

**COPYRIGHTS AND COMPETITION:
PRODUCING AND PROTECTING CHILDREN'S BOOKS
IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY**

A glance at any modern shelf of children's books will show that some of the books have been in print for a very long time. Yet the long history of such books has received relatively little attention.¹ Historians of children's books tend to focus on the original producers of the books, who are sometimes authors and sometimes publishers, and they tell histories which concentrate on the appearance of new titles, only occasionally admitting that older books were reprinted.² Histories of reading illustrate one aspect of the longer history of published books, but they have yet to be widely extended to the field of children's books.³ Another crucial aspect of the long history of books is their repeated publication, often in new markets and under different publishing circumstances from those of their original appearance. Even historians following Darnton's 'communications circuit' usually fail to make much of the fact that the cycle may keep turning, and new editions may be produced over a long period of time.⁴

The trade in books specifically for children is generally assumed to have started in the mid-eighteenth century, and to have expanded throughout the nineteenth century.⁵ Actual numbers are difficult to obtain, but estimates suggest that in the early nineteenth century, eighty to a hundred children's books were published each year, while by 1870 that figure had grown to 695 per year.⁶ To equate this sevenfold increase with the appearance of new books would, of course, be misleading. As with books for adults, children's books benefited from the growth in the reprint trade after mid-century, and the production figures include many reprinted titles alongside new

ones. The general pattern of the children's book trade in the nineteenth century was towards both a greater number of new titles, and a greater range of relatively cheap books, say, under 3s. The cheaper books were usually those which were not copyright, a group which included old British works as well as certain new foreign works.⁷ Libraries such as George Routledge's 'Excelsior Series of Standard Authors without abridgement' in the 1870s included American books like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the works of Elizabeth Wetherell alongside British works such as *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels*, all at 2s. each. At this time, new British books such as *Alice in Wonderland* or *Treasure Island*, cost 5s. or 6s.⁸ Publishers' libraries of 'classic' or 'standard' books became increasingly common from the 1860s, and the same reprinted titles could frequently be found on several publishers' catalogues, as well as in several differently priced lists within each catalogue.⁹ Routledge, for example, often published the same title in formats varying in sixpenny increments from 1s. ('Every Boy's Library') to 3s. 6d. ('Reward Books'), depending on the quality of paper, the number of illustrations, and the style of binding.

In this article, I will examine the publishing history of a children's book which was continuously in print throughout the nineteenth century. It was originally published by the 'last of the gentleman publishers' of the eighteenth-century.¹⁰ Then it became a share-book, owned by a group of publishers, several of whom were developing substantial wholesale businesses. Finally, it became a staple of the cheap reprint market of 'classic' children's books in the late nineteenth century, and appeared in series like those of Routledge alongside *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels*. Several late eighteenth century children's books, including Thomas Day's *Sandford and Merton* (1783-87), John Aikin and Anna Barbauld's *Evenings at Home* (1792-

96), and several of the works of Maria Edgeworth, particularly her *Parent's Assistant* (1796), followed this route through the nineteenth century. By the 1870s and 1880s, while *Robinson Crusoe* still topped the list of boys' favourite books, critics claimed that the books of the 'Aikin, Day and Edgeworth school' were out of date.¹¹ Reading *Evenings at Home*, Charlotte Yonge was struck by the 'perfect precision and polish of language ... [which] contrasts with the slovenly writing of the present day', but she felt that the stories in it had 'little to love... they had a certain bright coldness which extends to all Aikinism'.¹² For Yonge, these books had had their day. Edward Salmon was even less complimentary about *Sandford and Merton*, saying 'whatever its merits in the eighteenth century, the book is not suited to the requirements of the nineteenth, and the strange thing is that it has lived so long.'¹³ Yet, despite these opinions and the wealth of new titles available in competition with them, many of the Aikin, Day and Edgeworth works were still being published and bought in large numbers into the 1890s.¹⁴ My focus here will be on *Evenings at Home*, but it can stand for any of the Aikin, Day and Edgeworth books, and probably for a wider selection of books which survived far longer than their authors, original publishers, or copyright protection. 'Classic' children's books, textbooks, and certain reference works, such as dictionaries, were continually reprinted by publishers because the regular demand for them provided a steady source of income.

The changing fortunes of *Evenings at Home* and its contemporaries illustrate some of the broad trends taking place in the book trade through the nineteenth century. Historians of the share-book system tend to close their accounts at the end of the eighteenth century, remarking that the end of perpetual copyright spelled the end for the share-book system. Yet this article will show that the share-book system

continued well into the nineteenth century, though it became a system for supplying wholesalers, who in turn supplied the growing demand of the provincial middle-classes. Similarly, the provincial trade grew throughout the century, competing with London-based publishers and wholesalers to supply their local markets. Publishers always had to play the copyright laws, which, given two new statutes and an ever increasing and somewhat equivocal body of case law, let alone the complications of international copyright, was not necessarily straightforward.¹⁵ The mid-century mass reprint trade has been recognized as crucial in creating a mass market for printed material, but its effects on children's books have scarcely been noted. Once children's books became part of the reprint trade, they were usually produced by several publishers competing with each other, rather than in a single edition by a co-operating group. This article may suggest more questions than it answers, but it is intended to raise awareness of the insights long histories of publishing will bring to our understanding of the changing nature of the nineteenth-century book trade.

1.

Evenings at Home; or the juvenile budget opened, consisting of a variety of miscellaneous pieces for the instruction and amusement of youth (6 vols, 1792-96) was written by two well-known literary Unitarians, John Aikin (1747-1822) and his sister Anna Letitia Barbauld (1743-1825), and published by the Unitarian publisher, Joseph Johnson (1738-1809). The Aikins were friends of Joseph Priestley, Erasmus Darwin, Richard Edgeworth and his daughter Maria, and Johnson acted as publisher for them all. *Evenings at Home* was intended to be read in the family circle rather than used in schools, though there can be no doubt that it was an educational text, and that it embodied a specifically Unitarian approach to the methods and subjects of

education. It was similar to other ‘instructive and amusing’ books of its time in containing a collection of amusing stories with practical and moral lessons. It was more unusual in teaching scientific facts without an explicitly religious agenda, and basing its moral lessons on similarly rational grounds. These unusual features meant that the audience for *Evenings at Home* was limited to fairly liberal and probably Dissenting circles in the 1790s. However, it soon became well-known and its lack of a specific religious creed allowed it to be read by children whose families held a variety of religious beliefs. Figure 1 illustrates the later publishing history of *Evenings at Home* by plotting the numbers of new editions each decade. The available information on print runs is given in Tables 1 and 2.¹⁶

Between 1792 and 1823, only one version of *Evenings at Home* was available. (I shall use the term ‘edition’ to refer to a batch of books issued by a publisher, while ‘version’ will refer to an edition which is significantly different from its predecessors.) It came in six small duodecimo volumes, contained the same text as the first edition, and was published in London by Joseph Johnson, his successor Rowland Hunter and the publishers to whom Hunter subsequently sold shares. The twenty-eight year period of copyright expired between 1820 and 1824, and the last surviving author died in 1825. From the mid 1820s, therefore, any publisher could print the original text of *Evenings at Home*, and a number did so, including William Milner of Halifax, and Griffin & Co. of Glasgow. However, the group of shareholders secured a new copyright protection by asking Arthur Aikin, son of John Aikin, to revise and correct *Evenings at Home* in 1823. Two new stories were also added. Arthur’s sister, Lucy, subsequently rearranged the stories for the four-volume 1826 edition. These additions and corrections were protected until 1851, during

which period the revised work was published only by the group of share-holders.¹⁷

As we shall see, the share-holders had expected to be able to continue publishing the revised version after the end of copyright with little competition. But the appearance of a cheap new revised version from Routledge in 1851 crushed these hopes. The share-holders kept publishing until the late 1860s, but by that time several other publishers were trying to emulate Routledge's success with cheap reprints, and the share-holders seem to have given up. Thus, in the 1860s, three cheap versions of *Evenings at Home* were available: Routledge's newly revised version; reprints of the first edition; and the share-holders' own revised version, whose price had been forced down by the competition. By the 1890s, publishers' interest in *Evenings at Home* finally began to wane. Frederick Warne produced the last edition based on the original version in 1891, Routledge's last edition seems to have been in the early 1900s, and the final edition was a 1915 reprint of the Pitman's shorthand edition, adapted from the first revised version.

The print runs for the share-holder and Routledge editions are given in Tables 1 and 2. The Johnson records, and those of the various publishers who reprinted the original version are not available. Johnson's typical print run is said to have been 750, though a slightly higher estimate is probably justified given the continued success of the book, and the fact that the first edition for which we have figures (13th, 1823) had a run of 3,000. We might estimate that 12,000 copies were printed by Johnson and his successors between 1792 and 1822. The share-holders printed a further 17,500 between 1823 and 1863, and Routledge printed 66,000 between 1851 and 1891. There were at least another twenty-nine editions for which figures are unavailable, which, at a conservative estimate, added another 22,000 copies to the marketplace,

giving a total approaching 120,000 copies over the century, of which almost two-thirds appeared after 1850. This is clearly dwarfed by the sales of best-sellers like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which reached one million, but it is nevertheless evidence of the prolonged and extensive selling power of an eighteenth-century classic.¹⁸ Both *Sandford and Merton* and several of the Edgeworth's stories were printed by Longman and their co-share-holders in similar numbers, and showed a similar resurgence of popularity in the second half of the century, with *Sandford and Merton*, for instance, going through almost four times as many editions, from twice as many publishers, in the second half of the century.

2.

There are three interesting issues which arise out of this publishing history, though I propose to concentrate on two of them here. One is the nature of the revisions made to create new copyrights in the two revised versions. I intend to discuss this only as far as it affects the other two issues, and will not give a detailed analysis of the changes that were made.¹⁹ The second issue concerns the survival of the old share-book system, and the possibility of holding shares in a work which is out of copyright, as Longman and others clearly did in *Evenings at Home*. Finally, there is the transformation of the market for children's books from a limited upper-middle class market to a mass market, a process in which Routledge and reprinted 'classics' like *Evenings at Home* played a key role.

John Feather has explained how the wholesaling congers of the late seventeenth century evolved in the early years of the next century into publishing congers whose members held shares in the copies.²⁰ This system allowed publishers to share the risk of new publications, but was more generally used to raise sufficient funds for new

runs of older titles, at a time when most publishers were small and lacked capital. When the House of Lords ruling in 1774 ended perpetual copyright, many of the old share-books came onto the open market. Publishers had to concentrate on finding new titles to make the most of the limited period of copyright protection available, as Rivingtons and Longmans did, or enter the competitive reprint market. With nineteenth-century publishing characterized as individualistic and competitive, the story of the share-book system is implicitly allowed to end with the eighteenth century, one of the casualties of the transformations in the book trade in this period. The assumption is that as publishers became larger and able to fund their own ventures, and the short period of copyright restricted the potential value of shares, the share system died out.

Although it is rare to see new books in the mid-nineteenth century with a dozen or so publishers on the title page, older books were still printed this way. *Evenings at Home*, like *Sandford and Merton* and the Edgeworth works, was still being published by a large group of shareholders in the 1860s. This raises several questions: why had the share system survived for this type of work; in what form did it survive; and, given the new copyright laws, what did the partners actually own shares in? The history of share-ownership in *Evenings at Home* can help to answer these questions, and it is illustrated in Figure 2. The eighteenth-century share-book system was based on a highly protectionist trade, with shares sold only at closed auction and thus only to other members of the established trade. The list of publishers who were at some point involved with *Evenings at Home* shows one way in which this had changed, for established names like Longman and Murray could be found alongside newcomers like Routledge and H. G. Bohn, and outsiders like Thomas Tegg, the remainder

merchant. This implies that, although the share-system as a whole still functioned as a form of protection for its members, the system of buying and selling shares and hence the membership of the group had become more open. Figure 2 also shows that the shares changed hands quite frequently, though we know almost nothing about the reasons or mechanisms for this.²¹

Evenings at Home, along with the Edgeworth works, first became a share-book in an attempt to raise capital. Their original publisher, Joseph Johnson had died in 1809, and his grand-nephew Rowland Hunter proved an inept successor.²² Established Johnson authors died, and few new ones replaced them. Maria Edgeworth eventually left in 1828, since Hunter was unable to raise the capital necessary to publish works by such a famous author.²³ In an attempt to ease his financial troubles, Hunter sold shares in some of his copyrights. A large fraction of *Evenings at Home* was sold to Baldwin, Cradock & Joy around 1815, and Hunter sold off more of his own share during the 1820s. This arrangement benefited both Hunter and Baldwin, for Baldwin was buying a share in a popular work which had about another ten years of copyright protection. This was not a long time compared with the perpetual copyright of the previous century, but it was long enough to make a return on a book which was still selling well.

The arrangement worked sufficiently well that, as the end of that copyright protection approached, Baldwin and Hunter took measures to extend the protection, and requested John Aikin and his family to produce a revised version. Statute law at this time was not explicit about the nature of works which qualified for copyright protection.²⁴ Case law allowed that ‘Copyright may exist in a novel arrangement, as well as in recent corrections and additions to an old work not the property of the

compiler.²⁵ Such protection applied only to the complex of the old text plus new alterations, and could not prevent the original text being reprinted without the corrections or additions.²⁶ Since they were willing to pay the Aikins £150 for this new version and to print 3,000 copies, Baldwin and Hunter were clearly confident that there was still a market for *Evenings at Home*, and that their revised version would be preferred over any reprint editions of the out-of-copyright text, although it is possible that the selling of more shares at this period was needed to raise funds for the revisions.²⁷ That the next edition, of 4,000 copies, was needed within three years suggests that the prediction was a sound one. The publishers who reprinted the first version in the 1820s and 1830s were generally provincial publishers like Milner and Griffin, who were printing for a geographically distinct market, where the wider availability of books was more important to middle-class customers than the fact that such books were not the most recent editions.

By investing money in creating a new copyright work, Baldwin and Hunter were also predicting that the demand would continue for the majority of the next twenty-eight years. The sales did indeed continue, but unfortunately for Baldwin and Hunter their businesses did less well. Hunter gradually sold off his shares in the 1820s and 1830s, before going bankrupt in 1838. Baldwin began selling shares in the 1830s, but the majority were dispersed after his bankruptcy in 1837. Once a book has become a share-book, it is almost impossible to reverse the process, and *Evenings at Home* continued to be divided up among more publishers. As Longman's experience with textbooks showed, books for which there is a regular demand provide a steady source of income, and buying shares in them could be considered a fairly safe investment, especially as the short period of copyright kept the prices down. Yet, to recoup on the

investment, publishers would have to hold on to their shares, and this makes the turnover of shares among the smaller share-holders somewhat surprising. However, a few publishers made a point of increasing their holdings, and Simpkin & Marshall and Hamilton & Adams became the two biggest share-holders. Longman eventually sold their share to Simpkin in 1873.²⁸

Hamilton & Adam and Simpkin & Marshall, like Baldwin and Whittaker were best known as wholesale suppliers for country booksellers. Simpkin & Marshall were the largest company, and were, as Feather notes ‘synonymous with book supply for the great majority of retailers in the provinces, and indeed for many in London’.²⁹ Hugh Amory’s study of the share-holders of Fielding’s *Works* suggested a connection between the share-system and the wholesalers.³⁰ In the case of the Fielding partners, in the early nineteenth century, the funding for the edition came from one of the partners with spare capital, such as Longman or Cadell, while the other members agreed to buy their share of the copies. The main difference from the original wholesaling conger of the late seventeenth century was that the printing was now controlled by a partner, rather than an external printer who then sold to conger-members. In the mid-nineteenth century, a similar system applied to printings of *Evenings at Home*, which were wholly organized by the wholesaling share-holders. Upon completion, the organising partner requested the relevant fraction of the printing costs from each partner and delivered the books. The existence of the other share-holders guaranteed the organizers a certain number of sales, though each share-holder took only the relatively small number he thought he could sell. The wholesalers could then take a substantial fraction of the edition to meet their large, though diffuse, demand.

Thus, in the early nineteenth-century, ‘wholesalers’ were more closely connected with printing the editions they supplied than was to be the case later in the century. These early wholesalers were attempting to meet the needs of the provincial middle classes, and specialized in the same cheap, popular reprinted works that were being used by the developing provincial publishing trade. The demand for *Evenings at Home* among the London book-buying families seemed to have declined to a slow trickle by mid-century, with Longman selling only twenty or thirty copies per year, but there were large numbers of the provincial middle-classes who wanted better access to books than the slow distribution systems and the slowly growing provincial publishing trade could supply.³¹ Until the railways greatly improved distribution networks around mid-century, the London publisher-wholesalers and the provincial publishers were only rarely in direct competition. Although Simpkin & Marshall continued to be involved in printing new editions until at least the late 1860s, they began to concentrate more on distributing the books printed by others, as it became possible for London-based companies to reach markets all over Britain, and more publishers began to use the services of wholesalers to do this.

The survival of the share-book system despite the shortened period of copyright protection raises questions about the nature of the property owned by the share-holder. During the copyright period, the share-holders owned a share in the copyright, just as in former times, although the value of each share would be reduced. But what happened after the expiry of copyright? Amory showed how ‘share-holders’ might become partners in an attempt to produce copies which could compete with the reprints allowed by the 1774 end to perpetual copyright.³² In this case, they owned no more than their interest in that edition. The situation became more interesting in the

mid-nineteenth century, with the use of stereotyping. In 1846, when *Evenings at Home* had only five more years of copyright protection, the partners decided to stereotype it.³³ They clearly envisaged a future in which a small, but relatively constant demand for *Evenings at Home* would be supplied from their stereotype plates. Since few other publishers had taken advantage of the opportunity to reprint the original version, they had little reason to expect much competition from other publishers once copyright ended.

Once the share-holders had invested in stereotype plates, there was a physical property in which they owned a share no matter what the copyright status of the work was. With stereotype plates, the publisher of a work which had just come out of copyright had a distinct advantage over any competitors who sought to reprint the work, since any number of a new impression could be printed with no costs for composition. Table 3 shows the costs of the 1846 edition, which was the last to involve composition charges for the share-holders.³⁴ The one-off charge for producing the stereotype plates was £30, while the composition costs were 25% of the remainder. For a later edition of the same size (1,500), the share-holders could expect to produce their editions for three-quarters the cost of their rivals, and thus undercut their prices. The continuing value of stereotype plates was illustrated by a business offer in 1860, when the partners in *Evenings at Home* offered to supply Trübner & Co. with copies of the stereotype plates for the American market.³⁵ There was no law preventing Trübner & Co. setting up and printing the edition themselves, but since the cost of the stereotype plates had been offset against the first edition printed from them, the share-holders could sell copies at prices which could beat the composition costs Trübner would have to pay.³⁶ By offering them for the American market, they

avoided the possibility of creating more competition for themselves. The stereotype plates thus gave the share-holders an advantage over competitors, and functioned as a physical embodiment of their property.

3.

Evenings at Home had been widely praised by its early reviewers for ‘presenting useful information and rational entertainment’.³⁷ Yet in the following decades, the ‘instructive and amusing’ genre came under attack, particularly from those, like Samuel Coleridge and Charles Lamb, who believed that children should be encouraged to use their imaginations, rather than be crammed with scientific knowledge.³⁸ The reputation of the genre was not helped by the large number of works which emphasized ‘instruction’ to the detriment of ‘amusement’. William Thackeray recalled that ‘Abominable attempts were made in those days to make useful books for children, and cram science down their throats as calomel used to be administered under the pretence of a spoonful of currant-jelly.’³⁹ By mid-century, the fairytales of Charles Perrault, the brothers Grimm, and Hans Christian Andersen had set the scene for what some historians see as the ‘Golden Age of Children’s Literature’. Explicitly didactic works were declared old-fashioned, or banished to the schoolroom.⁴⁰ Elizabeth Rigby was something of a lone voice among critics in 1844, when she called for a return to the old books which were being superseded by ‘works bearing no comparison with them in value’.⁴¹

This episode illustrates the independence of publishing practice from critical opinion, for despite receiving the label ‘old fashioned’ from most critics, *Evenings at Home*, with other Day and Edgeworth works, reached thousands more children in the second half of the century than it had done originally. This sudden change in fortunes was

due to the rapid growth in the book trade, particularly in reprints, which Simon Eliot has identified as occurring in the late 1840s and early 1850s.⁴² This was when cheap reprints began to reach a mass market, starting with the libraries of David Bogue and H.G. Bohn, and shortly afterwards with those of George Routledge.⁴³ It was Routledge who provided unexpected competition for the *Evenings at Home* shareholders. They had believed that they could produce cheaper editions than their competitors, but their concept of 'cheap' is indicated by the fact that when the new 1846 edition was produced, the prices on the remaining 1836 copies were reduced to 5s. Since Routledge had every intention of printing large numbers of copies of *Evenings at Home*, he immediately stereotyped the work, thus depriving the shareholders of their advantage. The share-holders met this challenge by lowering their price, but while Routledge went on to produce 1s. editions, the share-holders' cheapest edition was in 1868, priced at 2s. 6d. By that time, however, *Evenings at Home* appeared in the standard children's libraries of four other publishers.⁴⁴

George Routledge (1812-88) had begun his business as a remainder merchant, but in the late 1840s he entered the reprint trade. Much of his early success was founded on producing cheap editions of American works, though the ambiguity surrounding the legal status of these works until the 1854 House of Lords decision meant that it was an uncertain business in which Routledge did not always have the law on his side.⁴⁵ The safer source of cheap books was old domestic works, and this is clearly seen in Routledge's children's libraries. The first entry in the Routledge Impression Book for 1851 (the year in which Routledge & Co. was founded) is for *Evenings at Home*.⁴⁶ The next page is for *Sandford and Merton*, with *Swiss Family Robinson* on the third page.⁴⁷ They were stereotyped immediately, and sold at the comparatively cheap

price of 3s. 6d. In 1851 alone, Routledge printed 4,000 of the first two titles, and 3,000 of the third, and was ready to print 2,000 more of each in 1853. The shareholders in *Evenings at Home* had barely sold that many copies in the previous twenty years. Their hopes of continuing to meet a small but steady demand for *Evenings at Home* with little competition from other publishers were smashed. Routledge clearly showed that by publishing the work more cheaply, he could sell far more copies of it. Tables 4 and 5 give the cost break-downs for a Routledge edition and a share-holder edition in the late 1850s, by which time both were using their existing stereotype plates.⁴⁸ The ‘plates’ referred to in the Routledge costs were actually the woodcuts which had been designed in 1851; the share-holders’ figures include the woodcuts in the main printing total.

Routledge was able to produce 1,000 copies around £20 more cheaply than the shareholders. £10 of this difference was due to the advertising costs of the shareholders, although Routledge presumably also advertised, but did not count this as part of the cost of the edition. The other £10 comes from the costs of the actual printing, which Routledge was able to have done more cheaply, perhaps due to the greater bulk of his run. The paper costs were almost equivalent. A £20 difference over 1,000 copies equates to just under 5d. per copy. The 1858 share-holders’ edition used in Table 4 is the first one for which the share-holders matched Routledge’s prices by selling their works at 3s. 6d. Before then, although the share-holder books were only 5d. more expensive to produce, they were being sold for over 2s. more per copy. By 1858, Routledge’s willingness to work with small profit margins had forced the shareholders to follow suit and reduce prices. In 1865, Routledge produced an impression on cheaper paper (2,000 copies for £63) and sold it at 2s. per book. The following

year he brought out a similar version, but without woodcuts, which retailed at 1s. 6d. His first 1s. edition appeared in 1879, though it proved less popular than the more expensive versions, probably because of its paper covers.

Routledge also made use of new advances in printing, illustrating and binding to make his editions more attractive than the standard octavo volume, bound in brown boards or cloth with thirty-four woodcuts, which was produced by the share-holders. Routledge's children's books of the 1860s and later are known for the quality of their illustrations, due to collaborations with the colour printer Edmund Evans, and the illustrators Kate Greenway and Randolph Caldecott.⁴⁹ Improvements in technology and a belief in the importance of illustration were also seen in his reprint titles from the beginning. The first Routledge edition of *Evenings at Home* contained woodcuts, which cost him only £25, compared to the £106 expended by the share-holders.⁵⁰ By the 1860s, Routledge editions contained plates, and by the 1880s, there were eight coloured plates. In the preface to a reward edition of *Evenings at Home* in 1875, Routledge explicitly drew attention to the 'paper and print, binding and pictorial illustration, [with which] he is happy in the opportunity of offering to his young friends a *Gift-Book for the Season* – for ANY season – worthy of their acceptance.'⁵¹ Yet the range of formats makes it clear that Routledge's books were intended to be far more widely available than school prizes.⁵²

Routledge's editions of *Evenings at Home* were different from the share-holder version in a final way. Routledge had the text revised and corrected again by Cecil Hartley.⁵³ Significantly, although both Arthur and Lucy Aikin were still alive in 1851, Routledge did not ask them to edit his new version. If he had paid them anything approaching the £150 paid for the 1823 revisions, the cost of his 2,000

copies would have almost doubled.⁵⁴ Hartley was paid a mere £7 for his editing. Unsurprisingly, for this money, Routledge received rather fewer revisions. In fact, the majority of Arthur Aikin's detailed revisions of the scientific material were omitted. Spelling, grammar and punctuation were modernized ('tyger' to 'tiger', 'dying' to 'dyeing', use of quote marks around direct speech etc), and Hartley added four editorial notes, none of which were particularly substantive, but which served to make it obvious to any enquirer that revisions *had* been made. As occurred in 1823, the revision process created a new copyright for Routledge, forcing his potential competitors to either edit a version of their own, or reprint one of the older versions available.⁵⁵ Although Routledge's edition could claim to be the most up-to-date on the market, this was somewhat misleading, especially regarding the developments in science over the preceding sixty years, none of which were mentioned. Yet Routledge produced (and presumably sold) 66,000 copies of *Evenings at Home* in the subsequent forty years, while the share-holders produced only another 4,000 copies of Arthur Aikin's revised version. This suggests that customers were either not sufficiently discerning to notice that Routledge's edition was not the most scientifically accurate, or that this did not matter to them.

Routledge was an unexpected competitor for the share-holders, and once his success had demonstrated that old reprints of children's books could be sold on a large scale, other publishers suddenly became interested, as Figure 1 showed. Although the original version had been available for reprint since the mid-1820s, Griffin was its only publisher in the 1830s, joined in the next decade by Milner, Washbourne and Scott, Webster & Geary. Between them, these four publishers printed only seven editions. After Routledge's success in the early 1850s, Milner and Washbourne

continued to reprint the first version, and were joined by Nimmo of Edinburgh, Ward, Lock & Co., and Warne, while Cornish and Bohn reprinted the revised version.⁵⁶ Thus, after 1850, eight publishers other than Routledge printed at least eighteen editions. This unexpected revival in the fortunes of *Evenings at Home* was due entirely its transformation by Routledge from an old-fashioned, relatively expensive book for upper-middle class children whose parents had read it when young, to a classic children's book, available cheaply and attractively alongside the new children's books from America.

The revival was not permanent, as Figure 1 shows. Routledge's business went through an awkward phase when his sons took charge in the 1890s, resulting in bankruptcy in 1899, but it is the decline in editions of *Evenings at Home* from other publishers that is more striking. It is possible that several of the other publishers who specialized in reprints also had business troubles towards the end of the century. However, another reason might lie with the nature of the market for these old reprints. In the 1850s and 1860s, a mass market for printed material was just being created for the first time. The working-class readers who benefited from this had little experience of print, which might explain their lack of concern over the out-of-date scientific material in Routledge's revised version. By the 1880s, however, society as a whole was more literate and more experienced with printed material. Perhaps the books which had been eagerly accepted as a first introduction to the world of print soon came to be seen by working-class readers as old fashioned, just as the middle-class critics had maintained for the previous forty years.

4.

This long history of a children's book illustrates some of the underlying changes in

the British book trade in the nineteenth century, which are often hidden by the narrative which focuses on a late eighteenth-century transition, from co-operative, protectionist groups of share-holding publishers to individualistic, competitive publishers. Children's books, textbooks, and reference works provided a steady source of income for many publishers. In the first half of the century, groups of publishers, which included established names like Longman and Murray, as well as outsiders like Tegg and Routledge, and wholesaling firms like Simpkin & Marshall and Whittaker, co-operated in producing these works and protecting their editions from competition. By the second half of the century, these groups of publishers had dispersed: Simpkin & Marshall were concentrating more on wholesaling, although still reprinting some titles for their own use; Longman increasingly produced their own textbooks, while Routledge and the reprinters used the children's books to fill their libraries of classics at cheap prices. In this section of the book trade, the move from co-operation to competition seems to have come much later than is generally assumed.

This is also a story of the increasing market for children's books, which seems to have a transition coinciding with that in the structure of the publishing trade discussed above. In the first half of the century, *Evenings at Home* was published by two groups: the London-based share-holders, dominated by publishers with wholesaling interests; and the provincial publishers. While reprinted children's books were steady earners for the London share-holders, for the provincial publishers who were trying to develop their business and establish their place in the market, they were a safe, cheap source of material. Both groups can be seen as trying to reach a wider audience with their books, by targeting the non-London middle classes whose access to books was

being increased by falling prices, although the relatively small print runs and slow distribution systems meant that they were rarely in direct competition with each other. In the second half of the century, improved distribution networks had allowed publishers like Routledge to reach the whole country, and to compete directly with publishers in Glasgow or Edinburgh as well as those in London. Larger print runs and cheaper prices allowed Routledge and others to show that the market could be expanded even more, if the price could be brought within reach of the lower-middle and working classes. Thus old children's books, despite being dismissed by critics as 'not suited' to the late nineteenth century, were brought to a larger audience than ever before.

Figure 1

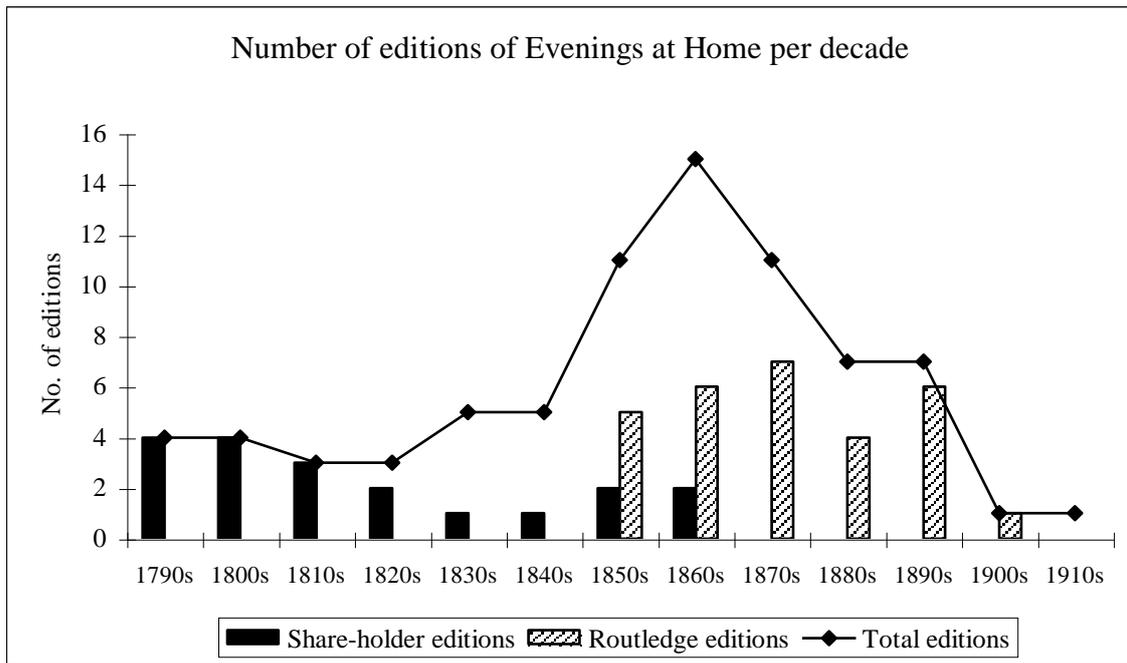


Table 1

Share-holder editions		
Year	Copies	Price
1823	3,000	10s. 6d.
1826	4,000	
1836	3,000	reduced to 5s. in 1846
1846	1,500	
1852	2,000	
1858	1,000	3s. 6d.
1863	1,000	3s. 6d.

Table 2

Routledge editions		
Year	Copies	Price
1851	2,000	}
	2,000	}
1853	2,000	}
1856	2,000	} presumably 3s. 6d.
1858	2,000	}
1860	2,000	}
1863	2,000	}
1865	2,000	2s.
1866	4,000	1s. 6d.
	2,000	2s.
	2,000	3s. 6d.
1870	2,000	3s. 6d.
1871	2,000	2s.
1872	2,000	3s. 6d.
1873	4,000	2s. 6d.
	2,000	2s.
1874	2,000	3s. 6d.
1879	4,000	1s.
1880	1,000	3s. 6d.
	2,000	2s.
1882	2,000	3s. 6d.
	2,000	2s.
1890	1,000	3s. 6d.
	1,000	2s.
1891	1,000	3s. 6d.
	1,000	2s.
	4,000	1s.
	2,000	1s. 6d.

Table 3

Share-holders' 1846 edition	
47 ¼ reams dble fscap @ 20/-	£47.5.0
Composing 15 ¾ sheets @ 2/6/-	£36.4.6
Working 40 reams @ 17/-	£40.16.0
Coldpressing @ 1/1; Stereos, 15 ¾ sheets @ 1/10/-	£32.6.6
Printing titles for old edition	£0.8.0
Difference on 75 copies old edition reissued at reduced	£5.9.6
Advertising	£12.10.6
TOTAL for 1,500 copies:	£175

Table 4

Share-holders' 1858 edition	
Paper 31 ½ Rms fscap @ 18/-	£28.7.0
Working 15 ¾ sheets with woodcuts 31 ½ - 32 Rms @	£19.4.0 }
Coldpressing 31 ½ - 32 Rms @ 1/-	£1.12.0 }
Corrections and repairing plates, setting adverts etc	£1.0.0 }
	<u>£21.16.0</u>
Paper for frontispiece 1025 pieces @ 7/-	£0.7.0 }
Working frontispiece	£1.2.0 }
	<u>£1.9.0</u>
Advertising	£10.18.0
TOTAL for 1,000 copies:	£62.10.0

Table 5

Routledge 1856 edition of 2,000 copies:		For 1,000
59 Reams of paper, 20/-	£59.0.0	£29.10.0
Working ditto, 7/-	£20.13.0	£10.6.6
Paper and printing of plates	£9.16.0	£4.18.0
TOTAL:	£89.9.0	£44.14.6

¹ But see J. A. Secord, 'Newton in the nursery: Tom Telescope and the philosophy of tops and balls, 1761-1838', *History of Science*, Vol. 23, 1985, pp.127-51; and C. Stray, 'Paradigms lost: towards a historical sociology of the textbooks' in *Textbooks and Educational Media: collected papers, 1991-95*, ed. S. Selander, International Association for Research on Textbooks and Educational Media 1997, pp.57-74.

² For example, F. J. H. Darton, *Children's Books in England: five centuries of social life*, 3rd edn., Cambridge 1982; M. F. Thwaite, *From Primer to Pleasure in Reading: an introduction to the history of children's books in England from the invention of printing to 1914 with an outline of some developments in other countries*, 2nd edn., London 1972; and J. R. Townsend, *Written for Children: an outline of English-language children's literature*, 6th edn., London 1995.

³ J. Raven, H. Small and N. Tadmor (eds.), *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, Cambridge 1996.

⁴ R. Darnton, 'What is the history of books?' in *The Kiss of Lamourette*, ed. R. Darnton, London 1990.

⁵ Darton, *Children's Books in England* is the classic history of children's books in England.

⁶ See S. Eliot, *Some Patterns and Trends in British Publishing 1800-1919*, London 1994, p.45, and S. Eliot, 'Patterns and Trends and the NSTC: some initial observations, Part II', *Publishing History*, Vol. 43, 1998, p.79 for the early nineteenth century, and A. Ellis, *A History of Children's Reading and Literature*, Oxford 1968, p.66, for 1870. Of course, these figures are for numbers of titles and do not indicate the numbers of books produced.

⁷ On international copyright, see S. Nowell-Smith, *International copyright law and the publisher in the reign of Queen Victoria*, Oxford 1968 and J. J. Barnes, *Authors, Publishers and Politicians: the quest for an Anglo-American copyright agreement*, London 1974.

⁸ *Alice* was available from Macmillans at 7s. 6d. in 1865, and 6s. four years later. Ballantyne's *Coral Island* was 6s. in 1857, and 5s. three years later. Both *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped*, which appeared in the 1880s, came out at 5s.

⁹ L. Howsam, 'Sustained literary ventures: the series in Victorian book publishing', *Publishing History*, Vol. 31, 1992, pp.5-25 examines the phenomenon of the Victorian series.

¹⁰ L. F. Chard, 'Bookseller to publisher: Joseph Johnson and the English book trade, 1760-1810', *The Library*, Vol. 5th series, 32, 1977, pp.138-54.

¹¹ E. Salmon, *Juvenile Literature as it is*, London 1888, pp.14-16, 21-3, reports the result of a survey of school-children.

¹² C. Yonge, 'Children's literature of the last century', *Macmillan's Magazine*, Vol. 20, 1869, pp.229-37, 302-10, 448-56, at p.233.

¹³ Salmon, *Juvenile Literature*, p.160-1.

¹⁴ *Evenings at Home* and *Sandford and Merton* were on Routledge's list, while the Edgeworth works were on Macmillans'.

¹⁵ For the history of copyright, see J. Feather, *Publishing, piracy and politics*, London 1995; Barnes, *Authors, Publishers and Politicians*, and M. Rose, *Authors and Owners: the invention of copyright*, London 1993. Nowell-Smith, *International*

copyright law, pp.2-14, notes the problems of the complexity of the copyright laws for the ordinary publisher.

¹⁶ These figures come from the Longman Impression Books, and the Routledge Publication Books, both available on microfiche from Chadwyck-Healey. References to the Longman archives are given as in A. Ingram (ed.), *Index to the Archives of the House of Longman, 1794-1914*, Cambridge 1981.

¹⁷ An 1839 edition by Cornish may be an exception, but I have been unable to examine it to ascertain which version it is.

¹⁸ R. D. Altick, 'English publishing and the mass audience in 1852', *Studies in Bibliography*, Vol. 6, 1954, pp.6-8.

¹⁹ The changes are discussed in A. Fyfe, 'How the squirrel became a squigg: the long history of a children's book', *Paradigm*, Spring 1999.

²⁰ J. Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, London 1988, pp.69-75.

²¹ Unlike trade-sales in the eighteenth century, the selling of shares in the nineteenth century has yet to receive scholarly attention.

²² L. F. Chard, 'Joseph Johnson: father of the book trade', *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, Vol. 79, 1975, pp.51-82, and Chard, *Bookseller to publisher*.

²³ Chard, *Bookseller to publisher*, p.153.

²⁴ 54 Geo. III, cap. 156, section 3, requires the legal deposit of later 'Additions or Alterations'.

²⁵ W. A. Copinger, *The law of copyright in works of literature and art*, London 1870, p.21.

²⁶ These issues are discussed in Copinger, *Copyright*, Ch. 2, who cites the relevant case law. Although Copinger discusses the 1842 Copyright Act (5&6 Vict., cap. 45), the changes are mainly in the term of protection, and the efforts made in the 1842 Act to define terms more carefully.

²⁷ Longman H10, 214.

²⁸ Longman, H1, 12.

²⁹ Feather, *British Publishing*, p.137.

³⁰ H. Amory, 'De facto Copyright?: Fielding's 'Works' in partnership, 1769-1821', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 17, 1984, pp.449-76.

³¹ Sales figures for late 1840s in Longman, H1, 11. On the state of provincial publishing up to the end of the eighteenth century, see J. Feather, *The provincial Book Trade in Eighteenth-century England*, Cambridge 1985, p.109ff.

³² Amory, *De facto copyright*, p.461ff.

³³ Under the 1842 Copyright Act, the extended protection of 42 years could be granted to pre-1842 works, but publishers who owned copyrights could benefit only if the author (or his next-of-kin) agreed, 5&6 Vict. cap 45, section 4. *Evenings at Home* was not re-registered in the Stationers' Hall entry book.

³⁴ Longman H14, 20.

³⁵ Longman J 175.

³⁶ The partners wanted £3.13s.6d. a sheet for the plates. They had paid £2.6s. per sheet composition charges in 1846. Since Trübner could take more than one edition,

the price of the plates reflects either repeated composition charges, or composition charges plus stereotyping (which cost £1.10s. per sheet in 1846).

³⁷ 'Evenings at Home, Vol. IV. (review)', *Monthly Review*, Vol. 17, 1795, p.113.

³⁸ A. Richardson, *Literature, Education, and Romanticism: reading as social practice, 1780-1832*, Cambridge 1994, Ch. 3.

³⁹ 'On some illustrated children's books', 1846, quoted in M. Moon, *John Harris's Books for Youth 1801-1843: a checklist*, Revised edn., Folkestone 1992, p.182.

⁴⁰ M. V. Jackson, *Engines of Instruction, Mischief and Magic: children's literature in England from its beginnings to 1839*, Aldershot 1989, especially Ch. 8-9 discusses the career of the instructive book. The move from didacticism to imagination is also discussed in Thwaite, *Primer to Pleasure*, Ch. 3.

⁴¹ E. Rigby, 'Children's books', *Quarterly Review*, Vol. 74, 1844, pp.1-26, at p.19.

⁴² Eliot, *Patterns and Trends*, and S. Eliot, 'Patterns and Trends and the NSTC: some initial observations, Part I', *Publishing History*, Vol. 42, 1997, pp.79-104.

⁴³ Reprints, especially of poetry, had been available long before this, but not on the scale that Routledge and others aimed for. See Altick, *English publishing in 1852*, and R. D. Altick, 'From Aldine to Everyman: cheap reprint series of the English Classics, 1830-1906', *Studies in Bibliography*, Vol. 11, 1958, pp.3-25.

⁴⁴ Frederick Warne, Ward, Lock & Co., W.P. Nimmo, and George Routledge.

⁴⁵ On these issues, see Nowell-Smith, *International copyright law*; Barnes, *Authors, publishers and politicians*; and Feather, *Publishing, piracy and politics*.

⁴⁶ Routledge Publication Book, 1850-58, p.1.

⁴⁷ *Swiss Family Robinson*, of course, was not a British work, but dating from 1812, it was well beyond any copyright protection, even if it had ever benefited from any.

⁴⁸ I have used the 1856 figures for Routledge because they are more detailed than the 1858 figures.

⁴⁹ The history of children's illustrations is discussed in Thwaite, *Primer to Pleasure*, pp.190-8.

⁵⁰ I have been unable to examine any early Routledge editions, so my details come solely from the impression books. Thus, I do not know how many wood cuts were in the 1851 edition.

⁵¹ C. Hartley (ed.), *Evenings at Home; or the Juvenile Budget opened: consisting of a variety of miscellaneous pieces for the instruction and amusement of youth, by Dr Aikin and Mrs Barbauld, carefully revised and corrected throughout, and with some additional pieces, by the authors, the whole newly arranged in four volumes*, London 1875, preface, p.iii.

⁵² The cheaper series had no plates, but probably had the old woodcuts. Unfortunately academic libraries tend to preserve the expensive editions.

⁵³ Hartley is described on title-pages as 'Cecil Hartley, MA, editor of the 'Circle of the Sciences'', but I have been unable to find out anything more about him.

⁵⁴ Routledge Publication Book, 1850-58, p.1. The cost of the impression was £176.

⁵⁵ Technically, Routledge had a copyright, but he could not take legal action based on it as he did not register it at Stationers' Hall, as required under 5&6 Vict, cap. 45, section 24.

⁵⁶ Bohn had already done this in 1847, presumably legally since he was one of the share-holders.