

A51 NOTES OF LIFE & LETTERS 1921

*A. First English edition.**(1) Advance printing*

NOTES ON | [*in red*] LIFE & LETTERS | BY | JOSEPH CONRAD | [*publisher's monogram*] | 1921 | LONDON & TORONTO | [*in red*] J. M. DENT & SONS LTD.

Collation: π^6 A-X⁸ Y¹⁰ (\$1 + Y2 signed); pp. [i-iv] v-ix [x] xi-xii [1-2] 3-354 [2]: 202 x 134 mm.; printed on wove paper.

Contents: p. i, half-title 'NOTES ON | LIFE AND LETTERS'; p. ii, publisher's advertisement listing eight works by Conrad; p. iii, title; p. iv, "*All rights reserved* | PRIVATELY PRINTED. . 1921'; pp. v-ix, 'AUTHOR'S NOTE' signed 'J. C. | 1920.'; p. x, blank; pp. 3-354, text; on p. 354, 'THE | TEMPLE PRESS [*dandelion device*] LETCHWORTH | ENGLAND'; last two pages, blank.

Binding: Olive green smooth cloth. Front cover blind stamped '[*within a single rule border, author's monogram within a laurel wreath*]'; spine stamped in gold 'NOTES | ON | LIFE | -AND | LETTERS | [*feather*] | JOSEPH | CONRAD | J.M.DENT | & SONS.LD.' Top edge trimmed, fore edge and bottom edge untrimmed. White wove end-papers.

*Copies examined:**(2) First trade printing, first domestic issue*

Title page as in the advance printing.

Collation: Collation and pagination as in the advance printing; 195 x 130 mm.; printed on wove paper. The paper used for the first trade printing is heavier than that used for the advance printing. Copies of the first trade printing bulk 29 mm.; copies of the advance printing bulk 22 mm.

Note:

Collation of copies with the contents leaf in the third state reads $\pi^6(\{s5\}\pi6)$ A-X⁸ Y¹⁰ (\$1 + Y2 signed). For the three states of the contents leaf see the notes on the first printings, below.

Contents: As in the advance printing except that on p. iv the line 'PRIVATELY PRINTED . . 1921' does not appear.

Binding: a. Dark green smooth cloth. Stamping as on the binding of the advance printing. Top and fore edge trimmed, bottom edge rough trimmed. White wove end-papers. Dust wrapper of light brown wove paper printed in brown.

b. Blue smooth cloth. Front cover printed in black with a single rule border; spine printed in black 'NOTES | ON | LIFE | AND | LETTERS | [*feather*] | JOSEPH | CONRAD | J.M.DENT | & SONS, L^{T D}.'. Top and fore edge trimmed, bottom edge rough trimmed. White wove end-papers.
Note:

The state of the *b* binding (blue cloth printed in black) is not positively established. Normally, colonial issue copies were specifically so identified to prevent their re-introduction into the British book trade and these copies have no such identifying marks. More likely, they are copies from one of the small binding orders placed after 1921 but before the 1934 re-issue with new preliminaries. Copies in this binding have the original prelims with the contents leaf in the third (cancelled) state.

(3) *First trade printing, colonial issue*

No copy located.

(4) *First trade printing, second domestic issue*

No copy located.

Notes

First printing: On 25 October 1919 in a letter to J. M. Dent, Conrad wrote, "Some time ago the question of publishing a volume of my occasional work, such as articles on Daudet, Maupassant, France, H. James, the two *Titanic* articles, and a selection from several others, was mooted between P.[inker] and myself. The idea was rather new to me and at first not very attractive. But if it came to anything I should certainly like it to come out uniform with the novels published by you. How does the idea strike you – the publication being planned for the autumn, 1920?" Three weeks later, 12 November 1919, he wrote to Richard Curle, "I haven't the slightest recollection of the article 'Books'. I am glad you found my 'Anatole'. Do keep a list of your discoveries in view of a vol. by and bye." Then, in January 1920, again he wrote to Curle, "Ever so many thanks for your letter of yesterday inclosing the list of papers for the misce^{ous} volume. It seems to me to be absolutely complete. I don't think there can be a scrap of my writing hiding anywhere. There is nothing I can remember, at any rate."

In the spring of 1920 Curle provided Conrad with proofs of the Wise pamphlets and on these Conrad made his textual revisions for the book. These corrected proof sheets of the eighteen Wise pamphlets which appear in *Notes on Life & Letters* were sold with Conrad's library 3 March 1925 and appear as lots 191 through 200 in Hodgson's catalogue of the sale. In addition to the articles which had been printed by Wise, *Notes on Life & Letters* includes three pieces privately printed by Clement Shorter and nine others which had not been separately published. Presumably Curle, who had been gathering together the material for this volume, also ferreted out these. Hodgson's catalogue lists "a typed copy of 'The Ascending Effort,' with alterations by the Author, also initialled, 5 pp., 4 to, and 1 other." What the "1 other" is we do not know. The last lot in Hodgson's catalogue lists "Proof Sheets of 'The Crime of Partition' (Fortnightly Review, May 1919), 13 pp., with corrections, some in Conrad's hand, and Stephen Crane (London Mercury, December 1919), 2 pp., corrected and initialled." Yet, in spite of the noted revisions, textual changes for the *Notes on Life & Letters* volume are minimal. As Conrad put it, they are "dusted, which was but a decent thing to do, but in no way polished."

The first printing of *Notes on Life & Letters* was a special run of 36 copies⁶⁸ which were received by Dent 19 February 1921 and were sent to friends of the publisher. In the copy sent to T. J. Wise, now in the Lilly Library, there is a letter from J. M. Dent which reads: "Dear Mr. Wise, I am sending you one of 35 copies of Conrad's new volume which we printed on rather larger paper before the ordinary edition. I know you prize such things." In all copies of this printing examined the contents leaf is in the first state (for the three states of the contents leaf see below).

Dent ordered 9,350 copies of the first trade printing, 7,000 of which are entered in the stock ledger as having been received 21 February 1921. An additional 2,450 copies (100 over the number ordered) are recorded as received 14 April 1921. The stock ledger also records that an

advance binding order for 6,250 copies had been placed February 14th and that 3,000 bound copies were delivered February 22nd.⁶⁹ The remaining 3,250 copies from the initial binding order were delivered by March 8th. At the same time the advance order for the domestic issue copies had been placed, an order was also placed for 750 copies in colonial cloth. These were received February 28th. Two further orders for copies in colonial cloth were placed, the first for 40 copies 9 April 1921 and the second for 100 copies 26 May 1921. In all there were 890 colonial issue copies.

Sales appear to have been slow and no further substantial binding orders were placed. In 1924 publication of *Notes on Life & Letters* in the Uniform Edition all but brought to a stop the sale of the first English edition copies so that in 1934 it was decided to issue the remaining sheets with new preliminaries at 3s 6d. An order for 1,000 8 page cancels was placed 8 January 1934 and the re-issue appeared in the *English Catalogue of Books* as published January 1934. In fact, the cancel signatures were not received until September 17th. The demand for the "cheap edition," as the 3s 6d re-issue was termed, was slight. Only occasional small binding orders (10 copies or fewer) were placed from 1934 through 1940 after which the remaining sheets were wasted.

The contents leaf, pp. xi-xii, appears in three states. The eighth item on p. xi reads:

1st state: TALES OF THE E

2nd state: TALES OF THE SEA [with the 'S' and 'A' stamped in by hand]

3rd state: TALES OF THE SEA [with the original leaf cancelled and a corrected leaf substituted].

Publication: 25 February 1921 at 9s. The British Museum depository copy was received 24 February 1921.

Subsequent printings: No further printings were made from the first English edition plates.

B. First American edition.

(1) First printing

[within a single rule border printed in orange] [within a double rule border] NOTES ON LIFE | AND LETTERS | [two rules] | BY | JOSEPH CONRAD | [on a blind stamped oval panel within a blind stamped oval frame, in orange: publisher's device] | GARDEN CITY, N.Y., AND TORONTO | DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY | 1921

Collation: [1]⁸(1₁+1) [2-17]⁸; pp. [i-iv] v-x [1-2] 3-262 [263-264]; 188 x 125 mm.; printed on wove paper.

Contents: p. i, half-title 'NOTES ON LIFE | AND LETTERS | [circular ship device]', p. ii, list of twenty-two works by Conrad plus the two collaborations with Ford; p. iii, title, p. iv, 'COPYRIGHT, 1921, BY | DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY | ALL RIGHTS RESERVED, INCLUDING THAT OF TRANSLATION | INTO FOREIGN LANGUAGES, INCLUDING THE SCANDINAVIAN | COPYRIGHT, 1904, BY NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW CORPORATION | COPYRIGHT, 1920, BY GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY'; pp. v-viii, 'AUTHOR'S NOTE' signed '1920. J. C.'; pp. ix-x, 'CONTENTS'; p. 1, sectional title 'PART I | LETTERS | [circular ship device]'; p. 2, blank; pp. 3-262, text; p. 263 '[printer's device] | THE COUNTRY LIFE PRESS | GARDEN CITY, N. Y.'; p. 264, blank.

Binding: Dark blue linen finish cloth. Front cover stamped in gold ‘[*within a frame of two rules terminating at the base in a circular ship device, a gold panel with lettering in cover cloth*] NOTES ON LIFE | AND LETTERS | [*rule*] | JOSEPH CONRAD’; spine stamped in gold ‘NOTES ON LIFE | AND | LETTERS | [*rule*] | JOSEPH | CONRAD | DOUBLEDAY | PAGE & CO.’ All edges trimmed. White wove end-papers. Dust jacket of white wove paper printed in dark green.

Copies examined:

(2) *Second printing*

The second printing of the first American edition of *Notes on Life & Letters* was for the Doubleday, Page “Sun Dial Edition” of Conrad’s collected works. (See B1a, vol. XVIII, below)

(3) *Third printing*

The title page as in the first printing except the publisher’s device is without the blind stamped oval panel and frame.

Collation: [1]⁸([s5] 1₂) [2–17]⁸; pp. [i–iv] v–x [1–2] 3–262; 180 x 114 mm.; printed on sized wove paper.

Contents: As in the first printing except: p. iv, the first part of the copyright notice has been reset in five lines and moved from the bottom to the center of the page, ‘COPYRIGHT, 1921, BY | DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY | ALL RIGHTS RESERVED, INCLUDING THAT OF TRANSLATION INTO FOREIGN LANGUAGES, | INCLUDING THE SCANDINAVIAN | [*at the bottom of the page*] COPYRIGHT, 1904, BY NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW CORPORATION | COPYRIGHT 1920, BY GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY’ [Note that the comma after ‘COPYRIGHT’ in the last line has been dropped]; on p. 262, ‘[*rule*] | THE COUNTRY LIFE PRESS, GARDEN CITY, N.Y.’; because redistribution of the plates, eliminating the extra leaf in signature 1, reduced the number of leaves in the volume from 137 to 136, there are no pages 263–264 in the third printing.

Binding: Blue-green limp leather. Front cover stamped in gold ‘[*within an ornamental frame, a gold panel lettered in cover leather*] NOTES ON | LIFE AND LETTERS | JOSEPH | CONRAD’; spine stamped in gold ‘[*ship*] | [*two rules*] | NOTES ON | LIFE AND | LETTERS | CONRAD | [*rule above a scroll*] | DOUBLEDAY | PAGE & CO.’ All edges trimmed, top edge gilt. White wove end-papers printed in blue-green and pink with a seascape. No specimen of the dust jacket seen.

Copies examined:

Notes

First printing: After Conrad’s revisions of the several articles published in *Notes on Life & Letters* had been completed a typescript for the book was prepared and sent both to Dent and Doubleday, Page. Apparently, contrary to his habit, Conrad made no further changes in the proofs of the English edition so that, for once, the English and American editions show no textual changes which can be attributed to the author. It might be noted that the American edition is less heavily punctuated with commas, but this is certainly the work of Doubleday, Page’s copy editors.

The Doubleday, Page application for copyright states that printing of *Notes on Life & Letters* from electrotypes plates, was completed 31 March 1921. Because the book was required for publication in three formats – cloth bound, “Deep Sea”, and the “Sun-Dial” collected works – three printings were run in close succession. In the absence of publisher’s records priority of printing and publication between the three can only be hypothesized. Type wear offers no substantial evidence. There is relatively little of it and the few examples which clearly are wear and not bad inking present no strong pattern.

Other differences between the three printings exist but offer only very tenuous evidence of priority. In the first cloth bound printing the copy-right notice on the verso of the title page is set in six lines and appears at the base of the page; in the “Sun-Dial” and “Deep Sea” printings the copyright notice is reset in seven lines, five centered on the page and two at the base. For the second cloth bound printing, 1922, the copyright notice was again reset. In the first cloth bound printing and the “Sun-Dial” printing the Country Life Press device appears on page 263; in the “Deep Sea” printing the book ends with page 262 and the printer’s imprint appears at the bottom of that page; in the 1922 reprint page 263 is blank. Thus, the “Sun-Dial” printing, which contains similarities to both the other printings should occupy a middle position between them. It may also be suggested that removal of the printer’s device to print the 262 page “Deep Sea” copies led to the blank page 263 in the 1922 reprint. Based on this line of reasoning the order of priority in printing between the first three printings of the first American edition tentatively is given as: *a*, cloth bound; *b*, “Sun-Dial” collected works; *c*, “Deep Sea”.⁷⁰

The “Sun-Dial” printing was limited to 735 numbered copies; the number of copies in the cloth bound and “Deep Sea” printings is not recorded.

Publication: 22 April 1921 at \$1.90 in cloth. The listing in *Publishers’ Weekly*, 30 April 1921, lists only the cloth bound copies, two of which were deposited for copyright May 12th, about six weeks after the first printing had been completed. Ehrtam records reviews in the April 20th *Weekly Review* (New York) and the April 30th issues of the *Newark Evening News* and the *Boston Evening Transcript* as those which appeared the week of publication.

Subsequent printings: Because the first American edition setting of *Notes on Life & Letters* also was used for the “Sun-Dial Edition” of the collected works, it continued in use longer than previous Conrad first editions. After the three 1921 printings the book was reprinted by Doubleday, Page in 1922, 1923, 1924 for the “Canterbury Edition”, 1925 for the “Memorial Edition”, 1926 for the “Kent Edition”, 1926 in the “Deep Sea” format, and in 1927. In England Dent used mats from the first American edition setting to cast the plates for their “Uniform Edition” in 1924 (see B1b, vol XVIII below) and for the “Gresham Edition” in 1925. The plates were used for further reprintings in 1942 and 1949.

C. Second English edition.

Published as volume XVIII of the Heinemann edition of Conrad’s works (see B2, below).