

Savile Clarke *Alice* Productions

Articles

A Preliminary Census of Henry Savile Clarke's Libretto Published in his Lifetime

Henry Savile Clarke's libretto was published by the Court Circular Office (where he was Editor) at 2, Southampton Street, Strand, London, priced one shilling. The original version, as performed when the show first opened on 23 December 1886, is dated "1886" and annotated "First edition, under revision" at the top of the front cover. Two variant covers are known – one printed in dark brown ink with no advertisement on the back cover (likely the original version) and one printed in black ink with an advertisement for Chlorodyne on the back cover (as for all subsequent 1886 printings). Some brown-ink, and all known black-ink cover variants have a misprint on the title page, where the "ti" lead type has dropped out of the word "sanction" to leave "sanc_on". Other misprints come and go in later printings. So far, the only known hand-dated copies of a "First edition, under revision" are one with a brown-ink cover annotated "Dec 1886" (which may or may not be contemporaneous) and one with a black-ink cover annotated "13 January 1887".

Three separate printings of the First edition have now been identified, characterised by small modifications to the mirror scene on page 31. What is believed to be the first printing refers to the mirror acquiring a "sort of dirtiness" – a clear typographical error, which is subsequently corrected to "dimness" before being changed again to "mist" as in the original book.

Early in January 1887, the libretto underwent revision – the significant changes being the removal of the looking-glass scene at the beginning of Act II (First Edition page 31, Revised Versions page 29), adding more verses to 'The Walrus and the Carpenter' (written by Dodgson) with the appearance of oyster ghosts who give them indigestion and dance a hornpipe (Revised Versions pages 40-41) and giving the White Knight more dialogue and a new song, 'The Waits' (Revised Versions pages 49-51). The original version was still playing when Carroll attended on Friday 7 January. In a letter of 13 January, Dodgson replied to Savile Clarke "I am glad you will get alterations made so soon: & wd like to know who are

to be the 3 ghosts.” The revisions had all appeared in the printed programme by that time (see a copy annotated [Wednesday] “12 January 1887” – V&A Theatre Archive THM/LON/PRI/1887), which suggests that they were introduced into the stage performance during the week beginning Monday 10 January. The additions were noted subsequently by the critics (e.g. *The London Evening Standard*, 27 January 1887 page 2) and by Dodgson himself when he next attended on 1 February 1887 with Edith Rix and Lily Flyter.

After the new version appeared on stage, the printed libretto was updated — “First edition, under revision” was removed from the cover and the title lettering simplified, but the date of 1886 was retained. Space for the additional text was found by printing on the backs of the four sets of illustrations (previously left blank), so the Revised Versions required only 54 numbered pages instead of 55. At the end of the text on page 54 was added a print number, the first being 3-18-1-87 (i.e. 3rd printing, 18 January 1887, although given that there are three variants of the mirror scene, it would actually be the fourth printing – another typographical error). It would appear that the libretto was reprinted again almost immediately, with further, minor amendments — this next known printing (the fifth) was numbered 5-24-1-87 and is here referred to as the 1886 Second Revised Version. The version of 3-18-1-87 was likely an interim revision that was never performed before an audience and may well have been printed by mistake. (For a fuller discussion of the revisions, see ‘Through the Looking-Glass, and what Henry Savile Clarke did there’ by Catherine Richards and Clare Imholtz, Chapter 31 in *Through the Looking-Glass. A Companion*. Peter Lang, 2024.) Known print numbers are 5-24-1-87, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and un-numbered (the latter appears to have been printed by Savile Clarke for presentation, lacking a price and advertisements). The print run sequence corresponds to hand-written annotations indicating (presumably) the date at which the owner attended a performance. The cover was modified slightly from 6 onwards (the address of The Court Circular Office now being on a single line), and 7, 8, 9 include an advertisement for Hodge’s Truss on page 56.

In 1888, Henry Savile Clarke made further significant changes for the revival. To the banquet scene at the end of Act II he added more dialogue for the Red and White Queens with Alice, and a new song — Carroll’s ‘Fish Riddle’. He replaced the song ‘To the Looking-Glass World’ with the slightly shorter imitation ‘Sound the Festal Trumpets’, which he wrote himself (pages 54-56). It is likely that Clarke considered original tune for ‘To the Looking-Glass World’ (that of *Bonnie Dundee*, which Carroll had requested be retained as the musical setting for those verses, which he had written with that tune in mind) was not sufficiently stirring for a grand procession at a banquet and may well have decided to write his own version for which Walter Slaughter could compose a new and invigorating tune. All three editions of *The Lewis Carroll Handbook*, and the 1928 Parrish Collection Catalogue, refer to an edition dated 1889. However, at least one of these references is a typographical error relating to the 1898 Opera Comique revival and there is no 1889 printing of the libretto at Princeton University (where the Parrish Collection now resides) and none has been identified elsewhere. Only one version of the 1888 Edition is known, although there is a variant printing for use by performers etc. with identical text, but printed on larger format, thicker, paper, *recto* only and lacking a cover.

1886 First Version (First Edition, under revision)

Cover	Title page	Mirror Scene	Location
Brown Ink	"sanction"	"dirtiness"	Morgan Library, New York. Cat PML 352255 https://www.themorgan.org/printed-books/348792
Brown Ink Dec 1886	"sanction"	"dirtiness"	Special Collections, UCLA. Cat CBC PZ8 .C553al 1886 https://search.library.ucla.edu/permalink/01UCS_LAL/17p22dp/alma9910113083606533
Brown Ink	"sanction"	"dirtiness"	Parrish Collection, Princeton University. https://catalog.princeton.edu/catalog/99110746633506421
Brown Ink	"sanction"	"dirtiness"	Copy sold by PBA Galleries, 2023. Location unknown
Brown Ink	"sanc_on" misprint	"dimness"	Kent State University. Cat PR4611.A7 C5
Brown Ink	"sanc_on" misprint	"dimness"	Cotsen Library, Princeton University. https://catalog.princeton.edu/catalog/9989222253506421
Brown Ink	"sanc_on" misprint	"dimness"	Lindseth Collection, Christ Church, Oxford University https://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/permalink/44OXF_INST/35n82s/alma990136747750107026
Brown Ink	"sanc_on" misprint		Berol Collection, New York University. PR4453.C72 A4 1886 Copy 1
Brown Ink	"sanc_on" misprint	"dimness"	Private Collection.
Brown Ink	"sanc_on" misprint		Copy previously in the Stern Collection. Location unknown
Black Ink	"sanc_on" misprint		Berol Collection, New York University. PR4453.C72 A4 1886 Copy 2
Black Ink	"sanc_on" misprint	"mist"	Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin. Cat ML 50 S547 A43 1886b WEA https://search.lib.utexas.edu/permalink/01UTAU_INST/9e1640/alma991005846079706011
Black Ink 13 Jan 1887	"sanc_on" misprint	"mist"	Houghton Library, Harvard University. Cat Thr 1094

Black Ink	"sanc_on" misprint	"mist"	Private Collection.
Cover Missing	"sanc_on" misprint	"mist"	Weston Library, Oxford University. Cat Johnson d.4680 https://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/permalink/44OXF_INST/35n82s/alma990136747750107026

Notes

A copy in the Butler Library, Columbia University, New York. Cat B825D66 HC is catalogued as 55 pages with the cover printed in brown ink, yet to be confirmed as the First Edition, under revision.

Dodgson's own copy with his annotations (First Edition, under revision) was offered for sale by Messers Parker of Oxford in 1898 (catalogue reproduced in Stern, Jeffrey, *Lewis Carroll's Library, Carroll Studies No. 5*, LCSNA 1981, p. 61), current location unknown.

1886, Revised Versions (First Revision 3-18-1-87; Second Revision 5-24-1-87 onwards)

Print No.	Annotation	Location
3-18-1-87		Lindseth Collection, Christ Church, Oxford University. https://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/permalink/44OXF_INST/35n82s/alma991027225185407026
3-18-1-87		Private Collection.
3-18-1-__	22 Jan 1887	Lilly Library, University of Indiana. PR4453.C7 A6
3-18-1-__		British Library, London. Cat gh 9205207X
3-18-1-__		Morgan Library, New York. PML 352254 Copy 2 https://www.themorgan.org/printed-books/348786
3-18-1-__		University of Virginia. Cat PR4611.A72 C52 1886b https://search.lib.virginia.edu/sources/uva_library/items/u5720830
5-24-1-87	3 Feb 1887	Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin. Cat ML 50 S547 A43 1886 WEA https://search.lib.utexas.edu/permalink/01UTAU_INST/9e1640/alma991010527229706011
5-24-1-87		Berol Collection, New York University. PR4453.C72 A4 1886 Copy 3
5-24-1-87		Osborne Collection, Toronto. Barcode 37131 053 604 591
5-24-1-87		3 copies in Private Collections.
6	12 Feb 1887	Cadbury Research Library, Birmingham, UK. Cat PR4453.C748 https://birmingham-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/vmc2c6/44BIR_ALMA_DS21102463660004871
6		University of Virginia. Cat PR4611.A72 C52 1886 https://search.lib.virginia.edu/sources/uva_library/items/u5720830
6		Private Collection.
6		Berol Collection, New York University. Box 10, Folder 652, Call number MSS.057

7	19 Feb 1887	Morgan Library, New York. PML 352252 Copy 1 https://www.themorgan.org/printed-books/348765
7		Private Collection.
8		Houghton Library, Harvard University. Cat GEN 21472.58.86 Amory Copy A [does not match catalogue entry] https://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/990049568450203941/catalog
8		Sir William Dixson Library, State Library of New South Wales. Cat 88/155. https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/74VM4pXzRygM
9		Lindseth Collection, Christ Church, Oxford University. https://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/permalink/44OXF_INST/35n82s/alma991027225185407026
9		Houghton Library, Harvard University. Cat GEN 21472.58.86 Amory Copy B [does not match catalogue entry] https://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/990049568450203941/catalog
9		University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. Cat X 822 C553A [does not match catalogue entry] https://i-share-uiu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CARLI_UIU/1ubbi2j/alma99297364812205899
9		Private Collection.
10		2 copies in Private Collections.
None	May 1887	Private Collection. Presentation copy of the Second Revised Edition, without price or advertisements.

Notes

Copy in the Rare Book Collection, Fisher Library, University of Toronto Cat brabant .C37 A447 Z6C53 1886 discovered to be missing in 2024.
Copy listed by Parrish in 1933 inscribed “To Ruth Woodhouse by Lewis Carroll”, who accompanied him to a performance on 11 February 1887, was not included in the Princeton donation. Current location unknown.

Published Extracts

Publication of significant extracts from the libretto include the following:

Review — by Annie Wakeman (wife of Lorin A. Lathrop, the U.S. Consul at Bristol and later at Cardiff) in *The Boston Herald*, Sunday 27 March 1887, page 17, reprinted in *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, Sunday 3 April 1887, page 25 and in *The Courier-Journal* (Louisville), 10 April 1887, page 14. (Several sections are included from a revised edition, including oyster ghosts.)

Stage adaptation — by Mrs Burton Harrison in her own three-act stage adaptation of *Wonderland*, 1890 (Clarke’s opening and closing fairy scenes and verses, duly credited.)

1888 Libretto

Notes	Location
Acting copy (Bowman)	Morgan Library, New York. Cat PML 352253 https://themorgan.org/printed-books/348780
Acting copy (Prompt)	Private Collection.
Annotated in Dodgson's hand "Chestnuts" (purchased directly from the family, 1909)	Houghton Library, Harvard. Cat GEN 21472.58.88* Amory Collection
	Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin. Cat ML 50 S547 A43 1888 WEA https://search.lib.utexas.edu/permalink/01UTAU_INST/9e1640/alma991010528199706011
	Fisher Library, University of Toronto. Cat brabant C37 A447 Z6C53 1888 https://librarysearch.library.utoronto.ca/permalink/01UTORONTO_INST/14bieso/alma991106390641906196
	Parrish Collection, Princeton University. https://catalog.princeton.edu/catalog/99110746643506421
	University of Alberta. Cat PR 4453 C72 A82 1888
	Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), London. Renier Collection 862.AA.2313
	Private Collection.

Notes

Dodgson's copy of the 1888 Edition was offered for sale by the Art and Antique Agency, 41 High Street, Oxford, Catalogue No. 2, 1898, Item 12 (catalogue reproduced in Stern, Jeffrey, *Lewis Carroll's Library, Carroll Studies No. 5*, LCSNA 1981, p. 76), current location unknown.

Compiled by Catherine Richards, © May 2025; last updated December 2025

Thanks are due to all those collectors and collections who assisted with my inquiries.