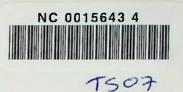
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THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

HUGH THOMSON 1860 - 1920
"THE VISUAL INTERPRETER"

A Thesis Submitted to:

THE FACULTY OF HISTORY OF ART AND DESIGN AND COMPLEMENTARY STUDIES

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#### INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to outline the background and early influences of Hugh Thomson and the world from which Thomson emerged.

The thoughts and opinions of the society in which he lived affected Hugh Thomson's perceptions of life and therefore his work.

The role of magazines and serials and the relationship between the author and the artist is discussed. The illustrator's art emerged in Victorian Britain and became an accepted part of any literary publication.

Hugh Thomson was both a serial and novel illustrator and his gradual development in style is notable from his early contributions in the "English Illustrated Magazine" to his later novels and travel illustrations.

Travel was a phenomenon which developed in Britain with the help of Thomas Cook in 1855. Its popularity led to an increase in travel illustration and travel commentaries to which Hugh Thomson contributed.

He is a prophesier of things past. The old world is to him a crowded map. His mind receives and treasures up everything that is brought to it by tradition or custom. It does not project itself beyond this to the world unknown but mechanically sinks back as from the edge of a precipice. No. 1

Although this is a quotation from William Hazlitt referring to Walter Scott, it is very appropriate in summing up Hugh Thomson.

Thomson seemed to look back in time for a lot of his illustrations, unlike many of his contemporaries. His work did fulfil a definite need for his conservative 19th century reader, who wanted to retain

the practices of so-called "social morality" of the eighteenth century. Hugh Thomson was aware of the Victorian ideologies and he managed to maintain a balance between tradition and progress which made his work socially acceptable.

As the technical and financial problems that inhibited reproduction of illustrations were overcome and the literate society grew, there was an increased demand for books and, akin to this, book illustration.

This society was in the vortex of change and one of the most productive things that emerged at this time was book illustration.

The aim of this study is to show Hugh Thomson's work, not in isolation, as one could lose perspective of Thomson's position, but in relation to art and literature of the period.

Hugh Thomson, 1860 - 1920: His Background and Early Influences 1 HUGH THOMSON 1860 - 1920: HIS BACKGROUND AND EARLY INFLUENCES

Hugh Thomson was born in Coleraine, Co. Derry, Ireland, on the 1st June 1860. He attended Coleraine Model School where his subjects, which included goemetry, geography and art, were later to be an important influence on Thomson's illustrations. His interest in nature led to hundreds of pictorial compositions of the countryside and his knowledge of geometry and perspective drawings gave Thomson an awareness of space - the key to successful design. In later years, Thomson illustrated many books (mostly in colour), often figure works with landscapes as accessories. He enjoyed painting landscape but figure work took up most of his time, capturing the attitudes of the people and showing them in a whimsical humour for which Thomson was so well known.

His earliest drawings were scribbled on the covers of the London Penny Magazine from which Thomson studied the woodcuts of Hogarth. Other influences at this time were Fred Barnard (1846 - 1896) and Charles Green (1840 - 1898), whom Thomson copied in an effort to master pencil drawings. Many of Thomson's drawings are of horses, coachmen and eighteenth century furnishings which are recorded to perfection and often from memory.

At fourteen years, Hugh Thomson had finished his school career and got a job with Coleraine Linen Manufacturers, Messrs. E. Gribbon & Sons, where Thomson worked in a clerical capacity while living in Coleraine.

A strong influence on Thomson, at this time, was made by his cousins, Stewart and Ellen Hunter, who included him in thier reading group, to whom contributors had an ardent love of books and appreciation for literature uncommon in a small provincial town. Thomson became acquainted with ideas of travel, history and literature, such as the works of Dickens, Bret Harte, Oliver Wendel Holmes, Tennyson and Browning.

With this literary interest and Thomson's own artistic abilities,

which were later to be discovered, he seemed destined for the life of a book illustrator.

Thomson's first chance to show any real artistic ability came in 1877 when he was asked to design an illuminated address for the retiring headmaster of Coleraine Model School. This Thomson completed with decorative lettering and ornamentation, which showed the youth's enthusiasm for the task. A fellow worker in the linen manufacturers recognised Thomson's talent from this work and showed it to a friend, John Vinycomb, M.R.I.A., who worked in Marcus Ward's, a chromolithographic printer in Belfast.

Mr. Vinycomb was impressed by Thomson's work and tried to secure for him an opening in the art department of the Royal Ulster Works to give him some scope for his ability. Vinycomb placed some of Thomson's work before Mr. John Ward, who agreed to take him on with a progressive salary. Thomson was delighted to leave Coleraine and to join Marcus Ward's firm in the summer of 1877, although his relations showed some reservations in his following an artistic profession.

John Vinycomb took Hugh Thomson under his care and his strong "artistic spirit in the firm" helped Thomson develop a style of pen and ink drawing that was both delicate and strong. He found by studying the best book illustrators and artists of the time, he was gaining a visible means of expressing his own ideas.

No. 2

In 1879, Thomson won a prize in the "Boys' Own Piper" for the best drawing, the winning sketch being titled, "The Church Porch". He soon followed this by an illustration, "The Armada" for which he received a £3 prize.

Although Hugh Thomson had no formal tuition in art, (attending the Belfast School of Art only half a dozen times), Thomson learned much from his fellow workers and from the sketching club "The Ramblers" which was formed from the Marcus Ward staff (now the Belfast Art Society).

Another influence on Thomson's work was a fellow artist and friend, Mr. J.W. Carey, who entered with Thomson an exhibition of work in 1881. The show opened in 1883 and Thomson's "Cavalry Charge" was proclaimed the favourite. His work was drawn from memory with extreme exactitude, Thomson having a particular interest in horses, especially later when he showed a great admiration for Caldecott's work.

Although Thomson was engaged to be married to a girl named Jessica Naismith Miller, he was unable to set up home on his salary. On the advice of his cousin, Ellen Hunter, (who was married in Dublin to Mr. Justice Dodd D.C.) Thomson sought to work in London, unable to secure good quality illustration in Marcus Wards who farmed out much of their work in England. So Thomson left Belfast and set out for London on the thirty first of November, 1883, with his letters of introduction.

London was to have a great influence on Thomson's career. It offered so many possibilities for illustrators and authors alike, and improvements in technology offered reproductive methods which Thomson could never have found in Belfast.

The Victorian Era into which Thomson emerged was marked by particular social and economic developments which led to the Industrial Revolution. All these factors played an important part in shaping the artists and illustrators of the time. Some moved forward whilst others seemed to keep the traditions and customs of the past. What had gone before, the thoughts and ideologies, were still very strong and therefore, very relevant considerations in gaining a perspective of the time.

A Study of the Society, Opinions and Aspirations of Victorian England 1837 - 1901 and Their Effect on Hugh Thomson

#### 2 VICTORIAN IDEAS

In the 1840s there was a growth in Britain of an aristocratic religious hierarchy and private institutions.

This is continually pointed out by Robert Owen (a prophet and critic of the age), whose cartoons were condemned by religious thinkers and non-conformist ministers alike. Some of these people chose to blindfold themselves from the underworld of crime and prostitution that existed. Instead, as Walter Bageaot stated, they

saw only the celebration of cozy domesticity.

No. 3

#### EMERGENCE OF EDUCATION

Social failures such as the "New Poor Law" of 1834 for factory reform showed economic mismanagement, government intervention at this time led to unemployment and periodic depressions. This sets the scene of Victorian Britain before the improvements in the standard of living.

From 1831 to 1901, the population of England and Wales tripled and in direct response, the government education grant was increased from £20,000 in 1832, to £1,600,000 in 1876.

Then came the abolition of "Taxes on Knowledge" which had prohibited the amount of books and magazines published. With the reduction in cost and literature being more freely available, the literate society grew.

With the educational advancement came a wave of social optimism and there was an upsurge in craftsmanship.

## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

There was an increase in police power at this time which many felt

as an

infringement on their ideas of an Englishman's traditional liberties.

No. 4

Women's liberation, however, gained support and discussions on topics previously considered taboo, now took place. Josephine Butler, (a Victorian woman with a strong family tradition of  $^{N_0}$ . 5 moral and social reform), emerged to help the down-and-outs and No. 6 to fight for police regulation of prostitution. The lax morality of governing classes was being curbed and venereal diseases in the army and navy were treated. She played a significant role in nursing the sick, but the Christian ideas which she expounded were a far cry from the realities she found.

Thomson does not often delve into social problems. His outdoor sketches could be called escapist, but Thomson did receive a commission to sketch "The Children of the Foundling Chapel" in 1906 for "Pall Mall Magazine". This sketch was for an account by Charles Morley, of orphans huddled together for warmth on a roof top. Thomson's illustration is grey and silent seeking sympathy. The drawing has a charcoal effect achieved with delicate ink line; the composition well angled. A middle class man looked on, almost unmoved, his coat, hat and walking stick representing his middle class background and further emphasising the desolation of the children. Fig. 1

- Samuel Smiles called on society in the 1830s to carry out his "self help" values which stated that the "duty" of each person was to seek to rid themselves of the need for alcohol and instead. strive for culture. This "duty" was the great evangelical concept that underlined the structure of Victorian society.
- Another temperance reforming enthusiast was Thomas Cook, the travel promoter, who took part in

that great Victorian struggle after the proper use of leisure time and the proper exercise of consumer responsibility.

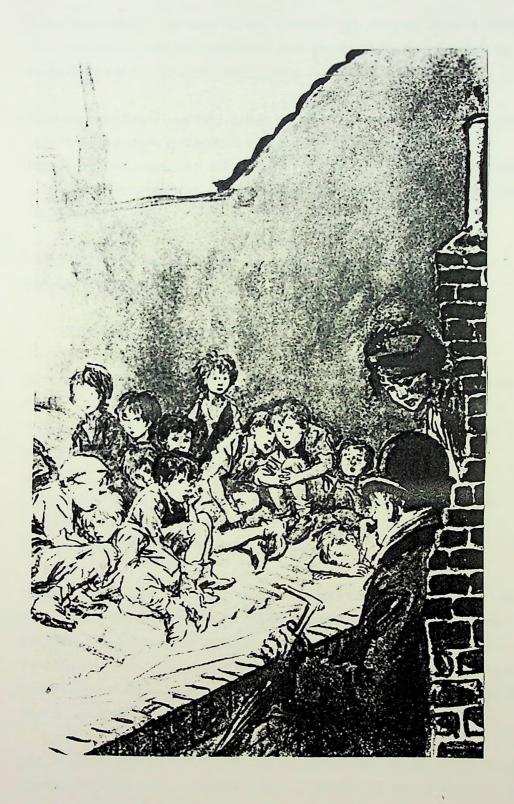


Fig. 1 "Nobody's Children" - Charles Morley.

The children of the Foundling Chapel, 1906.

Afterwards this account was reprinted in

"London at Prayer" (1909).

### STRUCTURING OF SOCIETY

This nineteenth century urban, industrial society made distinctions between work and pleasure and these distinctions led to a marked division in class structure.

With a structural society other elements and grouping took place. Illustrators were grouped together and their study became a structured arrangement with Forrest Reid and Gleeson, (art history critics), covering the 1860s whilst Cohn specialised as Dickens' illustrators.

Other critics explored the illustrators who gradually brought colour into their work.

#### GROUPING OF ILLUSTRATORS

Hugh Thomson was to face an age where illustration was already a field under high criticism and opinionism. He too was to be grouped, as a "pen and ink" artist and also as a contributor to the genteel book.

Grouping under headings such as "the sixties", "the nineties" offers no common denominator, as for example, John Gilbert, Holman Hunt, Whistler and Tenniel show.

There seems to be a strong misconception that illustration entered a new era in the year 1837, which ended in 1901. Such firm datelines are somewhat confusing. For example, Cruikshank's earliest illustration was 1806 but he still theoretically is a Victorian artist and Tenniel was born seventeen years before the Victorian reign began and survived it by thirteen years.

The artists, Frith and Frederick Watts examplify the contrasting tastes in nineteenth century arts. Frederick Watts (1817 - 1904) stated that

the greatest art whether plastic or graphic will be

devoted to those ideas and emotions that excite enthusiasm and inspire devotion.

No. 10

In contrast, Frith's career, which exactly coincided with the Queen's reign, goes along with the common tastes and illustrative manner, not unlike Thomson. Frith represents literary texts, like the popular book "The Vicar of Wakefield", but not with the same attention to character as Thomson displays. Thomson loved doing the illustrations for Oliver Goldsmith's "The Vicar of Wakefield", a commission which took him eighteen months (completed in 1889), rendering pictorially the scenes with all the tenderness of eighteenth century romance.

Goldsmith was considered by the editor to have found

his fitting pictorial interpreter in Thomson.

No. 11

ART OF THE ERA

Rossetti and Burne Jones although distinct in their personalities and modes of life, interpreted similar subjects along different channels. Again the word "Victorian" cannot be used as a definition that narrowly describes a specific style of painting. In sixty five years of the Queen's reign, Turner did his last work, Holman Hunt completed the "Scapegoat" and Whistler explored arrangements in grey and black.

From the 1850s until 1865, there was a wide variety of pictorial styles and subjects due to the social and cultural complexities in the nineteenth century. At this time, occupations, experiences and the environment was more diverse than ever before. Society became more aware and more appreciative of the arts.

# DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARTS

In 1830, any sophisticated and advanced training in the visual arts took place in the National School at the Royal Academy.

By 1880, the network of art schools was headed by the Royal

College of Art. There also developed a proliferation of societies to serve the needs and aspirations of a relatively enlarged population of painters, sculptors and graphic artists. With this came an increase in galleries and museums which Ruskin recognised as an educative benefit.

There also developed a literature of painting and by the end of the century, art magazines were in circulation. Later, Hugh Thomson was to contribute frequently to the art journals and magazines, especially "The English Illustrated Magazine" to which he made contributions over forty years.

Artists of the age varied; some wishing to have a naturalistic style in exploring the physical world, others with a compulsion to be truthful and then those who were researching history.

To a certain extent Thomson had a path laid out for him as nine-teenth century England had already the divergencies in illustrative content. Thomson chose to work in an eighteenth century manner with eighteenth century costume and formality. The readers in the nineteenth century enjoyed books of bygone days. The publishers took advantage of the fact that no copyright was to be paid on such books, so they could be profusely illustrated without incurring much expense.

William Mulready (1786 - 1863) was in style and content typical of popular mid-Victorian England and also an extension of the tradition of three to four generations into the eighteenth century. He explored genre scenes of domestic life, made excursions into literature and themes which evoked sentiment and morals. He is criticized by Ruskin for not painting important matters. NO. 12.

Hugh Thomson seems to be similar to both Mulready and Daniel
Maclise (1806 - 1870) in that he illustrated the popular classics.
They all also explore history and represental costumes and surroundings. Maclise illustrated "The Cricket on the Hearth" and "The Chimes", to which Thomson was later to give a new dimension.

Artists such as Ford Madox Brown recognised a world

Poised between the past and the future, between regret for what was passing and expectation for the future.

No. 13

POETS OF THE VICTORIAN ERA

Poets said that science had literally changed the perspective of the world and made poetry almost self indulgent. Victorian poets withdrew from the city, as they were smothered by the wealth that co-existed with the overcrowded disease-ridden slums.

As the century progresses, the poets, (as the artists had done), became less worried about the abuses of the town and more conscious of the enjoyments of the natural world which had remained peaceful.

The menace in the cities is symbolised in Kenneth Graham's book "The Wind in the Willows" (1908), where there is a desire for the peaceful countryside and quiet river banks. This thought brought about the advent of travel to be discussed later in terms of Hugh Thomson's travel illustrations for the "Highways and Byways" series for Macmillan & Co. Ltd.

This account of the Victorian ideologies and problems aims to show the society in which Thomson was to find a definite place. It briefly recognises the social problems of the age and traces the development of education, improvements in the arts, and the growth of artists and illustrators.

There were certain unspoken standards of respectability in the nineteenth century and constraints of which Thomson was well aware. They put constraints on some artists, like Thomson, while other artists seem to reject the formal middle class values and strive to create their own art.

When completing some illustrations for "The English Illustrated Magazine" in 1884, Thomson was conscious:

that the objections might be made that the crowd seemed very hollow and vain. But after all in such scenes, and especially in the last century ones, such emotions were kept well in hand and never showed on the surface. No. 14

A Discussion on the development of the illustrators art in Victorian Britain and the benefits to both artist and illustrator. A brief introduction to Hugh Thomson's literary contributions.

3

Before discussing Hugh Thomson's contribution to book and periodical illustration, this thesis aims to establish how the illustrator's art developed. In judging the quality of an individual book, a study has to be made between the illustration and the text and not just as a technical quality of the single print.

#### HISTORY

Most artists who illustrated novels recognised their job as conveying scenes and characters in a novel to a given text, but many did not fulfil the author's expectations.

From the Middle Ages onwards, the art of popular satiric prints was being practised by artists such as Hogarth, Gillray and Cruikshank. Hogarth was the father of this art form and Dickens seemed to be in awe of his accomplishments.

### DEVELOPMENT

In the 1830s, many novels came out in three to four volumes, occasionally with an elegant front cover, but usually with no illustrations. There grew an increasing desire for illustration plus text. A publisher, Richard Bentley, laid down the stipulations,

one monthly part novel must contain two striking scenes which can be adapted for graphic illustration. No. 15

Another paper stated that the author maintained much, if not all, his success on the illustrations. An illustrator, at this time, had to convey the author's text visually, the artist's imagination thereby being inhibited. There was therefore a need for flexibility on the part of the illustrator, an example of which is Phiz, who can change his style and submits easily to the likes of Dickens.

Illustration of the novels and serials differed slightly. The serial artist needed to make a different impact, a quicker one showing character and action that would keep the reader waiting for the next edition.

HUGH THOMSON - DOES HIS ILLUSTRATIONS FUSE WITH THE TEXT TO BECOME A SIMPLE ART FORM?

Hugh Thomson, like Cruikshank before him, allowed his illustrations to prompt the reader to look into the humourous side of situations, thereby giving a separate identity to the text and visual.

However, he is also praised for his closeness to a given text at other times - contradiction in terms!

In general the combination of text and illustrations was prompted by publishers rather than the author themselves. Kathleen Tillotson observed this new combination as having

High circulation, spreading the elasticity of cost payments from advertisers and independence from lending libraries. No. 17

The publisher risks were reduced as the public loved the new illustrations in every publication. Dickens' "The Pickwick Papers" had started this new form and had made illustration more acceptable. It also challenged other productions such as the work by R. Smith Surtees, the foxhunting novelist, who started to produce monthly parts with illustrations.

Illustration had become a good investment, and a relationship between the text and plate developed.

THE BENEFITS OF ART AND LITERATURE COMBINED:

Gillray is greatly informed by his literary interests. He showed the sublime comic spirit of life in his work; his humour was persuasive and amusing.

Thomson learned much from Gillray, some of which left him equipped to illustrate novels by Dickens and Thackeray. It was much easier for Thomson to attempt to illustrate Dickens' novels than his predecessors as most of Dickens' illustrators had to submit to his visual ideas in their work. This was referred to as "Dickensian vision", which means when Dickens commissioned drawings he had set the scene with the artists' work in mind. To some extent this could be seen as curbing the artist's creative imagination. No. 18

Hugh Thomson would have been unable to work on this level as he only accepted a commission when he decided it suited his style. Thomson seemed disillusioned when the felt the author might not be satisfied with his visual representation of the text.

When the illustrators first contributed to text they were often given plenty of freedom of subject representations, which meant they sometimes claimed large credits for work when published. An example of this is Cruikshank in the "Miser's Daughter".

Illustrations were often produced by Cruikshank in the early development of the plot, thereby he set the scene himself, taking possession of the story. Etching conditions meant also that the plates had to be drawn long before the text.

TECHNICAL IMPROVEMENTS THAT INFLUENCED THE ILLUSTRATOR'S ART:

In the 1830s, the print workshop was growing and the changes in methods of book production affected the illustrated book. In the early 1800s wood engraving was the commonest method of reproduction. The work of Thomas Bewick, in particular, was known in England, Europe and across the Atlantic for his unique style.

Lithography was in existence before the Victorian era and its use instead of wood engraving was because its reproduction for colour was more commercially viable.

Colour printing came to the fore as decorative borders in prayer

books, but was given new possibilities with the colour printer, Edmund Evans. Evans contributed much to high class reproduction. He saw the need for text and illustration to relate in harmony. Evans had been an apprentice to a pupil of Bewick Ebenezer Landells, and in 1851 set up his own engraving and printing office. Evans extended the possibility for print by lowering reproduction costs.

Thomson's contribution to serial and magazines came in December 1883, with his job in "The English Illustrated Magazine".

Literary magazines of this time were very representational of the values of English society, often with middle class respectable articles and literary criticisms. "Punch" was a more radical periodical, that grew from street corner status to an acceptable magazine with notable illustrators, such as Leech as its principal cartoonist.

"Punch" was one of the first periodicals that made illustration regular and opened many possibilities for illustrators.

Hugh Thomson's humourous characters never appeared in "Punch", a disappointment to the editor, who recognized Thomson's work would have been a valuable acquisition. Thomson had given some of his drawings to "Punch" in application of some illustrative work. When his work had been overlooked, Thomson's pride didn't stretch to compromising later when offered a job with "Punch".

"Punch's" sister journal "Once A Week" came out in 1859 and offered a popular alternative. Gradually serials were put in book form, which the public liked to collect, so that no fiction was later to be found in magazines. Illustrated books became precious objects and the commercial market continued to rise. There was an interest in handcraftsmanship which was linked to the upsurge of the aesthetic movement and the fame of William Morris's "Beautiful Book".

No. 20

The emergence of toybooks and gift books was chiefly aided by the artists, Waltern Crane (1845 - 1915), Randolph Caldecott (1846 - 1886) and Kate Greenaway (1845 - 1901). Each artist had their

distinct style, yet they all depicted escapist worlds.

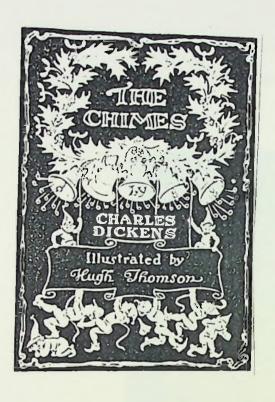
Caldecott's work was like Crane's in terms of line but he did not use Crane's heavy borders. Hugh Thomson was very aware of Caldecott's work, Thomson worked with Caldecott on the staff of "The English Illustrated Magazine".

## HUGH THOMSON'S WORK

One of Thomson's other strong influences was John Vinycomb whom he had met in Marcus Ward, his previous employers in Belfast. No. 21 Vinycomb was a heraldic crest artist and illuminator who encouraged Thomson's decorative style in books and cover designs. This style is particularly strong in book covers such as "Peg Woffington" by Charles Reade, 1899, "A Kentucky Cardinal and Aftermath" by James Lane Allen, 1901, and "The Story of Rosina and Other Verses" by Austin Dobson in 1895. These book covers, that are shown in black and white are printed in gold on dark coloured cloth, so the image is strong and the characters stand out. Thomson shows his natural design ability here with his type and illustration cleverly integrated for maximum effect (Fig. 2)

Thomson uses his charming covers in all his work, which almost celebrates the author's writing. This is seen in Dickens'
"The Chimes" in which the little characters prompt the reader's interest. (Fig.2i). Thomson was later to illustrate in colour Charles Dickens' "The Cricket on the Hearth", in which the objects play almost an equal role to that of the characters without being in opposition for the reader's attention. Thomson's subtlety of colour invites the onlooker's gaze and appreciation while the composition shows the artist's control. (Fig. 3)

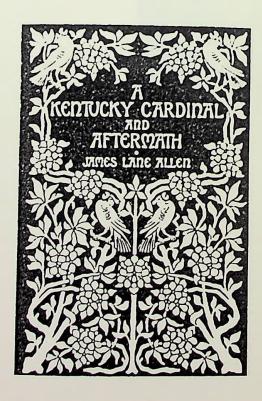
Thomson's illustrative ventures varied from scenes of country life to contemporary "low life" in London. He was offered outside commissions from his past employers in Belfast, Marcus Wards, along with work from "The Graphic", "The Pictorial World" and "The Hour Glass" but he was unable to accept these as he had a contract for working exclusively with Macmillans. Later, Thomson's



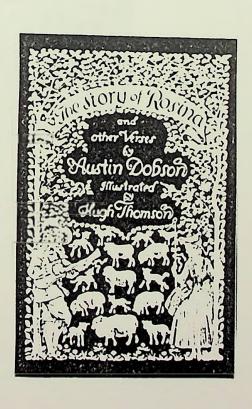
1913 The Chimes by Charles Dickens (i) (in colour)



(ii) 1899 Peg Woffington by Charles Reade

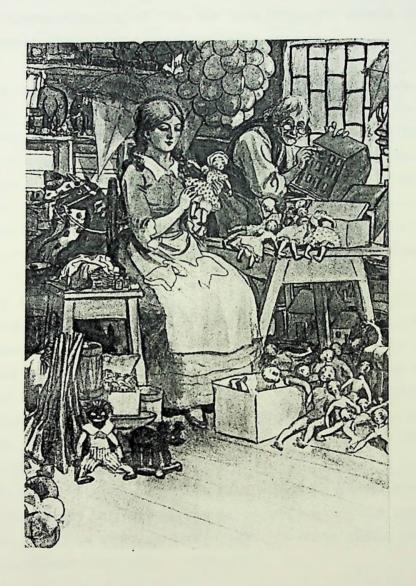


i) 1901 A Kentucky Cardinal and Aftermath (iv) 1895 The Story of Rosina and Other Verses by James Lane Allen.



by Austin Dobson.

Fig. 3 Caleb Plummer and his Blind Daughter, from "The Cricket on the Hearth" by Charles Dickens.



contract with his employers, Macmillan & Co., was relaxed giving him more flexibility and varied illustrative ventures for other companies.

Thomson mixed amongst the artists and intellectuals of his day, being invited to notable dinners such as at Frederick Macmillian's, Austin Dobson, Smalley of "The New York Tribune", Edmund Yates and Tenniel ("Punch's" cartoonist) were present.

Thomson was seen as popular and respected in these circles.

In 1886, he worked on a series of old songs and ballads in which he consulted Austin Dobson, an eighteenth century authority.

Their collective interest in the eighteenth century did make them valuable friends. The poems seemed rather naive but Thomson brought them into a whole new light with his pictorial imagery.

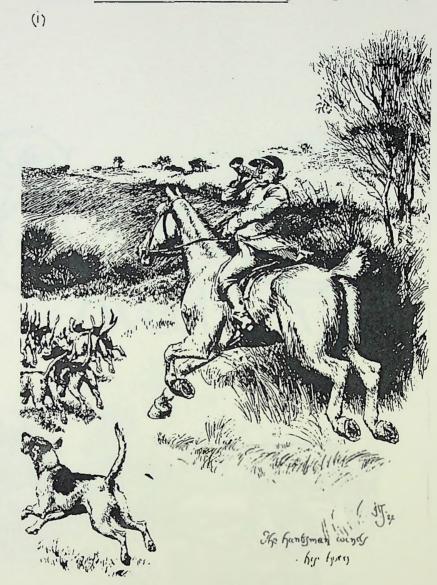
He seemed to organise nature in his work. Landscape was depicted from a high all-encompassing eye, one which surveyed and mapped.

At this stage, Hugh Thomson's style seemed to be fixed, his work only changing with his subject matter. His strokes in pen and ink showed a certain confidence in subject matter. This is probably due to his childhood love of the countryside and animals. Thomson seemed aware of the countryside and animals. (Fig. 41) The riding gear and trumpet seemed to echo his knowledge of the English gentry, whilst the emphasis was on the dogs and the movement of the horses. In Henry Fielding's "A Hunting We Will Go", No. 22 Thomson depicted some characters in a humourous manner such as the woman who begged her husband not to go out hunting but instead to stay at home. A woman is always seen, in these times, in a slightly subservient role. (Fig.4  $\ddot{\mu}$ ).

For these illustrations, Thomson had designed an illuminated title. (Fig.4ii). This style was used beautifully in another of Thomson's poetic illustrations, entitled "Come Sweet Lass" in which No. 23 the boy was cradled in the letter "C", and the girl showed all the innocence of a child. (Fig. 5). Flowers were enkindled in the type, a decorative addition indicative of art nouveau influences,

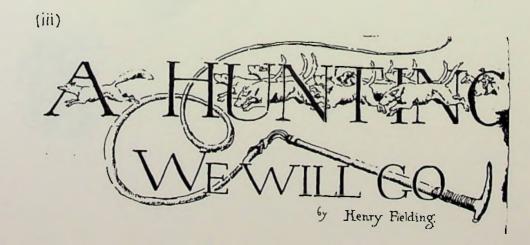
Fig. 4 English Illustrated Magazine: April 1889
"A Hunting we will Go" by Henry Fielding.

(ii)



The huntsman winds his horn.

The huntsman winds his horn.



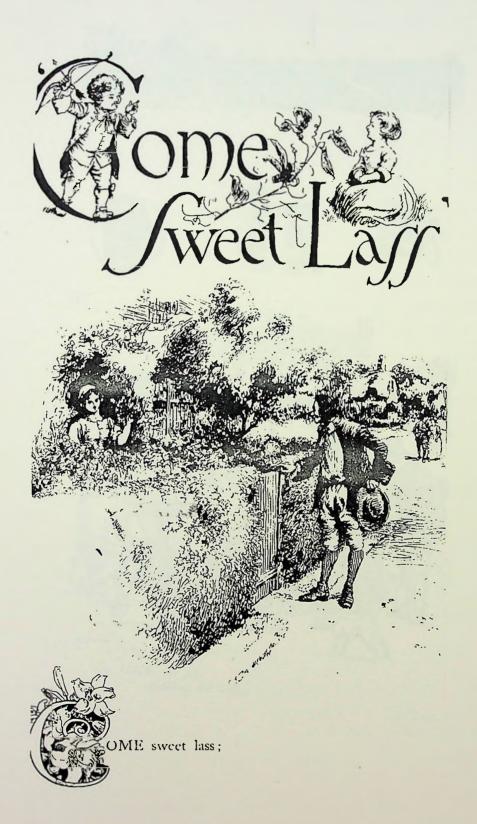
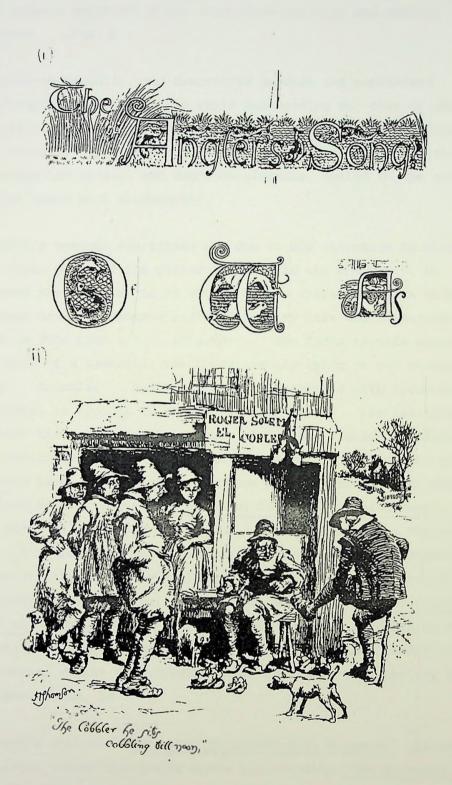


Fig. 6 English Illustrated Magazine: Dec1888

"The Angler's Song" by Izaak Walton.



and animals appeared in his decorative headings and capital letters. (Fig. 5 ).

Thomson continually used decorative borders and emphasised typography in colour. His style was heading for that of the "Genteel Book" to which he was later to make a large contribution. His style was like Caldecott's but less robust and his figure drawings had genteel and humorous elements, suited to the authors he had found most sympathetic.

Thomson's costume exactitude was due to his attention to detail and close study of the period clothing in the museums. allowed the onlooker to be amused by his characters with their strange dress. Thomson explored country life and characters such as "The Cobbler". (Fig. 6). The faces in this scene all had much of a sameness, the focus usually lying on one character Animals, scattered in the foreground with trees in the distance, is typical of Thomson's composition. His attention to leisure time scenes such as those of tennis, fishing and dancing was indicative of the Victorians' ideas of the correct use of leisure time. During 1886, Thomson had illustrated with Herbert Railton some articles for "Coaching Days and Coaching Ways". The work was divided between them. Thomson worked on the subject and action pictures while Railton portrayed the architecture. These articles were issued in monthly parts but were later to reappear in volume form. An example (Fig. 7. ) of "The Coaching Days and Coaching Ways" showed Thomson's linear approach to facial detail and subject matter. Some of his landscapes seemed to be overworked whilst this drawing keeps a clarity and subtlety of expression. No. 24

Thomson's work with "The English Illustrated Magazine" allowed him to travel around the Sussex Coats illustrating "The Highways and Byways" series. He had until now worked exclusively for them but now in 1889, his career was about to change. Thomson went

back to London away from which some people cannot live,

and I like in small doses at certain times of the year. Otherwise being born and bred a country boy, I think I shall always remain so.

"Coaching Days and Coaching Ways"

(How the driver of the Scottish Provident Institution
Stage Coach pulled up to enable the Scottish Provident
widow to join his fortunate passengers).



Hugh Thomson's Literary Interests and His Recognition as an Illustrator

4 HUGH THOMSON'S LITERARY INTERESTS AND HIS RECOGNITION
AS AN ILLUSTRATOR

Hugh Thomson's career meant he moved in literary circles, meeting often with well known authors and illustrators. Austin Dobson, a writer, was an admirer of Thomson's work. Dobson praised Thomson's excellent illustration of the eighteenth century romance "The Vicar of Wakefield":

full of invention, fancy and clever characteristics, charming in its glimpses of landscape and pictures of children, and everywhere, loyal to Goldsmith's text.

Dec. 2nd 1890. No. 25

"The Vicar of Wakefield" brought joy to the public, satisfaction and contententment to the publishers, and most importantly, it ratified the position of Hugh Thomson as an illustrator.

Thomson contributed to an exhibition at the Fine Art Society of his "Vicar of Wakefield" drawings in 1891, to which Kate Greenaway also contributed work. At this time, Thomson concentrated on the "Ballad of Beau Brocade" and other poems by Austin Dobson, and for "Cranford" by Mrs. Gaskell. In the "Ballad of Beau Brocade" (Fig. 8) Thomson gives his character an inquisitive look and movement, with his uplifted foot. The walking stick and buckles on his shoes, shows the artist's attention to detail. "Cranford" also showed this detail with Thomson's refinements in costume from the carefully arranged bonnets to the quaint umbrellas. (Fig. 9)

Thomson took away some formality from the scene by showing back-ground figures in outline, thereby stressing his central figure concentrations. Thomson's depictions were very often those of slim, fine featured young ladies, with only older men, having a lot of weight. Hugh Thomson completed a series of eighteen drawings for 'Scribner's Magazine", 1892 but another commission was not finished as he found it difficult to work on such a sad series of crippled children. No. 26

Fig. 8 "Jotted her down on the spot"

(Hogarth sketching the heroic chambermaid)

from "The Ballad of Beau Brocade".



Fig. 9 "We sedulously talked together" from "Cranford" by Mrs. Gaskell



On the triumph of "Cranford", the publishers, Macmillan, commissioned Thomson to illustrate "Our Village" for the next season. George Allen & Co. requested the illustration of Sir Walter Scott's "St. Ronan's Well" in 1894. The latter work did not appeal to Thomson and the result was more rigid and less characterisation seems to have taken place. It seemed that Thomson was better illustrating books in which he had a certain interest previously.

In 1892, Thomson went to Seaford, on the Suffolk coast, to concentrate on drawings for Austin Dobson's poems, where he decided to stay for years, instead of months. As the proofs of "Beau Brocade" arrived, Thomson was dissatisfied with the reproduction. He got more particular with each job, exacting perfrection in the printers who had dealt with his work.

Thomson had interludes when working on old-fashion Christmas subjects for Pear's "Christmas Annual". His work for this had been requested by Joseph Grego, a humourous artist and writer on art (1843 - 1908). New publishers had offered Thomson an illustrative venture in "The Reveries of a Bachelor" but he named terms of six hundred guineas for fifty drawings and the originals to remain his; Thomson's aim in charging so much was so the venture would prove prohibitive as he didn't wish to undertake it. He decided he would like to take royalties for further work.

In the autumn, Thomson made a dozen drawings for a title page for No. 27
"The Piper of Hamelin", a children's opera. He showed a dainty fancy and humour but did not seem totally suited to working on children's books. Thomson's characters did not show the happy amiable characteristics and solid shapes associated with children's book illustration. For comparative analysis, the book "London Town" (of the same time) by Thomas Crane and Ellen Houghton is a good example. This book was produced by the firm, Marcus Ward, for which Thomson had once worked. In "London Town" there is a concentration on decorative features, the first letter of any rhyme being stressed by capitals.

One foot up and one foot down And that's the way to London Town".

The characters are much broader and fatter than Thomson's and less frightening.

In 1898, Thomson illustrated "Jack the Giant Killer", which was to be his first and only issue of illustrated fairy books.

(Fig.10i). The artist, with an almost childlike fantasy had made the story too fearsom for the tastes of the Victorians who bought the books. Thomson seemed to approach depiction of the giant as Richard Doyle had done in 1851; Doyle's handcoloured wood engravings, commissioned by the Danziels, illustrates a legend of terrifying nature and hatits.

In one of them, cattle were substituted (at the publisher's insistence) for human victims hanging from the giant's belt.

(Ref. Fig 10ii)

Hugh Thomson illustrated some books by Jane Austin, including "Pride and Prejudice" in 1893. The publisher was the famous Mr. George Allen, who Ruskin often worked with. At first, Thomson felt the Jane Austin novel was not suitable for his illustrative style but later he agreed and it was to be a great success. This is an example of how illustrators often pick authors they think relate best to their illustration. No. 28

Macmillans, (Thomson's previous employer) asked if Hugh Thomson would undertake two more Jane Austin novels and he accepted out of a sense of gratitude for their past help. Austin Dobson wrote of Hugh Thomson's illustrations for "Pride and Prejudice" (Fig. !\):

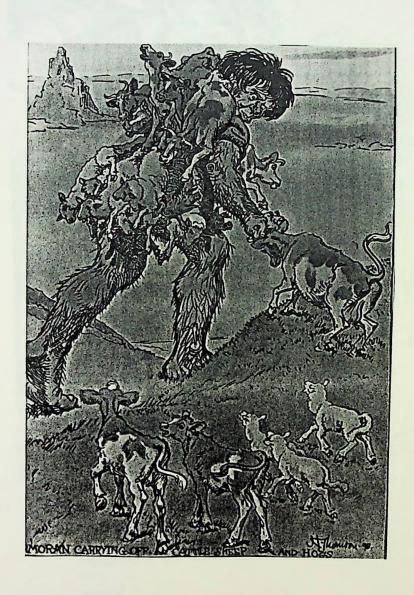
You are at your best, the critics are shouting themselves hourse in your praise. No. 29

Public appreciation was shown for this edition as in twelve months, 11,605 copies were sold. Thomson's illustrations seem to be in

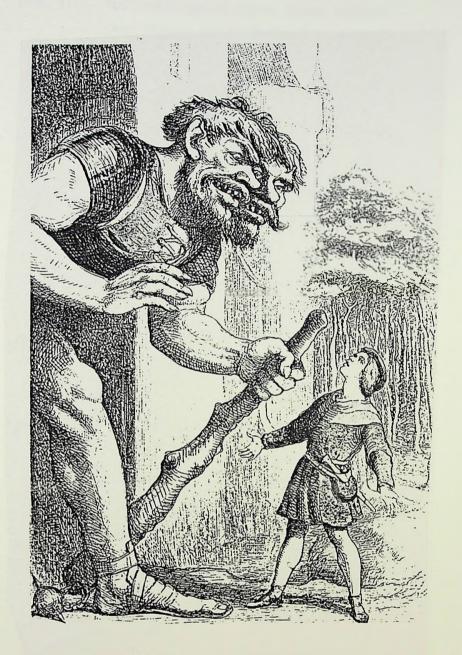
(Fig. 101) "After he had glutted his apetite upon their cattle, he would throw half a dozen oxen upon his hack, and tie three times as many sheep and hogs round his waist, and so march back to his own abode".

From Hugh Thomson's illustrated fairybooks,

"Jack the Giant Killer".



(Fig 10 ii )



Richard Doyle. The Story of Jack and the giants. Illustrated with thirty-five drawings by Richard Doyle. Engraved by G. & E. Dalziel. Cundall & Addey, 1851

[12430.g.3]

'The double-headed Welshman'. Doyle's hand-coloured wood engravings, commissioned by the Dalziels, illustrate legends about West Country giants of terrifying stature and habits. In one of them, cattle were substituted (at the publishers' insistence) for human victims hanging from the giant's belt.

Fig. 11 "Offended two or three young ladies"

From "Pride and Prejudice" by Jane Austen.



tume with Jane Austin's text, his characters showed sparks and attention to personality. This was particularly so in the illustration of Mr. Collins (Fig.12) where the character seemed to profess a certain annoyance at having been asked to read a book aloud. Collins was portrayed rather effiminately with his delicate slipper and his pompous manner. Another character in which Thomson showed this rather delicate male figure was in an illustration of Charles Reade's "Peg Woffington". It showed "Sir Charles Pomander in the Green Room of Goodman Fields Theatre, waiting for Mrs. Woffington. (Fig.13) The illustrative colour is delicate yet majestic; the character is somewhat detached from his surroundings and prim.

Hugh Thomson's work was growing in popularity even in America where "The Cosmopolitan" asked if he would undertake some work for them. "Scribner's Magazine" asked if Thomson would allow a sketch of himself and his work to appear in "The Bookbuyer", which was agreed. Joseph Grego wrote in appreciation of Thomson, saying his illustrations of "Pride and Prejudice" had given the

gentle humourous Jane and given her a new lease of life. No. 30

He also referred to Thomson's watercolours on "And Old-fashioned Christmas" as being greatly appreciated and he hoped the same theme would follow in black and white the following year in <a href="Pears">Pears</a> "Annual" (Fig.14).

In the summer of 1895, whilst completing nine drawings for Rosina",

Hugh Thomson contributed a sketch of an angler, a heavily John Bull type, set in one of Hugh's Izaak Walton sort of landscapes. No. 31

This appeared in daily issues of "The Octopus", an eight-week publication at Oxford. Thomson then began working on more Jane Austin novels. No. 32

Fig. 12 Mr. Collins "protested that he never read novels".

1894. "Pride and Prejudice" by Jane Austen.



Fig. 13 Sir Charles Pomander in the Green Room of Goodman Fields Theatre waiting for Mrs. Woffington.

"Peg Woffington" by Charles Reade.

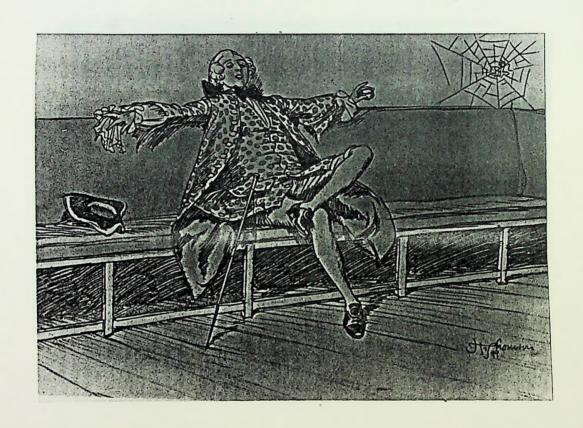
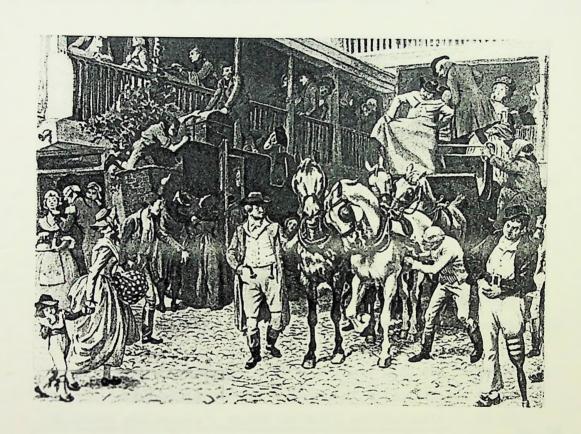


Fig. 14 "Leaving London to spend Christmas in the country"
-"Pears Annual". 1896, Christmas.



The successive volumes were published as the "Hugh Thomson Books", two each appearing in the season of 1896, "Sense and Sensibility" and "Emma", and in 1897, "Mansfield Park", "Northanger Abbey" and Persuasion".No. 33 (Fig. 15, 16.)

Thomson illustrated "The Story of Rosina" by Austin Dobson, who once more paid tribute to Thomson, saying,

Hugh Thomson has once again afforded me the invaluable aid of his fertile fancy; and I am therefore fully warranted in hoping that this further volume of reprinted verses may achieve a success equal, if not superior to that of its predecessor.

No. 34

It was suggested that Thomson should undertake Washington Irving's "Old Christmas", but Thomson refused on the grounds that Randolph Caldecott held the field.

On the fourth of January 1897, Thomson was elected a member of the Royal Institute, his black and white work being the only thing to appear in it. A fellow member elected then was Phil May.

A development of Thomson's work took place with the commission by Messrs. Macmillan to provide a number of illustrations for the "Highways and Byways", series of Devon and Cornwall. It was topographically illustrated by Joseph Pennell whilst Thomson worked on the pen and ink figure sketches. Later, Thomson was to combine both landscape plus figure illustrations in his depictions.

Thomson was asked by MacMillans to display a selection of drawings under the title "England in the Days of Our Great Grandmother". This period of study was particularly apt for Thomson's work and its success was reflected by both his sales and Joseph Grego's comment:

It is a positive inspiration of genius, that notion of delicately tinting your graceful designs ....

Fig. 15 Mrs. Elton was first seen at church.

From <u>"Emma"</u> by Jane Austen.



Fig. 16 Their road was through a pleasant country.

"Mansfield Park" by Jane Austen.

Thomson's success continued when he won the ward for his Peg Woffington drawings at the Davis International Fine Art Competition in 1900.

Thomson's reputation had been firmly fixed by the year 1900, when John Vinycomb (Thomson's friend in Marcus Wards in Belfast), had written to him requesting a loan of a number of drawings for an exhibition in the Linen Hall Library in Belfast. No 37

During this year Thomson worked mainly on "Highways and Byways" in London and James Lane Allen's novel "A Kentucky Cardinal" and "Aftermath". Work was held up by recurrent illness. For reference, Thomson used the prints of the period to establish costume style. There was great energy in these drawings. (Fig.17) The character and hens throughout the publication are full of zest and movement, two things Thomson seems to particularly enjoy.

In 1901, Thomson worked on illustrations for "The Witch and the Jewelled Eggs" from Littledom Castle and other tales by Mrs. M.H. Spielmann. This series of work was very successful and although fairytale-like, it wasn't the disturbing series of images which Thomson's "Jack and the Giant Killer" had been. Thomson had a special touch in illustrating horses. In (Fig. 18), even while the characters are cartoon-like, the horses maintain perfect structure. An excellent horse movement illustration had been completed in 1895 by Thomson on returning from Paris. It was a French cavalry charge in the Champs Elysees. (Fig. 19). Thomson always was keen on catching movement, his style is best suited to this and he always was able to retain a picture in his mind later to be painted. The first instance when Thomson had shown this ability was in 1883 (before he left Ireland) in his watercolour from memory, "The Return from the Ploughing Match".

Another exhibition of Thomson's work took place in 1902 at the Continental Gallery, mostly of the drawings he had made for "Peg Woffington" and also "Scenes from an Irish Horse Fair" by Stephen Gwynn, which appeared as a graphic supplement, and other sketches.

Fig. 17 "Then Mrs. Walters fed her hens".

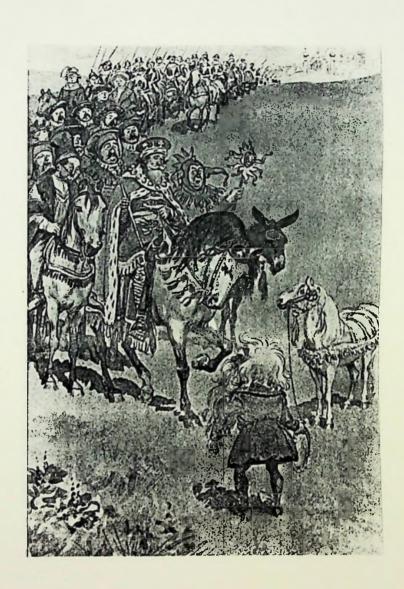
From "A Kentucky Cardinal and Aftermath"

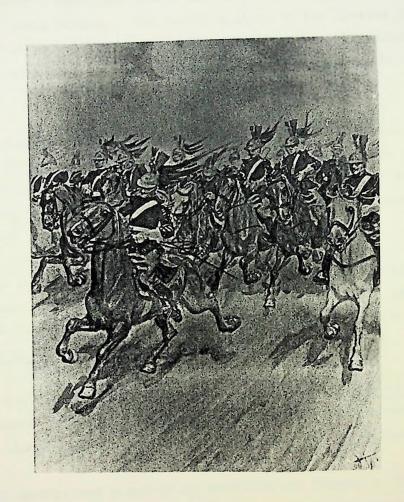


Fig. 18 The prince and princess bewitched.

In "The Witch and the Jewelled Eggs" (1901).

From "Littledom Castle" by Mrs. M.H. Spielmann.





Due to ill health, Thomson left for Switzerland but whilst there he worked on a series of thirty four sketches to accompany text named "A Holiday in Switzerland by the Graphic". No. 38

On October 1906, "Scenes of Clerical Life" were published and this marked a departure from a series which started with "Cranford" fifteen years before. The jovial meeting of the clerics is figured in many of the illustrations (Fig.2O). The lifestyle appears as a good one, the dress is formal and the surroundings ornate.

One of Thomson's excellent examples of colour illustration was for "Silas Marner" by George Eliot, 1907. The illustration, "Silas Foundling, Eppie" (Fig. 211) was particularly beautifully executed. The fine featured children resemble Arthur Rackam's "MOther Goose" (Fig. 2111) with the girls' curly hair and open-eyed gaze.

Thomson worked on a series of colour illustrations from 1910 - 1915, including Shakespeare's "Merry Wives of Windsor", 1910, (Fig. 22), Sheridan's "School for Scandal", 1911, Oliver Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer", 1912. (Fig. 23).

Thomson's illustrations for Shakespeare's "Merry Wives of Windsor" were almost like the famous Robin Hood characters, Falstaff being almost like Friar Tuck, the jolly overweight character.

A very disciplined piece of illustration was Thomson's "You No. 39 were going to observe, sir?" from "She Stoops to Conquer" by Oliver Goldsmith (Fig. 23). There are details of furniture in this drawing which is made up of water colour washes and penstrokes in black and brown ink. After "She Stoops to Conquer", Thomson had completed the postponed colour drawings for "The Chimes". This book had seven colour drawings, the most popular of them being the character, Toby Veck, who was depicted with a "quiet humour, in a Dickens' manner" a very cheerful design (Fig. 24). It looks at Christmas in a lively and happy manner. The original drawings of Thomson's "School for Scandal" were on exhibition in the Leicester Galleries in 1912. Then an important commission of

Fig. 20 The Clerical Meeting
From "Scenes of Clerical Life".



Fig.(21) Silas's Foundling Eppie.

From "Silas Marner" by George Eliot.



Arthur
Rackham. Mother
Goose. The old nursery
rhymes. William
Heinemann, 1913
[11646.h.32]
After the success of
his Alice illustrations
Rackham was more or
less free to choose his
texts. The verses in
Mother Goose are his
selection.



DUSSY-CAT, pussy-cat, where have you been? I've been up to London to look at the queen. Pussy-cat, pussy-cat, what did you there? I frighten'd a little mouse under the chair.

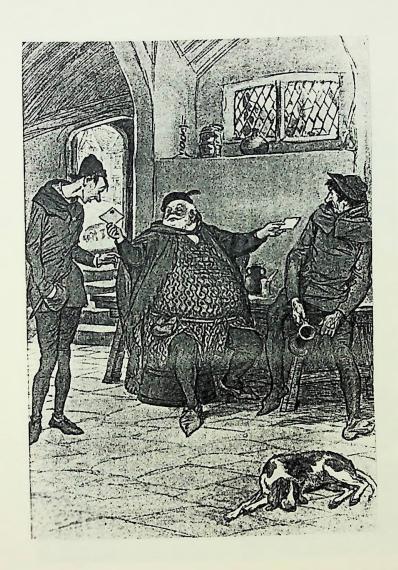


Fig. 23 "You were going to observe sir"

From "She Stoops to Conquer" by Oliver Goldsmith.

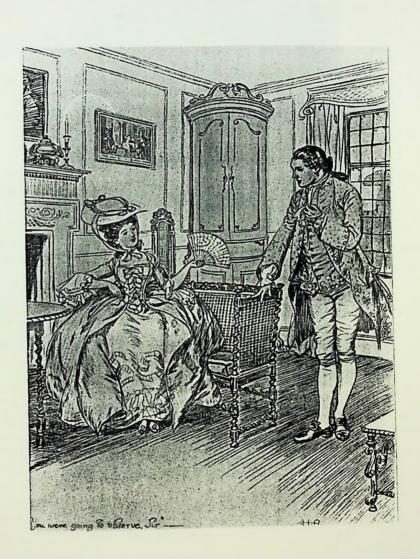


Fig. 24 "Trotty" veck, with his daughter Meg, dining on the steps.

"The Chimes" by Charles Dickens.



"Quality Street" by J.M. Barrie came for the autumn season.

By November, the title and cover design had been done. Thomson always worried if the author would find the illustrations suited to the text. Barrie paid tribute to Thomson:

The pictures are quite delightful. I love to think such work is done for a play of mine, and am quite sure "Quality Street" could not have found such another illustration in broad England. No. 40

It was proposed that High Thomson should work on "The Admirable Crichton" by J.M. Barrie after his previous success. Further commissions this year included 'Tom Brown's Schooldays" and a "Highways and Byways" in Galloway and Carrick.

"The Admirable Crichton" was a book which delighted Thomson as he considered it

one of the best things the dramatist has done, and that means one of the best things on the stage in this generation. No. 41

The caption (Fig. 25) was "What sort of weather have you been having in the kitchen?", cleverly summed up how little the aristokracy knew of their servants' lifestyle. Thomson characterised it in such a funny way yet showed the author's stress on the distance between the two classes.

Early in 1916, Hugh Thomson completed drawings for Tom Brown's Schooldays which had been commissioned two years previously. (It was another two years before the volume was published). At this time Thomson experimented with silhouette, which is praised by Austin Dobson in "A Bookman's Budget", especially those of Richardson, of Henry Fielding and of Hogarth. Thomson felt the tensions of the war in which his son was fighting in Europe, he also refers to

Fig. 25 "What sort of weather have you been having in the kitchen?" from "The Admirable Crichton".



Thomson was very much an Irishman and even in his son's bookplate, the crest, which Thomson designed for him, bears the shamrock. (Fig. 26).

Because of the constant worries and anxieties connected with the war, Thomson's health was not good and he had little illustrative work to do. The only commission was from the Jubilee Number of "The Chatterbox" (Fig. 27). This illustration appeared in colour, but even from this black and white illustration, Thomson's firm style of characterisation is seen. The child shows almost a Kate Greenaway type innocence as he looks at the "pimple-faced man", The child, David Copperfield, looks like he is from a genteel background which Thomson found easy to depict.

Due to lack of income, through the war, in June 1917, Thomson took a job in the Board of Trade, but periods of illness left him unable to work much. Many of his friends wrote to Mr. Lloyd George (then Prime Minister) and Hugh Thomson was granted a civil pension in May 1918 of £75.

Thomson's only war propoganda was in 1917, when a commission had come to design a cartoon to accompany "The Germans as others see them", and again in 1918, of "Germany's Impending Doom".

In August 1918, Thomson received copies of his "Tom Brown's School-days" from America. (Fig. 28). Even in the fight between "Tom Brown and Slogger Williams" Thomson shows no real violence. It is no wonder he did not pursue war propoganda. His illustrations always retain a dignity and eighteenth century formal composition.

In Thomson's last years, he worked on "Highways and Byways" in Gloucestershire, producing almost two hundred sketches. He died at the age of sixty, leaving a wealth of illustration for enjoyment.

Fig. 27 David Copperfield and his waiter at the Yarmouth Inn.

Drawn for "Chatterbox", 1917.

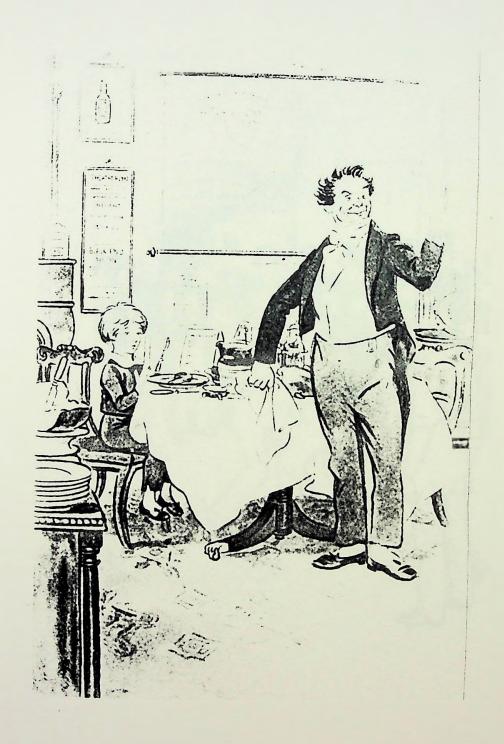
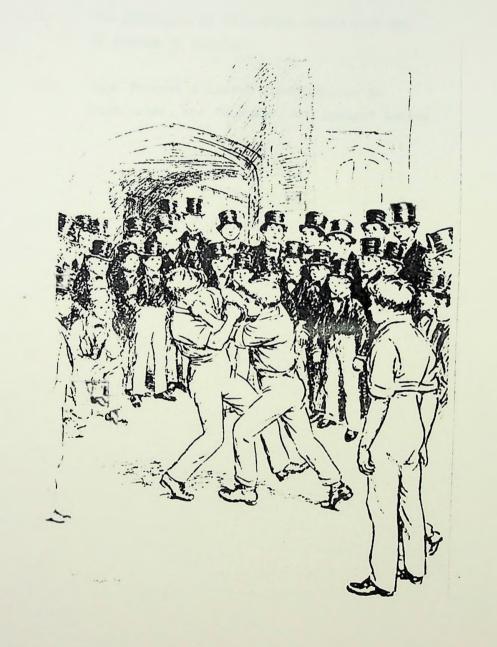


Fig. 28 The Fight.

From "Tom Brown's Schooldays", 1918.



- (i) The emergence of Victorian travel and why it became so popular.
- (ii) Hugh Thomson's travel illustration, in particular, the "Highways and Byways" series.

5

(i) The emergence of Victorian travel and why it became so popular.

Travel, for the Victorian middle classes, became a contrast to their lifestyle in the cities. The tranquility and friendly countryside offered a reassuring image. This interest brought with it a market for guide and travel books which were illustrated by draughtsmen, topographic artists and illustrators alike. European travel became a lucrative field to be explored in texts such as John Murray's "Handbook of 1832". By 1855, Thomas Cook was advertising return trips to Paris, and travel was seen as the goal in the struggle for respectability.

Cook wrote of travel as

the expansion of the intellect, the grasping of information, the desire for books... And all these results are best obtained by associated travel. No. 42

There evolved numourous organised excursions to France, Switzerland and Italy. In the 1890s, Cook organized a coupon system which ensured accommodation on arrival and preferential treatment for his customers. This operated as a form of international credit referred to as "Cook seriousness", the visitors spending time at historical monuments, archeological sites, study of natives and beauty areas. Thus evolved a growing leisure class and Thomas Cook taught two generations of consumers how to spend their money and leisure time.

(ii) Hugh Thomson's travel illustration, in particular the "Highways and Byways" series.

Hugh Thomson emerging into this world where travel and illustration of distant shores was being explored, was a natural for such a subject matter due to his love of nature.

Thomson admired some of Turner's landscapes which, in the first years, showed greater exactitude than the fantasy, of which Ruskin accused him later. Ruskin recognizes Turner as having taken liberties but seems to recognize his work much more than that of Caldecott and Stanfield.

Open air artists were often charged with sentimentality and escapism and their draughtsmanship under valued in many cases. Hugh Thomson's landscapes showed intuition for the picturesque with form and fluidity in his line. He seemed in sympathy with his work as his tender strokes never seem laboured or to lack strength. He shows the rural localities, full of winding lanes and distant prospects, with ease and a whimsical humour is often depicted through his dogs and horses.

Hugh Thomson's experiences in the rural areas satisfied his country loving tastes and, for this reason, he seemed totally suited to his illustrative projects for Macmillans. Later in 1900, Thomson's "Highways and Byways" series was represented in an exhibition in the Linen Hall Library where the catalogue writer comments,

these drawings exhibit all the natural freshness of those of a true student of landscape, a simple and easy grace. No. 43

Thomson showed attention to detail in his choice of a spray of hawthorn to

make a nice heading something after Parson's style.

To enhance a book design for "Sir Roger de Coverly", Thomson used this natural embellishment again in Oliver Goldsmith's "The Vicar of Wakefield" He was described as Goldsmith's

fitting pictorial interpreter.

Early in the year 1900, Thomson was working mainly on "Highways and Byways" in London. He admired the work of Dana Gibson at

this time of whom he said

made some of the finest black and white drawings of the day.

Hugh Thomson's admiration is also noted for Reynolds, Romney and Gainsborough, the latter of which Thomson sees as working with a beautiful and distinctive style.

Some of Thomson's time was spent on illustrations for literature whilst he was still researching for his "Highways and Byways" series. For much of this series, Thomson worked only on the figure illustrations like "Highways and Byways of Yorkshire" by A.H. Norway (Macmillan & Co. Ltd.), 1899. Here, Thomson gives an unreal, almost theatrical style to his characters (Fig. 29).

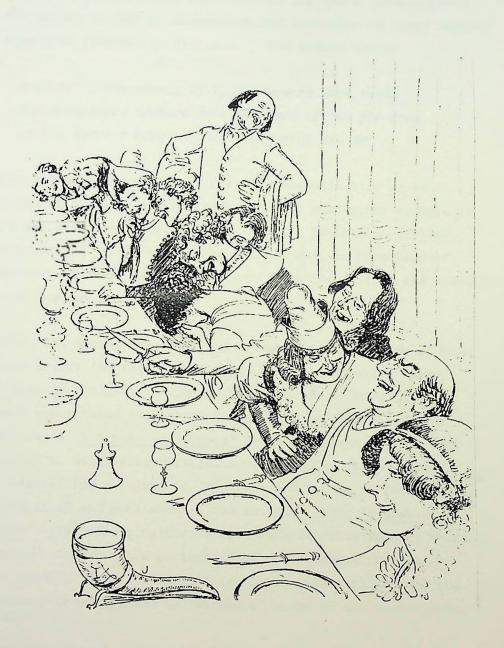
Thomson's frequent illnesses led him to the country solitude of Switzerland. His work was later to bring him to Monte Carlo, thus he frequently travelled widely for his illustrative ventures.

A joint illustration co-operation, between Hugh Thomson and Stephen Gwynn had been suggested in 1898 for "Highways and Byways in Ireland". The work was to take place in the North and South of Ireland. This was finally published in two editions, first, "The Fair Hills of Ireland" (1906) and then, "The Famous Cities of Ireland" which was not published until 1915 although the illustrations were undertaken at the same time. These books were designed as chatty texts that awaken a nostalgia in town and rural scenery. Thomson was particularly interested in topography and local histories, even as a youth. His work showed him to be an able draughtsman and an appreciative observer of both the costume and architecture of the eighteenth century.

The front cover of "The Famous Cities of Ireland" by Stephen Gwynn, illustrated by Hugh Thomson, was embossed in Celtic script and gilded in gold. Inside the first illustration is a water colour of "The Custom House, Dublin". In the preface, the author, Stephen Gwynn describes Hugh Thomson as

Fig 29 "Sat laughing for a quarter of an hour"

"Highways and Byways of Yorkshire" by Arthur H. Norway.



the artist whose work relieves the text with so much grace and humour.

The text concerns the histories of Waterford, Dundalk, Galway, Kilkenny, Derry, Dublin, Wexford, Cork and Belfast. Thomson seemed to have been chosen specifically for these illustrations as the author wished by observation and knowledge of local history to create an interest in the past. The author wrote,

Nowhere is the memory of bygone events more vivid and tenacious, nowhere does the deed of man for good or ill heave a more abiding impression. No. 45

Travel had become a necessary part of Thomson's life as he contributed to various exhibitions, a most noteworthy example of which was the Paris International Fine Art Exhibition of 1900. He frequently journeyed back to Ireland and was acknowledged in Belfast as being in the front rank with the artists and illustrators of his day.

In 1906, The Ulster Arts Club had arranged an exhibition of Hugh Thomson's work for which he designed dainty invitation cards, "The Bust of Evelina". During the next six to seven years, Thomson contributed topographical drawings to four volumes of Macmillian's "Highways and Byways" in which Joseph Pennell and Frederick L. Grigg also contributed. In 1906, Thomson was commissioned for a volume of "Highways and Byways in Kent", which was completed and published in the autumn. This "Highways and Byways" series was by Walter Jeurold with illustrations by Thomson. Canterbury Cathedral is pictured from a distance with areas of dense shading. The foreground is almost pure outline, and the commentary is surrounded by "birdseye" views of the countryside.

Thomson's sense of persepective seemed very good, especially in a sketch of a Norman porch in Canterbury. He shows his subject matter in line with hatched shading usually his sense of shadow giving way to darker tones. Thomson seems to enjoy the details in his work which stand in sharp contrast to his pure line observations. As "Kent" was considered a triumph, Thomson later illustrated a book on Middlesex in the same series. He later travelled to Wales for a much needed holiday. On returning Thomson wrote,

It is the first occasion on which have rejoiced in getting back to the smoke and dirt of London.

And our holiday was spent in one of the most beautiful parts of Wales, with glorious views and a lovely rocky coast. Incomprehensible. Perhaps the advent of a second childhood. No. 48

#### CONCLUSION

The Victorian era was one in which technical improvements brought a rise in the standard of living, and a wave of social optimism.

Although society was undergoing extreme change, it still held onto the morality of the eighteenth century. For this reason, Thomson's work received acclaim. He illustrated books such popular classics including the "Vicar of Wakefield" by Oliver Goldsmith, a popular eighteenth century romance. Publishers did not have to pay copyright on such literature, which meant they were keen to publish such books.

This age was poised between past and future, science and technology had induced change, yet many had ideas of a glorious and respectable past.

There was an increase in literacy in Britain and with it, the artist's and illustrator's talents were employed in books and periodicals.

Many of these publications showed middle class values and the "beautiful book" became a precious object which not everyone could afford to buy.

Thomson contributed to the "English Illustrated Magazine" and other periodicals of the day. He also worked on illustrations for travel commentaries such as the "Highways and Byways" series. Travel had become popular with the increased leisure time in Victorian society, which was due to reduced working hours. Thomson's rural scenes and quaint villagers seemed to be indicative of his style, with his travel scenes which showed intuition for nature.

Although Thomson's work was exhibited throughout Europe and America, and appreciated in many artistic and literary circles, he remained a modest artist. He was always conscious of keeping up and bettering his achievements. Thomson's work tells us much about the Victorian ideologies, and gives a wealth of pleasure to the onlooker.

#### FOOTNOTES

#### INTRODUCTION

No. 1 Quotation from William Hazlitt referring to Sir Walter Scott
Chapter 11
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A. & C. Black Ltd.
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# CHAPTER 1

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Hugh Thomson

By M.H. Spielmann & Walter Jerrold

1931

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- No. 3

  Eminently Victorian Aspects of an Age

  John F.C. Harrison

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- No. 5 IBID
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- No. 7 Petrie, A Singular Iniquity:
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- No. 12 Eminently Victorian Aspects of An Age Chapter 2. Artists of the Age. pp. 116-117.
- No. 13 IBID Chapter 2 pp. 108-109
- No. 14 Hugh Thomson
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  By M.H. Spielmann & Walter Jerrold

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- No. 38 IBID Chapter 5 p. 126
- No. 39 IBID ref. "She Stoops to Conquer"
- No. 40 IBID ref. "Quality Street" p. 182
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