



The Illustrated  
Book in England

1860 – 1900

National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives

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# The Illustrated Book in England 1860 – 1900



Lucien Pissarro,  
*La Légende de Saint Julien l'Hospitalier* (1900)

**The Technique** Wood engraving was the most common technique used to reproduce illustrations in books and magazines during this period. Indeed, the engraved woodblocks could survive for decades: writing in 1897 about illustration of *The Sixties*, Gleeson White<sup>1</sup> noted the use of the original woodblocks to illustrate his publication.

The most important and successful wood-engraving establishment in Victorian London was that of the Dalziels, several of whose volumes are on display here. Strongly entrepreneurial in its search for new talent and prolific in the number of illustrated books that it produced, the Dalziel firm contributed both to the growing recognition and financial viability of the profession of artist-illustrator.

The technical challenges involved in colour woodblock printing delayed the effective use of this technique until the 1870s, when Edmund Evans, the most talented and ubiquitous of the Victorian colour printers, produced the illustrations for several series of children's books by Walter Crane, Randolph Caldecott, and Kate Greenaway. So successful was Evans' work, because of its public appeal and accessible price, that a remarkable 100,000 copies of some of Caldecott's titles were being published in initial print runs. In 1980, Eric de Maré<sup>2</sup> reported that many of Evans' children's books had remained continuously in print for a century, with the original woodblocks often still in use.

**Fin de siècle** The Golden Age of English book illustration spanned the late 1850s to the early 1870s. A body of black-and-white work to equal that produced during this period would not be seen again until the last decade of the century, executed then by a different generation of artists and reflecting diverse influences and enthusiasms. Among these, a revival of interest in the Pre-Raphaelite illustration of the 1860s is shown in the work of Laurence Housman, Reginald Savage, and Charles Ricketts. The historical sensibility and craft ideology of the Arts and Crafts Movement and of William Morris' Kelmscott Press is reflected in the approach to book design and production taken by the Vale and Eragny presses, as well as in the work of Arthur Joseph Gaskin and Robert Anning Bell.

It is Aubrey Beardsley's unique vision that we most associate with the art nouveau element in *fin-de-siècle* English illustration, seen here in Beardsley's work for *The Yellow Book* and *The Savoy*. Beardsley's drawings took full advantage of the advances in the photomechanical process of line block printing; his work was of great influence in England and abroad. In the third quarter of the century, Joseph Crawhall published volumes of rough, hand-coloured woodcuts that refer to such earlier, crude publications as broadsides and chapbooks. His antiquarian interests prefigure the heavily outlined designs of William Nicholson and W. Graham Robertson.

By the end of the century, photomechanical techniques dominated the reproduction of images in commercial publishing, but the tradition of wood engraving continued to find favour with artists and the fine and private presses well into the twentieth century.

1. Gleeson White, *English Illustration: 'The Sixties', 1855–70* (London, 1897), pp. viii – ix.

2. Eric de Maré, *The Victorian Woodblock Illustrators* (London, 1980), p. 158.

## Checklist

All volumes are from the Rare Book Collection of the National Gallery of Canada Library.

Entries appear under the names of the illustrators.

- 1. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1828–1882**  
Alfred, Lord Tennyson. *Poems*. London: Edward Moxon, 1857.
- 2. Ford Madox Brown, 1821–1893**  
Robert Eldridge Aris Willmott. *The Poets of the Nineteenth Century*. Selected and Edited by the Rev. Robert Aris Willmott. Illustrated with One Hundred Engravings, Drawn by Eminent Artists, and Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel. London: George Routledge & Co., 1857.
- 3. Edward Burne-Jones, 1833–1898**  
*Good Words for 1862*. Edited by Norman Macleod. And Illustrated by J. E. Millais, Holman Hunt, John Tenniel, Charles Keene, Frederick Walker, J. D. Watson and Others. London: Alexander Strahan and Co., 1862.
- 4. John Everett Millais, 1829–1896**  
*The Parables of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*. With Pictures by John Everett Millais, R. A. Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel. London: George Routledge and Sons, 1863.
- 5. Arthur Hughes, 1832–1915**  
Christina Rossetti. *Sing-Song: A Nursery Rhyme Book*. Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel. London: Macmillan and Co., 1893.
- 6. Frederick Sandys, 1829–1904**  
Robert Eldridge Aris Willmott. *English Sacred Poetry, of the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*. Selected and Edited by Robert Aris Willmott. Illustrated by Holman Hunt, J. D. Watson, John Gilbert, J. Wolf, etc. Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel. London:

Routledge, Warne & Routledge; Printed by R. Clay, Son, and Taylor, 1862.

**7. William Holman Hunt, 1827–1910**

*Touches of Nature by Eminent Artists and Authors.* London: Alexander Strahan, 1867.

**8. George Du Maurier, 1834–1896**

William Makepeace Thackeray. *The History of Henry Esmond, Esq., a Colonel in the Service of Her Majesty Queen Anne.* Written by Himself. Edited by W. M. Thackeray. With Illustrations by George Du Maurier. London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1869.

**9. Arthur Boyd Houghton, 1836–1875**

*Good Words for 1863.* Edited by Norman Macleod. And Illustrated by J. E. Millais, John Tenniel, J. D. Watson, T. Morten, F. Sandys, John Pettie, and Others. London: Alexander Strahan and Co., 1863.

**10. George John Pinwell, 1842–1875**

*English Rustic Pictures.* Drawn by Frederick Walker and G. J. Pinwell, and Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel. India Proofs. London: George Routledge and Sons, 1882.

**11. Frederic Leighton, 1830–1896**

*Dalziel's Bible Gallery: Illustrations from the Old Testament.* From Original Drawings by Sir Frederick [sic] Leighton [et al]. Engraved by the Brothers Dalziel. India Paper Proofs. London: George Routledge and Sons, 1881.

**12. Randolph Caldecott, 1846–1886**

*A Frog He Would A-Wooing Go.* [London]: George Routledge & Sons; Edmund Evans, Engraver and Printer, [1883]. (R. Caldecott's Picture Books)

**13. Randolph Caldecott, 1846–1886**

*Sing a Song for Sixpence.* [London]: George Routledge and Sons; Edmund Evans, Engraver and Printer, [1880]. (R. Caldecott's Picture Books)

**14. Kate Greenaway, 1846–1901**

*Kate Greenaway's Alphabet.* London: George Routledge & Sons, [1885?].

**15. Kate Greenaway, 1846–1901**

*An Apple Pie.* London: George Routledge and Sons; Engraved and Printed by Edmund Evans, [1886].

**16. Walter Crane, 1845–1915**

*Baby's Own Aesop: Being the Fables Condensed in Rhyme, with Portable Morals.* Pictorially Pointed by Walter Crane. London: Frederick Warne; Engraved & Printed in Colours by Edmund Evans, [1886?].

**17. Reginald Savage, active 1886–1933**

*The Dial: An Occasional Publication.* Edited by Ch. Shannon & C. Ricketts. (London) no. III (1898).

**18. Charles Ricketts, 1866–1931**

Apuleius Madaurensis. *De Cupidinis et Psyche Amoris Fabula Anilis.* Textum Recensuit C. I. Holmes. Tabulas Invenit et Sua Manu Sculpsit C. Ricketts. Londoni: Hacon & Ricketts, 1901.

**19. Laurence Housman, 1865–1959**

Christina Rossetti. *Goblin Market.* Illustrated by Laurence Housman. London: Macmillan & Co., 1893.

**20. William Morris, 1834–1896**

*Of the Friendship of Amis and Amilie.* Done out of the Ancient French into English by William Morris. Hammersmith: Kelmscott Press, 1894.

**21. Lucien Pissarro, 1863–1944**

Gustave Flaubert. *La Légende de Saint Julien l'Hospitalier.* Le frontispice a été dessiné & gravé sur bois par Lucien Pissarro. La bordure et les lettres ornées ont été dessinées par Lucien Pissarro et gravées sur bois par Esther Pissarro. London: Eragy Press, 1900.

**22. Robert Anning Bell, 1863–1933**

John Keats. *Poems.* Illustrations by Robert Anning Bell and Introduction by Walter Raleigh. London: George Bell & Sons, 1897. (The Endymion Series)

**23. Arthur Joseph Gaskin, 1862–1928**

John Mason Neale. *Good King Wenceslas: A Carol.* Pictured by Arthur J. Gaskin. With an Introduction by William Morris. Birmingham: Cornish Brs., 1895.

**24. Aubrey Beardsley, 1872–1898**

*The Yellow Book: An Illustrated Quarterly.* (London), volume II (July 1894).

**25. Aubrey Beardsley, 1872–1898**

*The Savoy: An Illustrated Monthly.* Edited by Arthur Symons. (London), no. 2 (April 1896).

**26. Joseph Crawhall, 1861–1913**

*Olde ffrendes wyth newe faces.* Adorn'd with sutable scvlptvres. London: Field & Tuer; Simpkin, Marshall & Co.; Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1883.

**27. Sir William Nicholson, 1872–1949**

*An Almanach of Twelve Sports,* by William Nicholson. Words by Rudyard Kipling. New York: R. H. Russell, 1898.

**28. W. Graham Robertson, 1867–1948**

*French Songs of Old Canada.* With Translations. Pictured by W. Graham Robertson. London: William Heinemann, 1904.

By the mid-nineteenth century, England had developed a thriving industry and audience for illustrated books, supported by increased prosperity, the advance of universal education, with its attendant eager readership, and the technological opportunities offered by the Industrial Revolution. The books in this exhibition highlight three splendid periods in the history of the Victorian illustrated book: the Golden Age (or The Sixties), celebrated for illustrations by members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and their circle; the 1870s and 1880s, with their proliferation of children's books illustrated in colour; and the final decade of the century, during which a rich variety of styles co-existed and interacted.

The artists of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood included in this exhibition – Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Ford Madox Brown, Edward Burne-Jones, John Everett Millais, and William Holman Hunt – produced a relatively small body of illustrated work (with the exception of Millais, who had a prodigious career as an illustrator). It was their stature and the inventiveness and vigour of their designs that influenced the work of their associates and contemporaries, represented in the Library collection by Arthur Hughes, Frederick Sandys, George Du Maurier, Arthur Boyd Houghton, George John Pinwell, and Frederic Leighton. Magazines of a literary and improving nature, aimed at middle-class readers, flourished at mid-century, and it is in these journals, such as *The Cornhill Magazine*, *Good Words*, and *Once a Week*, that many of the illustrations of this period first appeared.

It was not uncommon for these magazine illustrations to be anthologized later into a single volume – the Victorian coffee table book – with or without the original accompanying text. These gift books for parlour diversion gathered illustrations by various artists from different sources into volumes more lavishly produced than the modest publications in which the designs first appeared. Examples of this practice are Millais' designs for *The Parables of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, first issued serially in *Good Words*, *Touches of Nature by Eminent Artists and Authors* and *Dalziels' Bible Gallery: Illustrations from the Old Testament*.

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