Introduction

"In the eighties the publishing house of Field & Tuer was showing a dexterity and invention that must have shocked the established Trade . . . theirs is a strangely unrecounted history."

—Francis Meynell, *Modern Books and Writers*[1]

Andrew White Tuer was among the most active and innovative printers and publishers of the late nineteenth century. However, no comprehensive bibliographic study of Field & Tuer and the Leadenhall Press had been completed when Francis Meynell and Desmond Flower included Joseph Crawhall's *Olde ffrendes wyth newe Faces* in their selection of "One hundred books chosen to illustrate the renascence of book design in England" for a 1951 exhibition in London. Even today, even among scholars of Victorian culture, there is often only a vague notion of the firm and its output.

Some years ago, I bought a plain-looking oblong volume with the running title: *The Book of Delightful and Strange Designs, Being One Hundred Facsimile Illustrations of the Art of the Japanese Stencil-cutter to which the Gentle Reader is Introduced by one Andrew W. Tuer, F.S.A. Who Knows Nothing at All About It.* My initial interest was in the inscription it bore, from Gleeson White to the Oxford historian Frederick York Powell, but that quickly became secondary. The book contains title pages and introductions in English, French, and German, an original Japanese stencil cut as a frontispiece, and reproductions on plates of 104 designs in white on bold black ground. Clearly, Andrew Tuer must have been a curious fellow, and my own curiosity was aroused. As I found other Leadenhall Press titles, I became increasingly captivated by the variety of the subject matter, design, and production. In the spirit of Andrew Tuer, I set out to research a subject about which I knew nothing at all. This book is the result.

I have been able to identify nearly 450 publications bearing the Field & Tuer and Leadenhall Press imprints (not including the various special issues, later editions, and ephemera), yet there seems almost to have been a conspiracy against the press among some printing historians. In Sawyer and Darton's 1927 two-volume work *English Books 1475–1900: A Signpost for Collectors*, there is but a single reference to Andrew Tuer as "director of a press that does not deserve oblivion." Little has been written about the Leadenhall Press since, apart from a few paragraphs and reproduced title pages in a 1931 piece on Victorian typography by A. F. Johnson in *The Monotype Recorder*[2] and a very informative 1987 article in *The Book Collector* by the historian J. P. T. Bury, who was related to Andrew Tuer by marriage and was Mrs. Tuer's godson.[3] Bury prepared a tentative table of the numbers of books

1. *Modern Books and Writers: The Catalogue of an Exhibition held at Seven Albemarle Street, April to September, 1951.* (Cambridge: Published for the National Book League by the Cambridge University Press, 1951). p. 33.
2. A. F. Johnson, "Old-Face Types in the Victorian Age," *The Monotype Recorder*, Sept.–Dec. 1931, pp. 5–14.
3. J. P. T. Bury, "Andrew W. Tuer and the Leadenhall Press," *The Book Collector*, Summer 1987, pp. 225–241.

published by the Leadenhall Press in each year from 1879 to 1905, totaling 317 by his reckoning. He also wrote an article about Andrew Tuer's bookplates, which was published posthumously in the March, 1888 issue of *The Bookplate Journal*. Where Tuer is mentioned in histories of printing, it is generally in the context of chapbook reprints and use of old style type, but in fact he published books of all descriptions on all subjects, from popular shilling series titles to elaborate limited editions, as well as two important and long-running journals, *The Paper & Printing Trades Journal* and *The Printers' International Specimen Exchange*.

There are several reasons for this oversight. The chief obstacle to research has been a lack of records. The Leadenhall Press stopped publishing shortly after Tuer's death, continuing as a print shop and closing in 1927. The archives were destroyed by Companies House in 1972. Only with the availability of research resources on the World Wide Web could I have imagined taking on this project. The fact that Tuer's contributions were largely forgotten soon after his death can be attributed, in part, to his own playful sense of humor. His tendency not to take himself too seriously may have led others, mistakenly, to do likewise. Probably the Leadenhall list did not include enough authors and illustrators whose reputations have stood the test of time, and the wide variety of publications makes a brief summary so difficult as to be pointless. (I once had two booksellers at the same book fair tell me they didn't have any Leadenhall Press books: one because he didn't deal in private presses, and the other because he carried *only* fine press books.)

But perhaps there *was* a conspiracy of sorts among historians of the nineties, satirized by Max Beerbohm in his essay "1880." Looking backward from the lofty present of 1896, he wrote, "To give an accurate and exhaustive account of that period would need a far less brilliant pen than mine." With a straighter face, Holbrook Jackson, in his 1913 book *The Eighteen Nineties*, casually dismissed decades of publishing thus: "suddenly, with few obvious preliminaries, we found ourselves in the midst of the Golden Age of what may be termed subjective printing." The movement of the "Book Beautiful," in defining itself, rejected wholesale the printing of the recent past, and most chroniclers of the period have perpetuated the notion of discontinuity.

Yet there were printers working in the seventies and eighties whose contributions are worthy of note. William Peterson, in *The Kelmscott Press, a History of William Morris's Typographical Adventure*, cites the publications of Rev. C. H. O. Daniel and Joseph Cundall, wondering, "Did Morris ever see them? We do not know, because he was silent about the Victorian books he considered worthy of admiration, but certainly Cundall, like Pickering, belongs to a very small group of nineteenth-century publisher-designers whose work may have influenced Morris. Likewise, it would be fascinating to discover whether Morris was aware of the books published and printed by Andrew Tuer, whose Leadenhall Press ('Ye Leadenhalle Presse' was the quaint version) in London issued many lively, amusing exercises in pastiche."

Almost certainly Morris was well aware of Tuer and his press. Tuer had been a committee member and exhibitor at the 1877 Caxton Celebration of the 400th

anniversary of printing in England, and by the mid 1880s, Leadenhall Press trade titles were selling in the tens of thousands, while the limited edition productions were being widely praised. William Harcourt Hooper designed several bookplates for Tuer before becoming Kelmscott's principal woodcutter, and the frontispiece illustration to the 1885 Leadenhall Press first edition of *Songs of the North* was by Morris's close friend Edward Burne-Jones. In 1890, Morris wrote to Tuer declining an offer to publish a lecture because it was given without notes.[4] Not long after the founding of the Kelmscott Press, Arthur Gaskin was producing illustrations for Morris while his wife, Georgie Cave France (whose work, as a member of the Birmingham Group, Morris also knew), was doing the same for Tuer.

While Morris may not have approved of Tuer's playful approach to book design, the best of the Leadenhall Press publications provided a standard that the designers and printers of the 1890s no doubt studied in developing their own ideas. I hope this study will generate additional interest and research, and contribute to a more complete understanding of Andrew Tuer and his contributions to the development of printing in England in the second half of the nineteenth century.

4. Norman Kelvin, *The Collected Letters of William Morris, Vol. 3: 1889–1892* (Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 243.

In 1890, Tuer wrote an article titled "The Art of Silhouetting" for *The English Illustrated Magazine*. The opening read, "Will the day ever come when the Iron Duke will be popularly remembered by the Wellington boot, or the great Sir Robert Peel by the double-barrelled nicknames he contributed to his country's police? Certain it is that M. Etienne de Silhouette, the great financial minister of France, has his immortality altogether away from money bags, and is familiar by name only because that name was affixed to the shadow portraits which had their heyday in the days of his decline."

THE ART OF SILHOUETTING.

By ANDREW W. TUER.

WILL the day ever come when the Iron Duke will be popularly remembered by the Wellington boot, or the great Sir Robert Peel by the double-barrelled nicknames he contributed to his country's police? Certain it is that M. Etienne de Silhouette, the great financial minister of France, has his immortality altogether away from money bags, and is familiar by name only because that name was affixed to the shadow portraits which had their heyday in the days of his decline.

It happened this way. M. de Silhouette may have been a heaven-born minister, but in that case he was a bit before his date. The date was 1709. Destined for public life, he visited England to study her polity; and in this he succeeded so well that, when by his merit and the power of Madame Pompadour he was made Comptroller General, in 1757, he began to reform French finance on English models. Whether it was the reform or the Anglicism matters not, but for one or the other reason M. de Silhouette became the favourite butt of French public life. All that was shabby, mean, and perhaps a little ridiculous, began to be spoken of as *à la Silhouette*. Amongst these things was the bare outline likeness, which began about then to be produced both in France and England, and to which the name was attached.

Not that silhouetting was a discovery of the eighteenth century; in fact, and naturally, it was older than the Christian era. Portraiture is, after all, an art to which love is under long obligation; and it is fitting that this first rudimentary portraiture was, according to tradition, achieved by an Etrurian maiden, the daughter of a potter, who traced on the wall the shadow of her swain. That was 779 B.C. The first artists in monochrome—Crates of Sicyon, Philocles of Egypt, and Cleanthes of Corinth—the Doultons, and Mortlocks, and Walter Cranes of their day—practised the art which then went by the name of skiagraphy.

AUGUSTIN AMANT CONSTANCE FIDELE EDOUART.

Germany, no less than France and England, shared in the modern revival of silhouetting. In 1780 a German follower of Lavater wrote a volume in which he claimed the shadow portrait as a specimen of true art when compared with the "daub

The experience and publicity gained during the Caxton Celebration apparently gave Tuer the confidence to take the next step toward becoming a noted publisher, as he introduced a new imprint. In 1877, *Histoire du Bonhomme Misère*, a series of 6 engravings in folio by Alphonse Legros, was published by R. Gueraut in an edition of 60 copies, "the engravings printed by Field & Tuer at the Leadenhall Press." The following year, Bickers & Son published *Ballads of Schiller No. 1*, by the Rev. Frederick Harford, which carried the colophon "Imprinted by Field & Tuer, at the Leadenhall Press."

Finally, in July 1879, the Leadenhall Press made a splash, so to speak, with its first book, Tuer's own *Luxurious Bathing*, a whimsical treatise on the joys of hygiene, illustrated with twelve landscape etchings and initials by Sutton Sharpe. Field & Tuer's ambitions were clear, in part from the Scribner & Welford imprint on the title page as American agents, a relationship that lasted into the twentieth century. As for design and production, the book was a large oblong folio printed in red and black, the regular edition was limited to 250 copies at three guineas, with a special edition of twenty-five copies on Japanese paper at seven guineas. *The University Magazine* had this to say in its review: "But to have a dip into the present folio is luxury indeed for anyone whose eye loves to appreciate flawless typography and paper, even surpassing that of the rare volumes produced before the age of shoddy. Messrs. Field and Tuer proceed on the traditional plan of the old craftsmen—that of doing first-rate work, and becoming gradually known for it, rather than by specious advertisement, which is a modern snare."[14]

14. *The University Magazine, a Literary and Philosophic Review*, Vol. IV, July-December, 1879, pp. 508-9.

The second edition, issued the following year in a smaller size with etchings by Tristram Ellis, had an addendum: "Since going to press the author's attention has been drawn—not over-courteously perhaps—to the sweeping denunciation in this sketch of the habitual use of scented soaps; but after a careful examination and trial of various kinds, one alone—Pears' transparent soap—may in his opinion be safely indicated as a pure detergent in every way suitable for Luxurious Bathing." (Not coincidentally, perhaps, the Leadenhall Press printed a number of advertisements for Pears' Soap over the years.

The next book to appear, in 1880, was *Journals and Journalism: With a Guide for Literary Beginners* by John Oldcastle, pseudonym of Wilfrid Meynell. The Meynells were close friends of the Tuers, who took an interest in the development of the press. Wilfrid acted as something of a literary advisor, while Alice, writing as "Francis Phillimore," contributed a preface to *Dickens Memento* (1884). Wilfrid provided prefaces to the four titles in *The Leadenhall Press Sixteenpenny Series: Illustrated Gleanings from the Classics* (1885–1888), and later he edited *The Child Set in the Midst: by Modern Poets* (1892).

In 1881, the elegant *On a Raft, and Through the Desert*, by Tristram J. Ellis, was published in two volumes with thirty-eight etchings on copper by the author,


LUXURIOUS BATHING:

A SKETCH

BY

ANDREW W. TUER,

WITH

Twelve Folio Etchings, Initials, &c.,

BY

SUTTON SHARPE.

1879.

THREE GUINEAS.

Proofs on Japanese Paper (Twenty-five only printed) Seven Guineas.

LONDON:

FIELD & TUER, "Ye LEADENHALLE PRESSE"; SIMPKIN, MARSHALL & Co., STATIONERS' HALL COURT.

NEW YORK:

SCRIBNER & WELFORD, 743 & 745, BROADWAY.

Title page of the first edition, with initials in red.