

DARK LONDON

By MARTHA VICINUS

ANY DISTINCTION BETWEEN “picturesque” and “dark” London must be at least partially artificial, with overlapping categories. Nevertheless, this division is useful for emphasizing the interest in the fearful, exciting or titillating aspects of London. The literature of “dark London” has been defined here as that which seeks to show the reader the darker, quasi-legal, illegal, or potentially illegal side of London. Much of this material is frankly exploitative, seeking to cash in on the curiosity of the respectable, or the needs of those seeking illegal amusements, or the fears and desires of those awed by the extent of crime, violence, and poverty in “unknown London.” While the Lilly collection of low-life London materials is by no means complete—no collection of such popular ephemera ever can be—it does contain a representative selection of all the major types of literature, with particular strengths in popular journalism.

The five main categories to be discussed are: 1) *Fast life guides*: This includes fiction purported to be written by “men of pleasure” or prostitutes, guide books to London’s brothels, gambling dens and supper rooms, and a multitude of short-lived journals specializing in gossip, innuendo, and facetious tales. The most important single figure in this category is “Baron” Renton Nicholson (1809-61), whose Judge and Jury Trials were infamous throughout London. 2) *Night life guides*: This includes fiction written to introduce the general reading public to London, emphasizing its night life, from the highly popular music halls to the expensive brothels and gam-

bling dens. Also included here are reforming tracts, intended to warn the young and innocent from frequenting London's night places, and often attacking drink, gambling and loose living in general. Other works are simply descriptive journalism intended to inform by means of short fictionalized accounts of visits to famous, but socially remote, night spots, such as the East End's theatres. 3) *Ragged London*: This category includes the bulk of the journalistic accounts of London's poor, including down-and-outers, the disreputable, and the respectable poor. Many of these works focus on children and child labor, or on those obviously unable to survive the struggle for a livelihood in London's slums. The majority of these accounts also include some comment on recreational activities, including the music hall, theatres, pubs and trips out of London. 4) *Criminal London*: In contrast to category 1, this category includes accounts of outright criminal behavior and police activity. While virtually all of the authors purport to be reformers, like the editors of the journals purveying gossip and accounts of scandalous doings, they often emphasized the horrific and salacious over the improving aspects of their stories. This category also includes a good deal of popular ephemera—penny and two-penny broadsides and pamphlets describing famous murders, rapes, and trials. A small quantity of detective fiction and fictionalized autobiographies of detectives is also here. 5) *Reforming London*: This section focuses on reform books, in contrast to category 3, which includes books warning against the evils of night life. The bulk of this category includes mission works—accounts by and about city missionaries, attempting to bring the wayward back to Christianity, honesty, sobriety or other social virtues. A few books deal with prisoners and criminal-reform. A section on pros-

titution focuses on the Contagious Diseases Acts 1864, 1866 and 1869, and the agitation against them. Also in this category are descriptions of schemes for reforming prostitutes and training them for domestic service. The overwhelming majority of this material dates from the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and is part of the larger reform movements of the time. The best known book in this category is General William Booth's *In Darkest England and The Way Out* (1890), an account of the Salvation Army's work.

The audience for these works was very similar in many ways to those who bought and read books described in "picturesque London," though few of the books in this category were as expensive or as beautifully produced as some of the illustrated collections of views of London. Obviously certain works were available, and appealed to, a very limited audience. The readership of the fast-life guides must have been largely male, and mainly clandestine. The price, if not as high as that of eighteenth-century pornography or pictorial pronography, was often steep enough to exclude all but the wealthy. When material was priced at 6d. or lower, it was much more likely to be subject to legal prosecution. Quite frequently well-known publishers of erotica and gossip journals were arrested for publishing pornography. Adolphus Rosenberg, who published a variety of journals of gossip and "fast" fiction under titles such as *The Umpire*, *Town Tattler*, *Town Topics*, and *Tittle-Tattle*, repeatedly complained of legal harassment. Another common complaint of the publishers of this material was in regard to the difficulty of finding shops that would carry their publications on consignment. The shoddy paper used, and the familiar device of promising more than the contents delivered, also encouraged a limited

audience and a short life for these papers. At the other extreme, some popular fiction was read by hundreds of thousands. Even those who could not read had ample opportunities to hear serial fiction read aloud in pubs, kitchens and family rooms. The circulation of the most famous broadsides and pamphlets, recounting murders and trials, ran into the millions. G. W. M. Reynolds' *Mysteries of London* (1846-50) and *Mysteries of the Court of London* (1849-56) each sold over 200,000 copies in penny numbers. Reynolds is the most commonly mentioned author and publisher whenever popular fiction is mentioned in the nineteenth century. The Lilly collection includes a one-volume excerpted version of these two series; the complete versions are in the Main Library.

Between these two extremes most "dark London" literature was intended to reach a predominantly middle class and upper working-class audience. The very poor could not have afforded much beyond a penny pamphlet, and living conditions did not foster reading habits, even if such men and women wanted to read journalistic accounts of their lives. Popular fiction is rather scantily represented in the London collection. The focus, rather, is on journalistic accounts of low life—the journalist serves as an interpreter, exploring what George Gissing called "the nether region," and then returning to the respectable world to report on his findings. Even the reforming or admonitory works serve the purpose of interpreting an alien world to the ignorant. Indeed, some authors describe the evils of the music hall so glowingly that it is hard not to believe that the results were the opposite to those intended. The general perspective of the author is that of an expert reporting his findings on the "natives." Illustrations, anecdotes, conversations and

other devices are used to bring this world closer to the reader. However attractive or fearful it may be to both reader and author, it is an interpreted world that we see in print, and not an objective account of life in darkest London. The audience for this material was large, and remains so to this day. It was largely those with an interest in urban life, whether out of curiosity or fear, or reforming zeal, who wished to know and to experience more of and about their surroundings—the largest city in the world.

1. *Fast life guides*: A: *Guide books*: The majority of the fast-life guide books date from the first half of the century, and obviously come out of an eighteenth-century tradition of pornographic introductions to city life. Most are accompanied by at least one illustration, almost invariably of a half-dressed gentleman besieging the bed of a voluptuous prostitute. Many give addresses and names of the best brothels and most satisfying women. Information about gambling, thieves' argot, Judge and Jury clubs, poses plastiques and other titillating entertainments are also included. (A Judge and Jury Club involved dressing in costume, and carrying out mock-trials of the most famous contemporary "criminal conversation" cases; poses plastiques featured women and sometimes men in flesh-colored tights or semi-nude, in classical poses.) The very long titles best described the contents of such guides: "Jon Bee's" [John Badcock] *A Living Picture of London, and Stranger's Guide through the Streets of the Metropolis; Showing the Frauds, Arts, the Snares, and Wiles of All Descriptions of Rogues that Everywhere Abound with Suitable Admonitions, Precautions and Advice on How to Avoid, or Defeat their Attempts; Interspersed with Sketches of Cockney Manners, Life, Society and Customs; and Supported*

Throughout by Numerous Cases, Anecdotes and Personal Adventures (ca. 1828) is a more admonitory version of the guide book than most, but its moralizing information is couched in clearly pornographic terms. Bee argues in his preface that he detested “all attempts at teaching this most perilous of all worldly knowledge, by the machinery of ‘pretty novel’ or ‘amusing narrative,’ ” and had therefore told nothing but the bald truth. Defending himself against possible critics, he insists on his high principles in writing a guidebook, “the censor of scoundrels, the expositor of villainies, cannot be supposed capable of being conciliated by the filthy pretensions of him who dares to expect complacencies that belong only to the virtuous . . .” Bee’s elevated style and aggressive defense are characteristic of this genre.

The Hon. F. L. G. [F. Leveson Gower] published “for private circulation” *The Swell’s Night Guide through the Metropolis* (ca. 1840), warning in his introduction that the book “contains no lectures staid and starched, inserted as bugbears to frighten youth from participating in the good things of this world.” The hint of fear is frequently found in guidebooks—as great a fear as pick-pockets and thieves was venereal disease; virtually every author warned against it and had recommendations both for prevention and cure. “A Sporting Surgeon” in *Hints to Men About Town, or Waterfordiana* (ca. 1845-50) offered information on the cure and prevention of “venereal infection.” Gower prices accomodation houses at 5s. to £1, warning against giving money for information about a house, and recommending that the reader investigate before paying for services. The Lilly has several copies of *The Bachelor’s Guide to Life in London, with its Saloons, Clubs, Ball, Concert and Billiard Rooms, Theatres, Casinos, Comical Clubs, Exhibitions, Debating Societies, and All the Gaities that*

Possess "a Local Habitation and a Name;" Useful Sporting Information, Boxiana, Gymnasia, etc. To which Is Added a Select List of Celebrated Chop Houses, Wine and Supper Rooms, etc. etc., published at mid-century by "Ward's Readable Book Depot" for 7/6. The relatively cheap price of the book, and the long list of entertainments are important reminders that not all fast-life guidebooks were primarily introductions to brothels. They prided themselves in offering complete guides to all forms of "gaities."

Most guidebooks included a section called "Hints to Yokels," explaining the dangers of London life for the uninitiated, and including a glossary of thieves' and/or Cockney languages. Indeed, some specialized in introducing the reader to this argot, such as *The Flash Mirror; or Kiddy's Cabinet, Containing Amongst Many Other Rum Goes, a Famous Guide to All the Flash Houses, Meeting houses, Boozing Kens and Snoozing Kens in London*, by "A Regular Slangsmen" (ca. 1830), or *Yokel's Preceptor, or Joskin's Vocabulary, "A Flat's Ogle's Opened," Flying Kens and Flask Cribs of London*, "by a cove wot's seen a move or two" (1830's). George Cruikshank illustrated a rather pallid flash dictionary and guidebook, *Sinks of London Laid Open: A Pocket Companion for the Uninitiated, to which Is Added a Modern Flash Dictionary Containing All the Cant Words, Slang Turns and Flash Phrases Now in Vogue, with a List of the 60 Orders of Prime Coves* (1848). This form of guidebook became less common after 1850, and separated off into either pure pornography or into guidebooks emphasizing cant language and a more moralizing, fearful account of a thieves' London. These earlier books, in contrast, rarely show fear of London's darker side, despite numerous warnings against possible dangers; the gentleman-reader was presumed to be in control and to manage his affairs with a modicum of

good sense, even when drunk or in dishabille. If he were gulled, he should be careful to lose no more than he could afford.

B. *Fast life fiction*: Most of this fiction is frankly pornographic, playing upon a whole series of familiar themes, such as a hypocritical Jesuit and nun, in *Venus in the Cloister* (1839), or Spanish amours, in *The Cuckold*, or *Woman Unveiled* (n.d.) or *Horn Tales*; or *The Art of Cuckoldry Made Easy* (ca. 1810), or the revealing of a madame's secrets, usually coming from a well-known house, if not well-known person, as in the *Life of Mrs. Bertram*, or *Memoirs of Mother Bang* (ca. 1820) and "A Navel Officer's" account of *The Private Adventures of Mme. Vestris*, and *Mrs. Cornely's Entertainments at Carlisle House, Soho Square* (1840). There are several updates of and reprinted excerpts from John Cleland's *Fanny Hill* in the London collection. (Some of these excerpts were printed as pamphlets and are cited under various titles in a list of uncatalogued materials titled "London: Short Title List" that is available in the reading room of the Lilly Library.) There is also a series of "yellow back" double-columned paperbacks written in the style of G. W. M. Reynolds, with more lascivious and sensual descriptions, such as *The Outsiders of Society*; or, *The Wild Beauties of London* (ca. 1870), which is bound with Bracebridge Hemyng's *Women in London*, presumably published around the same date; *The Wild Boys of London*; or, *The Children of Night* (n.d.); *The Work Girls of London, their Trials and Temptations* (1865); *The Merry Wives of London, A Romance of Metropolitan Life* (n.d.), and "Lady Maude Annesley," *The Dashing Girls of London, or The Six Beauties of St. James* (n.d.). All of these sensual adventures include some account of thievery and illegal activities, showing the links between prostitution and crime as inevitable and yet still

enticing. Only *Fanny White and Her Friend Jack Rawlings: A Romance of a Young Lady Thief and a Boy Burglar* (ca. 1860) shifts the emphasis away from sex to crime, concluding with their end as the Earl of Stonecliffe and his lover. The fiction itself is simply a series of sexual or social adventures thinly tied together by a main character; the usual range of sexual activities are pursued, though few include scenes of male homosexuality, aside from *The Phoenix of Sodom, or, The Vere Street Coterie* (1813).

The London collection also contains two early-nineteenth-century periodicals which published pornography. There is a complete run of *The Rambler's Magazine; or, Fashionable Emporium of Polite Literature . . . the Gay Variety of Supreme Bon-Ton* (1822-23). *The Rambler's Magazine* emphasized fiction, and some of its contents often appeared in one or another kind of pornographic publication throughout the rest of the century. It was succeeded by the *New London Rambler's Magazine; or, Annals of Gallantry, Glee, Pleasure and Bon-Ton* (1828). Many advertisements of pornographic books and magazines, and some catalogues put out by publishers and booksellers of what they variously described as "select," "facetious," or "fast and funny" literature, are cited in the short-title list of uncatalogued materials in the London collection available in the reading room of the Lilly Library.

C. *Fast-life journalism*. Fast-life periodicals, usually weeklies that sold for a penny or two, were mixtures of guides to the carnal pleasures of the city, scurrilous gossip about prominent personages and obscure people identified only by their initials, sketches of individuals and types familiar in the town, sexually suggestive jokes, and nearly pornographic fiction. Usually they were illustrated by one or two woodcuts, almost always of an in-

nocuous scene sometimes made racy by a caption carrying sexual innuendo.

One of the most successful and best known of these journals was *The Town: A Journal of Original Essays, Characteristic of the Manners, Social, Domestic, and Superficial, of London and the Londoners*, a two-penny weekly published in the form of a newspaper from 1837 to 1842 (the Lilly holds the complete run). The owner and editor of *The Town* was Renton Nicholson, who was also the producer and principal performer of the Judge and Jury Society. (The Lilly also holds copies of Nicholson's *Autobiography of a Fast Man*, published in 1863, and of his *Sketches of Celebrated Characters, and Key to the Judge and Jury Society* [1844?].) Like one of its contemporaries, *The Crim.-Con. Gazette* (1838-40) (in its late numbers its title was *The Bon-Ton Gazette*), of which the Lilly has a complete file (82 numbers), *The Town* pretended to the classical role of the reforming satirist. "We are the good genii of London," Nicholson wrote in the first number of *The Town*, "the great moral reformer of men and manners." The *Gazette* specified as one of its purposes "to arrest as much as possible the progress of aristocratic vice and debauchery," and both journals sometimes seem to show a political bias in their attention to scandalous gossip about royalty and the aristocracy. Both also occasionally published exposés of such practices as false advertising and the marketing of spoiled meat, and *The Town* published attacks on the police, the courts, baby farming, and other institutions that harassed and outraged ordinary citizens. But it is hard to imagine anyone reading *The Town* or *The Crim.-Con. Gazette* for moral improvement or political and social enlightenment. What matters in the first is the gossip, and in the second the accounts of scandalous court cases. To these features were added reviews of

plays and “harmonic evenings” at pubs and free-and-easies, descriptions of gambling houses and brothels, and sketches of actresses, police officers, prostitutes, sportsmen, and the pretty women who run cigar shops—all written up in the mock elevations and knowing tone made popular by Pierce Egan and intended to make readers feel that they are not just learning about but also participating in the fast life.

The London collection includes a bound volume of numbers of each of several imitations of *The Town: Sam Sly, or, The Town* (1848-49); *Paul Pry, The Reformer of the Age* (1848-49); and *The Peeping Tom, Wit, Fun, and Facetia* [sic] (ca. 1850). Each sold for a penny and was published a weekly newspaper, except for *Peeping Tom*, published in quarto after its first numbers because “There is a feeling in all minds, that the subjects discussed . . . are not of the evanescent nature which characterizes our contemporaries.” Although all these journals published gossip, there is a drift perceptible in them toward the publication of fiction and other features and away from reports about the current events in the town. When *The Town* itself was revived in 1849-50, it no longer published gossip, but only sketches and serials (“Mrs. Lorimer Spinks, the Married Lady Who Was a Little Too Gay”). This formula was continued in *The Fast Man* (1850), which published accounts of trials for incest along with its serials (“Miss Lavendar Miffs, . . . by the author of Mrs. Lorimer Spinks”).

This change in the journalism of the fast life is also apparent in the equivalents of these periodicals published in the 1860’s and after. The format now was usually that of a magazine, like *Punch* and other comic weeklies. The tradition of satire that reforms was recalled in the titles of many of these papers: *The Showman*

(1860's); *The Castigator: A Journal of Politics and Guardian of Public Interests* (1860's); *Lucifer, or, The London Lamplighter* (1875); *The London Peep Show: Truths about Men and Women As They Are* (1879); *Sound Sense; Is the Talk of the Town and the Reformer of Abuses* (1879); *The Hot Member* (later *The New Babylon*; 1880); *The Rod* (1881); *Men and Manners: A Satirical and Critical Journal* (1893). (Most of these journals are cited in the short-title list of uncataloged material in the London collection.) The London collection contains only an issue or two of each of these journals, and it is therefore difficult to know whether they lived up to the fearful promise of some of their names. *The Day's Doings*, a three-penny weekly published in the 1870's and apparently revived in 1881 (the Lilly holds the first number of 1881 volume), attained notoriety by publishing gossip about the sexual liaisons of the Prince of Wales, an irreverence beyond those usually attempted in these journals. *Town Talk*, published and edited by Adolphus Rosenberg (1878-85)—the Lilly holds about forty numbers, most of them from the early years of its run—frequently published complaints that its vendors were harassed by authorities who thought the publication obscene. Rosenberg also published *Rosenberg's Little Journal, Independent and Plain Speaking* (1886-87), *Tittle Tattle* (1888), and *Town Topics* (1894)—the Lilly holds some issues of each of these journals—and did eventually go to jail for libel. But the gossip of most of these journals does not seem much different from that published in society papers given to news about fashionable life that was popular in the 1860's and after, and the rest of their content seems miscellaneous and spiritless: attacks on easy targets like money lenders, some illustrations exposing female legs, some fiction, and sometimes theatre, police, or sports news.

It is certainly wrong to take the relatively bland tone and unfocused interests of these journals as evidence that the nocturnal pleasures of London in the second half of the century were more staid and less available than those of the city during the Regency and early Victorian decades. It is more likely that changes in manners, and the enforcement of laws like the Obscene Publications Act of 1857—probably prosecuted more rigorously, as Rosenberg often complained, against cheap than against expensive books and periodicals—assured that the fast life of the city was celebrated differently, in the innocent exuberance of music-hall songs like “Champagne Charlie,” for example (copies are in the Starr collection in the Lilly). Its journalism also suggests that the character of fast life itself did change in the second half of the century, becoming not more staid but less coherent and more furtive than the realm which in the years of Pierce Egan and Renton Nicholson seems to be a distinct precinct of the city to be openly visited and enjoyed by young men, and by middle-aged men trying to recover the pleasures of youth.

2. *Night-Life guides*. The line drawn between “night-life” and fast-life guides is a fine one, but generally speaking, “night-life” guides have been defined as accounts of various London amusements, rather than descriptions that focus on sexual scenes and the demi-monde. The night-life guides are to legal places, with an emphasis upon—once again—the safety of the reader, and his concomitant enjoyment. The chief progenitor of this form is Pierce Egan and his *Life in London* (1821), popularly known as “Tom and Jerry,” describing Corinthian Tom’s introduction of his country-cousin, Jerry Hawthorne, to the sights of London. Egan wrote a play, and a

sequel, *Finish to the Adventures of Tom, Jerry and Logic* (1830), and numerous imitators published similar tales. The format of showing a greenhorn around the city had been used many times before, but the particular combination of the Cruikshank brothers' illustrations, thieves' slang, descriptions of actual places (Covent Garden, Astley's, thieves' dens, etc.), an oblique treatment of sex and a light-hearted view of danger, made the formula particularly attractive in the early nineteenth century. The Lilly has several versions of "Tom and Jerry," including five plays, and *Real Life in London* (1821-22), a two-volume account of Tom Dashall and Bob Tallyho, "Exhibiting a Living Picture of Fashionable Character, Manners, and Amusements by an Amateur," complete with illustrations of a generally inferior quality. Other similar titles include *Life in the West, or The Curtain Drawn, by a Flat Enlightened* (1828), Alfred Thornton's, *Don Juan; Volume The Second, . . . Containing Sketches, Scenes, Conversations, and Anecdotes of the Last Importance to Families, and Men of Rank, Fashion, and Fortune, Founded on Facts, Containing His Life in London, Or, A True Picture of the British Metropolis* (1822), *The Confessions of a Gamester* (1824) and Charles Malloy Westmacott's *Mammon in London* (1823). By the mid-century Egan's gay bachelors on a spree were transformed into heroes cast into the dangerous and uncontrollable world of G. W. M. Reynolds' *Mysteries of London* and *Mysteries of the Court of London*. The earnest, innocent (and passive) hero is propelled through an extraordinarily large number of mishaps before finally finding financial and matrimonial bliss—but evil always lurks at the periphery, to titillate and frighten readers.

London as a marvelous, exotic, but basically unthreatening place of pleasure did not survive long as a popular image. Only the wealthy Bohemians of the late

nineteenth century could afford to live in such a city, and by concentrating on the theatre and popular entertainment world, they thrive as commentators on Bohemia—often seen as bygone days. A very chic, late example of this format is Ralph Nevill's *Night Life in London and Paris* (1926). Little of the salacious or illicit is found in such accounts as Arthur a'Beckett's *London at the End of the Century: A Book of Gossip* (1900), *London in the Sixties* (ca. 1914) by "One of the Old Brigade" [Donald Shaw], Arthur Ransome's *Bohemia in London* (1907), the wife of a leading theatre producer, Mrs. Margaret Clement Scott's *Old Days in Bohemian London* (1919), and John Hollingshead's many publications on his life as a theatre director and manager. This world was safe in its raffishness because it was primarily concerned with the entertainment world, with its rapidly developing system of stars, agents and mass audiences, rather than the joint worlds of crime and pleasure.

While accounts of Bohemia written by its members seem exceptionally numerous, large numbers of admonitory books appear to have been written, particularly during the years 1850-70, when the theatres and music halls were beginning to gain a mass audience of single men looking for cheap and relatively safe entertainment. Hundreds of cheap songbooks were printed, often claiming to contain all the latest songs sung at some of the more famous night spots, such as the songster sold at *Evans's Supper and Music Rooms, Covent Garden* (n.d. [1871]) (other songsters are cited in the short-title list of catalogued material in the London collection.) The many volumes warning the young include [Margaret Eloise Harkness], *Tempted London: Young Men* (1888), and *Toilers in London, or Inquiries Concerning Female Labour in the Metropolis* (1889); Robert Machray's *Night Side of London*

(1902); and J. Ewing Ritchie's *Days and Nights in London; or, Studies in Black and Gray* (1880). The subtitle "Black and Gray" gives some indication of the changed tone of journalists exploring the night life of London; its dangers were more forceful than its pleasures for most by the 1880's, unless one stayed within the confines of the legal theatre and halls.

During this period the three major journalists to introduce dark London to a wider reading public were James Greenwood (1832-1929), George Augustus Sala (1828-96), and John Hollingshead (1827-1904), all reputable journalists who also were well known as commentators on picturesque London. Greenwood wrote a series of tales about Ratcliffe Highway's thieves, *Low-Life Deeps: An Account of the Strange Fish to be found there* (1876); an account of working-class recreations and day-trips, *In Strange Company* (1874); an exposé *A Night in the Workhouse* (1866); and a foray into the slums, *Journeys through London; or Byways of Modern London* (1873). Sala preferred the more picturesque aspects of London, giving an aura of romance to his descriptions of life among the poor, or the Bohemian, as in *London Up to Date* (1894), an account of London's latest conveniences, and a series of *Echoes of the Year* during the 1880's, presenting dramatic, social, political, sporting, legal, and literary events, reprinted from his articles of the previous year. Sala, at the other end of the scale from Egan, shades into the picturesque, with an emphasis upon curiosities rather than adventures. John Hollingshead, a man of many worlds, combined a career in the theatre, a close association with Charles Dickens through *Household Words*, and a reputation as a Bohemian. *Under Bow Bells: A City Book for All Readers* (1860) and *Rubbing the Gilt Off: A West End Book for All Readers* (1860) are typical of his collections of essays,

drawn largely from *Household Words*, and emphasizing the more picturesque elements of London life. His *Ragged London in 1861* (1861), based on letters originally published in the *Morning Post* under the title "London Horrors," describes the plight of the underemployed slum dwellers—numbering some million—in London, is similar to other reforming works published under category 3. Always one to find some part of London worth writing about, particularly in the scramble to earn a good living, Hollingshead also wrote a popular account of London's burgeoning system of sewers, water and gas supplies, *Underground London* (1862). The scope of the works written by these three men, without mentioning their theatre writings, is indicative of how wide a net popular journalists cast in their efforts to find amusing subjects for their readers.

3. *Ragged London*. Most of the authors in this category exhibit a reforming zeal characteristic of mid-Victorian England, but few had any practical solutions, though the Peabody Trust trumpeted its successes in establishing grim, prison-like model houses, in *Mr. Peabody's Gift to the Poor of London* (1865). The nature of this material—the outsider looking in, appalled and frightened by the enormity of what he finds—is well expressed by two of the most famous mid-century tracts, Thomas Beames' *The Rookeries of London: Past, Present and Prospective* (1850) on St. Giles and Bermondsey, and George Godwin's *Town Swamps and Social Bridges* (1850), describing, with numerous engravings, the conditions of housing and the entertainments of the poor. Child employment, unemployment and housing are the three areas most often discussed, with the highly visible housing of the slums taking precedence among reforming journal-

ists, with such titles as Godwin's *Another Blow for Life* (1864), Ellen Barlee's *Our Homeless Poor and What We Can Do to Help Them* (1860), Octavia Hill's *Home of the London Poor* (1875), Richard Rowe's *Life in the London Streets; or, Struggles for Daily Bread* (1881), which draws from current fiction, and uses Cockney dialect, and *The Great Army of London Poor* (ca. 1880), by "The River-side Visitor." The criminal and destitute were examined, along with their more honest peers, in John Garwood's *The Million-peopled City; or, One-half of the People of London Made Known to the Other Half* (1853), which describes London juveniles, the Irish, Chelsea pensioners, omnibus drivers, and the criminal class; and in the more narrowly defined *Our Plague Spot: In Connection with Our Polity and Usages* (1859) on the dangers of venereal disease and the problems of training women in proper employment. The London collection also contains an original edition of Henry Mayhew's ground-breaking study, *London Labour and the London Poor: A Cyclopaedia of the Conditions and Earnings of Those that Will Work, Those that Cannot Work and Those that Will Not Work* (1861-62). Originally published in the *Morning Chronicle* during the years 1849-51, and then as a two-penny weekly during 1851-52, this four-volume study remains the finest and most complete study of the London poor at mid-century. The illustrations, detailed recreations of conversations, and endless statistics add up to an unforgettable picture of the London poor struggling to survive.

From the 1880's more "scientific" studies of the poor proliferated, beginning with Charles Booth's pioneering *Condition and Occupations of the People of the Tower Hamlets, 1886-87* (1887), leading to Frank Hird's *The Cry of the Children: An Exposure of Certain British Industries in which Children are Iniquitously Employed* (2nd ed., 1898) and

three socialist-oriented accounts, *The Poor in Great Cities, Their Problems and What is Being Done to Solve Them* (1896), by Robert Woods, *et. al.*, Robert Blatchford's *Dismal England* (1899), and Edward G. Howarth and Mona Wilson, *West Ham: A Study in Social and Industrial Problems* (1907). The Lilly also has the seventeen-volume edition of Charles Booth's *Life and Labour of the People of London* (1902, 1903). Alongside these studies the more traditional curiosity-seeking journalism continued to thrive, with such publications as Philip Davis' *Street-land: Its Little People and Big Problems* (1915), Montagu Williams' *Round London, Down East and Up West* (1893), Marjory Hardcastle's *Halfpenny Alley* (1913), the outcome of six years of nursing in the East End of London, and Mrs. Cecil Chesterton's [Ada Elizabeth Jones] *In Darkest London* (1926), a fascinating account of how down-and-out women survive, written by a woman who herself lived among deserted, unemployed and unemployable women for several months at Salvation Army hostels, common lodging houses and other less savory places. B.S. Townroe's *The Slum Problems* (1928) contains a general description of nineteenth-century slums.

B. *Fiction*. Interesting though the early sociological and journalistic accounts of ragged London may be, late-nineteenth-century fiction should not be neglected. The works of Edwin Pugh, Arthur Morrison, and others brought a new advance in naturalistic fiction. The best-known works were Morrison's *Tales of Mean Streets* (1894) and *Child of the Jago* (1896), Edwin Pugh's *Tony Drum, A Cockney Boy* (1898), and A. St. John Adcock's *East End Idylls* (1897). Lesser-known works include James Greenwood's *The Little Ragamuffins: or, Outcast London: A Story of the Sorrows and Sufferings of the Poor* (1884), and Tag, Rag & Co.: *Sketches of the People* (1883). Watts Phillips' *The Wild*

Tribes of London (1855) is a fictionalized account of life in “the depths,” and reads like a combination of the sensationalism of Reynolds and the naturalism of Morrison. The Lilly’s selection of fiction is spotty, but most of these novels had very small runs, and unless a writer had a previous reputation as a journalist, interest in fiction descriptive of the poor waxed and waned with contemporary social and political concerns. No continuous history of social-realism fiction sustained an author, but instead he drew inspiration from the journalism of the explorers of slums.

4. *Criminal London*. The Lilly’s collection of books on crime is rather more limited than its fast-life material, and most of it shades into “ragged London” in its description of the life of the very poor co-mingling with that of the thieves and prostitutes of the neighborhood. Aside from *The Elegant Sharper; or, The Science of Villainy display’d* (1804), by “Peter Pindar, Jun.” [C.F. Lawler] and the virulent Robert Mudie, in *London and Londoners: or, A Second Judgment of Babylon The Great* (2nd. ed., 1836), virtually all the books, pamphlets, and broadsides on London crime date from 1850 to 1935, with the bulk from 1870-1900. A popular form of memoirs from the late nineteenth century was the detective’s—a figure that did not even exist in the first part of the century. Superintendent James Bent’s *Criminal Life: Reminiscences of Forty-two Years as a Police Officer* (1891), Sargeant B. Leeson’s *Lost London: The Memoirs of an East End Detective* (1934), George Hodder’s *Sketches of Life and Character taken at the Police Court* (1845; originally published in the *Morning Herald*) and several books by “Waters” [William Russell], such as *Recollections of a Detective Police Officer*

(1st. ser. 1856; 2nd. ser. 1859) and *Traditions of London* (1859), are examples of this genre.

A number of more enterprising journalists wrote about the world of thieves in a style similar to the accounts of Greenwood, Hollingshead and Sala about ragged London. Bart Kennedy's *London in Shadow* (1902) contains brief sketches of strikes, crowds, dock life, and the music hall, in addition to scenes of crime. *The Life and Adventures of a Social Wastrel: a Story of Real Life* (1875) is a fictionalized tale of an educated hunchback who makes his way as a tramp. Despite repeated efforts to find respectable employment or emigrate, he is continually forced on the tramp; one moderately successful venture was the writing of broadside verse. This rather mawkish tale represents a typical transitional view of the poor—the hunchback's parents are blamed for his fate, and a gentle-born hero is made as sympathetic as possible. But the insoluble problems of the poor are also described.

Later works frequently emphasized the plight of an individual, in an effort to personalize and make more manageable the overwhelming scale of London's ragged and criminal classes. Efforts were made consistently to contain the fears of readers, and to offer some explanation of the lives of the underclass. Rarely do we find a larger social analysis of the sources of criminality, though most explanations do show a conjunction of poor housing, poor education, and few if any job opportunities. The more colorful aspects of crime were minimized by the investigatory journalists, despite their plentiful use of anecdote; only cheaper, fictional forms of reportage emphasized bloody murders, sexual perversities, or exotic thieveries. One exception to this generalization is D. Moirer Evans' *Facts, Failures and Frauds: Revelations Financial, Mercantile, Criminal* (1859), a long and detailed

account of the “high art” of large-scale financial swindles. Ironically, Evans himself went bankrupt in 1873 and died the next year.

Many reporters of criminal London were reformers, and some wrote for specific organizations, such as the Howard Association (prison reform), or the various organizations against the Contagious Diseases Acts (see 5 below). “A Prison Matron” [Frederick William Robinson] wrote *Female Life in Prison* (1862) and *Memoirs of Jane Cameron, Female Convict* (1864), two detailed accounts of daily prison life, and *Prison Characters Drawn From Life* (1866), all advocating moderate suggestions for reform. *Whitecross and the Bench: A Reminiscence of the Past by the Author of Five Years’ Penal Servitude* (1879) gives details of sponging houses, street prisons, prison charities, rules of the bench, etc. Francis Peek, chairman of the Howard Association, wrote an attack on socialism, with suggestions of alternative reforms in *The Workless, The Thriftless and the Worthless* (1888); the title itself indicates his own rather mixed approach to those he was attempting to assist. Thomas Holmes, a later secretary of the Association, wrote *London’s Underworld* (1912). T. Whyte Mountain, of a new generation of journalists, contributed *Life in London’s Great Prisons* (1930). The most important study on Victorian prisons, however, in the London collection is probably the pioneering *The Criminal Prisons of London and Scenes of Prison Life*, by Henry Mayhew and John Binny (1862), with numerous illustrations. The Lilly also has a number of recent secondary sources on crime, which supplement the rather incomplete primary documents.

B. *Broadsides and street literature*. The London collection contains several hundred broadsides, ballads, cartoons (sometimes called “wall-papers”) and pamphlets,

most of them published in the 1860's and 1870's, that were sold for a penny or two on the streets. (Most of these items are cited in the list of uncatalogued material available in the reading room of the Lilly.) The subjects of this street literature were often crime, disaster, and (less often) the scandals and dangers of the fast life of London. The Tichborne trials of the 1870's, for example, engendered a variety of publications sold on the streets: ballads; pamphlets about the claimant, his counsel Kenealy, and the trial itself; lithographed cartoons; mock playbills, auction bills, advertisements, and reward posters; and the *Tichborne Times* and the *Tichborne News*, journals published to raise money for the claimant's legal expenses. The Mordaunt divorce case, in which the Prince of Wales was involved, is chronicled in several street ballads and pamphlets in the London collection. So is a curious case of transvestism ("The Funny He-She Ladies"); an "alleged disgusting indecent outrage" attempted by one Colonel Baker upon a respectable female in a railway carriage; the trial and execution of the criminal Charles Peace; and such sensational murders of the 1860's and 1870's as the Bravo case (poisoning), the Whitechapel mystery (dismemberment), and the Penge murder (the starvation of a young woman). The collection also includes issues of the *Police News*, the *Illustrated Police Budget*, *Police News Miscellany*, the *London Clipper*, the *Weekly Star*, *Sensation*, *The World We Live In*, the *World's Doings*, and *Penny Pictorial News and Family Story Paper*, all of them penny journals, most of them published in the 1860's and 1870's, and all of them featuring accounts of murder and divorce trials, train- and ship-wrecks, earthquakes, and other sensational disasters.

By the 1860's the popularity of street ballads and broadsides among the working classes of the city was

yielding before the growth of cheap daily and weekly newspapers. The ballads and broadsides in the London collection show, however, that the variety of topics treated in these forms was still extensive in the 1860's and 1870's. Street singers still sold ballads attributed to criminals on the eve of their executions, comic songs ("Tommy, Make Room for Your Uncle"), sentimental songs (" 'Twas Rank and Fame That Tempted Thee"), patriotic songs ("Lines on the Zulu War"), songs about nautical disasters, and songs taken over from the minstrel shows and now, in the 1860's some of the early music-hall performers. A few of the street broadsides and cartoons are political, some of them in forms popular since the beginning of the century ("The New Litany for 1871"; "A Dish of Facts and Scraps, or, a Touch at the Times"). There are broadsides attacking Gladstone ("return to your duty . . . or prepare to be sent to the imbecile ward of our nearest Union. Look out, Billy, I am not joking") and street cartoons attacking Disraeli. There are complaints about laws that limit Sunday trading and about taxes on beer and matches. There are cartoons attacking the Prince of Wales, ritualists, police brutality, Bismarck, the Pope, and nearly all other foreign powers, and there are ballads praising the Queen's visit to Whitechapel and the marriage of one of the royal princesses to a Briton, for a change. The collection also includes a remarkable street ballad mocking Darwin's ideas ("Dr. Darwin"), a curious and compelling "wall-paper" from the *Police News Miscellany* depicting various ways to die ("The Dance of Death"), and a colored cartoon which questions whether a Britain corrupted by scandal and sensation has the right to rule India and the pious institutions of its culture ("The Anglo-Indian Juggernaut").

The pamphlets included in this part of the London collection, and probably sold on the streets as well as through newsagents, are similarly various in their topics. Some purport to be exposés and warnings about the fast life of the city. These pamphlets range from variations on classic themes—*Crimes of the Aristocracy*, by a *Discharged Footman*; *Life in London*, by a *Town Traveller*; *The Modern Fanny Hill*—to more topical subjects: *A Story of the Argyll Rooms*, *Told By One Who Has Fallen*; *From the Rink to the Brink*; or, *Vice and Its Victims*, the latter a cautionary tale about skating rinks. There are several pamphlets and cartoons about Brigham Young, all of them amused by the domestic arrangements of polygamy. The visit of the Shah of Persia to London was the occasion for the publication of several short biographies of the Shah, and the Eastern question was considered in several cartoons and pamphlets about Turkish atrocities. There are also pamphlets revealing Popish plots and the Prince of Wales' debts, reprintings of Mother Shipton's prophecies, guides to the interpretation of dreams, and the famous and extremely interesting exposition of the means of birth control, *The Fruits of Philosophy* (first published in the 1830's), by the American Charles Knowlton, along with a reply, *The Fruits of Philosophy for Both Sexes*, which enlists the wisdom of the "Chinese Bible" in a refutation.

In sum, this small but representative collection of mid-century street literature testifies that its urban, mostly working-class and lower-middle-class audiences were fascinated by crime, disaster, and intimations of scandal and vice, especially among the respectable middle classes and an aristocracy still imagined as licentious. More important, the variety of topics and tones in this literature of the streets testifies again to the complexity of the city and responses to it. In this material, we can guess

at the tough, skeptical, truculent, insular, witty, sentimental sensibilities of some of the people who lived in districts and were at home in streets that were described by others, accurately but incompletely, as dark and vicious.

5. *Reforming London*. Obviously much of the journalism described in categories 3 and 4 could as easily be placed under 5, although most of it was not primarily interested in seeing specific reforms, but rather in emphasizing the necessity of some kind of reform. The books discussed in this category, however, are primarily about social evils and how to cure them—or, at times, how no cure appears possible. The majority are religiously based, and most often the author has had specific experience in a Christian “mission” to the slums of London. A. D. S.’s *Ups and Downs of a Blue Coat Boy* (ca. 1880) is the only reforming book in the Sadleir collection primarily dedicated to temperance and the evils of “foul drink.” Typical of the reformers’ work is John Blackmore’s *The London By Moonlight Mission: Being an Account of Midnight Cruises on the Streets of London* (1860). Blackmore was a Christian rescue worker among prostitutes, pickpockets and street thieves, who founded “Female Temperance Homes and Dormitories” for the homeless. Between 1853, when he began, and 1 January 1860, Blackmore helped 3,180 women in three separate missions. Of these, 474 were “restored to their parents and friends”; 733 were sent into service; 93 emigrated; 78 married; 15 were placed in business; 1,305 received “temporary assistance”; and 47 were still in the homes. Those who stayed for re-training stayed an average of nine months; obviously the majority could only be assisted for a brief period of time. Blackmore’s mission was

a small enough effort, given the few that could be served, but it was one solution to the crying need for cheap housing in London, so amply demonstrated by the books described in category 3.

James Dunn's solution in *Modern London: Its Sins and Woes and the Sovereign Remedy* (1906) was to take Christianity to the slums. Unfortunately, there is ample evidence of the failures of this remedy, as documented by Richard Free, an East End clergyman, in *Seven Years Hard* (1904), Canon Arthur Jephson of Southwark, in *My Work in London* (1910) (Jephson was the model for the vicar in Morrison's *Child of the Jago*), Rev. James Yeames in *Life in London Alleys* (n.d.), and by "A Travelling Correspondent" in *The Rev. William Cuff in Shoreditch: Realistic Sketches of East London Life and Work* (1878). Alexander Paterson, an elementary school teacher, came to many of the same conclusions as the religious in *Across the Bridges, or Life by the South London River-side* (1911), though he felt more confident about the ultimate benefits of education, and emphasized the strength of working-class families, and their good-hearted generosity instead of the grimmer aspects of slum life.

All of these works were clearly aimed at a middle-class religious audience, and indeed, Charles Bosanquet wrote a guide to "the numerous ways" middle-class newcomers, especially from the professional classes, could join organizations to help the poor. His optimism in *London: Some Account of Its Growth, Charitable Agencies, and Wants* (1869) is echoed in L. N. R.'s *The Missing Link, or Bible-Women in the Homes of the London Poor* (1860), describing outreach work to the "sunken sixth." A dabbler in reform, Olive Christian Malvery, wrote *The Soul Market* (3rd. ed., 1907) about her work among poor women, including an interesting account of dressing as a flower

girl to experience street-selling life. Her work, however, had little reference to specific organizations, and it is difficult to see what she accomplished. In contrast, the London City Mission had a long and honorable history of offering aid to all sorts of men and women, as recounted by R.W. Vanderkiste in *Notes and Narratives of a Six Years' Mission, Principally among the Dens of London* (1854), and John Matthias Weylland's two volumes, *Round the Tower; or, the Story of the London City Mission* (2nd ed., ca. 1874), and *These Fifty Years, being the Jubilee Volume of the London City Mission* (1884). The best seller of all was, of course, General William Booth's *In Darkest London and the Way Out* (1890), offering a religious and social solution to the poverty of London. Two books on the East End Jews are also part of this collection, C. Russell and H.S. Lewis, *The Jew in London* (1901) and J.H. Stallard, *London Pauperism Among Jews and Christians* (1867).

B. *Reforming prostitution*. Ordinarily this subject would not be given a special category, and would be more suited for either category 1 or 4, but Sadleir collected a substantial number of books and pamphlets on the agitation against the white slave trade, reforming homes for prostitutes, and general discussions of the problems of this social evil. In contrast to the novels and accounts discussed in category 1, few of these documents attempt to present the viewpoint of the prostitute herself, and most are chiefly concerned with reforming the prostitute, and seeking changes in the laws. James Greenwood, ever alert to the social problems of the day, wrote a series of articles, *The Seven Curses of London* (1869), discussing baby farming, pauper children, training thieves as in *Oliver Twist*, and—of course—prostitution. More characteristic, however, of this reforming journalism are such works as *The New Clarissa: A Story of the White Slave Trade of*

the Nineteenth Century (1885, translated from French), A. Arthur Reade, *The Tragedy of the Streets* (Manchester, 1912), and Henry Gladwyn Jebb, *Out of the Depths: The Story of a Woman's Life* (1859), and *Female Sorrow: or, The Lives and Adventures of Four Unfortunate Women of the Town* (18—?). More sociological studies include Ralph Wardlaw's *Lectures on Female Prostitution; Its Nature, Extent, Effects, Guilt, Causes and Remedy* (Glasgow, 1843), *A Life-Long Story: or, Am I My Sister's Keeper? Facts and Phases for the Times* (1859), "dedicated to the Women of England by one of themselves," C. J. Lecour, *La prostitution à Paris et à Londres, 1789-1870* (Paris, 1870), and Ellice Hopkins, *Work Among the Lost* (1878), about the Albion Hill Home in Brighton for reforming prostitutes through a two-year program involving virtual imprisonment during a period of probation.

The most sensational aspects of the "white slave trade" after the revelations of W. T. Stead in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1885, concerning the purchase of a bona fide virgin girl of less than 12 years for £5, made for many popular accounts and tales. A special supplement of the *Pall Mall Gazette's* "Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon," plus reports of the trial of Stead, and a translation into French of the articles (*Les Scandales de Londres dévoilés par la Pall Mall Gazette* [1885]) are in the Sadleir collection. In addition, there are Alfred Stace Dyer, *The European Slave Trade in English Girls: A Narrative of Facts* (1880; 9th ed., 1885), *The Story of a Terrible Life: The Amazing Career of A Notorious Procureess*, set down by Basil Tozer (1929), and W. N. Willis, *The White Slaves of London* (1912). Interest in the white-slave trade was obviously generated by newspaper revelations of daughters of the middle class being abducted by false promises to brothels in Brussels (the scene of one of Mrs. Warren's houses in Shaw's *Mrs.*

Warren's *Profession* 1898); the total number of women who were actually part of this kind of prostitution was very small, but their plight was more interesting than of the thousands of poor women who plied their trade each night on the streets of London.

Pamphlets on the Contagious Diseases Acts (1866-69) have been collected together and are in the list of uncatalogued material available in the reading room of the Lilly. Other material on Josephine Butler is scanty, but available in the main library, though a few of her pamphlets are included in the above collection. A related work in this area is *Our Plague Spot: In Connection with our Polity and Usages as Regards Our Women, Our Soldiers and the Indian Empire* (1859). The reforming zeal of those wishing to end prostitution did not usually find an outlet in seeking wider employment opportunities for women, so perhaps it was inevitable that with the passage of laws raising the age of consent from twelve to sixteen, the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts and the tightening of international laws in regard to women, much of the reforming impulse had spent itself. But, in the process of reform, the vital principle of the Salvation Army had been established, that "the fallen woman is a sister to be saved, rather than a sinner to be punished."

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