

The First London Cries for Children

Author(s): Sean Shesgreen and David Bywaters

Source: *The Princeton University Library Chronicle*, Vol. 59, No. 2 (Winter 1998), pp. 223-250

Published by: Princeton University Library

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.25290/prinunivlibrchro.59.2.0223>

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



Princeton University Library is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Princeton University Library Chronicle*

JSTOR

# The First London Cries for Children

BY SEAN SHESGREEN AND DAVID BYWATERS

In an advertisement of 1708, the bookseller John Marshall, with premises at the sign of the Bible in Gracechurch Street, London, offers to furnish travelling hawkers “with all sorts of Chapmen’s Books, Broad-sides or Half-Sheets, and Lottery Pictures, as Birds, Beasts, London Crys, etc., by the Gross or Dozen.” Harvey Darton, in his classic *Children’s Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life*, offers this gloss on Marshall’s advertisement: “The reference to ‘Birds, Beasts,’ as evidently a well-known title, is the earliest I have come across, and I have found no book that really answers to it at that date. ‘London Crys’ is also an early mention: apparently an edition of *Habits and Cries of the City of London* was printed in 1688—A. W. Tuer reprinted a 1711 edition.”<sup>1</sup>

On the point of “London Cries” (which we define as pictures featuring characters hawking or toiling on public streets accompanied by texts that record their shouts or identify their trades), Marshall’s advertisement and Darton’s commentary must, in their own distinctive ways, disappoint historians of the printed word and image. By itself, Marshall’s “London Crys,” is a generic title, too broad to permit specific identification of just what he is selling. And Darton’s independent observations miss the mark or err in matters of fact, perhaps inevitable in a volume with so long a reach.

Such lapses are negligible compared with the large, general questions raised by his study of children’s books, still definitive and unsurplanted after seventy-five years in print. These questions, interesting to bookmen and -women of many different stripes as well as to scholars curious about the history of illustration, revolve around the early London Cries and their audiences. Were the London Cries,

<sup>1</sup> Harvey Darton, *Children’s Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life*, 3rd ed., rev., Brian Alderson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). The advertisement, from Abraham Chear’s *Looking Glass for Children* (London, 1708), p. 61, is quoted in Darton, p. 69.

THE  
CRIES of LONDON,

AS

They are daily exhibited in the Streets;  
WITH AN EPIGRAM IN VERSE,  
ADAPTED TO EACH.

Embellished with sixty-two elegant CUTS.

To which is added,

A DESCRIPTION of the METROPOLIS  
in VERSE.



L O N D O N:

Printed for F. NEWBERRY, at the Corner of  
St. Paul's Church-Yard. 1775.

[ Price Six-pence. ]

Title page of the 1775 edition of Newbery's *Cries of London* (London: Printed for F. Newbery, 1775). Cotsen Children's Library, Princeton University.

later widely accepted as a characteristic topic of children's books, aimed at youngsters when they made their debut in print? When did London Cries directed exclusively at children first appear? What were the shape and contents of this prototypical children's Cries and why did it appear when it did? Was it Marshall's "London Crys" of 1708, which seems worth conjecturing about despite its cryptic title? Or was it Marcellus Laroon's 1687 *Cryes of the City of London Drawne after the Life*, which Darton calls the *Habits and Cryes of the City of London* (and dates to 1688)? Or was it an entirely different book or set of books from a different epoch? These questions are the focus of our essay, inspired in part by a study of undocumented children's books, panoramas, and educational toys preserved in the Cotsen Children's Library at Princeton University. We will show that London Cries, devoted by definition to the portrayal of public life, shift from vehicles of communal amusement among men in the seventeenth century to instruments of private instruction for the individual child by the middle of the eighteenth century.

Before turning to this project, it may be useful to examine the widespread inclination to view the unprepossessing little books that are the subject of this essay as innocuous, benign, and inconsequential. That propensity, common even among those who do not dismiss such volumes and their readers out of hand, is perhaps best critiqued by means of an illustration and its corresponding commentary from one of the books themselves: *The Cries of London, as They are daily exhibited in the Streets; With an epigram in verse, adapted to each. Embellished with sixty-two elegant Cuts. To which is added, A Description of the Metropolis in Verse* (London: Printed for F. Newbery, 1775). First published in 1771 and preserved in the Cotsen Children's Library in editions of 1775 and 1784, this charming miniature, smaller than a credit card, is the longest-lived, best-selling London Cries to be published for children.<sup>2</sup> Before it had exhausted its popularity in England, it was reprinted in America in 1805, where it became the most popular of all the titles created by Francis Newbery.<sup>3</sup> Selling for sixpence, it was promoted by its publisher as "A proper

<sup>2</sup> The first edition is advertised in the *London Chronicle* of 8–10 January 1771; however, no copy of this edition has survived. Other copies of later editions exist for 1784 (Lilly); 1791 (Lilly, Newberry); 1796 (Houghton); 1799 (Lapides Collection, Baltimore); and 1802 (UCLA, Newberry). John Harris, who succeeded Newbery, published his own versions of this book in 1804, 1805, and 1806 (his "10th edition").

<sup>3</sup> *The Cries of London; The Cries of New York*, ed. Linda Lapides, (New York: Garland, 1977),

Present for young Ladies and Gentleman” in an advertisement in the *London Chronicle* of 8–10 January 1771. One of its sixty-two “elegant Cuts,” bearing the title “Old Cloaths to sell, Any Shoes, Hats, or old Cloaths?” features a man whose beard and exaggerated nose caricature him as a Jew. Here is the commentary for this print:

This dirty son of Israel’s race,  
While wealthy folks are sleeping,  
You up and down the town may trace,  
In every area peeping.  
But ah! beware, ye men and maids,  
His bargains you’ll repent;  
Remember well the varlet trades  
At least for cent. per cent.

The effect of this verse on the multitudes of young English girls and boys who, in their most impressionable years, read it (or had it read approvingly to them by their elders) is a matter for conjecture. Such texts, if they did not provoke, surely palliated the abusive conduct of ordinary citizens toward Jews, amply attested to by a myriad of primary and secondary sources.<sup>4</sup>



Marshall’s “London Crys” of 1708 is perhaps not as early a mention as Darton supposes. By 1708, *London Cries* had been around for more than a hundred years; the first examples appear in England in the late 1500s, when they take the form of broadsides, which in most cases have only narrowly missed extinction, as evidenced by the mutilated condition of the broadside reproduced on p. 227, which is missing its right margin and top left corner (effectively decapitating its wheat seller). These broadsides typically were intended for a popular audience and thus prized at a low rate. One example, held in the British Museum, is an untitled flysheet by an anonymous craftsman working in the manner of Franz Hogenberg

---

p. xviii. In her book, Lapidés reproduces the 1775 edition of Newbery’s *Cries* with S. Wood’s *Cries of New York*; she also adds a useful preface, to which we are indebted throughout this essay.

<sup>4</sup> For a history of anti-semitic caricature in England, see Frank Felsenstein, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes: A Paradigm of Otherness in English Popular Culture, 1660–1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).



Anonymous, untitled broadside in the collections of the British Museum.  
Photo courtesy of the British Museum.

(1540–1590), who visited England only twice in his career.<sup>5</sup> The sheet is captioned:

O yis. Any man or woman that  
Can tell any tydings of a little  
Mayden Childe of the age of 24  
Yeares. Bring worde to the Cryar  
And you shalbe pleased for your labor.

The verse is a sanitized version of one from “The Cries of London Made and Sold by *Richard Newton* at the Kings Head in St. *Martins le-Grande*, near *Aldersgate*,” held in the Cambridge University Library:

“O Yes, o yes, o yes; if any man, wife, widow, maid,  
tell tidings can  
Of a Maidenhead lost on Saturday last,  
Twix blanket & featherbed in great hast:  
Bring word where the owner may’t regain  
And she’ll reward you for your pain.

<sup>5</sup> C. P. Maurenbrecher, *Europäische Kaufleute*. 2 vols. (Dortmund: Harenberg, 1980), 1:15, 152.





Richard Newton, “The Cries of London,” broadside in the Pepysian Collection, Cambridge University Library. Reproduced by permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

Newton’s woodcut “Cries of London,” which we can date no more precisely than the seventeenth century, and the sheet of hawkers from the workshop of Hogenberg were not intended for children, their bawdy texts argue. Such ribaldry evokes the insults which, by “rude custom,” hawkers and other traders swapped in the street, driven by a spirit of competition and trading in a Rabelaisian fascination with the excretions of the body. The best-known and most literary example of this type of banter is Samuel Johnson’s; when a Thames boatman attacked him with some coarse raillery (unrecorded), the great man responded: “Sir, your wife, *under pretense of keeping a bawdy house*, is a receiver of stolen goods.”<sup>6</sup>

Nor was Marcellus Laroon’s *Cryes of the City of London Drawne after the Life* likely to be the first picture book of hawkers for children, in view of how it was advertised, who owned it, and what it cost to buy. First published by Pierce Tempest in 1687 in an edition of forty prints, Laroon’s *Cryes* was advertised in the *London Gazette* for

<sup>6</sup> James Boswell, *Boswell’s Life of Johnson*, ed. George Birbeck Hill, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934–1950), 4:26.

28–31 May 1688 as, “The Cryes and Habits of London, newly drawn after the Life, in great Variety of Actions, Curiously Engraven upon 50 Copper Plates, fit for the Ingenious and Lovers of Art.” This popular book became the single most powerful influence on the illustration of children’s Cries in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when its images were plagiarized by virtually every juvenile book publisher working in the genre. But were its owners and readers indeed “the Ingenious and Lovers of Art,” whoever they were?

The education, interests, and wealth of the six people we know to have owned the *Cryes of the City of London* suggest that they did. These individuals, who acquired the book for their libraries or cabinets of prints, conjure up not a single class of collectors (as one author of this essay previously asserted), but two such classes.<sup>7</sup> Four were successful professionals and intellectuals: Samuel Pepys (1633–1703), Joseph Addison (1672–1719), Narcissus Luttrell (1657–1732), and Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach (1683–1734), who, in *London in 1710 from the Travels of Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach*, describes walking into a print shop to buy Laroon’s engravings:

After this we went into a print dealer’s and bought the “Cryes of London” in seventy-four sheets for half a guinea. In these engravings all those persons who hawk cheap wares, crying them in the street are represented from life with the words that they cry. They are similar to the “Cris de Paris.” One can also obtain them with notes, for the curious tones that they call or sing can be freakishly imitated on the violin. They had no copies left of this last variety with the notes.<sup>8</sup>

Pepys, Luttrell, von Uffenbach, and Addison are remarkably homogeneous, intellectually and socially. All are men (by contrast, women were the chief consumers of the first English novels). All had university educations (three attended Cambridge) and cultivated politics, literature, and the arts. They owned personal librar-

<sup>7</sup> Sean Shesgreen, *The Criers and Hawkers of London: Engravings and Drawings by Marcellus Laroon* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 39.

<sup>8</sup> Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach, *London in 1710 from the Travels of Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach*, trans. and ed. W. H. Quarrell and Mary Mare (London: Faber and Faber, 1934), pp. 164–165.



ies and collected books; they wrote as well as read. They belonged to that coterie of bibliophiles, intellectuals, and connoisseurs who, by their appetite for drawings, etchings, and engravings, helped nurture a native school of printmaking after the restoration of Charles II. And, all were well off; in Daniel Defoe's sevenfold division of society from his *Review* (25 June 1709), they were "the middle Sort, who live well," or even "the Rich, who live very plentifully."

But the *Cryes* also surfaces in the libraries of William Cavendish (1640–1707), first Duke of Devonshire, and Sir John Mill (1681–1706), fourth Baronet of Mottisfont, who had it as a gift from its chief engraver, John Savage (active 1687–1700). So the book must have attracted the attention of the aristocracy, Defoe's "Great who live profusely."<sup>9</sup> No one in this period was greater or lived more profusely than the first Dukes of Marlborough, one of whom acquired, for the library at Blenheim Palace, forty-nine of the pen-and-ink sketches from which the *Cryes* was engraved.<sup>10</sup>

The price of Laroon's *Cryes* confirms what its advertisement and fragmentary record of ownership suggest; the book cost half a guinea when a laborer in the building trades made between eight and ten pence daily.<sup>11</sup> A volume so dear was not bought for or entrusted to children, who were unlikely to take good care of it—though adults certainly showed children picturesque illustrated books like this.<sup>12</sup> Even for an eager and wealthy bibliophile of Stuart or Georgian London, this book, with its formally complex designs like "The merry Milk Maid," was a costly gem to add to a carefully cultivated library.

The publishing history of Laroon's *Cryes of the City of London* is murky, despite recent scholarship, the best of it by Robert Raines, a medical doctor with a remarkable talent for archival research.

<sup>9</sup> George Edward Cokayne, *Complete Baronetage*, 5 vols. (Exeter, England: Pollard, 1900–1906), p. 133. Pepys's Laroon is in the Pepysian Library, Magdalene College, Cambridge University; Luttrell's copy is in the British Museum; Mill's copy is in the Sterling Library, University of London; and Cavendish's copy is in the Pierpont Morgan Library.

<sup>10</sup> A broad selection of these drawings is reproduced in Shesgreen's *Criers and Hawkers of London*.

<sup>11</sup> Phelps Brown and Shelia V. Hopkins, "Seven Centuries of Building Wages," *Essays in Economic History*, ed. E. M. Carus-Wilson, 3 vols. (London: Arnold, 1954–1962), 2:177.

<sup>12</sup> Andrea Immel, curator of the Cotsen Children's Library, has brought this point to our attention by evidencing portraits showing adults leafing through folio volumes of prints with children; she suggests that this practice probably grew out of the fact that in the late 1600s and early 1700s, there was not much in print for young people and the modern notion of matching age-appropriate material to developmental stages had not yet emerged.



Title page of Marcellus Laroon's *Cries of the City of London Drawne after the Life* (London: Henry Overton, 1733). Courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington.

The seventeenth-century bookseller Pierce Tempest, who commissioned the drawings and had them cut by John Savage and other (unknown) engravers in his atelier, published the book in five editions between 1687 and 1709, during which its contents grew from forty to seventy-four copper plates. After 1709, Tempest sold the book's plates to Henry Overton, who reissued it from "the White Horse without Newgate" about 1711.<sup>13</sup> Overton may also have reissued it in 1713, 1731, and 1733; the dates on the engraved title pages of all copies issued from the White Horse have been recut or disfigured, making them impossible to decipher. From Overton the book passed into the hands of Robert Sayer, who reissued it in serial form with eight new designs, including a new title page making special appeal to English Francophiles: *The Cries of London in Six parts. Being a Collection of Seventy two Humourous Prints drawn from the Life by that Celebrated Artist Laroon, with additions & Improvements by L. P. Boitard*.<sup>14</sup> Republished around 1760, this new edition features plates that have been reworked to modernize hawkers' costumes, especially the hats and shoes of women vendors but sometimes even their breasts and faces, as in the case of the new décolletage on the milkmaid, "improved" by the French engraver Boitard. From Sayer the book passed to R. H. Laurie, who reissued it in 1821, after which the copper plates vanished, bringing the book's publishing history to an end.

Darton claims that Andrew W. Tuer (1838–1900) reprinted Laroon's edition of 1711 but gives no title or date. Actually Tuer reproduced all kinds of images of street hawkers in two books, *London Cries with Six Charming Children* (1883) and *Old London Street Cries and the Cries of Today with Heaps of Quaint Cuts* (1885). The latter is a rambling, antiquarian account of the Cries illustrated by images reproduced from the work of various artists. Five of these images—reformatted, miniaturized, and notably sentimentalized—come from a source Tuer identifies as the "'Habits & Cryes of the City of London, drawne after the Life,' . . . containing seventy-four plates, drawn by Marcellus Laroon [Lauron], and republished in 1711."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Robert Raines, *Marcellus Laroon* (London: Routledge, 1966), pp. 95–97.

<sup>14</sup> Karen Beall, *Cries and Itinerant Traders / Kaufrufe und Strassenhändler*, (Hamburg: Hauswedell, 1975), p. 136.

<sup>15</sup> Andrew Tuer, *Old London Street Cries and the Cries of Today with Heaps of Quaint Cuts* (London, 1885), p. 6.

So much for Darton's sins of commission, which have survived two revisions, no doubt because they are so venial. But what of his sins of omission, which a new and spreading interest in children's literature invites us to address?<sup>16</sup> In drawing our eye to Marshall's "London Crys" but failing to write about it, Darton provokes but does not satisfy our curiosity. Is it possible to know, even in a general sense, what this mysterious title was, using, as a guide, the economics of the ballad and print trades uncovered by scholars like Tessa Watt and Alexander Globe?<sup>17</sup> Marshall's "London Crys" cannot have been Laroon's ensemble of prints, because not only was it Tempest's property in 1708, but also, fetching a half guinea per copy, it belonged in a different league entirely from the cheap "Chapmen's Books, Broadsides or Half-Sheets" that were the stock-in-trade of publishers to travelling hawkers. Indeed Marshall's title was emphatically *not* a true Cries of London featuring engraved images accompanied by matching texts. The cheapest of these—for example, the untitled flysheet mentioned above—cost about sixpence, putting them well beyond the means of country or city hawkers, no matter what their wholesale discount or "allowances to dealers" might have been.<sup>18</sup>

Marshall's "Crys" was a broadside or half-sheet ditty recording the shouts of London's street vendors, most probably the "Cries of London," a formulary ballad "that some stitcher, Weaver, spendthrift, or Fidler, hath shuffled or slubbered up," to borrow the pamphleteer Thomas Nashe's satirical caricature of the "pot" poets (versifiers inspired by pots of strong beer) who made their livelihood by such writing.<sup>19</sup> The cheapest and most accessible form of print in the 1600s and 1700s, these sheets retailed for a penny in 1641: "For a peny you may have all the Newes of England, of Murders, Flouds, Witches, Fires, Tempests, and what not, in one of

<sup>16</sup> For a short history of children's literature as an academic topic, see Beverly Lyon Clark's "Kiddie Lit in Academe," in *Profession 1996* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1996), pp. 149–157.

<sup>17</sup> See Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety 1550–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), and Alexander Globe, *Peter Stent London Printseller c. 1642–65* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985).

<sup>18</sup> Globe, *Peter Stent*, p. 28.

<sup>19</sup> Natascha Würzbach, *The Rise of the English Street Ballad, 1550–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 258.

Martin Parkers Ballads.”<sup>20</sup> They sold to hawkers at a deep discount in quantities as small as seven, costing threepence, and as big as a ream, going, in 1630, for thirteen shillings and fourpence, that is, a third of a penny per ballad.<sup>21</sup>

The broadside Cries, the common property of printers who supplied ballad sellers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, are illustrated by the Huntington Library’s “Cries of London. Printed and Sold at No. 4 Aldermay Church Yard.” It carries two illustrations, one featuring a peepshow man and the other a knick-knack vendor (or a cooper in different versions). The ready-at-hand cuts are accompanied by a ready-at-hand rhyme offering an account of London’s street shouts condensed into nine or eleven stanzas, each ending with refrains. Rhymes like this, transformations of one another or permutations of the same basic elements, as Peter Burke has shown, could be easily varied to reflect the current state of London’s street markets—or, for that matter, to accommodate any topical subject.<sup>22</sup>

An earlier version of this ballad, which takes its title from the refrain, “I have fresh cheese and creame,” is preserved in the Pepysian Collection at Cambridge and dates from about 1612; like all other literary renderings of the Cries of London, it concerns itself chiefly with what people consumed, offering a vivid register of social life in Jacobean London:

Buy a Matte for a Bedde.  
New Mustles, Lilly white.  
Buy a fine Tinder box.  
What Kitchinstuffe hay ye Maydes?  
I hay white young Leekes.  
Hay ’ny Dublets?  
I haue ripe Cowcumbers ripe.  
Hav ’ny Cornes ay’r feete.  
I have fresh Cheese and Creame  
I have fresh Cheese and Creame.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Henry Peacham, *The Worth of a Penny* (London, 1641).

<sup>21</sup> Watt, *Cheap Print*, p. 12.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot, England: Wildwood, 1988).

<sup>23</sup> Hyder Edward Rollins, *The Pepys Ballads*, 8 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929–1932), 1:xxx.

Most surviving versions of this ballad appear to have been published between 1747 and 1759, when they went by “The Cries of London. Tune, *The Merry Christ-Church Bells*,” a melody well known to all buyers, presumably. The three extant copies, issued in three different editions from three different locations in London, reflect communal ownership of the poem. It came from the “Printing-Office in Bow Church-Yard, London” (connecting it with Cluer Dicey); from “No. 41, Long-lane, West-Smithfield, London” (connecting it with John Evans); and from “No. 4, Aldermary Church Yard” (connecting it with the John Marshall active in the middle of the eighteenth century, whose tie to the John Marshall active in the early eighteenth century, about whom Darton writes, is a puzzle).

One of the set-piece stanzas from the Huntington copy shows how dramatically the food markets of London had expanded from the seventeenth century to the eighteenth, especially with regard to fish. The verse also testifies to the abiding misery caused by aching feet, cursed by fashion and badly made shoes:

Here's fine herrings, eight a groat.  
Here's codlings, pies, and tarts.  
New mackerel I have to sell.  
Come buy my Wellfleet oysters, ho!  
Come buy my whittings fine and new.  
Wives, shall I mend your husbands horns?  
I'll grind your knives to please your wives,  
And very nicely cut your corns.  
Maids have you any hair to sell,  
Either flaxen, black, or brown?  
Let none despise the merry merry cries  
Of famous London-town.

It is difficult to imagine that children would have taken much interest in feet tormented by corns or in the buying and selling of human hair. This catalogue of fish, flesh, fruits, and vegetables (exotic by the standards of an age subsisting on bread, cheese, and small beer) would have instead intrigued adult readers—especially the rural and the poor—who looked to broadside ballads for news or comment about politics and domestic life, such as the dazzling array of consumer goods that had revolutionized shopping in early



modern London. Stanzas making light of adultery would hardly have been aimed at or even permitted into the hands of children in an age far more didactic and morally vigilant than our own.



If Marshall's ballad "Crys" of 1708 and its successors were not aimed at boys and girls, what was the name of the first London Cries created for and marketed to young people, and when did such a publication appear? A surprisingly precise answer to these questions surfaces in a notice from the *Public Advertiser* of 21 December 1754, just ten years after the debut of the first children's book (identified by "the realistic school of historians" as John Newbery's *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book*, issued in 1744).<sup>24</sup> That advertisement reads:

This Day is published, From four Copper-plates neatly engraved, each containing 12 Prints, of The most humorous CRIES of London; in which the different Attitudes of those People are described, Price 1s. or 3d. each in Sheets, or stitched, in Little Books; likewise made up in Boxes or Rowlers, at 1s. a Piece, very fit to amuse Children and help them forward in their Learning. Sold by J. Kirk, Engraver, in St. Paul's Church-yard, and other Print and Toyshops in London, Westminster, &c. with Allowance to Dealers. Also all Sorts of English and Dutch Toys, where a Grotto and Water-works are to be seen free. Engraving of Seals in Stone, Steel, and Silver, also Silver and Copper-plates, in the neatest Manner, and at the most reasonable Rates.

This advertisement offering "little Books" indicates that John Kirk (died ca. 1762) and his family sold four different Cries in four different formats: as sheets, on rollers, in boxes, and stitched together to make miniature volumes, each featuring a dozen different hawkers. Until now, only one of Kirk's four Cries has been recorded, and

<sup>24</sup> The phrase is drawn from Anne Pellowski's *The World of Children's Literature* (New York: Bowker, 1968), p. 347; Pellowski follows Darton closely. For more information on John Newbery, see S. Roscoe, *John Newbery and His Successors 1740–1818* (Wormley, England: Five Owls Press, 1973).



John Kirk, *The Cries of London Engraved and Sold by J. Kirk, in St. Paul's Church Yard*, page pasted into inside front cover of volume. Facing page shows a pastry seller hawking "a Longtail Pig, or a Short tail Pig, or a Pig without a tail, a Sow Pig, or a Boar Pig, or a Pig with a Curling tail." Courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington.

even this book's title has been a mystery. Karen Beall, in her encyclopedic survey documenting pictures of hawkers from around the world, records a nameless London Cries, with ten illustrations, as "Engraved & Sold by I Kirkins [sic] St. Pauls Church Yard," that she dates as "before 1757" and locates in the collection of Elisabeth Ball.<sup>25</sup> The Ball copy carries a fascinating inscription: "The Geift of Mr. Manning to his niece Hannah Palmer new years day 1757." This dedication conjures up the true audience of Kirk's books: not children, but anxious mothers and fathers and aunts and uncles lifting themselves and their sons and daughters and nieces and nephews out of illiteracy, through educational methods less and less oral or communal and ever more bookish.

<sup>25</sup> This miniature volume is Er6 in Beall's *Cries and Itinerant Trades*, p. 135. Ball's collection of Cries was originally purchased by her father from the legendary French book dealer Gumuchian, whose sale catalogue is now a standard reference tool for scholars working in this field. A knowledgeable and enthusiastic collector, Ball has written a useful essay on her collection: "The Moving Market or Cries of London Town," in *Bibliophile in the Nursery: A Bookman's Treasury of Collector's Lore on Old and Rare Children's Books*, ed. William Targ (New York: World, 1957). A portion of her library went to the Morgan during her lifetime; after her death, more than 8,000 books and manuscripts were donated to the Lilly Library.

Happily, another miniature Kirk Cries, with a title page in good condition, has surfaced in the Virginia Warren Collection, now housed in Indiana University's Lilly Library. The twelve illustrations of this book differ from the ten in Ball's miniature; its title, in the form of a label pasted to the inside of its front cover, reads: *The Cryes of London Engraved and Sold by J. Kirk, in St. Paul's Church Yard. Also all sorts of English and Dutch Toys. Engraving of Seals in Stone, Steel or Silver— Also Silver & Copper Plates in the neatest manner and at the most Reasonable Rates. a Grotto & Water Works to be seen free.*<sup>26</sup> Another undocumented Kirk Cries, featuring the same twelve engravings as the Warren *Cryes* but in a completely different format, has come to light in the Cotsen Children's Library. This London Cries appears as a scroll mounted on spindles. Housed in a Dutch floral paper box, the Cotsen panorama is surely the item referred to in Kirk's advertisement as made up in "Rowlers"; it illustrates how closely allied bookselling and toy making were in the eighteenth century.

This alliance is illuminated by another item tied to the London Cries that the entrepreneurial Kirk sold. London's Guildhall Library owns a pack of engraved playing cards bearing pictorial representations of street hawkers.<sup>27</sup> A number of these images reappear in the Kirk panoramas and miniature books that have survived, but the overlap is not complete, for none of the designs in an abecedary in the Cotsen Children's Library (discussed below) appear in the cards. It is interesting to note that the six of hearts, showing a man knocking down nine volumes of London Cries (a scenario that is not replicated elsewhere), argues that depictions of hawkers may well have been popular among that class of collectors who bought at auction. The auctioneer's patter, "Gentlemen, nine Volumes of the London Cries, very fitt to amuse Children of all Sizes; two Shillings They'r a Going; a Going; a Going," provokes a male bidder in the well-to-do audience to jump up with an offer of "3 Pence more." The point about links between books, panoramas,

<sup>26</sup> The "American drugstore" character of Kirk's Golden Fan and other London bookshops of its ilk is illuminated by the last page of the Warren *Cryes*, where an advertisement offers readers "A neat Black Plaister which applied to any Small Wound or Cut Heals it without any further trouble by it's sticking Quality. Made by Woodcock."

<sup>27</sup> The Guildhall pack of cards is incomplete, lacking the ten of clubs and the king of hearts. A facsimile of this pack was published by Harry Margary in association with the Guildhall in 1978, and carries a useful introductory note by Ralph Hyde. A private collector in Baltimore, Maryland, owns another set of these cards.



“Nice Yorkshire Limon Cakes, no more than a halfpenny a piece. q r. Engraved & Sold by I. Kirk in St Pauls Church Yard.” Engraving from an abecedary version of Kirk’s *Cries of London* mounted on wooden rollers and enclosed in a glass-faced box covered in Dutch floral paper. Cotsen Children’s Library, Princeton University.

and playing cards is of some practical importance to modern librarians and bibliographers inclined to exclude playthings like these from their collections and catalogues, fostering a distorted view of the way such objects were created, marketed, and consumed in earlier centuries. For, in addition to suggesting the Cries' appeal to collectors buying at auction, this one card confirms that children comprised at least part of the audience at which the Cries were aimed.

This protean Cries by Kirk takes at least one other shape that must be recorded here before we turn to analyze the aims and contents of these books from Kirk's shop, the Golden Fan. The Cotsen Library includes another previously undocumented panorama, a strip of twelve engravings attached to wooden rollers in a glass-faced box covered in Dutch floral paper. Unlike the earlier Kirk *Cries*, this panorama is an abecedary; each frame carries a hawker together with two upper-case letters of the alphabet, except for the last design, which shows a chair mender and "YZWX." The continuous strip has no title page, but its splendid ninth image, "Nice Yorkshire Limon Cakes, no more than a halfpenny a piece Q R," does the truly important work of such a page; it serves as an advertisement, guiding prospective buyers to the Golden Fan "in St Pauls Church Yard."



Kirk's books and panoramas, like every London Cries, depend for their unique effect on a marriage between texts and images. In the marriage that Kirk has arranged, pictures rule over words, which are relegated to ribbons that float above the vendors' heads. The pictures are indeed cut in "the neatest manner" that Kirk touts as the hallmark of his workshop. Their precision is reflected in how the images are framed—by single, double, or triple lines serving as mats to impart a patina of "art" to their subjects. It also appears in the readability of the individual figures, some of which have a real-life quality to them. For example, the fishwife selling a wine quart of "perrewinckles" is a black woman, the first person of color to appear in the London Cries.

Though Kirk created a small number of original designs (his "Hot Ginger-bread, Smoking Hot," with its keen eye for technological

novelty, is not poached from any other work), he copied profusely the work of other engravers and artists, following the common (if disdained) practice of printsellers active before the Hogarth Act of 1735. He lifted designs from the popular prints of William Hogarth and Jacob Amigoni (a Venetian artist who visited England in the first part of the eighteenth century), but he borrowed most copiously from Laroon's *Cries of the City of London*.<sup>28</sup> Of the thirty-four images in the two surviving Kirk Cries configured as books and panoramas, a third come from Laroon's *Cries*; Kirk's images are also conscientiously close imitations of the originals.<sup>29</sup>

Kirk's texts, confined to banderoles and brief in compass, are indebted to riddle books; they have a "nursery-rhyme" flavor more oral than written. Some are tongue-twisters, playful word games, and nonsense rhymes, like "a Longtail Pig, or a Short tail Pig, or a Pig without a tail, a Sow Pig, or a Boar Pig, or a Pig with a Curling tail." The "pigs" this pie vendor sells are, like the "pig" stolen and eaten by Tom, the piper's son, pastries in the shape of swine with currants stuffed in their eyes and belly.<sup>30</sup> Others introduce basic concepts in weights, measures, and currency, such as "Fine Wood Strawberryys, six pence a pottle s t" (a pottle was a liquid measure of two quarts and any vessel holding that volume), or more complex problems, such as "Two a groat & four for sixpence Whitings" and "Two Pound three Half pence three Pound two pence large Potatoes." The chief purpose of these legends, clear from their content and spelled out in Kirk's title, is "to amuse Children and help them forward in their Learning." This statement, putting "amusement" before "learning," makes Kirk's "shilling merriment" one of the

<sup>28</sup> For more information about Jacob Amigoni, see Dwight Miller's *Street Cries and Itinerant Tradesmen in European Prints* (Stanford: Stanford Art Gallery, 1970).

<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, his borrowings are not slavish in every case; certain images carry innovations that do not appear in Laroon. Some of his designs add backgrounds, like the nondescript house that the old bellows mender stands before or the row of distinctive public buildings that form a city skyline springing up behind the potato seller. Other images depict vendors' customers, a realistic twist not found in Laroon. In an illustrated Kirk frontispiece, Waltho Van Clutterbanck, a quack doctor, performs with his merry andrew before a rowdy audience of eleven people; among them, a young woman ogles a man to the disapproval of an older lady, another woman seems poised to rob her neighbor, and a mischievous youth climbs onto the makeshift stage of the two performers. Van Clutterbanck, like other London quacks, calls himself the "Seventh Son of the Seventh Son of the unborn High German Doctor Chymist & Dentrificator," to capitalize on the folk belief that occult powers of healing arise from birth order. For more information on this figure, see C.J.S Thompson, *Quacks of Old London* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1993), p. 190.

<sup>30</sup> Lapides, *The Cries of London; The Cries of New York*, p. v.



first picture books for children to link schooling with pleasure and to value both above morality and religion.<sup>31</sup>



Kirk's books and panoramas caught the covetous eye of Edward Ryland, who then began to publish a set of rival Cries, which he sold from his shop in the Old Bailey around 1760. By that time, the Cries of London was firmly established as a children's genre. Writing to her husband in 1755, a Mrs. Boscawen explained how she had amused their son during his recovery from his smallpox vaccination: "The chief service I can do him is to provide him with such amusements as will keep him still and quiet. So that, instead of waggons, carts and post chaises, we shall deal altogether in mills, pictures, dolls, London cries, and such sedentary amusements." Her casual reference to "London cries," as a thing well-known to her husband, suggests that images of hawkers—either prints originally aimed at adults but recycled for young people (like Laroon's) or books designed for children (like Kirk's and Ryland's volumes)—were familiar amusements in the nursery by the letter's date.<sup>32</sup>

When great libraries first began to collect children's books seriously in the 1950s, the second volume of Ryland's Cries alone was believed to have survived, preserved in imperfect copies at the Lilly Library, UCLA, and the Morgan Library, whose splendid *Early Children's Books and Their Illustration* laments the disappearance of the first volume.<sup>33</sup> Since the publication of *Early Children's Books* in 1975, how-

<sup>31</sup> See Joyce Whalley and Tessa Chester, *A History of Children's Book Illustration* (London: John Murray with the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1988], p. 94. Whalley and Chester point out that *The Butterfly's Ball and the Grasshopper's Feast*, published by John Harris in 1807, is usually credited with beginning "the comparatively new ideas that juvenile reading could be purely pleasurable" (p. 42).

<sup>32</sup> Frances Boscawen, *Admiral's Wife; Being the Life and Letters of the Hon. Mrs. Edward Boscawen, from 1719 to 1761*, ed. Cecil Aspinall-Oglander (New York and London: Staples Press, 1949), p. 170.

<sup>33</sup> *Early Children's Books and Their Illustration* (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1975), p. 170. The Guildhall Library also owns a copy of vol. 2 of Ryland's Cries with the following advertisement tipped in. "This Day is published, Price 1s. plain, 2s. coloured, adorned with a humorous Frontispiece, and printed on superfine Paper, Volume II. of The Cries of London; or child's Moral instructor, for the Use of Schools, private Families, Governesses, Tutors, &c. Decorated with 32 Plates elegantly engraved. With a Moral and emblematical Description of each particular Story. Intended at once to make Instruction pleasing, and unite Humour with Decency. Printed and sold by Edward Ryland in the Old Bailey; and to

ever, two copies of the first volume of Ryland's *Cries* have come to light, one in the Opie Collection, recently acquired by the Bodleian Library, and another in the Cotsen Children's Library. More surprising still, a third volume of this book, "Decorated with 34 Copper Plates, Elegantly Engraved," has surfaced in the Guildhall Library, London. This book, the last (we dare venture) of the set, looks like the item promised by Ryland in an obsequious advertisement in the Lilly copy of the second volume: "The Editor of these Volumes craves Permission to return his grateful Acknowledgments for the favorable Reception this Little Work has already met with; and as the *Cries of London* are so very extensive, he proposes, with all convenient Expedition, to compleat this Undertaking in one more Volume."<sup>34</sup>

Ryland's three volumes, as well as offering many more copper plates than Kirk's, were also available plain or colored, making it the first children's *Cries* with tinted plates to appear in England. Selling for a shilling uncolored or two shillings colored, these improving miniatures were all called *The Cries of London; or, Child's Moral Instructor: for the Use of Schools, Private Families, Governesses, Tutors, &c. Decorated with 32 [34 in vol. 3] Copper Plates, Elegantly Engraved; with a Moral and emblematical Description of each particular Story; Intended at once to make Instruction Pleasing, and unite Humour with Decency*, a long-winded title that shows clearly enough the purpose and audience of the set. In marked contrast to Kirk's sets, however, instruction here flourishes very much at the expense of delight. His figures, unable in themselves to carry much moral freight (and like Kirk's mainly plagiarized from Laroon's), are overwhelmed by seven stanzas each of doggerel verse that take no interest in them at all, except as pretexts for moralizing.

The poems usually begin with the figure and then proceed to various species of good and bad behavior more or less by free association. The singing-glass vendor is typical. His toys are proper rewards for studious boys; they can "trumpet" the praises of such

---

be had of R. Baldwin and S. Crowder, in Paternoster-row; J. Wilkie, in St Paul's Church-Yard, and of all the Booksellers in Town and Country." No source is indicated but the notice is dated "1766" by hand.

<sup>34</sup> The Guildhall copy of vol. 3 of Ryland's *Cries* is imperfect, lacking pages 3, 4, 15, 16, 47, 48, and all after 62, as well as plates xvii, xviii, xxiv, xxxii, and xxxiii of the book's thirty-four plates. The plates in vol. 3 are engraved a little more elegantly than those in vols. 1 and 2; figures and backgrounds are rendered with more care and precision.

“The Mountebank,” illustration from *The Cries of London; or, Child’s Moral Instructor*, Vol. II (London: Edward Ryland, [ca. 1760]). Reproduced by permission of The Pierpont Morgan Library.



boys, who don’t “sing away” their time; recreation is good in moderation, but those who pursue nothing else will grow up vicious; a bad reputation is a curse; fame, like glass, cannot be mended. The performances of the “gallantre-show man” lead to reflections on the stories he represents, which depict the “sad events” that befall the thoughtless. The shows depend on false appearances and effects of light and dark; the reader should follow truth and light, and avoid the dark.

Often the versifier associates criers with vices more or less at random. A mountebank may plausibly represent fraud, and a laceseller may “wound the infant mind” by selling underwear adorned with sexual mottoes.<sup>35</sup> But the rabbit seller is made an atheist, the aspara-

<sup>35</sup> No record of her offending garter’s mottoes survives, though another London Cries confirms the fad of decorating undergarments with love’s adages:

Sweet posies on them you will find,  
All pleasing still to love,  
And every one, say what you will,  
Such mottos must approve.

The verse is drawn from a set of unidentified Cries of London pasted into an extra-illustrated album of that title in Harvard’s Houghton Library.

gus seller an overcharging cheat, and the lobster-woman a snuff addict, apparently for no better reason than that the author takes a notion to censure these vices. In sum, the world he evokes is one of reward and punishment relentlessly conditioned on good or bad behavior. The cherry seller shows us that good children can reap “golden fruits,” and the jack-line seller warns that bad ones can expect a rope on the back or around the neck. Neglect your prayers and you’ll be “rabitted”; deviate from modesty and you’ll be “lac’d.”

However, there is something a little suspect, at least to modern ears, about the morality the poems recommend. They say little about charity or self-sacrifice; they grow most eager on such activities as combine the moral and the prudential, especially hard work and thrift, which poor criers are repeatedly made either to induce or exemplify. So, for example, the pea seller “thinks no toil too much” if “she can but rub” through life; and the sufficiency of her product to the wants of the “lab’ring man” and his family shows

How easily, if we’d but think  
Our life can be sustain’d,  
And yet, for only meat and drink,  
How oft’ the pocket’s drain’d.

The strawberry girl, an “industrious maid,” gets up before sunrise to pick her fruit; she is “throng’d [by] . . . ambient Zephyrs” as she walks the street, and her perfect health teaches us to “Despise the follies of the age,” since “what nature does is best.” Likewise, the seller of save-alls (devices for burning candle-ends) “reads a lesson” on the importance of saving. The buyer of kitchen-stuff provokes in the poet an elaborate series of reflections on thrift: “No waste no want’s”; “rare oeconomy” is the same as “prosperity”; the seeds of thrift should be sown in “infant bosoms”; overspending offends heaven; children too delicate to eat grease would starve, as grease alone suffices to “satisfy the wants of man”; and when the reader comes to “command,” she should dismiss from her employment any “idle sluts” who waste.

The poet is especially impressed by the hard work of criers who mend things, probably because such work neatly combines thrift and industry; he singles out the chair-mender, describing him at greater length than any other crier. This poor man trudges through

the streets, mending chairs no matter what they are made of, and is “contented with a trifling gain.” He prompts the poet to reflect:

How serviceable are such men,  
Who turn what’s *old* to *new*!  
A task which scarcely one in ten  
Industriously will do.

The poet goes on to contrast such men with an “idle race” that does “slovenly work”—apparently shopkeepers, since hard-working chair-menders are never found in shops.

The author appears to assume that the accompanying pictures will provide a sufficient quantity of pleasure, so that he need not trouble himself to provide any in his verse. When, now and then, he offers us wit, he seems to have in mind rather the parents, governesses, and tutors who will buy the book than the children who will read (or be read) it. The first of his criers, an almanac seller, leads him to list some contemporary astrologers; the fact that one of these, named Partridge, was “*killed* before he *died* / By Dublin’s witty *Dean*” must have puzzled the great majority of his young readers. The image for this plate features two of Ryland’s modifications of Laroon: in the background of the print is the dome of St. Paul’s Cathedral; prominent in the basket the almanac seller carries is a volume titled “Ryland’s Almanack.”

Aside from thrift and industry, the virtue Ryland’s writer most frequently recommends is obedience to parents, tutors, and school authorities. Children should allow their tutors to discern which “science” (that is, learning) most suits them; they should mind their friends as the chair-mender does his business; they should regard their schools as analogous to the cages that protect the hawker’s chickens from “the spit or pot.” The poem on the chimney sweeper is a little essay on parental love:

Your little toys they chearful give,  
It shews the love they bear;  
Your study only is to live  
To recompence their care.

Adult readers may have applauded this sentiment even as, in their eagerness to “shew the love they bear,” they purchased Ryland’s

volume. But such is the untethered didacticism of the author that he cannot resist schooling even them in the important business of properly arranging reward and punishment: cherries should reward good children, but those who write sloppily

Will seldom, very seldom, find  
The sweets of any cherries.  
Yet, if thro' pure affection's sake,  
At any time they shou'd  
'Tis wrong:—a diff'rence all shou'd make,  
Between the bad and good.

Undeviating attention to this difference is the defining quality of the *Cries of London*; or, *Child's Moral Instructor* and many of its successors.



Whatever the disparity between Ryland's tracts admonishing "infant minds" about the perils of provocative lingerie and Kirk's primers using nonsense limericks to delight young people with reading, these publishers' books together rocketed the London Cries into the orbit of children's volumes, where they began to supplant the Bible, *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Divine Emblems*, and the "good godly" pamphlets used to teach young people to read before education shifted from religious doctrine to moral improvement, educational advancement, and social betterment.<sup>36</sup> In the second half of the eighteenth century, the formative years of children's book making in England, when the growth of modern private life and the reordering of the family around children began to fuel the trade in small books and books for small people, sixteen of the twenty-five London Cries published in England targeted children. And in the Victorian period, 150 out of 180 London Cries served youngsters, for whom they were configured as broadsides, big books and small, ensembles of prints, cards, and toys of all sorts.

Practical in their aims or sentimental in their bents, these printed materials make up a sub-history of young people's literature in the Victorian age, when children's books became an integral part of rearing families, up and down the social ladder. A few are adorned

<sup>36</sup> Whalley and Chester, *History of Children's Book Illustration*, pp. 14, 36.



with original, colorful, and striking illustrations, like “The Italian Pedlar,” “The Fruiterer,” and “The Old Clothesman” (another caricatured Jew) from *Figures of Fun; or, Comical Pictures and Droll Verses, for Little Girls & Boys, Part 1* (London: Charles Tilt, 1833).<sup>37</sup> Visually a precursor of the fanciful and imaginative tales that make their debut in the Victorian epoch and culminate in Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland* (1865), Tilt’s *Figures of Fun* offers brightly colored designs, done in the manner of Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1537–1593). These designs are remarkable for their surreal idiom, as well as for their devotion to fun, unqualified by the least touch of what Darton calls “grown-up-ness” or “be-good-ness,” whether moral, religious, or scholastic.

But Tilt’s “comical” and “droll” book, translating Kirk’s witty word play into delightfully quixotic imagery, is a rare specimen. In the nineteenth century, the prevailing movement in children’s Cries is not in the direction of fanciful images and whimsical texts (although Tilt did publish a second part to *Figures of Fun* about the same time he issued part one). The movement is rather towards Ryland’s aggressive moral aims, exemplified by the Newbery family’s *The Cries of London, as They are daily exhibited in the Streets; with an epigram in verse, adapted to each*, the text with which we began this essay. The didacticism of Newbery’s volume appears in its commentary to “Knives to grind, Razors or Scissars to grind?” which, despite its comic touch, is almost prayer-like in tone and has nothing at all to do with the image it accompanies; instead, it is composed in the voice of the versifier speaking on his own behalf:

O Thou, whate’er thy name, in blest abodes,  
 Who grind’st the knives of Jove and all the Gods,  
 Smooth let my Verses flow as oil, or rather,  
 Like thine own Razor-Strap of greazy leather;  
 Sharp be their edge, as edge of sharpest knife,  
 That in these moral pages to the life  
 I may descry, and closely trim each truth,  
 And be the Whetstone of the rising youth.

<sup>37</sup> One of the few surviving copies of *Figures of Fun*, preserved in the Lilly Library, bears an inscription that confirms our views about the status and gender of those who bought and read such books; its dedication reads: “Miss Charlotte Elizabeth Hoddle A present from Sidmouth by Aunt Sarah.”



“The Old Clothesman,” a colored illustration from *Figures of Fun; or, Comical Pictures and Droll Verses, for Little Girls & Boys, Part 1* (London: Charles Tilt, 1833).  
Courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington.

Another aspect of the didacticism of this Cries and others like it, pointed out by James Steward, is that they explore a range of callings in domestic service, shop apprenticeships, and the manual arts open to the children of the middle and lower orders.<sup>38</sup> They also disclose which trades are “shameful” and so barred to youths from respectable families.

If later London Cries do not follow moral directions like this, they often take an educational tack of the sort that Kirk pioneered. This type of school-book publication is illustrated by Thomas Howell Jones’s *London Cries or Addition Made Easy!!!* (c. 1836), an arithmetic table featuring simple numbers, formulas, concepts, and word problems configured as a broadsheet, but also sugar-coated as a pack of sum cards and a jigsaw puzzle. London Cries for children following the moral, educational, and entertainment paradigms established by Ryland and Kirk thrived until the 1880s, when the Industrial Revolution blackened every facet of life in England’s capital, and curiosity about London’s “lower orders,” once the preeminent domain of the Cries, was usurped, scrutinized, and analyzed by the emerging class of professionals we now call social scientists.

<sup>38</sup> James Christen Steward, *The New Child: British Art and the Origins of Modern Childhood* (Berkeley: University Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, 1995), p. 175.