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OLD COLOURED BOOKS



THE REV. DOCTOR SYNTAX

OLD COLOURED BOOKS

BY

GEORGE PASTON

METHUEN & CO.
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SOME OLD ILLUSTRATED BOOKS

I

It is an unromantic fact, but one which cannot fail to be of interest at the present time, that the remarkable development of the graver's art in England during the latter part of the

eighteenth century was due, in a measure at least, to—Protection. In the middle of the century our trade in engravings was still an import one, English print-sellers being obliged to pay hard cash for the prints they bought in France, since the French took none in exchange. But with the accession of George III. a better prospect dawned for the artist and engraver. The young King, unlike his immediate predecessors, desired to patronise native talent; no budding Hogarth should draw unflattering comparisons between himself and the King of Prussia as an "Encourager of the Arts." And in spite of the gibes of Peter Pindar, in spite of the royal preference for Ramsay over Reynolds, it is probable that George III. was sincere in his desire to stimulate the growth of British art. In 1769 the long-talked-of Royal Academy was founded; while, for the benefit of the rising school of English engravers, bounties were granted on the exportation of English prints, and heavy duties imposed on the importation of French prints. Politics and patriotism were not without their influence upon the trade, many a good courtier being willing to help the cause by the purchase of an inexpensive print, though he was not yet prepared to patronise a British painter. Immense sums were cleared by John Boydell over Woollett's engravings after West and Copley; illustrated books, more especially of travel, were eagerly bought up; illustrated magazines flooded the market; print-shops multiplied, their windows "glazed with libels" in the shape of coloured caricatures; and foreign artists, engravers, and miniaturists flocked to the English Eldorado. In 1790 it was stated in a trade pamphlet that the prints exported from England at that time, as compared with those imported from France, were in the proportion of five hundred to one!

RUDOLF ACKERMANN

The French Revolution, and the wars that followed, temporarily ruined our foreign trade in prints, the great fortune that Boydell had made by his judicious speculation in the talents of his countrymen, melting away under these adverse influences, and leaving him a ruined man by 1802. But as Boydell's star sank, that of another art-publisher, presumably less dependent on foreign trade, rose above the horizon. Rudolf Ackermann (1764-1834), the son of a Saxon coachbuilder, came to London about 1775, and after ten years spent in making designs for coachbuilders, set up for himself in the Strand as an art-publisher and dealer in fancy goods. Ackermann proved himself a man of really remarkable energy and initiative, with a mind always open to the reception of new ideas, and a spirit of commercial enterprise that was based upon artistic taste and sound judgment. He was also one of the few men who have ever successfully combined business and philanthropy on a large scale. During the years that followed the Reign of Terror, he was the chief employer of the French *émigrés* in London, finding occupation for no fewer than fifty nobles, priests, and ladies, in the manufacture of screens, card-racks, and other articles for his "fancy department." Irrespective of his business as an art-publisher, this extraordinary man patented an invention for rendering cloth and paper waterproof, made experiments in air-balloons for the dissemination of news in war-time, designed Nelson's funeral-car, introduced lithography for the purposes of art-illustration into this country, raised and distributed a large sum for the relief of sufferers after the battle of Leipsic, undertook the same good offices for the Prussian soldiers after Waterloo, and was a generous employer to the Spanish exiles who took refuge in England in 1815. His Wednesday evening conversazione at the Repository of Arts, 101 Strand, became quite a feature in the literary and artistic world after 1813, while he played the part of protector and adviser to the more unpractical of the authors and illustrators who were employed upon his various undertakings.

Turning to Ackermann's numerous and valuable art-publications, we find that very early in his business career he was one of the chief employers of Rowlandson, the caricaturist, to whom he eventually became a kind of "foster-publisher," just as Humphrey was the foster-publisher of Gillray.

THOMAS ROWLANDSON

Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827) had received his artistic training partly in the Academy schools, and partly, thanks to French connections, in Parisian studios, where, in addition to a brilliant technique, he acquired a taste for gaming and all kinds of dissipation. A brief attempt to succeed as a portrait-painter was abandoned for caricature, as soon as he perceived the success that had been won in that field by his contemporaries Gillray and Bunbury, to say nothing of the easy triumphs of such minor workers in the grotesque as Collings and Woodward. The exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1784-87 of such admirable studies in social comedy as *Vauxhall Gardens*, *The Serpentine*, *French Barracks*, *An Italian Family*, and *Grog on Board*, speedily established his reputation, and his future seemed secure. But his temperament made havoc of his career. He threw away, not only his earnings, but more than one substantial legacy, over the dice, remaining at the tables sometimes for a day and a night together. Though he had a horror of debt, and his I.O.U. was reckoned as good as sterling coin, his losses troubled him but little. "I have played the fool," he was accustomed to say when he came home with empty pockets, "but," holding up his famous reed-pen, "here is my resource." And for many years his faith in his own powers was abundantly justified. But as time passed on, his amazing rapidity of production began to spoil his market; while his facile but not profound imagination showed signs of wearying. The print-shops were flooded with his hasty sketches, and though his admirers were

numerous and his patrons liberal, the demand failed to keep pace with the supply.

At this juncture it became apparent to the keen eye of Rudolf Ackermann that some effort must be made to turn this fine talent into new channels, and to organise its output. He had noted the popularity of such connected series of comic designs as Woodward's *Eccentric Excursion* and Bunbury's *Academy for Grown Horsemen*, and it occurred to him that humorous works illustrated with coloured etchings by Rowlandson, and issued in monthly parts, or in volume form at a moderate price, would have more chance of success than a multitude of detached plates. *The Loyal Volunteers*, published in 1799, seems to have been the earliest result of the connection between artist and publisher, and this was followed by a series of popular productions, including the well-known *Miseries of Human Life*. But the most sensational success was made with *The Tour of Dr. Syntax in Search of the Picturesque*, which appeared in the *Poetical Magazine* in 1810 and in book-form in 1812. The idea of a series of designs representing the adventures and misadventure of a ridiculous old pedagogue during a tour among the Lakes, appears to have been suggested to Rowlandson by his friend John Bannister, the comedian, but the subject was versified by William Combe, then an inmate of the King's Bench. Combe has described how every month "an etching or drawing was sent to me, and I composed a certain proportion of pages in verse, in which, of course, the subject of the design was included; the rest depended on what would be the subject of the second, and in this manner the artist continued designing, and I continued writing, till a volume containing nearly ten thousand words was produced." A contemporary states that Combe used to pin up the sketch against the screen of his room, and reel off his verses as the printer wanted them; but, owing to his dilatory habits, only one etching was sent to him at a time.



DR. SYNTAX IN THE GLASS HOUSE



QUÆ GENUS OFFICIATING AT A GAMING HOUSE

The success of this not very promising system of collaboration astonished the authors and delighted the publisher. The fortune of the *Poetical Magazine* was made, new editions being called for so rapidly that the old plates were worn out and new ones had to be etched. Dr. Syntax hats, coats, and wigs became fashionable, while the old schoolmaster, his scolding wife and his ancient steed, were among the most popular of public characters. The many inferior imitations to which this success gave rise induced Ackermann to commission sequels from the same collaborators, and these appeared under the titles of *Dr. Syntax in Search of Consolation* (the hero having lost his wife), *Dr. Syntax in Search of a Wife*, and *Johnny Quæ Genus*, between 1820 and 1823. The popularity of these works was doubtless mainly due to Rowlandson's designs, in which British breadth of humour was combined with French lightness of touch; but Combe's versified account of the adventures of the long-suffering Doctor, though it has lost much of its savour for the present age, seems to have been completely to the taste of his own generation.

William Combe (1741-1823) was a literary "bravo" of a type that was common enough in the eighteenth century. If he had not the truculence of John Churchill or the coarseness of Peter Pindar, he was little less unscrupulous in his use of the pen. The son of a Bristol merchant, he was educated at Eton and Oxford, and after making the grand tour he was called to the Bar. But "Duke" Combe, as his friends nicknamed him, was too fine a gentleman to work at his profession. He set up an expensive establishment, kept a retinue of servants and several horses, and, thanks to his good looks and attractive manners, obtained an entrance into the most "exclusive circles." At the end of two or three years, having squandered a small fortune left him by his godfather, Combe disappeared from his fashionable haunts, and, if tradition may be believed, underwent strange vicissitudes of fate. He is said to have enlisted as a private, first in the English and afterwards in the French army, and to have figured as a teacher of elocution, a waiter in a restaurant, and a cook at Douai College, where he made such excellent soup that the monks tried to persuade him to join their order. In 1772 he returned to England, and was induced to marry the *chère amie* of an English nobleman by the promise of a handsome annuity. The annuity not being forthcoming, he wrote a versified satire called *The Diaboliad* (1776), dedicated to the Worst Man in His Majesty's dominions, who has been variously identified as Lord Irnham and Lord Beauchamp. The satire having a *succès de scandale*, was followed by *The Diablo-lady*, and other lampoons in the same style. Combe now settled down to literary work—of a kind—and produced the spurious *Letters of the late Lord Lyttelton* (which deceived many of the elect), and the equally spurious *Letters of Sterne to Eliza*. He had made the acquaintance of Sterne during his travels in Italy, and used to boast that he had supplanted the sentimental divine in the good graces of Eliza. In 1789, Combe took service under Pitt as a political pamphleteer, with a pension of £200 a year. This salary ceased when Addington came into office in 1803, but he then obtained a post on the staff of the *Times*. Crabb Robinson, who met him in the *Times* office, said that he had known few men to be compared with Combe, and states that he was chiefly employed in consultation, important questions being brought to him to decide in Walter's absence.

Combe's connection with Ackermann began when he was about sixty years of age, and it is remarkable that his greatest successes should have been won when he was nearing seventy. That he was able to produce so much popular work at his advanced age, was probably partly due to the fact that, unlike most of his contemporaries, he was a confirmed water-drinker, and that his life within the Rules was free from anxiety and responsibility. The Rules were jokingly said to extend as far as the East Indies, and it is certain that they extended as far as Ackermann's hospitable table in the Strand. Combe stoutly refused to allow his friends to make any arrangement with his creditors, and no formal contract regulated his dealings with his publisher. "Send me a twenty-pounder," or "Send me a thirty-pounder," he wrote when funds were low, and his employer knew his value too well to neglect his demands. Besides contributing numerous articles to Ackermann's monthly, *The Repository of Arts, Literature, Fashions, and Manufactures* (1809-28), Combe wrote the descriptive letterpress for several of the large illustrated books published by the same firm, *The History of the Thames*, *The History of Westminster Abbey*, and the third volume of the splendid *Microcosm of London*, illustrated by Rowlandson and Augustus Pugin (1762-1832),^[1] the former being responsible for the figures, the latter for the architecture. The first and second volumes were written by W. H. Pyne, author of *Wine and Walnuts*, who is perhaps better known by his pseudonym of "Ephraim Hardcastle." Combe is seen to most advantage, however, in *The English Dance of Death*, which was published in 1815, with illustrations by Rowlandson, and followed the succeeding year by *The Dance of Life*.



By Gamblers link'd in Folly's Noose,
Play ill or well, he's sure to loose.

"The Infamous Combe," as Walpole unkindly dubbed him, was the author of over a hundred books; but as he only put his name to one, there is considerable doubt about the identity of his literary offspring. Though nominally confined in a debtors' prison, Combe, on the death of his first wife in 1814, married a sister of Mrs. Cosway's, but this union was no happier

than the first, and the couple were soon separated. In his old age he appears to have amused himself with a platonic love-affair with a young girl, [2] and in the composition of his autobiography. If this was a truthful record of his career, it must have been a more exciting document than all his other books put together; but, unfortunately, in a fit of resentment at the marriage of his adopted son, he burned the manuscript leaf by leaf.



SUBSCRIPTION ROOM AT BROOKS



VAUXHALL GARDENS

Before quitting the subject of the triple alliance between Ackermann, Rowlandson, and Combe, a word is due to the method in which the delicately-tinted illustrations to their joint-productions were executed. According to Delaborde, the copperplate engravings printed in colour at the close of the eighteenth century, were usually printed from one plate, done in stipple, and the various tints were rubbed in by the printer, who used a sort of stump for this purpose instead of the ordinary dabbing-brush. This was a lengthy process, and not always satisfactory, since so much depended on the discretion of the printer. A more common method was to print broadly with three tints of printing ink, and afterwards to complete the colouring by hand with water-colours. Mr. Grego has described in some detail the manner in which the etchings of Rowlandson were produced by the conscientious Ackermann. The artist would saunter round to the Repository from his lodgings in the Adelphi, and call for reed-pens, drawing-paper, and saucers of vermilion and Indian ink, which last he proceeded to combine in his own inimitable fashion. "For the book-illustrations a finished drawing was first made, and then Rowlandson etched the outline firmly and sharply on the copperplate, an impression from the bitten-in outline was printed upon drawing-paper, and the artist put in his shadows, modelling of forms and sketchy distance in the most delicate handling possible. The shadows were then copied in acqua-tint on the outlined plate, sometimes by the designer, but in most cases by an engraver. Rowlandson next completed the colouring of

his own Indian-ink shaded impression in delicate tints harmoniously selected. This tinted impression served as a copy for Ackermann's famous staff of colourists, who, having worked under his supervision for many years, attained a degree of perfection and neatness never arrived at before, and almost beyond belief in the present day." The result of this elaborate care may perhaps best be seen in *The Microcosm of London*, *The Dance of Death*, and the charming edition of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, published in 1817.

[1] Father of the more celebrated Augustus Welby and Edward Welby Pugin.

[2] His letters to her were published the year after his death.

II

ROBERT AND GEORGE CRUIKSHANK

In the early years of the nineteenth century, when Gillray was fast drinking himself into imbecility, and Rowlandson had turned his attention to book-illustration, English caricature, that once vigorous plant, showed signs of premature decay. In the opinion of all lovers of pictorial satire, the promise displayed in the as yet immature designs of a couple of youthful brothers, Robert and George Cruikshank, held out the best hopes for the future. The two boys were the sons of a Lowland Scotchman, Isaac Cruikshank (c. 1756-c. 1811), who came to London with his Highland wife some time in the "eighties," and made a modest mark as a water-colour painter and caricaturist. He produced a large number of political caricatures in the style of Gillray, which were coloured by his wife and later by his two boys, who enjoyed but little schooling, and only so much artistic training as he could give them. It was owing, probably, to Isaac's passion for Scotch whisky, which is said to have hastened his end, that the little household in Duke Street, Holborn, had a hard struggle to make both ends meet, and George (1792-1878), while yet a child himself, was set to illustrate children's books for the trade. Before he was out of his teens he was producing coloured caricatures, of which the arrest of Sir Francis Burdett is the earliest important example, and contributing etchings to *The Scourge* (1811-16), a scurrilous publication, edited by "Mad Mitford." The principal subjects of his somewhat crude satire were the Regent, Buonaparte, and a certain number of too notorious personages in "high life." In 1814, George illustrated a *Life of Napoleon* in Hudibrastic verse, by Dr. Syntax, not our friend Combe, but some anonymous admirer of his hero. Young Cruikshank's talent attracted the attention of William Hone of *Table-Book* fame, who employed him to illustrate a series of radical squibs, including *The Political House that Jack built*, *The Political Alphabet*, and *The Queen's Matrimonial Ladder*. It was for Hone that George designed his famous Bank-note "not to be imitated," which, he fondly believed, put a stop to hanging for the forgery of one pound notes. Hone seems to have been a very poor paymaster, but his custom brought the young artist great notoriety, and by 1820 "the ingenious Mr. Cruikshank" was firmly established as a popular favourite.



DEATH'S DANCE

After his father's death, George continued to keep house with his mother, sister, and brother, and we are told that the wild ways of her two boys gave the thrifty, serious Mrs.

Cruikshank a great deal of anxiety. She is reported to have chastised George with her own hands when he came home tipsy o' nights, and she was accustomed to say, with more than maternal candour, "Take the pencil out of my sons' hands, and they are no better than two boobies." However, it was probably owing to their familiarity with "the haunts of dissipation" that they became acquainted with Pierce Egan (1772-1849), the pet of peers and pugilists, an accomplished professor of Cockney slang, and the greatest living authority on questions relating to boxing, bull-baiting, cock-fighting, and all such "manly sports." Pierce, who handled a pen much as he might have handled a quarter-staff, had already won fame as a sporting reporter, and as the author of *Boxiana, or Sketches of Modern Pugilists*, published in 1818. In 1821 he conceived, or had suggested to him, the idea of a book on Life in London as seen by a young man about town, and he engaged the brothers Cruikshank to illustrate it. It has been claimed that the idea originated with Robert Cruikshank, who drew the characters of Corinthian Tom, Jerry Hawthorn, and Bob Logic, from himself, his brother, and Pierce Egan. George IV. gave permission for the proposed work to be dedicated to himself, and in July 1821 it began to appear in monthly numbers, under the title of *Life in London; or the Day and Night Scenes of Jerry Hawthorn, Esq., and his elegant friend Corinthian Tom, accompanied by Bob Logic the Oxonian, in their Rambles and Sprees through the Metropolis*. The work was illustrated by fifty-six hand-coloured etchings by the two Cruikshanks, as well as numerous engravings on wood. The very first number took the town by storm, and the colourists were unable to keep pace with the demand. Scenes from the tale were painted on fans, screens, and tea-trays, numerous imitations were put forth, even before the book was issued in volume form, and more than one dramatised version appeared on the stage. Every street broil was transformed into a "Tom and Jerry row," the Methodists distributed tracts at the doors of the theatres in which the piece was played, and it was declared that Egan had turned the period into an Age of Flash. But all protests were speedily drowned in a general chorus of admiration, to which the *European Magazine* put the climax with its public declaration that "Corinthian Tom gives finished portraits; with all the delicacy and precision of Gerard Douw, he unites the boldness of Rubens with the intimate knowledge of Teniers!" Thackeray, in a charming essay, has recalled his early delight in the book, in those far-off days when every schoolboy believed that the three heroes were types of the most elegant and fashionable young fellows the town afforded, and thought their occupations and amusements those of all high-bred English gentlemen. Twenty years later, Thackeray describes how he went to the British Museum to renew his acquaintance with his old favourite, and was disillusioned by the letterpress, which he found a little vulgar, "but the pictures," he exclaims, "the pictures are noble still!"



HUNTING THE SLIPPER

DAVID CAREY

The earliest imitation of *Life in London* was called *Real Life in London, or the Rambles and Adventures of Bob Tallyho, Esq., and his Cousin the Hon. Tom Dashall. By an Amateur*. This book, which some have supposed to be the work of Egan in rivalry with himself, was illustrated by Rowlandson, Alken, and Dighton. A year later, in 1822, came *Life in Paris, Comprising the Rambles, Sprees, and Amours of Dick Wildfire and Squire Jenkins*, by David Carey; while *The English Spy*, by Bernard Blackmantle, appeared in 1824. David Carey (1782-1824) was a young Scotchman, son of a manufacturer at Arbroath, who began his career in Constable's publishing house in Edinburgh but presently came south, and devoted himself to literary journalism. He attracted some attention by means of a satire, called the *The Ins and Outs*, and also wrote some long-forgotten novels and sketches. In 1822 he went to Paris, where he wrote his account of life in that city; and then, his health breaking down, returned to his native town to die of consumption. It was claimed for the illustrations to his book, which were from the pencil of George Cruikshank, that "To accuracy of local delineation is added a happy exhibition of whatever is ludicrous and grotesque in character." Now George had never been in France, and therefore was obliged to take his local colour from the "views" of other artists, but the ludicrous and grotesque side of French life and character came only too easily to his John Bullish imagination. To him, as Thackeray points out, all Frenchmen were either barbers or dancing-masters, with "spindle shanks, pig-tails,

outstretched hands, shrugging shoulders, and queer hair and moustaches." In his regenerate days, George was wont to assert, *à propos* of *Life in London*, that, finding the book was a guide to, rather than a warning against, the vicious haunts and amusements of the Metropolis, he had retired from the alliance with Egan, leaving about two-thirds of the plates to be executed by his brother Robert. If this be true, he showed some inconsistency in consenting to illustrate Carey's book, which is a frank imitation of Egan's, though in a French setting.

CHARLES MOLLOY WESTMACOTT

A more ambitious book in the same genre was *The English Spy; an Original Work, Characteristic, Satirical, and Humorous, comprising Scenes and Sketches in every Rank of Society, being Portraits of the Illustrious, Eminent, Eccentric, and Notorious*. The author, Charles Molloy Westmacott, *alias* Bernard Blackmantle, editor of *The Age*, has been described as a typical editor of the rowdy school of journalism. He claimed to be the son of Sir Richard Westmacott, the Royal Academician, by a certain Widow Molloy, who kept the King's Arms at Kensington. The system of journalistic blackmail was brought to a higher degree of perfection by Westmacott than by any other free lance of the time. For the *pièces justificatives* relating to a certain scandalous intrigue in which various exalted personages were implicated, Westmacott is said to have received nearly £5000. With his ill-gotten gains he fitted up a villa near Richmond, where for a time he lived in luxury, though not, it would appear, in security. In 1830 he was soundly horsewhipped by Charles Kemble for an insulting allusion to his daughter Fanny in *The Age*, and he was threatened with the same punishment by Bulwer Lytton. In his portrait by Daniel Maclise he is represented with a heavy dog-whip, probably a necessary weapon of defence. In his later days Westmacott took refuge in Paris, where he died in 1868.



TOM AND JERRY, IN THE SALOON AT COVENT GARDEN

In 1823, Westmacott published his *Points of Misery*, illustrated by George Cruikshank, and in 1825 he brought out a *roman à clef* called *Fitzalloyne of Berkeley*, in which various scandals relating to the Berkeley family were introduced. The book was eagerly bought and read, and Westmacott, who had vainly tried to extort money for its suppression, must have made a handsome sum by its publication. *The English Spy* was brought out in two volumes, and contained seventy-two large coloured plates as well as numerous vignettes on wood, the majority being from the designs of Robert Cruikshank, who figures in the book under the pseudonym of "Robert Transit." Two of the coloured plates were contributed by Thomas Rowlandson, notably a sketch of the Life Academy at Somerset House, with the R.A.'s of the period busily engaged in drawing from a female model. Most of the social celebrities of the time are introduced into the book, Beau Brummell, Colonel Berkeley, Pierce Egan, Charles Matthews, "Pea-green" Hayne, and "Golden" Ball; while life at the University, in sporting and fashionable London, and at the popular watering-places, is vividly described. On the last page is an interesting little vignette representing the author and artist in the act of handing the second volume of their work to an eagerly expectant bookseller. The success of this book, and of many other imitations of *Life in London*, induced Egan to compose a sequel to his work, which appeared in 1828 under the title of *The Finish to the Adventures of Tom, Jerry, and Logic, in their Pursuits through Life in and out of London*, illustrated by Robert Cruikshank. In this curious book an attempt is made to propitiate the Nonconformist conscience of that day by bringing the majority of the characters to a bad end. Corinthian Tom breaks his neck in a steeplechase, Corinthian Kate dies in misery, Bob Logic is also killed off, and Splendid Jem becomes a convict; but Jerry Hawthorn reforms, marries Mary Rosebud, a virtuous country maiden, and settles down at Hawthorn Hall as a Justice of the Peace and model landlord.

PIERCE EGAN AND THEODORE LANE

In 1824, Egan had started a weekly newspaper called *Pierce Egan's Life in London*, which, being sold to a Mr. Bell, enjoyed a long period of popularity as *Bell's Life in London*. In the

same year Pierce published his *Life of an Actor*, dedicated to Edmund Kean, and illustrated by Theodore Lane. Lane, who was born at Isleworth in 1800, was the son of a drawing-master in poor circumstances. At the age of fourteen he was apprenticed to John Barrow, an artist and colourer of prints, who was living in St. Pancras. Thanks to the encouragement of his master, Lane early came into notice as a miniaturist and painter in water-colours, and he exhibited works of that class at the Academy between 1819 and 1826. But his real talent lay in the direction of the quaint and the humorous. In 1825 he made a series of thirty-six designs representing scenes in the life of an actor, which he took to Egan and begged that popular author to write the letterpress. After some hesitation, Egan undertook the task, chiefly, as he says, with the idea of introducing a meritorious young artist to the public. For his designs Lane received £150 from the publisher, and the book really proved a stepping-stone, not to fortune, but to regular employment. His work was praised by the two Cruikshanks, and a writer in *The Monthly Critical Gazette* declared that his designs would not discredit the pencil of Hogarth. Lane illustrated Egan's *Anecdotes Original and Selected of the Turf, the Chase, the Ring, and the Stage* in 1827, and also published two or series of humorous designs. In 1825 the young artist, though left-handed, took up oil-painting with success, and attracted favourable notice by his pictures *The Christmas Presents* and *Disturbed by Nightmare*, which were exhibited at the Academy in 1827 and 1828. His best work, however, was *The Enthusiast*—a gouty angler fishing in a tub of water—which is now in the National Gallery. On 21st May 1828 poor Lane's promising career was cut short in most tragical fashion. While waiting for a friend at the Horse Repository in the Gray's Inn Road, he stepped upon a skylight, and, falling through, his brains were dashed out upon the pavement below. He left a widow and two children, for whose benefit Egan published a little work in verse called *The Show Folks*, with illustrations by Lane, as well as a short memoir of the unfortunate artist. Of Egan's numerous other works it is only necessary to mention his *Book of Sports and Mirror of Life* (1832), and *The Pilgrims of the Thames in Search of the National* (1838), illustrated by his son, and dedicated by express permission to the young Queen Victoria. "The Fancy's darling child," as he has been aptly named, died at his house in Pentonville in 1849, "respected by all who knew him"—*vide Bell's Life*.

GEORGE CRUIKSHANK

To return to George Cruikshank, who was now in the full tide of success and overwhelmed with commissions. It would be impossible here to give a complete list of his productions, but mention may be made of his illustrations to *Peter Schlemihl*, *the Man without a Shadow*, and to Grimm's *Popular Stories* (1824), which were so much admired by Ruskin; of his Illustrations of *Phrenology* (1826), which marks his first appearance as an independent author; the famous *Mornings at Bow Street* (1815); the *Comic Almanac*, which began in 1835; the series of etchings for the *Sketches by Boz* (1836), and those for *Oliver Twist* in *Bentley's Miscellany* (1839), which led to his claim that he had originated the story—a claim that naturally put an end to his connection with Dickens. In 1839 began a long series of illustrations for the novels of Harrison Ainsworth (1805-82), the editor of *Bentley's Miscellany*. Ainsworth was born at Manchester, and bred up to "the law," but on coming to London to finish his legal studies, he neglected his law books for literature. He attained his first success with *Rookwood* in 1834, and in 1839 became editor of *Bentley's Miscellany*, in which his novel *Jack Sheppard*, with illustrations by Cruikshank, first appeared. In 1842 he started *Ainsworth's Magazine*, and engaged Cruikshank, who had quarrelled with Bentley, as illustrator-in-chief, at a salary of £40 a month. The engagement proved a fortunate one, resulting in the excellent designs to *The Tower of London*, *The Miser's Daughter*, *Windsor Castle*, and other novels, which Cruikshank himself described as "a hundred and forty-four of the very best designs and etchings I ever produced." The connection came to an end with the usual quarrel, Cruikshank claiming to have suggested the plot and characters of both *The Miser's Daughter* and *The Tower of London*.



ADVENTURES IN A WHISKEY PARLOUR

In 1847, Cruikshank was converted to teetotalism, and thenceforward laboured in the cause with almost fanatic zeal. It was in this year that he executed his famous group of eight designs called *The Bottle*, which was reproduced in glyphography, and circulated at a cheap

price by temperance societies. In 1850 he was employed to illustrate the second edition of Smedley's successful novel *Frank Fairleigh*. Frank Smedley was born at Great Marlow in 1818, and, being crippled by a malformation of the feet, he was educated at a private tutor's instead of at a public school. He contributed his first story, *The Life of a Private Pupil*, to *Sharpe's Magazine* in 1846-48, and a couple of years later it was published under the title of *Frank Fairleigh*. The book, in which Smedley's love of open-air life and sympathy with outdoor sports are strongly manifested, made a decided hit, and was followed during the next few years by *Lewis Arundel* and *Harry Coverdale's Courtship*. Smedley has left an amusing account of his first interview with George Cruikshank, who, on seeing a cripple in a wheeled chair, could not conceal his wonder, but kept exclaiming, "Good God! I thought you could gallop about on horses." Smedley, who died of apoplexy in 1864, was editor of the ill-fated *Cruikshank's Magazine*, started in 1853, which only reached its second number.

George Cruikshank's last years were taken up in great measure with his work in the cause of temperance reform, and though he still occupied himself in book-illustration, it became increasingly evident that he had outlived his public. His large oil-painting, *The Triumph of Bacchus*, did not attract the multitude when exhibited at Exeter Hall in 1863, though he had devoted three years to its execution. Thanks to the kindness of his friends, and the grant of two small pensions, actual poverty was kept from his door, and he lived to a green old age, bright-eyed and alert, the best of good company over his glass of cold water, dancing a hornpipe at past eighty, or dressing up and singing *The Loving Ballad of Lord Bateman*, which he had illustrated in 1839. He was taken ill early in 1878, and died on 1st February, finding his final resting-place in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral.

George Cruikshank, his biographer Blanchard Jerrold tells us, always worked with great care and deliberation, thinking out his subject thoroughly before beginning to realise his conception. "He made, to begin with, a careful design upon paper, trying doubtful points upon the margin. The design was heightened by vigorous touches of colour. Then a careful tracing was made, and laid, pencil side down, upon the steel plate. This was carried to the printer, who, having placed it between damp paper and passed it through the press, returned it, the black-lead outline distinctly appearing on the etching ground. And then the work was straightforward to the artist's firm hand."

III

HENRY ALKEN

The books illustrated in colour at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century may be classed under certain well-defined headings—narrative, topography, costume, and sport, the last being by no means the least important. Although neither Gillray nor Rowlandson ignored the sport of kings, it was Bunbury who, drawing upon his own personal experiences, set the fashion for hunting and "horsey" books, which were most commonly conceived in a vein of broad humour. Of such was Bunbury's *Geoffry Gambado, or the Academy for Grown Horsemen*, of which several editions appeared between 1788 and 1808. The most distinguished of Bunbury's immediate successors was Henry Alken, an artist whose origin seems wrapped in mystery. It has been rumoured that he began his career as stud-groom or trainer to the Duke of Beaufort in the opening years of the nineteenth century. His early drawings were produced under the pseudonym of "Ben Tallyho," and the first work to which he signed his own name seems to have been *The Beauties and Defects in the Figure of the Horse, comparatively Delineated*, which appeared in 1816. This was followed by some sets of humorous etchings in frank imitation of Bunbury, such as *Specimens of Riding, Symptoms of being Amazed, A Touch at the Fine Arts*, and, in 1821, by a folio volume, *The National Sports of Great Britain*. In 1824 we find a most complimentary allusion to Alken's work in an article on the fine arts in *Blackwood's Magazine*, probably written by Christopher North. The writer, after observing that George Cruikshank failed in one subject only—the gentlemen of England—proceeds: "Where Cruikshank fails, there, happily for England and for art, Henry Alken shines, and shines like a star of the first magnitude. He has filled up the great blank that was left by the disappearance of Bunbury. He is a gentleman—he has lived with gentlemen—he understands their nature both in its strength and its weakness.... In this work [*A Touch at the Fine Arts*] there is a freedom of handling that is really delightful. Yet I am not sure but I give the preference to my older favourite, *The Symptoms*. The shooting parties—the driving parties—the overturning parties—the flirting parties—the fighting parties in that series are all and each of them nearly divine. Positively you must buy a set of Alken's works—they are splendid things—no drawing-room is complete without them." Alken, it will be seen, had already made his mark, but it was his connection with Mr. Apperley, *alias* "Nimrod," that was to bring him his largest meed of fame.



RACE HORSE

CHARLES JAMES APPERLEY

Charles James Apperley was born at Plasgronow, Herefordshire, in 1778, and educated at Rugby. His father, a man of literary tastes, who corresponded with Dr. Johnson and read Greek before breakfast, had been tutor and bear-leader on the grand tour to Sir William Watkin Wynn. Young Apperley, who refused to be turned into a scholar, was gazetted cornet in 1798 in Sir W. Wynn's regiment of yeomanry, and served in Ireland during the Rebellion. On his return to England in 1801, he married a Miss Wynn, a cousin of Sir William's, and settled at Hinckley Hall in Leicestershire, where he hoped to add to his income by selling the hunters that he trained. Three years later he moved to Bilton Hall, near Rugby, once the property of Joseph Addison, where he hunted regularly with the Quorn and the Pytchley, till another move took him to Bitterly Court, in Shropshire, where he became intimate with that amazing character John Mytton, of Halston House, whose life and death he was afterwards to record in a book that made both subject and biographer famous. Here we may suppose that Apperley was witness of some of those escapades that are now familiar to every student of sporting literature: the midnight drive across country, when a sunk fence, a deep drain, and two quickset hedges were successfully negotiated; the attempt to leap a turnpike gate with a tandem, when leader and wheeler parted company; and the gallop over a rabbit warren to see whether the horse would fall, which it very naturally did, and rolled upon its rider. It was perhaps just as well for Apperley that he left this too exciting neighbourhood after a few years, and moved to Beaurepaire House, in Hampshire. The loss of money in farming operations brought him into difficulties, and at this time he seems to have conceived the idea of writing a book on hunting. He produced nothing, however, till some years later, when he was persuaded by Pittman, editor of the *Sporting Magazine*, to become a contributor, and his first article, on "Fox-Hunting in Leicestershire," appeared in 1822. This was followed by accounts of other hunting tours, which proved so popular that the circulation of the magazine was soon trebled. Apperley is said to have received £20 a page for his work,—the highest price ever paid to a journalist at that time,—but apparently this splendid remuneration had to cover his working expenses, which included a stud of hunters. "Nimrod" soon became a celebrity in the sporting world, and masters of hounds trembled at his nod. The news of his arrival in a country set every member of the local hunt in a flutter; the best horses were brought out, and the best covers drawn, in the hope of a favourable notice from the great man.



A NEW HUNTER—TALLYHO! TALLYHO!

In 1830 the *Sporting Magazine* came to grief, in consequence of the death of the editor, and Apperley, who had borrowed large sums of Pittman, was obliged to take refuge from his creditors at Calais, where he spent the next twelve years. Here, a year later, arrived John

Mytton, also a fugitive, having run through a splendid property, and ruined a magnificent constitution by drink, before he was thirty-five. Apperley seems to have done his best for his old friend and comrade, who, having exchanged old port—of which his daily allowance had been from four to six bottles a day—for brandy, was rapidly drinking himself to death. Mytton, who seems to have been practically a madman in his last years, returned to London in 1833, and was promptly thrown into the King's Bench, where he died of delirium tremens in the following year.



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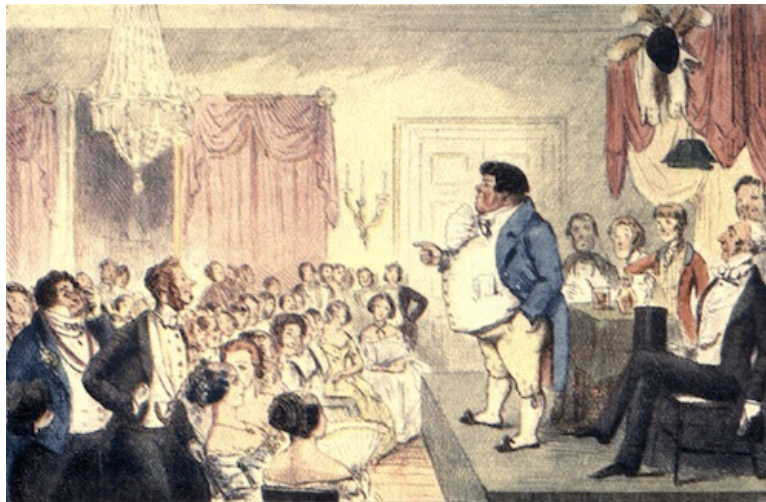
"OH GENTLEMEN! GENTLEMEN! HERE'S A LAMENTABLE OCCURRENCE"

Apperley occupied himself during his exile in writing sporting memoirs and reminiscences, and contributing to Ackermann's *New Sporting Magazine*. In 1835 he was invited by Lockhart to write three articles on Hunting, Racing, and Coaching for the *Quarterly Review*, and these, which represent some of his best work, were republished under the title of *The Chase, the Turf, and the Road*, with coloured etchings by Henry Alken. Lockhart was so much impressed by the powers of his new contributor, that he told John Murray, "I have found a man who can hunt like Hugo Meynell and write like Walter Scott,"—a criticism that did more credit to his sporting than his literary acumen, though Apperley's style is greatly superior to that of Pierce Egan and other of his sporting contemporaries. In 1837 he published his *Memoirs of the Life of John Mytton*, which had appeared serially in the *New Sporting Magazine*, and was illustrated with plates drawn by Alken and etched by Rawlings. This was followed by *The Life of a Sportsman*, illustrated by the same artist, which has become one of the classics of hunting literature. Apperley returned to London in 1842, and died in Pimlico the following year.

ROBERT SMITH SURTEES

The death of Apperley was preceded by the rise of another famous sporting writer, Robert Smith Surtees (1803-64), the second son of Anthony Surtees, of Hamsterley Hall, Durham. Robert was educated at Durham Grammar School, and afterwards articled to a solicitor. A partnership was bought for him in London, but this proved unsatisfactory, and the young man, turning his back upon the law, started upon his literary career as contributor to the old *Sporting Magazine*. In 1831, in connection with Rudolf Ackermann, the son and successor of Rowlandson's employer, he started the *New Sporting Magazine*, which he edited down to 1836, and in the pages of this periodical the celebrated Mr. Jorrocks, humorist, sportsman, and grocer, made his first bow to the public. These papers were collected under the title of *Jorrocks' Jaunts and Jollities* in 1838, with illustrations by "Phiz"; but a later edition, that of

1843, contains fifteen coloured plates by Alken. In the same year Surtees succeeded to the family estate, but in spite of this change in his circumstances he did not lay aside his pen. Lockhart had once remarked to Apperley *à propos* the creator of Jorrocks, "That fellow could write a good novel if he liked to try"; and the compliment, being promptly repeated to Surtees, resulted in the composition of *Handley Cross* (1843), in which Mr. Jorrocks makes his appearance as a country squire and master of hounds. A later edition of the book was illustrated by a new sporting artist, John Leech. *Handley Cross* was followed by *Hawbuck Grange*, *Ask Mamma*, and the ever-popular *Mr. Sponge's Sporting Tour*, which contained numerous coloured plates and woodcuts by Leech. "The Yorkshireman," as Surtees was nicknamed, presumably because he was born in Durham, also contributed papers to *Bell's Life*, some of which, commemorative of the fine open winter of 1845-46, were afterwards published as *The Analysis of the Hunting Field*, with illustrations by Alken, who now disappears from our view, though he left two or three sons in the same "line of business," with whom he has sometimes been confused, while the popular name of Alken became a general patronymic for a whole school of sporting artists. Surtees, who died at Brighton in 1864, was a fine horseman and a keen observer of social types, though, so far from being the rollicking sportsman suggested by his books, he is described as a man of rather reserved and taciturn nature. The remarkable character of Mr. Jorrocks was evolved during long, lonely journeys, when the shrewd ex-grocer, or rather his imaginary conception, stood his creator in the stead of a travelling companion.



MR. JORROCKS' LECTURE ON "UNTING"



ROBERT SEYMOUR

The success of the *Jaunts and Jollities*, and of Egan's *Finish to Life in London*, suggested, it is said, to Messrs. Chapman and Hall the idea of a work which should deal with the adventures of a club of Cockney sportsmen, and serve as a vehicle for the humorous designs of Robert Seymour. Leigh Hunt and Theodore Hook were asked, in the first instance, to supply the letterpress; but, on their refusal, the young Charles Dickens, then (1835) just three-and-twenty, and only known as the author of some amusing sketches, was chosen to act as the literary illustrator of the work. Dickens rejected the idea of a sporting club, though he so far deferred to the publishers' suggestions as to create the immortal Pickwick Club, into which Mr. Winkle was introduced expressly for the exploitation of Seymour's peculiar talent. The young author also stipulated that, instead of being expected to "write up" to the artist's designs, he should be allowed a free hand with the letterpress, the illustrations being allowed to arise naturally out of the incidents described in the text. On 26th March 1836 it was announced that the first number of *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* would be published on the 30th, the work to be issued in shilling monthly parts under the editorship of "Boz," each part being illustrated with four etchings on steel by Seymour. Robert Seymour (1800?-36) had already made his name as a caricaturist and book-illustrator. He had published a volume of humorous sketches (mostly dealing with sporting misadventures), and had been employed to illustrate *Bell's Life* and *Figaro in London*. For *Pickwick* he prepared seven illustrations, of which four appeared in the first part. Whether from overwork, or from the fact that his often hasty sketches did not invariably give satisfaction to his employers, Seymour was in a depressed state of mind at this time, and on 20th April, just before the publication of the second number of *Pickwick*, he committed suicide by shooting himself through the head with a fowling-piece.

ROBERT WILLIAM BUSS

In consequence of this catastrophe, the second number came out with only three plates, and an apology to the public. In their dilemma the publishers invited Robert William Buss (1804-75), a young artist of some promise, to take up Seymour's work. Buss, who was the son of an engraver, had studied under George Clint, A.R.A., and had been employed to illustrate Cumberland's *British Theatre*. He was also an exhibitor at the Royal Academy, where his most successful works had been in a humorous genre. Buss consented to lay aside his Academy picture and undertake the illustrations to *Pickwick*: but as time pressed, and he was ignorant of the art of etching, he put the two first designs into the hands of a professional etcher. The result was unfortunate, since, although the technical part of the work was well executed, the free touch of the original was entirely wanting, and Buss's name appeared to designs, not one stroke of which was on the plates. While the artist was busy designing other, and, as he hoped, more successful illustrations, he received his dismissal from the publishers, who were dissatisfied with the specimens already submitted to them. Although he admitted that his first two plates were "abominably bad," Buss was much aggrieved at this treatment, having been promised every consideration from the publishers on account of his ignorance of etching, and the haste with which the earlier designs had to be prepared. Later he became known as a popular book-illustrator, executing plates for the novels of Mrs. Trollope, Captain Marryatt, and Harrison Ainsworth; while, towards the end of his career, he issued an elaborately-illustrated work on English graphic satire.

HABLÔT KNIGHT BROWNE

In consequence of these early misfortunes, there was so poor a demand for the first three numbers of *Pickwick*, that the publishers had serious thoughts of stopping the publication of the work. However, on the dismissal of Buss, several illustrators came forward to offer their services, including "Alfred Crowquill" (Alfred Forrester), Leech, and Thackeray, the last-named going himself to call on Dickens in Furnival's Inn, and submitting his drawings to him. Needless to say, not one of the three was successful in his candidature, the choice of the publishers falling upon a very young artist, Hablôt Knight Browne (1815-1882), who had served his apprenticeship to Finden, the line-engraver, and gained some experience as a book-illustrator. He had already illustrated a pamphlet by Dickens, called *Sunday under Three Heads*, and was engaged in executing plates for Chapman and Hall's *Library of Fiction*.

The choice, as every one knows, proved a happy one, Browne, who took the pseudonym of "Phiz" to correspond with the editorial "Boz," throwing himself heart and soul into the spirit of the work, and proving an ideal collaborator from the author's point of view. The ill-luck which had dogged the early days of *Pickwick* turned out a blessing in disguise for Dickens, since he was no longer expected to exploit the talent of his illustrator, and was enabled to impress his own ideas and wishes upon "Phiz," his junior by three years. With the fourth number, which saw the first appearance of Samuel Weller, the circulation of the work began to go up by leaps and bounds; a *Pickwick* boom ensued, and many of the designs had to be etched in duplicate, as the plates showed signs of wear and tear. Owing to the lack of

harmony between the illustrations in the first three numbers and those that followed, Browne was employed to redraw Seymour's plates, and to substitute two new designs for the despised Buss plates. The latter, which only appeared in about seven hundred copies of the original edition, are now as eagerly sought by collectors as if they were miniature masterpieces, while the untouched designs of Seymour rank far above those that were redrawn by Phiz.

The authorised illustrations to the *Pickwick Papers* have been supplemented by several series of "illegitimate" designs, chief among which are the famous Onwhyn plates, published in 1837, when the book was in the full tide of success. These consisted of thirty-two etchings on steel, the majority of which were executed by Thomas Onwhyn (died in 1886), and are signed "Samuel Weller," though a few have Onwhyn's initials. The plates were published by E. Grattan in eight monthly parts at a shilling each, and were afterwards sold in volume form at nine shillings. Onwhyn, who was the son of a bookseller, seemed determined to make a *specialité* of Dickens' illustrations, for in 1838 he issued through Grattan no less than forty designs for *Nicholas Nickleby*, signed "Peter Palette"; while in 1848 he executed a second set of *Pickwick* plates, which, in consequence of the republication of the earlier set, were not brought out till 1894, eight years after the artist's death. Though his technique was somewhat weak, Onwhyn's work shows considerable humour, and his uninvited designs now add great lustre, in the eyes of collectors, to an "extra-illustrated" copy of *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*.

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