

A11 THE MIRROR OF THE SEA 1906

*A. First English edition.**First printing*

[*in red*] THE MIRROR OF THE SEA | MEMORIES AND IMPRESSIONS | BY | [*in red*] JOSEPH CONRAD | “. . . for this miracle or this wonder | troubleth me right gretly.” | BOETHIUS DE CON: PHIL: B. IV., PROSE VI. | METHUEN & CO. | [*in red*] 36 ESSEX STREET W.C. | LONDON

Collation: π^4 1–19⁸ 20² (\$2, -202, signed); pp. [i–vi] vii [viii] 1–306 [307–08]; 187 x 129 mm.; printed on laid paper watermarked ‘*crown* | {bl} Abbey Mills{/bl} | {bl} Greenfield{/bl}’.

Contents: p. i, half-title ‘THE MIRROR OF THE SEA’; p. ii, list of eight works by Conrad plus the two collaborations with Ford; p. iii, title; p. iv, ‘*First Published in 1906*’; p. v, dedication to Mrs. Katherine Sanderson; p. vi, blank; p. vii, ‘TABLE OF CONTENTS’; p. viii, blank; pp. 1–306, text; p. 307, blank; p. 308, ‘PRINTED BY | BILLING AND SONS, LTD | GUILDFORD’.

Binding: *a.* Light green or green smooth cloth. Spine stamped in gold ‘[*shell and coral design*] | THE | MIRROR*OF | THE*SEA | JOSEPH*CONRAD | [*flower*] | [*shell and coral design*] | METHUEN’. Top edge gilt, other edges untrimmed. White wove or white laid end-papers. Bound in at the end is a 40 page publisher’s catalogue dated July, August, or October 1906. In some copies the publisher’s catalogue is bound in after p. 306. No specimen of the dust jacket has been seen, though the publisher’s records show they were printed. Jessie Conrad’s copy (at Yale) inscribed to her September 1906 and, therefore, among the first copies received from the binder, has August advertisements and is bound in light green cloth.

b. As in the *a* binding except that all edges are trimmed and the top edge is not gilt. White laid end-papers. Bound in at the end is a 40 page publisher’s catalogue dated July 1906.

Binding note: Conrad’s inscription in the Curle copy of *The Mirror of the Sea*, now in the Berg Collection in the New York Public Library, reads ‘This is one of the 1st Ed^{on} | copies as issued to the | Libraries with cut edges | Joseph Conrad’. In spite of the fact that, first, from the sound of this inscription, Curle probably dictated it and, second, that no other copy has been seen in this binding, it is included here because the Curle copy shows no evident signs of recasing. The publisher’s stock ledger records that all copies were ordered bound in the 6s. binding. However, this does not preclude the possibility that special instructions to trim all edges were sent with one or more orders. Until more copies in the *b* binding have been located its status remains doubtful:

*Copies examined:**Notes*

First printing: As early as May 1902 Conrad had written to Pinker, “I am confident that from the word go I could get the Mirror of the Sea ready in six weeks,” but as was usual with Conrad, between the conception of a book and its completion much more time was required than

anticipated. By February 1904 the articles were taking shape and negotiations for serialization, first opened with the *Daily Mail*, were under way. In Conrad's view the book was a collection of essays – “impressions, descriptions, reminiscences, anecdotes and typical tracts – of the old sailing fleet which passes away for good with the last century – easy narrative style,” but with sufficient unity to make a volume.

As was noted before with *Nostromo*, Conrad at this time was still quite close to Ford Madox Hueffer and shared with him his thoughts about his writings. In March 1904 Conrad wrote to Pinker that he was going to Deal “in order to get rid of a certain nervousness which has been bothering me since Saturday . . . Ford is going with me and we shall finish the sixth paper there.” There is no further mention of Ford's role in this book in Conrad's letters to Pinker, but evidently they at least discussed the essays as the book was taking shape. By May 1905 Conrad was able to write to Pinker: “The vol of the M of the Sea is practically ready and as to that I have an original idea which would mention to you. It is this: To include all the Sea sketches and all the literary papers now ready in *one* vol giving both sides of Conrad – seaman and artist. “The vol could have a general title and contain two parts:

The M of the Sea P^t Ist

The Mirror of Life pt II^d

The Mirror of Life being fiction – of course.

. . . General Title could be something like *Action and Vision*.”

The idea was unnecessary for *The Mirror of the Sea* which reached volume length without the additional material but was used many years later for the collection *Notes on Life and Letters*. In October Pinker had in hand an offer for the book from Methuen about which Conrad replied that as long as Pinker got the best price possible he didn't care who had it. “I venture to suggest however,” he wrote, “that the season announces itself as very full, all the lists seem to be made up, and that it would be good perhaps to hold the vol: over till after the new year?” In fact, the book wasn't to be ready for the fall 1905 list for, while most of the writing was completed, the papers still had to be assembled into a book and Conrad had some thoughts on this: “The arrangement of these papers is worth careful consideration,” he wrote to Pinker. “If we could manage it so as to produce the effect of a continuous book – would it not be better? I mean from a *selling* point of view. With some little trouble the thing could be done – except as regards the *Port of London* perhaps. My idea is of a sort of reminiscent discourse running on like this: I. II. III. IV etc etc XX XXI and so on, with no titles on blanks or half blank pages between; something, in short, like poor Gissing's Ryecroft papers: and only the headings of the top of pages being changed according to the matter treated. The changes of these headings could be tabulated nevertheless in the table of contents under the general name *Mirror of the Sea*. Then at the end separated by a blank page we would have *TRAFALGAR* and I am afraid the *Port of London* too as additional to the long book *M of the S*.

“But Perhaps even the *P of L* could be squeezed into the body of the work.

“Would you talk it over with the publisher. They don't like short stories or sketches. Well let us make it a long book.

“In any case I would want badly to see the whole lot of copy: And for that I depend upon you as I have nothing by me.”

In January he wrote to Pinker that the Port of London paper could be melted into the main body of the book and included in the same letter his idea for the title page. “Make it a condition,” he wrote. “I want my name at the top of the page because *Memories and Impressions* cannot be by anybody. You see my point.” Methuen's editor's however, objected to rearranging the title page

and suggested instead substituting “of” for “by” but this Conrad rejected: “*OF* is logical no doubt but it is not expedient. In this connection it is distinctly aggressive and that apparently insignificant departure from the usual is likely to provoke more remark than the radical rearrangement of the title page suggested by me. So let us have *BY* and hock no one’s preconceived notions.”

“My feeling is against a red title. Black, providing that the lettering can be made a little heavier, is more to my taste: I leave the final decision to you: Couldn’t the words *Mirror of the Sea* be printed in Gothic type? It rests with you.”

Conrad was always fussy about details but previous to *The Mirror of the Sea* had concentrated on the details of text rather than format. This interest in the physical appearance and layout of his books is met with only occasionally in his career: here, in some details of the privately printed pamphlets, and in the uniform design of his books published by Doubleday. The latter he regarded as a forerunner to the collected works which, in Conrad’s mind, symbolized recognition of an established position in English literature.

The signed agreement for the book Conrad returned to Pinker March 2, 1906, and the final text followed March 5: On 26 July 1906 Methuen ordered 500 copies of *The Mirror of the Sea* printed by Billing and Sons of Guildford: The first 1000 of these with eleven overs were received August 20th and the remaining 500 copies followed September 28th. Five binding orders, covering the entire printing, were issued between September 11th and November 6th and the bound copies here delivered between September 19th and November 20th.

Publication: 4 October 1906. Most reviews and notices in the London papers appeared between October 10th and 22nd. The British Museum depository copy was received October 13th.

Subsequent printings: A second printing of 500 copies of *The Mirror of the Sea*, styled ‘SECOND EDITION’ on the title page, was ordered in November and a third, also of 500 copies and styled ‘THIRD EDITION’ on the title page, followed in December. The three 1906 printings were all from standing type, but after the third printing moulds for stereotype plates were made and the type distributed. Copies of the third printing remained in stock through 1912 so that the fourth printing (the first from plates) was not required until February 1913 at which time 1500 copies were ordered, this time from Morrison and Gibb. Copies of the fourth printing have the statement on the verso of the title page ‘*First Published (Crown 8vo) . . . October 1906 | Second Edition December 1906 | Third Edition (Fcap. 8vo) . . . April 1913*’.²⁷ The fourth printing, published at 5s., was the last from the first English edition setting. The first 500 copies, bound in March 1913, sufficed until September 1915 when an additional 100 copies were ordered bound. With publication of the cheap edition in November 1915, sales of the 5 s. copies were further reduced. The fourth printing was answered out of print 27 February 1925. Two bindings have been seen on the fourth printing: cloth and suede, the latter issued in a publisher’s box. Though the Methuen stock ledgers make no distinction between these bindings, it is probable that the suede copies are from one of the later binding orders (issued from September 1915 to July 1923) and were sold for gift copies in contrast with the then available 1 s. copies.

B. Second English edition.

The second English edition, completely reset for publication in the | s: format, was printed in September 1915 and published November 4th: From then until March 1924 the plates of this edition were used for seven further printings, totaling 24,000 copies, for issue at 1 s: Three more printings, totaling 10,000 copies, were made between May 1924 and August 1927 and issued at 3 s., 6 d: The last of these went out of stock 27 April 1934. The book was again reprinted in 1934 (10,000 copies), 1935 (10,000 copies) and 1944 (9,000 copies).

*C. First American edition.**First printing*

[*within a border of type ornaments forming four wavy lines*] THE MIRROR | OF | THE SEA | BY | JOSEPH CONRAD | AUTHOR OF "NOSTROMO ETC. | [*publisher's device*] | NEW YORK AND LONDON | HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS | MCMVI

Collation: [1]⁸ 2–21⁸; pp. [I–VI] 1–328 [329–330]; 186 x 122 mm.; printed on wove paper.

Contents: p. i, title; p. ii, '[*within a single rule frame*] Copyright, 1906, by HARPER & BROTHERS. | [*short rule*] | *All rights reserved.* | Published October, 1906.'; p. iii, 'Contents'; p. iv, blank; p. v, half-title 'The Mirror of the Sea'; p. vi, blank; pp. 1–329, text; p. 330, blank.

Binding: *a.* Light blue smooth cloth. Front cover printed in pale yellow and two shades of grey with two panels, each within a single rule frame in pale yellow: top panel, illustration in pale yellow and two shades of grey representing a sailing ship at sea; lower panel, in pale yellow 'THE MIRROR | OF THE SEA | [*anchor and rope, 17 x 10 mm.*] | JOSEPH CONRAD'. Spine printed in pale yellow 'THE | MIRROR | OF | THE SEA | [*shell*] | JOSEPH | CONRAD | HARPERS'. All edges trimmed. White wove end-papers. Dust jacket of light brown wove paper printed in black.

b. As the *a* binding except that the anchor and rope design on the front cover is different and measures 28 x 19 mm.

Binding note: Of the two Library of Congress depository copies, one is in the *a* binding and the other is rebound. This, plus the fact that the *b* binding appears on only one of the eleven copies examined, indicates the *b* binding is later, probably from one of the small binding orders issued between 1910 and 1915. Copies of the February 1915 printing have been seen in both bindings.

*Copies examined:**Notes*

First printing: The first American edition of *The Mirror of the Sea* was set from the Harper serial text and does not incorporate the numerous alterations Conrad made before passing the final book proofs of the English edition. Nor does it contain the dedication and the mottoes which appear on the title page and at the head of the first page of text in the Methuen edition. The proximity of the printing dates – July 26th in London and August 1st in New York – may have been the cause of this, though, at this point in his career, Conrad appears to have concerned himself only with the texts of his works as they were published in England. Harper's first printing order was for 3000 copies. The title was entered for United States copyright August 9th and the two depository copies were received by the Library of Congress October 4th.

Publication: 4 October 1906 at \$1.50. During the fall season 1654 copies were sold followed by 488 copies in 1907 after which sales slowed to about fifty copies a year through 1911. There has been an increase to 105 copies in 1912 which grew to 121 in 1913 and 145 in 1914.

Subsequent printings: A second printing of 300 copies was ordered on 29 January 1915 and a third of 750 copies in December 1916. There were no further printings of the first American edition. The book was removed from the Harper list in December 1920 and went out of print in August 1921.

D. Second American edition.

(1) First American printing

Published in volume XI of the Doubleday, Page 'Sun-Dial Edition' of Conrad's works (see B1a, below).

(2) First English printing

Published in the Dent 'Uniform Edition' of Conrad's works (see B1b, Vol. XI, below).

E. Third English edition.

Published in volume XI of the Heinemann edition of Conrad's works (see B2, below).