Gregory Dart expands upon existing notions of Cockneys and the ‘Cockney School’ in the late Romantic period by exploring some of the broader ramifications of the phenomenon in art and periodical literature. He argues that the term was not confined to discussion of the Leigh Hunt circle, but was fast becoming a way of gesturing towards everything in modern metropolitan life that seemed discrepant and disturbing. Covering the ground between Romanticism and Victorianism, Dart presents Cockneyism as a powerful critical currency in this period, which helps provide a link between the works of Leigh Hunt and Keats in the 1810s and the early works of Charles Dickens in the 1830s. Through an examination of literary history, art history, urban history and social history, this book identifies the early-nineteenth-century figure of the Cockney as the true ancestor of modernity.

Gregory Dart is a senior lecturer in the English Department of University College London. His research, both current and prospective, is centrally concerned with the modern city, as a cultural and material phenomenon. His first monograph, *Rousseau, Robespierre and English Romanticism* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), examined the influence of the French Revolution on English Romantic writers. Since then he has published widely on Romantics and the city, edited two selections of Hazlitt’s writings and co-edited a collection of essays called *Restless Cities* with Matthew Beaumont.
This series aims to foster the best new work in one of the most challenging fields within English literary studies. From the early 1780s to the early 1830s a formidable array of talented men and women took to literary composition, not just in poetry, which some of them famously transformed, but in many modes of writing. The expansion of publishing created new opportunities for writers, and the political stakes of what they wrote were raised again by what Wordsworth called those ‘great national events’ that were ‘almost daily taking place’: the French Revolution, the Napoleonic and American wars, urbanization, industrialization, religious revival, an expanded empire abroad and the reform movement at home. This was an enormous ambition, even when it pretended otherwise. The relations between science, philosophy, religion and literature were reworked in texts such as Frankenstein and Biographia Literaria; gender relations in A Vindication of the Rights of Woman and Don Juan; journalism by Cobbett and Hazlitt; poetic form, content and style by the Lake School and the Cockney School. Outside Shakespeare studies, probably no body of writing has produced such a wealth of comment or done so much to shape the responses of modern criticism. This indeed is the period that saw the emergence of those notions of ‘literature’ and of literary history, especially national literary history, on which modern scholarship in English has been founded.

The categories produced by Romanticism have also been challenged by recent historicist arguments. The task of the series is to engage both with a challenging corpus of Romantic writings and with the changing field of criticism they have helped to shape. As with other literary series published by Cambridge, this one will represent the work of both younger and more established scholars, on either side of the Atlantic and elsewhere.

For a complete list of titles published see end of book.
METROPOLITAN ART AND LITERATURE, 1810–1840

Cockney Adventures

GREGORY DART
To my father and mother
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