Tim Bobbin, Lancashire Humorist : A Bibliographical Note.

RATHER more than a quarter of a century ago, in 1872, a then young and enthusiastic librarian, who was located in a North Midland town and hailed from the County Palatine of Lancaster, launched forth to the world, with great trepidation, a twelve-page pamphlet. This was entitled *The Literature of Tim Bobbin*, with a descriptive sub-title of "a chronologically arranged list of the various editions of the writings of 'Tim Bobbin,' with notes." It was printed in a town which was, like Lancashire towns, associated with the names of Arkwright and Hargreaves, and appropriately published in Cottonopolis. This early contribution to the bibliography of John Collier—for that was his proper name—consisted of the titles of forty-three editions of his writings, in whole or in part, issued under various titles and at equally varying prices.

All this material was, three years later, utilised by Lieut.-Col. Henry Fishwick, F.S.A., in his great bibliographical work, entitled *The Lancashire Library*, with a few additional titles, which I had noted for a subsequent edition of my little contribution to the bibliography of the subject, which was destined never to appear. I have now records of fifty-three editions of Collier's works, in whole or in part, published under varying titles. These include—I give abbreviated titles only—*View of the Lancashire Dialect*, with a glossary, *Tim Bobbin's Toy Shop Opened*, *Miscellaneous Works*, *Tumms and Mary*, *Dialect of South Lancashire*, *Works of Tim Bobbin*, *Poetical Works*, *Tumms and Mary Modernised*, *Tim Bobbin's Tales*.

Copies are preserved of many of these editions notably in the Manchester Free Reference Library, the Library of the British Museum, and in public and private libraries in Lancashire especially.

The character of the *View of the Lancashire Dialect* will be gathered, if I give a composite title made up of the 1746 and

1757 editions. Here it is :—"A view of the Lancashire Dialect, by way of dialogue between Tummus o Williams o Margits o Roaphs and Meary o Dicks o Tummus o Peggys, showing in that speech the comical adventures and misfortunes of a Lancashire clown; to which is prefixed, by way of preface, a dialogue between the author and his pamphlet, with a glossary of all the Lancashire words and phrases therein used, by Tim Bobbin, oppin speyker o' the dialect, and Fellow of the Sisyphean Society of Dutch Loom Weavers."

The Glossary of Lancashire provincialisms was enlarged in the fourth edition by the addition of five hundred words, and about three hundred more appeared in the sixth edition. The 1763 edition of the *Toy Shop* and subsequent issues of Collier's writings were illustrated by the author. The first mentioned was "embellished with copper-plates"—three in number—"designed by the author, and engraved by Mr. Barlow, of Bolton."

The 1820 (Manchester) edition of the *Miscellaneous Works* contained as many as nineteen plates by J. Slack. Among Tim Bobbin's other illustrators were George Cruikshank. The editors and biographers of Collier include Richard Towneley, John Corry, Samuel Bamford, and Elijah Ridings.

Editions of the works as a whole or in parts have issued from Manchester, Rochdale, Salford, Preston, Leeds, Liverpool, Wigan, Warrington, and London. The published prices have varied from a guinea to a penny. The first edition which contained Collier's complete works is the 1819 edition, which was edited by John Corry and published at Rochdale.

Large paper copies are very scarce. The Manchester edition of 1862 is a reprint of the Rochdale 1819 edition, with the same plates, but with the addition of *The Dialogue* rendered into modern English. It was issued in two forms and edited by Elijah Ridings.

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