Publishing History

"THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND LITERARY HISTORY OF BOOK, NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINE PUBLISHING"

IV

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Lecture: The Rise of the Wholesale Trade

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, when the Syndics of the University Board was still in existence, it did not find the subject easy. It is the established tradition of these lectures that they should concern a historical subject, i.e. a subject that would require much research and reading. But within that scope, presenting you with the results of original research and giving the facts and authoritative words on the matter in hand, but the subject has not yet been thoroughly covered in narrative history. In 1899, and 1904, Gurney and Duff described the English Book Trade in the first essay of printing, and the 1953 lectures on the same subject from a more literary standpoint.

I propose to you and your succeeding lecturers to offer you something even wider in scope, extending through five centuries from the beginning of printing to the days before 1714. I shall not be dealing with precise attributions of type design or founding or with the process of the printing shop, but with the market for printed books.

The first lectures are to be about how books were sold. A book, of course, cannot be sold before it is printed, but it is often more important as a reminder of the usual course of trade a book will never be printed unless someone thinks it can be sold.

I shall also have occasion to speak of trade in other commodities beside books, and I hope you should have already seen much information that shows that trade has been no more than a peddlin' way in economic history. I will advance four reasons for my choice of subject. First, it has seemed to me that the current interpretation of book trade documents was to reveal the story of books in its more general aspects, and that it might be stimulating and fruitful for further research in bibliography to set down and use some of these assumptions. Secondly, the organization of the book trade has something in common with Andrew Marvell's love for his country.

... My vesuvius love should grow
taller than species, and more slow.

Changes in the book trade are a process of many years, and the subject cannot be fully understood within naive chronology limits or within periods set by the apparent dates of 1530, 1557, 1647, or 1750. Thirdly, the development of the book trade cannot be fully interpreted in relation from other trades. The same individual sets out in very different circumstances, and even when books were more than a minor interest, the pattern of their dealings was conditioned by the workings of other trades.

Lastly, in trying to cover nearly five centuries in four lectures, I hope we will know more would be advantageous. While I hope to cite no authentic example to justify each of the smaller points in this discourse, I shall have no time to cite more than a very small part of the evidence to support these.

The first lecture will discuss The Rise of the Wholesale Trade. The second lecture will deal with The Establishment of the London Monopoly. The third lecture will consider The Shoe Book Syndrom in the eighteenth century.
lecture I shall discuss The Emergence of the Publisher, or in other words of the publishing house, as we know it today, and of the effects which this has had on the form of books in the sixteenth century.

When Caxton set up the first printing press at Westminster in 1476, the book trade, such as it was, was almost entirely a bespokes trade. The buyer went to a stationer and ordered a book. The stationer had to find a proper text, get it copied by a scribe, written down, and bound by a bookbinder before the buyer could have his book. Contracts for this sort of sale are still extant. In his will of 1402, Richard Grafton of Redwater, instructed his executors to pay the stationer for illuminating and binding a copy of the Catholicus 'prost in indetermini inter me et invenio factum plicens continuo'. As in the contract made between me and him is more fully set forth. At other times the buyer may himself have had access to a text and have directly employed the scribe, the illuminator, and the binder. Richard de Scandebrugh, fellow of Merston College, for example, made a contract on 31 June 1453 with a scrivere John Reynold to copy the last three books of Sene Scota on the Sommer at 3 2d a quire. The manuscript written in possession of this contract is still at Merston.

But it was not only the books which were bought and sold; some stations also held some books in stock, and we have Caxton's own description of what the stock of a bookseller was like in his French-English Vocabulary, printed about 1480, but which has recently been shown to have been written in 1465 or 1466.

George, the Bookseller, hath more books than all the townes. by theyth them alle suche as they ben. they stolen or emprised, or otherwise pur sued. He hath doctorall, toutes, owners of Our Lady, dometous, patins, ac cidentes, sanctori well emnument, bounders with clapers of silver, booke of physike, seven salmes, kalenders, yorke and perpethyme, pentes of sweartes, pentes of glass, good portmes, which ben worth good money. The list of this book is, perhaps deliberately, mixed up; but leaving on one side the personal books and the calendars and books of physic, all the rest are either schoolbooks or service books. Many of them were clearly second-hand.

We know from other sources that there was an established trade in second-hand books in London. John Pye who lived in Wafing Street (just east of St. Paul's Church yard) and was Warden of the Stationers' Guild in 1641 sold a manuscript on the apoc ryphal gospels from 1460. As this book which is now Bodley MS 110 was written about a hundred years earlier, John Pye must have sold it second-hand. Thous anes books were second-hand stocks in London, they were likely to have been on a much smaller scale in the provinces. The second-hand trade at both universities was carried on by means of the Chest System. A Chest was a charitable foundation which advanced money to members of the University on the deposit of books or other valuables. Graduates and undergraduates pledged their books in these Chests, and if these books were not redeemed within twelve months, they were offered for sale through the University Stationers. The Stationers had to value the books before they were deposited in the chest. He was paid a small fee for valuing and another fee for selling; but he never owned the books. At this time his second-hand trade was in practice financed by the Chests.

The stock of George the Bookseller, apart from the school books which were not expensive, consisted of service books—not large and sumptuous books for the service of churches, which were normally bespoken, but small and portable picture books for priests and well-to-do laitymen; good pockets which ben worth good money. 'Cures of Our Lady,' and 'Sanctus well emnument, bounders with clapers of silver.' Some of them were no doubt manufactured in England but there still survive from the second half of the fifteenth century a very considerable number of breviaries, that is, the psalters and books of Hours which the monks nowadays describe as 'of ship quality. Perish,' despite their English provenance. It is not impossible that these books written, illuminated and bound in the Netherlands were imported for retail sale in England; and that this was the earliest form in which books were manufactured for reading through a number of bookmakers instead of being made only to the order of one customer.

There were then in the third quarter of the fifteenth century in London, Oxford, Cambridge and probably most of the large towns scribes, illuminators, bookbinders. They were bespoken craftsmen working to the buyer's order: some of them, assiduously bookbinders, may have kept shops and subcontracted the writing and illumination. But with the exception of pens and paper and the occasional service book, they kept little stock and had no accumulative capital with which to buy stock. These craftsmen cannot have been equipped, physically or psychologically, to buy any large quantities of newly printed books for sale.

These craftsmen shopkeepers functioned in a town or shire economy. The inhabitants from the country round brought in their supplies agricultural produce or salt in the towns. They took back in exchange the necessary goods which they could not make themselves; horses, harness, cloth, pots and pans, tools and so forth. The townsman lived by his more specialized handicrafts, and the freedom of an incor porated town mainly consisted in the townsmen's exclusive right to keep open shop within the walls of the town. A stranger could sell at wholesale rates in a freeman, but he could not sell by retail within the town. Even in London there was comparatively little regulation of what a man sold; he could change from one occupation to another: he could sell goods which he had made himself or goods that he had bought for resale. He had to be a Freeman of the city before he could resell anything at all.

This is a feature of the economy in medieval times lasting right down to the end of the eighteenth century and we shall have to keep it constantly in mind. Once a man was a Freeman he could sell anything, vegetables as well as immunity, spices as well as olive. It is in the field of drapery, liquor, haberdashery, and imported 'bunches' as spices that we first find traces of wholesale trade; in fact of a national market. It was chiefly carried on by merchants based on London, because Londoners enjoyed freedom of trade throughout the Kingdom. It was natural that once the making of books ceased to be a handicraft, once printing had been invented, just as the likely retail outlets for printed books would be the shops in the towns that drew their supplies of small wares from London or other ports.

But in the Middle Ages there was another and in the early days of printing perhaps more important method of distributing articles which were not produced in the town or the country round. Every town in England had one or more lanes in the
course of the year. They were held outside the town, and stalls and booths were set up in which all sorts of wares could be sold by strangers to the townspeople and from the surrounding countryside. Those who stayed for the most part were the London merchandise, but some of them might have been aliens. The fairs were held at different dates, with occasional trade and merchants had to work out an itinerary, into which they could fit the most remunerative fairs. In the same way as the proprietors of colleges and other endowments were subject to this law.

There is ample evidence that books were sold at these fairs. In 1497 an Act of Parliament was passed which required by London merchants and the gentry, which they sold there, including 'ornaments of Holy Church, chalices, bells, warmasters'. We know that many of the early scholars attended these fairs. Francis Filippo, an alien who commissioned the printing of several English service books at Venice, attended the Newmarket Harvest Fair and received a Bible from Strode of London in 1528. But the classic instance is that of Reuben Rosset, about 1480, and some of the documents in the law suit in which his heirs brought against Pymont were printed by H. R. Plomer in 1600. Rosset was a citizen of London but we do not know to what London Company he belonged or what fairs he attended. Pymont's reply contains four points of great relevance to our theme.

(a) Rosset was buying the books from Pymont so that he might 'make them unto the country to sell'.

(b) Rosset was going to sell the books by retail. He thought he could not have as much profit from other books of other stories. This is, as far as I know, the first expression of the essential difference between the printer's and the reader's way of making a profit. The profit in printing depends on the number by which you can sell a single book, whereas the profit of the retailer depends on the variety of books which he can keep in stock.

(c) Rosset wished the books 'very bound in paste'. A book cannot morally be retained until it has been bound, and this is another reason for letting that Rosset was buying the books for retail sale at fairs.

(d) Lastly at least two of the books which Pymont supplied—Bede's Ecclesiastical History and the Chronicle of England—were never printed by him. He must have bought copies from Wynkyn de Worde and read to Rosset. There were then three ways in which a printer could dispose of his books. He could:

(a) sell by retail in his own shop;

(b) sell by wholesale throughout the country; or

(c) sell by wholesale in the City of London and provincial towns.

Books, he had to buy in hundreds, but they must be retailed one by one. The number of copies of one book that can be sold out one one cannot be as soon as you conclude the matter, men, as he relatively small. Now, suffice, of course, exist, but the proportion of any edition which a wholesale or any other printer sold by retail to his own own on this book was never more, very large. The early printers must always have had fewer prints, and this was also the result of the distance between publishers and local retailers. The fairs may well have been the most important ones in the earliest days of printing, and as they are relatively small, their importance steadily declined over the next 2 or 3 centuries. Though alien stationers, such as Francis Filippo and Peter Acton of

Savoy, did the round of the fairs in person, it is unlikely that the London printers could travel the country in this way and at the same time supervise the work of their printing shops. It was the large wholesale dealers, the printers, merchants and gentry of the City of London who commissioned books from the printers at wholesale rates (and, probably, as in the case of Rosset, brought to supply their customers at the fairs which they could fit the most remunerative fairs. In the same way as the proprietors of colleges and other endowments were subject to this law.

William Witherby, who commissioned John Pettus to print two scholarly texts, was a London draper of some substance and twice Warder of that Company. William Ponders who reprinted the booklets as the Acts of the Trinity was, a small but prominent printer. It is not easily to name a Cambridge figure in the printers' Company. All these rich merchants were, of course, wholesalers of many other commodities besides books. Thus, Caxton liked to advertise the importance of his transactions and the noble patronage which he received. I suspect that he more sometimes had to think of them as a successful merchant and that his claim to commercial fame was that he had introduced a brand new line in the simple,waste trade.

Books were retailed at fairs, and so had to be bound before they were offered for sale. The country fairs were widely served by the London Mercury and partly by alien merchants from overseas. Francis Filippo was a German who finally settled in Paris. Sebastian Antiphon from Savoy had a warehouse for books in Oxford, and we can identify other itinerant alien in this trade. They were dealers in international trade but chiefly in service books and Latin books for schools and universities. The trade in country fairs was of bound service; and the activity of alien merchants was brought to an end by an act of 1534 which forbade anyone to buy foreign bound books or to buy books of a foreigner except by wholesaler. This prevented the aliens from going to the country fairs, but it did not prevent them from continuing to supply foreign printed books in London or elsewhere at wholesale rates, unaesthetic. The foreigner who handled this wholesale trade, Arnold Bockman of Cologne, was present and so, were men of substance sufficiently eminent to act as confidential advisers to the Archbishop of Canterbury; they were excepted by the Stationers' Company as 'Brothers' though they may have the full rights of native members of the Company. Brothers of the Company could enter books in the copyright register, but they were not allowed to print the city or could not sell by retail. These alien came to handle the importation of books from abroad, or the Latin trade as it was called, early in the seventeenth century; but the trade was still sufficiently important for the Stationers' Company to form a Latin stock to take it over. The Latin trade then remained chiefly in the printing of new foreign works of scholarship principally from the Frankfurt Fair. The English editions of the Frankfurt Fair Catalogue printed by John Bill from 1617-1630 were sale catalopges of this point stock; venture. The school book market for Latin texts then began to be supplied by reprints made in London and the disruption of the Frankfurt Fair by the Thirty Years War (and the subsequent disorganisation of bookshops and local retailers)

The fairs may well have been the most important channel in the earliest days of printing, but as we shall see later, their importance steadily declined over the next 2 or 3 centuries. Though alien stationers, such as Francis Filippo and Peter Acton of
antiquarian books and works of scholarship. By the end of the seventeenth century, the use of Latin, particularly in the Church and the universities, had reduced the market for imported books to relative unimportance.

Although the book trade was on the move, it was not until the eighteenth century that the book trade began to flourish. The demand for books increased, and the printing press played a significant role in this development. The use of paper became more widespread, and the quality of paper improved, which allowed for the production of more durable books. The taste for books also changed, and there was an increased demand for works of fiction and humor.

In the middle ages manuscripts were bound so that they would lie flat on the pages, allowing for ease of reading. As printing became more common, books were bound in a more practical way, with the pages laid flat on the page and held together with a spine. The binding of books was an important part of the book trade, and the quality of the binding could affect the value of a book.

The book trade in the eighteenth century was characterized by a shift towards the production of books in English, and the English language became more widely used. This shift was partly due to the economic conditions of the time, which favored the production of books in English, and partly due to the cultural and intellectual developments of the time, which emphasized the importance of the English language. As a result, the book trade in England became more active, and the demand for books grew.

The book trade also began to take on a more commercial aspect, with books being sold in bookshops and printed books becoming more common. The printing press played a significant role in this development, as it allowed for the mass production of books, which could be sold at a lower price. This increase in the availability of books contributed to the growth of literacy in the eighteenth century.

In the nineteenth century, the book trade continued to grow, with the introduction of new printing technologies and the growth of the middle class. The demand for books continued to increase, and the book trade became more specialized, with books being produced for specific markets and audiences.

By the end of the twentieth century, the book trade had transformed once again, with the advent of digital technology. The production and distribution of books changed dramatically, with the rise of digital publishing and the Internet. The book trade became more global, with books being produced and distributed on a larger scale than ever before.

In summary, the book trade has undergone significant changes over the centuries, from the production of manuscripts to the mass production of printed books, and from the dominance of Latin to the rise of the English language. The book trade has been shaped by economic, cultural, and technological developments, and has played a significant role in the history of literature and education.
paid between the printer and the reader, or in the style of modern commerce, between the manufacturer and the consumer: and, if any of these profits is too penuerously distributed, the process of commerce is interrupted... We must allow, for profit, between thirty and thirty-five per cent between six and seven shillings in the pound: that is, for every book which costs the last buyer twenty shillings we must charge Mr Cadell with something less than fourteen. We must set, the copies at fourteen shillings each, and suppose what is called the quarterly book, or for every hundred books so charged we must deliver an hundred and four. The profits will then stand thus: Mr Cadell, who runs no hazard, and gives no credit, will be paid for wearing a rent and attendance by a shilling profit on each book, and has chance of the quarterly book. Mr Dilly, who buys the book for fifteen shillings, and who will expect the quarterly book if he takes five and twenty, will send it to his country customer at sixteen shillings and a shilling, by which, at the hazard of loss, and the certainty of long credit, he gains the regular profit of ten per cent which is expected in the wholesale trade. The country bookseller, buying at sixteen and a shilling and commonly treating a considerable time, gains but three and a shilling, and, if he treats a year, not much more than two and a shilling; otherwise than as he may, perhaps, take as long credit as he gives. With less profit than this, and more you see he cannot have, the country bookseller cannot live: for his receipts are small, and his debts sometimes bad. Both these statements, by Vautrollier and Johnson, are statements of the custom in the trade by people who were familiar with the trade. The gross profit margin of the retail bookseller is fifteen per cent in the earlier case: seventeen and a half per cent in the latter. The correspondence is striking, but neither document mentions, what is certainly the fact, that out of this gross margin the country bookseller had to meet the cost of binding as well as the cost of carriage. From the days of Dick Whittington onwards, it has been the aim of ambitious children in the country (or of their parents on their behalf) to become London merchants. There is a fascinating glimpse of the process at work in some fifteenth century dialogues in a manuscript at Trinity, where the librarian of the Cock, on the Hoop in Northgate, Oxford, cross-questions some London merchants stepping at his inst on how his son could be apprenticed in London. The extent to which the Stationers' Company took from outside London is shown in a table published in *The Library*, Vol. 3, 1780. Boys apprenticed between 1562 and 1640, no less than 2,860, but of that 419 came from the provinces, Only 419 came from the city of London itself: 213 from Yorkshire, 180 from Northamptonshire, 147 from Shropshire; and Cheshire and Staffordshire each sent over 100. Not all these apprentices became freemen or, if they did, remained in London; and not all London freemen were masters or engaged in wholesale trade. But those who did certainly made use of their connections in the district from which they came. We can see the process at work in the few documents which have survived. Thomas Chard's connections with Cambridge, Roger Ward's with Stratford, Christopher Hunt's with Blandford and so on. The country bookseller sent his orders for new books to his correspondent in London; and the scale of a London wholesale business depended on the number and value of its country connections.

SECOND LECTURE: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LONDON MARKET

In my first lecture I discussed the channels of distribution through which books were distributed from London to the country. Now I would like to consider how and why it came about that London was the centre in which books were produced and from which they were distributed. London was never the exclusive centre of production for important commodities such as cloth or paper or silversmithing, and it is not nowaday for books so there is no inherent reason why it should have been for books in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This London monopoly in books was the result of deliberate and persistent organisation; and it could not be achieved until at least five difficult problems had been solved. First, the City authorities and the Stationers' Company had to come to some arrangement to absorb the alien printers and admit them to the freedom of the City. Secondly, the more comprehensive guild that established had to secure harmony and good order among its members by inverting the expedient of registering copy- right.

Thirdly, the Stationers' Guild had to protect itself from the unregulated competition of provincial printers outside its control; and Fourthly, it had to secure protection against books printed abroad for the English market. The first problem can be stated in formal constitutional terms. The Freedom of the City of London was a princely guarded privilege. It could be achieved only in one of three ways: (a) by apprenticeship to a Freeman, but Freeman were not allowed to take aliens as apprentices; (b) by patronage, but that was only open to men whose father had been a Freeman of the City when he was born; or (c) by redemption. Freedom by redemption could only be secured through the recommendation of some eminent person—Rupert Molyneux was admitted to the Freedom of the City in this way on the recommendation of Queen Anne Boleyn in 1536—by the recommendation of the Wardens of the Guild concerned. Now it has often been pointed out that all the early patents with the exception of Caxton were alien. If they were to become Freemen it would only be by the formal recommendation of the Stationers' Guild. Before any such recommendation could have been made, there must have been some agreement between the Guild and at least the more important of the alien printers. We have no record whatever of the terms of such an agreement; but we can deduce within fairly narrow limits what it was. The report says that in the civilisation of the City in 1300 is a matter of some uncertainty. There were suburbs outside the City and liberties within it which were not subject to the City authorities. The imprints on early books are not always sufficiently precise for us to say exactly where the alien printers had their shops, and it becomes a matter of subtle and complicated geography to ascertain whether these alien printers were within the City's jurisdiction. I have already discussed this problem (page 50) in summarising the position to say that all of the 200 books which we know to have been printed in the metropolis before 1300...
260 were certainly printed outside the jurisdiction of the City. The statue of St. Mary Notary by the Church of St. Thomas the Apostle. It can hardly be without significant analogy which was once in the City's jurisdiction. The situation changes, sharply coloured, is the case of Nolan Notary. Nolan Notary is at work in St. Paul's Cathedral (in 1318). Fleet Street does not help because this new address was almost certainly within the liberty of the Bishop of Salisbury. The real event is the date of Pynson's move to George in Fleet Street, because this address on the north side of Fleet Street between the ramparts is a more conclusive date than the Pynson's move to the south side of Fleet Street between the ramparts is a more conclusive date than the quite certainly within the City's jurisdiction. Pynson did not sign the lease of these houses years earlier because he prints from the new address are dated from 1503 onward. It is reasonable to conclude from this that the unrecorded Staton's Guild had begun to direct the alien printers very soon after 1503.

The second problem was solved by the astounding invention of the registration of copyright. Perhaps we shall better appreciate the brilliance of the solution if we first consider the original problem which it was designed to solve. The printer who reprinted a book had two advantages over the original printer: first, he could deverse editions if he prized one. Secondly, it is quicker and cheaper to set type from the original edition than from manuscript copy which may vary in price or quality. He could sell at a cheaper rate, and should he find a market, he could print more copies of his work than the original printer could do on his own, at a lower price. (The price started early. Matthew, the St Albans printer and Gerard Loys syntonyme of the stationers' guild in the East End of London in 1400 Pynson reported Chaucer's Canterbury Tales which Canon had already printed, and there are many other instances. Whylend's Weald's perpetuated the quality of Peter's work and Pynson's inventions, and the Ellesmere's two works which he had printed first; and why Pynson's invention was generally accepted because among a thousand men you will not easily find one more shrewd.)

The fancy novel was made by the individual printer to apply for a royal copyright, which gave him the exclusive right of printing the text. The first recorded use of a privilege in London appears to be for a Latin sermon on St. Thomas's Christmas by Richard Tac in 1518, which Pynson printed on 12 November of that year. The privilege printed in London is not only that of no man may print this sermon within two years of the publication of it. But the privilege granted by the King that person who should be licensed. Pynson's example was soon followed by Sautel and many others. The term allowed varied from two to fifty years, but was often left wholly indefinite. The cost of obtaining a privilege was probably considerable charge for a government clerk to copy it out would have been at least two shillings, and there were probably other fees to be paid in addition. This company with the bargain or promise charged for entry in the Statutes' own Register half a century later. Privileges, at any rate for a specific book for a short period, were doubtless granted on request. The conclusion of Pynson, Terpsichora, for instance, obtained a seven years privilege for his embellished edition of Staton's Latinus from Edward VI as well as from most of the other crowned heads of Europe. Privileges were granted freely to printers, though there are also examples of grants to authors and booksellers who were not printers. For individual books these grants became proportionately less numerous after 1540. We know that one precorporation ordinance of the Guild required a printer to show his copy to the Wardens before he started to print. A draft of the proposed statute was shown in Convocation as early as 1542. And if it is, I think, permissible to infer from this decline in the number of royal privileges that single works that members of the unincorporated Guild may have begun to register their own copyrights as early as 1540.

The Statute had no intention of creating a new form of property when they started to register copyrights. They were only conscious that piracy was an intolerable nuisance, and that their business would never prosper so long as there was no protection against it. The organization of effective protection required three measures.

I. A system of deciding whose copy was a book.

II. A rule that printers would not print a book for the owner of the copy.

III. Statutes to enforce these rules.

The way in which it was decided who was to print a book had he printed it was to show the copy to the book to the Wardens before it was printed and for the Warden to sign their licence. (I 537). They kept a record of these licences and the first person to apply was normally carried to the copyright.

There are two points worth noticing about the way in which the Statute's Company registered claims to copyright. First, the privilege of registration was not restricted to printers, and second, the privilege in early days was not even restricted to members of the Statute's Company. The reason for giving security of copyright to bookbinder who had no printing press equally with printers who had, was, I take it, to save the position of the wholesale dealers who organized the distribution throughout the country. The printers themselves had no time and probably no opportunity to manage their own wholesale distribution, and so could not live without the wholesale purchasers. They were presumably anxious and glad to get security against removing their own copies reprinted, but in agreeing to a similar right for wholesalers who owed no printing press, they were in fact giving the occupant of the market, the selling end of the trade, the power in the long run to dictate the terms and prices of printing. The tendency for distribution to become separated from production has been proved by Professor Livinow in the characteristic of other trades in the sixteenth century.

The second point to note is that the privilege of registration was not at first confined to members of the Statute's Company, freedom of copyholders, and even
In the early years of the sixteenth century some London printers printed books for provincial stations: Pynson printed books in 1499 and 1507 for Cornish Chaplains at Oxford: in 1513 Wynkyn de Worde printed a book for Henry Ives in the same city, and he printed for John Gacket at York. But after 1513 this traffic seems to stop: few books printed for provincial stations thereafter were printed at Oxford or Paris. The only exceptions and the latest books printed in London were in the accounts of a provincial station are two books, one dated 1527 and another of about the same date, which Peter Treveris printed for the Oxford bookseller John Dorne. Treveris with his press in Southwark on the south bank of the river was outside the jurisdiction of the City of London: and there is other evidence besides these two books which suggests that right up to his death in 1512 Treveris was at odds with the general policy of the Stationers' Company.

Printing outside London was always difficult: none of the early presses lasted long. It is doubtful if the local market, even at Oxford or Cambridge, was large enough to absorb the whole of an edition of economic size: and it was not possible to build up a wholesale connection throughout the country with the small number of different titles which one single printer—even in a large way of business—could produce. Between 1519 and the end of King Henry VIII the only print out of London which produced more than one or two books was that of Sheech at Cambridge and John Heriot at St Albans. In both cases there is evidence to suggest that the London Stationers were trying to sabotage their operations. There was another brief outbreak of printing in Edward VI's reign by itinerant printers at Ipswich, Worcester and Cambridge, but their output had a marked political slant and naturally faded away when Mary came to the throne in 1553.

The fourth and last problem to be solved before the London monopoly could be secure was how to stop foreign competition. The method of stopping imports was traditional. The trade petitioned the government for an Act of Parliament—the preamble to the Act says so—and the Act was duly voted and received the royal assent in 1554. The method here is simple, but exactly what books the stationers wished to prevent being imported and in what form is more subtle and more complicated. The Act forbids any importation of books already bound. I tend to show in my final lecture that this had the effect of preventing the alien merchants from doing the round of the English fairs, but it also promoted the livelihood of the local binders and retailers in London as well as the provisors. The Act further forbade anyone to buy foreign books of a foreigner except by wholesale. It did not, as a note, stop a foreigner from selling books in sheets at wholesale rates. A retailer in London or the country could still buy unbound foreign books and they did so, for the simple reason that the London trade was not yet able to produce the full range of service books or school books that the English market needed. The supply of foreign service books was stopped by a change of religion and not by any legal clause in the Act of the stationers. But on the school books I must here draw a distinction between the elementary books for lower school, such as the grammars of Caxton, Flesher, Whittington and Lilly, and upper school books, that is annotated classical texts and dictionaries for use in the upper forms of grammar school and at the universities. The English trade found no difficulty in providing the elementary books from the start; but for sustained effort was made to print upper school books until first Byrscopy, then Thomas Mars, then Vautoyer. The full range of
educational books for upper school was not present in England until the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Indeed the trade is apt to err on small scale even now. I have now, I hope, sufficiently explained the chief problems which confronted that some of these problems were well on the way to solution before the stationary situation. There were, however, two factors at work which offered an exclusive right to produce a single book. In January 1564 the Crown granted its first patent. This was the patent to Caxton and Whitworth for books by smaller. The Stationers' Company had a monopoly of the English language. The author of the first English book to be printed in the English language was the printer, and the motive which led the Crown to extend this practice and grant such privileges was the need to prevent the introduction of foreign books. The Crown very soon saw the value of such patents and indeed patents to charitable institutions—were a source of potential profit or a convenient way of satisfying the claims of deserving but unfortunate circumstances. The Stationers' Company was formed in 1551. It had the patent for patents for books to printers. The patent had been granted to a company. There were to be understand that these privileges might be revoked at any time and for reasons which the Stationers' Company or the Crown might see fit. The exercise of the rights of the Stationers' Company could lead to the taking of legal action against any printer or bookseller who infringed these rights. The Stationers' Company was formed in 1551. It had the patent for patents for books to printers. The patent had been granted to a company. There were to be understand that these privileges might be revoked at any time and for reasons which the Stationers' Company or the Crown might see fit. The exercise of the rights of the Stationers' Company could lead to the taking of legal action against any printer or bookseller who infringed these rights.
it was administered by a Bible Stock raised by the Stationers' Company and that for the first time, the Company operated from a separate warehouse. It was in the hands of leading members of the Company who worked in close association with the English Government. Before the English Stock sought to acquire any permanently selling standard work. It possessed the copyright of Poor's Book of Manners from the Stationers' Company. Books which established themselves as steady sellers such as Samuel Daniel's History of England and John Speed's Genealogies. It did not concern itself with transitory stuff like poetry or political pamphlets or newspapers or ballads. The last example, ballads, is interesting because it has been shown that this was a special type of business conducted throughout the century to a group of not more than half a dozen publishers. Ballads are for the true part topical stuff, although many had a long life. But the probable reason why the English Stock had nothing to do with them was because they were sold direct to country chapmen, that is to say hawkers who bought them at wholesale rates from the Ballad Warehouse at Fye Corner or the Angel in Ditch Lane, and then wandered up and down the country to sell them. Ballads were not distributed like books through established country book-sellers; and the wholesale purchases of ballads were not the large London wholesalers who were members of the Stationers' Company and had a substantial amount with the warehouse keepers of the English Stock.

Although the Stationers' Company and its English Stock exercised their role in the sort of books which they handled, they recognised that the English Stock could not compete with the London book trade. There were other branches of the trade, which might also be regulated by the creation of a joint stock. The Stationers' Company were very active in the second quarter of the seventeenth century in the Latin Stock, the Irish Stock, and the Scottish Stock.

The Latin Stock was formed in 1614 to distribute imported books from a London warehouse after the same fashion as the English Stock, and to regulate the reprinting in London of suitable foreign texts which had a potential sale in England. I have already said something of the Latin Stock: it went bankrupt in 1627. The Irish Stock was formed in 1614 to take over the patron of the King's Printer in Ireland. The object of the enterprise was probably to push the sale of London books in Dublin and to prevent the Dublin piracy of London books, rather than any profit that was likely to arise from government printing in Dublin. In effect, it was found that there was not enough printing work in Dublin to employ the press profitably. In 1632 Sidney's Arcadian Journals must have been intended for distribution in England. The Irish Stock in London found it difficult to control their agent in Dublin; and there were recurrent difficulties in settling his accounts. There was trouble with them all: Felix Kingston, Thomas Dozen, Arthur Johnson and finally William Blades. Blades became a Freeman of Dublin in 1631, and finally bought out the London Stationers. He is said to have given £200 for the rights of the Irish Stock in the King's Printer's Patent in Ireland in 1639. But it is not known whether this sum was ever paid. The story of the Stock to exploit the King's Printer's Patent for Scotland differs much the same lines as in Ireland. Robert Young acquired a share of this Patent in 1632, and was on friendly terms with Evan Tyler, who was the man on the spot for 31 years from 1641. In 1647 after Young's death the Stationers Company bought
book trade, but it was by no means the whole of it. Controversial theology, politics, and science were not for the English Stock. Books on such subjects were secured by the individual ordinance of statesmen, but the expense was shared when the initial outlay was too large for one man, or the sale of the book could be more effectively lured by engaging the interest of several persons. These were the two factors which provided arrangements for sharing books. The first trace of the practice is in the Royal Book of 1507 which was printed by Pynson, but of which copies exist both with his name and Wynken de Worde's. Both Booseham and Bosham shared the 1542 edition of Ralph's Chronicle and the Chaucer printed in the same year. The next edition of Chaucer, printed in 1498 after the death of Booseham, was shared between Bosham, Kelms, Pet and Toyne. A Bible of 1515 has this colophon: Imprinted at Londin by Nicholain Hilld. . . at the cost and charges of certain honest men of the occupation, whose names be upon their books; and four variant names are known with the names of Booseham, Pet, Toyne and John Wylye.

The motive for sharing an edition in these early cases was probably to find the capital for printing an unusually large book. Several names in the imprint continue to be a feature of large books—the second folio Shakespeare, the second Beaumont and Fletcher—and so on down to the nineteenth century. But the imprint does not always tell the whole story. The only name in the imprint on Matthew Satchel's five books De Misericordia, 1630, is that of the printer James Bile. If we know from the records of the Stationers' Company that there were no shares in the copyright of this book, and that Bile himself only held one half of one of these ten shares. We were come to the evidence for the other reason for sharing—an edition—the need to engage the interest of the wholesale trade to promote its sale—in the will of Richard Royson in 1402. Perhaps the first point to note about this will is Royson's legacies to his worthy Author Symon Patrick, John Goodman, Edward Frensham, Ralph Cusworth, William Cave, and John Patrick. He left them forty shillings each to buy measuring rings. But MT worthy authors, indeed! This is the language of a man consciously proud of his success in securing the copyright of books with a wide sale. Royson directs that 'all and every my Copys, Lynned and not Lynned,Pressed and not pressed in the booke of the Company of Staines London where I have any right ortitle in lawe or equity shall under certain conditions go to his nephews.' It was a narrow kind of copyright. He also left property to his faithful wife, Elizabeth, who shall from time to time after the reprinting of my said copies with the advice of my Owners. . . sell and dispose the same impressions to six or twelve. Good kind of copyright. Booksellers in and about the City of London and Liberties thereof. We may properly infer that this describes Royson's own practice. He is not the only man to direct from the author: he bought the paper; he paid the printer for composition and presswork. Then for perhaps he arranged the sale of the whole edition in blocks to six or eight or more of the leading London booksellers. No doubt, since he was also a wholesaler and a retailer, he kept a block to sell himself. Now there were at least two conditions prerequisite for a successful transaction of this sort. There must be a high degree of mutual confidence among the selected wholesalers that they will not use undercut each other's price. In other words there must be a price agreed at the outset by all the participating booksellers below which they will not sell to other members of the trade. Secondly the price must give these wholesalers a profit sufficient to engage their interest in promoting the sale of the book. The chosen wholesalers—the members of the Conger—in fact undertook the estimate of the book very much in the same fashion that a large capital issue is guaranteed nowadays. In essence, the mode of operation of the various Captains of Royson's has described them and analyzed the price structure involved in his business of book trade. It was the origin of the practice that provided the landowner return, a large profit, and the continuing cohesion of the London wholesalers. For republicans did not identify to have an undertaking to operate as Richard Royson did and to the administration of the estates of deceased booksellers it was more convenient for these proprietors to divide up and sell the copyright to other booksellers than to operate in the day to day book-selling business of exploiting them. The Conger became owners of the copyright which they wish to republish and sell. This was necessary of the whole-copyright; each book is sold for as little as a 4th share in the copyright. A Conger of this type might sell an entire Conger might itself own 'in Congerity' a part share in the copy right titile, and in this respect it operated as a unit trust today.

According to Edward Phillips in 1706 a Conger was a particular Bookseller, who put in Joint Stocks for the Buying and Printing of Copies, selling for their common Advantage. The point I would like to note here is that a new type of Conger had begun to take over Royson's functions, putting the copy and setting it to print. With a Conger concentrating on titles of copies, there were, no doubt, technical problems of printing and the like, but there was no longer any need for the function—the entire effort had been provided. The Congers had a wide coverage of valuable in the part of the field for reprinting which the copyright extension of the English copyright open, they covered the whole country with their wholesale coverage thus securing de facto copy right in the early years of the nineteenth century in which the trade so that their existence was no longer necessary. Indeed their policy in its turn becomes out of date, and the way is open for any for each title. The London wholesalers acquired—through inheritance or property descent—shares in all the valuable reprints; and each new edition and book was managed by a committee of owners of shares whose interests were at stake. The overall policy of the Conger will describe the details of its management later on, but it must first be noted that such a system might be called the Conger, and is not meant by de facto copyright. While the business of reprinting sermons, English classics, and established books was the most substantial and profitable part of the trade, the in 1740 a great activity in producing new books and books in new forms began was now established as a reading matter for a wide public, and were begun in country towns as well as in London. The magazine had arrived and was part
circulation in the provinces. There was a great vogue for publication in parts; and some books appeared in parts with current censorship upon their wrappers, and others as supplementary pages inside newspapers. Many books such as Churchill's Voyages, The History of the World, and the Biographia Britannica were published in part, in although we might never suspect it from their appearance as bound volumes today.

You can catch a whiff of this feverish activity from some remarks by the Rev. Thomas Stackhouse in his quartet with Mr. Thomas Edlin:

About the beginning of May 1722, when the success of some certain things published weekly set every little bookseller's sexts to work, Mr. Wilford, behind the Cheapside, and Mr. Edlin, near Easter Change, sent for me to the Castle Tavern in Paternoster Row. . . . Their proposal was, in general, to have something in print which might be published weekly, but what it was to be, that they knew not. Edlin was clearly for revising his Roman History. . . . and, with some heavy impressions upon Dr. Burnet, very warmly maintained that with a little loosen up (as he called it) in infusing some life and spirit into Onley's dull style, the thing would still do in a weekly manner. Wilford would by no means come into his design, his talk ran chiefly on Devotional Tours, and Family Directions, alleging (as subtly he might) that the world was very wicked and would never be reformed till such pieces and good books as he then recommended by some management or other were brought into more general use.

When Stackhouse's book to write his History of the Holy Bible for Edlin to publish, he stipulated that Edlin should provide him with the necessary works of reference. Edlin later refused to supply these, on the ground, says Stackhouse, that the chief of his subscribers lived in Southwark, Wapping and Ratcliff Highway; that they had no Noctis of Criticks and Commentators; that my Business was to adapt the work to the public convenience; and therefore the less learning in it is the better.

The new sort of market which Edlin expected for his part issues does at least demonstrate the increase of literary and the widening of the market for books. To explain what I mean by copyright de facto, perhaps I should first allude as briefly as I may the course of copyright de jure. The Licensing Act of 1662, which had given the Court of the Stannaries a Company statutory control over copyrights entered in the Company's register, finally lapsed in 1669. In 1679 Parliament, after repeated applications by the booksellers, enacted the first Copyright Act. This gave twenty-one years copyright to the publishers of books already printed, but not other copyright to booksellers. It gave fourteen years to the author of a new book, with a further fourteen years if he was alive at the expiration of the first term of fourteen years. The booksellers nevertheless used to maintain that they had at common law a perpetual copyright, derived from the provisions of the 1709 Act, until 1772 when the House of Lords decided that there was no such thing in common law as perpetual copyright.

Up to 1773 the London booksellers habitually threatened the printers and pub-

lishers with suits in which they claimed copyright with charity suits on the basis of this alleged common law right. So much for copyright de jure.

Copyright de facto was just as real and profitable a form of occupancy of literary property as legal copyright, but it depended not on the normal sanctions of the law,
associated in the foundation of country books, and that some metropolitical wholesale, for bookselling, were partners in London books.

Perhaps a more striking example of the difficulties of payment may be drawn from the Aerates and Dido. The London bookseller, when he had taken the book to be sold by another, was furnished with a bill. He had no difficulty in obtaining books from London and selling them in the country either by letter or by bringing them in person. The price or price that he paid for the books might help to keep his family or be sold locally for colonial currency. But Master North’s difficulties in these days were somewhat different. He should call a coffee, and no substitute for good steaming bills. London booksellers accordingly bought thousands at wholesale, and exported them in great quantities. Thus obtained, later he bought shares in valuable books, and exported the fish to Spain and Portugal. The proceeds of such sales provided him with bills easily negotiable in London. But as soon as he had only found out how to secure funds in London, he made the further discovery that books went not the most profitable commodity in which to re-engage them. He could get a better return by buying colonial staple goods, and tea in London for resale in Boston than he could by buying books.

With the experience of Thomas Hancock fresh in your minds, perhaps I may insert a memorandum of a few years of good fortune. He is found in the Customs books of 1707 as an exporter of wool. It is too far-fetched to suggest that his experience went parallel to that of Thomas Hancock and that in exporting English goods to the Continent, he was doing so to secure funds abroad to pay for foreign books to import—as we know he did on a large scale into England?

The appearance of colonial currency in the first half of the eighteenth century may exaggerate the picture, because this particular feature did not affect the country booksellers in England (as it was). Nevertheless London books were the essential part of the country bookseller’s trade, and they were dear to the British and difficult to pay for. There were alternative sources of supply for some books, first from Holland, then from Dublin, and a greater range from Edinburgh. There is no need for me to go into the well known details of the Dublin privacy of Samuel Richardson’s works or of Alexander Donaldson’s Edinburgh editions of London share books. They constituted a formidable threat to the export trade out of London to the English countryside. In Scotland, in Ireland, and in the American plantations. The London trade not only thrived and expanded but explained how by quoting a letter dated 20 April, 1720, from a London wholesaler John Whitton to the Cambridge bookseller John Merril.

Dear Sir,

Yesterday was a general meeting of all the correspondent booksellers, and it was decided almost the whole trade. The scheme was voted and approved of, and an agreement was entered into, and signed by all present. Thus (Wardell & Berr}

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had a legal copyright in Fielding's novels for only fourteen years before Fielding died within three years of publication. Caddy and Davies had 28 years copyright in the first three volumes of Gibbon's Rome, but for the same reason only fourteen years' copyright in the next three volumes of that work. As soon as, or rather in anticipation of—the lapse of legal copyright, the original publishers offered some shares in the copyright for sale by auction. These shares were spread as widely as the

The ownership of shares was a commonplace among the London booksellers with the object of securing their interest in the division of the profits from the sale of a book. This degree of sub-

The ownership of shares is a worthwhile contribution to the sale of a book. It allows the original publishers to sell some of their shares to members of book societies for a lower price than the original price. This lowers the cost of producing the book and makes it more accessible to a wider audience. The shares in the ownership of a book can be passed on to future generations, ensuring that the book continues to be available and accessible.

When a book went out of print, it was the duty of the manager of the previous edition to call a meeting of all the shareholders in the book. A shareholders' meeting was called to discuss whether the book should be reprinted. If the shareholders agreed, the book was reprinted. If not, the book was allowed to go out of print.

The ownership of shares was a valuable asset for publishers and booksellers. It allowed them to control the supply of books and to ensure that the books were available and accessible to a wider audience. It also allowed them to share the profits from the sale of a book and to ensure that the book continued to be available in future editions.
eventually understood, the de facto occupancy of copyright by the London Booksellers through the share book system. As late as 1827, twenty shares, each of one thirty-second part of the copyright in Cowper's Poems, were put up for sale. There was then only one share in the whole of statutory copyright unleased, but the first share fetched £120, and the rest £30 each. At this valuation the whole copyright must have fetched some £6,000, which is many times the sum that the original publisher paid Cowper for his copyright.

The details of this sale are even more provocative as evidence of the booksellers' confidence in their power to secure a yield from literary property nearly forty years and a half after its publication. At this date Cowper's Poems had not traded as poorly as was generally believed, so that there was no permanent copy right in law. As late as 1835, C. B. Whacker, one of the largest wholesalers in the trade, when examined by a Committee of the House of Commons, could say:

'there are not more than ten or a dozen publishers of new works, though there are a great many persons who pride our books afterwards, that after the copyright is out, but we don't call them publishers. By the third quarter of the nineteenth century the share book system had shoehorned to cases where a share in the copyright was also a share in the ownership of stereotype plates or blocks for elaborate illustrations. I am not sure that it is entirely dead yet. For the Annual Register, first published in 1758, is still published as a share book by Longman every year.

In my third year I tried to explain the working of the share book system which was the chief method of publishing and distributing books for a century and a half, from about 1700 to about 1850. In my last lecture I should like to say something about the rise of the publisher and the history of the Not Book. Agreement. By publisher I mean a firm which wholesales its own books, but does not wholesale anybody else's - the firm which organises the production of a book, and then sells it down to retailers all over the British Isles, but which does not buy books from other publishers to resell them to the trade.

John Davison wrote a similar account in 1729. In his essay, in his essay, the trouble with me is that I can't remember the title of the essay, but the trouble with me is that I can't remember the title of the essay, but the trouble with me is that I can't remember the title of the essay. I have been told that the essay's title is something like 'A Tale of Two Cities' by Charles Dickens, but I cannot be certain. The essay contains a discussion of the effects of the copyright laws on the trade of books and on the livelihood of booksellers. The essay also discusses the role of publishers and the development of the book trade in England. The essay concludes with a reflection on the future of the book trade and the changing role of the publisher.

In this case Francis Newbery and Sir Richard Phillips published the books they had produced down to retailers. In itself this is no innovation because both of them were extensive holders of shares in copyrights, and disposed of the books they received as free for the publication of their own productions. The logical and complementary step, therefore, was to go up wholesaling books in which he had no publishing interest and to continue himself to wholesaling his own publications. The first explicit evidence of the tendency that I have found is in an anonymous Memoir of Sir Richard Phillips, published in 1682 when he had just become High Sheriff of Middlesex, and I have this passage to quote from it.

'At Mr Phillips began his career as a publisher with a fixed determination to possess the public with some sort of moral merit. His business soon grew into a large sale for the shop in St Paul's Churchyard, and accordingly he returned to his pleasant residence, situated in Bridge Street, Backstairs. Of the extent of this concern, and the amount of the goods contained in it, some idea may be formed, when we see that I have been very closely interested in the ground floor of the premises, that the shop was not less than forty thousand pounds worth. Mr Phillips likewise augmented his establishment in respect to clerks, etc., and to his removal, from three or four individuals to ten or a dozen. The extensive nature of Mr Phillips's concerns, I believe, almost incalculable; certain it is, that he was the first publisher in London; he sells only his own publications, for which, to great the demand that his numerous servants are in continual employment.'
A more precise statement is available about the organization of the firm of Cadell and Davies in 1818 in a supplement to the third edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Progressive extension led not only to a distinction between the publishing and old book departments: and we have at present in one house the house so well known as the publishers of Home and Roberton the example of an establish-
ment avoiding all business, even wholesale, except what relates to books printed for their own accounts. These subdivisions tend exceedingly to facilitate business; they cause it to be done both better and to greater extent.

The difficulty of classification at this date, if saying that one firm was a publishing house, the other a wholesale house, may be illustrated from a classified list of book-sellers given in the chapter on the General State of Literature and the Fine Arts in London which appears in the first edition of Leigh's New Picture of London, 1818. There are ten different subdivisions of book-sellers: the first four are:

1. Wholesale Booksellers and Publishers who supply the town and country trade, and execute foreign orders for books of every description. [Seven names given]
2. Wholesale Booksellers and Publishers who chiefly confine themselves to their own publications. [There are only two names here: Cadell and Davies; and John Murray.]
3. Wholesale Booksellers, who chiefly supply the town and country book-
sellers. [Ten firms listed]
4. Retail Booksellers and Publishers (42 firms listed)

It would not be true, I think, to say that the publisher, who was a publisher only, evolved solely from the share book owning wholesaler, though this was undoubtedly the case with Sir Richard Phillips, Cadell and Davies, John Murray, Longman, and Rivington. On the other hand, many of the most eminent nineteenth century pub-
lishing houses evolved directly from retail booksellers: Colburn, Bentley, Moxon, Smith Baker, George Bell, and Macmillan are all cases here in point.

But before proceeding to describe how the separate publishing houses developed, it may help us to understand their operations if we consider their connections with the country trade and the small customers, or in plain words the reading public. One of the features about trade advertising that always strikes me as curious is the gap between the Tyne Catalogues, which were printed three times a year from 1668 to 1712, and the slow resumption of trade advertising through the London Catalogue of Books organised by William Bent from 1780 onwards. The gap is narrowed by the catalogues of Wilford at one end, and those of Bent's predecessors from 1764 to 1773. Nevertheless, its existence is significant.

Bent's predecessors assure Bent himself until he began his series of monthly catalogues in 1816, that he was the only bookseller of the whole number of London publishers—even of new books. All that is given in his author, life and price. Thomas Mortimer, when compiling in 1763 the first catalogue of London clamped by trades, can only define their numbers in specifying that particular book as being published by any particular bookseller.

On applying to the Booksellers for a List of the several Capital Works printed for each, I found that the property of the principal Copies was divided into so many shares, and changed hands so often, that it would be impossible to ascertain, with any accuracy, to which they belonged. I was therefore obliged to drop this part of my design, lest it should be productive of litigation instead of utility.

And you will remember Latchkington's description, which I quoted in my third lecture of the London wholesale's treatment of the orders from his country corre-
respondent. 'Thousands of books are yearly written for to London that are never sent ... the book is too dear' or 'it is out of price.' the book is not worth your purchasing'—such a one wrote much better on the subject.

The fact is that in the middle of the eighteenth century the country bookseller did not know—and had no means of knowing—precisely what books were available or at what price. His customers were no better informed. They got no help from the advertisements in the London daily newspapers, because these did not circulate in the country. There might be some help from the books in a week or two, in newspapers, and more from monthly magazines, but these reviewed or advertised only a small proportion of the books published. In the eighteenth century, the country bookseller—and his customers—had to depend on what his London correspondent, the wholesale book-
seller, said.

This is the situation from which we can start to examine the means of communica-
tion between town and country through which in the early nineteenth century a London publisher, who was not a general wholesaler, could organise a country wide sale of his publications.

In the early nineteenth century there were three chief ways in which the London publisher could market his in the country:

Firstly, by review:
Secondly, by travellers:
Thirdly, by prospectus and catalogue:

and each of these methods here deserves some consideration in detail.

Reviews in eighteenth century magazines were comparatively perfunctory affairs. It was the immense improvement in the quality and the appeal of the reviewing of books in the Quarterly and the Edinburgh which stimulated the fashion for reading reviews which lasted throughout the nineteenth century. The sales of these reviews were themselves enormous as the following description of Magazine Night by James Grant in 1838 shows.

The most remarkable feature in modern book-selling is the trade in periodical literature. Magazine Day is a sort of monthly eye in the history of a London bookseller. The orders for the forthcoming numbers of the various periodicals, which he is in the habit of receiving for some days previously, keep it constantly in his mind's eye; and when he does arrive, the great contest among the trade is who shall be able to supply their customers first. Magazine Day can only be said fairly to commence about half-past nine o'clock, and before twelve you will see the various periodicals in the windows of every retail bookseller throughout the length and breadth of the metropolis. Perhaps in no other instance, that of newspapers alone excepted, is an article so rapidly circulated over town, as it is periodical literature on that day.

The point from which the magazines and other periodicals all start when their distribution is about to take place is, in the case of larger works, Pateronieur
Row, which, with that freedom for brevity of expression so characteristic of the people of London, is invariably called The Row, by the dealers in periodicals, is, I repeat, not only the great, but may be said to be the only repository of periodicals outside of Magazine Day. Most persons unacquainted with the London bibliophile trade, fancy that every Bookseller in town who receives an order for a periodical from the country, must go for it directly to the particular publisher of that periodical. This is not the fact. The party receiving the order ships it once to the Row, where he gets the periodical of the question and where he gets, at the same time, all the other periodicals which other customers may have ordered. If he had to go for each periodical to the place of publication, he would find it impossible to get through the business, if at any extent, with the requisite expedition; as the publishers of such works are scattered in all directions throughout the metropolis. Only fancy a person having to go, say, from the middle of the City, first, to a house in Leadenhall Street, for the 'Asiatic Journal,' and then westward to Regent Street for Fraser's Magazine,' 'Beeton's Miscellany,' or the 'Metropolitan Magazine.' In fact, this, however, he has only to go direct to the Row, where he once gets from the house he is in the habit of dealing with, all the periodicals for which he may have orders.

The actual publishers of periodicals, therefore, have, properly speaking, nothing to do with the sale of their respective works on Magazine Day, and they seldom have even any idea of the actual number sold of their own publications on that day. I have known instances in which the proprietors of some new periodical, or the new proprietor of some old one, have been extremely anxious to discover the effects of the expenditure of a very large sum of money in advertisements, and yet have not been able to form the least idea on the subject on Magazine Day.

The plan adopted by the publishers of periodicals is to send to the various wholesale houses in the Row large quantities of their respective works, either on the evening before, or early in the morning of Magazine Day. Different houses receive different quantities, according to the relative amount of business done. Some houses take them only on the condition that the unsold copies shall be returned. They have a small commission on the number sold, over and above the regular trade allowance of twenty-five per cent. This enables them to supply the trade on the same terms as if each periodical were purchased direct from its publisher. Some houses in the Row scarcely ever, by chance, meet with any other customers than the trade; and, consequently, they never get full price for any magazine or other periodical they send.

The quantity of business which some of the larger houses go through on Magazine Day is immense. I know one house which draws, on an average, from 1200 to 1400 orders on Magazine Day. As to the number of periodicals, varying from ten to three drillings and silence, which must be turned over from the shelves of this establishment to the hands of the purchasers, before such a sum of money could be taken. The house to which I refer deploys from 500 to 700 copies of some of the more popular periodicals. The business done on Magazine Day is all in ready money. There are no credit transactions whatever. The best customers know that without money they will not be remedied, and consequently no credit is ever asked or expected.

The constant bustle kept up from morning till night, in these wholesale houses, exceeds any thing of which a person, who has not witnessed it, could form any conception. The premises are full of young men and boys, all struggling for a priority of supply. I have often seen as many as fifty or sixty wedged into a shop of the ordinary size. What between thergbuy and noisy movement of their feet on the floor—the clanking of sovereigns, and dollars, and pencis, on the counter—the quavering among themselves—the loud announcement of the names of the works supplied, and the amount of money to which each person's order comes, by the parties behind the counter, and the calls by the customers for the different publications wanted; what between all these discordant sounds, kept up without one moment's intermission, a stranger becomes literally inter- mitted before he has been many minutes in the place.

Magazine Day is not confined to the metropolitan circulation of periodical literature. On that day, works of this class are collected for all parts of the country, and sent off in packages by the regular conveyance. Since the late establishment of steam communication between London and almost every port of any importance in the kingdom, the periodicals which first see the light in the Row, on Magazine Day, are in the hands of mailers in the remotest parts of the country in less than a week. The quantity of literature thus sent off monthly to the country is immense, and has been vastly increased since the introduction of cheap publications into the biblioplastic market.

The sales of the reviews themselves were large; but they had an even greater effect in promoting the sale of other books because they not only created an appetite to read a particular book, but always stated the publisher and price of the book under review. The reviews were published by particular houses; Murray, Conyngham, Colburn and so forth; and the great influence which they had on the sale of books led some publishers to ensure that their own publications were well treated in the periodicals which they published. It was said, for example, that Colburn founded 'The Literary Gazette' solely in order to pull his own publications. But many reviews were scrupulously impartial even to the point of refusing to accept free copies for review from the publishers and insisting on buying them. In the nineteenth century, the editor of a magazine had to buy the books he reviewed; but before 1800 it had become the established custom for a publisher to send out free review copies to newspapers and magazines. The earliest surviving copy I know of is a set of the periodical that is followed today. The book is dated 1787 and is inscribed in manuscript on the flyleaf: "With the Author's Compliments to the Editor of Tat's Magazine," and inside the front cover is a printed label which gives the publisher's name and the price, set a date before which the book should not be received, and solicits a copy of the periodical containing the review.

So much for reviews and review copies. The second method by which a publisher could communicate with the country booksellers was by sending a commercial traveller round the country. This was not a direct invention by the book trade; it was used in, for example, the ironmongery and textile trades long before any London
bookseller took it up. Nor is it exclusive to publishers for it was first used by a wholesaler but it is a method of communication which does not restrict the country bookseller's source of supply to a single London correspondent. It opened to the county bookseller a considerable change in method due to changes in postal facilities. Before the introduction of the penny post in 1840, no London publisher or wholesaler used direct mail advertising, because at ninpence a letter it was too expensive. Instead they enclosed packets of their prospectuses and catalogues in the parcels of books returned by the country booksellers and despatched by stage coach postman. Their intention was that the country bookseller should display these prospectuses in his shop and thereby increase the sale of the book.

But the complaint was frequently made that country booksellers used these prospectuses to bagging for or for other ignoble uses, and that sending unsolicited for publicity matter in this way was haphazard and unscientific. Publicity by post, even by penny post, presupposes a careful list of recipients, though lists of clergymen and schoolmasters were fairly easily available in the nineteenth century. Although the remunera

The use of travellers was well established by the 19th century. There still survives, I believe, the detailed record of a representative of A. & C. Black who subscribed the seventh edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica in 1840, and extracts from it were printed in The Publishers' Circular twenty years ago. This traveller visited nearly all the bookshops in the North and Midlands in the course of a journey from Edinburgh to London and back again. He notes the condition of each shop, what orders he took, how many prospectuses he left if he thought it worth while to leave any and whether he had a London correspondent. In 1866, G. B. Whistler was commissioned by a Select Parliamentary Committee on Postage to draw up a scheme for the electric transmission of business by travellers, and the mode of paying for it. In 1870, we have two travellers who take the leading stores in England and Wales, and the great towns in Ireland and Scotland only, twice a year.

Have you constant correspondence with these travelling agents?—Constant. How do you manage that correspondence?—We manage that correspondence by sending their instructions in parcels. Our travellers, when they remit orders, send them up in this form of description (producing one), there are different names in different towns, which we dissect, because one sheet of paper closely written would bring a great number of errors.

Do you still adhere to the idea of 3d postage?—Yes. It would be a great benefit to all houses that keep travelling, from their setting (frequently) in their setting (frequently) they would not be able to free-lost on the road because we should know where we were. Now, if they collect orders, waiting till they can make up a sheet to send them over Balloon, Cradock, and try when that firm went bankrupt in 1837. Towards the end of the nineteenth century there were perhaps a dozen or more large wholesale houses in and around Paternoster Row. Some of them, for example Longmans and Livingstone, inevitably abandoned their wholesale activities to become publishers and to distribute only the works which they published themselves. The others gradually amalgamated towards the end of the nineteenth century. Simpkin Marshall took over Balloon, Cradock, and try when that firm went bankrupt in 1837. Towards the end of the nineteenth century there were only three large London firms left in the wholesale trade: Hamilton, Adams, and Co.; William Rout and Co.; and Simpkin Marshall. All three were amalgamated under the name of Simpkin Marshall in 1899. Simpkin Marshall survived the First World War with difficulty, and attempts to reestablish the firm since 1945 have not been successful. The scale of wholesaling alone has come to rest on too narrow a profit margin. Simpkin usually got their books at
sale price or 20 per cent discount and the quarterly book. They had to resort to this as the retail booksellers' price of 20 per cent discount, and the margin of possible profit was between 5 per cent and 9 per cent. This is considerably less than the wholesale margin in other trades, where the goods physically, and in the event the margin of profit proved tradeable. The margin might have been increased, if the retail booksellers in the country had not learned by that time that they could get their books just as well, though not more cheaply, by writing direct to the publisher instead of to Stock and Blackiston.

I have mentioned the term sale price, and I ought to give some account of its meaning. In the eighteenth century it was customary, as I have already noted, to have a dinner before holding an auction of shares in copyrights. A similar technique was taken over by the publishers, who would invite the wholesalers to a dinner to subscribe their forthcoming publications. Books bought at this dinner were charged at a rate generally 33⅓ per cent instead of 30 per cent discount off the retail price—lower than the wholesale price after the book had been published. These publishers' dinner sales were often elaborate affairs: the publisher invited his most popular authors; there were speeches and toasts before the select company of the booksellers of London and Westminster were invited to say how many copies they would take of the books in the publisher's new list. This agreeable custom fell into disuse towards the end of the nineteenth century. Longman's held their dinner sale on 3 November 1872; Murray's on 4 November 1877; Bentley's continued to hold their annual dinner until the firm was bought by MacMillan in 1895.

I must now take you back again to the retail booksellers at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Books, as of most other things, were sharply during the Napoleonic wars. A new novel which in the 1790s retailed for 3s or 3s 6d a volume, cost 1s 6d a volume in 1815, and the price for a new standard size three-volume novel remained at a pint and a half until 1849. The reason for this was the extensive network of circulating libraries by which the novel was read and passed on, so that many people contributed to the extravagant price charged for it. That the price was extravagant is shown by the fact that when the bluff was called in 1849 the price of a new novel came down to six shillings. I have taken this well-known example to show that it is possible to keep the price of books artificially high for a considerable length of time, but not for ever. And this is a point to remember in considering, as I now must, the efforts made to maintain a standard and uniform retail price for books.

Books are now advertised at a stated price and can be bought at that price in any bookshop in the United Kingdom. Except for some temporary intervals when, I will come to shortly, this has probably always been the case in London and since the middle of the eighteenth century in the provinces. A provincial bookseller has a comparatively restricted customer; moreover, it is probable that his gross margin of 30 per cent to 20 per cent has never allowed him to afford any significant discount off the published price to his retail customers. This was not always the case in London, certainly for retailers in the West End in the early years of the nineteenth century.

There have been attempts at resale price maintenance in the book trade since 1800. The first attempt in 1812 came to grief within a year. The next scheme in 1825 lasted until 1862; and the last, the Net Book Agreement signed in 1899, is still in

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*Some scholars have noted that without conspiracy in any form, price fixing is possible. Others have argued that it is effective, and consequently that it is legal, to fix prices in a cartel. This can be seen if the main suppliers make it difficult to release supplies at trade prices to those booksellers who undercut price. This undermines the whole livelihood of the bookseller concerned. He might then agree to supply through third parties, and the main suppliers then have to give up their supplies in those third parties. It is a process which has been the occasion of much bitterness in the trade.
unlaw the Trade produced better books, he shall be under the necessity of soliciting Mr Pickering for a share of his; and Mr Heney and Mr Hatchett observed, 'that when they allowed to their customers the trade editions, they would not purchase them, and they were therefore obliged to procure for themselves the edition of Mr Pickering.' At this meeting a motion was made and carried, 'That the Trade should oppose the rival editions, by producing others equally good and cheap.' To this he, of course, had no objection, it being fair competition; and a more salutary measure was proposed and adopted by a majority, viz. That certain individuals should form a 'secret committee' and should not attack at first or works without consulting the rest of the partners or shareholders, as had been customary hereunto; the motive of which was, to keep their proceedings from the knowledge of W. Pickering, who is one of the shareholders. The result of this plan has been, that the fine press, the creation of a system of partiality and judging; and, in the third, that, until the works are finished, no partner, excepting he be one of the secret Committee, is aware of what he may be called upon to pay. These facts are well known, but however material to W. Pickering as an individual, they are of trivial importance to the public compared with the statement which follows. In the year 1829 a few Booksellers residing near the Royal Exchange became alarmed at the mode in which some of the trade were, as they termed it, 'underwriting to the public' and they formed a party with the avowed object of protecting their own interests, at the expense of those of the public. By degrees this influence of threats, the wholesale publishers were induced to join them; and certain Regulations were proposed, which, if carried upon every bookseller who might refuse to subscribe to them, the penalty of being denied books at the usual trade price. This plan partially succeeded, and some of the wholesale vendors were on the Committee, actuated by envy, jealousy or other unworthy motive, presuming, without even the courtesy of a letter, to exclude certain individuals from their just privileges, though they had not a pretext for changing them with any infringement of their arbitrary laws. Several industrious and honest tradesmen have thus been severely injured. Much as W. Pickering disapproved of these Regulations, yet, if he had, from the causes adverted to, and the influence of bad example, become a party to them, he felt it his duty to act in obedience to their dictates. It is not said that he has ever sold books below the regulated price; it is not even pretended that he has sold to those who have allowed third persons to obtain them under the pretended standard; but on the bare suspicion that SCOTTEN parties have procured books which originally came from his shop, at a cheaper rate than was demanded proper, he is denied those privileges of the Trade to which he has by sentence a just and legal right.

This is not, however, the only way in which the Select Committee have endeavored to injure him. They have circulated a placard, containing his name with the names of other publishers, throughout the trade, without any explanation, and without even a printer's name, thereby exposing him to suspicions injurious to his credit as a tradesman, and derogatory to his character as a man. Upon this act, he will make no further remarks, as it is under the consideration of his legal advisers, and will probably be submitted to the decision of a jury. Immediately on the conclusion of this conduct, he made application to the following booksellers, who works the greater part of which were their respective publications, viz. Manns, Sherlock and Marshall; Longman, Rees, and Co.; J. Duncan, J. and A. Arch, J. J. M. Richardson, Evington Wilson; Balch and Cradock; J. C. and F. Evington; Whitaker and Co., Parbury, Allen and Co.; and John Murray. Their answers are given at length at the end of this address. It is his wish to show the spirit by which the Committee are actuated, it will be found in their conduct respecting the Regulations aforesaid. It is a question if as it must seem, they have actually prohibited a single copy of them from being taken, and W. Pickering's written request to be allowed to have a transcript was not complied with: nor was an application on the part of his solicitor more successful. These laws which are intended to govern the trade, and the neglect of the slightest point of which exposes the unfortunate offender to the danger of being placed about the metropolis, as well as to the denial of the means of following his business, are purposely concealed by those who improperly exact obedience from them.

It is for the TRADE to consider whether such an arbitrary measure does not call for its united voice to inquire, if a self-elected body of ten individuals has a right to usurp such powers; if, in any case, it is for these persons to sit in judgment upon any one whom they may please to select: they have acted on charges which are unfounded, and their decisions are partial and unjust. From such persecution, no one is safe, as from the caprice or the malice of either of these persons, he may be riot set free from every privilege of his trade. But if it is necessary that a body should be constituted to control the trade, ought it to be a self-elected select committee, or ought it not to be appointed by a public and general meeting of the Wholesale and Retail Booksellers, that the right of all may be most effectually protected?

In the mean time it is desirable that every fact should be brought forward, and that each individual in the trade should signify his consent or dissent from the acts of this body, and that if necessary an appeal should be made to a Court of Law.

In conclusion, it is for the Public to consider whether open trade or a monopoly is deserving of its support; and with respect to those persons who have added insult to injury, they may be assured that every possible means will be used of bringing their transactions to public view, and that their proceedings
will be watched with the utmost vigilance. Confidence of the support of every liberal mind, and without any fear as to the result. W. Pickering respectfully submits this statement to public consideration.

Orders of the various Booksellers to W. Pickering’s Applications. One of each title, preserving the last-mentioned, are presumed to form the Committee.


"Cannot supply Mr. Pickering; if he pays twice the value of the books I would not give up a page. I would not sell any body a book that sold Mr. Pickering one.


"Cannot let Mr. Pickering have books, his name not being on the list of recognized Booksellers.


"In duty bound to refuse Mr. Pickering under selling price, in consequence of the circumscription of this meaning, delivered by order of the Committee."


"Cannot supply under selling price to Mr. Pickering, his name being struck off the list of Booksellers. We are directed to refuse by order of Mr. Richardson and the Committee."


"To Mr. Pickering at full price, and no reduction."

DONCASTER—Modern Traveller, vol. xvi.

"To Mr. Pickering ten per cent. under full price, he being on the list of Booksellers."

J. AND A. ARCH—Boston’s Private Diocese.

"Their reason for refusing the book was, that they had proofs of Mr. Pickering’s underwriting. On being asked if it was on account of the list delivered that he supplying Lewis and others, after agreeing the regulations which seem, to allow the public ten per cent. if required, to the foreign trade and schools, fifteen per cent. and promised not to supply others who had infringed on those laws. Mr. Pickering cannot compel us to supply him with books, he has acted so badly.

The books are being delivered to the customer. With the risk that the bookers in London have used to supply him with books, and he has acted so badly.

Baldwin—History of Greece, Library of Entertaining Knowledge, Committee of Booksellers.

"Cannot supply Mr. Pickering, his name being struck off the list, by order of the Committee,.

PARRIBY, ALLEN, AND CO.—Aristic Journal, February, 1832.

"We cannot supply Mr. Pickering, his name being taken off the list of Booksellers."

1 By "underwriting," the Books Recognition means the original agreement to the preceding page.

2 The Books Acts appear to have peculiar titles with respect to "selling out."

BILLY WILSON—Key to the Words of Christ’s Hospital.

"Refused to supply, he having rendered a book which is under writing, with Mr. Pickering’s name, are compelled to refuse supplying it under regular price."

WHETTAKER AND CO.—25 Weymouth St., vol. xxxix.

"We cannot let them go. We are not authorized to let them go."

* It is necessary to acquire Booksellers with the Public that W. Pickering’s Publications, announced in his Catalogue for 1832, may now be had, notwithstanding the frequent and liberal statements of some Houses, of his books being "out of print," "not of print," "discontinued," &c., &c.

The end of this epistle reflects, I think, some credit on William Pickering. In the following year he brought out the series of Blendworth Treatises which were to great demand. As the last of the trade would not supply him with their books on wholesale terms, Pickering refused to supply them with the Bridgewater Treatise at less than the full retail price. The result was a compromise: each side agreed to supply the other at wholesale rates. But Pickering insisted as part of the settlement not only that he himself should be removed from the blacklist, but also Lewis and Cox who had been similarly victimized.

The same sort of trouble breaks out again in 1832:Rickers and Bush of Leicester Square started to sell rare books at less than the published price. A first class controversy was blown up by the public press some three publishers, such as John W. Chapman and John W. Parker, refused to meet against standard prices, and received support from eminent authors and politicians: Charles Dickens, Thomas Carlyle, Gladstone, Cobden and John Stuart Mill among many others. The Booksellers’ Association, among whose leaders was now well known William Pickering, replied by submitting the case to the arbitration of Lord Campbell, Dean Millman, and George Groce. Lord Campbell—out legal grounds which I cannot myself follow—said that the Booksellers’ Association was an illegal conspiracy in restraint of trade; and the Association was accordingly dissolved.

For the second half of the nineteenth century the standard published price of a book became nominal. Every retail bookseller was expected to give a discount of 2½ in the shifting to his customers. With the result that the retail booksellers in London began to discount to him to other more remunerative trade—like fancy goods or toys or Berlin wood, or to go up in ranks altogether.

The remedy—if it is a remedy—was started by Macmillan in 1840. They convinced that it was not necessary or even practicable to organize a general reduction of book prices. After the publication of the standard published price, and at the same time narrowed the retail margin so that there was no need to give a discount. And they refused to sell books—at any price they were called— to retailers who would not sign an undertaking to sell them at the full published price without any reduction. The first book so published was Alfred Marshall’s Principles of Economics 1890 and the first edition of that book should contain a printed slip explaining that the retailer can allow no discount on the published price. Many booksellers,
course, refused to sign the undertaking required, and Macmillans closed their account. Macmillans also had to persuade Simpkin Marshall not to supply their net books to retailers who had not signed the undertaking. The scheme, as applied to certain selected books, answered, and the number of net books published by Macmillans increased steadily throughout the 1890s. Other publishers began to follow this lead, and in 1890 the Associated Booksellers agreed with the Publishers' Association on the general introduction of the Net Book System from 1st January, 1900. This is the Net Book Agreement which still operates today. It does not cover all books—school books and children's books are not yet normally net books—but it has made the retail price set by the publisher effective and established a standard price throughout the country.

I have now finished the substance of what I have to say about the organisation of the English market for printed books, but I should like to emphasise a few of the provocative ones which I have been trying to make in these lectures.

The manufacture of the material stuff of which books are made was first mechanised in European paper mills in the twelfth century and paper had become an article of wholesale trade in England by the beginning of the fourteenth century, but it is not until the second quarter of the eighteenth century that an English book was normally printed on paper made in England. Writing the text was mechanised here in 1476, but, Caxton excepted, the English printers had to buy their type abroad for the next two hundred years. A book is not a book until it has been bound, but every book had to be bound singly by hand, until the 1820s. The single remaining handicraft in the trade is that of the retail bookseller, who still has to sell all the books that are sold one by one over his own counter.

In these lectures I have tried to show that the trade in printed books started as a humble ingredient in the stock of general wholesale merchants and that the Stationers' Company Charter of 1557 represented the culmination rather than the beginning of a consistent policy to centralize the production and distribution of books in London. I have tried to explain how the share book system worked and how it gave place to the independent publisher and a standard price throughout the country. In this brief and scrappy survey one fact stands out as fundamental: the organisation of the trade changes in the midst of and as part of the general expansion in trade of all kinds. The practice of writing the text by hand or managing the English Stock diminish not so much absolutely as by contrast with the expanding growth of other types of book. New types of text have created new methods of organisation to bring them to market. The type of books is always changing; and if, in the not very distant future, people still continue to buy printed books, they will nevertheless be regarded as the antiquated apparatus whose vital functions are much better performed by tape recorders and television. The change that is now before us is a change that is not covered by the terms of my title The English Market for Printed Books.