

Victorian Publishing: The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market 1836-1916 (The Nineteenth Century Series)

Alexis Weedon

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Drawing on research into the book-production records of twelve publishers-including George Bell & Son, Richard Bentley, William Blackwood, Chatto & Windus, Oliver & Boyd, Macmillan, and the book printers William Clowes and T&A Constable - taken at ten-year intervals from 1836 to 1916, this book interprets broad trends in the growth and diversity of book publishing in Victorian Britain. Chapters explore the significance of the export trade to the colonies and the rising importance of towns outside London as centres of publishing; the influence of technological change in increasing the variety and quantity of books; and how the business practice of literary publishing developed to expand the market for British and American authors. The book takes examples from the purchase and sale of popular fiction by Ouida, Mrs. Wood, Mrs. Ewing, and canonical authors such as George Eliot, Wilkie Collins, and Mark Twain. Consideration of the unique demands of the educational market complements the focus on fiction, as readers, arithmetic books, music, geography, science textbooks, and Greek and Latin classics became a staple for an increasing number of publishing houses wishing to spread the risk of novel publication.

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