



The Illustrated Book in England

1790–1860

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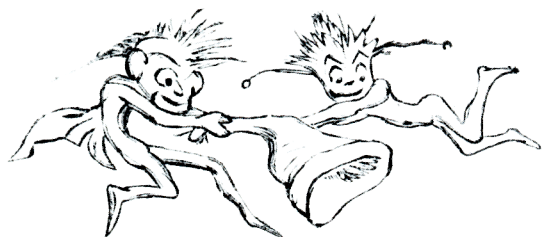
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The artistic accomplishment and technical inventiveness of English book illustration and production were pre-eminent in the Western world during the period covered by this exhibition. The Library will present two further exhibitions on the illustrated book in England, covering the second half of the nineteenth century, and the first decades of the twentieth.

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ENGRAVING AND ETCHING ON COPPER were the most common techniques used in book illustration in the late eighteenth century, but this relatively soft metal could not withstand the rigours of mechanized presses and long print runs. As the nineteenth century advanced, the primacy of copper engraving and etching was superseded by other materials and techniques: engraving and etching on steel; mezzotint; aquatint; lithography; and wood engraving.¹ Publishers specializing in illustrated titles emerged, such as Rudolf Ackermann, whose London firm produced some of the most splendid books of the period (nos. 9, 11 and 12).

INTRODUCED IN THE 1820S, ENGRAVING AND ETCHING ON STEEL were ubiquitous by the following decade. Joseph Mallord William Turner was among the artists who achieved masterful results with this medium (no. 4). Colouring could be added by hand after the printing process (nos. 6 and 7). Shepherd's Edinburgh scenes shown here, (no. 5, issued in parts before they would have been bound by the bookseller in accordance with the client's instructions), are of special interest as this set was once in the possession of the Scottish artist James Smillie (1807–1885), who emigrated to Quebec and himself produced engraved views of that city. The mezzotint also found favour in the 1820s, attaining dramatic effects, such as those seen in John Martin's illustrations for Milton's *Paradise Lost* (no. 8).

AQUATINT, OFTEN HAND-COLOURED, was first used in English book illustration in the 1790s, and became increasingly popular in the early part of the following century, particularly for lavish plate books (nos. 9, 11 and 12), although the technique is also found in more modest publications (nos. 10 and 13). The reproductions of drawings by Thomas Gainsborough shown here (no. 14) were printed at the first lithographic workshop in London, established by Charles Hullmandel in 1818 or 1819. Lithographs, sometimes tinted (as are

several of the Gainsborough leaves), vied with aquatints during this period as the preferred technique for large format illustrations.

IN THE 1790S, THOMAS BEWICK HAD DEMONSTRATED the potential of wood engraving for fine book illustration (no. 15). Wood engraving flourished in the 1830s and 1840s, mastered by apprentices of Bewick such as William Harvey (no. 16), and proliferating mid-century in the popular press, including the journals *Punch*, *Illustrated London News*, and, seen here, *The Magazine of Science and School of Arts* (no. 17), and *The Cornhill Magazine* (no. 18).

OF GREAT INTEREST IS THE VOLUME OF PROOFS (no. 20) from the London printing firm of Richard Clay, (proofs of the engraver's work were submitted to the artist for approval or amendment), containing hundreds of illustrations by Hablot Browne ('Phiz'), Birket Foster, Charles Keene, John Tenniel, and their contemporaries, as well as work by the Dalziels, the foremost firm of engravers in England at the time. The proof for one of the designs by Hablot Browne for *Puck on Pegasus* (no. 19), a Dalziel engraving on wood, can be seen in the lower left-hand corner of the right-hand page of the Clay album.

TECHNICAL CHALLENGES IMPEDED THE SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENT of commercial colour printing during the period covered by this exhibit. Although colour woodblock printing was promoted by printers such as Savage (no. 21) and artists such as Baxter (nos. 22 to 25), printing in colour (as opposed to hand-colouring) did not attain the same stature as monochrome printing in book illustration until chromolithography was in general use by mid-century. The publications of Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt (no. 26) and Owen Jones (no. 27) testify to the monumental quality that could be realized with this technique.

THE EXHIBITION INCLUDES AN EARLY REFERENCE TO scientific experiments in photography in England and France (no. 28). These advances would bring overwhelming and lasting change to book illustration: Photography and the development of photomechanical processes increasingly dominated publishing worldwide as the century progressed.

THE RANGE OF SUBJECTS ADDRESSED BY THE ILLUSTRATED BOOK reflects the enthusiasms of the new reading public. The increasing liberalization of English society offered the opportunity for political and social satire, seen here in the illustrations of Thomas Rowlandson and John Leech. There were eager audiences for the illustration of foreign voyages, works of art and architectural monuments. Illustrated fiction and popular journals made the names of caricaturists and illustrators household words, artists such as George Cruickshank and Hablot Browne, familiar to us through their work for the classics of English fiction of the period.

1. An explanation of these and other techniques may be found in *Glossary of Print Techniques* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1991).

Checklist

All works are from the collection of the Library of the National Gallery of Canada, unless otherwise noted. Entries are made under the names of the illustrators.

ENGRAVING AND ETCHING

Henry Fuseli, 1741–1825

1. *Milton's Paradise Lost*. A New Edition. Adorned with Plates. Vol. I. London: Printed by T. Bensley for F. J. Du Roveray; Sold by R. Dutton, B. Crosby and Co., E. Lloyd, and J. Bell, 1802.

William Blake, 1757–1827

2. Edward Young. *The Complaint, and the Consolation; or, Night Thoughts*. London: Printed by R. Noble, for R. Edwards, 1797.

John Flaxman, 1755–1826

3. *The Odyssey of Homer*. Engraved from the Compositions of John Flaxman R. A. Sculptor, London. London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees & Orme; R. H. Evans, W. Miller; & I. & A. Arch, 1805. (Rare Book Collection, National Library of Canada)

Joseph Mallord William Turner, 1775–1851

4. Hannibal Evans Lloyd. *Picturesque Views in England and Wales*. From Drawings by J. M. W. Turner, Esq. R. A. Engraved under the Superintendence of Mr. Charles Heath. Vol. II. London: Published for the Proprietor, by Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1838.

Thomas Hosmer Shepherd, active 1827–1844

5. *Modern Athens, Displayed in a Series of Views, or Edinburgh. In the Nineteenth Century; Exhibiting the Whole of the New Buildings, Modern Improvements, Antiquities & Picturesque Scenery, of the Scottish Metropolis & its Environs, from Original Drawings*. With Historical Topographical & Critical Illustrations. No. 1. London: Published by Jones & Co., 1829.

HAND-COLOURED ENGRAVING AND ETCHING

George Cruickshank, 1792–1878

6. *Royal Condescensions: or, Dublin Out of Its Senses! An Irregular Cracker; Consisting of all Sorts of Rhymes about the Irish Visit*. Embellished with a Characteristic Engraving. London: Printed for Hodgson & Co., 1821.

John Leech, 1817–1864

7. Gilbert Abbott & Beckett. *The Comic History of England*. With Ten Coloured Etchings, and One Hundred and Twenty Woodcuts. Vol. II. London: Published at the Punch Office, 1848.

MEZZOTINT

John Martin, 1789–1854

8. *The Paradise Lost of Milton*. With Illustrations, Designed and Engraved by John Martin. Vol. I. London: Septimus Prowett, 1827. (Rare Book Collection, National Library of Canada)

AQUATINT

Thomas Rowlandson, 1756–1827 and Augustus Charles Pugin, 1769–1832

9. *The Microcosm of London; or, London in Miniature*. Vol. I. London: R. Ackermann's Repository of Arts; T. Bensley, Printer, [1808]. (Rare Book Collection, National Library of Canada)

Isaac Robert Cruickshank, 1786–1856, and George Cruickshank, 1792–1878

10. Pierce Egan. *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*. Embellished with Thirty-Six Scenes from Real Life, Designed and Etched by I. R. & G. Cruickshank; and also Enriched with Numerous Original Designs on Wood, by the Same Artists. London: Printed for Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, 1821.

William Cole, 1800–1892

11. *Select Views of the Remains of Ancient Monuments in Greece, as at Present Existing, from Drawings Taken and Coloured on the Spot in the Year 1833*. London: Published for the Author, by Ackermann and Co., 1835.

Charles Ramus Forrest

12. *A Picturesque Tour along the Rivers Ganges and Jumna, in India: Consisting of Twenty-Four Highly Finished and Coloured Views, a Map, and Vignettes, from Original Drawings Made on the Spot; with Illustrations, Historical and Descriptive*. London: Published by R. Ackermann, 1824.

Thomas Rowlandson, 1756–1827

13. William Combe. *The Third Tour of Doctor Syntax, in Search of a Wife; a Poem*. Illustrated with Eighty Plates by T. Rowlandson. London: Nattali and Bond, [1855?].

LITHOGRAPHY

Thomas Gainsborough, 1727–1788

14. Richard James Lane. *Studies of Figures, Selected from the Sketch Books of the Late Thomas Gainsborough. R. A. (Never Before Published.)* Executed in Lithography in Exact Imitation of the Original Drawings. Nos. [1] and 2. London: Pub^d. J. Dickinson; Printed at C. Hullmandel's Lithographic Establishment, 1825.

WOOD ENGRAVING

Thomas Bewick, 1753–1828

15. Ralph Beilby. *A General History of Quadrupeds*. The Figures Engraved on Wood by T. Bewick. The Second Edition. Newcastle upon Tyne: Printed by and for S. Hodgson, R. Beilby & T. Bewick; Newcastle: Sold by Them, by G. G. J. & J. Robinson, and C. Dilly, London, 1791.

William Harvey, 1796–1866

16. James Northcote. *Fables, Original and Selected*. Second Series. Illustrated by Two Hundred and Eighty Engravings on Wood. London: John Murray, 1833.

Anonymous

17. *The Magazine of Science and School of Arts* (London), no. XIII (June 29, 1839).

Richard Doyle, 1824–1883

18. *The Cornhill Magazine* (London), vol. III, no. 17 (May 1861).

Hablot Knight Browne ('Phiz'), 1815–1882

19. Henry Cholmondeley Pennell. *Puck on Pegasus*. Illustrated by Leech, Phiz, Portch, and Tenniel. With a Frontispiece by George Cruickshank. Engraved by Dalziel Brothers, Joseph Swain, & E. Evans. London: John Camden Hotten; Printed by R. Clay, Son, and Taylor, 1861.

Richard Clay, Printer

20. [Printer's Proofs. London, 1850s–1870s].

COLOUR PRINTING

William Savage, 1770–1843

21. *Practical Hints on Decorative Printing, with Illustrations Engraved on Wood, and Printed in Colours at the Type Press*. London: Published for the Proprietor by Messrs. Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown; T. Cadell; J. Booth; J. Major; R. Triphook; and R. Jennings, 1822. (Rare Book Collection, National Library of Canada)

George Baxter, 1804–1867

22. Robert Mudie. *The Air*. London: Thomas Ward & Co., 1835.

23. Robert Mudie. *The Earth*. London: Thomas Ward & Co., 1835.

24. Robert Mudie. *The Heavens*. London: Thomas Ward and Co., 1835.

25. Robert Mudie. *The Sea*. London: Thomas Ward & Co., 1835.

CHROMOLITHOGRAPHY

Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt, 1820–1877

26. *The Industrial Arts of the Nineteenth Century. A Series of Illustrations of the Choicest Specimens Produced by Every Nation, at the Great Exhibition of Works of Industry, 1851*. Divi⁵. 5th. London: Day and Son, 1853.

Owen Jones, 1809–1874

27. *The Grammar of Ornament*. Illustrated by Examples from Various Styles of Ornament. One Hundred Folio Plates, Drawn on Stone by F. Bedford, and Printed in Colours by Day and Son. London: Day and Son, 1856.

PHOTOGRAPHY

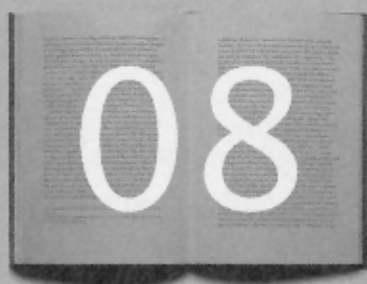
Anonymous

28. *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction* (London), vol. XXXIII, no. 945 (April 20, 1839).

BOOK ILLUSTRATION AND PUBLISHING IN ENGLAND reached artistic and technical heights during the first half of the nineteenth century. The turn-of-the-century books shown here illustrated by Henry Fuseli (no. 1), William Blake (no. 2), and John Flaxman (no. 3), belong to a tradition of labour-intensive hand production supported by an educated and moneyed aristocracy. This tradition was revolutionized by the sweeping changes that took place in English society in the first decades of the nineteenth century, and that directly affected the making and utilization of the book.

The rise of universal education, the growth of urban centres, and increased economic prosperity were among the factors that created a heightened demand by new audiences for reading material. The technologies of the Industrial Revolution addressed this demand: New methodologies in paper-making, typesetting, printing, and binding were developed; new techniques in reproducing illustrations were introduced to meet the requirements or potential of machine presses; and, new modes of transportation permitted the timely and reliable marketing of popular literature. Mechanization reduced costs, encouraged the growth of the publishing trade, and placed more material in the hands of a burgeoning readership.

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