

“Romancing the Stone”: R. H. Horne, Daniel Deniehy and Lithography

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Richard Henry (later Hengist) Horne's *Exposition of the False Medium and Barriers Excluding Men of Genius from the Public* (1832–33)¹ has the reputation of being the first work to reveal the existence of publishers' readers to the world at large.² Whether or not one accepts Horne's fierce criticisms of these occult and malign actors in the book industry, his anonymously published tract is something that belongs in the personal libraries of students of the trade as it was practised in the nineteenth century. For this reason it was of considerable interest that Australian Book Auctions catalogued a copy of it in their March 2009 sale of the collection of the late Dr John Tange.³ The brief description, encompassing both the 1833 volume and another book formerly owned by Horne, raises issues whose elucidation will provide a modest footnote to the exploration of the culture of Victorian Melbourne that was a highlight of what one can call Harold Love's middle period of creative scholarship.

The entry reads:

HORNE, R. H. AN EXPANSIVE INSCRIPTION by Horne on a copy of his first book, EXPOSITION OF THE FALSE MEDIUM and barriers excluding men of genius from the public (1833), bought by the poet at Dwight's bookshop, Melbourne, in 1860 + Horne's copy of William Hazlitt's *Notes of A Journey Through France and Italy* (1826).

The second part is quite accurate. Hazlitt's *Notes*, with the imprint "for Hunt & Clarke," bears the signature "Rich^d. Hen^y. Horne" on its title-page. Having been rebound in blue morocco by Bayntun-Rivière of Bath, presumably for the Melbourne bookseller Kenneth Hince at some time in the last four decades, it betrays nothing of any earlier or intermediate provenance. The uncut edges suggest that it may have been in its original boards during Horne's ownership. In any case there is no reason to doubt that it is lot 139 of the catalogue prepared for the 20 March 1869

¹ (London: Effingham Wilson). Eri J. Shumaker, *A Concise Bibliography of the Complete Works of Richard Henry (Hengist) Horne (1802–1884)* (Granville, OH: [Denison University], 1943) states (p. 1) that the book was first published in 1832 and that the 1833 imprint was that of a second edition.

² See Royal A. Gettmann, *A Victorian Publisher: A Study of the Bentley Papers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 187, 191–92; Linda Marie Fritschner, "Publishers' Readers, Publishers, and their Authors," *Publishing History* 7 (1980): 45; Angus Fraser, "A Publishing House and Its Readers, 1841–1880: The Murrays and the Miltons," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 90 (1996): 5.

³ *Books from the Library of the late Dr. John Tange ... To be sold by Auction in three sessions Monday 23rd March 2009 at 6.30 pm, Tuesday 24th March at 1.00 pm and 6.30 pm* (Melbourne, 2009), lot 245.

sale⁴ of a substantial part of the literary man's library prior to his return to England after seventeen years in Australia:

Journey through France and Italy. By the late William Hazlitt. 1 vol. 1826. (p. 16)

On the other hand more needs to be said about *Exposition of the False Medium*.

The volume, which is far from being in pristine condition, is in brown papered boards with a blue cloth back and a printed spine label. The endpapers are plain. With the exception of a deleted line on page 326 from a quoted poem,⁵ Horne's annotations—in ink—are confined to the first few openings:

[inside upper board] I forgive M^r. Second-hand for giving my work to M^r. Bailey, since he has been so generous as to give me the head of the noble and learned Bentivoglio, in exchange. But what is to compensate the Cardinal? If this can happen in less than thirty years, my "Poor Artist" published anonymously by Van Voorst, in thirty years more may be republished as a translation from a newly discovered work of La Fontaine or Goethe—who knows? R. H. H.

[vertically, alongside the paragraph above] Australia 1860

[on the verso of the portrait facing the title-page] This head of Cardinal Bentivoglio was drawn by me for the present work, on stone. It was the first time that the use of the pen was ever made in Lithography for a head. I was also the first to use a pen in Lithography, in any work, the first experiments and specimens for the Ordnance Office in London, having been made by me, in conjunction with some French artist. After which, the Ordnance Office bowed us out, with thanks, and the map-work was given out according to patronage and private interest, as usual.

R. H. Horne

[above the portrait of Bentivoglio] D. H. Deniehy
from R. H. Horne

[on the title-page] R. H. Horne
1860

Found at an old book-stall in Melbourne 1860; and I observe, in the lapse of Time,

⁴ *Catalogue of very scarce & curious books, in English and other languages; miscellaneous books, and the various works of Mr. R. H. Horne, now first collected. Also, some of the finest engravings of the great Italian master, Piranesi; other valuable & scarce engravings, musical instruments, &c. Being the property of Mr. R. H. Horne, who is about returning to Europe. To be sold by auction, by Gemmell, Tuckett, & Co. At their rooms, 49 Collins-street West, on Saturday, March 20th, at eleven o'clock* (Melbourne: Gemmell, Tuckett, & Co., 1869). The copy used was State Library of Victoria * LT 017 M6 1C (v. 4). Ann Blainey, who consulted the Mitchell Library copy, notes that the total realisation was £60 6s. 3d.—see *The Farthing Poet. A Biography of Richard Hengist Horne 1802–84. A Lesser Literary Lion* (London: Longmans, 1968), 239.

⁵ "Tremendous—ruin'd—vanish'd—forgotten;"

that my work has been given to the Author of “Festus”—and that the head of Cardinal Bentivoglio has been given to me. R. H. H.

Indeed, one finds—in pencil and in another hand—“R. H. Horne” under the portrait, which is on mounted india paper, and “Bailey of Sheffield” on the title-page. Another hand again has written “Dwight” inside the upper board, and there is a pencilled note “by Bailey.”

What is one to make of all this? Deniehy’s relations with Horne, both in Sydney and in Melbourne, were quite close and complex, despite the “callous obituary” of 1865 resented by Henry Kendall and the Australian journalist-critic’s erstwhile protector Nicol Drysdale Stenhouse.⁶ Beyond the semi-popular account given by Cyril Pearl,⁷ one needs to consult Deniehy’s most serious student, Frances Devlin Glass.⁸ Writings and journalistic co-operation are one thing, but we have to focus for the moment on exchanges of books.

Most of Deniehy’s books were sold at auction in Sydney by Bradley and Newton on 26 and 27 July 1866—that is, in the year after his death.⁹ As Frances Devlin Glass has pointed out in her study of the sale,¹⁰ some volumes, possibly not very many, were disposed of beforehand by an impecunious owner and his widow. It is, therefore, not astonishing that *Exposition of the False Medium* does not appear in the substantial list, one that was hastily and inaccurately prepared and sometimes laconic, for example lot 695: “Seventy-three Various, 73 vols.” Indeed, the only R. H. Horne title recorded is the edited two-volume collection *A New Spirit of the Age* of 1844 (lot 110). Thus we do not know how the Tange copy of *Exposition of the False Medium* fared in the century or so before it came back into the trade after the Second World War. However, it is reasonable to assume that Horne, who was part of H. T. Dwight’s circle and published by him, meant somebody else in writing about “an old book-stall in Melbourne.” The marginal and itinerant sellers of the period are very sparsely documented. It is possible that the trail of Horne’s annotated *Exposition* can be followed through the numerous catalogues Dwight produced before his death in

⁶ See Ann-Mari Jordens, *The Stenhouse Circle: Literary Life in Mid-Nineteenth Century Sydney* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1979), 77–79, 91.

⁷ Cyril Pearl, *Brilliant Dan Deniehy. A Forgotten Genius* (Melbourne: Nelson, 1972).

⁸ See Francis Devlin Glass, “‘Botany Bay *Littérateur*’: D. H. Deniehy’s Literary Criticism,” *Australian Literary Studies* 9 (1979–80): 214–24; “D. H. Deniehy as a Critic of Colonial Literature,” *ibid.*, 328–36; and “Daniel Deniehy: A Checklist of Writings and Speeches,” *ibid.*, 388–98. I have not seen the much earlier article by G. B. Barton, “Some Literary Recollections: Horne and Deniehy,” *Cosmos* 1, no. 8 (30 April 1895): 403–6.

⁹ *The Valuable Library of the late D. H. Deniehy, Esq., consisting of rare and choice works in every department of literature. To be sold by public auction, by Bradley & Newton, at their rooms, Old Bank of Australasia, 239 George Street, on Thursday & Friday July 26 and 27* (Sydney: Bradley & Newton, 1869). The copy consulted was Mitchell Library 018.2 D.

¹⁰ “‘Two and a half tons of books’: Daniel Henry Deniehy’s Library,” *Australian Academic and Research Libraries* 7 (1976): 37–53.

1871 or even in the record of the two massive dispersals in 1872.¹¹ What is certain is that an unannotated *Exposition* was entered in the Stock Book of the Melbourne Public Library in 1869 as having been bought from Dwight, who was no doubt active at the Horne sale of that year.¹²

The 20 March 1869 auction contained other interesting items, leaving aside the presentation copies of Robert Browning and the first editions of Keats and Shelley that would attract modern collectors. Lot 79 is “Cardinal Bentivoglio’s Letters, Italian and English. 1 vol. London, 1764,” while we read under lot 84:

Southern Lights and Shadows. By the late Frank Fowler, Esq. With numerous MS notes by the late D. H. Denichy, Esq. 1 vol. London, 1859.

In this way another link is forged with the Stenhouse Circle.

The first-listed copy of *Exposition* reiterates in print the claim made in manuscript to Denichy in or after 1860:

134 Exposition of the False Medium, and Barriers excluding Men of Genius from the Public; being the first work by R. H. Horne. (Published anonymously). With a Portrait of Cardinal Bentivoglio, drawn on stone by the Author, being the first time line engraving was tried in lithography. Effingham Wilson, London, 1833.

It is evident that Horne was the writer of his own catalogue, but can his contention be sustained?

It is true that we do not know nearly enough about Horne’s early life.¹³ None the less, his boast seemed to me highly dubious, so I referred it to Michael Twyman, whose assessment I am quoting with gratitude, and with his permission:¹⁴

The portrait is mainly what would be described as a crayon lithograph, though there are touches of ink work (probably drawn with the pen) on the beard, hair, eyebrows, and shaded areas beneath the white collar. . . . strictly speaking he was right in his first claim—that the portrait made use of the pen.

The second claim—that he was the first to do so for a head—cannot be supported. It is true that lithographed portraits were usually drawn in crayon. I would go further and say that by the 1830s a distinctive genre had been established in lithographed portraiture, particularly in France. But there are earlier ink-drawn portraits.

¹¹ See Ian F. McLaren, *Henry Tolman Dwight: Bookseller and Publisher* (Melbourne: University of Melbourne Library, 1989), passim.

¹² See State Library of Victoria * s 828.8 H78 v. 14. Two copies of *Exposition*, one dated 1832, were offered in the Horne auction, lots 134 and 165.

¹³ This can be verified from the most recent biographical notice by Robert Dingley in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 28: 141–43; see also <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13791> (accessed 23 October 2009).

¹⁴ Letter of 17 May 2009 after consultation of the British Library copy of *Exposition*.

I can find nothing about Horne's work for the Ordnance Office in London, but ink lithography was so widespread in drawing offices that I cannot take his claim seriously.

Twyman's surmise that Horne was a "self-publicist" fits well with what we know about the poet's career before, in and after Australia. To what extent people in Melbourne and Sydney were taken in by his vain-gloriousness is not clear. A sense of reality co-existed with the sort of colonial credulity that is not entirely absent, alas, from twenty-first-century Australia. Horne's fate suggests that false prophets and braggarts are eventually found out. In any event we have no cause to rewrite the history of lithography in Britain or anywhere else.

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