions known as yellow books (Figs. 38–41). The series *John Cassell’s Library* began exploiting on a large scale the old practice of issuing standard and educational works in cheap parts. William and Robert Chambers continued to provide “improving literature” in ever more affordable editions. Thomas Tegg, whose business was founded on reselling remaindered books, began to take full advantage of the public domain by offering cheap reprints. Others followed suit. From the 1860s onward, a book bound in paper could be had for as little as 6d (Altick 307). By the end of the century, an abridged version of a novel could be had for as little as 1d (Altick 314).

Fin de siècle

The availability of cheap print matter and the establishment of public libraries in the latter half of the 19th century broke the grip that lending libraries had on the publishing world. By the 1890s, Mudie’s was offering triple-deckers at reduced prices. Not that lower prices completely killed the lending libraries business, Mudie’s continued to operate until the 1930s. New commercial lending libraries also sprung up, including the pharmacy chain *Boot’s Book Lovers Library*, which began at the end of the century and continued to operate until the 1950s (Altick 312–315).
Another consequence of mass-produced cheap literature was a decline in the aesthetic appeal and durability of the book. Popular literature of the 19th century was not designed to survive. The small press/beautiful book movement arose in response to such carelessness (Fig. 42). Kelmscott Press (Fig. 43), The Doves Press, and The Bodley Head, to name a few, created a market for well-made and artistically designed books. These design values soon had an effect on the mass market which saw the publication of aesthetically pleasing and affordable editions in such series as J.M. Dent’s *Everyman’s Library* (Fig. 44) (Altick 315–316).
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Forerunners: Broadside Ballads, Religious Tracts, Political Pamphlets, Gothic Novels, and Blue Books
Figure 1: Broadside: The New Sailor’s Farewell / The Dark-Ey’d Sailor.

From the Lubrano Broadside Collection: Folder 3: No. 2. Memorial University of Newfoundland, Special Collections.

A broadside publication is a single sheet printed on one side with text that might be verse, prose, or pictures, or a combination of all three. Sometimes two ballads were printed together on the same broadside with or without an illustration (Fig. 1). A single ballad could also be printed on a half-sheet. When included, accompanying woodcut illustrations were usually crude and often bear no obvious relationship to the text. In fact, they were frequently reused on different broadsides. “The term ‘broadsheet’ is frequently used synonymously with ‘broadside,’ but strictly speaking a broadsheet is either a large uncut sheet printed on both sides, or a pamphlet formed from one” (Shepherd 14). The penny broadside ballad was the true popular literature of the masses from the 16th century onward, reaching a peak of production in the early 19th century, when a single broadside, especially if it was topical and sensational, could sell in the hundreds of thousands.

The two most famous broadside publishers of the period were James Pitts, a former printer of *Cheap Repository Tracts* (Fig. 3), who reinvigorated the trade when he set up business in the Seven Dials district of London. Pitts was soon eclipsed by transplanted Scotsman James Catnach, whose output of sensational materials geared to an urban audience found an enormous market. Catnach reputedly took sacksful of pennies to the bank each week. He is also said to have paved his parlour with counterfeit coins. Catnach printed many traditional songs, but he specialized in printing the news in verse. He published hundreds of crudely written ballads that became the poor man’s newspapers, dealing with politics, sport, fashions, murders, deathbed speeches, and confessions. Catnach became famous for his ‘cocks’ and ‘catchpennies,’ fictitious narratives printed up when real news was scarce.
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Figure 2: Poor Black Bess.
The rivalry between London broadside printers James Pitts and “Jemmy” Catnach benefitted the next generation of broadside printers, particularly William S. Fortey, who came into possession of the backlists of both publishers, reissuing many of them under his own imprint. He also took over Catnach’s premises at Monmouth-Court. Fortey was one of the last generation of broadside printers and one of only three printers of broadsides still active in 1892. As the century progressed, the broadside-ballad trade declined, eclipsed by cheap newspapers and periodicals.

The following is taken from an interview with a street hawker in Brighton in August 1869, who on that day was selling a half-penny newspaper. “Have you got any real old ‘cocks’ by you?” He replied, “No, not a bit of a one; I’ve worked ‘em for a good many years, but it ’aint much of a go now. Oh, yes, I know’d ‘old Jemmy Catnach’ fast enough—bought many hundreds, if not thousands of quires of him. Not old enough? Oh, ’aint I though; why I’m turned fifty, and I’ve been a ‘street-paper’ seller all my life. I knows Muster Fortey very well; him as is got the business now in the Dials—he knows his way about, let him alone for that; and he’s a rare good business man let me tell you, and always been good and fair to me; that I will say of him” (The History of the Catnach Press xii).

When Fortey died in 1901, his stock was auctioned off by Sotheby’s. Much of it can now be found at the Printing Library of the St. Bride Foundation, London. The broadside on the left (Fig. 2), Poor Black Bess, tells the story of the highwayman Dick Turpin and his faithful horse Black Bess, pursued by “Argus-eyed justice.” Turpin and Black Bess made it from London to York in 12 hours, but eventually, cornered and exhausted, Turpin decided to shoot his mount to save her from the bloodhounds. “‘Twas in kindness I killed thee my poor Black Bess.”
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Figure 3: The History of the Two Wealthy Farmers.

190 x 120 mm. Pp. 15 [1]. A single folded sheet. “Cheap repository. Sunday reading” at the head of the title. Pages 15 to 16 contain a list of Cheap Repository tracts from June 1, 1795. Signed at end: Z, that is, Hannah More. The front page contains a woodcut illustration of the two travellers outside the Golden Lion Inn.

In the late 18th century, religious and political ideals competed vigorously to reach a growing readership through the printed word. Among those of religious vocation, Hannah More (1745–1833), a writer and philanthropist, was instrumental in bringing literature to the common English reader (Altick 77). Early literary success brought her fame and access to London society. Disillusioned by the moral vacuity of the literary world, however, More turned her attention first to the aristocracy and then to the lower classes, attempting to instruct both in morality and in how to live a Christian life. With her sisters, she set up a number of charity schools. In the 1790s, appalled by the atheism espoused in the radical pamphlets circulating in England during the French Revolution, she set out to defend revealed religion in a series of Christian tales, published anonymously as *Cheap Repository Tracts*. Three tracts were published per month between 1795 and 1798. As well as overseeing the whole operation, More personally wrote 49 of the 144 tracts. Sales were enormous, with over 2 million sold within the first year. The series paved the way for the work of the *Religious Tract Society* (RTS), founded in 1799. The RTS and other associated religious societies, the *British and Foreign Bible Society* (BFBS) and the *Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge* (SPCK), were highly influential in 19th-century publishing, both in England and abroad, increasing literacy by making available bibles and cheap reading materials, as well as setting a moral tone with which others in the publishing industry had to contend with.
Figure 4: Hone: The Political House that Jack Built.

Figure 5: Hone: The Political Litany, diligently revised …


William Hone (1780–1842), a writer, publisher, and bookseller, was public-minded and showed strong activist tendencies, campaigning on behalf of the rights both of the mentally ill and the wrongfully convicted. In 1814, he wrote and published the parody *The Political House that Jack Built*” (Fig. 4), which went on to sell more than 100,000 copies in 54 editions. In his writings, he frequently collaborated with the illustrator George Cruikshank (1792–1878). Hone was famously put on trial for blasphemy in 1817. His offence: penning and publishing the three parodies “The Late John Wilkes’s Catechism of a Ministerial Member,” “The Political Litany Diligently Revised to be Said or Sung until the Appointed Change Come” (Fig. 5), and “The Sinecurists’ Creed or Belief, as the Same Can or May be Said.” Hone was charged separately for each of the parodies, with trials held on three successive days. He chose to defend himself in court, which entitled him to call witnesses, cross-examine them, and review the case for the jury. The case attracted enormous public attention. Hone argued that he was charged with blasphemy and not sedition and defended himself against the government’s charges by claiming that it, not religion, was the subject of his ridicule. He was acquitted at all three trials and claimed victory for the free press and the trial-by-jury system. He was acclaimed as a champion of the people.
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Figure 6: Radcliffe: The Mysteries of Udolpho.
In *A Rogue’s Life*, first published in 1879, the writer Wilkie Collins asks: “Anybody may cram their poor heads; but who will brighten their grave faces?” Collins’s point was that people read for pleasure and escape as much as for information. It was no different in the 18th century. In fact, an increasingly literate public demonstrated an insatiable interest for escapism through sensational fiction. One popular form was the gothic story, which was based on romance and feeling. Ann Radcliffe’s (1764–1823) novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho* tells the tale of Emily St. Aubert, who suffers misadventures that include the death of her parents, supernatural terrors in a remote castle, and the unsavoury manoeuvrings of an Italian criminal. Radcliffe’s story, like those of her many imitators, presented traumatic disruption to the lives of heroes and heroines, trials that are ultimately rectified in the end in a way that upheld virtue and rightful inheritance, as well as punishing those who sought to exploit others (Hughes 9). The book, a bestseller in its day, was a particularly influential text in the subsequent development of not only of gothic literature but on literature of all levels. Cheap chapbook editions of such stories were available in the early 19th century in the form of “Shilling Shockers” and “Sixpenny Shockers,” otherwise known as gothic bluebooks. Many were abridgements (36 or 72 pages long) of full-length gothic novels, often plagiarized (Figs. 7–8). The work also sparked an explosion of sensationalist fiction associated with the Salisbury Square group of publishers and writers who produced “penny dreadfuls.” *The Mysteries of Udolpho* also influenced the middle- and highbrow literature of Jane Austen, Walter Scott, and Edgar Allan Poe.
Figure 7: The History of Cecilia; or, the Beautiful Nun.

Figure 8: The History of William and Nancy …

8. *The History of William and Nancy: or The Force of Love: containing the particulars of their courtship and marriage to which is added The Shepherdess of Chamouny, an interesting tale; and Cymon and Iphigene*. London: Published by J. Bailey. [c.1820]. Disbound chapbook (missing *Cymon and Iphigene*) with colour frontispiece. 24pp. [Price 6d.]

*The History of Cecilia; or, the Beautiful Nun* is a redaction of the story “Cécile” from *Adéle et Théodore* by Stéphanie de Genlis, written in 1782 and first translated into English in 1783. It is a gothic tale that was printed for Ann Lemoine (born Ann Swires, fl. 1786–1820), a British chapbook bookseller and publisher who specialized in gothic blue books. Lemoine innovated the marketing and distribution of short gothic tales, capitalizing on the craze for gothic literature (Figs. 7–8). She was the first fully independent female publisher in England. Between 1795 and 1820, she published well over 400 separate chapbooks. While she may have written some of the chapbooks herself, she was known to have employed writers, including one of the more popular chapbook writers of the time, Sarah Scudgell Wilkinson (1779–1831). Lemoine also published songbooks, jokebooks, adventure stories, and children’s tales. The small, paper-bound chapbooks, which were quickly produced using poor materials, and distributed by peddlers and itinerant salesmen, sold for less than 1s. Bluebooks were simply chapbooks with soft blue wrappers. Frederick Frank described the gothic bluebook as “a primitive paperback or ur-pulp publication, cheaply manufactured, sometimes garishly illustrated, and meant to be thrown away after being ‘read to pieces’” (Frank 132).
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Figure 9: Eliot: Felix Holt.

Figure 10: Mudie’s Lending Library Sticker.

Publishing in the early 19th century catered almost exclusively to upper- and middle-class readers. A typical press run for books during this period was small, usually a few hundred copies. Books were expensive, even for middle-class readers to purchase, and this was especially true of the novel, which was typically released in three volumes, or as a “triple-decker,” with each volume priced at 10s and 6d (Altick 297). Such pricing put the novel beyond the reach even of many middle-class readers, who were forced to explore other avenues of access. The most popular alternative was the lending or circulating library, where readers could pay a yearly subscription and be guaranteed access to a steady stream of triple-decker novels, as well as to non-fiction works and periodicals. The most famous of the circulating libraries was Mudie’s, established in the 1840s. Mudie’s advertised extensively, and for a subscription fee of 1gn per year, subscribers could visit his premises on Oxford Street or have the latest publications delivered to them.

George Eliot was the pseudonym of Marian Evans (1819–1880), who also went by several names during her life: Mary Anne Evans (at birth), Mary Ann Evans (from 1837), Marian Evans (from 1851), Marian Evans Lewes (from 1854), and Mary Ann Cross (1880). Marian Evans (George Eliot) was acknowledged in her time as a master of the novel. *Felix Holt, the Radical* is one of her later fictional works and also one of her least read. Its subject is the upheavals of society at the time of the first Reform Act of 1832. The story is of an election contested by Harold Transome, a local landowner who goes against his family’s Tory traditions by running for election as a radical. Contrasting with the opportunism of Transome is the sincere, but opinionated, radical, Felix Holt, who chooses working-class poverty over comfortable wealth. Both men fall in love with the same woman, Esther Lyon.
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Figure 11: Mudie’s Select Library catalogue for 1891.
10. *Mudie’s Select Library.* London: Mudie’s Select Library, January 1891. Including works of History, Biography etc. pages 1-22: Works of Fiction, pages 222-390; followed by a 24-page section entitled “Sets of Works from Authors” and lastly by a section entitled “Books of the Best Authors”. Various “terms of subscription” are laid out verso of the title page. 450 pp. This copy has the original cover. An inscription on the front blank indicates it was the property of the “Tralee Young Men’s Christian Association.”

Charles Edward Mudie was born in London in 1818, the son of Scottish-born Thomas Mudie, a newspaper agent, bookseller, stationer, and lending librarian. The son learned the trade from his father and, in 1840, he opened a shop at 28 Upper King Street, supplying newspapers and stationery as well as lending books, which soon became his main business. The three-volume novel was a standard publishing format in the 19th century. Mudie’s demand that publishers produce only three-decker novels allowed him to divide up one novel among three subscribers, a practice that kept the format healthy until the 1890s. He also advertised his catalogues widely, creating bestseller lists. Mudie’s Lending Library offered unlimited borrowing of fiction and prose works at low subscription rates, starting at 1gn per year. In doing so, he greatly expanded the amount and kinds of reading materials available to readers. By mid-century, he had over 25,000 subscribers. In 1852, he opened new premises on London’s New Oxford Street. He also established branches in Birmingham, Manchester, and other regional centres. Between 1853 and 1862, Mudie is said to have added almost 1 million volumes to his book stock, becoming one of the major distributors of fiction in Britain at the time. His business also catered to readers overseas, shipping tin trunks of books to India, Egypt, and other British colonies.
SPORTING ANECDOTES;
ORIGINAL AND SELECT;
INCLUDING CHARACTERISTIC SKETCHES OF EMINENT PERSONS WHO HAVE APPEARED ON THE TURF.
With an interesting selection of the MOST EXTRAORDINARY EVENTS WHICH HAVE TRANSPRIED IN THE SPORTING WORLD;
A correct description of THE ANIMALS OF CHASE, AND OF EVERY OTHER SUBJECT CONNECTED WITH THE VARIOUS DIVERSIONS OF THE FIELD.
BY AN AMATEUR SPORTSMAN.

Figure 12: Egan: Sporting Anecdotes.
11. Egan, Pierce. *Sporting Anecdotes: original and select, including characteristic sketches of eminent persons who have appeared on the turf. With an interesting selection of the most extraordinary events which have transpired in the sporting world a correct description of the animals of chase, and of every other subject connected with the curious diversions of the field. By an amateur sportsman.* London: Albion Press, printed by James Cundee for Thomas Hurst, J. Harris and J. Wheble, 1804. vi, [10], 542 pp. With 16 engraved plates; woodcut vignette on title page.

Pierce Egan (1772–1849), a sporting journalist and author, was born in London of Irish ancestry. Egan entered the printing trade and trained as a compositor. In 1812, he began working as a compositor for George Smeeton on a serial publication: *Boxiana, or, Sketches of ancient and modern pugilism, from the days of the renowned Broughton and Slack to the heroes of the present milling era.* Authorship was ascribed to “one of the Fancy” (“the Fancy” being the sporting set in fashionable society) but was subsequently ascribed to Egan when the second edition appeared in 1818. Egan is best known for his work *Life in London* (1821), which follows characters Tom and Jerry on their “rambles and sprees.” The work was an immediate hit. His other works include *Pierce Egan’s Book of Sports* (1832). He also wrote humorous travel guides to various cities, including London, Liverpool, and Dublin. Curiously absent from many accounts of Egan’s life and work is any reference to *Sporting Anecdotes: original and select, including characteristic sketches of eminent persons who have appeared on the turf,* ..., perhaps Egan’s first book. The work is a hodgepodge of sporting anecdotes in prose and verse, with titles ranging from “A monkey cured of hunting” to “Genealogy of a jockey” to “Canine ingratitude,” some of which were reprinted in later works. Though the popularity of his work waned later in his life, Egan is now thought to be an influential figure in the development of illustrated sports journalism. His son Pierce James Egan (1814–1880) was a bestselling author of historical fiction.
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Salisbury Square Fiction: The Penny Dreadful
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Figure 13: Edward Lloyd.
12. Salisbury Square Fiction: Edward Lloyd and John Dicks

Salisbury Square fiction is the name given to popular literature, particularly the flood of penny dreadfuls, bloods, romances, and penny periodicals put out by publishers who had their premises in or around Salisbury Square in London after 1841. Chief among these was the publisher Edward Lloyd.

Edward Lloyd (1815–1890) was born in Surrey. In 1836, he entered the London publishing scene. From his address at 12 Salisbury Square, Fleet Street, he began published weekly magazines, for example, Lloyd’s Penny Weekly Miscellany. He also commissioned books, publishing over 200 works of fiction between 1836 and 1856. Many were “penny dreadfuls” and “penny bloods,” but the majority were “domestic romances,” which Lloyd published in deference to a loyal female readership. Best known among these is Ada, the Betrayed. According to John Medcraft, Lloyd “eliminated highwaymen and vampires, added an innocuous title, and confined himself to the milder themes of pirates and smugglers, murder and rape, seductions and abductions” (15). Lloyd knew his readership and often used working-class readers as focus groups before deciding to publish a particular title. Working with T.P. Prest, Lloyd published many unauthorized Dickens works. Later in his career, he became a respectable publisher of newspapers, among them Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper, and actively downplayed his early lucrative publishing ventures in sensational fiction.

John Thomas Dicks (bap. 1818, d. 1881) published sensational fiction but also cheap editions of the classics. Teaming up in the 1850s with the writer George Reynolds made Dicks one of the most successful publishers in London. Dicks published Reynolds’s Weekly Newspaper as well as Reynolds’s multi-novel series Mysteries of the Court of London (1849–1856). In 1863, the two men formed a partnership, and eventually (probably at Reynolds’s death in 1879) Dicks purchased the name and copyrights of G.W.M. Reynolds. In the 1860s, Dicks began reprinting novels, plays, “classics,” and miscellaneous material rather than originating new works. His series included Dicks’ English Novels (Fig. 33), Dicks’ Shakespeare, and Dicks’ Standard Plays.
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Figure 14: Prest: Ela, the Outcast; or, the Gipsy of Rosemary Dell.

Thomas Peckett Prest (1809/10–1859) was born in London, the son of a blacksmith. He apprenticed to a printer and began his career as a compositor. In the 1830s, he began to write and perform songs for saloons and singing clubs. He also wrote for minor publishers of the unstamped press, mostly in ephemeral penny periodicals. In 1836, he began to work with the Salisbury Square publisher Edward Lloyd. Looking to capitalize on the popularity of Dickens, Prest began to write imitations, which included a penny weekly serial *The Posthumous Notes of the Pickwick Club*, or, *The Penny Pickwick, by “Bos”* (1837–1838). Prest’s version liberally adapted and expanded Dickens’s work for a working-class readership. The work, augmented by woodcuts by the cartoonist C.J. Grant, was extremely popular and is said to have sold more copies than the real *Pickwick Papers*. Prest followed with other adaptations, including *Oliver Twiss* (1838), *Nickelas Nicklebery* (1838), and *Pickwick in America!* (1839). Prest has also often been credited with being the author of *Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, but scholarship has shown that the tale was really the work of James Malcolm Rymer. Early number editions of *Ela, the Outcast*, Prest’s most popular work, sold as many as 30,000 copies per week. Prest followed it up by writing over 60 “bloods” for Lloyd in the 1840s. This edition of *Ela* (Fig. 14) dated 1850, was issued in 72 parts.
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**Figure 15**: Smith: Minnigrey.

**Figure 16**: Smith: Amy Lawrence …


John Frederick Smith (1806–1890) was one of the bestselling fiction writers of the 19th century. As a young man, he worked as an actor in England and on the continent. He spent time in Rome, where he was involved with the Roman Catholic church. His first novels reflect his early vocation: *The Jesuit* (1832) and *The Prelate* (1840). His emergence as a bestselling author did not come until 1849, when he returned to England and began to write for the *London Journal*. Smith is credited with increasing the magazine’s circulation to 100,000 copies that year, on the strength of his short story “Marianne, a Tale of the Temple” and then with instalments of his novel *Stanfield Hall*. His next novel, *Minnigrey*, serialized between 1851 and 1852, is said to have increased sales of the *London Journal* to 500,000 copies, for which newsagents had to send special wagons to the station (ODNB). *Minnigrey* was serialized a second time in 1861. It was also adapted for the stage as well as being translated into Dutch and Danish. Other J.F. Smith novels include *Amy Lawrence, the Freemason’s Daughter* (1851), *Woman and Her Master* (1854), *The City Banker* (1856), *Milly Mogue* (1859), *Warp and Weft* (1863), and *Sir Bernard Gaston* (1867). The romances of Mr. Smith and his imitators, it was said, “contain plenty of vice and not a little crime, but the criminal always comes to grief in the end, and virtue is duly rewarded with wealth and titles and honour. The villains are generally of high birth and repulsive appearance, the lowly personages always of ravishing beauty and unsullied virtue. Innocence and loveliness in a gingham gown are perpetually pursued by vice and debauchery in varnished boots and spotless gloves” (Hitchman 1890). Little is known about Smith’s life. He reportedly lived a bohemian lifestyle and was also said to be deaf. Later in life, he moved to New York, where he died poor and unknown in 1890.
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Figure 17: Reynolds: Pickwick Abroad...

Figure 18: Pickwick Abroad (illustration).

Figure 19: Reynolds: Mysteries of London.

Figure 20: Reynolds: Mysteries of the Court of London.
George Reynolds was a novelist, journalist, and radical. In 1837, he began work as editor of the *Monthly Magazine*. In 1837–1838, he offered in the magazine a serialized and a racy fiction/guidebook to Paris, *Pickwick Abroad, or, The Tour in France* (1837–1838), in which he plagiarized Dickens’s characters. The series was popular and, although it increased the magazine's circulation, it also offended the magazine’s owners, who quickly terminated Reynolds as editor. Reynolds completed *Pickwick Abroad* in penny monthly parts, and the novel in its complete form went through many editions. Encouraged by the success, he wrote more fiction. In 1844, Reynolds began the penny-issue serial that made him famous, *The Mysteries of London*, published by George Vickers. The series was set among the squalor of slums and criminal life, a subject that had a great deal of resonance with readers living in the rapidly expanding Victorian cities. He presented readers with violent and sexualized crime stories that highlighted a society split between the decadent wealthy and the suffering poor. In 1847, after a falling out with Vickers, Reynolds began his association with John Dicks. No longer able to publish under the title *The Mysteries of London*, Reynolds continued the series as *The Mysteries of the Court of London* (1848–1855). Taken together, the two series, published in 624 penny numbers between 1844 and 1856, comprised approximately 4.5 million words in 6,000 pages of densely printed double columns. The two series sold millions of copies. At the same time, Reynolds wrote over 20 other novels, as well as many short stories and magazine pieces. He was active in journalism, editing *The London Journal* and later starting his own magazine, the sensational and radical *Reynolds's Miscellany* (1846–69), which quickly reached a circulation of 30,000. His political interests produced *Reynolds's Weekly Newspaper: A Journal of Democratic Progress and General Intelligence* (start date: 1850), which was highly influential among the working classes, especially in the north of England. “The Bookseller noted that Reynolds’s works outsold those even of Dickens, and in his obituary in 1879 it called Reynolds ‘the most popular writer of our time’” (ODNB).
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Figure 21: Marriot: BlackEyed SUSAN; or, the Sailor’s Bride.

As is sometimes the case with both serialized literature and popular fiction of the 19th century, the author was not listed or went by a pseudonym. In the case of the first of these two works, *BlackEyed Susan; or, the Sailor’s Bride*, the author is unknown. The pseudonym E.F. Marriot may have been the publisher’s attempt to associate the work with Captain Marryat, or Captain Frederick Marryat (1792–1848), a Royal Navy officer, a novelist, and an acquaintance of Charles Dickens.

In other cases, authorship is assigned incorrectly. In the case of *The First False Step. A Novel*, authorship is ascribed as follows: “By the author of ‘Varney, the Vampyre,’ ‘The Rivals,’ and ‘Jane Shore,’ etc.” Based on this, several bibliographers list the author as Thomas Peckett Prest (1810–1859). The work is now generally ascribed to novelist and journal editor James Malcolm Rymer (1814–1884), one of the most popular novelists of the era but who never published under his own name. He used a variety of pseudonyms, including M.J. Errym, Malcolm J. Merry, Marianne Blimber, Nelson Percival, J.D. Conroy, Septimus R. Urban, Bertha Thorne Bishop, and Captain Merry. Rymer was said to have written up to ten stories simultaneously and has been credited with over 120 titles. Rymer also edited a number of periodicals, including the *Queen’s Magazine* (1842) and *Lloyd’s Weekly Miscellany* (1845).
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Figure 22: Egan: Fair Rosamond, a Romance of History.

Figure 23: Fair Rosamond (illustration).
20. Egan, Pierce (The Younger). *Fair Rosamond, a Romance of History*. London: Barth, [1851]. Illustrated in 33 parts. Note: Cambridge University Library catalogue dates this edition as c.1851 because of a gutter advertisement in part 8 (not present in this copy). It was advertised to begin in 1850 in *Reynolds’s Miscellany*. The front pastedown shows the bookplate of Arthur E. Waite (1857–942), a student of the occult and a bibliographer of early penny literature.


Novelist Pierce James Egan (1814–1880) was the son of Pierce Egan (1772–1849), pioneering sporting journalist and author (Fig. 12). Egan the younger’s earliest work was as an artist and etcher. He issued his novels in weekly numbers and later collected them in volumes. He specialized in historical fiction, particularly “unreal and bloody stories of the Middle Ages” (Kunitz and Haycraft 209), such as his *Wat Tyler* (1841), in which scenes of slaughter were juxtaposed with romantic interludes. His *Robin Hood and Little John* (1840) was reprinted many times; it started a trend that has been called “a whole Robin Hood industry in popular fiction” (Sutherland 209). These novels were followed by *Paul Jones* (1842), a tale of a privateer, illustrated with woodcuts by Egan; *Fair Rosamond, a Romance of History* [1851]; and *Edward the Black Prince, or, A Tale of the Feudal Times* (1855). Egan also contributed to early volumes of the *Illustrated London News*. Between 1849 and 1852, he edited the *Home Circle*. He became a frequent contributor to *Reynolds’s Miscellany*. From 1857 onward, he wrote for the *London Journal*, remaining one of its most frequent contributors until the end of his life. The subject matter of Egan’s later fiction shifted from his earlier feudal stories to depictions of rural life, characterized by sensationalism and the juxtaposition of different social ranks and classes.
Figure 24: Ainsworth: The Tower of London.

William Harrison Ainsworth’s (1805–1882) first success as a novelist came with the 1834 publication of *Rookwood*. The work invented the legendary ride of the highwayman Dick Turpin from London to York (Fig. 2). Other novels followed, including *Jack Sheppard* (1839), before Ainsworth switched from crime to historical fiction with *Guy Fawkes* (1840), *The Tower of London* (1840), and *Old Saint Paul’s* (1841). The *Tower of London* was serially published in 1840. It describes the history of Lady Jane Grey, from her short-lived time as queen of England to her execution. The work is illustrated by George Cruikshank. Ainsworth published 40 novels in total. He was a friend of Dickens, taking over editorship of *Bentley’s Miscellany* from him before starting his own magazine, *Ainsworth’s Magazine* (1841–1854). He also owned and edited the *New Monthly Magazine* from 1845 until 1870.

Illustrator and satirist George Cruikshank (1792–1878) produced thousands of prints and book illustrations over his lifetime. His style “derived not only from London street culture but also from the vivid pictorialism of the *Bible*, Aesop’s *Fables*, Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, and Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*, and from the design vocabulary of visual satire sharpened and elaborated by such past masters as William Hogarth and contemporaries such as Thomas Rowlandson and James Gillray” (ODNB). Cruikshank was also a collaborator with radical satirist and publisher William Hone (Figs. 4–5). He illustrated the English translation of *Grimm’s Fairy Tales* and later worked with Charles Dickens on two series of *Sketches by Boz*. Between 1835 and 1853, he published an annual: *Cruikshank’s Comic Almanack*. His work was admired by many, including John Ruskin and Charles Baudelaire.
**Figure 25**: Cockton: The Life and Adventures of Valentine Vox. Title page and illustration.

*The Life and Adventures of Valentine Vox* was Henry Cockton’s (1807–1853) first and most successful novel. He published the work under the pseudonym Sherry, issuing it in monthly numbers between 1839 and 1840. It is a comic novel about a ventriloquist with a taste for practical jokes. A subplot tells the story of Valentine’s uncle, Grimwood Goodman, who was unfairly determined insane and locked up in an asylum by scheming relatives. The work was extremely popular, inspiring Thomas Prest to write a plagiarized serial, *Valentine Vaux*, under the pseudonym Timothy Portwine. *Valentine Vox* remained in print until the 1920s, and Routledge editions are said to have sold as many as 400,000 copies (ODNB). Cockton made little money from the work, however, and he died of consumption at 46 years of age.

Thomas Onwhyn (1814–1886) is best known for contributing 21 of the whole series of 32 illustrations to the serialized 1837 edition of *The Pickwick Papers*, issued by E. Grattan. Most of the illustrations were signed with the pseudonym Samuel Weller, but some also show Onwhyn’s initials. In 1838–1839, Grattan issued a series of 40 Onwhyn etchings illustrating *Nicholas Nickleby*. Dickens did not approve. “In a letter of 13 July 1838, he referred to ‘the singular Vileness of the Illustrations’” (ODNB). In the 1840s and 1850s, Onwhyn produced illustrations for many short-lived publications illustrating the comic side of everyday life. Onwhyn had an eye for humour, and he satirized tourism, teetotalism, and fashion in works such as *Etiquette Illustrated* (1849), *What I Saw at the World’s Fair* (1851), *A Glass of Grog Drawn from the Bottle* (1853), and *Nothing to Wear* (1858). He also illustrated six novels by Henry Cockton. Onwhyn abandoned illustration in the 1860s and for his final decades worked as a newsagent.
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Periodicals
Figure 26: Cockney Adventures and Tales of London Life. No 2. Nov 11, 1837.

“Among the lighter early penny periodicals with a London theme was *Cockney Adventures and Tales of London Life*, published weekly from 1838. Each issue contained a short story—said by the author, Renton Nicholson, to have been drawn from real characters and incidents—that aimed to encapsulate the feeling of cockney life, often using examples of the dialect. The tone is mainly humorous, finding amusement rather than moral outrage in the failings and foibles of everyday characters” (British Library).

Renton Nicholson (1809–1861) had a varied career as a pawnbroker, jeweller, gambler, cigar seller, wine merchant, and finally as a writer and editor. He frequently went bankrupt and was imprisoned numerous times. As well as producing *Cockney Adventures and Tales of London Life*, he edited *The Town*, a weekly paper, the first number of which appeared in 1837. It was a sensationalist, semi-pornographic paper, concentrating on scandal in high life. He also was involved with another periodical, *The Crown*, a weekly paper supporting the beer trade. In 1841, he opened Garrick’s Head and Town Hotel, in Covent Garden, where under the title of “the Lord Chief Baron” he hosted the well-known Judge and Jury Society. Members of both houses of parliament, statesmen, poets, actors, and others visited Garrick’s Head to witness the mock trials. Humorous, these gave occasion for much eloquence, brilliant repartee, fluent satire, and double entendre.
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Figure 27: The People’s Journal / Howitt’s Journal of Literature and Popular Progress.

According to *The Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, this journal, started by John Saunders and William Howitt in 1846 and published as *The People’s and Howitt’s Journal* until 1851, “gives testimony to the hopes and ambitions that concerned metropolitan journalists had of the power of periodicals to elevate, encourage and educate the urban working classes.” The journal published poems, stories, reports about urban life, and “extensive and thoughtful articles on contemporary issues and political thought” (ODNB). It is probably best remembered for publishing work by Elizabeth Gaskell, whom Howitt knew through Unitarian connections. At its peak, the journal had a circulation of about 30,000.

This issue of the monthly journal is notable for containing two articles about the California gold rush. Among the earliest reports of the gold find, it was instrumental in attracting prospectors from England. As well, there is a report on a series of literary and scientific “re-unions” at the Aylesbury Mechanics Institution. There is also a short anti-slavery piece: “Slavery is the retarder of civilizations, the suggester of vice, and the result of inhumanity; is it then surprising that man refused to be linked to such a chain of demoralization.” In the same issue, however, is a notice approving the transfer to Australia of orphan girls from workhouses who were 13 years and older, to be placed with trustworthy families: “The candidates must be fit for labour, have been vaccinated, or have had the small-pox, and must be free from contagious or infectious diseases.”

There is also verse, of the sentimental kind—“The Mother’s Dream,” by Mrs. Newton Crosland (late Camilla Toulmin):

By her Dead Child she still is kneeling,
The solemn bell has stayed its pealing;
The clouds have wept themselves away,
The sun resumed his gorgeous sway,
And through the antique oriel pane
Streams with a sapphire-emerald stain,
And falling, as through ruby deep,
Makes Death but seem a rosy sleep.
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Figure 28: Family Herald: No. 552.

In 1842, George Biggs launched the *Family Herald*. It was the first of the four highest selling penny fiction magazines of the mid-19th century. Although unillustrated, its format was soon taken up by other publications, among them the *London Journal* (Fig. 29), *Reynolds’ Miscellany* and *Cassell’s Illustrated Family Paper*, all of which added illustrations. The *Family Herald* avoided the sober realism of *Chambers’ Journal* and the *Penny Magazine*, while still presenting useful and even scientific information. More importantly, it offered members of the public what they really wanted, fiction, in the form of short stories and novels in serial form. In doing so, they avoided the vulgar realism of Salisbury Square fiction, while at the same time offered an exciting reading experience. Margaret Dalziel argues that *Family Herald* and other middlebrow magazines offered fiction in which the “the characters were not so low born but were middle or upper class” (Dalziel 22). By 1854, Charles Knight estimated that *Family Herald* had a circulation of 300,000 (Dalziel 23). The magazine was sold in weekly penny issues or in annual volumes. It ceased publication in 1940.

Each issue contains a different motto on the masthead. For this edition (No. 552) it reads, “It is possible that a wise and good man may be prevailed upon to gamble; but it is impossible for a professed gamester to be a wise and good man.” The same issue contains verse, a short story, two chapters from serialized novels (chapters IX and X of *Kate Donlavy or the Heiress of Castle Conor*; and no. 90 of *The Fly*). There is also a section addressed “To Correspondents”; a “Certain Cure for Consumption”; “New Publications”; and essay “England Among the Nations”; “Family Matters”; “Scientific and Useful”; “Statistics” (‘The London and North-Western Railway Company frequently receive at the station in Liverpool, in one day, from Ireland alone, upwards of 1,000,000 of eggs.’); as well as “Varieties”; “The Riddler”; and “Random Readings.”
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Figure 29: The London Journal. No. 177.

One of the highest selling penny fiction magazines of the mid-19th century, with a weekly circulation, at its height, in the mid-1850s, of over 500,000. The journal was established in 1845 by George Stiff, an engraver and newspaper publisher. Bookseller described Stiff as “one of the principal pioneers of illustrated literature in its present form” (ODNB). The early issues were written and edited by the bestselling author G.W.M. Reynolds, who left the journal in 1846 to start his own magazine, Reynolds’s Miscellany.

The London Magazine was published by George Vickers (1817–1886). Vickers was well known as a publisher of penny magazines and “penny dreadfuls.” The London Journal aimed at a more sophisticated readership, one that was more entertaining than the sober Chambers Journal and the Penny Magazine, while at the same time avoiding the sensational tone and content of Salisbury Square fiction. This particular issue begins with local history, “Harrow-on-the-Hill”; continues with a short story “How Alice Huntingfield Was Lost and Won” by Mrs. White; offers a florid report about a literary group whose members included Charles Lamb, Leigh Hunt, Coleridge, Hazlitt, Wordsworth, Godwin and others; a section called “Gems of Thought” includes the following: “Test of Ill Nature … The first part of a newspaper which an ill-natured man examines is a list of the bankrupts.” There is also verse, several more pieces on local history, a treatise on women and cancer, and a second piece of fiction “Look before You Leap” by Mazeppa. The issue concludes with an essay on the subject of candour, notices to correspondents, as well as advertisements for works published by G. Vickers.
Figure 30: The Penny Magazine. No. 93.
In 1826, mainly through the efforts of Lord Brougham, the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (SDUK) was founded with the object of publishing information for people who were unable to obtain formal teaching or who preferred self-education. The Society aimed to publish inexpensive texts that adapted scientific and other intellectual material for the rapidly expanding reading public. In July 1827, writer, publisher, and bibliophile Charles Knight took over the position as reader and superintendent for Society publications.

As an editor, Knight oversaw many publications, but chief among them was the popular *Penny Magazine* (1832–1845). Knight described the magazine as “the most successful experiment in popular literature that England had seen” (ODNB). True to the aims of the Society, the magazine was directed primarily at a working-class readership and served up informative articles on art, literature, natural history, science, history, and biography (but not politics or religion). The magazine also offered secular self-help: encouraging thrift, self-discipline, self-education, and other social and moral desiderata. Although its intended readership was the self-improving artisan, it probably enjoyed a much larger audience among the middle classes than the working class. A key to its success was its lavish illustration. By 1832, it had a circulation of almost 200,000 in weekly numbers and monthly parts, outselling its main rivals *Chambers’ Edinburgh Journal* and the *Saturday Magazine*. Together with its competitors, the *Penny Magazine* prompted something of a magazine boom. Its popularity was short-lived, however, as it ultimately failed to provide what a rapidly expanding readership most wanted: fiction. In contrast, *Chambers’ Edinburgh Journal*, which did offer some fiction, continued to thrive into the 20th century.
Figure 31: The Saturday Magazine. No. 600.
First published in 1832 (to 1844) and bearing the motto “It is not good that the soul be without knowledge,” *The Saturday Magazine* aimed at those among an expanding 19th-century readership who wished to self-educate. It was published by the Committee of General Literature and Education, which was in turn sponsored by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK). Under SPCK auspices, the penny-per-copy *Saturday Magazine* offered an alternative to what the Society considered disreputable journals directed at the poorer classes. *The Saturday Magazine* competed with *Penny Magazine* (Fig. 30) and *Chambers’ Edinburgh Journal* for a growing magazine readership. A typical issue contained articles about nature, science, history, and technology. It contained verse but no fiction. Because of the expansion of the British Empire, there was an appetite among English readers for accounts from foreign places. This issue contains an entry entitled “Canadian Foliage.”

“Both the spring and autumnal colouring of the vegetable world are richer and fresher here than at home. Vegetation, long oppressed by a severe winter, bursts at once into luxuriousness and liberty, with the apparent gusto of animal sensation, as if determined to enjoy the genial but transient summer to the utmost. In the autumn the juices are not fried up in the leaves by a slow sereing process, as in England, before they fall off shrivelled and discoloured, but the first smart night-frost in September changes the foliage at once, with much sap still circulating vigorously, into red, brown, yellow, and other tints, as if by a direct chemical or dying operation” (*Trifles from My Portfolio*, 183).
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Figure 32: The Poor Man’s Guardian. Vol. 2. No. 79.

Henry Hetherington (1792–1849) was an English printer, bookseller, publisher, and newspaper proprietor who campaigned for social justice, a free press, universal suffrage, and religious freethought. Together with his close associates William Lovett, John Cleave, and James Watson, Hetherington was a leading member of numerous co-operative and radical groups, including the Owenite British Association for the Promotion of Co-operative Knowledge, the National Union of the Working Classes, and the London Working Men’s Association. He was a leader of the “moral” wing of the Chartist movement and a supporter of pro-democracy movements in other countries. In 1831, he began publishing *The Poor Man’s Guardian.* As proprietor of the paper, Hetherington defied the stamp law, which many considered a tax on knowledge. The tax was first introduced in 1712. By 1819, when a 4d tax was applied to all journals issued on a regular basis, it had become prohibitive to mass circulation: The motto of *The Poor Man’s Guardian* was “Taxation without representation is tyranny, and ought to be resisted.” In place of the government’s red stamp (indicating that tax had been paid), Hetherington printed the logo seen to the right of the masthead in Figure 32. Hetherington played a major role in the “War of the Unstamped” and was imprisoned three times for refusing to pay the newspaper stamp duty. The *Poor Man’s Guardian* was one of as many as 500 publications that circulated unstamped. Hetherington also published other illegal papers, including the *Republican* (1831–1832), the “*Destructive*” and *Poor Man’s Conservative* (1833–1834), *Hetherington’s Twopenny Dispatch,* and the *People’s Police Register* (1834–1836). *The Poor Man’s Guardian* ceased publication in 1835. The following year the stamp tax was reduced from 4d to 1d.
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Figure 33: Jack Brag from Dicks’ English Novels.

Theodore Edward Hook is described in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* as a writer and hoaxer. His most celebrated hoax took place in 1810 when he bet that he could make a random house the most talked about in London. “Having falsely ordered a range of goods and sent out bogus invitations to dignitaries and notables, Hook and his accomplices watched from a room opposite as wagonloads of coal from the Paddington wharves, upholsterers’ goods in cartloads, organs, pianofortes, linen, jewellery, and all types of furniture arrived in unison at the woman’s Berners Street door. The lord mayor of London, governor of the Bank of England, chairman of the East India Company, and the duke of Gloucester were equally tricked into making an appearance. An amused crowd blocked the street for the entire day; yet, although he was suspected, Hook escaped without his involvement being proved” (ODNB). In addition to being a prankster, Hook wrote librettos, songs, and farces and later became editor of several magazines, including the satirical magazine *John Bull*. He also produced novellas and novels, including *Jack Brag* (1826), a satire on freeloading.

John Thomas Dicks (*bap.* 1818, *d.* 1881) published sensational fiction but also cheap editions of the classics. Teaming up in the 1850s with the writer George Reynolds made Dicks one of the most successful publishers in London. In the 1860s, taking advantage of increased literacy among the poorer classes, as well as increased leisure time, Dicks began reprinting cheap versions of novels, plays, “classics,” and miscellaneous material. His imprints included *Dicks’ English Novels* (6d per volume), *Dicks’ Waverly Novels*, *Dicks’ Shakespeare*, and *Dicks’ Standard Plays*. The series *Dicks’ English Novels* ran to approximately 240 titles.
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Figure 34: The Snake in the Bush, from the London Library series.

Two examples of “pamphlet,” or “yellow back,” or “penny dreadful,” or “railway literature” from the latter half of the 19th century. They are essentially short stories. *The Snake in the Bush* tells the American tale of Tim Timberlick, “whom everybody liked except Indians, for in past years he had made many of them bite the leaves” and whose “ranch was well known to hunters, trappers, and miners.” *The Guerilla Spy* is an American Civil War story about the life and confession of Henry C. Magruder, the original “Sue Munday, the scourge of Kentucky.”

According to Richard Altick, one of the difficulties for publishers of “yellow backs was that there were not enough copyrights to go around. A select number of firms held reprint rights to their most popular authors. The solution was to reprint contemporary American literature, which until 1891 was largely unprotected under British law” (Altick 300). Both copies are unopened and both contain advertisements for The London Library series in the back pages. “In Penny Numbers, every Number a Complete Story, containing Thirty-two Pages of well-printed matter, in book size, folded into an Illustrated Wrapper.” Both were priced at 1d. Bound compilations of the series could be had for 8d. The two copies listed above may not be part of the original London Library series printed in the 1860s, but may be reprints issued in the 1880s by J & R Maxwell.
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Figure 35: The Three Bears cover, 1872.

Figure 36: Goldilocks, from the Three Bears.

Figure 37: The Three Bears.
The railway boom in the mid-19th century was a publishing opportunity for many. Among them was George Routledge (1812–1888), who essentially built his publishing empire on cheap reprints. The first of his cheap reprint series was his Railway Library, launched in 1848 and consisting of American editions. Many other reprint series followed. Routledge was at the forefront of those who understood the value of illustrations in their publications. He promoted collaboration between the artist Walter Crane and the colour printer Edmund Evans, so that Crane’s pictures appeared in children’s stories, collections of poetry, and in the “yellowbacks” sold in bookshops and railway stalls. In the 1860s, he added Routledge’s New Series of Shilling Toy Books.

According to the Oxford Companion to Children’s Literature, “toy book” is a “term used particularly for a type of picture book which became popular in Britain in the mid-19th century. The format was eventually standardized and consisted of a large, almost square page (often 26 × 22 cm.), with six or eight colour pages sometimes interspersed with pages of text (though usually there was very little reading matter). The covers were of paper and the original pricing was generally sixpence, or a shilling for an ‘indestructible’ version ‘printed on linen.’” In the case of Routledge’s The Three Bears, the price was “one shilling; or, mounted on cloth, two shillings.” Colour was a main selling point in toy books. The subject matter was usually folk tales and rhymes. According to Routledge, toy books required large print orders to keep their price low; he claimed that he could only make a profit on a title if he sold more than 50,000 copies. Collections of toy books were often bound up and sold as one volume.
Figure 38: Soyer’s Shilling Cookery for the People.
Alexis Soyer was born near Paris in 1810. He later apprenticed as a cook before moving to England in 1831, and for the next six years worked at several great houses. In 1837, he became chef at the Reform Club in Pall Mall. As his reputation grew, he produced a number of books, including *Délassements Culinaires* (1845), followed in 1846 by *The Gastronomic Regenerator*, written primarily for the grander households with a kitchen staff. In 1847, he was asked to go to Ireland, where he set up soup kitchens to aid famine relief. On his return to London, he published *Soyer’s Charitable Cookery, or, The Poor Man’s Regenerator* (1848), which sold for 6d, with 1d being returned to the poor fund. *Shilling Cookery for the People* followed in 1855, designed for the working classes who could not afford elaborate kitchen utensils or large amounts of exotic ingredients. It contained basic recipes for plain dishes, boiled meats, sweet and savoury puddings, offal, and leftovers. *Shilling Cookery for the People* is part of the Routledge’s Useful Library series.

“My Dear Eloise,—Since the alteration in our circumstances I have learnt to practice the most rigid economy, which you will remark in this receipt. When I buy a hare, as I sometimes do, for two shillings, skinning it myself, and selling the skin for fourpence; I save all the blood in a pie dish, take out the heart and liver, removing the gall; I then cut the hare in two, across the back, close to the last ribs, and cut this part into pieces, using it for soup, and the hindparts I keep for roasting the following day. Hare soup.—I then proceed as for a giblet soup, only using half a pound of either veal, beef, or mutton, cut into dice, and put in a box with the hare. Fifteen minutes before serving, I mix the blood with the heart and liver, which I have chopped fine, and boil it up ten minutes; skim and serve. The addition of a little brown sugar and a glass of port wine is an improvement; if no wine, a little stout or porter will improve it. It ought to be of a dark brown colour, for which use colouring.”
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Figure 39: Harte: An Episode of Fiddletown and Other Sketches.

Born in Albany, New York, Bret Harte (1836–1902) moved west as a young man. In the early 1850s, he took a job as printer’s devil for the newspaper the *Northern Californian*, often filling in blank space with his own stories and verses. “His stories and verse would scorn the greed, corruption, lawlessness, brutality, and hypocrisy of miners and ministers, bankers and sheriffs, merchants and politicians. Gamblers, prostitutes, and other social outcasts, open in their ways, were by contrast more worthy … Irony with a realistic texture, yet softened by sentimentality, was the hallmark of Harte’s style” (ONDB). When his reputation faded in the US, he moved first to Germany in 1878 and later to Glasgow, where he continued to write about the frontier west.

The railway boom of the 1840s and 1850s in England transformed the distribution of books and periodicals and affected patterns of publishing and of reading. At the WH Smith bookstalls in railway stations, a reader could pick up the latest “yellowback,” the leading publisher of which was Routledge. Their cheap railway library editions were bound in yellow paper and furnished an illustration on the upper cover and an advertisement on the lower cover. This issue contains the “Routledge Railway Library Advertiser” pasted in the front and back, as well as a partial Routledge “Railway Catalogue.” One of the difficulties in yellowback publishing was that there were not enough copyrights to go around. The solution for many publishers was to reprint American literature, which until 1891 was largely unprotected under British law. Interestingly, this Routledge edition claims to be the “Author’s copyright edition,” perhaps in hopes of trading on the author’s reputation.
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Figure 40: Grant: The Scottish Soldiers of Fortune.

Figure 41: Grant: Did She Love Him?


James Grant (1822–1887) was a Scottish novelist and amateur historian. His father, John Grant, a captain in the Gordon Highlanders, was posted to Newfoundland in 1833, where he lived with his family for six years. James Grant’s first novel was the four-volume *Romance of War* (1845), which described adventures of the Gordon Highlanders. The work was based on stories told to him by his father. His earliest novels were extremely popular and he went on to write over 50 works of fiction as well as historical works. The first edition of *Did She Love Him?* was published by the Tinsley Brothers in three volumes and appeared in 1876. The first edition of *The Scottish Soldiers of Fortune* was published in cloth in 1888, the year after Grant’s death.

These two editions are both cheap “yellowback” editions issued by Routledge. The railway boom of the 1840s and 1850s in England transformed the distribution of books and periodicals and affected patterns of publishing and of reading. Cheap railway library editions were bound in yellow paper and furnished an illustration on the upper cover and an advertisement on the lower cover. This yellowback edition of *The Scottish Soldiers of Fortune* has an advertisement for Pears’ Soap on the back cover and “Routledge’s Railway Library Advertiser. Eleventh Issue.” on the endpapers. *Did She Love Him?* contains advertisements in the front papers for 1s novels: “Books for the Country,” “Routledge’s Sixpenny Miniature Library,” “Routledge’s Shilling Song Books,” and “Routledge’s Sixpenny Song Books.” The endpapers contain a six-page catalogue advertising various fiction and non-fiction series. The back cover bears advertisements for “Dr. Rooke’s Oriental Pills and Solar Elixir” and “Crosby’s Balsamic Cough Elixir.”
According to scholar and book collector Dr. Roger Peattie, 20th-century narratives around William Morris contend that he single-handedly rescued the book from the aesthetic depravities of 19th-century mass publishing. The Roger and Marlene Peattie Collection at Memorial University Libraries contains many works which dispute this narrative: “the richly harmonious books of Noel Humphreys and Owen Jones, the strikingly appropriate colour printing and page layout in Edmund Evans’s books, the polychromatic splendour of High Victorian book covers, and the austere, modern achievement of Rossetti’s bindings” (Peattie 18–19). In fact, as far back as the 1830s, publisher William Pickering and printer Charles Whittingham the Younger were producing aesthetically beautiful and well-made books. Dr. Peattie contends that “The Book of Common Prayer (1844), printed in an antique style on handmade paper, is one of the most handsome books of the century” (Peattie 18–19).

Charles Whittingham (1767–1840) the Younger was the nephew of printer Charles Whittingham (1795–1876), who pioneered the earliest iron Stanhope hand-presses in England. Whittingham chose to follow his uncle in retaining the iron hand-press and concentrating on the production of small editions known for both their design and presswork. Throughout his career, Whittingham developed a base of customers who shared his aesthetic concerns. Perhaps the most influential was the bookseller and publisher William Pickering. In 1830, Pickering engaged Whittingham and was soon providing the printer with over half his business. In 1844, Whittingham printed The Book of Common Prayer, the last of seven folio prayer books published by William Pickering (1796–1854), six being historical reprints and an 1844 version for contemporary use. Whittingham printed the work in red and black Gothic type, with a wood-engraved border on the title page, probably designed by Mary Byfield. With Pickering, Whittingham experimented with typography, and their work led to the revival of the old-face roman types of William Caslon. Whittingham also became known for colour printing from woodblocks. He produced several books for antiquary and illuminator Henry Shaw (1800–1873), including his 1842 Encyclopedia of Ornament.
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Figure 43: Rossetti: Sonnets and Lyrical Poems, 1894.

Sonnet 96.
LIFE THE BELOVED.

Thy friend's face, with shadow of soul o'erspread,
Sometimes unto thy sight perchance hath been
Ghastly and strange, yet never so is seen
In thought, but to all fortunate favour wed;
As thy love's death-bound features never dead
To memory's glass return, but contravene
Frail fugitive days, and alway keep, I ween,
Than all new life a livelier lovelihead:

So Life herself, thy spirit's friend and love,
Even still as Spring's authentic harbinger
Glows with fresh hours for hope to glorify;
Though pale she lay when in the winter grove
Her funeral flowers were snow-flakes shed on her
And the red wings of frost-fire rent the sky.

Sonnet 97.
A SUPERSCRIPTION.

Look in my face; my name is Might-have-been;
I am also called No-more, Too-late, Farewell;
Unto thine ear I hold the dead-sea shell
Cast up thy Life's foam-fretted feet between;
Unto thine eyes the glass where that is seen

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William Morris (1834–1896) was a designer, author, and visionary socialist. In 1892, he founded the Kelmscott Press, which soon became the most famous small press of the 19th century. Morris sought to produce books that would be “a pleasure to look upon as pieces of printing and arrangements of type” (ODNB). He looked to both the Medieval and Renaissance periods for design exemplars. Morris designed his own types and ornaments, drawing inspiration for his roman style Golden Type (used in *Sonnets and Lyrical Ballads*) from 15th-century printer Nicholas Jensen, and drew on manuscript and early modern examples of gothic script for his blackletter “Troy” and “Chaucer” fonts. Kelmscott books often have elaborately designed title pages and can include border decorations throughout. According to Dr. Roger Peattie, “for all 66 Kelmscott Press books, Morris designed the borders, initials and types, prepared the inks, chose the handmade paper and binding, and supervised the printing” (Peattie 18–19). The Kelmscott Press was active between 1891 and 1898. Although short-lived, the Press had enormous influence on the private presses that followed in its wake. Toward the end of the century, Laurence Housman, the brother of poet A.E. Housman, designed books which brought many of Morris’s Kelmscott ideals into the world of commercial publishing, including John Lane’s Bodley Head, the Vale Press, and Macmillan. As well as sparking the private press movement that continues to this day, Kelmscott-inspired design aesthetics soon found their way into mass market and cheaply published series books.
Figure 44: Morris: The Life and Death of Jason.

J.M. (Joseph Malaby) Dent (1849–1926) began his career in London as a bookbinder, moving into the publishing trade in 1889. Under the name J.M. Dent & Co., he worked to improve the standards of trade book production. He established his name with the *Temple Library* limited-edition series, which included uniform editions of the great English novelists. Dent soon recognized an enormous potential demand for cheap classics among self-educated readers. In 1906, he began his greatest project, a 1,000-volume uniform edition of world literature that sold for 1s per volume. His editor was Ernest Rhys, who proposed the name *Everyman’s Library*. The influence of Kelmscott Press could be seen on the design of books in the series, particularly on covers, title pages, and endpapers. The demand for *Everyman’s Library* was so great that Dent had to build the Temple Press, a new production facility. One hundred and fifty-two volumes were produced in the first year. The early *Everyman* volumes were reprints of out-of-copyright texts, and included Greek, Roman, English, American, and western European classics, but also the Russian classics, the great books of India, as well as works from a wide range of female novelists. Dent retired in 1924, with family members taking over the business. By 1939, more works by 20th-century authors were included. In 1956, the 50th anniversary was marked by the publication of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* as the 1000th book in the series. Between 1906 and 1975, the series sold over 60 million copies.
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