

VICTORIAN COMIC WRITING & JOURNALS TO WHICH DOWTY CONTRIBUTED

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Comic writing burgeoned from the 1830s onwards, with weekly, monthly or annual publications featuring puns, jokes, parodies, verse, essays and satire with political cartoons, comic illustrations, social sketches, and the like. After *Punch*, first appearing in 1841, came numbers of titles that had disappeared by the time Dowty came of age in 1868, but after the second Reform bill (1866-70) there came a revival with new titles appearing: to these Dowty contributed greatly.

THE *LONDON FIGARO*

1870-1898

The *London Figaro* was a London periodical devoted to politics, literature, art, criticism and satire during the Victorian era. It was founded as a daily paper in 1870 with the backing of Napoleon III but after a year re-established itself as a general interest weekly magazine and is chiefly remembered nowadays for its highly independent drama criticism.

The first issue was published by James Mortimer on 17 May 1870. It was initially a daily periodical and continued to be published daily until 18 March 1871. At this point it changed format from a newspaper to a weekly magazine owing to the withdrawal of its financial support as a result of French defeat in the Franco-Prussian War.

The magazine became very popular during the mid-1870s and for several years was published twice a week. Mortimer was very supportive of his writers and in particular strove to shield the identities of his drama critics, Clement Scott, and later William Archer, both of whom wrote under the pseudonym, Almaviva. Mortimer suffered much personal abuse from actors and promoters as a result.

In 1879 Mortimer was the defendant in a libel case brought against him by William Henry Weldon as a result of the serial which the *Figaro* had run on the topic of Georgina Weldon, his wife, who claimed that she had been unjustly confined under the lunacy laws of the time. Owing to a combination of misfortune and bad decisions Mortimer lost the case and was sentenced to three months in prison and a heavy fine.

In 1882 Mortimer sold the *Figaro*. Writing in *Journalistic London* later in the year, Joseph Hatton said:

The Figaro once prospered exceedingly. Its founder, Mr. James Mortimer, an American with a French training in journalism, first introduced it to London as a daily paper. He was unfortunate in challenging attention for a light, chatty, and serio-comic treatment of current news and literature at a time when the public mind was excited with the tragedies of a great war. Otherwise the daily Figaro might possibly have been alive now. A weekly edition reached an enormous circulation. Its chief leader-writer was Mr. John Baker Hopkins, a journalist who for many years was associated with The Law Journal. Mr. Hopkins is the author of "Nihilism; or, The Terror Unmasked," and several works of fiction. "The Smiff Papers" did much to extend the circulation of The Figaro, as did also the dramatic criticisms signed "Alma Viva." Mr. Doughty [sic] was the author of the first mentioned feature, Mr. Clement Scott of the second. Recently the paper has been taken

over by a limited liability company, and Mr. Mortimer appears to be giving more attention to play-writing than to journalism.

The magazine continued publication for another 15 years. By the late 1890s, however, it had lost much of its readership; and at a shareholders' Extraordinary General Meeting in December 1897, it was agreed to wind it up

DAILY NEWS

1846 to 1930

The *Daily News* was a national daily newspaper in the United Kingdom was founded in 1846 by Charles Dickens, who also served as the newspaper's first editor. It was conceived as a radical rival to the right-wing *Morning Chronicle*. The paper was not at first a commercial success. Dickens edited 17 issues before handing over the editorship to his friend John Forster, who had more experience in journalism than Dickens. Forster ran the paper until 1870. Charles Mackay, Harriet Martineau, George Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, G. K. Chesterton and Ferdinando Petruccelli della Gattina were among the leading reformist writers who wrote for the paper during its heyday. In 1870, the News absorbed the *Morning Star*. In 1876, The Daily News and its correspondents Edwin Pears and (later) Januarius MacGahan sounded the first alarm respecting the Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria.

In 1901, Quaker chocolate manufacturer George Cadbury bought The *Daily News* and used the paper to campaign for old age pensions and against sweatshop labour. As a pacifist, Cadbury opposed the Boer War, and the *Daily News* followed his line.

In 1906, the News sponsored an exhibition on sweated labour at the Queen's Hall. This exhibition was credited with strengthening the women's suffrage movement. In 1909, H. N. Brailsford and H. W. Nevinson resigned from the paper when it refused to condemn the force feeding of suffragettes.

In 1912, the News merged with the *Morning Leader*, and was for a time known as the *Daily News and Leader*. In 1928, it merged with *The Westminster Gazette*, and in 1930, with the *Daily Chronicle* to form the centre-left *News Chronicle*.

The chairman from 1911 to 1930 was Edward Cadbury, eldest son of George Cadbury.

TRUTH AND TRUTH CHRISTMAS NUMBERS

1877-1957

Truth was a British periodical publication founded by the diplomat and Liberal politician Henry Labouchère. Labouchère founded the periodical after he left a rival publication, *The World*. *Truth* was known for its exposures of many kinds of frauds, and was at the centre of several civil lawsuits. Although Labouchère himself contributed to *Truth*, it was for the most part controlled by Horace Voules in its early days.

For twenty-nine years, Dowty wrote satirical verses under the title "The Barrel Organ", which ranged over politics and the social scene. He was also the author of a lengthy year-end verse review which became a staple *Truth's* Christmas numbers.

Later in its existence, *Truth* was close to the Conservative Party. In 1941, it was briefly the subject of political controversy following allegations made in Parliament, but publication continued when the allegations were refuted. Later, *Truth* came under

the direction of Collin Brooks. In its final years, it moved away from its right-wing editorial line back to the more liberal agenda of its early days. Truth ceased publication in 1957.

FUNNY FOLKS

1874-1894

Funny Folks was a British periodical published by the Scottish newspaper proprietor James Henderson. It has been called "the first English 'comic' paper", and "the model for all later British comics".

The first issue, on 12 December 1874, was produced as a supplement to the special Christmas edition of Henderson's weekly magazine *The Weekly Budget*. Its popularity led to its subsequent publication as a free-standing periodical, priced at 1d. per copy. It was subtitled *A Weekly Budget of Funny Pictures, Funny Notes, Funny Jokes, Funny Stories*.

The newspaper-format journal was innovative in combining entertaining stories and puzzles with large cartoons. These were often satirical in tone, with some by John Proctor, known as Puck, and some from German and French sources. It was aimed at an adult lower middle-class audience, rather than at children, and benefitted from innovations in the use of cheap paper and photo-zincography printing. One of the contributors to the journal was Alfred Harmsworth, who launched his own *Comic Cuts* a few years later.

BEETON'S CHRISTMAS ANNUALS

Beeton's Christmas Annual was a British paperback magazine printed yearly between 1860 and 1898. From 1860 the issues dealt with seasonal topics, original fiction, history, verse, and games suitable for the Christmas fire side, and the like, but from 1872 came issues with a distinct Radical turn, for they dealt with political satire.

After his wife Isabella died in 1865, Beeton's fortunes failed and after law-suit he was obliged to sell the rights to the "Beeton" name to rival publishers and work for them for a salary.

The ODNB (2004), article about Beeton noted:

'At the end of 1870 there was published a clever parody of Tennyson's "Idylls of the King" called "The Coming King—," which with much insolence purported to draw the veil from the prince's private life. The assault was pursued next year by the same authors in "The Siliad," and the series was continued in "The Fijiad," "Faust and 'Phisto," "Jon Duan," and finally in a prophetically named brochure, "Edward VII; a play on the past and present times with a view to the future". All current politics and society came under the satirists' lash. But the burden of the indictment, phrased in various keys of scurrility, was that the prince's conduct was unfitting him for succession to the throne. The upturn of Queen Victoria's popularity and the manifest good-nature and public spirit of the prince soon dissipated for the most part the satiric censure. Yet an undercurrent of resentment against reputed indulgences of the prince's private life never wholly disappeared'.

This was the period when Edward, Prince of Wales, who was married to Princess Alexandria, was notorious for the number of his mistresses, which caused much comment in the Press.

While this series was produced, Beeton became ill, and other editors assisted him
 These were:

George Rose Emerson; not so far identified, but he was the author of

Sebastopol: The Story of Its Fall, 1855

London, How The Great City Grew, 1862

William Ewart Gladstone: prime minister of England. A political and literary biography,
 1881

*England's Hero And Christian Soldier: A Biographical And Historic al Sketch Of The
 Life Of General C. G. Gordon* (1886)

S. R. Emerson; not so far identified, but appears to have been a journalist.

E. C. G. Murray; (Eustace Clare Grenville Murray (1824 – 1881) He began as a
 diplomat but turned to journalism.

Evelyn Douglas Jerrold (1850 – 1885) He was a grandson of Douglas Jerrold

O. P. Q. Philander Smiff (A. A. Dowty)

SERIES TITLES WERE:

<i>The Coming K –</i> (London: Ward, Lock, and Tyler, 1872)	This was a parody of Tennyson's <i>Idylls of the King</i> and lampooned the activities of the Prince of Wales	Edited by Beeton, S. R. Emerson, and Dowty
<i>The Siliad; or the Siege of the Seats</i> (London: Ward, Lock, and Tyler, 1873)	This was a parody of Pope's translation of Homer's <i>Iliad</i> Its theme was Gladstone's troubles of 1875 and the last year of his ministry, and also judicial and ecclesiastical patronage.	Edited by Beeton, S. R. Emerson, and Dowty
<i>Jon Duan: A Twofold Journey with Manifold Purposes</i> (London: Weldon and Co, 1874).	It was a parody of Byron's <i>Don Juan</i> It attacked the activities of Enemies of the People, such as bankers.	Mostly edited by Dowty and Jerrold
<i>Edward the Seventh: A Play on the Past and Present Times with a View to the Future</i> (London: For the Proprietors, 1876)	This was a parody of seven acts from Shakespeare in the style of <i>Henry IV</i> and <i>Henry V</i>	Edited by Beeton, S. R. Emerson, and Dowty

After Beeton's death, the books were edited and published by others and reverted to
 the usual Christmas fare. The November 1887 issue was specially famous, as it
 contained a novel by Arthur Conan Doyle entitled *A Study in Scarlet* which introduced
 the characters Sherlock Holmes and his friend Watson.

FUN

Fun was a Victorian weekly humorous magazine, first published on 21 September 1861 in competition with *Punch*. The ownership of *Fun* passed in 1870 to the engravers and publishers George and Edward Dalziel, who had previously engraved drawings for *Punch*. Two years later they transferred it to their nephew Gilbert Dalziel (1853–1930). After the death of the editor, Tom Hood (1835-1874), the quality of the content began a slow decline. Gilbert's contributions ceased in the early 1870s, and although *Fun* still had talented writers including Clement Scott and Arthur Wing Pinero, the magazine lost a key asset without his unique combination of what Stedman calls "squibs, fillers, puns, verses, drawings, social and dramatic criticism, suggestions for double acrostics (a special *Fun* feature), absurd letters, and, of course, the Bab Ballads, which out-laughed anything *Punch* had to offer"

The imprint published *Hood's Comic Annual*, for a number of years, to which Dowty contributed short stories. This series must not be confused with *Hood's Magazine and Comic Miscellany* (1844-1849), edited by Tom Hood's father, Thomas (1799-1845).

Hood was succeeded as editor by Henry Sampson until 1878, and then the editorship devolved to Charles Dalziel. In 1893 the Dalziel family withdrew from the journal, and Henry T. Johnson became editor. *Fun* was bought by the publisher George Newnes, who sold it to Charles Shurey, proprietor of a rival comic paper early in 1901. It ceased publication in the same year, when it was absorbed into Shurey's *Sketchy Bits*.]