

A CAUTIONARY TALE:
STOP-PRESS CORRECTION IN *THE*
RECOLLECTIONS OF GEOFFRY HAMLYN (1859)

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Work for the first critical edition in the Academy Editions of Australian Literature series, *The Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn* by Henry Kingsley,¹ unexpectedly revealed – at the last moment – a hidden textual state of one octavo gathering (signature C) in Volume I of the three-volume first English edition published by Macmillan and printed by Richard Clay in 1859. Herein lies a cautionary tale, but the background needs to be filled in before it can be appreciated.

In the absence of any manuscript or proof material, the only states of the text relevant to the critical edition were represented by those editions produced in Kingsley's lifetime: the Macmillan first edition of 1859 (hereafter *E1*), the Ticknor and Fields first US edition (1859 – *A1*), Macmillan's second edition in one volume (1860 – *E2*), a Continental edition by Tauchnitz (1864) and a serialisation in the *Australian Town and Country Journal* (1870–71). These editions were computer-collated, and later impressions of *A1* and *E2* were optically collated against their first impression.

Approximately 10,000 variants were revealed by the computer-collations alone. We felt at that stage that we had more than enough to deal with, especially considering that before we had started nobody had realised there were any textual problems with the novel at all. The major contribution of the critical edition had been predicted to be one of annotation.

There had already been one alarm. Virginia Blain, a member of the Academy Editions Editorial Board, discovered a review of *E1* that quoted wording – undoubtedly authorial – not in that or any other edition.² It came from the only chapter of which Kingsley is known to have called for revise proof ('The Golden Vineyard'); evidently the printer had used discarded first proof to make up a review copy.³ That alarm satisfactorily explained, other checks were necessitated when John Holroyd informed me that he possessed a copy of *E1* that, he believed, contained some unique readings. The problem turned out not to be linked to that of the review copy.

The copy of *E1* used for computer collation⁴ was thereupon optically collated against his copy (previously owned by K. F. Bell). This copy had been the subject of a note by E. Morris Miller in *Biblionews*⁵ in 1952 after misprints in it were found not to be present, or to differ from those, in two other copies, one owned by J. K. Moir (now in the Moir Collection, State Library of Victoria) and one then owned by Miller. For the critical edition, nine copies were then checked for the ten printing errors identified by the optical collation

and Miller's note.⁶ The errors appear to have been caused by the printing process: types either not printing through poor inking or loss (particularly noticeable on the edges of pages), or shifting slightly because of loose justification and, in three cases, allowing spaces to lift and print.⁷

We thought we had done enough. It came as a surprise then, and not a pleasant one, when, soon after starting the oral collation of the first proofs of the critical edition's reading text (based on *E1*) against a newly acquired copy of *E1* in the ADFA Library, seven readings not in the NLA or Holroyd copies were discovered in the ADFA copy. The variants were noted in the second gathering of textual material we checked – signature C in Volume I (pp.17–32). They were clearly intentional corrections, unlike the ones we had already dealt with in the copies of *E1*. These new variants involved a spelling correction, changes in punctuation, word-division and the transposition of words.⁸ Were other signatures with such variation lying in wait? Even worse, would we find evidence that Kingsley had intervened during the printing? The awful spectre of classic stop-press correction, whether by the author or the press-corrector, loomed as a possible explanation of what we had already discovered, potentially laying waste to the apparatus of the critical edition now in proof – an apparatus of more than 2,500 entries!

With bated breath, I ordered the optical collation of the three volumes of the NLA copy of *E1* (the basis of our computer collation) against the ADFA and NLA Ferguson copies.⁹ The Holroyd copy had already been collated. The newly discovered variants did not appear in these copies, and – fortunately – no other sheets showed any evidence of intentional textual variation. The spectre subsided. Why then was the correction so localised? Our conclusion was finally that the variants were the end-result of a mishap during the printing of the inner forme of sig. C, even though they all occur on the outer forme (pp.17, 21, 24, 25, 28). We came to this conclusion by considering the report of changes identified by the optical collations – changes which the oral collation of the ADFA copy against our proofs had not identified and could not identify.

A weakness evidently occurred when the 'd.' in 'promoted.' in a midline position on p.18 dislodged during printing (the NLA copy has it; the NLA Ferguson and Holroyd lack it; I.18, l.4; 24:30).¹⁰ The trouble must have spread, leading to the removal of the inner forme from the press and the resetting of much of p.18 and some of p.22 (the ADFA copy has some different lineation here, and the 'd.' is restored).¹¹ The resetting occurred without textual change, and thus the oral collation had not identified it (our proofs were based on the NLA copy, and both it and the ADFA copy have the 'd.'). By the time the ADFA copy was printed following the resetting, the 't' in 'the' on the left-hand edge of l.17 had been lost. Additionally, the microscopic adjustments of the positions of type that occur whenever a forme is unlocked and re-locked is visible on several other pages of the inner forme but without any change in

lineation or text. (The adjustments are revealed by a three-dimensionally stepped or vibrating effect under optical collation.)

In theory at least, resetting could have left a word or words from the bottom of a page on the inner forme needing to be transferred to the top of the next on the outer. Whether to check that this had not happened or whether the press corrector was handed a new sig. C sheet printed on both sides and found it more convenient to read the pages seriatim, he evidently read over the whole sheet, making the seven corrections, all of which happened to be on the outer forme. (Microscopic type-jostle also appears in lines around these points.) As there was no reason to suppose the correction was done with reference to the manuscript, the changes were not accepted into the reading text except for the correction of the misspelling, 'beautful'. Interestingly, both *A1* and *E2* must have been set from a copy of *E1* with the earlier readings for they contain them, but correct the misspelling.

Thus was the mystery explained and relief obtained. That is, until we were checking the Contents page. Again in proof, we discovered that the *E1* Contents does not match its own chapter-titles within the text in several places. Fortunately the explanation in this case was not too hard to work out. Macmillan had placed both Kingsley and Richard Clay under considerable pressure in the closing stages of the production of *E1*. The mismatch was evidently a result. Either Kingsley had failed to adjust the Contents for each volume (if he was sent them) when he altered the chapter-titles in the text, or the oversight happened at the printshop. The result, like that of the review quoting the uncorrected state of 'The Golden Vineyard' chapter, is a glimpse at what the manuscript had read.

Most strikingly, the Contents page shows that II.IX had been entitled 'WHITE HEATHENS'; evidently Kingsley – from a clerical family, whose reputation he had to worry about – decided that the very notion was open to fastidious objection. The chapter-title of II.III in the Contents, 'CHRISTMAS DAY IN THE BUSH', became 'A WARM CHRISTMAS DAY.' in the revised text; and 'SETTLING DOWN' (II.IV) became 'JIM STOCKBRIDGE BEGINS TO TAKE ANOTHER VIEW OF MATTERS.'. 'WARM' is an ironic understatement; and the next chapter shows that James Stockbridge has now reversed his opinion of Mary Hawker, the woman whose rejection of him had caused him to emigrate to Australia. Having seen her at close quarters in Australia now for two months, he finds he is no longer interested in her. The original chapter-title had been perhaps a little too arch for its irony to be recognised.¹²

Kingsley's humour had come to the fore. This was some comfort for we had discovered that a good deal of it is needed to see a critical edition through to the press.

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NOTES

1. Ed. Stanton Mellick, Patrick Morgan and Paul Eggert (St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1996).
2. *Westminster Review*, July 1859, pp.301-2: see Introduction to the critical edition for a transcription and discussion.
3. Thus galleys were not used. First proofs were in paged form. This practice may have been common: it was later true of at least three of D. H. Lawrence's works.
4. At NLA Call Number: N 823.8 K55re.
5. *Bibliobooks*, 5, no.13 (December 1952), p.42.
6. Copies consulted by Elizabeth Morrison (Academy Editions Research Officer): National Library of Australia (hereafter NLA), Moir and Holroyd as above; NLA Ferguson collection; Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales; Baillieu Library McLaren Collection (2 copies of the Baillieu's 3), University of Melbourne; Fisher Library Rare Books Collection, University of Sydney - 2 copies.
7. Two emendations in the critical edition's reading text were avoided by this inspection: the NLA and five other copies lack 'a' in 'a flood' (II.321:16), and the NLA and three other copies have 'is' for 'his' at III.157:15. In addition, the optical collations described below obviated the need for two more emendations: in *E1* the 'f' in 'for' on the left-hand edge of III.164, l.9 is missing in the NLA copy but present in the ADFA (at Special Collections 267414), and similarly an end-of-line semicolon at II.59, l.26.
8. The ADFA copy of signature C (pp.17-32: *E1* is 8vo) of vol.I contains: a corrected misspelling of 'beautful' at l.24, l.15 (critical edition, 28:30), a comma deleted after 'least' in the preceding line (28:30) and one added after 'up' at l.17, l.19 (24:19); 'daresay' is split into two words at l.21, l.21 (27:1) and similarly 'Anyone' at l.25, l.8 (29:7); 'him;' becomes 'him:' at l.28, l.17 (31:14), and 'to them again' becomes 'again to them', eliminating an ambiguity at l.21, l.27 (27:6).
9. The NLA Ferguson copy is at call number FERG 2439; it has catalogues of 'Ap 15 - 59' (i.e. 15 April 1859) and is in a Macmillan binding. The NLA, Holroyd and ADFA copies have been privately bound and lack catalogues.)
10. The person performing the optical collations, Anna Eggert, proposed this solution. Formerly a bibliographic faintheart and scoffer, she was enrolled in the ranks forthwith.
11. The three Baillieu McLaren copies of *E1* were also kindly checked for us by Margaret Murphy, Curator of Special Collections, Baillieu Library, for sig. C. This check confirmed our findings. Two are in Macmillan bindings and have catalogues dated 'Ap 15 - 59' and '9.9.59'; the third is in a private binding and lacks catalogues. The 'Ap 15 - 59' copy has the 'd.'; the privately bound copy lacks the 'd.'; and it is restored in the copy with the catalogues of '9.9.59' which has the same revised readings as the ADFA.
12. There were also five minor differences in hyphenation, punctuation or presentation. These are detailed in the critical edition's Explanatory Notes at note 1 for p.283.