

Literature and the Empire

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The Bible Society Cleanings.
Various source media, 19th Century UK Periodicals
DECEMBER, 1896.



IN CENTRAL AMERICA.
Native Indians at Home.



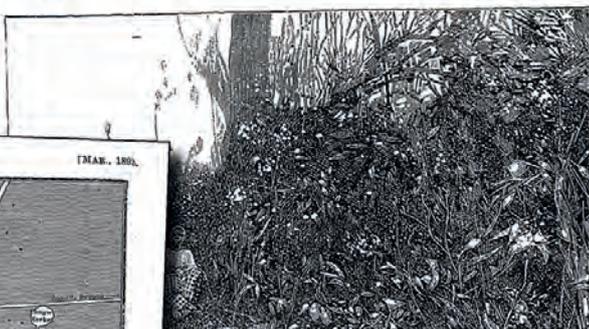
THE TOURISTS—T. W. HARKER AND H. GREEN.

A CYCLING TOUR IN SOUTH AFRICA.

BY THOMAS WOODVILLE HARKER.

ii. HE vrou is indeed the helpmate of her husband in every way, would be useless. I do believe the American poet at some time or other must have had visions in his dreams of this portion of the globe, for has he not written:—

Baptisms at San Salvador. [FEBRUARY, 1899.]



JANUARY 1, 1890.] THE MISSIONARY HERALD.
CALABAR COLLEGE, KINGSTON, JAMAICA.
THE following graphic letter from S. B. Burton, Esq. F.R.G.S., of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, will be read with great interest:—
"Newcastle-on-Tyne, December, 1894.
"DEAR MR. BAYNES,—The request
Royal Mail s.s. *Eden* on July 18th last.
"On the twelfth day out we passed

Overview

Throughout the nineteenth century, periodicals published both in Britain and in the colonies featured aspects of the imperial experience. Before the 1850s, colonial editors were largely dependent on metropolitan journals and writers. Reprinting poems and essays and serializing novels by popular British authors was a standard way of filling their pages. For instance, one of the first magazines published in the Canadian Provinces, the *Nova Scotia Magazine and Comprehensive Review*, established in 1789, was subtitled, in part, 'a collection of the most valuable articles which appear in the periodical publications of Great-Britain, Ireland, and America...'

Before colonial and international copyright laws began to tighten starting in 1842, colonial editors often 'pirated' works by metropolitan authors without permission and without payment. As late as 1881, an editorial in the *Calcutta Fortnightly Review* lamented that the habit of reprinting 'interesting tales and extracts from English journals' undermined support for 'the original literature' of India (qtd. in Chaudhuri, 181). During his trip to North America in 1842, Charles Dickens spoke out against literary 'piracy', and on his return to England, he advised other authors to shun American and colonial editors of journals 'almost exclusively devoted to the republication of popular English works'. Well after 1842, for example, the *Illustrated Melbourne Post* 'freely' reprinted articles and stories from Dickens's periodical *All the Year Round*.

From roughly mid-century on, in the colonies of white settlement (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa), both editors and writers sought to express themselves in ways that were not just imitative of metropolitan literature, but that reflected the uniqueness of life in the colonies. Many colonial periodicals sprang up but didn't last very long, due mainly to the small size of colonial readerships. Prior to 1850 in Australia, for example, 'the life of the average...magazine was about a year'. These ephemeral journals typically contained 'verses of at least a low standard, a melodramatic serial, and perhaps a short story either conveyed from some English periodical or written locally after a bad English model; many of the articles also would be of English origin...' (Green, 123).

Colonial periodicals both imitated and found it difficult to compete with popular journals published in Britain. There were many colonial versions of *Punch*, for example, such as *Melbourne Punch*, *Sydney Punch*, *Queensland Punch*, *Indian Punch* and *Punch in Canada*, and also increasingly sophisticated imitations of the great British reviews - the *Edinburgh*, *Quarterly* and *Westminster*. Thus, in New Zealand, the short-lived *Southern Monthly Magazine* modelled itself on the British *Cornhill Magazine* (Tye, 219). Colonial periodicals reprinted metropolitan authors both because good new writing was scarce in the colonies and because the colonists nostalgically demanded works from 'home' - that is, from Britain. Periodicals published in India such as the *Calcutta Review* and the *Oriental Observer* featured literature by Anglo-Indian authors, but also the first stirrings of writing by English-educated Indians. But Indians began to

produce their own periodicals, perhaps starting with Ram Mohan Roy's secular and reformist *Brahminical Magazine* in 1821.

Travel accounts, stories and poems dealing with immigration and life in the Australian 'bush', the South African 'karoo', or the 'backwoods' of Canada were popular in both colonial and British journals. Dickens's *Household Words*, for example, frequently ran stories and articles about emigration and life in the colonies. Further, colonial writers often depended on British readers for whatever popular notice and income they received. With the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* as their model, local British and colonial geographical societies began to publish their own journals such as the *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, the *Journal of the Manchester Geographical Society*, the *Journal of the Tyneside Geographical Society* and the *Report of the Liverpool Geographical Society*. These, together with journals featuring anthropology, notably the *Journal of the Anthropological Society of London* published scientific articles instead of poetry and fiction. But the scientific periodicals helped to inspire such imperialist writers as Robert Ballantyne, H. Rider Haggard and G.A. Henty in their production of adventure fiction. And there were periodicals that emphasized colonial affairs, including the *Foreign and Colonial Quarterly Review*, published in London from 1843 to 1847. It featured a regular section entitled 'Colonial Intelligence'. The women's journal *Queen*, moreover, was established by Mary Carpenter in 1870 to promote mutual understanding between its British readers and Indians.

The Missionary and Antislavery Press

Both in Britain and in the colonies, there were many periodicals that featured the often heroic struggles and occasional martyrdoms of missionaries such as John Williams and David Livingstone. Some missionary journals occasionally published verses or hymns, but only rarely didactic tales or religious 'tracts', exemplary of the wages of sin and the path to salvation. Such journals include *Missionary Magazine and Chronicle*, produced by the *London Missionary Society*, and the Wesleyans' *Missionary Notices*. *Missionary* editors offered early entries into the emerging field of writing for children, with such periodicals as the *Juvenile Missionary Magazine* and the *Wesleyan Juvenile Offering*.

Though missionary periodicals did not emphasize poetry and fiction, throughout the century they were a major source of knowledge for their readers about non-Western cultures and religions. Missionaries often served as the best sources available for information reproduced in anthropological journals back in Britain. And some missionary journals deserve notice for translating myths, tales and poems from non-Western cultures. Thus, the *Calcutta Christian Observer*, published by Baptist missionaries, 'made an important contribution by devoting one-third of the periodical to Indian literature in translation...' (Vann, 13). Both before and after Parliament abolished slavery in all British territories in 1833, abolitionist publications were closely related to the missionary press. Abolitionist journals regularly featured slave narratives and articles on the horrors of slavery; their emphasis was documentary, yet some of them published poems, stories and miscellaneous articles. There is a close relationship as well between the *Anti-Slavery Monthly*

Reporter (which underwent various title changes) and, starting in 1837, the *Reports of the British & Foreign Aborigines Protection Society*.

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Emigrating to Cape Town in 1819, Scotsman Thomas Pringle, who had edited the *Edinburgh Monthly Magazine*, the first incarnation of *Blackwood's Magazine*, helped found the *South African Journal* and was, together with John Fairbairn, an early promoter of freedom of the press in that colony. The poems he published in *African Sketches* (1834) and his *Narrative of a Residence in South Africa* (1835) are considered two of the earliest English-language works in South African literature. On his return to Britain, Pringle became Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society, and helped publish *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave* (1831).

British-Colonial Writers in Colonial Journals

Pringle's story is exemplary in several respects. Before mid-century, most colonial writers were recent arrivals

in the colonies, and some of these returned to Britain, as did Pringle. Though they often depended on imitating British journals and reprinting British authors, colonial journals nevertheless promoted the beginnings of colonial literatures. In Canada, works by both Catherine Parr Traill and her sister Susanna Moodie appeared in the *Literary Garland*, founded in Montreal in 1838. Moodie contributed to it more frequently than any other Canadian writer; it published as 'sketches' her most familiar work, *Roughing It in the Bush*, first published as a book in 1852 (Distad, 76). For a while Moodie edited *Victoria Magazine: A Cheap Periodical for the Canadian People* (Sutherland, 20).

As the century progressed, increasingly original novels, stories and poems by colonial writers began to appear in colonial journals. A few years after emigrating to Australia in 1863, Marcus Clarke joined the staff of the *Melbourne Argus*. He wrote a weekly column for the Australian, and in 1868 started to publish and edit the *Colonial Monthly*, in which he serialized his first novel, *Long Odds*, in 1869. Clarke also edited the satiric journal *Humbug* for a year. The work for which he is deservedly famous, the great crime and prison novel *For the Term of His Natural Life*, first appeared as a serial in the *Australian Journal* in 1870-2. Another important early Australian novel, *Robbery Under Arms* by 'Rolfe Boldrewood' (Thomas Alexander Browne), was serialized in the *Sydney Mail* starting in 1881.

In southern Africa, from about mid-century forward, 'many papers and journals were being published...catering for a wide range of constituencies,

including women, missionaries, the Dutch community, Jews and even Spiritualists, as well as the newly emergent black readers' (MacKenzie, 33). These were venues for literature by both metropolitan writers and the colonists. Because Cape Town had been founded as a stopping-off point for transit between Britain and India, moreover, there was even a good deal of interchange in the southern African press between British, southern African and Indian perspectives (Robinson, 152, 158). Literature and periodicals by African writers began to appear after mid-century.

The *Cape Monthly Magazine*, later retitled the *Cape Quarterly Review*, ran from 1857 to 1883 and serialized a number of novels by anonymous, white southern African authors, such as *Kafirs and Kafirland: A Settler's Story* (1857-8). Further, the *Cape Illustrated Magazine* (1890-1901) was 'a rich source of colonial poetry, from Frances Nicholson's exotic and fabulous 'Africa' (1891) or J.G.'s 'Song of the Zulu' (1890) which perfectly evinces the late-Victorian heroic image of the Zulu...through to...Anglo-Boer War poetry, including Edgar Wallace's 'The Armoured Train' (1899)' (Smith, 23). A notable southern African literary periodical was *Sam Sly's African Journal* (1843-51), a 'zestful weekly' (Cheadle, 264).

Boys' Journals and Adventure Fiction

While many of the British periodicals that targeted an adolescent male readership from the 1850s on, like S.O. Beeton's *Boy's Own Magazine* (1855) and Edwin Brett's *Boys of England* (1866), are included in the *New Readerships: Children's Periodicals* module, they must be mentioned here as particularly promoting

imperialism through adventure fiction. Besides Beeton and Brett, an exemplary figure is W.G.H. Kingston. Many of Kingston's publications, both fictional and nonfictional, deal with immigration to the colonies, including the reasons for leaving Britain and for braving struggles against nature, against 'the natives' - on colonial frontiers. From 1844, Kingston edited the *Colonist*, the *Colonial Magazine* and the *East Indian Review*. He founded and edited *Kingston's Magazine* to promote the Empire and colonisation. And he served as an officer of a colonisation society, while publishing several books and pamphlets on immigration, including *How to Emigrate; or, The British Colonists* (1850). In 1863 Kingston published *Our Sailors; or, Anecdotes of the Engagements and Gallant Deeds of the British Navy During the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria and also Our Soldiers; or, Anecdotes of the Campaigns and Gallant Deeds of the British Army During the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria*. He followed these patriotic tomes with *How Britannia Came to Rule the Waves* (1870).

Many other periodicals and writers aiming at male, adolescent readers were as patriotic and almost as prolific as Kingston, though their patriotism was tempered by the need for emigration and colonial expansion in the first place. In other words, much nineteenth-century writing about the British Empire, even the most chauvinistic, asserts or implies that conditions in Britain are too cramped and impoverished to support the growing 'home' population. So to the colonies the 'surplus population' should go. Periodical editorials, articles, poems and stories that stressed colonial expansion and immigration as a solution to what Thomas Carlyle called 'the Condition of England

Question' multiplied exponentially during and after the Irish Famine of 1845-50.

Conclusion

Through the first several decades of the nineteenth century, periodicals published in the colonies struggled to attract both readers and writers. They were often short-lived and highly imitative of British models. Many of them survived by 'pirating' articles, stories and even entire novels from British periodicals and authors. Starting in 1842, copyright legislation began to regularize an increasingly global market for literature written in English. This was as true for British India as for the United States of America. From mid-century on, colonial periodicals multiplied and gained confidence about the originality of the colonial authors they published. Throughout the century, writers for colonial periodicals often were recent immigrants from Britain, and some of them returned there - Thomas Pringle, for example.

No survey of literature and colonial periodicals would be complete without mentioning Rudyard Kipling at the end of the 1800s. Born in India and sent to England for his early schooling, Kipling returned to India as a teenager in 1882. There he began his writing career as a reporter, raconteur and versifier for Lahore's *Civil and Military Gazette*. He later edited and wrote for the Allahabad *Pioneer*. Kipling's career, like those of Thomas Pringle, Susanna Moodie and Marcus Clarke, is inseparable from the history of colonial periodicals and journalism. Meanwhile, in Victorian Britain, periodicals featured many literary works that dealt with the colonies and the Empire = Joseph Conrad's *Heart of*

Darkness, to mention just one famous example.

Conrad's dark masterpiece was first published in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1899.

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