CHAPTER 4

THE REVISION AND COPY-EDITING OF *WHILE THE BILLY BOILS*

LAWSON AND ARTHUR W. JOSE

One central document bears witness to the processes of revision and editing of the copy prepared for the typesetters of *While the Billy Boils*. Filed at A1867–8 in the Mitchell Library, its mounted clippings of Lawson's stories and sketches from newspapers, magazines and *Short Stories in Prose and Verse* have been marked-up by multiple hands. The most significant are those of Lawson and of his copy-editor Arthur W. Jose (1863–1934). Educated in Bristol and Oxford, Jose came to Australia as a young man. He became a teacher, poet and a university extension lecturer; and he acted as reader for Angus & Robertson over many years. His *A Short History of Australasia* (1899) would be a great success. Deeply committed to Imperial federation and said to possess a 'cocksure manner' that made him appear arrogant to some, he became a correspondent for the *Times* and would serve as editor-in-chief of the first *Australian Encyclopaedia* (Angus & Robertson, 1925, 1926).[1] In *The Romantic Nineties* he described himself as having been in 1898, when working for Angus & Robertson, 'a comparatively young and callous type of sub-editor': by 'callous', the context makes clear, he meant self-confidently interventionist.[2]

On A1867–8 the title of many of the stories whose clippings occupy more than one page was provided in pencil to avoid later confusion for the typesetters; the hand on several but not all of those that have

[1] R. Lamont, 'Jose, Arthur Wilberforce', in *ADB*, ix. 523–4 [p. 524].
[2] Arthur W. Jose, *The Romantic Nineties* (Sydney: A&R, 1933), p. 47.

the titling is George Robertson's, including the stories whose clippings come from *Short Stories in Prose and Verse*[3] as well as 'Hungerford' and '"Tom's Selection."' As Lawson changed the title of the latter to 'Settling on the Land' when he came to revise it, Robertson was evidently preparing the clippings for Lawson's use. This accords with a list of duties on folio 18 of the firm's 'Private' Letterbook, dated 12 January 1896. 'GR' is given for 'Publishing Department. Books in preparation'. 'GR & MacC [Hugh Maccallum]' are given for 'Books when published' in the same department. The newspaper sources of the clippings for *While the Billy Boils* are sometimes given in lead pencil when not a printed part of the clipping itself; but this hand is unidentified, as are the hands involved in the roughly inscribed foliations in coloured pencil or crayon and another numbering more carefully inscribed in lead pencil. (The evidence provided by these numberings is considered below.)

The majority of the clippings show an alternation of the hands of Lawson and Jose. Mostly Lawson worked first, then Jose, but occasionally the other way round. The textual note for each story in the Eggert and Webby edition of *While the Billy Boils* states the order, which is sometimes obvious when there is a series of rewordings. But, more often, establishing the order requires a search for less significant indications: for example, alternations or overrulings of punctuation and the making good of defective copy.

Sometimes the story went back to the first hand for final adjudication: usually, but not always, this was Lawson. He typically wrote first in lead pencil and confirmed in ink, usually red but occasionally black. His pen was thick-nibbed. He often then rubbed out his pencillings, but not always and not completely. Jose wrote with a very fine-nibbed black pen; his inscriptions in this medium are usually tiny but clear. He wrote with a distinctive capital *E* used in lower-case positions. The fact that he

[3] I.e. 'The Union Buries its Dead, 'The Drover's Wife', '[The Bush Undertaker]' and 'Macquarie's Mate'; but the pencil titling of '"Rats"' is apparently not in GR's hand. Its characteristics have been determined from the 'Private' Letterbook 1895–1906 (ML MSS 3269/71/3): his small *k* and *s* and *d*, and his capital *H* and *T* and *C*, as well as his very distinctive initials, were indicative in these comparisons.

missed some obvious typos suggests that the copy-editing was done at some speed, and in fact he would charge Angus & Robertson for only twelve hours of work for the job.

Jose as copy-editor

Jose's effect as copy-editor on the texts of the stories and sketches of *While the Billy Boils* has been the cause of some debate. In his *Commentaries* of 1985, Colin Roderick saw Jose's work as largely unwarranted, mechanistic interference, whose textual outcome, in his edition of the stories, Roderick nevertheless felt obligated to accept. In two articles in 1990 and 1991, themselves preceded by a doctoral thesis on Jose, Teresa Pagliaro presented a more nuanced view of an intelligent editor, responsive to Lawson's intentions but seeking to disarm, by astute textual changes, what he anticipated as likely objections from British reviewers. They had criticised Rudyard Kipling's successful short-story collections in the early 1890s for their tendency to include distasteful details of Anglo-Indian colonial life in the name of realism. Pagliaro also argued that, for similar reasons, Jose wanted Lawson to signal a clearer linguistic divide between the down-at-heel characters who populate his stories and the yarner–narrator that Lawson gradually developed (Marsters, Mitchell) – or, failing that, to include subtle signals of distance between the narrator and the author. She concurs with Doug Jarvis's earlier argument that there was 'an increased interest in the principles of fictional technique' at the *Bulletin*, especially those of realism.[4] Pagliaro then broadens this interest to include Jose and quotes Robertson's exasperation with it when arranging for Hugh Maccallum to work on proofs of Paterson's *Rio Grande's Last Race* (1902): 'M. has considerable knowledge of technique (an opinion isn't considered worth

[4] Doug Jarvis, 'Lawson, the *Bulletin* and the Short Story', *Australian Literary Studies*, 11 (1983), 58–66. Pagliaro's unpublished PhD thesis is 'Arthur Wilberforce Jose 1863–1934: An Anglo-Australian', 1990, University of Sydney. Her articles are: 'Jose's Editing of *While the Billy Boils*', *Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand Bulletin*, 14 (1990), 81–93; and 'A. W. Jose: Angus & Robertson Editor', *ibid*., 15 (1991), 11–19.

a damn unless this word is dragged in)'.[5] While this probably implicates Jose, extant evidence of his habits as a copy-editor of prose fiction suggests that he was less doctrinaire or analytical than pragmatic.

Lawson and Jose had a preliminary discussion about their common strategy for converting the clippings into a satisfactory form for the typesetters of *While the Billy Boils*. Lawson must have offered to housestyle as he went. Spellings were a particular problem, as Jose subsequently reported to Edward Dyson when Dyson was revising his *Rhymes from the Mines*, published by Angus & Robertson in December 1896:

> I believe Mr Robertson has said something about the spelling. I was talking to Henry Lawson about his, & he agreed that (a) there ought to be no *useless* mis-spelling (i.e. 'sez', because it doesn't indicate a mis-pronunciation) (b) it is simpler to leave the g's in: people will drop them in reading if they usually do so. His tales are *g*'d almost everywhere in the book.[6]

If the verb 'agreed' is indicative of the transaction, of who was leading the way, it was nevertheless a practice that Lawson willingly participated in. So Lawson, when revising the stories, conventionalised or toned down the dialect spellings, including his frequent, and deliberate, 'trav'lers'.[7] If he had originally been trying for a special effect in dialectal spelling, that effect would be dissipated by a resumption of the conventional form, which could draw no attention to itself. He was evidently prepared to accept that outcome.

Lawson also marked on various clippings general instructions to the typesetter to convert all double inverted commas to single, to expand all verbs ending with '—in'' to '—ing', all cases of 'an'' to 'and': see Illustration 1 opposite page 116. He expanded figures, monetary amounts (for example, '9s.6d.') and abbreviated initials (as in 'N. S. Wales'). Lawson

[5] ML MSS 314/66, p. 245, GR to R. Thomson (who succeeded Maccallum at A&R in 1898) [*c.* 1902].

[6] ML MSS 314/28, p. 805: this is one of Jose's four pages of notes, apparently about the first proofs of Dyson's *Rhymes from the Mines*: see further, Appendix 1.

[7] Interestingly, 'Labor' is marked to become 'Labour', one indication of a gradual shift in Australian orthography and locating it in professional *book* printing.

also crossed out nearly all lines of asterisks serving as section breaks within stories. (Often this was only a confirmation; the preparer of the clippings had usually done this in pencil already.) Lawson marked the great majority of individual examples in each of these categories; but not being a copy-editor by profession, he missed a percentage of them. Jose caught many but not all of the remainder in the stories that he worked on.

Comparative evidence of Jose's working habits is found in the printer's copy for a revised edition of *In the Days*, published in January 1900. The document is a printed copy of the 1896 first edition with markings in the hands of 'JF', Jose and Lawson.[8] Lawson has usually either erased pencillings of minor corrections or confirmed them in red ink; the pencillings must have been done prior to his stint. The pencilling hand is Jose's, who has written on page 36: 'Eng. reviews will say "Why didn't he take trouble enough to *finish* his work"', and on page 63: 'why misspelt when it doesn't represent any slang pronunciation?'. This refers to 'mustarsh' on the first line on the page. Lawson replies: 'I dunno HL.' He has then written in pencil and then red-inked over the top: 'moustache'. This shows that, even after the experience of working on *While the Billy Boils* with Jose, Lawson remained attached to his own spellings (which he also continued to use in his personal correspondence). He had evidently not accepted Jose's view that such spellings were merely 'oldfashioned'.[9] Most of the other pencilled corrections are added commas; Lawson mostly confirms them.

A letter from Robertson to Jose of 27 February 1896 about a submitted manuscript hints at the treatment Robertson and Jose had agreed was commonly needed to make a work publishable:

> The White Waratah.
>
> We want to know in writing

[8] ML C871. 'JF' is identified by Roderick (*Collected Verse* I. p. xxx) as J. F. Archibald but may be John Farrell, who reviewed the first edition for the *Daily Telegraph* on 15 February 1896 and signed the review 'J.F.'. In C871 the JF initials do not match Archibald's (as in a letter to his father, 28 June 1904: ML A3213, p. 25). The comments are usually to do with what 'JF' judges to be failures in metre and sometimes imprecisions of diction.

[9] Another example occurs on p. 194, first line, re 'bound'ry'. Jose writes 'These abbreviations are oldfashioned when they make no difference in the pronunciation'.

> 1. Do you think it would sell
> 2 Is it well enough written to go straight to the Printer without any 'fading'[10]

The term *fading* seems to imply the removal of eccentricities and the finishing-off, which books, as opposed to newspaper printings, were believed to require. The assumption is that a book decorum was needed. Jose was only doing for Angus & Robertson's authors what editors in his period and ever since have felt obliged to do: stand in as first reader and try to mediate between the intentions of the author, as best he could construe them, and such expectations of the readership, especially reviewers, as might affect the fortunes of the work in the relevant marketplace. So the question of the copy-editor's intentions and working methods becomes important to the present account.

Kipling as Jose's model

Jose would have had Kipling's stories in mind. Kipling's invention of his brash young narrator in *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1890) – implicitly of middle-class Anglo-Indian military background – solved the problem of getting rapidly into the story and getting it told, without a slow accumulation of significant detail in good, modern realist fashion or the, by then, old-fashioned, sometimes longwinded method of creating an omniscient and trustworthy narrator. Avoiding this and other dangers of omniscience is what a first-person narrator could provide. Kipling's use of casual idiomatic language and slang by such a narrator was not itself new. But Kipling's narrator's knowingness of address to the subject matter that causes each story to begin in the most abrupt way *in medias res*, and the clipped air of second-person intimacy with the reader that the narrator assumes, must have seemed fresh and welcome to contemporary readers, especially given its vigour and self-confidence. The stories in Kipling's first collection mostly deal with mad, unreasoning or frustrated love, dissipation, pig-headed pride or other behaviour that pushes the central

[10] In 'Authors Letter Book', 1895–97, ML MSS 3269/71/4, fol. 137. The author's name is not given and there is no record of the work being published.

character beyond the pale of Anglo-Indian and, implicitly, middle-class standards of respectability. There is plenty of room for humour and pathos in this kind of story where everything is scaled back to the brash narrator's capacity to understand. He presents himself as a compulsive storyteller, but he admits there are things he cannot explain, which must remain mysteries to him and can only be gestured at or dismissed. This provides, for readers who detect the subtlety, a satisfying handing-over of interpretative responsibility to them.

There is no class desertion signalled in the Kipling narrator's slangy language, once his character and relative youth are taken into account. Nevertheless some reviewers criticised the slanginess as a needless vulgarity;[11] and some readers would have reacted against such questionable subject matter as respectable men driven to drink, an Oxford man gone native, and British ladies becoming near-victims of adulterous passion in the hill stations of colonial India. The stories imply that isolation from Home, a debilitating climate and exotic culture can lead Britons into strange behaviours. *Robbery Under Arms* had suffered similar criticisms upon its first appearance in London in book form in 1888. There were complaints about the reader's having to keep close company with a slangy first-person narrator, who was a working man and bushranger, and having to look at 'vulgar ruffianism' through his eyes.[12]

Although the offence was a mixed one (language and subject matter) in Kipling's case, his narrator's slanginess is presented in highly conventional ways. Grammar is not compromised, nor standard spellings; and an educated class confidence communicates itself through the young narrator's brashness. Lawson's narrators lack this confidence – but neither do they need it, for they have another kind.

In 'Two Dogs and a Fence', for instance, the very choice of the subject matter presupposes the suburban life of the streets where there are fences

[11] Pagliaro quotes Quiller-Couch accusing Kipling of 'facile vulgarity' and Humphrey Ward, W. E. Henley and R. L. Stevenson criticising his style: 'Jose's Editing', p. 83.

[12] See Introduction, Rolf Boldrewood, *Robbery Under Arms* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2005), ed. Paul Eggert and Elizabeth Webby, p. liv.

both to keep dogs in and to keep other dogs out. The narrator Mitchell is only notionally present, but his appearance in the first paragraph creates the storytelling situation, which in turn strikes the tonal level, the idiomatic register, and readies us for speech-like rhythms in which observations about the typical behaviour of two dogs on either side of a fence will, in a new way, *make* sense where there was none before, and certainly not in the dogs. We are being primed, in other words, for a yarn, and this is what we get: 'The inside dog generally starts it.' We do not demand that 'it' have a grammatical antecedent since we are used to waiting for such revelations: that is the nature of the yarn. The storyteller-cum-suburban-philosopher may withhold as much as he wishes for greater effect.

When Jose came to edit this story he passed over this slightly ungrammatical sentence and did not countermand the outside dog's later intimating that the inside dog 'is worse than a flaming old slut'. But he lifted Mitchell's 'a stinkin' fuss' to 'a stinking fuss', overturned a double negative (the outside dog 'never wants to have a disagreement with nobody') and changed a comma to a semicolon – undoubtedly done as part of a change that would lend structure to what he must have judged too rambling a sentence. However, its parasyntactical form prior to the change perfectly captured Mitchell's anger at the 'sneering sort of civil way' of 'a good many peaceful men' that 'makes you want to knock their heads off, and who never start a row, but keep it going'.[13]

Lawson's experiments with presentation of wording are thus intrinsic to the narration, especially from 1893, not something that could later be harmlessly eliminated. The non-genteel world of this sketch is not – as Jose may have expected it to be – ironically or comically condescended to by a choice of language and syntax able to confirm the alliance of writer and reader in a shared educational and class superiority. This must have posed a problem for Jose, and to some extent the absent class confidence was made good by the standardisings he required. Although sympathetic to Lawson's employment of the idiom of his simple and

[13] See Eggert and Webby. Jose changed 'heads off, and' to 'heads off; men'.

outback characters, Jose evidently felt he needed to put boundaries on its use so as not to alienate reviewers and thus deter would-be purchasers.

There is no evidence, however, that Jose articulated as a conscious policy, either to Lawson or to himself, Pagliaro's subtle consideration that the Home reader might tend to identify the semi-literate yarner–narrator with the author and would, despite the contradiction, expect standard English spellings and presentation from his mouth – a conventional 'finish' – so as not to signal a class desertion or educational incapacity. According to Pagliaro, the 'author's display of skill' would, additionally or alternatively, signal a needed distance between the casual idiom of the narrator and Lawson's own.[14]

It is not clear that anyone at the time could have enunciated the supposed technical problem with this sophistication.[15] Although claims and manifestos about the artistry of realist and especially naturalist fiction were being voiced, prose fiction was not properly embedded into anglophone critical discourse as an aesthetic form until after Henry James's prefaces to the New York (revised) edition of his novels (1907–09) were gathered by R. P. Blackmur in *The Art of the Novel* (1934). The sophistication Pagliaro's case assumes is more an achievement of the New Criticism. Wayne Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961) was one of the more notable exercises in stylistic analysis and in the exposure and definition of narrative strategies. Kipling's narrator could henceforth be seen as an intentionally unreliable one, whereas for Kipling, 70-odd years before, it had probably been more a case of finding the glove that nicely fitted the authorial hand.

Similarly with Boldrewood. It was not until 1950 that any critic realised that the breakthrough of *Robbery Under Arms* lay in the liberating language of the first-person narrator, his 'colonial vernacular'. In the 1890s the achievement was typically seen as historical or romantic. The comment, 'Mr. Boldrewood has struck a new patch in the way of

[14] Pagliaro, 'Jose's Editing', p. 82.

[15] The closest Jose appears to get, and in relation to verse rather than fiction, occurs in his criticism of Edward Dyson: 'It spoils the effect of dialect pieces if [other] stories told as by you personally are badly spelt' (ML MSS 314/28, p. 809).

storytelling', was as technical as the commentary got.[16] Verse, being the older form, was far more susceptible to such commentary by the 1890s, and there Jose was certainly articulate, especially in relation to faulty metres and forced rhymes; and it is verse to which Robertson is referring in his letter about 'The White Waratah'. Objections to 'pure melodrama' and 'ultra-sentimental[ity]' – which suggest his then modern-day preference for realist approaches – also occur in Jose's notes on Dyson's *Rhymes from the Mines*.

There is no direct evidence that Lawson had read Kipling's stories, though he would have at least encountered discussions of them or references to them, and he could apparently quote from Kipling's poetry at will.[17] Even without that direct influence, there is no mystery in their both creating innovative styles of narration at much the same time: just as Twain and Boldrewood did, more or less simultaneously and in ignorance of one another, in the early 1880s in writing the first extended first-person narrations by working-class narrators in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) and *Robbery Under Arms* (serialised 1882–83). The flexibilities and possibilities for humour that Bret Harte had been introducing into short-story narration since around 1870 would also have been in Lawson's mind.

Lawson's colonial vernacular

The vernacular that Lawson had been developing in the newspaper versions of his stories, especially from 1893, would be toned down during the revision and copy-editing phase. Lawson wanted success in Britain; Jose would not have had to apply much pressure to secure his agreement. Lawson had already acknowledged a need for editorial assistance in his Preface to *Short Stories in Prose and Verse*. A largely self-taught man, he

[16] Review, *Daily Telegraph* (Melbourne), quoted in Introduction, *Robbery Under Arms*, ed. Eggert and Webby, p. lxv; cf. pp. lxxiv–lxxix. The 1950 critic was Frank Sargeson: quoted, *ibid*., p. lxxx.

[17] According to Bertram Stevens in a handwritten biographical essay 'Henry Lawson', dated April 1917: in 1897 'we wd. generally walk down town, drinking at various pubs., talking about poetry, reciting snatches of Lawson or Kipling & swapping yarns … he knew Kipling pretty well' (ML A1889, fol. 13). Cf. Chapter 1 n. 2 and *Letters* 82.

would not have wished to be dismissed as uneducated; he was vulnerable to this criticism throughout his life and never became a well-read man.

Lawson's rendering of that colonial or outback vernacular helped to provide the habitus for the events of his stories. It is clear that for him language was not only a tool, a symbolic notation of intended meaning. Language did not just convey meaning transparently. It also pointed: it was indexical. His frequent use of inverted commas around words conditioned their meaning by locating the event either within the character's habit and outlook or by pointing up the difference between the narrator's normal idiom and the linguistic expectations of the environment he finds himself beholden to: those of his landlady, for instance. The markings help to settle the reader into the story; they acclimatise us and thus create the undergirding for the disturbance to that climate that the story will enact or recount. Their deletion in printer's copy of *While the Billy Boils* tended to remove the effect at which Lawson had originally aimed.

His demotic narrator-types could make effective use of this technique. The marked terms are usually and simultaneously an expression of empathy rather than, as they might have been in the hands of another author, patronising distaste temporarily withheld for comic purposes. The same is not true of Kipling, and this is one way of defining Lawson's distinctive achievement. In the social sense, Lawson was not in Kipling's class, and tidying up his prose to give that false impression was to court the danger of dulling or even neutralising the special qualities of narration that Lawson had been developing.

In the majority of the stories in *While the Billy Boils* the narrator does not have a marked Mitchell-type personality. (Similarly, in Kipling's Mulvaney stories, the narrator figure very soon retreats into the background.) In Lawson's 'Going Blind', for instance, the first-person narrator's use of terms within inverted commas insists on the difference of the idiolect of the boarding house and then on that of the nearly blind bushman, Jack, from that of the city-slicker narrator (see Illustration 2). But the narrator's sympathy for Jack's plight intensifies as the story goes

on, so that the distance between narrator and character closes. This is one of the saddest stories Lawson ever wrote. Nevertheless in revision in late 1895 he altered the narrator's ''em' to 'them' even though the former suggested a bond, at once linguistic and sympathetic, between narrator and character.

This suggests a more general consideration. Lawson knew roughly who read his stories in the *Worker*: shearers, rouseabouts, unionists, union officials, labourers and other bush workers, and sympathisers in the city. If his narrating position had to be above that of his bush characters he could nevertheless at least quote them; he could draw attention to the language habits that indexed their thinking, such as it was, and signal when they had to adjust to the habits of landladies and officialdom. (The *Worker* version of 'Remailed' – see Eggert and Webby – is a good example of the latter.) Lawson knew instinctively that his people lived *in* their language, of which he was the self-appointed chronicler. It was their language that gave him access to them.

Lawson's prose rhythms are typically speech-based, as Colin Roderick has memorably pointed out:

> traditionalists . . . resented his dislocation of their romantic idiom. Lawson, uneducated in the leisured prose of the nineteenth century, wrote in the plain, speech-based idiom of the bush and slum . . . when reading him [one feels] that he is speaking confidentially, and not to a vast anonymous public.[18]

That Lawson was innocent of the conventions of leisured prose is far from certain, for he participated in a print culture; that he did not naturalise them in his own prose is clear. It was something at which he had to work and with which he had to experiment if he was to achieve a compensating naturalness of expression. So his down-at-heel narrators' sentences are often parasyntactical rather than strictly syntactical. Then, in the next story perhaps, he will strike a self-consciously educated pose. Witness Lawson's employment of the first-person plural – as if he were

[18] Colin Roderick, 'Introduction' to Henry Lawson, *Short Stories and Sketches 1888–1922*, ed. Roderick (Sydney: A&R, 1972), p. xiv; and cf. *Commentaries* 106.

the newspaper itself, or the editor speaking for it as, for example, in 'Some Reflections on a Voyage across Cook's Straits (N.Z.)' and 'Remailed'. The prevailing irony is one of the medley of tones, or narrative dispositions, that he is successively striking.

In other stories an indirect free style allows him to keep in sympathetic contact with the character's thought and speech rhythms. This omniscient narrating (as in '"Dossing Out" and "Camping"') is not much different from Lawson's first-person style since, in the latter, he soon falls out of the scene: for example in dealing with the travellers' obsession of exactly where the Dunbar sank at Sydney Heads (in 'Coming Across. A Study in the Steerage') or the experience of losing a half-sovereign (in 'Some Reflections on a Voyage across Cook's Straits'), which he renders in the second person, thus drawing the reader into the narrator's conundrum. Generally, the first-person narrator prefers to look and listen rather than take part, since doing the latter takes him into a more troubling relationship with his readers. When the first-person narrator is represented as Lawson himself ('"Board and Residence"', '"In a Wet Season"') there is a touch of self-indulgent whining that he escapes only when he neutrally records what he sees.

Because the accompanying scholarly edition has the advantage of presenting the stories and sketches in chronological order and in their original newspaper texts, Lawson's unfolding experimentation with modes of narration becomes visible. Similarly, recording in foot-of-page apparatus Lawson's and Jose's alterations for *While the Billy Boils* – rather than incorporating them into the texts – exposes the veneer of book decorum that the stories received when collected. Its collaboratively achieved nature need not, the edition implies, be the end of the textual inquiry. That decorum can be newly understood in terms of what it was for.

This editorial approach has the potential to allow existing arguments to be tested and new ones in the future to be clarified as they are formulated. For instance, in his *Commentaries* volume, Colin Roderick argues that most of the *–ing* endings, the completion of contractions such as *'em*, and the standardisings were not solely at Jose's behest but relate to

Lawson's changed understanding of Mitchell in 1895 from his original one in 1893. The last in the initial, colloquial style, Roderick notes, was 'Another of Mitchell's Plans for the Future' (*Bulletin*, 1 July 1893); and the lifting in register had already started in the 1894 Mitchell stories. In 'Our Pipes' (*Bulletin*, 11 May 1895 but possibly written in 1894), Mitchell has 'settled into place as a quizzically philosophical intermediary between Lawson and the reader'; henceforth he will be more purely a narrator rather than an actor in events.[19] The regularisings for *While the Billy Boils* of 1895–96 can be seen, according to this argument, as a case of the earlier stories being made consistent with Lawson's changed style. This would help explain his acquiescence in Jose's requirements.

However, examination of A1867–8 shows the situation is not clear-cut. For instance, 'Shooting the Moon' (*Worker*, 22 September 1894 and thus supposedly after the end of the colloquial style) has, and retains in *While the Billy Boils*, Mitchell's saying 'yer', 'He seen Tom', and 'There was two beds'; but the *–in'* endings no longer occur. In regularising speech and some colloquial usages in the earlier stories Jose and Lawson were only superficially and in some cases mechanically reforming them, probably to give an appearance of homogeneity and to try to solidify the Mitchell stories into a series.

Two more Mitchell stories were created from Marsters stories. Marsters had originally come into published being in the *Worker* in July–August 1893 in '"Some Day"' and 'A Camp-fire Yarn'.[20] He is less colloquial, his speech is more educated, and he is more philosophical and serious than Mitchell. Despite these considerations, Lawson simply renamed Marsters in the printer's copy. A further Mitchell story was created by renaming 'That Swag' (*Bulletin*, 15 December 1894) as 'Enter Mitchell'. The swagman is described physically ('short, and stout, and bow-legged, and freckled, and sandy'), whereas Mitchell is nowhere described; and the swagman is not otherwise named in the story.[21]

[19] *Commentaries* 75–6, 79.
[20] For the dating see Chapter 2 n. 28.
[21] *Commentaries* 72. The new title 'Enter Mitchell' is inscribed in red ink but does not appear to be in HL's hand; perhaps someone sitting next to him asked whether this one could

Whether or not it was intentional, the effect of lifting Mitchell's register meant it became a little closer to that of the now renamed Marsters. Following Jose's guidelines alone could not meld the two conceptions, however, and colloquiality remained a part of Mitchell's character even after the alterations. For example, in 'Mitchell: A Character Sketch' (*Bulletin*, 15 April 1893), the opening sentence is left unchanged by Jose and Lawson: 'It was a very mean station, and Mitchell thought he had better go himself and beard the overseer for tucker.' In comparison, Jose's corrections of ''em' to 'them' and 'agen' to 'again' (but missing or leaving ''spose') look superficial. Mitchell emerges in this and a number of other sketches as the resourceful scrounger, a man of dry, sardonic humour – capacities that are not in Marsters's repertoire. Similarly, in 'A Camp-fire Yarn', Lawson accepts Jose's prior standardisings of the speech of Marsters's mate ('you was', 'she come'): a mechanical correction and an unthinking acceptance that do not lift the narrator's speech nearer to that of the British reader for they have the opposite effect of bringing the mate's register nearer the already near-standard one of Marsters. They call Pagliaro's defence of Jose's policy into question; he could be quite unsubtle in practice.

Surprisingly, Lawson could be too. The lifting of Mitchell's register from the 1893 stories is often unconvincing.[22] Mitchell's language is thoroughly idiomatic both early and late. As a result, having his *–in'* endings completed and his dialectal spelling ('s'posing') standardised fails to imply a lift in education or class, which is in any case not justified by the account of his youth (in 'Our Pipes'). There is insufficient re-envisioning on Lawson's part for the standardisings to take effect, and there is sometimes a loss in intimacy caused by them.

become another Mitchell story and picked up his pen. Roderick speculates it was Walter Syer (*Commentaries* 70), but this is unlikely; the hand more closely resembles Jose's. Syer's hand has irregular slope with untidy indistinct lettering: cf. his letter to Sir William Dixson, 6 June 1902 (tipped-in to Dixson's copy of the luxury issue of *In the Days When the World Was Wide*: SLNSW at DL 89/571). The capital *E* and *M* resemble Jose's: for the *M*, see Jose's letter to Fred Shenstone of A&R, 16 October [*c.* 1899], ML MSS 314/41, pp. 207–09.

[22] E.g., see the textual apparatus for 'Mitchell Doesn't Believe in the Sack' in Eggert and Webby.

Because (as described in Chapters 5 and 6) the final production stages of *While the Billy Boils* were ad hoc and scrambling, inconsistencies in the planned collaborative revision and copy-editing resulted. For example, in 'On the Edge of a Plain' – which Jose had corrected but which Lawson probably came to late in the process, revised in pencil and failed to confirm in red ink – both of them neglected to correct any of Mitchell's *–in'* endings. And they both neglected to do it in 'Another of Mitchell's Plans for the Future', while also passing over Mitchell's 'what d'yer mean'. Another doubt about the sensitivity of Lawson's discharge of Jose's copy-editorial policy arises in 'That There Dog o' Mine'. Lawson gives Macquarrie [*sic*] the shearer the same linguistic lift as Mitchell receives elsewhere, yet Macquarrie is clearly an uneducated man, often drunk. Jose queried these standardisings: 'doubt if all these ought to be inserted: it's dialogue'. Lawson's strategy is little more than mechanical copy-editing at this point, less sensitive to context than Jose's.

The latter's substantive changes – all of which are recorded in the textual apparatus in the edition – were numerous but by no means overwhelming. Most were shrewd and localised in effect; the most significant ones were requests for deletion of new endings to stories that Lawson had just added or requests for alteration of existing ones. Jose seemed to prefer terse endings, preferably in dialogue. Lawson preferred more resonant endings often achieved via a pulling back to third-person narration that nevertheless remained in touch with the tonal range of the rest of the story and was expressed within its idiomatic register.

The foregoing discussion suggests two conclusions. The first is that the commercial pressure to produce a satisfying collection required partial remouldings of the stories and sketches that inevitably, though to varying extents, compromised the intentions behind, and disguised the nature of, their original texts. The second conclusion is more surprising. The character remouldings show what relatively little resistance Mitchell's imagined character offered Lawson. Indeed, the fact that the stories could absorb them suggests that characterisation was never at

their centre. Instead, what emerges as central to many of the stories from 1893 is their settling down into a shared acceptance of hardships, of youth lost, of passions put behind, of comic consolations. It is formed and re-formed in a basic communal setting, quintessentially, between a man and his mate, both of whom are down on their luck, struggling to survive. The acceptance is enacted through story: in the moment of its telling and via the mood it creates. Mitchell becomes the yarn spinner for the sad register; and Steelman for the comic-absurd, after his creation in early 1895.

Other hands evident on printer's copy

The variations in the order of Jose and Lawson's hands on printer's copy suggest a number of stints and probably the staggered receipt of clippings. In addition, there are clippings where Lawson was not involved at all and a small number of cases where hands other than Lawson's and Jose's are evident. A large hand in lead pencil has made several localised corrections in 'The Drover's Wife' and a very few corrections in each of 'A Visit of Condolence' and 'The Story of Malachi'. But no other stories seem to have been affected. It is possible that the hand is George Robertson's, although, if it is, it may seem surprising that he intervened so sparingly. However, Robertson was paying Jose to do the job and must have been a very busy man, as the firm's list of duties makes clear. In 1923, in his notes for *The Auld Shop and the New*, Robertson commented: 'My success in business was probably due to a capacity for organization, and to hard work.'[23] He would have known how and when to delegate.

Another hand – once again, large inscriptions in lead pencil – is evident in 'The Story of Malachi' and 'Our Pipes'. Although there is not much in this hand by which to judge, it has characteristics consistent with Jose's (a capital *H* and the distinctive *e*). On 'An Unfinished Love Story', which Lawson has not touched, there is a fourth, unidentified

[23] Page 26.