GEORGE MUNRO, "THE PUBLISHER"

By A. J. CROCKETT

TIT

 $With \ the \ American \ News \ Company, \ 1862-1863.$

TFTER six years with the Appleton firm, Munro left their employ and found work with Knos & Tousey or the American News Company, as they were later to the ended form, but deedted they could do better distributing and selling the Dime Novels than in working for the man who published them. In 1864 they organised as the American News Company, but it was the same two men, doing the same work appeared in 1800 and the name of "Ross & Tousey, General Appeared in 1800 and the name of "Ross & Tousey, General

At that time the distinction between the publisher, the bookseller and the librarian, was not as clearly defined as it became later. On the title page of many American books there appeared as usual the name of the publisher together with the names of the various bookellers, who shared with the publisher the responsi-

bility of marketing the book.

În Dr. George Patterson's LIFE OF REW, JAMES MAC-GREGOR, the pioneer Pictou minister, which was published in Philadelphia in 1839, for example, the name of the publisher is given on the tile page, together with the names of various is given on the tile page, together with the names of various plant peaces of Professor DeMill's financial difficulties which ended his earcer as a bookseller and brought him in 1890 to the feeding of Acadia and later to Dalhousis. His market was too

It seems clear that it was to obtain a practical knowledge of the distributing and selling of books that Murrow went to work with Ross & Toussey. His employment with them was an introduction to Ersatus Beadle. Beadle's methods of getting the Appleton firm. They differed from the system in Ragland where men of means subscribed to a publishing varture, which would be published by installments and as the different parts or volumes appeared could be obtained by the subscriber from his bookseller. By this means the publisher could calculate risk of publishing.

The selling methods of the Beadle firm differed from anvthing with which Munro was acquainted. They differed from the work of the colporteur, who visited the homes of the countryside and brought his books with him, being generally sponsored by some Book and Tract Society. The book agent was still active, selling a large attractive book at a high price, but his methods had no interest for the publisher of cheap books. The Book Clubs lay still in the future. Ross & Tousey had far different ideas, or rather Mr. Beadle had the ideas for them.

Beadle used the idea of a news company which sold newspapers, magazines and other small articles which sold for small sums and in large quantities. He printed the Dimes at stated intervals with paper covers, or better still with no covers at all, and he used the Post Office, for with a list of subscribers, and issued at stated intervals, he secured the cheap postal rate for periodicals. In short, Beadle had adopted the principle of mass production and distribution.

In 1863, Munro left Ross & Tousey and took a subordinate position with the Beadle firm. His work is said to have been that of a bookkeeper, but Munro was ready to undertake any job about the plant. One result of this obliging habit was that when anything special was to be done, the tendency was to

turn it over to Mupro.

Erastus Beadle was an ingenious character who was exploiting the field of cheap literature in America. He had a different education, different experience and different associates from Munro. He was not a man who could be wholeheartedly approved, but he was not a man to be ignored. He had the ability and good qualities which are usually associated with success. Munro worked for Beadle for three years and the question

naturally arises as to how much and in what way was he influenced by Beadle and his methods. It is therefore of interest to follow the early career of Beadle as publisher in New York. particularly during the war years, 1860-1866. During the latter part of this period, Munro was one of his staff of workers and this was the final period in the preparatory years before launching out for himself. Our interest is in the rise and prosperity of Beadle and not so much with his decline and fall.

Working for Beadle and Adams, 1863-1866.

The position which Munro obtained with Beadle and Adams was a very subordinate one. It seemed strange that after working for six years with a reputable firm of publishers he should leave at take a much less desirable position with another firm. To the compliers of the American Dictionaryo National Biograph of the American Dictionaryo National Biograph of the was an extraordinary situation. They seem surprised that the was an extraordinary situation. They seem surprised that the seem of the se

The story is that the proprietor, Mr. Beadle, was showing Edward S. Ellis, one of his most prolife writers, around his great plant for easilet the attention of his visitor to Munro working in an original room. That man," he said, "has worked for us for nearly two years. I pay him 356 per week. He is perfectly satisfied that. He will never wish to change his situation or try to improve it."

Beadle was mistaken. In less than a year his industrious employee had left him to start a business of his own.

Much that has been said and written about Munro, stems from this incident. Much of the space allotted to Munro in the American Dictionary of National Policy is given to this recognition of the American Dictionary of National Policy is given to the American Dictionary of National Policy is given to the American Dictionary of National Policy is given that Munro, the quiet, discreet, industrious embion is given that Munro, the quiet, discreet, industrious embion is given that Munro, the quiet, discreet, industrious embions and about the given the property of the suppleyer, and then, when he had become personally as his employer, and then, when he had become personally as the suppleyer and the given him employment by starting the publishing of Di had given him emp

Civil War years that Munro worked for the Beadle firm. He served the firm and fulfully, honestly and well. But when the war was over an independent of reconstruction had to be faced, there were new problems for the nation and new problems for the publishers. There we building of railroads, the expansion and development of the building of railroads, the capanism and development of the winter growing areas, and much flow of immigrants into these new the growing areas, and much flow of immigrants in these new the growing areas, and much which the problems were handled. It would be the problems for the publishers of books and reading matter as well of breation. For such work Munro was more fitted by education and training.

than the Dime Novel firm. Beadle and his Dimes continued to flourish for about a quarter of a century after Munro left him and it was not the competition of Munro that brought about his fall, but his own inadequacy and the deterioration of his standards.

On the other hand Munro's education, training and experience fitted him for the task of providing good, cheap, readable and wholesome books and periodicals to meet the need of that crucial period in the nation's history.

V

The Early Career and Work of Erastus Beadle.

I write of Erastus Beadle and his early publishing ventures because of his association with Munro. To appreciate Munro it is well to know the world he lived in, the people with whom

he associated, and the kind of work they were doing.

It is not my purpose to follow the fortunes of the Beadle

It is not my purpose to follow the fortunes of the beautiful first deeded, 1890-1870, although a writer intellement of the "brieflement of the brieflement of th

Elike the lad from Pietou county, Erastus Beadle left his home at the early age of twelve. For a time he worked in a country grist-mill not far from his home. Here, the observant lad noticed the crude lettering on most meal bags and soul devised a remedy. He whittled out a complete font of letters

from rock oak, his only tool being his good jack-knife.

In time his thought he could provide. With his moveable needed the lettering his he could provide. With his moveable blocks, which he carry in a buriap hag on his back, the lad set out on his travels, and down the country, from Ohio to Stalen.

As he travelled, he left behind him block-datesed bags, tool chests, farm implements and many other articles, all nostly lettered. For a cent a letter he would stamp anything and the pennies rolled in. The business was profitable but it had its limitations and no future. It was his ambition to become a master printer.

In the course of his travels he learned that Mr. Elihi Phinney of Cooperstown, N. Y. occasionally took an apprentise to learn the printing business and Beadle, still in his cours, used to Cooperstown in central New York state and to the print shop of Mr. Phinney. There he stayed for six years and learned all that Mr. Phinney could teach him. Cooperstown was noted as the home of James Fernimore Cooper, world famous as the author "The Last of the Mobicana" and other Indina stories. While a town of some importance, it was not large enough for two printers, not when one of them was Erseatus Beadle.

The young master printer had ideas and ambitions of his own. He wanted a business for himself and at the age of twenty-six went to Buffalo and set up his printery. From the start he showed he was an unusual young man. He was the start of the start he showed he was an unusual young man that the popular songs of the day. Originally these songs were printed in the form of hand bills, or "broadsheets" and sold on the streets for a penny. Beadle put fifty or sixty songs into a single volume, in size about eight by five inches, printed them on salmon colored paper and sold them for ten cents. It was his first "Dime Song Book". The venture was a success. Material was so easily obtained

that he continued to publish these song books until he had published over two thousand popular songs and ballads. He did not print them because of their quality, poetic or otherwise, but because they expressed the thoughts and ways of a generation that would soon be gone and forgotten, and besides it was portiable. It is a mistake to thin Beadle thought only of money. He thought the songs were worth preserving. His thought was been out to do was well worth doing. He had no published work he set out to do was need worth doing. "The Home" and "The Youth's Caskett", and word easket in its original sense, a small chest or jewed case.

Associated with him in Buffalo were his older brother. Invin Beadle, and Robert Adams, one of his stereotypers, a handsome, curry-haired young Irishman. Adams remained with the Beadle firm until his death in 1806, the year in which Munro left them. The group remained in Buffalo for about four years and three Adams. Rom in New York city, he two Beadles and three Adams. Rom in New York city, he two Beadles and three Adams. Rom in New York first and took a leading part in the work.

The venture in Buffalo had been so successful that they were soon ready for another. Beadle wished to do for the ordinary reader what he had done for the singers. Instead of songs and ballads, which everybody sang, he would publish stories which everybody would read. A prominent author in the United States has said that "no one knows precisely how he hit upon the idea of the dime novel", but he thought the germ of the idea was in the dime songbooks, and a keen young publisher, like Beadle, would likely see that a steady supply of wholesome, well-written stories would be eagerly absorbed by a comparatively literate people of fifty million.

A recent writer in the London Times Literary Supplement, however, says that James Fenimore Cooper was the literary grandfather of the authors of Beadle's Dime Novels. Beadle spent six of his most impressionable years in Cooperstown, the home of Cooper, one of the world's great romantic writers. He is still most widely known for his stories of the American pioneers. the Noble Red Man, the Deerslayer, and the Pathfinder. His stories were not studies of character nor of the perplexing problems of human nature. He described the wilderness of America and the people in it, using plenty of incidents and adventures which gave him his many readers and absorbed their attention. The last of this series, The Leather Stocking Tales, was published in 1841, three years before Erastus Beadle arrived to take up his apprenticeship with Mr. Phinney.

It was a strange new world to the lad of sixteen, a community of pioneers and the home of Cooper, the man who induced them to settle there. Even today the town prides itself on its connection with the great popular writer. It would be natural, almost inevitable, that the young printer's apprentice, coming into such a community, would be influenced by the reputation and work of the founder of the town and its most noted citizen. Beadle could not write such stories as Cooper, but he could print them, and when the opportunity came, he did so.

Erastus Beadle in New York. Plans and Writers for his Dime Novel Venture, 1855-1860

The Beadle and Adams group arrived in New York in 1855, a year before Munro came to the city. An influential member of the loosely organised group was Irwin Beadle, but his brother, Erastus, was the dominating member. He had the ideas, the energy, the push and experience, and naturally became the head of the firm. His experience in Cooperstown and Buffalo led him to consider collecting stories of the experiences of the pioneers in opening and settling the American frontiers, especially the American West. Fenimore Cooper had made good use of this and others could follow a similar vein.

Beadle knew he could not write like Cooper but he could employ reputable men who could write wrift, moving stories of their own experience of frontier life and he could print them on cheap paper and in numbers hitherto inconceivable. He would thus be able to sell the books for a dime and reach a vast number of people, and at the same time preserve the flavor of pioneer American life and particularly Western life. To ensure this, he made long journeys through the American West to engage Indian scouts, trappers, fighters and explorers to write their considerable. Among his galaxy of such here authors, the two Colonel Peoniss Ingraham. The F. Coop (Buffalo Bill) and Colonel Peoniss Ingraham. The Same Same and the property Adams, Major Sam Hill (Buolokin Sam) and many others whose names mean little or nothing today but who were beloved by the ten-acgors of that day.

These writers were strange characters. There was, for instance, Edward Judson (Nod Buntline), a man of varied experience and a prolific writer. He was credited with writing over four hundred novels and he wrote a play for Judfalo Bill which had long runs in Chicago, St. Louis and New York. He are the play of the play

Another type was Captain Mayne Reid, the son of a Preshyterian minister in northern Ireland. His mothers set her heart on his following his father; she would rather see him minister of the powers parais in Ulster than Prime Minister of Britain, but he would have none of these things. He was all for a life of activity and adventure, fought in the American Civil War, becoming a captain, and afterward fought with the Indians. His also were mare-folious and entraneing and were read up boys of activity, and that when he was a boy there were no books like Mayne Reid's.

Naturally it would take some time to round up such charac-





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ters and organise a staff of writers and much would depend on the choice of an editor to edit the stories and sift the bad from the good. Beadle's first major decision was the choice of Orville J. Vietor as editor and much of Beadle's success was due to Vietor's good judgment, general ability and experience. He was something of an author himself, having written a life of Limeolo something of an author himself, having written a life of Limeolo upon and edited, not only the Dime Novels that all the publications of the Beadle firm.

His success as an editor led one admirer to say that "he was one of the most remarkable figures in the history of American Literature", that "he changed the reading habits of the nation". Be that as it may, he was influential and too important to be ignored. He was a friendly kindly man, respected and loved by every author who worked for him. Withal he had an air of austerity for those who were dilatory, deficient

or delinquent in their work.

Beadle and his editor knew the value of publicity and went after the best known American authors who could write an interesting story. It is therefore not surprising to find that the author of the first of the Beadle Dime Novels was the day. Her name and nearly all ones popular authors of the day. Her name and nearly all ones popular authors of work is now lost in obscurity. She is unknown owe except for the fact that she wrote the first Dime Novel. Her story "Malacska, the Indian Wife of the White Hunter", for which she shaded the story of the terminal that the story which is highly the story of the story of the story of the proline of the story of the story of the story of the proline of the story of the story of the story of the lister.

"Malaeska" was published in the summer of 1860, the first year of the Civil War. It was a small volume of 128 pages, printed on salmon-colored paper, and 65,000 copies were sold in a few months, the demand continuing for a long time.

Beadle had in mind the cultivation of another field, the religious life of the people. Religion was a subject as absorbing as frontier life or Indian fighting. This was shown by the popularity of "The Prince of the House of David", a book by J. H. Ingraham, which had a circulation second only to that of "Uncel Tom's Cabim". It was to be found in every town and village library, No Sunday School library was without it. It was in every prous home and, indeed, in homes which made no was in every prous home and, indeed, in homes which made no with old and young. The Insture of the book was set out in its sub-title, which ran:



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"Being a series of letters of Adina, a Jewess of Alexandria sojourning in Jerusalem in the days of Herod. addressed to her father, a wealthy Jew in Egypt, and relating as by an eyewitness, all the scenes and wonderful incidents in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, from his baptism in Jordan to his erucifixion on Calvary."

It is hardly to be wondered at that many of the militantly pious

considered the book to be semi-inspired.

Beadle engaged its author to write for his Dime Novel Series but about pirates and Indians. Ingraham seems to have had a trunkful of such tales awaiting publication, and he and his son. Colonel Prentiss Ingraham, were most prolific in their output.

Thus far Beadle did well, his enterprise and foresight being rewarded with great success. Other factors, however, combined

to increase his business and profit.

Beadle and the Dimes in the Civil War Years, 1960-1965.

This period is important for our purpose since it was about half way through these war years, in 1863, that Munro joined the Beadle staff. It is neither possible nor necessary to give a detailed account of the doings of the firm. It is enough to show the character of the work and the factors which made the enterprise a success. From these we may appreciate why Munro stayed until 1866 and then left the firm together with Irwin Beadle, the brother of Erastus.

For the first ten years the enterprise grew and prospered amazingly. Many things combined to bring this about. Beadle was particularly fortunate in his choice of Orville Victor, his editor. He was also fortunate in his choice of writers who could retell the adventures of the wild western days. As time went on, not a few of the writers were not western men at all, but all such men, if they wrote about the West, were required to take at least one trip to the far West. It was not across the wide Missouri they were to go; Beadle was satisfied if they had actually crossed the Mississippi. The trip was often brief for the cost of the trip was paid by the writer himself. One writer has confessed that most of the Western color in his stories was obtained from a car window and from books. There were grave doubts whether one writer was farther west than Philadelphia. Some writers were never west at all. They could write and that was the principal thing. One of the writers came to the firm unexpectedly in its early



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Members of the Investment Dealers' Association of Canada. beginning. One day a youth of eighteen walked in to the city from his home in New Jersey, appeared at the Beadle and Adams office and asked for the editor. He had a neatly written manuscript in his pocket, a story about post-revolutionary life in northern New York state, and the youth had given it the title

"Seth Jones or The Captives of the Frontier."

This story the young man handed to Mr. Vietor, the editor, who looked on it as just another story, but it is said, that when he read it, he nearly fell off his chair in his surprise and delight. It was his idea of a perfect Dime Novel. Within a year-450,000 copies were sold and countless editions have been refating it. It is told that W. H. Seward, Lincoln's Secretary of State, came in late to a cubiner meeting with one of the Bedde books in his hand and wawing it with unconcealed delight. It was "Seth Jones", the novel written by Edward S. Ellis, the new writer of the bedde firm.

"Seth Jones" was No. 8 in the series of Dime Novels. More than anything else, it showed the Beadle firm that they had

started a trend.

Ellis, the eighteen year old school teacher, was paid 875 for his story and was given a contract to write four movels a year. He was an unusual character. He wrote his four novels a year, and in addition wrote articles or stories for eight magazine, all in spare time from his school work. During the decade of the eighteen-eighties he wrote such things as an Arithmetic Book, a book on Psychology, and fifty volumes of History, but he nover did anything else quite as good as "Seth Jones."

Ellis was one of the best of the Beadle writers. He is the Ellis referred to in the story in which Beadle took him round the plant and pointed out Munro busily at work wrapping up bundles.

Beadle was also fortunate in starting his business at this pericular time. The nation was on the verge of civil war. Much was being said and written about the abolition of slavery, and when a great political party adopted it as a plank in its platform, it became a bureing question.

Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stows, sister of the great pulpit orator and abolitionist, the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, undertook to write "something about slavery" and produced "Undet Tonie Tonie Cahin." When it appeared serially it received little attention, but when it was produced in book form it took the world by but storm, and was read by almost every English-speaking man, storm, and was read by almost every English-speaking man, or and the storm of the storm o

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This widely read book had much to do with clarifying the issues and in a way hastened the outbreak of hostilities. Even after the war it was a great weapon for the abolitionists and continued to stimulate the zeal of the supporters of the government at Washington.

In these circumstances, it was inevitable that many of the early stories in the Dime Novel series should be anti-slavery stories and more or less of the nature of propaganda. Naturally the Civil War stimulated the sale of the new cheap books. The government, appreciating their propaganda value, shipped them by the carload to the Northern armies. They were soon considered regulation equipment. These tales were devoured around campfires, swapped till they were worn to shreds, and, finally, in a fraternising period, passed on to the Confederate soldiers in exchange for rum and tobacco.

One of the series was "Maum Guinea", a story of plantation life modelled on "Uncle Tom's Cabin". In one of his antislavery orations, Henry Ward Beecher said that "Maum Guinea" was a shot in the right direction," while Lincoln declared it was every bit absorbing as "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Its full title was "Maum Guinea and her Plantation Children, or a Holiday Week on a Louisiana Estate." It was written by Metta V. Victor, wife of the Beadle editor, who wrote many of the

In 1861 the Beadle firm opened a branch in London under the name "Beadle's American Sixpenny Publishing House" and many of the Beadle series of anti-slavery stories circulated widely in England. They were the more effective in that they were subtly written, appealing to the ordinary reader who cares little for descriptions and analyses of character. It is well-known that the working people of England favored the Northern side while the ruling class generally favored the South. Meanwhile the Beadle firm grew and prospered.

Such is the story of the rise and progress of the Beadle enterprise in the publishing of cheap books and such the conditions and background, as I find it, when the Civil War ended in 1865. A new post-war period followed bringing new problems and new duties. It too meant new decisions which must be made by both the Beadles and by Munro. It was for each the parting of the ways.

(This is the second of a series of articles on George Munro.—Ed.)

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