WILLIAM PICKERING,
HIS AUTHORS AND INTERESTS:
A PUBLISHER AND THE LITERARY SCENE
IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

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It has been said that the publisher has two roles which can sometimes be incompatible. He is on the one hand a professional ensuring that literature is made available to the reading public, and on the other a dealer in a commercial trade. Part of his energy is devoted to discovering and recognising literary merit and scholarship, part to money and commercial negotiation. He shares in the fortunes of a book with the author and forms a partnership with him in its production. In the eighteenth century publishers were still largely booksellers and stationery sellers, and sometimes indulged in other trades such as the selling of patent medicines. Publishing itself tended to revolve round famous literary figures, and although Thomas Dodsley and Jacob Tonson had their literary circles, they were amongst a number of booksellers congregating round the giant figure of Johnson, sharing the cost of publishing his works. There was an emphasis on co-operation rather than competition, and trade books, where costs were shared, were typical of many publishing ventures. Subscription lists were essential as a guarantee for many others. This is not to say that the eighteenth-century bookseller-publisher did not on occasion take the initiative and have a direct influence on literature. John Newberry had set about producing books for children; Dodsley had compiled and edited twelve volumes of old plays. But the works which they influenced tended to be in the category of dictionaries, encyclopaedias and other compilations.

When the nineteenth century opened, publishing was still largely the monopoly of the big London houses. The early part of the century witnessed significant changes in both function and tone. What emerges at this time is an increasing specialisation, not merely in publishing as distinct from bookselling, but in categories of literature by individual publishers. A new breed arrived on the scene with positive and decided ideas on what they wanted to
achieve, what subjects they wished to specialise in, and what form their productions should take—periodical, part, series and so on. To this was added a desire to compete for an individual share in the big names in literature, and to reach a wider public. The cooperative age of “bookselling” was passing and, although the pleasant social occasion of the sale dinner and the Chapter Coffee House survived, the growth in the number of new books was accomplished by increasing competitiveness amongst publishers. Moreover, this occurred against a background of political, economic and social change and instability which prevailed during the first half of the century and which offered both risk and opportunity. It is true that trade books continued to be published alongside new editions by individual publishers, who even retained shares in them while publishing their own. Pickering’s name appears, for instance, with the thirty or so others in the imprint of the trade edition of Hume and Smollett’s History of England, and as late as 1840 he was still advertising both together.¹

The two names which characterised the changed conditions were John Murray II and Archibald Constable. At the beginning of the century Murray had been in partnership with Samuel Highley, who was more interested in selling books issued by other publishers than in running risks himself, so in 1803 Murray separated and began an enterprising career which eventually earned him from Scott the title of “Emperor of the West”. Raising the status of the publishing function he turned his address in Albemarle Street into a famous literary centre, frequented by Scott, Byron, Southey and Borrow, and his career illustrates the changed relations developing between authors and publishers. In Dr. Johnson’s day the literary lion would be surrounded by an association of publishing booksellers; now the publisher was to become the centre of an appreciative crowd of authors. The scale of payments to notable authors, too, was greatly increased. In his early days John Murray II was closely associated with Byron, paying him £600 for the first two cantos of Childe Harold and £2000 for the third canto. The first edition was said to have been exhausted in three days.² Nor, in spite of a reputation for caution,

¹ W. Pickering, Catalogue of books offered to a select number of booksellers of London and Westminster (1840), p. 3.
was Murray free from the growing tendency for ambitious and even speculative projects. His venture with the new daily newspaper The Representative ended in failure and a loss of £26,000.³ Archibald Constable illustrates the new climate even more vividly. His name is linked with the growth of Edinburgh as a publishing centre, where he tried to collect the best authors around him. As Murray was associated with Byron, so Constable was associated with the other literary giant of the day, Sir Walter Scott. After participating in the publication of The lay of the last minstrel and Marmion, he offered Scott £700 for the copyright of Waverley, a sum which Scott thought too much if the novel failed and too little if it succeeded. Eventually author and publisher agreed to divide the profits equally.⁴ This sort of bargaining between the two professions was becoming more and more prominent as the scope and extent of publishing increased, and as more authors became professional and at least partly dependent on writing for a livelihood. Ambitious and sometimes over-optimistic projects were a feature of Constable's activities. At a meeting with Scott and Ballantyne at Abbotsford in 1825 he attempted to gauge the market from the annual schedule of assessed taxes and proposed, in his Miscellany, to issue a volume a month at 3s. or 2s. 6d. to tap a possible market of millions: "Twelve volumes in the year", he said, "a halfpenny of profit upon every copy of which will make me richer than the possession of all the copyrights of all the quartos that ever were". In spite of the crash of 1826, the series was announced as Constable's Miscellany of Original and Selected Publications designed to produce cheap, various, useful and agreeable knowledge in Literature, Science and the Arts.⁵ This illustrates another new movement in publishing in this period, namely the launching of comparatively inexpensive series for popular education in an attempt to reach the widest possible circle of readers, and match the growth in literacy. The chief specialist in this field was Charles Knight. "As early as 1814", he wrote in Passages of a working life, "I had the notion of becoming a popular educator". Setting himself up as a publisher in 1823, he

⁴ T. Constable, Archibald Constable and his literary correspondents (hereafter Constable) (Edinburgh, 1873), iii. 47-8.
was associated with the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge under Lord Brougham, and in 1829 started publication of the Library of Entertaining Knowledge. This was followed by the Penny Magazine in 1832 and the Penny Cyclopaedia in 1833. This type of publication was not necessarily risk free, and when the weekly sheets of the Penny Cyclopaedia were enlarged and the price raised to 2d. and then to 4d., its commercial value was undermined. As Knight remarked: "The Society had the honour of the work without incurring any of the risk". The tendency towards some specialisation can also be seen in the case of Richard Bentley, with his Standard Novels in 1831, and Edward Moxon, who started publishing in 1830, with his reputation as a publisher of poets. Even the old established firm of John Murray developed a bias towards travel and biography.

I

William Pickering arrived on this changing scene in 1820 and during the course of the next decade he demonstrated the main publishing interests which were largely, but not wholly, to pre-occupy him for the rest of his career; interests which displayed a distinct antiquarian bias and in which poetry was to play as important a role as it did in the case of Edward Moxon. The republication of both neglected and standard works, superior in textual accuracy, editorial standards and typography, were to be amongst his most important contributions to the literary output of the first half of the nineteenth century. Most references to the productions of William Pickering have hitherto concentrated largely on the form—the book design, typography and ornament,—yet a more detailed consideration of the content of his publishing output and of the authors he published, both living and dead, is equally important. This aspect has been comparatively neglected. Items of little typographical or design interest may be of significance in this context, and works regarded as of little account and hardly read today may have been the subject of intense preoccupation by the reading public at the time. Sir Geoffrey Keynes, in his memoir, remarked in the prefatory note to the handlist that "a large number of Pickering's books are now

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6 C. Knight, Passages of a working life during half a century (hereafter Knight) (London, 1864-5), ii. 200.
of no account from a literary point of view and of no special typographical interest, so that the compilation of a complete list, though possible, would not be profitable”. Nevertheless, a more complete knowledge of his output than that provided by a select starred list is essential in assessing his significance in the history of publishing in this period. Sometimes a consideration of projects which failed to materialise, or from which he withdrew, can add to the general picture. Pickering is perhaps exceptional in that, despite the growing separation of the two functions, his bookselling activities remained to the end as important as his publishing. The significance of this lies in the fact that with regard to the former he concentrated on acquiring a large stock of antiquarian books and manuscripts; and the link between the two activities lies not only in his desire to republish the older literature because of his love for old books, but also that the old books and manuscripts which passed through his hands often provided the material necessary for his own and sometimes other publishers’ editions. In Pickering’s case the one activity tended to fertilise, as it were, the other.

Apart from the Diamond Classics, which were virtually a form of advertising to publicise his arrival on the publishing scene, Pickering’s first publications, Burnet’s Lives of Sir Matthew Hale and John, Earl of Rochester and Baxter’s Poetical fragments, were minor neglected works of notable authors, and set the tone. Initially he did not attempt to publish many new works by contemporary literary figures, but his production of new editions of the older literature did bring him into contact with notable editors of high reputation, and his choice of editors and his relations with them throughout his career was a distinguishing characteristic of his contribution to the literary scene. One of the first was Dibdin who, as a bibliographer, does not have a high reputation today, but as author and editor was more highly


8 The importance of having good editors is illustrated by the unfortunate choice of G. R. Gleig by Bentley and Colburn as editor of the National Library in 1830, the failure of which was partly owing to his deficiencies. He lacked wide acquaintance with writers and patience in dealing with manuscripts, yet wanted his own way in planning the series and selecting the subjects. He lacked the editorial skill of Lockhart which contributed to the success of Murray’s Family Library (Gettman, pp. 33-8).
regarded at the time and whose relations with Pickering are of interest. His edition of Thomas à Kempis's *Of the imitation of Jesus Christ* was published by Pickering and John Major in 1828, who "determined to make it both a beautiful book and a critical performance". The details of publication illustrate the problems of selling an edition of this kind of work of limited appeal. Publisher and editor agreed that the well-tried method of subscription was the only possibility, especially in view of the subject matter and Dibdin's ecclesiastical, aristocratic and literary connections. He revealed that out of an edition of 750 copies on small paper, no less than 600 were subscribed by "private friends" including the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Kenyon, Earl Spencer, Mr. Douce and others. Major and Pickering were responsible for only 50 copies each. In these circumstances, if the publishers did not make a great profit, at least they were covered against loss. Pickering's enthusiasm did not appear to be affected by limited possibilities of profit, and in the introduction to Dibdin's edition of Holbein's *Icones Veteris Testamenti*, published by him in 1830 with ninety wood engravings by John and Mary Byfield, it is made clear that it was the publisher who initiated the project and had asked Dibdin to edit, and that there was little hope of gain. One project with Dibdin proved to be far too ambitious and had to be abandoned. In 1828 Pickering published an advertisement for Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, to be issued by subscription in twelve volumes, one every two months. All texts published during the author's lifetime were to be collated, and the whole to be edited by Dibdin "with all the woodcuts". It is referred to in Dibdin's letter to Pickering dated 12 October 1827: "I suppose our Johnny [John Foxe] sleeps soundly just now? Not so my Tommy [Thomas à Kempis]". As far as Pickering was concerned "Johnny" was to remain sleeping. The expense of


10 Ibid., p. 829.

11 It was an expensive project, and at 21s. a somewhat expensive book. Twenty-five years later over 300 copies still remained to be sold off (Catalogue of the... important stock of modern books published by Mr. William Pickering of Piccadilly... sold by Mr. L.A. Lewis, 11 April 1854-15 October 1856. Seven main parts bound with some later supplementary sales, annotated with prices by W. Craven. Photocopy of the only known complete set in Trinity College Library, Cambridge, kindly supplied by the late Dr. A.N.L. Munby.)
the publication was too great and the possible rewards too
doubtful for him at this time. What is clear from these cases is
the close collaboration between publisher and editor, with the
former often taking the initiative. The project was regarded as a
joint venture with roles tending to overlap. The publisher could
initiate a work and secure the services of an editor. The editor
could share in the responsibility of securing a market.

Pickering's willingness to print historical works of limited
appeal, and the way this brought him into contact with well
qualified editors, emerges when one takes a look at manuscripts
edited for him by Sir N. H. Nicolas. Nicolas was called to the
Bar in 1825, but his legal work was confined to peerage claims
before the House of Lords. Becoming a member of the Society of
Antiquaries in 1824, he began to concern himself with antiquarian
studies and was noted for his attacks, from the best of motives,
on the Society and the Record Commission. In 1830 he published
*Observations on the State of historical literature and on the Society
of Antiquaries and other institutions for its advancement in England*,
followed by other pamphlets on the same topic, and was instru-
mental in bringing about the Select Committee of Inquiry into
the Public Records in 1836. One of the first historical manuscripts
he edited for Pickering was *The Privy Purse Expenses of King
Henry VIII from 1529 to 1532*, published in 1827. The difficulties
in publishing such material he revealed in the preface:

It must be at once obvious that manuscripts which throw light upon
British History, but which are not sufficiently popular to enable a
bookseller to print them, ought to be published by the Society. It should
appoint persons to prepare such manuscripts for the press and to
remunerate them rather than waste the Society's resources by publishing
useless articles because they are gratuitous contributions.

The manuscript itself had been purchased at a sale and had
been in Pickering's possession for a year. He then took the
opportunity to advertise it at the same time as the book: "The
original ms. of this curious volume, containing 40 autographs of
King Henry VIII, is now in the possession of the publishers, for

12 Photocopy of a letter in the Rylands Library. An edition of Foxe in eight
volumes was published between 1837 and 1841 by R. B. Seeley and W. Burnside,
edited by S. R. Cattley. In a prefatory notice it is stated that the proprietors had
incurred a considerable loss in spite of a subscription list of 2000, and there had
been "immense labour" in bringing it out.
sale”. This is a very telling example of the essentially complementary roles, in Pickering’s case, of publisher and antiquarian bookseller. By publishing such works, he was obviously meeting an urgent need of the time, for it was not merely the deficiencies of the Society of Antiquaries and the Record Commission which were hampering historical research, but the state of, and difficulty of access to, libraries, together with the apparent reluctance of many publishers to deal with such material. In 1828 Pickering published *A journal by one of the suite of Thomas Beckington during an embassy to negotiate a marriage between Henry VI and a daughter of the Count of Armagnac, 1442*, with notes and illustrations by N.H. Nicolas. In the preface, the editor deplored the “lamentable state of most of the public libraries ... the difficulty of obtaining access to them, and the want of proper catalogues”, saying that the volume was the result of a chance discovery in the Ashmolean Museum. He complained about what he called the “utter indifference of the public to works on the subject, the simple fact that the article in the following pages was offered to six of the most eminent publishers of the day, and that each of them declined to print it upon any terms, is a sufficient proof”. That the work would be unprofitable and unlikely to appeal to a wide public is evident. The edition was limited to two hundred and fifty copies only, with twelve on large paper, but by its publication Pickering ensured that it was now available for use by historians.

Pickering’s activities in the field of general historical and antiquarian publishing are well known. As well as the Household books under the editorship of Nicolas, he published in 1831 the *Privy purse expenses of Princess Mary*, edited by Sir Frederic Madden.13 Perhaps not so well known is his support of local

13 In 1828 Madden had become Assistant Keeper of Manuscripts in the British Museum, and became head of the department in 1837. Pickering corresponded with him about the work (B.L. Eg. MS. 2838, f. 201) and about manuscripts and books which he had for sale (B.L. Eg. MS. 2841, f. 240). His publishing connection with both Madden and Panizzi stood him in good stead as a bookseller. He sold many books and manuscripts to the Museum and on the death of Thomas Rodd in 1849 was appointed auction agent (*British Library Journal*, 10/2, 1984, p. 141).

Acknowledgements are here made to the British Library for permission to quote from letters in the Collectanea Hunteriana, the Egerton MSS., and the correspondence of William Maskell; to the National Library of Scotland to
The period in which he was engaged in publishing was one of growing interest which saw the formation of many local history societies. One such was the Surtees Society, formed in 1834 for the publication of manuscripts relating to Northumbria. Pickering was not only a co-publisher of the series from 1835 to 1845 with J.B. Nichols and Son, and Laing and Forbes of Edinburgh, but was actually a member and attended the second anniversary dinner in Durham in 1836. It is possible that his interest in local history began during his apprenticeship with J. and A. Arch. There appeared in 1836 a collection of engravings from drawings by Thomas Fisher relating to the antiquities of Bedfordshire, dated 1812 to 1836, with a title-page with the imprints of Nichols, Pickering and Arch. In the publishers' advertisement, concern is expressed at the decay of monuments and documents of local and general history and the destruction of drawings relating to them, and hoping that the publication will "place them beyond reach of accidental destruction and promote the preservation of the antiquities depicted". Pickering's later participation in publication ventures in local history illustrates two important considerations. One was the desirability that local printers or booksellers should be involved, and the other was that, owing to the great expense, a London publisher was necessary for financial support and for help with selling. In 1834 appeared the first volume of History of the foundations in Manchester by Samuel Hibbert-Ware under the imprint of William Pickering, London, and Thomas Agnew and Joseph Zanetti, Manchester. The author's negotiations were with Agnew, and it must have been the local publishers who sought Pickering's support. That the support was necessary is evident from Agnew's anxiety about the expense. In 1826 he wrote to the author:

Immediately after you were so kind as to undertake the completion of the manuscript I proceeded with the engraving department with the utmost expedition, not sparing expense... as I have expended a very considerable sum of money in the work, I hope you will excuse the anxiety that I have for its completion.

quote from Letters to Sir Walter Scott, 1796-1831; and to the Bodleian to quote from correspondence in the Bliss MSS.

15 M.C. Hibbert-Ware, Life and correspondence of Samuel Hibbert-Ware (Manchester, 1882), p. 358.
A similar situation existed in the publication of George Poulson's *The history and antiquities of the Seigniory of Holderness*, 1840-1. The local printer-publisher Robert Brown had come forward to ensure that the work was produced in Hull, but again it was emphasised in the publishers' "address" that London support was necessary owing to the expense:

It is to be regretted that topographical works seldom pay their projectors and although the present history has been supported by a splendid subscription list, yet it cannot be concealed that the subscribers do not amount to a sufficient number to secure the publishers from positive loss. It has been said... that the illustration of antiquities, no matter in what part of the kingdom they are placed, is a national concern and merits national support, and if they fail to give profit, how is it to be expected that any advancement can be made towards the publication of the... antiquities of the country.

The work appeared in two volumes, the first having the imprint of Robert Brown, the second that of the local printer Thomas Topping. Pickering's name is in both.

II

One of the most detailed pictures of the process of publication and Pickering's relationship with an author and editor in the 1820s is given in his correspondence with the Rev. Joseph Hunter between 1827 and 1829, in connection with the appearance of *The life of Sir Thomas More* by Cresacre More in 1828, and *The Hallamshire glossary* in 1829. Hunter, minister and antiquary, was a native of Sheffield and an authority on the history of South Yorkshire. His *History of Hallamshire* had appeared in 1819. He had become a Presbyterian minister in Bath, where he lived for many years spending much of his time in historical and literary research. In 1833 he was appointed Sub-Commissioner of public records, editing a number of volumes, and like Nicolas, with whom he was acquainted, was involved with the Select Committee. He was, again, the type of literary figure suited to Pickering's publishing tastes, as Pickering was the type of publisher whom such an author would approach. Hunter had prepared an essay on the life of Sir Thomas More and Pickering was willing to publish but wanted to control the form it would take, and the terms. He justified his position by referring to other recent publications in a similar category and his own experience: "I feel
obliged by your offer of the Essay on the life of Sir Thomas More”, he wrote, “and which on certain conditions I would willingly undertake the publication. I do not think that the Essay in quarto alone would answer, but if prefaced to the Life in an octavo volume similar to Cavendish’s Wolsey, I think a small impression could not fail to answer”. And later he reiterated his position: “It is certainly my opinion that the Essay should be formed into an introduction to precede the Life of More... the public do not like quartos particularly when they are so thin as not to form a volume.” So Pickering was able to ensure that the publication conformed to the kind which most interested him—the reprinting of an older neglected work in a much improved form both physically and editorially. This was the first edition since the one published by J. Woodman and D. Lyon in 1726, and, moreover, the first time the work had been correctly attributed to its true author. Pickering’s desire to influence the text is also apparent even though he disclaimed any intention of interfering: “With regard to the editorial department”, he wrote, “I shall not interfere”, but went on, “In looking over the work I observed one passage which has little to do with history that would be better omitted which I judge is one that you would alter or leave out”. The preoccupation, which he had had from the beginning of his publishing career, with type, title-pages, heraldic devices, illustrations and ornaments, is well displayed in these letters, as well as the possible delays which such preoccupation could cause. On 13 August 1827, he wrote to Hunter: “I now forward the first two sheets of the Life of Sir Thomas More which has been very long delayed by the printer who was waiting for a supply of new type. The initial letters will be inserted in their places—which are now in the hands of the woodcutter”. There follows a lengthy discussion of the illustrations to be included. Pickering finally decided himself which one to use, particularly as it was one of three plates which he already possessed. “With regard to the portrait”, he said, “I think the one used by Mr. Singer

17 B.L. Add. MS. 24873, f. 55.
18 Ibid., f. 57.
19 Ibid.
engraved by Scriven is the most characteristic and most suitable, by putting in a facsimile of his autograph it will have a novel appearance." He was not prepared, in a work appearing in a small edition, to go to the expense of having engraved the picture he would have preferred, the family portrait by Holbein: "The expense of drawing and engraving would cost £100, which is 4s. a copy on the edition", he explained. There was in this connection an ulterior motive. He wished to reserve the choicer picture for the forthcoming edition of The Bijou, or at least to ensure that it appeared there first: "I would engrave for my annual volume the Bijou", he wrote, "and from which I could print an additional number of copies for such as would like to insert theirs in More's Life". In the event, the re-done portrait was the only engraving included, together with a woodcut of More's residence at Barnborough House. The title-page also occupied Pickering's meticulous attention, more than one attempt being necessary before he was satisfied. On 12 January 1825 he wrote again to Hunter: "The title page I think cannot be improved. Mr. Nicholas kindly promised to ask Mr. Willement to make a design for a vignette, which I will not fail to get from him". But by April he was still not ready: "The setting up of the title I am not satisfied with, and it is possible I may reprint it—the printing and the ornament are too crowded and look heavy", he stated.

The problem of making a small edition of a work of this nature pay is amply illustrated in this correspondence, and Pickering sets out the considerations which will affect the term of the publication quite clearly in his negotiations with the author, as well as revealing his own philosophy:

20 This portrait had already appeared in an edition of the Life of Sir Thomas More, edited by S. W. Singer and published by Tripbook in 1817.
21 B.L. Add. MS. 24873, f. 61.
22 Holbein's picture of More's family, engraved for the first time by J.A. Dean, was published in The Bijou for 1829 with an extensive description and an acknowledgement to Charles Winn of Nostell Priory, the owner of the painting. At the end is a note: "It is proper to observe that the facts in this sketch of the More family have been taken chiefly from Mr. Singer's excellent edition of the Life of Sir Thomas More by his son-in-law William Roper, and from the Life of the Chancellor by his great-grandson Cresacre More, ably edited by the Rev. Joseph Hunter" (The Bijou (London, 1829), p. 193).
23 B.L. Add. MS. 24873, f. 61.
24 Ibid., f. 63.
The great disadvantage of small impressions are, that neither author nor publisher can receive an adequate remuneration—but should it come within your views that the remuneration should be by a certain number of copies... I should most willingly undertake it. Possibly you may not be aware of the particular disadvantages... in the first place the composition is the same for a large impression as a small one, the printing nearly so, the eleven copies to the public libraries and those to reviews and journals, and the indispensible expense of advertising equally the same—the paper is the only article which is in due proportion. On the other hand a small impression is nearly certain of selling and yielding a small profit—but a large one locks up a publisher’s capital, the books after a certain time get thrown out which destroys the publisher’s reputation and frequently the author’s. It is with books as with other things, when common they are little appreciated.25

Hunter, however, required some further payment besides the copies and Pickering agreed, revealing the device which might make this possible: “The only way in which I will be able to afford £25 and ten copies is by printing a very few large paper and charging a high price for them”.26 Later, he sent the author a cheque for £25 in settlement, and confirmed that he had printed twelve large paper copies, as he put it “for the curious, which will be a large price and which is the only way by which small impressions can be made to answer”.27 Since the price of the standard copies was 14s. and the large paper £5.5s., the ‘curiosity’ of the buyers of the latter must have been considerable.28

With the Hallamshire Glossary, there was the same problem of making a profit on a limited edition, and Pickering was well aware of the limitations of works in this particular category. “Of all the glossaries”, he wrote, “I think that by Mr. Brockett has been the only one which has taken with the public—partly arising from a numerous list of friends and from being well known to many booksellers as a customer—they have subscribed and pushed the sale—which influence I have not.” In the agreement on the terms between author and publisher it was desirable that there should be no ambiguity, but differences often arose during the course of publication, as in this case: “I certainly considered that I was purchasing the entire copyright”, Pickering wrote, “and not the

25 Ibid., f. 55.
26 Ibid., f. 57.
27 Ibid., f. 63.
edition—it is doubtful whether a second may ever be called for—still I ought to have that benefit although the remuneration is small... I much doubt whether there will be any profit”.29 Again there is the same close attention by Pickering to the typography and form of the book appropriate to the subject matter, in spite of the delay which resulted:

I now forward the proofs of Ray's *Yorkshire words* [the supplement to the glossary] which wants the Gothic type which I fear will not be procured in town. Possibly you can manage to insert it in Roman. The title sheet is printed off as you wish 'Hallamshire Glossary' though I feel assured very few will know the work as connected with Yorkshire.30

There had been a delay several months previously when the start of printing had not been possible because of another work in the same type already in the press: “I have not given it to the printer”, he explained, “as one would have delayed the other”.31 When the book was eventually published, the Anglo-Saxon origins of words were printed in gothic throughout. On 2 May 1829, eight months after the first sheet was ready, the printing was finally completed. “At last I send you the conclusion of the Glossary”, Pickering wrote, “It has been very long in hand which has been partly delayed by its taking up so many capital letters, the printer having two or three other works in the same type”.32 As he feared, it did not have a ready sale: “I have subscribed the book through the London trade”, he explained to Hunter, “and have done very badly, not having sold eight copies.”33

These letters to Hunter afford a fascinating glimpse of Pickering at work as a publisher, and his concern that the books should be, in a sense, his work as well as that of the author or editor, since his reputation as well as their's was at stake. Nor are the letters restricted to the business of getting the works published, but give further evidence of the close link with his bookselling business. As

29 B.L. Add. MS. 24873, f. 67. In fact, there were no further editions of the *Hallamshire glossary*, although Brockett's Glossary went through three editions between 1825 and 1846.
30 B.L. Add. MS. 24873, f. 71. Pickering actually advertised the work as *Yorkshire Glossary* in one catalogue (W. Pickering, *Cat. of Biblical, classical and historical manuscripts and of rare and curious books* (London, 1834), p. 167.)
31 B.L. Add. MS. 24873, f. 65.
32 Ibid., f. 73.
33 Ibid., f. 75.
a bookseller he was supplying items which Hunter might require for future works, and Hunter in his turn was supplying information of interest on old authors, new editions of which were being considered by the publisher. In particular, Hunter was devoting time to the study of the text of Shakespeare which interested Pickering as a bookseller. On 11 March 1829, Pickering wrote:

Shakespeare I am convinced from occasional reference has never been done justice to—as far as collation goes—to take the first folio edition and insert the variations of the earlier quartos, many improved readings would be found—should you want a first folio for the purpose I have one or two imperfect that could come cheap”.

Later the same year he made a definite offer:

I have two imperfect copies of the first Shakespeare, but neither would have answered your purpose alone, but selecting one out of the two I could make up a copy ... if put into plain binding I should charge you £5 for it. The early leaves alone are worth the money as they are very frequently wanting”.

For his part, Hunter supplied information which Pickering probably utilised in his 1836 edition of *The Complete Angler*. “I thank you for the notes for Walton”, Pickering acknowledged, “which will be of considerable use”. Pickering’s relationship with Hunter continued in the following decade. In 1837 he published *Select Committee on the Record Commission: a letter to P. F. Tytler*, and in 1838 *Three catalogues; describing the contents of the Red Book of the Exchequer, of the Dodsworth manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, and of the manuscripts in the library of Lincoln’s Inn*. As late as 1853 we find him writing to inquire about the Arms of the Woodcraft family who resided in Hunter’s native South Yorkshire, and he concluded his letter saying: “I hope that if you want any old book for reference, or any other purpose, you will not hesitate to ask me, as it will give me pleasure to lend you anything I have”.

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34 Ibid., f. 71.  
35 Ibid., f. 75. In 1845 Hunter’s *New illustrations of the life, studies and writings of Shakespeare* appeared, published by J. B. Nichols. In the preface the author discusses the errors in the first folio.  
36 B.L. Add. MS. 24873, f. 65.  
37 Ibid., f. 78.
The works Pickering published for Hunter were of the type which interested him, but they had a very limited market and were not very profitable, and he himself was fully aware of this. In a letter dated 8 September 1828 he commented: “In the course of nine years publishing I have never yet had the good fortune to reprint more than two works, which is a small proportion to 100”.

There had been a lack of popular and contemporary authors in his productions, and the early series such as the Oxford English Classics were comparatively expensive and had a small sale. Compared with John Murray and his association with Byron’s works and his projected Family Library, or with Archibald Constable publishing the works of Scott, and involved with launching his Miscellany, Pickering’s field of activity and his reading public appear restricted, and it is clear that he wanted to try to broaden somewhat the scope of his publishing. Byron had died in 1824 and Scott’s main works were in other hands, but Pickering nevertheless made an attempt to link his name with the two literary giants of the day, the authors with the most fascination for the reading public and for whose works the highest prices were paid. In 1824 he had engraved a commemorative medal of Byron by Alfred Joseph Stothard. It was advertised at 21s. and depicted the head of the poet, with bay trees and lightning on the reverse, with an edge inscription in Greek lettering. He then proceeded to send a copy to Scott as a momento: “I take the liberty”, he wrote on 14 September 1825, “to request that you will do me the honour to accept an early impression, and shall feel highly gratified if you should deem it a not unworthy memorial of the great poet who so highly valued your friendship”. He followed this up in a further letter on 19 November 1826 by sending Scott a transcription of some extracts from the Household Book of Henry VIII:

38 Ibid., f. 67.

39 Book Collector, 27/3 (1978) pp. 401-2. It was not unusual for Pickering to render his name in his imprints in the language of the book: “Gulielmus” for those in Latin, “Guglielmo” for those in Italian. One presumes that Greek was chosen for the inscription in this case because of Byron’s association with the Greek independence movement.

40 National Library of Scotland, MS. 3906, f. 9.
I am in possession of a curious ms.—Household Book of King Henry VIII... thinking some few extracts may not be uninteresting to you I have transcribed them on the other side... I should be most happy to show the volume to you, should you have time during your stay in London. A line by post will meet with immediate attention.41

By soliciting Scott in this way, he did manage to get a small contribution to The Bijou for 1828. This accompanied an engraving by W. H. Worthington of the painting by David Wilkie of Sir Walter Scott, Bart., and family, and consisted of a letter from Scott to Sir Adam Ferguson dated 26 February 1827. It described the picture, identified the various members of his household, and said he had no objection to the picture being engraved. It was certainly a contribution, but Scott himself did not think much of it, and it was, as it were, second-hand, having been intended for a work by Robert Balmanno to be published by Longmans, but abandoned.42 Pickering wanted something more significant and requested through his agent in Scotland, John Boyd, a further contribution. "Mr Pickering of London", wrote Boyd, "is extremely anxious to have a piece of poetry or prose from your pen to adorn his volume for 1829, for which he is willing to come to any terms you may propose".43

Scott made the acquaintance of Pickering when he visited his shop in 1828. In the entry for 16 May he wrote in his diary:

I staid an instant at Pickering's, a young publisher, and bought some dramatic reprints. I love them very much but I would not advise a young man to undertake them. They are of course dear and as they have not the dignity of scarcity the bibliomanics pass them bye as if they were plated candlesticks. They may hold as good a light for all that as if they were real silver and therefore I buy them when I can light on them.

41 Ibid., MS. 3903, f. 177.
42 Sir. W. Scott, The letters of Sir Walter Scott, 1826-8, ed. H. J. C. Grierson (London, 1936), p. 167. Such was the popularity of Scott that the piece, slight though it was, was given pride of place in the advertisements for The Bijou and is blown up out of all proportion in the editor's preface: "Nor is it too much to expect that if every other recommendation were wanting, that plate, and still more the description by which it is accompanied would prove irresistible attractions to the world; for who can be indifferent to so pleasing a memorial of a writer to whose merits England, Europe, nay, the whole civilized world has offered its homage and its praise" (The Bijou, 1828, p. vi).
Pickering took advantage of the opportunity to get Scott to write something for him, but Scott declined: “He wished me to write a third part to a fine edition of Cotton’s ‘Angler’, for which I am quite incompetent”.

The “dramatic reprints” referred to and so much appreciated were the fine editions of Webster, Peele and Greene, edited by Alexander Dyce. The publisher was certainly pleased to have such a famous literary figure subscribe to them, and in 1830 wrote to report on the progress of publication, emphasising the lack of profit: “Unfortunately”, he said, “the encouragement for our early literature is at present so very limited that with few exceptions I publish at a loss”. He again took the opportunity to press Scott on the matter of a contribution to the projected edition of Walton and Cotton, however small:

I hope very soon to bring out my long promised edition of the Complete Angler, edited by Mr. Nicolas [he wrote]. The work I refer to is no small favourite with you and possibly you may be in possession of some anecdote of the salmon fishing of the North, of which little is known in the South, but I fear it would be asking too great a favour to contribute anything in this way?

Pickering, however, was still hoping for something more significant, namely, a companion volume to the Aldine Edition of the British Poets. No doubt he had in mind Scott’s Lives of the Novelists, originally published as prefaces to Ballantyne’s Novelists Library by Hurst, Robinson & Co, from 1821 to 1824. In his prospectus Pickering had said that the series was designed to “range with” Murray’s Family Library, Lardners Cabinet Cyclopaedia and the Waverley Novels. The first two volumes of Murray’s series in 1829 consisted of an abridgement of Scott’s Life of Napoleon by Lockhart, and Volume 16, published in 1830,


45 The dramatic works of Robert Greene of 1831 had a dedication by Dyce to Scott.

46 National Library of Scotland, MS. 3915, f. 96. Pickering was not exaggerating when emphasising the limited market. Although important editions, the dramatists were not profitable. In the sales catalogues, 186 copies of the limited edition of Richard Greene were sold off. Moxon did think it worth buying the copyright of the Dyce editions of Greene, Marlowe, Peele and Webster for £15 (Catalogue of the... important stock of modern books published by Mr. William Pickering of Piccadilly... sold by Mr. L. A. Lewis, 11 April 1854-15 October 1856).
was another Scott item, his *Letters on demonology and witchcraft*, while the first four volumes of the *Cabinet Cyclopaedia* were devoted to Scott's *History of Scotland*. So it is not surprising that Pickering hoped these could be matched by a contribution to his own series. On 25 November 1830 he wrote again, explaining his object:

I am now engaged in publishing an edition of the poets with which every endeavour to make them perfect is taken. I have ventured to send you a copy of Thomson as a specimen which I hope may interest you ... To this collection I should wish to add an introductory volume of Essays on the Poetae Majores of Great Britain, and if it is possible, from your magic pen.

He was again prepared to let Scott dictate the terms, since it was the name which was all-important. "I should be proud of publishing from your magic pen", he wrote, "As there is no necessity for its being elaborate and from your intimate knowledge of the subject I trust you will be induced to undertake it—and if so I shall certainly do my utmost to meet your wishes as to conditions". By this time, however, Scott's health was deteriorating, as Pickering acknowledged in his last letter: "With sincere wishes for your perfect recovery, and hope that you may long be spared to enjoy the fame you have so justly carried".

The desired contribution was not to be, and Pickering was disappointed in his hopes. The letter to accompany the picture of the Scott household was the only item that he was able to acquire from his "magic pen".

The pursuit of the popular literary name was not unusual at this period and is an indication of the pressure of competition between rival publishers. When Harriet Martineau returned from America in 1836 she was besieged by Bentley, Colburn and Saunders. Bentley claimed that she had promised him a book and offered...

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47 National Library of Scotland, MS. 3915, f. 96.
48 Ibid., MS. 3917, f. 220.
49 Lockhart had commented much earlier on the desire of publishers to have Scott's name in their lists: "The eager struggling of the different booksellers to engage Scott at this time [1808] is a very amusing feature in the voluminous correspondence before me. Had he possessed treble the energy ... he could never have encountered a tithe of the projects that the post brought day after day to him, announced with extravagant enthusiasm and urged with all the arts of conciliation" (Lockhart, iii. 85-6).
extravagant terms for a work on America and £1000 for the first novel she should write. Colburn then offered £2000 for a travel book and £1000 for a novel. She finally accepted £900 for an edition of 3,000 copies for Society in America from Saunders, and complained that “it was nearly midnight before the house door locked on the last of the booksellers for that day”.

As an author, she was out of sympathy with the new spirit of enterprise displayed, particularly by new publishers, and was suspicious of their sense of their own importance. When G. R. Gleig attempted to get Scott and Southey to contribute to the National Library he complained that “almost all the great names are engaged. We were too late in coming to our determination”. As far as securing a contribution from Scott was concerned, Pickering was very late in the field.

IV

The publication of The Bijou in 1828 marked Pickering’s attempt to enter into a wider and more popular literary market than hitherto. In this particular field of the literary annual, however, the competition was already becoming intense. The fashion had begun for what were termed “these elegant bijouteries of the festive season” with the publication by Ackerman of Forget-me-not: a Christmas and New Year’s present for 1823. Based on the German model of the ‘Taschenbuch’, it was “the first attempt to rival the numerous and elegant publications of the continent”. It was soon followed by others like the Literary Souvenir and the Keepsake, and by the time Pickering entered the field in 1828 there were fifteen English titles. By 1830, when the last number of The Bijou appeared, there were over forty. The engraved plates were the main reason for their existence, although they contained many contributions from leading writers of the day; it was regarded as the proper thing to do to write for them. The list of contributors is certainly impressive, including Byron, Southey, Scott, Wordsworth, Lamb, Coleridge, Hood, Dickens, Thackeray, Tennyson, and many other famous names. The standard of contributions was higher in the earlier years, as one would expect, but difficult to keep up in the atmosphere of fierce competition which prevailed.

50 Gettman, pp. 57-8.
51 Ibid., p. 34.
The text was often merely 'written up' to the illustrations and in the words of the Quarterly Review, "the classics were doled out in fragments in the midst of trash". Their large editions of 10,000-20,000 copies were made possible by the development of steel engraving and machine methods of binding, but they were nevertheless very expensive and time-consuming for the publisher to produce. Engravers were paid up to £150 for one plate and the owner or artist a similar amount for permission to use the original painting. The printing of the plates was a slow business and there were not more than fifty engaged in the process in the 1840s, compared with over four hundred letterpress printers. In his correspondence with Hunter, Pickering had stressed the difficulties, expense and competition involved when discussing the family portrait of Sir Thomas More. He said the engraving would cost £100 and "it would not do to use it for the 'Life' first, as it would then lose the charm of being new—in this class of work [Bijou] there is the greatest possible rivalry—the cost of getting up mine this year is nearly £3,000".

The literary annuals, however, were popular and the rewards for success were substantial. Frederic Shoberl, the editor of Forget-me-not, wrote in the 1827 number that circulation increased annually, that the 10,000 copies of the last issue had been exhausted before Christmas, and that, since the publisher had received orders for more than he could supply, the size of the forthcoming edition was to be increased. Pickering announced his first number of The Bijou modestly. He expressed the hope that "it will be deemed entitled to an elevated station among the annual publications... far from wishing, however to institute indvidious comparisons, he only asserts for it an equal claim to the notice and patronage of the public". Like Ackerman, he claimed a "superabundance of matter" from which to select. Just as publishers were eager to secure the most prestigious names, so the writers themselves seemed just as eager to have their works included. This modest entry on to the scene was not, however, received kindly by

53 Ibid., p. xxii.
54 B.L. Add. MS. 24873, f. 61. In the preface to The Keepsake for 1829 the proprietor, Charles Heath, claimed that the number had cost £11,000 to "get up".
all established rivals. In an obvious reference to *The Bijou*, the editor of *The Literary Souvenir*, Alaric A. Watts, wrote in the 1828 issue about a new rival who claims more engravings than hitherto: “This is a species of quackery unworthy of fair and honourable rivalry”. Claiming that he always obtained permission from the artist and owner before engraving, he went on: “Had I been less scrupulous in this respect I too might have adorned the pages of *The Literary Souvenir* with engravings after Sir Thomas Lawrence and Mr. Wilkie”. This was unfair to Pickering, who claimed he had obtained permission, and certainly in his correspondence with Hunter he refers to this in connection with the painting of the More family.

Apart from Scott, the most notable literary name associated with the first number of *The Bijou* was Coleridge. In 1828 Pickering published the fifth edition, his own first edition, of the *Poetical Works*, which included a number of hitherto unpublished pieces. These were also included, apparently without direct sanction or payment, in the annual; moreover incomplete and uncorrected, much to the annoyance of the author. They were, *The wanderings of Cain*, *Work without hope*, *Youth and age*, *A day dream*, and *The two founts*. Their inclusion by the editor, W. Fraser, was justified in the preface:

Mr. Coleridge, in the most liberal manner, permitted the editor to select what he please from all his unpublished manuscripts, and it will be seen from *The wanderings of Cain*, though unfinished, and other pieces ... that whenever he may favour the world with a perfect collection of his writings, he will adduce new and powerful claims upon its respect.

The pieces had been released by Coleridge to Gillman for inclusion in the *Poetical Works*, and presumably the editor considered he was justified in anticipating this by including the new items in *The Bijou*. Yet the poem *Youth and age* had been received by Alaric Watts directly from Coleridge for inclusion in *The Literary Souvenir* for the same year and a footnote duly appeared in the preface: “I have just learned that *Youth and age* is about to be published in another annual work. I can only say that I received it from the author as a contribution to the *Literary Souvenir*”. Coleridge’s own correspondence confirms this. In a

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55 The text of the poem in the *Literary Souvenir* is corrected and is closer to the corrected 1834 edition of the *Poetical works* than the version in *The Bijou*. 
letter to Watts dated 24 November 1827 he wrote: "Till Thursday night had never even heard the name of the Bijou. The infamy on the part of some one in obtaining from Mr. Gillman under false pretence, a ms. poem the publication of which was against my judgement & my express wish renders me a greater sufferer than yourself."\textsuperscript{56}

In the feverish atmosphere generated by the publication of the annuals, such confusion is not surprising, and Coleridge fared no better with other publishers. About the same time he was negotiating with S.C. Hall, the founder of The Amulet, for the inclusion of other poems and pieces. Hall selected only one, The Improvisatore, which was published in the 1828 number, yet in 1833 he published three other poems without permission or payment.\textsuperscript{57} In 1828 he had declined an offer of £50 a poem from Watts in return for confining his contributions to the Literary Souvenir. And Coleridge was not the only author to become exasperated by the publishers of annuals at this time. Scott was paid £500 for contributing 100 pages to the 1829 Keepsake, but his contribution fell short of this. Heath, instead of cash, then offered free engravings for a new edition of the Waverley Novels in return for further contributions to the 1830 number. Scott was disgusted and ended his relations with Heath and "the conceited vulgar Cockney, his editor" [F. M. Reynolds].\textsuperscript{58}

The affair of The Bijou was not the happiest inauguration of relations between author and publisher, and the appearance of the 1828 edition of Coleridge's Poetical works was also attended by friction over the contents, the terms and the size of the edition. In a letter to Alaric Watts in August 1827 he complained:

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., p. 698 n.
\textsuperscript{58} Scott, p. 525. The 1829 Bijou included an extract from Christabel to go with an engraving of a picture by Thomas Stothard. The 1830 number was the last Pickering was to publish, although he finished off the series by bringing out The Cameo: a mélange of literature and the arts selected from The Bijou. By now, occupied with the Aldine series, he withdrew from the fray, probably because of the difficulty in keeping up the standard of literary and artistic contributions. In the preface to the 1830 Bijou, Pickering referred to the "extraordinary expense", saying that "it could not have appeared after the first year but for unusual public patronage". There were many anonymous contributions, and the number of engravings had been reduced from fifteen in the first number to nine in the last (The Bijou, 1830, p.x.)
Another vexatious thing is about the edition of my poems by Pickering—against my will and judgement from the beginning. Though it was expressly bargained to be only the poems already published, yet under various pretences much that had far better in their present state have remained unpublished, has been forced from me—and what is worse—I am as clear as a prophet can be that my dear friend Gillman, to whom I had given over the poems, will never receive a pickled herring from this Pickering.

Later, after complaining about the state of the proof sent by the publisher, which he was unable to correct, and on receiving no reply to a request for "a more decent proof", he then raised the question of the size of edition:

Mr. Pickering has sent word to Mr. Gillman that he has printed only 300 copies and therefore there can be no profit, as it will barely pay the expense of paper & printing. I have as good grounds as an author well can have, for believing that an edition of a thousand, properly advertised would have been sold within a twelve-month. Had it been, as it should have been, in two volumes, there is scarce a doubt of it. As it is neither I nor Mr. Gillman will ever receive a penny, I dare prophesy. So much for Mr. Pickering and Company.

It would certainly seem excessively cautious to limit the edition so severely, in view of the poet's growing reputation, and his comments seem justified when it was said to have been sold off within three months of publication. This friction demonstrates the misunderstandings and trouble which could be caused by the absence of a clear written agreement between author and publisher covering all the points which were likely to arise. On the publication, in 1829, of a corrected edition, Coleridge did receive a loan of £30 from Pickering and relations improved. The edition of 1834, containing the poet's final corrections, and matching the Aldine series, was frequently reprinted during the 1830s and 1840s. Most of Coleridge's other works, edited by H. N. Coleridge and usually with the author's last corrections, were republished by Pickering during this period; and the first edition of Confessions of an enquiring spirit, edited from manuscripts, appeared under his imprint in 1840. Coleridge, in spite of the sharp comments in

59 Coleridge, vi. 699-700.
60 Ibid., p. 760 and n.
61 The lack of a detailed agreement caused friction between the novelist Charles Reade and Richard Bentley over the publication of It's never too late to mend (Gettman, pp. 89-90).
some of his letters, did appreciate Pickering's work as a publisher. In 1834 he asked Henry Nelson Coleridge to congratulate him on taking over the publication of the *Gentleman's Magazine*: "Give my thanks and congratulations to my poetic publisher, Mr. Pickle-herring, on the resuscitation of Sylvanus Urban. Tell him from me that the improved form & look of the work do him credit".62

Conflict with the family over the terms of publication arose again, however, with the increasing success of the poet's works. The original conditions do appear somewhat stiff, with the publisher taking the least risk and more than the normal profits. As with much poetry, scholarly works and local history the arrangement was by the commission method, and in 1828 Coleridge had agreed to pay the expenses of publication, give five per cent commission on the sale of all copies, and afterwards half the net profits to the publisher.63 The more normal arrangement in such cases was a fixed ten per cent of gross receipts to the publisher, so it was no wonder that, when 3,000 copies of the poems had been sold, and two new editions of *Aids to reflection*, had appeared within a few years, Henry Coleridge wanted a change and asked for two-thirds of the profits to be allocated to the estate. Pickering eventually agreed with Sara Coleridge to cancel his initial five per cent, but fell behind with his payments. Finally the family induced him to sell his half share. In 1851 the publisher Edward Moxon bought the whole stock of Coleridge's works for £831, so after twenty three years the connection with the Coleridge family ended, as it had begun, on a rather unfortunate note.64 It does seem surprising that he gave up such a major literary figure in this way unless he was under such financial pressure that he had little option.

V

It was in the *Aldine Edition of the British Poets* that Pickering's relations with his three major editors, Nicolas, Dyce and Mitford

62 Coleridge, vi. 976.


64 Ibid., pp.225-6. Sara Coleridge fared little better with John Murray. "Pickering", she wrote, "keeps us an entire year out of our money—and as for Murray ... I can get no account from him at all".
came to full fruition. The need for, and the advantage in having, scholars well used to dealing with manuscript material is illustrated in the 1845 edition of Chaucer, the life by Sir Harris Nicolas being especially valuable in its thorough investigation into contemporary documents. From the beginning Pickering intended the series to be of the highest standard; in one of his letters to Scott he had expressed his intention to make them “perfect”, and there is no doubt that he spared no effort in trying to make them so. In the case of the second Aldine edition of Burns, in three volumes, also edited by Nicolas, Pickering advertised at great length in announcing its preparation. He claimed that no expense had been spared in acquiring original manuscripts, and that he had nearly two hundred letters or poems in Burns’ own hand. This would, as he put it, “establish the superior claims of this edition of his works to the attention of the public”. He solicited further information, asking for the loan “for a few hours only” of any original manuscript of any letter or poem. On publication, he claimed in the preface that “the possession of so many of Burns manuscripts has enabled the publisher to print a few of the poet’s effusions for the first time”, together with extracts from letters in the memoir; and the editor had made a careful search for manuscript material and had printed as much as possible from original sources. This procedure had in it, of course, an element of ‘puffing’, but the result was in the words of the standard bibliography of Burns “a textually noteworthy edition”.65 Nicolas also edited the Aldine editions of Collins, Cowper, Kirke White, Surrey and Wyatt, and Thomson. What is clear is that Nicolas, Dyce and Mitford regarded themselves as collaborators with the publisher in the enterprise. In his memoir accompanying the 1830 edition of Collins, Nicolas paid tribute to Dyce, who first edited an edition of Collins for Pickering in 1827:

the praise of collecting every particular which industry and zeal could glean belongs to the Rev. Alexander Dyce, the result of whose enquiries may be found in his notes to Johnson’s memoir, prefixed to an edition of Collin’s works which he lately edited. Those notices are now, for the first time wove into a memoir ... and in leaving it to another to erect a fabric out of the materials which he has collected, instead of being himself the

When there was no new manuscript material available, as in the case of the Earl of Surrey, Nicolas acknowledged his indebtedness to a former editor, and, again, as was his wont, took the opportunity to deplore the state of the public records: "Until a change takes place in the present disgraceful state of public records", he asserted in the memoir, "it was vain to hope that any new light can be thrown on the life of this eminent person".

Nicolas was also the editor of Pickering's profusely illustrated edition of *The Complete Angler* of 1836, described as the finest illustrated edition of the century. Dibdin remarked on Pickering's "passion for art as well as for printing ... what he has done for Isaac Walton is almost an absolute miracle", and Nicolas, at first reluctant to superintend the edition, devoted part of the preface to a veritable eulogy on the publisher:

His reluctance was, however, but of short duration, for no one who daily witnessed the Publisher's enthusiasm could possibly withstand its influence. He relieved him from all his difficulties by selecting the notes which relate to the art; while his own attention was entirely bestowed on the literary and biographical parts of the work. It has been to his friend Mr. Pickering literally a labour of love. Neither time nor expense was spared to produce an edition worthy of the state of the Arts at the present day, and of the importance which was, in his opinion, due to the subject; and during the seven years which the work has been in progress, his ardour never for a moment abated. It is now for the public to judge of the result of his efforts; and the Editor, who has so often benefited by his bibliographical knowledge cannot deny himself the pleasure of expressing a hope that he to whose tastes and exertions these volumes owe nearly all their value, may derive from them the credit which he so well deserves.

It was indeed a superb project, and expensive, being priced at six guineas for the two volumes, and ten guineas on large paper. But it was not a profitable venture and is yet another example

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66 W. Collins, *The poetical works* (London, 1830), p. vii. Pickering had again advertised for more material: "Mr. Pickering of Chancery Lane will feel obliged if correspondents can furnish him with any new particulars respecting Collins or his family, his letters, a poem on the marriage of the Prince of Orange; an original portrait or his autograph will be acceptable for the edition of his works in the Aldine Edition of the Poets" (*Gentleman's Magazine*, 1830, i. 487).

of Pickering’s enthusiasm outrunning his commercial prudence. After his bankruptcy seventeen years later there were two hundred and twenty three copies sold off, most of them at the sale on 24 July 1858 in sheets, and these were available to booksellers long after his death, and often on offer bound at far less than the published price.68

The second editor he managed to engage for the Aldine Poets was the Rev. Alexander Dyce, the not uncommon example of a man who had taken Holy Orders but who held no official position, and instead dedicated himself to scholarly pursuits, in this case literature.69 Fluent in Greek, Latin, Italian and French, he was noted for his scholarship. He was acquainted with Samuel Rogers, and, like Mitford, joined the Rogers ‘circle’ and met Dickens, Thackeray and Scott and many other literary figures. He was also a member of the Camden Society, and a founder, with James Halliwell Phillips and Thomas Wright, of the Percy Society, and sat on its first Council. He worked at a time when editors were all too prone to alter the author’s words in accordance with their own tastes, and the quality of his texts and notes still command respect. He began his connection with Pickering in his edition of the Poetical works of William Collins which Pickering published with Talboys of Oxford in 1827. The opinion has been expressed that without Pickering’s support, this and the several other expensive undertakings he embarked upon would not have been possible. In the words of his contemporary John Forster:

So limited the sale for it and so exacting his necessary requirements in regard to printing and other points of production, that it was a liberality merely to share the venture; and but for Mr. Pickering’s enterprise Dyce would have had no encouragement to continue the design he now began of employing his critical powers and acquirements in the field of early English poetry.70

68 P. Muir, Victorian illustrated books (London, 1971), p.21. The 53 plates and the copyright of the Nicolas memoirs and notes were bought by Nattali for £89.5s. In 1875 Chatto and Windus brought out a reprint with all the illustrations and including the original preface with the acknowledgement to Pickering by Nicolas (Catalogue of important ... books including 197 copies of the late Mr. Pickering’s ... edition of Walton and Cotton’s Angler ... sold by Mr. L. A. Lewis ... July 23, 1838).


He had an early interest in the theatre and even before he took his degree at Oxford had edited Jarvis's *Dictionary of the language of Shakespeare* in 1818. The editions of the early English dramatists which he produced for Pickering—Peele in 1829, Webster in 1830 and Greene in 1831,—were the first modern editions to be published, and he was the first to edit Marlowe properly, in 1850. The difficulties he had were illustrated in a letter to Forster: "Unfortunately", he said, "after all the pains I took to amend the texts, much remains in Greene and Peele especially, in a most wretched state owing to the frightful mutilation they have undergone". Dyce took a great interest in the Aldine poets and was responsible for the editing and the memoirs of the Aldine Akenside Beattie, Pope and Shakespeare. One cannot doubt that Pickering's relationship with him was one of lasting friendship. As late as 1849 we find him declining an invitation from him, possibly for a fishing trip, saying "I cannot possibly accompany you to Deptford tomorrow, as there are three sales to attend to ... therefore I hope you will excuse me." The third member of the trio to edit the Aldine series was the Rev. John Mitford, another ordained priest who, although holding livings in Suffolk, had little aptitude for clerical work, and took permanent lodgings in London. Like Dyce, he became a friend of Samuel Rogers, who is said to have commented: "Poor fellow! His going into the Church was a great mistake. He is no more fit to be a parson than I am to be the Angel Gabriel". Like Dyce, too, he was noted for his scholarship, had a profound knowledge of English literature, and amassed a considerable library largely devoted to English poetry. His interests, however, were not confined to literature but embraced such diverse topics as fishing, natural history and cricket. Before his association with Pickering he was responsible for the first accurate edition of the works of Thomas Gray in 1816, and much of his work appeared in the Aldine edition of the poet in 1835. His edition of Gray's *Correspondence with the Rev. Norton Nicholls, with other pieces* was published by Pickering in 1843. Mitford had the lion's share of the Aldine poets, being responsible for the memoirs and notes

71 Ibid., p. 739.
72 Victoria and Albert Museum, Alexander Dyce Collection.
to eleven works in the series, including Dryden, Milton and Spencer. On being requested to compose the memoir adapted to the Milton, he emphasised his own independence in pursuing the task: “I have consulted all the former writers for information without copying them”, he remarked, “after being indebted to them for the necessary facts, and for occasional expressions, the remainder of the narrative has been the result of my own inquiries and formed from the conclusions of my own judgement”. He concluded by acknowledging his debt to Dyce, “his amiable and accomplished friend, to whose industry and talents all who are interested in our early poetry must feel great obligations”.74 Like Dyce, his relationship with Pickering was one of friendship, as is revealed in letters to his friend Edward Jesse.75 In 1836 he recommended him to become acquainted with Pickering.

My dear Jesse [he wrote], I have requested Pickering to present you with a copy of his book on fishing, just published, in which you will find all the information you want; and as Picky is an angler, and has got several books on that subject, he will be most happy to send you any. “Not to know him argues yourself unknown”, so pray make his acquaintance and he will doubtless ask you to pippins and cheese. P.S. Picky will give you a day’s fishing in the West India Docks which abound in roach and eels. Also he will show you his beautiful edition of Walton.

In a further letter later the same year Jesse and Pickering were the objects of some typically amusing banter: “Pickering delights in your society”, he said, “and says you are very superior to his dinner table of authors—i.e. Dyce, myself, and some more hacks”.76

As well as being associated with Pickering in the Aldine series from 1830 onwards,77 Mitford was a collaborator with him in the

74 J. Milton, Poetical works (London, 1831), i. vi, xx.
75 Naturalist, Surveyor of Royal Parks and Palaces, and author of Gleanings in natural history.
76 Houstoun, pp. 78, 82.
77 Pickering, in his agreements with Nicolas, Dyce and Mitford, must have retained the valuable copyright material in the editorial matter of the Aldine poets, since it was purchased by Whittingham for £470. Whittingham then offered it to Moxon, who, after some consideration, declined and it was eventually acquired by Bell and Daldy who continued to publish the series for most of the rest of the century (Catalogue of the sixth portion ... of modern books published by ... William Pickering ... sold ... by Mr. L. A. Lewis ... November 30,
new series of the *Gentleman's Magazine* which was launched in 1834. Pickering purchased a share (and his name appears jointly with that of J.B. Nichols in the imprint from that date) and advertised widely in the following terms: "On January 1st was published No. 1 of a new and improved series of this long established miscellany, embellished with a view of the interior of King's Library, British Museum." The size was increased and the contents certainly reflected Pickering's interests and attitudes, with articles on historical and antiquarian topics, retrospective reviews of works of English history and literature, notices of the early poets and dramatists, transactions of scientific and learned societies, records of historical events, honours and preferments in Church and State, births and marriages of nobility and gentry; together with 'embellishments' in the form of views, architecture, historical monuments and, of course, illustrations from books including his own publications such as Douce's *Dance of death* and Shaw and Madden's *Illuminated ornaments from manuscripts and early printed books*.\(^78\) Charles Knight commented that "in its volumes there is more tombstone information to be found than in any other work in our language; in it the antiquaries stoutly held their own".\(^79\) In the publishers' preface to the new series there is a defence of what it calls "penetration into the deeper recesses of antiquity where the general reader was unwilling to follow; the obscure legend and mutilated inscription have been the objects of their regard; they have cleared the moss from many a forgotten marble, and rescued from oblivion many an obliterated name". But it goes on: "the largest and brightest masses of erudition have been formed of particulars which separately observed, would appear dull, minute and unimportant". With regard to Church and State, the proprietors' colours are nailed firmly to the mast:

Our principles and opinions on subjects connected with religion and government are the same which we always professed: and that is all that tends to support the necessary Supremacy of Law and the stability of our

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\(^78\) Charles Babbage stressed the advantage of publishers becoming the proprietors of reviews, magazines and journals, in which they could puff their own publications. The editors were often paid handsomely (C. Babbage, *On the economy of machinery and manufactures*, 5th edn. (London, 1835), p. 330).

\(^79\) Knight, i. 265.
Constitution; in all that regards the preservation of order and peace, the maintenance of our venerable Apostolic Church, they are unchanged, and we believe we may add, unchangeable". 80

Coleridge had complimented Pickering on the new series and was most emphatic in his approval and advice for the future.

The first three articles are cheering pledges of new life in a venerable body [he wrote to Henry Nelson Coleridge] that if he or the editor will rigourously maintain the great merit of the Gentleman's Magazine—viz.—freedom from all faction, love and even dotage on the Past, delight in all that is capable of becoming an abiding past; and the judicia, even with the amiable prejudices of an English Gentleman, Scholar and whoever intelligently drinks Church and King, the magazine will assuredly reassume its old Primacy. 81

VI

Mitford became editor of the Gentleman's Magazine at the same time as Pickering became a proprietor and continued as such until 1850. 82 He was a prolific contributor himself, and the period has been called the "palmy years of that periodical". Amongst his contributions were many occasional pieces of poetry, signed "J.M.", and one piece in particular is worthy of note in illuminating one aspect of Pickering's activities as a publisher. In 1836 he contributed some impromptu lines on the Aldine Anchor, the first and last stanzas of which are worth quoting:

"Would you still be safely landed,
On the Aldine Anchor ride,
Never yet was vessel stranded,
With the Dolphin by its side.

To the Dolphin, as we're drinking,
Life, and health, and joy we send;
A poet once he sav'd from sinking,
And still he lives—the Poet's friend." 83

Who the particular poet "saved from sinking" was we can only guess, but in the case of contemporary minor poets it is certainly...

80 Gentleman's magazine (1834), i.
81 Coleridge, vi. 976.
82 Pickering remained a publisher of the magazine for just ten years, his name disappearing from the imprint in 1844.
83 Gentleman's magazine (1836), i. 501; Notes and Queries, 27 October 1866, p. 327.
no exaggeration to claim he was their friend. Sir Geoffrey Keynes in his Memoir comments on his publication of minor verse, but what is remarkable is the extent to which he indulged in it. In terms of the number of separate items he published throughout his career, minor verse of one kind or another accounted for nearly ten per cent of his total output. His support may have enabled a few worthwhile works to see the light of day, but also many indifferent or worthless ones as well, although it is worth remembering in this context that the Victorians did not mind indifferent poetry provided it expressed the right sentiments. Most works were published either by subscription, where the author could call on friends and acquaintances to support the work, or on commission, the author paying the expenses and sharing the profits if there were any. This may have ensured that the publisher did not suffer direct loss, but on the other hand they did take up his time and energy, as well as printing resources. As an example of the subscription method one may quote *The human hand, and other poems* by the Rev. C. F. Watkins, which appeared in 1852. This had previously been published with the Rivington imprint under the title of *Sacred poems*, but, according to the author, had been "badly got up by a country printer". He wanted a more presentable edition, which he certainly got from Pickering, printed by Whittingham and embellished with ornaments and decorative initial letters. There were two hundred and sixty two subscribers for a total of three hundred and thirty four copies, amongst whom gentry and clergy were prominent, and the edition must have been disposed of since only two copies remained to be sold after the publisher's death two years later. The subscription method of publication was gradually being replaced by 'part' publication, but was obviously still useful in such a case where the latter was inappropriate. For most minor verse, however, the author was required to meet the costs. There were undoubtedly some poets who had a vogue at this time, such as John Moultrie, Rector of Rugby, whose poems were published by Pickering in 1837. They were much appreciated by Charles Knight, and two more editions appeared in 1838 and 1852. Many, however, were very

84 Keynes, p. 35.
86 Knight, i. 287.
minor indeed, sometimes only appearing in the one edition, and introduced by the authors with appropriate modesty. Such were the poems of E.D. Girdlestone, an Oxford undergraduate, published anonymously in 1850 under the title *Whose poems?*. “This volume is small”, wrote the author in the preface, “The Librarian of the King of Lilliput would have rejected it with upturned contempt! Its pretentions are small ... how presumptuous then of me, its nameless author, to offer it to the acceptance of a fastidious public.” Pickering, however, as the “poet’s friend”, was willing to undertake its publication.

There were three contemporary poets with works published by Pickering who merit some attention, since they throw light on his relationships with authors, his methods and his reputation. The first of these was Edward Fitzgerald, whose early works, *Euphranor*, *Polonius*, and the *Six dramas of Calderon* first appeared under his imprint. Fitzgerald, evidently aware of his reputation for bringing out good editions of neglected works, had written to him in April 1846 on the need for a new edition of Selden’s *Table-talk*. “It has been for some time impossible”, he said, “to get a copy ... surely the book deserves and would repay reprinting ... it wants re-editing, as well as reprinting ... succeeding editions have done little to rectify the errors of the first.” With the letter, Fitzgerald sent Pickering a copy with his own annotations. There is no further information on subsequent negotiations, but the following year Pickering published his edition of Selden edited by S.W. Singer with an acknowledgement: “Part of the following illustrations were kindly communicated to the editor by a gentleman to whom his best thanks are due, and whom it would have afforded him great pleasure to name”. Fitzgerald’s notes are almost literally reproduced, but he expected no remuneration, and preferred to remain anonymous. He then choose Pickering as his publisher, who in this case appears to have been little more than an agent. The author had the works printed at his own expense by his local printer, John Childs & Son of Bungay, and turned them over to the publisher who simply marketed them. Regarding *Euphranor: a dialogue on youth*, he wrote in a letter to W.D. Donne in 1851: “Pickering publishes—and I suppose the book will be had at his shop in a

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week. I leave it to Childs and him to fix a price—2s. ought to be the utmost. It is to be done up in plain green cloth". The author even undertook some of the advertising himself. In a letter to E. B. Cowell, he asks him to advertise the work in the most popular Oxford newspaper for two weeks at his own expense, saying he only wanted a "glance in a review". He also sent a copy to the editor of the Westminster Quarterly Review, where Cowell reviewed it in April 1851. He wrote to Cowell again on the publication of Polonius: a collection of wise saws and modern instances the following year: "I must not forget to tell you that I believe Polonius is published at Pickering's". Fitzgerald had only two hundred and fifty copies printed and added: "I doubt it will be but a losing affair but I had long had a desire to put out such a thing". He then attempted to get him to publish for him a selection from Thomas Fuller, one of Pickering's known favourites, but without success. "I should suppose Pickering has lost my Fuller", he wrote to John Allen in November 1852, "which I shall be sorry for. He thought there was scarce enough for a volume". His last work to appear under Pickering's imprint was Six dramas of Calderon. Freely translated, which was in the process of publication when Pickering went bankrupt, but was left with his house owing to sheer inertia on the author's part. "Everyone seems to think me very silly for bringing it out under Pickering's broken banner", he wrote in a letter to Cowell, "and I doubt that, other considerations apart, his people have now too much to do to attend to me. But as I told you I was too tired of the business to hunt for another publisher."
The second poet to be considered in this context is Thomas Lovell Beddoes, because, fortunately in this case, we have a detailed account of the process of publication of his works, from the initial request to the remaindering of surplus copies.\textsuperscript{91} Since the poet had died in 1849 the negotiations were with his executor and editor, T. F. Kelsall, to whom he had bequeathed the manuscripts, and who had obtained them from his brother, Captain Beddoes. \textit{The Bride's tragedy}, an early Jacobean style verse drama, had been published by Rivington in 1822, but apart from this item, Pickering's editions, carefully edited by Kelsall, were the first to appear. In 1850 he published \textit{Death's jest book, or the fool's tragedy}, a verse drama which Beddoes had been working on for over twenty years, and which, in deference to family wishes, came out anonymously. Publication was on a commission basis, the immediate cost to Kelsall being £30. Pickering sent the estimates and limited the number of copies to five hundred, “as there are but few purchasers of poetry”. The price, like that of the Aldine volumes, was 3s. 7d. to the trade and 5s. retail. Like the Aldine series also, it was printed by Whittingham, and Pickering recommended cloth-covered boards rather than paper wrappers, and a printed paper label instead of gilt for the title. Advertisements, emphasised by Pickering, were inserted in the press, five copies allowed for the libraries and twenty for the reviewers, the latter sent to the usual journals like the \textit{Athenaeum}, the \textit{Literary Gazette}, \textit{Spectator}, \textit{Examiner} and \textit{Fraser's Magazine}. He was uncertain as to whether to send it to the church magazines as he said he “had not read a line of it”. A copy was sent to Captain Beddoes who was so grateful with the result that he then gave permission for the rest of the works to be published and offered to pay the expenses. This cost Kelsall another £30. Five hundred copies of the full collected edition in two volumes were printed the following year as \textit{The poems, postumous and collected, of Thomas Lovell Beddoes}. The second volume provided Pickering with an opportunity to dispose of two hundred and fifty copies of the \textit{Death's jest book}, which he had bound up with \textit{The bride's tragedy} after having first secured the permission of Rivingtons to reprint the latter. He had, as frequently, his own influence on the contents, insisting on

retainings, against Kelsall's wishes, the preface to The bride's tragedy: "I should keep it", he said, "as written by the author". He then, entirely on his own initiative, issued the other two hundred and fifty copies as a single volume impression with the same collation and contents, but omitting Death's jest book, and devised his own title page: Poems by the late Thomas Beddoes, author of Death's jest book. In spite of this manipulation, and good reviews, the works did not sell well, and Pickering noted that thirty-six copies of the single-volume and one hundred and twenty-four copies of the two-volume impression had been sold, which "helps off Death's jest book, but I am disappointed at the small demand for the one-volume". Many copies remained to be sold off after his death. The whole episode demonstrates the hazards of publishing minor verse, of which Pickering was well aware, and the consequent necessity for the commission method, as well as his close control over the physical details and his desire to have at least some influence on the editorial matter.

The third example is something quite different. Such was its popularity, it could be described as a veritable Victorian literary phenomenon. The success of Philip James Bailey's Festus was astonishing and was due to two factors. When Pickering published the first edition in 1839, poetry was in the doldrums, and the 1830s had produced nothing of any great significance. Tennyson and Browning were not yet established and successful. The only large-scale work of the decade was the verse drama Philip von Artevelde by Sir Henry Taylor, who wrote that "it was a flat time, publishers would have nothing to say to poets, regarding them as unprofitable people". Moreover, since the death of Byron, poetry of the romantic imagination was frowned upon by churchmen. Festus, combining as it did a wild imagination with a colouring of religious fervour, seemed to fill a gap and strike a

92 This title-page sometimes appears as an extra in the first volume of the two-volume edition.
93 Catalogue of a miscellaneous collection of books sold ... by Mr. L. A. Lewis, January 31, 1855, p. 21. There were 46 copies of Death's jest book, 48 copies of the two-volume impression of the poems, and 163 copies of the one-volume version. Pickering's assignees expected them to realise 5s.-6s. per copy, or 1s. 6d.-2s. for one volume, but they actually fetched only 2s. 11d. and 8½d., respectively.
chord with the early Victorians. Pickering, as the "poet's friend", for once reaped a financial reward for devoting his time and resources to a minor poet. Bailey was a solitary writer. He was called to the Bar but never practised, and in 1836 retired to his father's house to write, where he was much influenced by his liberal politics and theology, and by his own extensive reading of romantic poetry. He is said to have known *Childe Harold* by heart, and, although his work was regarded as an English Faust, it owes more to Byron than to Goethe. He did not make his way into literary circles and his only literary acquaintance was John Robertson, editor of the *Westminster Review*. He worked alone, detached from his surroundings, a circumstance which resulted in the early exhaustion of his poetic powers. *Festus* was constructed on an imposing scale, and showed what might be done in poetry by an imagination not of the highest quality but bold and violent in its appeal. It depicted a Byronic young man tempted with opportunities for unbridled sin but with an absolute certainty of eventual salvation after repentance. There are many idealistic passage reflecting Victorian aspirations towards a better world where hard labour and poverty are abolished and all are "saved" in a universal brotherhood of man. The first edition appeared anonymously and had a mixed reception in the reviews. But it was the version in the second edition in 1845, when its authorship was acknowledged, which received most attention and recognition. This was not from the standard literary reviews but from sections of the evangelical press and from many notable literary figures, including Tennyson, who was influenced by it. In 1846 he wrote to Edward Fitzgerald: "I have just got Festus: order it and read it. You will most likely find it a great bore, but there are some very good things in Festus". It has been said that it

95 "It is an extraordinary production, out-Heroding Kant in some of its philosophy and out-Goethering Goethe... in its wild plot. Most objectionable as it is on this account, it yet contains so many exquisite passages of genuine and glorious poetry that our admiration of the author's genius overpowers the feeling of mortification at its being misapplied and meddling with such dangerous topics" (*Literary Gazette*, 31 August 1839, p. 558). "A rambling poem, constructed on what is said to have been the Elizabethan principle of domestic architecture—long passages that lead to nothing. The idea is mere plagiarism from the Faust of Goethe (*Athenaeum*, 21 December 1839, p. 959).

96 *Alfred Lord Tennyson. A memoir by his son* (London, 1897), i. 234.

influenced "Ring out wild bells" in *In Memoriam*, which has been characterised as a condensed lyrical version of Bailey's long-winded rhetorical treatment of the same theme.\(^98\) Pickering's notices quoted Tennyson as saying "I can scarcely trust myself to say how much I admire it for fear of falling into extravagance", and in his prospectuses for later editions gathered together over fifty quotations from other famous literary figures, such as Rossetti, Bulwer Lytton, Thackeray, Harrison Ainsworth, Samuel Smiles, Mathew Arnold, Walter Savage Landor and others. So blatant was his advertising that it led Dr. John Brown of Boston to protest that

it would appear from these opinions, which from their intensity, variety and number are curious signs of the times, that Mr. Bailey has not so much improved on, as happily superceded the authors of Job and Ecclesiastes, of the Divine Comedy, of Paradise Lost and Regained, of Dr. Faustus, Hamlet, Don Juan, The Course of Time, St Leon, The Jolly Beggars and The Loves of the Angels.\(^99\)

Whatever the varied opinions, there is no doubt that it was for a time very popular. Pickering published four editions, in 1839, 1845, 1848 and 1852, although the last was called the fifth on the title-page. He also published *The Angel world and other poems* in 1850, but this was not a success, so was promptly incorporated into the 1852 edition of *Festus*. After Pickering's death the number of editions rose to thirteen, under the imprints of Chapman & Hall, Bell & Daldy, Longman Green and, lastly, in 1903, Routledge. But by the 1860s its popularity declined due to its ever-increasing as each new edition appeared. This was not so much development as accretion, the work growing from 8,103 lines in 1839 to 19,558 lines by the time the last Pickering edition was published in 1852. By 1903 it had nearly 40,000 lines, twice the length of *The Ring and the Book*, which made it virtually unreadable.\(^100\) In America it was even more popular, where its vogue is hard to exaggerate. No English poem ever sold so many editions. There were at least forty pirated ones between 1840 and 1889, but neither author nor publisher received anything from


\(^{99}\) McKillop, p. 762.

them. It was an extraordinary phenomenon while it lasted, and Pickering certainly seized the opportunity to exploit his English editions to the full.

VII

Preoccupation with Pickering’s association with poetry, historical works and the older literature can obscure two aspects of his publishing with which his name is not normally linked. These are, firstly, the field of ‘improving’ literature to cater for the expansion of education and the reading public, and, secondly, the literature of social reform, a major topic in the age of Reform Bills, Factory Acts and the abolition of slavery. The most notable publisher in the realm of popular education was, of course, Charles Knight, but most other publishers had similar ventures.\textsuperscript{101} Pickering eventually entered the field in 1843 with his \textit{Small Books on Great Subjects}, which ran to twenty-two items in the next ten years. Most were written by Caroline Frances Cornwallis, although at least two were by John Barlow, a Fellow of the Royal Society. Two works had already been published when, in 1842, the idea arose of publishing a numbered series. In that year, the ‘ABC Society’ was formed, derived from the initials of the first movers, and the subscriptions were to cover or reduce the cost of publication. Formed after the fashion of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, it had not only the usual aim of providing “wholesome literature to the new class of readers, suited to their limited time and purses”, but also to form a body of philosophical knowledge, and to show “well meaning but ill-judging people that Science and Religion must agree.”\textsuperscript{102} The authoress preferred anonymity because of what she regarded as the contemporary prejudice against women writers, or, as she put it in a letter to a friend in 1841: “because of the degree of ridicule still attached to the meddling of women in philosophy.”\textsuperscript{103} She

\textsuperscript{101} The modern epoch of cheap literature may be said to have begun in 1827 with Constable’s \textit{Miscellany}, followed by Knight’s \textit{Library of Useful Knowledge}, Murray’s \textit{Family Library}, and Lardner’s \textit{Cabinet Cyclopaedia} published by Longmans.


\textsuperscript{103} Some contemporaries had noted the invasion by women of fields of literature other than the novel, and alleged a tendency for them to have
set out to prove that a woman could master any subject and then write intelligently on it, and it is true that the series covered a wide range, including works on chemistry, geology, grammar, education and criminal law, as well as philosophy and theology. Whether Pickering was aware of her identity is not known, but the reading public and critics were certainly not, and the works were well received. The tenth book in the series for example, *On the principles of criminal law*, had a good review in *The jurist* in December 1846, but she commented: “if it were once known among lawyers that the tract had come from a female, they would never read it.”\(^{104}\) The works went through several editions and were taken over and republished by J. W. Parker after Pickering’s death. At 3s. 6d. a volume, published every six months, they were not, however, in the same category of cheapness or popularity of subject matter as Knight’s *Penny Cyclopaedia*. The other cheap series, the *Christian Classics* at 1s. 6d. a volume in paper wrappers, which Pickering began to publish about the same time, was not as popular as he obviously hoped it would be. Consisting of reprints of seventeenth-century Divines, it was a series in accordance with his own tastes, but very large quantities of them remained to be sold off after his death.\(^{105}\)

One does not normally associate Pickering with the subject of social reform, yet, in spite of his love of the past and rather conservative outlook, it is nevertheless represented in his publications. Very early on in his career, in 1823, he brought out with E. Wilson new editions of two major works by Jeremy Bentham, perhaps the greatest of the philosophical radicals, who by now had come to believe that universal suffrage was a necessary precondition for reform. The *Introduction to the principles of morals and legislation* and *A fragment on government* were works notable for their influence on future legislation and in the reform of the administration of the law. There had been a lapse of forty-seven years between the first and the authorised second edition of

\(^{104}\) Cornwallis, p.v.

the latter, and the author makes it clear that the initiative came from the publishers. In a letter to Dr. Parr in February 1823 he wrote:

A third edition of my *Fragment on government* (for a second was printed in Dublin in the days of piracy) is to come out, so the bookseller informs me, in the course of this week. Item, a second edition of *Introduction to morals and legislation* ... in which is a portrait which they made me sit for. It seems well engraved. I have seen it; and people say it is like. Both these are booksellers' jobs of their own proposal. I get nothing, I lose nothing, I desire nothing better, and so everybody's satisfied.106

Perhaps significantly, *A fragment on government* contains a list of Bentham's other works in print "which may be procured of the publishers of this work"; which suggests that the publication was prompted by the need to fill a gap in the stock of his works in the bookshop, an early example of the close link between Pickering's bookselling and publishing activities. At about the same time he had made the acquaintance of Basil Montagu, the reforming lawyer, humanitarian and bibliophile, and the association was sufficiently close for him to have Montagu as the godfather of his son, who was named after him. Montagu had been attracted to Pickering's shop in Lincoln's Inn Fields as a customer for early editions of Bacon, and edited an extensive edition in seventeen volumes which Pickering published between 1825 and 1834. In 1807 he had been appointed a commissioner in bankruptcy and began to write on the subject. In 1827 Pickering published two of his tracts, *Observations on the Act for consolidating the bankrupt laws* and *Reform*. The other topic for which he was noted was the death penalty, which he denounced in a series of pamphlets, Pickering publishing *Thoughts on the punishment of death for forgery* in 1830. Montagu was also associated with John McCreery, the radical printer, and Whittingham's predecessor in Took's Court, who printed the works mentioned for Pickering. A passionate outspoken radical, he became involved in the movement for Parliamentary reform. In 1828 Pickering published

106 J. Bentham, *The works ... published under the superintendence of his executor J. Bowring* (Edinburgh, 1843), x. 535. Curiously, the preface to the second edition of *A fragment on government*, written by way of a return for what the author calls "the booksellers' obliging attention", was not included, but printed later and separately (J. H. Burns and H. L. A. Hart, *A comment on the Commentaries* and *A fragment on government* (London, 1977), p. 502.)
for him a cheaper one-volume edition of his notable poem The Press, “offered in a more popular form to the notice of the public”, in which his radical and even republican sympathies are expressed.107

The subject of social reform is also notably represented in the works he published later for Sir Arthur Helps. Pursuing a career in the public service in which he became, in 1860, Clerk of the Privy Council, Helps also devoted himself to literary work, and is perhaps most noted for his later association with Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort. He edited The principal speeches and addresses of His Royal Highness, the Prince Consort in 1862 and Leaves from the journal of our life in the highlands in 1868. He also became a friend of Dickens with whom he shared a concern for the solution of the social and economic problems of the time. He chose Pickering as his publisher and had a high regard for him and for his advice.108 On the publication of Essays written in the intervals of business in 1841, he wrote to his friend Professor Auster:

I am glad to find that you hear pleasant things about the ‘Essays’—so do I—for the publisher told a friend of mine that he did not think I should lose much by it, which is extremely pleasant hearing... Sir Hastings Doyle actually made £9 by his poems, a thing the like of which has not happened, I imagine, to any young poet for a long time. What should we do if one were to make so much by a poem. I should change it into coppers, melt them down, and have a bust, not of myself, but of my publisher... being taken in a thoughtful attitude, composing, or giving directions for, an elaborate puff.109

Further tributes follow when the first series of Friends in Council appeared in 1847: “I hope you will like the ‘Friends’”, he wrote


108 Publication appears to have been on commission, usual for essays as for minor verse. In 1857 Pickering received a payment from the author which he acknowledged: “Thank you for your cheque for £8. 3s. 6d. ... I am sensible of the impropriety you mention of authors paying any money to publishers; however, as the march of intellect is progressing I hope honesty will keep pace and that justice will be eked out to us poor victims. For such marvels ought to be recorded in tablets of brass and sent to the Great Exhibition, as one of the novelties of 1851. Believe me, Dear Sir, your dutiful Slave and Publisher” (Sir A. Helps, Correspondence, edited by his son, E. A. Helps (hereafter Helps) London, 1917, pp. 92-3.)

109 Ibid., p. 23.
again to Auster, "I am sure you must like Pickering’s part in it, which is admirable. Indeed, I think that Pickering writes these books himself, and persuades some foolish fellow like me, for instance, to pretend to the authorship, for fear it should injure him in his business". The Pickering editions of Helps’ works are attractive, in some cases printed in Caslon old-face type, with ornaments, and were much appreciated at the time. In 1851 the author received a letter from C.E. Norton, together with an American reprint of Companions of my solitude (first published by Pickering in 1851): "It is printed neatly", it said, "but not with the tasteful beauty that I could desire for it. It will, I fear, be a long time before we have an Aldi Discipulus Americanus." Friends in Council, a result of discussions with Kingsley, Carlyle, Emerson and others, reveals great concern about social conditions at home and slavery abroad, and these themes are dealt with at length in The claims of labour in 1844 and The conquerors of the New World and their bondsmen in 1848. The first shows the author’s detailed knowledge of working and housing conditions from the reports of the Poor Law Commissioners, and the fact that he was in advance of his generation in the remedial measures he proposed. The second demonstrates the lengths to which he was prepared to go in researching his subject, visiting Spain to examine relevant documents. These showed how the slave trade was linked with colonial expansion in the Americas, when the Spanish settlers imported slaves into Hispaniola even before the end of the fifteenth-century. The book includes a moving account of the appalling treatment of the native Indians in spite of the professed humanitarian intentions of Queen Isobella. Many of the works Pickering published for Helps acquired a certain popularity and appeared in a number of editions during and after his lifetime.

VIII

No account of Pickering’s authors and publishing interests can be considered without reference to theology. With poetry, the older literature and historical works, it occupied a major, if not the major, place. It is possible to deduce from Charles Knight’s

10 Ibid., p.52. Scott similarly acknowledged his debt to his publisher, Constable: "You, my good friend, have made a dozen volumes where probably not one would have existed" (Constable, iii. 140.)

11 Helps, pp. 95-6.
analysis of the classified index to the *London Catalogue* that approximately twenty-two per cent of all books published between 1816 and 1851 were on Divinity.\(^{112}\) An examination of Pickering's output from 1820 to 1853 shows that the proportion of books of a theological nature equalled, and possibly exceeded this figure. Favourites with him were the seventeenth-century writers such as Thomas Fuller and George Herbert, and his regard for them and his desire to collect information about them for his editions were well known by his contemporaries. He was as assiduous in acquiring material in these cases as he was for his Aldine poets. With regard to Herbert, the first volume of his edition of the works was published in 1836, a year after the second, with the explanation given in the preface: "this unavoidable delay has enabled the publisher to procure several original poems omitted in the volume already published, ... these have been attached to the present volume but paged in such a way, that when the volumes are uniformly bound, they may be transferred to the other". An acknowledgement is then made for letters of Herbert received by the publisher. Even after the publication of this edition, material continued to come in. One of his regular correspondents, the Rev. Philip Bliss, writing from Oxford in 1839 remarked: "Knowing your love for Herbert and all connected with Herbert, I send you for your inspection a volume into which I have transcribed some letters from Mr. Tanner's collection which you may like to see and are welcome to make use of in any way you think proper."\(^{113}\) Pickering received material on Fuller from the Rev. Joseph Hunter, as revealed in his letter to Hunter on 15 June 1829: "With many thanks for your account of Fuller which contained two or three pieces that had escaped me."\(^{114}\) When A.T. Russell's *Memorials of the life and works of Thomas Fuller* was published in 1844, acknowledgement is made to "Mr. Pickering, the publisher" amongst others for sources utilised in the work. Perhaps the appeal of these two writers stemmed from their steadfast

\(^{112}\) Knight, iii. 194-6.

\(^{113}\) Bodleian Library, Bliss MSS. Autog. C 10, f. 105. In the 'Advertisement' to the 1844 edition of *The Temple*, Pickering makes due acknowledgement to Bliss: "By the kindness of the Rev. Dr. Bliss, Registrar of the University of Oxford, the publisher is enabled to add a poem ascribed to Herbert entitled *A paradox, that the sicke are in better case than the whole*, and for some particulars of C. Harvey."

\(^{114}\) B.L. Add. MS. 24783, f. 75.
adherence to the established church, combined with moderation, in a century of civil war and religious extremism. In the dedication to his work on Fuller, Russell remarked:

In the comparative state of the theology of the two periods [the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries] it is allowed on all hands that a great similarity exists between the times of Dr. Fuller and our own. The same extremes are observable... in these pages may be seen the true Via media between Popery and Puritanism, representing to the last the school of Hooker, rather, the original party, and the state of the Church of England as established under the auspices of Queen Elizabeth. If ever the Church shall recover its former greatness and strength it will be in an age in which not Laud but Hooker, not Heylyn but Fuller will be regarded as the faithful representative of the English Church system.¹¹⁵

Pickering’s support for the position of the established church in his own century is shown by his involvement, in his publishing activities, in what were perhaps the two major theological preoccupations of early Victorian England. Firstly, there was the Oxford Movement and the crisis in the Church of England over Catholic emancipation; secondly, there was the more general upheaval in faith due to the progress of scientific discoveries, particularly in geology, which conflicted with the fundamentalist theology in the Biblical account of the Creation. With regard to the former, _Tracts for the times_ had begun publication in 1833, and the Oxford Movement arose under the threats posed by Catholic emancipation, political support for dissenters, possible disestablishment and loss of Church revenues. It began to develop the renewal of Catholic thought and practice within the Church, emphasising the apostolic source of its authority, rather than that of the state. Pickering’s involvement began when he became the principal publisher of the new journal, the _Church of England Quarterly Review_, the first number of which appeared in January 1837.¹¹⁶ His prospectus, a wordy document, spelt out in ringing tones the intention to defend from the forces which threatened it the English church and its traditions:

The controversy now carried on within the pale of the Tabernacle [it stated] is one of the greatest that ever occupied the mind of a mighty nation... the Church of Taylor, of Hooker, of Latimer and of Cranmer

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is, under the thin pretence of violent modification, about to be prostrated to the dust; her revenues are to be foreclosed and confiscated; and her authority split amid the swarms of separatists and sectaries, whose several species of government vie with each other in the absurdity of their constitutions; and whose Tenets, to use the words of the mighty Bacon, are 'full of schism and inconsistent with Monarchy'. May God forfend that the proprietor of The Church of England Review should live and see that day of desolation ... alas! that Catholic sense of Religion which was the genius of the Apostolic age ... is becoming comparatively rare, and the spirit of faction ... the ignorant zealotry of schism have succeeded ... We will startle, we will arouse... we will hold out to England and the English the sacred lamp of religious and moral truth, and the establishment shall be prompted to cultivate the affections of the common people, and not, as hitherto, repose in lethargy and mildew beneath the broad imperial branches of the State.

Pickering's support, however, lasted only two years. In 1839, his name disappears from the imprint, to be replaced as principal publisher by W.E. Painter. There seems a strong possibility that he was not happy with the policy being developed, of opposition to the Tractarians, since his withdrawal coincides with a sharply critical commentary on Tracts for the times in the number for April 1839, accusing the authors of bias towards the Roman Church. Furthermore, the new editor in 1840, Henry Christmas, made clear his dissatisfaction with Tractarianism and adopted a policy of what he described as 'Evangelical High Church'.

Whatever the reason for Pickering's withdrawal, there can be no doubt about his close relations with that extremely high churchman and ritualist William Maskell. Maskell became Vicar of St Mary's Church, near Torquay, and domestic chaplain to the Bishop of Exeter, and, as well as being a high churchman, was a noted ecclesiastical antiquary, devoted to research into the history of Anglican ritual. Pickering published his most important works, including The ancient liturgy of the Church of England, in 1844, and Monumenta Ritualia Ecclesiae Anglicanae in three volumes, 1846-7, the most important work in its field, and reprinted by the Clarendon Press forty years later. But it is in connection with two pamphlets that Pickering's concern is clearly shown. A first letter on the present position of the High Church Party in the Church of England was published by him in 1850, followed by a second letter the same year. Both letters went through more than one edition,

and on 10 April he wrote to Maskell on the progress of publication, revealing his interest and support and the urgency he felt over the matter.

This morning I received copies of the Letter no. 1—second edition [he wrote], but at 3 o'clock I had no tidings of Letter 2 ... I went down to Chiswick and waited about an hour. I brought with me 500 copies in the omnibus and I took them to the binder, Mr. Craven with endeavours to get some off to you by the mail train at 9 this evening, by going to the station ... my household from the Porter to the Master, and my printer to his veriest Devil love Mr. Maskell, and I really believe there is very little alloy in it.118

The letters express disillusionment with the Tractarian position, accusing many of its proponents of secrecy and dishonesty over belief in Catholic truth, auricular confession and priestly absolution, and Pickering's correspondence illustrates his sympathy and agreement.

In the omnibus [he went on], I read to the 55th page and feel satisfied at present of the time I have taken and you also ... what you have put forth may, like a hurricane, try the strongest oak. Yet it will, with God's helping, give strength and consistency to the Church. I much approve the quick and Christian-like tone you have written.119

At about the same period Pickering published critical pamphlets by other Tractarians such as William Dodsworth (A letter to Dr. Pusey on the position which he has taken up in the present crisis, 1850, and Anglicanism considered in its results, 1851) and Theodora Drane (The morality of tractarianism: a letter from one of the people to one of the clergy, 1851). Events reached a crisis with the Gorham case, in which a clergyman was refused a benefice by the Bishop of Exeter because of his doctrine of baptismal regeneration. The case came before the Privy Council, which decided that his teaching was not contrary to the position of the Church of England. This assertion of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council as the supreme Court of Ecclesiastical Appeal led many clergy and laymen, including Maskell, Dodsworth and Theodora Drane to go over to Rome. Pickering had written in his letter to Maskell: "Many have said Mr. Maskell is going to

118 B.L. Add. MS. 37824, f. 193, Item 23.
119 Ibid.
Rome—I answered—that is an aspersion. He never said to me he was, nor do I believe it",\textsuperscript{120} but in this, he was sadly mistaken.

IX

The second major theological preoccupation was the result of the progress of scientific discovery. Lamarck had published his \textit{Philosophie zoologique}, with its early theories of evolution, in 1809; and in 1830 Lyell's \textit{Principles of geology} appeared, the subtitle, "being an attempt to explain the former changes of the earth's surface by reference to causes now in action", constituting in itself a challenge to the biblical story of the Creation. In 1829 the Earl of Bridgewater\textsuperscript{120a} died, and in his will left £8,000 to be held at the disposal of the Royal Society, to be paid to a person or persons nominated by him to write and publish one thousand copies of a work "on the power, wisdom and goodness of God as manifested in the Creation". The president, Davis Gilbert, asked for the assistance of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London in making the arrangements and selecting the authors, which gave the proceedings an element of ecclesiastical patronage. The undertaking was a notable event in the intellectual life of the times, illustrating the struggle between traditional beliefs about the Book of Genesis and newly-acquired scientific knowledge. The theological upheaval created by the new geology was only less in importance than that in the 1860s and 1870s arising out of Darwin's theories in biology. It represented a desperate attempt to hold together a world that seemed to be flying apart at the seams. The project was treated as of some urgency, and the Duke of Sussex, who succeeded as president of the Royal Society, guaranteed to underwrite it if necessary, to avoid delay.\textsuperscript{121} Eight leading authors were selected, four scientists and four clergymen,

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid. Pickering's son, Basil Montagu Pickering, was an even more fervent supporter of the High Church position. Like his father, he published many controversial pamphlets and went out of his way to obtain Newman's consent to publish his miscellaneous writings, extending in all to twenty volumes between 1871 and 1877 (\textit{Bookseller}, 2 March 1878, p. 210).

\textsuperscript{120a} The \textit{Complete Peerage} (ii (1912), 311 note a) has "Bridgewater or Bridgwater", but notes that the former is correct. In these circumstances and as the numerous quotations below all add the "e", "Bridgewater" has been left in these cases to avoid the frequent use of [sic].

the latter noted for having in addition some major scientific interest. They were all distinguished scholars of their time, no less than seven being Fellows of the Royal Society. Three of the scientists, Peter Mark Roget, William Prout and John Kidd were Doctors of Medicine, and the fourth, Sir Charles Bell, was Professor at the Royal College of Surgeons and an anatomist. Of the clergy, the Rev. William Buckland was Professor of Geology and Mineralogy at Oxford as well as being Canon of Christ Church and Dean of Westminster, while the Rev. William Whewell was Professor of Mineralogy and Moral Philosophy at Cambridge and the author and editor of many works in the natural and mathematical sciences. The object, as in No. 6 of the series, Buckland's *On Geology and mineralogy with reference to natural theology*, was to provide an authoritative summary of the subject while at the same time making it accessible to a broad readership, and demonstrating a Divine design in nature.  

The securing of the publication of the series was a major coup for Pickering. It was said to have been instrumental in ending his conflict with the Booksellers' Committee in the early 1830s, which had prompted the issuing of his broadside *Bookseller's Monopoly* in 1832. As the *Retail Booksellers' and Bookbuyers' Advocate* would have it at the time:

The value of the Bridgewater treatises to Mr. Pickering is great, for by their aid the abused monopolists rendered him innocent of a crime against them, although previous to their appearance, he was considered by his old master, Arch, the Quaker, as a person who had not "acted nobly"... what a God-send these treatises have been... and how completely they have unmasked the cupidity of the band of interested traders.

Their financial value to Pickering himself was considerable, since it was not often that a whole series was guaranteed and subsidised before a single copy had been sold. In a letter from the Bishop of London to the Rev. Thomas Chalmers, the author of the first treatise, it is stated that the expenses of publication were to be paid out of the legacy, with perhaps £700-£800 available for the writer of each one. According to the will, the entire profits

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123 Retail Booksellers' and Bookbuyers' Advocate (January 1837), p. 23.

from sales were to go to the authors, but the eventual terms which the publisher appears to have agreed with each separate author differ in some detail from its stipulations. We are fortunate in having available in this case the precise text of the agreement between Pickering and Chalmers, dated 15 October 1832. It is a typical one of the period, of the ‘joint account’ type, in which the author is absolved from all liability, and the profits shared. The publisher was to pay for paper, printing and advertising and other incidental expenses, and these having been deducted, the profits were to be divided equally. The price was to be fixed by the publisher “not higher than is usual for such a work”, and this was not to be lowered for three years. The date of the first settlement was to be at Christmas 1833 and thereafter half-yearly by “a bill at six months”. Details of the format are given—one volume, with thirty lines to a page, and the author undertook to complete the work between 1 March and 1 July 1833, six months before the first settlement was due. One thousand copies were to be printed, the publisher having the option of an additional five hundred “in the event of the said work selling to a greater extent than the other treatises”, and provided they were printed within three years from the day of publication. The agreement and the copyright were to extend only to the first edition, and when this was sold the copyright was to revert entirely to the author, and in any case after three years from publication. Finally, provision was made for independent arbitration “in the event of any misunderstanding between the two parties”, one person to be chosen by each, with power to nominate a third, the decision to be binding in law and equity. The agreement demonstrates that Pickering was able to modify the original intention of the executors of the will by paying the expenses himself but securing half the profits. It shows his care to limit the risk, firstly by avoiding an immediate payment for the first printing, and effectually postponing further payments by specifying a bill of exchange at six months; and secondly by allowing copyright to revert only after one thousand copies had been sold, to avoid being left with unsold copies of the first edition with the copyright for new editions in the hands of the author. This caution is understandable, and it was typical of publishers at

125 Memorandum of agreement between the Rev. Thomas Chalmers, D.D., and William Pickering for the publication of a work entitled ‘On the adaptation of external nature to the moral and intellectual constitution of man’ (National Library of Scotland, MSS. acquired since 1925, Charters, etc., no. 54).
the time to stress the speculative nature of their profession. The
difficulty of assessing the commercial value of a new work is
illustrated by the sheer variety of agreements, even though they
usually conformed more or less to the three basic forms: sale of
copyright, on commission, or, as here, joint account. The type
represented in this memorandum became fairly standard. John
Murray made much use of it, although Richard Bentley confined
it to books whose sale was unpredictable.\textsuperscript{126} The disadvantage to
the author was the delay in receiving any income, although
Bentley did sometimes offer a £50 advance on the profit. In the
case of the authors of the Bridgewater Treatises this was not
necessary, not only because of the subsidy but also because they
all had other sources of income. Whatever the precise details,
what is clearly evident is the desirability of a definite form
of written agreement to avoid quarrels, misunderstanding and
suspicion on the part of the author, as happened over the first
Pickering edition of Coleridge's Poetical works.

As events turned out, Pickering need not have worried about
the risk in this case. The Chalmers treatise ran through two
editions of one thousand five hundred copies each in 1833, and in
1834 there was a third edition of the same number. All eight
treatises went through several editions under his imprint and
further editions appeared under other imprints, notably that of
Bohn, after Pickering's death. The eighth edition of Whewell's
treatise, Astronomy and general physics considered with reference
to natural theology, was published by Pickering in a smaller format
at 5s. instead of 9s. 6d., to bring the work within reach of as large
a body of readers as possible. It was decorated, perhaps rather
incongruously, with ornamental headbands and initial letters.
By 1836, when Buckland's treatise, perhaps the most critical,
appeared, the advance interest was considerable, and there was an
early notice in the Quarterly Review for April 1836. The first
edition ran to five thousand copies and the entire printing was
sold out before any copy actually came on the market.\textsuperscript{127}
A second printing with additional notes appeared the same
year and a second edition followed in 1837. In 1839 it was
translated into German. Dibdin, with some exaggeration, wrote:
"Mr. Pickering has a note of louder triumph to sound as being

\textsuperscript{126} Gettman, p. 105.
\textsuperscript{127} Rupke, pp. 19-20.
publisher of the Bridgewater Treatises ... which bid fair to traverse the whole civilized portion of the globe".\textsuperscript{128} They were enthusiastically received by many clergy. The Rev. James Tate wrote in 1838 to William Kirby, author of the seventh treatise \textit{On the power, wisdom and goodness of God as manifested in the creation of animals}, offering his congratulations: "One day last week I was engaged in reading with great interest your Bridgewater treatise; and have been much delighted with the just answer so ably passed on La Place and Lamarck."\textsuperscript{129} But there was also scepticism expressed as to the wisdom of embarking on such a project, and fears that rather than strengthening the cause of the fundamentalists, it would raise even more doubts as to its validity. In a review of Buckland's treatise in the \textit{Athenaeum}, there was sharp criticism of his attempt, in the second chapter, to reconcile the evidence of geology with the chronology of the Bible: "The mixing up of things sacred with things profane", it charged, "was calculated to engender an heretical religion and a fantastic philosophy."\textsuperscript{130} Some of the authors themselves betrayed some confusion of mind as to the precise aims of the treatises. Charles Bell, author of \textit{The hand: its mechanism and vital endowments as evincing design}, much preferred his proper scientific work and had difficulty in beginning it, and did not know exactly what type of reader it was intended for. The natural theology aspect did not interest him, "and here are eight men more to wear the subject to the bone".\textsuperscript{131} Roget, responsible for the fifth treatise, \textit{Animal and vegetable physiology considered with reference to natural theology}, revealed, in his final chapter entitled \textit{Unity of design}, the confusion of a scientist promoting his speciality yet at the same time trying

\textsuperscript{128} Dibdin, ii. 905. The extent of their penetration of the accessible market can be gauged by a quotation from \textit{The Mill on the Floss}: "Then followed the recommendation to choose Southey's \textit{Life of Cowper} unless she were inclined to be philosophical and startle the ladies of St. Ogg's by voting for one of the Bridgewater Treatises. Of course Lucy wished to know what those alarmingly learned books were and as it is always pleasant to improve the minds of ladies by talking to them at ease on subjects of which they know nothing, Stephen became quite brilliant in an account of Buckland's treatise which he had just been reading" (G. Eliot, \textit{The Mill on the Floss}, ed. G. S. Haight, Oxford, 1980, p. 334).


\textsuperscript{130} \textit{Athenaeum}, 4 February (1837), p. 78.

\textsuperscript{131} Sir C. Bell, \textit{Letters ... selected from his correspondence} (London, 1870), p. 406. Paley's Natural Theology had been published in 1802.
to contain it within the restrictions of a dogmatic faith. Finally, in 1837, Charles Babbage producing the independent so-called ninth treatise, perhaps summed up the whole matter by arguing that the ultimate effect of the treatises was to support a general prejudice that the pursuits of science were unfavourable to religion. In any event, Pickering’s association with them and with the Tractarian movement shows that although he is usually regarded as being mainly concerned in his publications with the older literature, he nevertheless became involved in some of the most contentious issues of the day.

X

Pickering was in many ways typical of the new age in which the publisher becomes prominent, specialises and begins to take precedence over printer and bookseller. The positive preferences he showed in what he wished to publish demonstrate not only his own tastes, but also the new outlook of nineteenth-century publishers who wished to make a mark in an individual and particular manner. This is especially true of the new men on the scene such as Knight, Bentley and Moxon, as well as Pickering himself. The romantic spirit of the new literature seemed to be reflected in their enterprise, and, although famous authors such as Scott and Byron had a tremendous effect on the reading public, the role of Constable and Murray was essential in promoting their works. As the rewards of authors grew, so did the possibilities of profit for those who presented their work to the public. Pickering shared many of the ambitions of publishers in the new era. He was involved in the intense competition in new forms of publishing, such as the literary annuals. He shared in the initiation of ambitious projects like the Aldine poets. He had a particular desire to make a noteworthy contribution by bringing out good editions of neglected works like those of the early dramatists, better editions of standard works like the Oxford English Classics, and many other projects under the best available editorship. These were publishing activities sorely needed at the time. He was also involved, through his publications, in many of the preoccupations

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of early Victorian England: the attempt to reconcile the new
science with the old religion; the Tractarian movement; and in his
concern with the past, the publication of historical manuscripts
and sharing in local histories, he was participating in a general
upsurge of serious historical activity. 'Improving' literature, and
the literature of social reform, characteristic of the time, are
both represented in his output; and in Bailey's *Festus* he was
responsible for promoting what was truly a Victorian literary
phenomenon. Surprising, perhaps, is the complete absence of
fiction, unless one counts items like Sara Coleridge's *Phantasmion*,
and the almost complete absence of travel literature, categories
which few other publishers would ignore.

Elegance of typography and design were, in these activities, not
a main consideration but a welcome additional bonus, though
sometimes an expensive one. Pickering's own distinction lies
partly, but not wholly, in his particular attention to appropriate
typography, design and ornament. His productions represent a
high point in that they are the result not only of the role of
publisher and designer being combined in one person, but also of
the role of publisher and bookseller being integrated to an extent
which was perhaps unusual. Just as it was his particularly close
relationship with Whittingham which enabled him to produce
beautifully printed books, so it was the close link with the
bookselling side of his business which often provided the material,
both manuscript and printed, which enabled him to influence not
merely the appearance but the content of many of his productions
as well. After his time we find bookselling separating more sharply
from publishing, and book designing separating from both. Sir
Geoffrey Keynes's starred hand-list of his most typographically
and ornamentally distinguished books illustrates one aspect of
Pickering's work. But a broad survey of the whole field of his
publishing activity and a closer acquaintance with the contents of
his books, particularly some of those which have received less
attention, could give a more complete picture of the significance
of his place in the literary scene in the first half of the nineteenth
century; it is hoped that this paper may contribute to this aim.
Prefaces and introductions are essential reading and at least some
reading of texts is necessary in the attempt to form a true
assessment. That this can be an enjoyable activity is illustrated in
the remarks of one noted American collector who said: "I am a
William Pickering was a collector who must read his books—no unopened pages for me!”

One measure of the importance of Pickering’s publications at the time is the extent to which they continued to appear in further editions by other publishers on the one hand, and, on the other, the number of surplus copies which had to be auctioned in the sales after his bankruptcy. The famous folio black-letter prayer books, though highly regarded now as superb examples of book production, were expensive, difficult to sell, and many sets remained to be sold off between 1854 and 1856. The 1836 edition of Walton and Cotton’s Complete angler, highly prized now as the finest illustrated edition of the century, was not profitable and many copies had to be disposed of. In contrast, the Bridgewater Treatises, though not read nowadays, continued to be published long after his death, as did the Small books on great subjects. Bailey’s Festus, seldom, if ever, read today, continued to appear under other imprints until 1903. Similarly, the works of Sir Arthur Helps were taken up by other publishers. In the context of the time, these were popular and significant books. Pickering’s mistake, from the commercial point of view, was that he tended to be too much of a perfectionist, and his enthusiasm for some of the projects which aroused his keenest interest led him to overestimate the market for them. “It is to be lamented for the cause of literature”, wrote D’Israeli in 1840, “that even a bookseller may have too refined a taste for his trade; it must always be to his interest to float on the current of public taste, whatever that may be; should he have an ambition to create it, he will be anticipating a more cultivated curiosity by half a century.”

There is a striking contrast between Pickering’s extreme caution in limiting to three hundred copies his first edition of an important contemporary literary event like Coleridge’s Poetical works, and his almost reckless liberality in the production of copies of the Diamond Classics or the Christian Classics, enormous quantities of which had to be remaindered. In the case of his new edition of Donne’s Devotions, which he published in 1840, a notable revival of a neglected work last published in 1638, over one thousand

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copies remained in the sales of his bankrupt stock. Such extravagance had to be paid for and may have contributed to his bankruptcy. On hearing in 1858 that his creditors had eventually been paid 20s. in the pound, Leigh Hunt wrote of him: "We knew his books, and always heard that his love of them was superior to his love of money; as they indeed, and his failure equally went to prove. Not that the failure was necessary to prove it. God forbid that honesty and non-success should be identical, whatever circumstances may say to that effect." 

William Pickering was obviously most happy and at his best with the editors of his new editions, with whom he had long-lasting and friendly relations. He appears to have been less successful in his relationship with major literary figures like Scott and Coleridge. And with regard to Coleridge, it may be worth commenting that the variations in the text of his poem *Youth and age*, published simultaneously in *The Bijou* and *The Literary Souvenir*, were due not to any matters of imposition or printing processes, but entirely to the pressure of competition between publishers. This was perhaps symbolic of the times and a sign that a new era of publishing had arrived.

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136 Catalogue of the ... important stock of modern books published by Mr. William Pickering ... sold by Mr. L. A. Lewis, 11 April 1854-15 October 1856.  
137 Leigh Hunt, "The late Mr. Pickering, the bookseller". *Spectator*, 9 April (1859), xxxi. 395-6.