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TITLE-PAGES PRODUCED BY THE
WALTER SCOTT PUBLISHING CO LTD

by

JOHN R. TURNER

THE Walter Scott Publishing Co Ltd of Felling, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, began business in 1882. Until that date the proprietor, Walter Scott (1826–1910, made a baronet in 1907 but not related to Sir Walter Scott of Abbotsford) had been, and continued to be, a very successful builder and contractor, operating as a builder mainly in North-east England but undertaking extensive work on railway and dock construction throughout Britain. The printing and publishing business appears to have been acquired as a result of the impending bankruptcy of The Tyne Publishing Co, when Scott stepped in and took over.¹ Printing and publishing was therefore an unexpected and completely new line of business for Scott. Nevertheless, he almost immediately made a success of the venture and within a few years he had published several hundred titles. The publishing company continued in business until 1931 although steadily declining after Sir Walter's death in 1910.

The business was based on series of reprints: Camelot Classics edited by Ernest Rhys (who later became the editor of Dent's Everyman series), the Emerald Library, the Oxford Library, the Canterbury Poets, and so on. But far more than reprints were undertaken; for example, the company produced the Contemporary Science Series consisting of original works under the editorship of Havelock Ellis; they were the first to publish English translations of Ibsen and brought out early translations of Tolstoy's works; they were the first to publish some of Bernard Shaw's work, and some of George Moore's.

The great majority of the publications were perfectly normal books but a few copies survive which are unusual. The evidence seems to show that from his start as a publisher in 1882 Walter Scott printed and published certain popular titles and sold some of the copies to booksellers (and sometimes to other publishers) in which the title-pages made no mention of Scott. The

1. Accounts vary on the details of Scott's acquisition of the publishing company. On 15th August 1882 the *Publishers' circular* announced that the Tyne Publishing Co now belonged to Scott, but certainly the Tyne *Printing* Co continued in business after this date and they seem to have continued as publishers as well as printers. Furthermore, from the beginning, Scott's printing works was in Felling-on-Tyne and according to local and trade directories the Tyne Printing Co was never in Felling. James Clegg's *International directory of booksellers . . .*, Rochdale, 1910, asserts that The Walter Scott Publishing Co Ltd was founded in 1875 and presumably this information was supplied by Scott, but none of the other sources agrees with this date.

imprint on these title-pages was that of the particular customer who had bought the copies and thus made it appear that the book was published by the customer. The title-pages were printed by Scott, but the firm's own Walter Scott title leaf was cancelled and was replaced by the customer's title leaf. However, apart from the cancelled title leaves the rest of these copies was identical with the standard Scott copies; the books had Scott's colophon and could even include advertisements for other Scott publications. Copies were sometimes re-bound by the buyer but the books were also available complete in a standard Scott binding. Most of the names on these title-pages are not well known but single examples have been found which show that J. M. Dent and Mudie's Library were also involved.

The procedure of issuing books with tailor-made title-pages seems to have begun with the Tyne Publishing Co before Scott took over and was then continued by Scott. Unfortunately the history of the Tyne Publishing Co has proved to be even more obscure than that of Walter Scott and only one example from them has been found so far. In fact, it is quite possible that other publishers besides Tyne and Scott used the procedure.

The example from the Tyne Publishing Co is found in two copies of Lewis Apjohn's *William Ewart Gladstone*, one with a title-page with Tyne's imprint and the other with the imprint of J. M. Dent. The Tyne title leaf is normal but Dent's is a cancel; in all other respects apart from the bindings the two copies are identical. They have similar frontispieces and texts from the same plates, including the text on the upper parts of both title-pages above the imprints. Even the list of Tyne agents is present in both copies.

The title leaf in the Dent copy has been cancelled, not by binding the cancellans in with the sheets, but by removing the cancellandum (presumably an original Tyne title leaf) and pasting the Dent cancellans onto the stub. In all the following examples of books with cancelled title leaves it is this method of pasting the cancellans onto the stub of the cancellandum which has been used.

J. M. Dent mentions in his autobiography that he began his working life as a bookbinder and in about 1873 he had the idea of buying printed sheets direct from publishers. However, he says nothing about having his own title-pages printed.

I had noticed that booksellers had books bound in leather in their windows, and I knew that they bought the books in sheets from the publishers and had them bound by their own bookbinder. Now I thought if I could say to the publishers that I would buy their sheets if they would give me some work in contra account, I could then bind the sheets and sell to the bookseller, and so make work in two ways.²

The Tyne Publishing Co, however, seems to have gone one better than this in providing Dent with his own title-page so that he could sell the copies he had bound as his own publications. Before 1882 Dent had not yet published any-

2. J. M. Dent, *The House of Dent 1888-1938* (1938), pp. 34-35.

thing of his own, and a little later in his autobiography he notes: 'I had during 1886 and 1887 been dreaming of publishing—only a renewed dream of boyhood. Some years before I had compiled, with the help of my wife, one or two birthday books and others, and I had published them with an idea of selling them in my leather bindings.'³ The Dent copy of *Gladstone* is half bound in leather on cloth boards with marbled end papers and all edges gilt so perhaps it was one of the 'birthday books and others'.

Thus, Tyne appears to have had a business agreement with Dent, and two other copies of Apjohn's *Gladstone* show the connexion between Tyne and Scott and the continuity of the procedure with title-pages. Apjohn's book contains a chronological table of the events in Gladstone's life which ends at 9th November 1880 in the Tyne and Dent copies. Those copies were followed by one with a title-page from James Askew of Preston since here the chronological table ends at May 1890 and this copy has an extra forty pages of text. Askew's title leaf is a cancel; the book was printed by Walter Scott and has his colophon. This Askew copy therefore seems to be similar to Dent's and would have been preceded by an issue from Walter Scott.

The only corresponding Scott issue so far discovered, however, is later than Askew's. The chronological table ends at Gladstone's death on 19th May 1898 and there are twenty more pages of text than in Askew's issue. It seems likely that there must have been an earlier Scott issue to provide the text for Askew. Scott had certainly published the book before May 1890 because he gave a copy to Newcastle Public Library⁴ in March 1889. In any case Scott would have obtained the title when he acquired the Tyne Publishing Co since they had already published it. The bulk of the text, *ie* pp. [17]–301, is from the same plates in all four copies which again indicates the continuity from the Tyne Publishing Co.

Besides taking over the titles along with the Tyne Publishing Co, Scott seems also to have adopted from them the system of printing title-pages for named customers.⁵ Since the firm was acquired as a going concern presumably including the staff, and since Scott was new to publishing, this is not very surprising.

The remaining examples discovered all involve Scott. There are six titles besides Apjohn's *Gladstone* and usually there is a pair of copies for each title, one printed and published by Scott with a normal title leaf, and the other printed from the same setting of type and with a cancelled title leaf bearing the imprint of someone else. All the copies have Scott's printer's colophon, and two copies with non-Scott titles (Harrop's issue of *Hope*, *Life of Gen-*

3. *Ibid.* p. 53.

4. Newcastle Public Library acquisitions ledger. The copy no longer exists.

5. Other possible examples are found in Harvard University Library, which has two copies of Howard Blackett's *Life of Giuseppe Garibaldi*, one published by the Tyne Publishing Co and the other by John McGready, and the University of British Columbia Library, which has a copy of J. T. Lloyd's *Henry Ward Beecher: his life and work*, a Tyne Publishing Co title which was also 'published' by John McGready.

eral Gordon, and Matthews and Brooke's issue of Brontë, *Shirley*) include advertisements for Scott publications after the main text.

Without surviving documentation it is not possible to reconstruct Scott's exact working practices. The procedures were likely to vary according to circumstances, but in all probability the following would have taken place in Scott's day-to-day work. The type for a particular title would have been set, stereos made from it, and the sheets printed from the stereos. Part of the print run would be bound for stock and the remainder stored as sheets until the bound stock ran low, when more copies would be bound from the sheets in stock. This process would continue until those sheets also ran low and then a reprint would be considered. If an order was received for copies with a bespoke title-page, the Scott title leaf would be removed from sufficient copies to fill the order, the customer's title-page would be printed, and the new title leaf pasted into the books. As mentioned, the new title leaves are always pasted onto the stubs of the old leaves.

As far as the printing of the cancellans title leaves is concerned, it is clear that this was done by Scott and not by his customers. The similar setting of the title-pages of Apjohn's *Gladstone* has already been mentioned and there are more similarities in other pairs of titles. For example, the only difference between the title-pages of the Scott and Askew issues of Hope's *Life of General Gordon* is the change in the imprint. These are simple typographic title-pages but the design of three other title-pages (the Scott and Dodgson issues of Dumas' *Twenty years after*, and the Matthews and Brooke issue of Brontë's *Shirley*) shows them to be from the same printer because they all follow the same layout and use the same ornaments in a similar way.⁶

The alternative explanations to the proposition that the non-Scott copies derived entirely from Scott are that either Scott sold sheets to his customers, or he sold stereos to them. Both alternatives are partly refuted by the fact that some of the non-Scott copies have Scott advertisements. If the customers had had such control over the product before binding took place, presumably they would have removed Scott's advertisements.

In addition, copies exist in which not only the sheets and cancelled titles derive from Scott, but also the bindings. The Scott issue of *Twenty years after* is half-bound with dark green cloth spine-strip and corner pieces on light green cloth boards, and gold tooling has been applied to the front, spine and back. The binding on *Shirley* from Matthews and Brooke is exactly the same except for the colour of the cloth which is dark red on the spine and corner pieces and light red on the boards. The binding on the Dodgson issue is in a different style but, despite Dodgson's title-page, it even has the name 'Walter Scott' at the foot of the spine. Even more significant, the paper used for the linings of the hollow backs in *Shirley* and Dodgson's *Twenty years after* is exactly the same. Waste paper has been used and it is possible to see down the

6. The ornaments form two sides of a frame: along the head an ornament with spirals of leaves 11 x 97 mm; along the gutter an ornament with stylised leaves 141 x 18 mm. There are also two rows of eleven star ornaments, one above and one below the author's name.

hollows that the paper is printed or written on by hand in the same brown ink and in the same style of lettering. The non-Scott copies must have been supplied, if required, ready bound by Scott.

Another slightly unusual feature which helps to prove that Scott supplied bound books, or at least sewn book blocks, to these customers is that several of the copies are wire sewn (all the copies from Scott except the Coleridge; Apjohn, *Gladstone*, *Hope*, *General Gordon* and *New World heroes*, from Askew; *Shirley* from Matthews and Brooke; and *Twenty years after* from Dodgson).⁷ Wire-sewn books, as opposed to pamphlets, were never common in Britain although there are a few examples still surviving. According to Bernard Middleton, 'wire staplers came into use in the 1870s, but within a few years they were discarded in favour of thread sewing machines'.⁸ This is supported by Geoffrey Glaister: 'In 1877 August Brehmer brought from Philadelphia to London his patent machine which wire-stitched both pamphlets and books. The books were stapled to tapes across the backs, but as the wire tended to rust and disfigure the pages their use for books lapsed'.⁹ Walter Scott must have owned a Brehmer machine or patronised a bookbinder who owned one because wire sewn copies of books which he printed and published besides those being discussed here are still occasionally found.¹⁰ Tapes are used in the normal position across the spine of the book, and the gatherings are saddle stitched with wire. Each staple passes from the inside of the gathering around the top and bottom of the tape in a similar way to thread sewing, or alternatively each staple passes through the tape, with the cut ends of the wire meeting at the back of the tape.

Scott copies with variant issues from the same plates discovered to date are as follows:

TYNE/SCOTT TITLE-PAGES¹¹

Lewis Apjohn, *William Ewart Gladstone*
London: Tyne Publishing, no date. Title leaf normal; no printer's colophon; 'Chronology' ends 9 Nov 1880. Copy in the British Library.

OTHER TITLE-PAGES

Lewis Apjohn, *William Ewart Gladstone*
London: J.M. Dent, no date. Title leaf cancelled; no printer's colophon; 'Chronology' ends 9 Nov 1880. Copy in University College of Wales, Aberystwyth.

7. All the Askew copies have similar bindings (red leather quarter bound on red cloth boards blocked on the front with the words 'Gems of Literature Series') with no indication that the cases were supplied by Scott. It is therefore possible that Scott sometimes supplied only the book blocks and the customer provided the cases.

8. *History of English craft bookbinding technique* (1963), p. 294.

9. *Glossary of the book*, 2nd ed (1979), p. 515.

10. The following are a few examples which I have seen: J. Arthur Bain, *Life and explorations of Fridtjof Nansen*, nd; Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici . . . and other essays*, 1886; Daniel C. Eddy, *The young woman's friend*, 1885; *English fairy and folk tales*, ed Edwin Sidney Hartland, nd; J. T. Lloyd, *Henry Ward Beecher: his life and work*, 1887; and Edward Bulwer Lytton, *Alice, or the mysteries*, nd. It does not follow, of course, that all copies of these books will be wire sewn, because one edition could be bound in a variety of ways. Routledge also sometimes used a wire sewing machine in their Morley's Universal Library Series.

11. The Scott copies which have been used to set against the non-Scott copies have

Lewis Apjohn, *William Ewart Gladstone*
London: Walter Scott, no date. Title leaf normal; colophon: The Walter Scott Press, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 'Chronology' ends 19 May 1898; wire sewn. Copy in the British Library.

[No copy of a corresponding Scott issue of *Shirley* has been traced]

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Poems*
London: Scott, 1886. Title leaf normal; colophon: Printed by Walter Scott, Felling, Newcastle-on-Tyne; thread sewn. Copy in the National Library of Wales.

Alexandre Dumas, *Twenty years after*
London: Scott, no date. Title leaf cancelled; colophon: The Walter Scott Press, Newcastle-on-Tyne; wire sewn. Copy in the National Library of Wales.

Eva Hope, *Life of General Gordon*
London: Scott, no date. Title leaf normal; colophon: The Walter Scott Press, Newcastle-on-Tyne; wire sewn. Copy in the National Library of Wales.

Lewis Apjohn, *William Ewart Gladstone*
Preston: James Askew, no date. Title leaf cancelled; colophon: The Walter Scott Press, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 'Chronology' ends May 1890; wire sewn. Copy in the British Library.

Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley*
Bradford: Matthews and Brooke, no date. Title leaf cancelled; colophon: The Walter Scott Press, Newcastle-on-Tyne; wire sewn; Scott advertisements. Personal copy.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Poems*
London: Mudie's Select Library, no date. Title leaf cancelled; colophon: The Walter Scott Publishing Co., Ltd., Newcastle-on-Tyne; thread sewn; 'Mudie' advertisements. Copy in the National Library of Wales.

Alexandre Dumas, *Twenty years after*
Leeds: Joseph Dodgson, no date. Title leaf cancelled; colophon: The Walter Scott Press, Newcastle-on-Tyne; wire sewn. Copy in the British Library.

Eva Hope, *Life of General Gordon*
Preston: James Askew, no date. Title leaf cancelled; colophon: The Walter Scott Press, Newcastle-on-Tyne; wire sewn. Copy owned by James Askew and Son Ltd.

Eva Hope, *Life of General Gordon*
Edinburgh: Nimmo, Hay and Mitchell, no date. Title leaf normal; colophon: The Walter Scott Press, Newcastle-on-Tyne; thread sewn. Copy in Cambridge University Library.

Eva Hope, *Life of General Gordon*
Manchester: John Harrop, 1885. Colophon: Printed by Walter Scott, The Kenilworth Press, Felling, Newcastle-on-Tyne; Scott advertisements. Copy in University of Georgia.¹²

been chosen simply for their accessibility, mainly because the bibliography of Scott reprints is extremely obscure. All the Scott titles are from one or other of the reprint series but it is almost impossible to say from which particular series. Scott's reprints are almost invariably undated, and individual copies seldom have any indication of the series to which they belong. According to Scott's advertisements the same title could appear in several different series, still with no indication in the books themselves; *Oliver Twist* and *Pickwick papers*, for instance, are each in seven different series.

12. It has not been possible to examine this copy, and the Harrop state appears to be

Eva Hope, *Grace Darling, heroine of the Farne Islands*

London: Scott, no date. Title leaf normal; colophon: The Walter Scott Press, Newcastle-on-Tyne; wire sewn. Copy in Newcastle Public Library.

Eva Hope, *New World heroes: Lincoln and Garfield*

London: Scott, no date. Title leaf normal; colophon: The Walter Scott Press, Newcastle-on-Tyne; wire sewn. Copy in the British Library.

Eva Hope, *Grace Darling, heroine of the Farne Islands*

Glasgow; Sydney: John McGready, no date. Two title-pages present; colophon: Printed by Walter Scott, The Kenilworth Press, Felling, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Copy in University of British Columbia.¹³

Eva Hope, *New World heroes: Lincoln and Garfield*

Preston: James Askew, no date. Title leaf cancelled; colophon: Printed by Walter Scott, Felling, Newcastle-on-Tyne; wire sewn. Copy owned by James Askew and Son Ltd.

Other points which still need comment concern firstly the Scott issue of Dumas' *Twenty years after*. The book is a normal Scott publication printed throughout by him like the others, except that the title leaf even here is a cancel. Perhaps in this one title a mistake was discovered in the cancellandum. An alternative explanation, albeit not a very satisfactory one, is that title-pages were left blank in all books which Scott was promoting in this way and a customer's or Scott's own title-pages were added only when orders were received.

Secondly, an interesting variation on the presence of Scott's advertisements in non-Scott books is found in the Mudie issue of Coleridge. One leaf of advertisements has been added after the text with the heading 'Mudie's "Morris" Edition of the Favourite Canterbury Poets' which thus gives a half-hearted acknowledgement to Scott's Canterbury Poets Series. Certainly all the twenty-three titles listed are from Scott's series, but the intention seems to be to suggest that these are Mudie's publications—even if they are printed on a cancelled leaf facing Walter Scott's colophon.

Thirdly, the question of when all this took place can be answered to some extent. Only Harrop's *General Gordon* and Scott's Coleridge are dated (1885 and 1886 respectively) but despite this there are other indications of when the books appeared. The chronological table in the four copies of *Gladstone* provide three more dates: 1880 (for Tyne and Dent), 1890 (for Askew) and 1898 (for Scott).

Further deductions can be made from the addresses on the title-pages. Walter Scott moved from Paternoster Square to 24 Warwick Lane in late June 1885¹⁴ and thus his issues of *General Gordon*, *New World heroes* and *Grace Darling* with Warwick Lane on the title-pages were all printed after this date. His issue of *Twenty years after* gives the address as Paternoster Square and consequently must have been printed before June 1885. Similarly,

rare. The *National union catalog pre-1956 imprints* lists only four copies and one of these (the copy claimed to be in the Library of the Department of the Navy) has proved to be a ghost. No copy has so far been located in Britain.

13. It has not been possible to examine this copy.

14. *The bookseller*, 4 July 1885, p. 647.

Askew's company history states that the firm moved to 96 Fishergate Hill in 'the early 1890s'; since all three Askew copies have the address, they all appeared after 1890.

John McGready began in business on his own and then from 1880 to 1885 he traded as McGready, Thomson and Nevin.¹⁵ After 1885 the partnership appears to have been dissolved and he continued to operate under his own name only. Because McGready's *Grace Darling* makes no mention of McGready, Thomson and Nevin it would not have been produced during the five years of their partnership and therefore would have appeared before 1880 or after 1885. It could not be printed by Scott and also have appeared before 1880 because Scott was not a printer until 1882, so it must have been printed after 1885.

In the Canterbury Poets series the earliest volumes are dated but dating stops after 1888. Then in undated volumes the series style was changed. At first the books were printed in red and black, the title-page had a large red initial and every page had a red ruled border, and there were ornamental head and tail pieces. When the change occurred the ornaments and ruled borders were removed and the books printed throughout in black only. The change in style appears to have occurred in 1889 because *American sonnets* (entered in the *English catalogue* in 1889) is in the early style, while Landor's *Poems* (*English catalogue*, 1889), Owen Meredith's *Poems* (*English catalogue*, 1890), and *Women poets* (*English catalogue*, 1890) are all in the later style. Mudie's Coleridge is printed in the second style and therefore must have been printed in 1889 or later. Furthermore, Mudie's volume has what could be a date, '7-04' (= July 1904?), printed below Scott's colophon on page 294.

One final comment should be made about the Nimmo, Hay and Mitchell issue of *General Gordon*, which does not conform to the pattern and therefore seems to suggest a slightly different business agreement with Scott. The Nimmo copy was printed by Scott and has his colophon on the final page of text. However, the title leaf has not been cancelled and it was printed with the rest of the sheets on a leaf conjugate with the second leaf of the text. Secondly, although mostly from the same setting as the Scott issue, a correction has been made to change to roman an italic *o* used by mistake on page 368. Thirdly, the binding is thread sewn rather than wire sewn.

Of the businesses mentioned on the non-Scott title-pages, Nimmo, Hay and Mitchell were the nearest to a conventional publisher. The partnership was formed in 1883¹⁶ and continued in business until the mid-1930s. They appear as publishers in the *English catalogue* from 1898, the first year to include the list of publishers' names and addresses. James Clegg in 1910 described the firm as a publisher of 'reward books, birthday books and non-copyright classics',¹⁷ and they frequently advertised their publications in *Publishers' circular* and *The bookseller*.

15. *Industries of Glasgow* (1888), and *Kelly's Directory of stationers*.

16. *The bookseller*, 4 October 1883, p. 895.

17. James Clegg, *International directory of booksellers* (1910). Earlier editions list Nimmo, Hay and Mitchell as publishers without giving a description of the business.

It therefore appears that the Nimmo, Hay and Mitchell copy of *General Gordon* is actually what all the other non-Scott issues give the impression of being—a separately published book. It seems likely that Nimmo, Hay and Mitchell came to an agreement with Walter Scott and bought some form of right to publish, with Scott still retained as the printer.

To conclude, the evidence presented here is admittedly based on a small sample, it does not provide final proof, nor is it all present in one book or pair of Scott and non-Scott books. Short of the discovery of a written agreement between Scott and one of his customers the evidence is never likely to be conclusive. However, it seems reasonable speculation that Walter Scott offered bound books for sale in which the title-page was specially printed with the customer's name so that the customer appeared to be the publisher. The arrangement was flexible; for example, the books could be bought as bound copies but customers could also provide their own bindings. The titles were all taken from Scott's list of publications and both Scott's original publication and the customer's copies were in print at the same time. Apart from the title-page there was usually no attempt to disguise Scott's involvement, even to the extent of leaving advertisements for Scott publications in the volumes. Scott must have seen the method merely as a way of selling more books. He must have discounted keeping his own name before the public on the title-pages and regarded sales by James Askew, John Harrop and the others, quite rightly, as Scott sales.

Presumably there would have been a minimum order below which Scott would not supply tailor-made title-pages, but this must have been fairly low. It is hardly conceivable that even a bookseller like Matthews and Brooke who had a well established and profitable trade could have taken thousands of copies of Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley*. It is difficult to understand how Scott found the system worth while because the amount of work involved in printing and inserting individual title-pages in only a few copies at a time was considerable. Nevertheless the method was in operation for several years, it was inherited by Scott from the Tyne Publishing Co, it was being used by them in 1880 or '81 and Scott was still using it in 1904. Despite its long history these books were only a small part of Scott's output¹⁸ and most of his publications were perfectly ordinary books which were sold in the normal way through bookshops.

18. I am in the process of compiling a list of Scott's publications which so far contains about 1200 titles.