

## H. G. Bohn

(London: 1831-1864)

Born in London to German parents, Henry George Bohn entered the book trade in 1812, when, at the age of sixteen, he toured Europe purchasing books for his father's bookstore. He often found bargains among the nobles who wished to dispose of their libraries before they were confiscated by Napoleon's armies. In 1831 he left his father's business when he was denied a partnership in the firm. He established his own bookshop at 4 York Street, Covent Garden, London, with two thousand pounds, half of which he borrowed from his father-in-law, William Simpkin. Multilingual and experienced in finding and purchasing rare books, he quickly came to dominate the used-book trade in the 1830s. In 1841 Bohn established his reputation when he published his "guinea catalog," a 1,936-page listing of the 23,208 rare books he had for sale. Bohn noted in the catalogue that his prices were considerably cheaper than those of his competitors. At this time Bohn also began to purchase the copyrights of remainders and to republish the books at lower prices than they had originally carried. It was here that he found his niche in the market.

In 1846 Bohn published the first of a series of reprinted classics. Similar to David Bogue's European Library, which had begun to come out in 1845, Bohn's 150-volume Standard Library offered the public classic works at relatively low prices. Bohn went on to publish many other series: Extra Volumes Uniform with Standard Library (7 volumes, begun in 1846), Scientific Library (63 volumes, begun in 1847), Antiquarian Library (40 volumes, begun in 1847), Classical Library including an Atlas (89 volumes, begun in 1848), Illustrated Library (76 volumes, begun in 1849), Shilling Series (begun in 1850), Philosophical (sometimes referred to as the Philological and Philosophical) Library (19 volumes, begun in 1852), British Classics (29 volumes, begun in 1853), Collegiate Series (10 volumes, begun in 1859), Library of French Memoirs (6 volumes, 1855-1856), Cheap Series (76 volumes), Historical Library (13 volumes, begun in 1857), Ecclesiastical Library (18 volumes, begun in 1859), School and Collegiate Series (1 volume, 1853), English



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Gentleman's Library (8 volumes, begun in 1849), and the Royal Illustrated Series (21 volumes). Bohn had more than 600 volumes in print when he retired.

Although Bohn is best known for these series of inexpensive books, he published other books as well. His list covered a great diversity of fields: fine arts, architecture, heraldry, topography, theology, natural history, mathematics, medicine, music, agriculture, history, and literature. Nor were all of Bohn's publications low-priced. *The Works of James Gillray* (1851), with 588 drawings by Gillray, sold for ten pounds. Bohn himself wrote several of the books he published, including *Handbook of Proverbs* (1855). He also revised and enlarged William Thomas Lowndes's *Bibliographer's Manual of English Literature*, which

had appeared in four volumes in 1834; Bohn's edition, in eleven volumes, was published from 1857 to 1864. Other titles from Bohn's press included *Polyglot of Foreign Proverbs* (1857), *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Quotations* (eight volumes, 1860), *Index Verborum to the Dictionary of Quotations* (1860), and *Pictorial Handbook of Modern Geography* (1862). He also collaborated with Joseph Cundall on publication projects, including the fourth edition of Cundall's *Tales of the Kings of England* (1846).

One significant consequence of Bohn's Standard Library and his subsequent series was the reduction in the average cost of all titles published in England. Between 1828 and 1853 the average price of a book declined from sixteen shillings to eight shillings, four and half pence. The initial price of Bohn's Standard Library was three shillings, sixpence per volume; subsequent volumes and later series were priced at five shillings per volume. Bohn's prices became the standard for the market for twenty years.

In 1845 David Bogue published William Roscoe's *Life of Lorenzo de Medici Called the Magnificent* and included illustrations that had been copyrighted by Bohn. Bohn sued his competitor for breach of copyright; the Court of Chancery ruled in his favor and issued an injunction against Bogue. Bohn also had difficulty with another competitor, George Routledge. Soon after Bohn reprinted Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Representative Men* (1850), he found that the work had also been included in Routledge's Popular Library. In retaliation Bohn reprinted books by Washington Irving, whose works were included in Routledge's series. Two other British publishers, John Murray and Richard Bentley, had bought the rights to publish the works of several American authors, including Irving. When Bohn and Routledge republished Irving's works, they were sued by Murray and Bentley for copyright violation. During the proceedings Bohn and Routledge raised several key points of law concerning the actual dates and locations of publication of Irving's works. As these were common-law issues, in 1850 Chancery advised Murray and Bentley to take their cases to a common-law court. Murray took his suit to Queen's Bench the following year; but Murray settled out of court with Routledge in May 1851 and with Bohn three months later. In his settlement Bohn agreed to purchase Murray's copyrights to Irving's works for two thousand pounds on the condition that Murray discontinue the litigation. In October

Bohn reached an out-of-court settlement with Bentley, who received four hundred pounds for his copyright to three of Irving's works.

Bohn's decision to settle with Murray and Bentley was due in large part to another case involving copyright protection for foreign authors. This case, *Boosey v. Jefferys*, had several similarities to Murray's suit against Bohn. When *Boosey v. Jefferys* was about to be appealed to the House of Lords, Bohn and other publishers who were reprinting the works of foreign authors and musicians decided to help defray Jefferys's expenses by forming the Society for Obtaining an Adjustment to the Law of Copyright. Following a preliminary inquiry in March 1852, the House of Lords heard the case in August 1854. The Lords ruled that for an author to have a claim to copyright protection he must live in England or one of its colonies. The effect of the ruling was to force American authors to travel to Great Britain or some part of the British Empire and reside there long enough to witness publication of their works. The ruling remained in force until it was superseded by the U.S. International Copyright Law in 1891. Bohn's interest in the copyright issue led him to write and publish *The Question of Unreciprocated Foreign Copyright in Great Britain* (1851).

Bohn retired in 1864. As his sons were not interested in publishing careers, he sold his stock of new books to Bell and Daldy for forty thousand pounds; Chatto and Windus purchased his copyrights for twenty thousand pounds. Bell and Daldy moved into Bohn's York Street offices; during the next three years Bohn moved his stock of used books to a warehouse at 18 Henrietta Street, where he retained an office until 1881. Bohn eventually sold his used books, earning about thirteen thousand pounds. During his active retirement Bohn catalogued his holdings, translated foreign classics, and helped aristocrats such as the duke of Hamilton develop their libraries. He died in 1884.

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—David B. Mock

## Bradbury and Evans

(London: 1830-1865)

### Bradbury, Evans and Company

(London: 1865-1872)

### Bradbury, Agnew and Company

(London: 1872-1969)

Bradbury and Evans, printer and proprietor of *Punch*, became one of the foremost publishers of fiction in the 1840s. The firm is particularly noted for publishing works by Charles Dickens and William Makepeace Thackeray.

William Bradbury came to London from Derbyshire. In 1830 he became associated with Frederick Mullet Evans, who had been a printer in Southampton. For the first ten years they were exclusively jobbing printers. The first book they printed was a law book by Alexander Maxwell. Printing law books became an early specialty; additionally, the firm gained a reputation for fine art printing.

In July 1833 Bradbury and Evans moved to 11 Bouverie Street and Lombard Street, Whitefriars, where they installed "a machine of the largest size and best construction" which was well suited to printing newspapers and periodicals. The firm was advanced and competent. So efficient was Bradbury and Evans that it could help other firms that were in difficulty; it sometimes printed the *London Journal* and, on one occasion, an issue of the *Illustrated London News*. Among

the firm's clients were the publishers Chapman and Hall and Edward Moxon.

One of the firm's earliest publishing ventures came about almost by chance. In 1841 Bradbury and Evans became printers of a new humorous journal, *Punch; or, The London Charivari*, which had been started by the engraver Ebenezer Landells and Joseph Last. Bradbury and Evans gradually established a financial interest in the periodical, and in December 1842 they entered into a partnership with Mark Lemon, the editor of *Punch*, and Douglas Jerrold.

Much of the early success of *Punch* seems to have been due to the way in which its affairs were organized at weekly dinners, which became legendary for their sociable atmosphere. *Punch* was noted for its generosity; its maxim was "Go to any expense, and the office will pay." *Punch* soon gained a reputation for its topicality and daring. It attracted many of the major authors of the day, and published illustrations by such leading artists as John Leech, Hablôt K. Browne, John Tenniel, and Richard Doyle. Thackeray was on its staff. *Punch* was the great success story of the 1840s, and it did much to enhance the reputa-

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