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978-1-108-05724-0 - The Bewick Collector: A Supplement to a Descriptive Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2

Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

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### The Bewick Collector

The names of Thomas Bewick (1753–1828) and his brother John (1760–1795) are synonymous with beautiful, delicate and accurate woodcuts of the natural world. Their instantly recognisable style was to influence book illustration well into the nineteenth century. The antiquary and print collector Thomas Hugo (1820–76), best known as a collector of Bewick woodcuts, first published this two-volume catalogue of his extensive collection in 1866–8. It has since emerged that many of the items sourced from printers' offices and booksellers across the country – including Thomas Bewick's own publisher, Emerson Charnley – cannot be authenticated as the Bewicks' work. The collection was nonetheless a remarkable assemblage of valuable materials, including uncut first editions, woodblocks, handbills and broadsides (all regrettably dispersed after Hugo's death) which might otherwise have been lost. Lavishly illustrated throughout, this volume is the 1868 supplement to the catalogue.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05724-0 - The Bewick Collector: A Supplement to a Descriptive  
Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2

Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

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978-1-108-05724-0 - The Bewick Collector: A Supplement to a Descriptive  
Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2

Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

# The Bewick Collector

*A Supplement to a Descriptive Catalogue  
of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick*

VOLUME 2

THOMAS HUGO



Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05724-0 - The Bewick Collector: A Supplement to a Descriptive  
Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2

Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

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978-1-108-05724-0 - The Bewick Collector: A Supplement to a Descriptive  
Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2  
Thomas Hugo  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

THE BEWICK COLLECTOR.

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-05724-0 - The Bewick Collector: A Supplement to a Descriptive  
Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2  
Thomas Hugo  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05724-0 - The Bewick Collector: A Supplement to a Descriptive  
Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2

Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

# The Bewick Collector.

A

## SUPPLEMENT

TO

### A DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE

OF THE WORKS OF

## THOMAS AND JOHN BEWICK;

CONSISTING OF

ADDITIONS TO THE VARIOUS DIVISIONS OF CUTS,  
WOOD BLOCKS, ETC.,

ENUMERATED IN THAT WORK.

*The whole described from the Originals*

CONTAINED IN THE LARGEST AND MOST PERFECT COLLECTION  
EVER FORMED,

AND ILLUSTRATED WITH A HUNDRED AND EIGHTY CUTS.

BY

THOMAS HUGO, M.A., F.R.S.L., F.S.A., ETC.,

*Vice-President of the London and Middlesex Archæological Society ;  
Honorary Fellow and Honorary Member of various other Literary and Archæological Societies ;  
Rector of All Saints, Bishopsgate ;  
etc. etc. etc.*

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Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2  
Thomas Hugo  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

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978-1-108-05724-0 - The Bewick Collector: A Supplement to a Descriptive  
Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2

Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## P R E F A C E.



ALTHOUGH but a space of little more than two years has elapsed since the appearance of ‘The Bewick Collector,’ and the interval may accordingly be considered more than ordinarily brief between the issue of that work and of the present Supplement to it, there are exceptional circumstances which will be held, I think, more than sufficient to justify me in adopting the course which I am now taking.

The book was hardly published before I was well-nigh inundated by consignments from all quarters far and near, including two from America, of parcels of greater or less magnitude, whose owners solicited my judgment of their multifarious and too often uninteresting contents. Some of these were gifts, a few were for inspection only—the rest were for sale. Books, Pamphlets, Miscellaneous Engravings, Wood Blocks, crowded on each other. For many months I positively lived—so far as important duties would allow me, and frequently at a considerable outlay of labour, patience, and self-denial—among old woodcuts

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05724-0 - The Bewick Collector: A Supplement to a Descriptive Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2

Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii

*Preface.*

and their impressions. Gradually the storm cleared, the influx of boxes and parcels became less and less, and finally ceased, so that during the last few months I have had sufficient leisure to arrange and describe the result, and in this manner to make the various treasures, thus strangely yet most happily brought together from so many and distant quarters, available for the use and enjoyment of others as well as of their more immediate owner.

From an inventory which I have kept of the subjects of examination, I find that I have had before me about seven thousand Books and upwards of fifty thousand Wood Blocks. A large proportion of the latter, however, came under my notice during three journeys which I have made in various parts of England, especially the five northernmost counties, in the course of the last two years. Many scores—I might truly say hundreds—of old printing offices have I ransacked—not only in Newcastle and the neighbourhood, but in London and various other and distant places where books were published with Illustrations by Thomas Bewick—hundreds of booksellers visited and corresponded with. If, therefore, the result be inadequate or unsatisfactory, which few, I think, will allege, it is owing neither to want of zeal in the pursuit nor to stint in the employment of means.

It may not be without interest for some of my readers if I remark that the additions to my Books and to my Wood Blocks have almost invariably been made from different localities. Hardly a tenth part of the

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05724-0 - The Bewick Collector: A Supplement to a Descriptive Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2

Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Preface.*

ix

former—the additions to my Books—have been obtained from Northumberland, Durham, Cumberland, and Westmoreland; while, on the other hand, with the exception of some interesting London purchases, very few Wood Blocks of Bewick's execution have been discovered beyond the limits of those four counties. The reason lies apparently in the fact that in the search for Books illustrated by Thomas and John Bewick the extreme north of England had been thoroughly examined and exhausted; while Blocks engraved by the former, especially those for miscellaneous purposes, were done almost exclusively for his immediate neighbours, and consequently were not to be found at a distance from their several localities. The great majority of his most celebrated works for remote employers were already included in my Collection, and I have now done my best to make his own neighbourhood even more bare of his Blocks than it previously was of Books illustrated by him.

These, then, are the reasons which induce me to offer the present Supplement to all who feel interested in the Artists and their labours. Circumstances have crowded into weeks and months what is ordinarily the result of the successful labours of many and long years. And the repose which has followed the pressure of the throng, if it have not added to the result, has at least gone far to impart the certainty that little if aught more remains to be effected, and to make me feel that I shall do well, without a delay which would now be unproductive and consequently useless, to present those

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978-1-108-05724-0 - The Bewick Collector: A Supplement to a Descriptive  
Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2

Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x

*Preface.*

who have already testified their approbation of my work with the Additions which I may not unreasonably hope will supplement and complete it.

Touching the former volume, I have in the first place to tender my best acknowledgments for the very flattering reception with which it has been honoured by the public press at large. Not only has it received the hearty approbation of various of our London critics, but a goodly number of the provincial journals, including more than one in Bewick's own noble town, have been pleased to comment most favourably and handsomely on my labours. I have heard, indeed, but a single adverse criticism, and that from but one or two private objectors. It is to the effect that I have created an unnecessary labour and inflicted a gratuitous weariness on my reader by the enumeration of "another" and yet "another" duplicate of many of the articles. I beg in reply to remind such a critic that my book is professedly and designedly not only a Catalogue of the Works of the Artists but of my own Collection, and that the mention of each article is, accordingly, a very important and indeed necessary feature in such a work. And, further, I take leave to add that it is rather hard, when I have spread so rich and varied an entertainment for my guests, that I should be grugged a single and homely dish for my own special gratification.

There is, however, a further reason which will hereafter in all probability impart a public value to what is now, I own, but a private advantage. The feeling is

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05724-0 - The Bewick Collector: A Supplement to a Descriptive Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2

Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Preface.*

xi

strong within me, daily increasing in intensity, and all but arrived, if it have not quite done so, at the certainty of a fixed determination, that either the British Museum, or some other National Art Collection, shall hereafter be, as it ought, the depository of this host of artistic treasures. There the multitude of unique articles, which not only impart to it an unapproachable precedence, but remove it from even distant comparison,—the wonderful series of Books and Pamphlets, many apparently unknown beyond its limits, others of hardly less rarity, including a goodly number of volumes either the property of Thomas Bewick himself, or presented by or to other celebrated persons, or for some other reason possessed of special interest,—the matchless collection of Proofs in various states,—the immense aggregate of Miscellaneous Cuts done for public purposes and private persons, the fruits of the life-long gatherings of well-known Collectors,—and, perhaps above all, as, if possible, more than all unique and incomparable, the priceless assemblage of Wood Blocks, as well of many of the most celebrated books illustrated by Thomas and John Bewick, as of a multitude of the best performances of the elder brother for all kinds of purposes of business and amusement—would be in their rightful place, secure from casualties which in their case would be an irreparable loss to Art in general, and safely preserved for the study and admiration of generations yet to come. In the event of my Collection being deposited in such an Institution, where the possession of duplicates for careful compari-

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05724-0 - The Bewick Collector: A Supplement to a Descriptive  
Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2

Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

son would be estimated as it deserves, the present Catalogue would acquire a greatly increased value, as not only an enumeration of the results of private and long-pursued research, and a guide to Collectors desirous of following, so far at least as possible, in the same track, but a ready key to the contents of a great Public Department of Art. So that what now appears a blemish to the critics just referred to may ultimately become a thing of special utility to them and multitudes besides.

Let me add that a far more serious objection—which, however, I have not met with—might have been advanced against my work, and for which I should have had humbly to solicit forgiveness. I am sorrowfully conscious that among the Books and Pamphlets there are more than a few—upwards of forty at least—which should never have been admitted to a place in the list. My reader, however, if he have carefully perused the notes appended to many of the articles, will not fail to recollect that I have in numerous instances expressed my doubt, and sometimes more than that, of the correctness of their attribution to either of the Artists. These doubts are now increased to certainties. I am quite sure that neither Thomas nor John Bewick had any hand in the productions referred to. And the same must be affirmed of a very large number of other publications, especially those of the London press, with which their names have of late been most improperly associated, but in which not a single line of their work is to be found.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05724-0 - The Bewick Collector: A Supplement to a Descriptive Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2

Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Preface.*

xiii

This should be well understood, for Collectors are pertinaciously beset, and now more than ever, by all kinds of specious pretences. In various Book Catalogues, for example, I have been considerably amused by the note affixed to a number of worthless volumes—"Not in The Bewick Collector," "Not in Hugo," "Unknown to Hugo," etc. etc. Many of them were indeed "known" to me so well as to be intentionally excluded. They were certainly "not in 'The Bewick Collector,'" and it would have been simply a blunder in the book and a disgrace to its author if they had been. For they were mere pretenders to that to which they had not the shadow of a rightful claim.

I feel, accordingly, that I shall be doing the Collector a very important service, if I endeavour to prevent him from being cajoled by the practices referred to by enumerating some of the classes of books the illustrations of which are thus—to speak mildly—erroneously attributed to the Brothers Bewick. There are, indeed, hundreds of volumes which nothing but the most profound ignorance or the most shameless indifference to honest dealing can ever attempt to identify with either of the great Newcastle Masters. Disgraceful, I must say, and utterly unworthy of English tradesmen, has been the late traffick in such commodities. I warn my readers against the deception. The remedy, however, after all lies with themselves. For so long, I must be allowed to add, as Collectors are willing to be victimized, so long will worthless books "with charming engravings by Bewick"—such is the phrase

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05724-0 - The Bewick Collector: A Supplement to a Descriptive Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2

Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xiv

*Preface.*

—be offered for their purchase. Ready, indeed, and thoughtless must many of them be, to be so impudently, clumsily, and absurdly duped.

Passing these, however, as unworthy of further remark, I would direct my reader's attention to other works, which have, in good faith but ignorantly, been assigned to the Artists :—

1. The publications in general of Vernor and Hood. For example :—The Letters of Junius, No. (98.); Marmontel's Tales, No. (136.); Bloomfield's Farmer's Boy, Nos. (155.), etc.; Britton's Beauties of Wiltshire, No. (166.); Rural Tales, Nos. (182.), etc.; Holloway's Scenes of Youth, No. (189.); Zimmerman, No. (195.); Bloomfield's Wild Flowers, No. (245.); Bloomfield's May Day with the Muses, No. (448.); Hudibras, No. (3803.); and others mentioned in Appendix, No. V., which I have compiled with the special intention of guarding the Collector against deception. Many of the illustrations in these volumes, indeed, are of considerable excellence. They are in some cases the work of Anderson, and in others that of Austin and Charlton Nesbit. Nor, it is right to add, are Vernor and Hood to be held accountable for the error into which modern students have fallen as to the attribution of these engravings. While, whenever they could do so, they expressly stated the fact of the illustrations of their books being the work of Bewick, *e. g.*, Dodd's Beauties of History, No. (88.); Scripture Illustrated, No. (225.), etc., they never attempted to impart a fictitious value to their property by the dishonest use



Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05724-0 - The Bewick Collector: A Supplement to a Descriptive Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2

Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Preface.*

xv

of the Artist's name. This cannot be affirmed of all their brethren.

2. A large majority of the publications of J. Carnan, of St. Paul's Churchyard, of E. Newbery, also of St. Paul's Churchyard, and of J. Harris, his successor. Among others, evidently by the same artist, are the cuts in Youthful Portraits, No. (89.); Pity's Gift, No. (122.); Mrs. Pilkington's Historical Beauties, No. (123.); The Crested Wren, No. (129.); Paternal Present, No. (176.); Triumph of Goodnature, No. (177.); False Alarms, No. (3779.); and others noticed in Appendix, No. V. Most of the Cuts in these publications of Newbery and Harris exhibit very minute care in their execution, but have little or nothing of the boldness and freedom of the Artists' genuine works.

A word, before proceeding further, to some who may imagine that too much attention has been devoted to works of a trifling nature and by-gone interest. "The world is probably not aware," says Washington Irving, in his 'Biography of Oliver Goldsmith,' "of the ingenuity, humour, good sense, and sly satire, contained in many of the Old English Nursery Tales. They have evidently been the sportive productions of able writers, who would not trust their names to productions that might be considered beneath their dignity. The ponderous works on which they relied for immortality have, perhaps, sunk into oblivion, and carried their names down with them; while their unacknowledged offspring, 'Jack the Giant Killer,' 'Giles Gingerbread,' and 'Tom Thumb,' flourish in wide-spreading and never-ceasing popularity."

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05724-0 - The Bewick Collector: A Supplement to a Descriptive Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2

Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xvi

*Preface.*

3. The publications of John Marshall, Aldermay Church Yard. Among many others are *Life and Perambulation of a Mouse*, No. (56.); *Jemima Placid*, No. (279.); *Memoirs of a Peg Top*, No. (280.); *Adventures of a Pincushion*, No. (334.); *Life and Adventures of a Fly*, No. (3767.), and others in Appendix, No. V.

The engravings in this Division are very peculiar. They appear to be the work of the same artist, and in their tasteless want of meaning can hardly be said to illustrate the books in which they occur. They consist usually of figures, in hard outline, of immoderately tall and thin personages, whose action and employment it is difficult so much as to guess. The following is a favourable example, bad as it unquestionably is,



by the same hand, and its inspection will make my meaning clearer. I selected it some time since from a large and worthless stock of old Wood Blocks in London, where there can be no doubt that it was executed, and for one of the volumes of this publisher.

4. In addition to these are a number of books issued

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05724-0 - The Bewick Collector: A Supplement to a Descriptive Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2

Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Preface.*

xvii

by various Houses. Among them:—Riley's Historical Pocket Library, No. (57.); Musical Budget, No. (145.); Zion's Pilgrim, No. (170.); Life of Peden, No. (171.); The Nurse, by Tansillo, No. (197.); Miss Owenson's Irish Harp, No. (226.); The Painter's Budget, No. (329.); Burdekin's Publications, Nos. (339.), (340.), (341.), (461.), etc.; Brown's Poems, No. (433.); Tom Bragwell, No. (437.); Irish Family, No. (447.); Foote's Works, No. (3778.); Misfortunes of Love, No. (3781.); Life of Turpin, No. (3782.); Rowe's Fables, No. (3801.); Evans's Juvenile Tourist, No. (3802.); Week at Harrogate, No. (3808.); and others in Appendix, No. V.

As I have previously remarked, most of those to which numbers are attached have been already mentioned in terms of suspicion, so that I would fain hope the Collector has not been seriously misled by finding them admitted to a place to which they had no well-grounded pretensions.

With a view, however, of affording him a better idea of the extent of the field which he will find himself compelled to investigate, and still more of putting him on his guard against its dangers, I have added an Appendix of several numbers, a frequent reference to which I feel assured will prove very useful and profitable.

I. A List of Books printed for T. Carnan, in St. Paul's Churchyard.

I know of but one of his publications, No. (22.), which contains any specimen of Bewick's powers.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05724-0 - The Bewick Collector: A Supplement to a Descriptive Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2

Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xviii

*Preface.*

Their illustrations appear to be older than any of his productions. The list, however, is necessarily valuable to those who are interested in this species of all but obsolete literature. Like those which follow, it has been compiled from a number of the publisher's own catalogues.

II. A List of Books printed for E. Newbery, and for J. Harris, successor to E. Newbery, at the Corner of St. Paul's Churchyard.

Only a few of these contain illustrations by either of the Brothers Bewick, some of which, however, are among the choicest productions of the younger of the two. All will be found in the Collection.

III. A List of Books printed and sold by John Marshall, Aldermay Churchyard.

I am not aware that any of these contain illustrations by Bewick, though many are popularly considered so to do, and, like those before mentioned, attempted to be sold as such.

IV. A List of Books printed and published by T. Wilson and R. Spence (and afterwards Thomas Wilson and Son), High-Ousegate, York.

A considerable number of the books in this List are not included in the 'Bewick Collector,' from the fact of their containing no examples of the Artists' work. Of a large number, containing such examples, careful descriptions have been given in that volume and the present Supplement. It should be distinctly remembered, however, that none of these cuts were done by Bewick for the York publishers, but that

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05724-0 - The Bewick Collector: A Supplement to a Descriptive Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2

Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Preface.*

xix

they were purchased by them from Messrs. Hall and Elliot, of Newcastle, and were used as occasion required for the productions of their office. In many instances, the cuts originally done for one book were forced by their subsequent owners to illustrate others, and are consequently more or less unsuitable for the purpose to which they were compelled to minister.

It will be perceived that the titles of many of the York books are identical with those of Carnan, Newbery, Marshall, and others. The illustrations, however, of the latter are different, and the work of other hands. Hence the admission of the one, and the rejection of the other.

V. A Century of Books, of various publishers, places, and dates, which have been offered to me among the multitudes referred to at the commencement of this Preface, selected from the rest for their plausible appearance and consequent ability of deceiving the Collector, but which I hold to be as really undeserving of a place in this Catalogue as other and less artistic productions. Of course the articles in this Division—this specimen list of pretenders—might have been added to largely and without difficulty. But enough, and perhaps more than enough, are given to enable the Collector to perceive the kind of books which he will certainly do well to reject. If he will carefully compare the illustrations of these volumes with those about which there is no question, executed and published at the selfsame time, he will see without difficulty how impossible it is that productions

*b 2*

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05724-0 - The Bewick Collector: A Supplement to a Descriptive Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2

Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

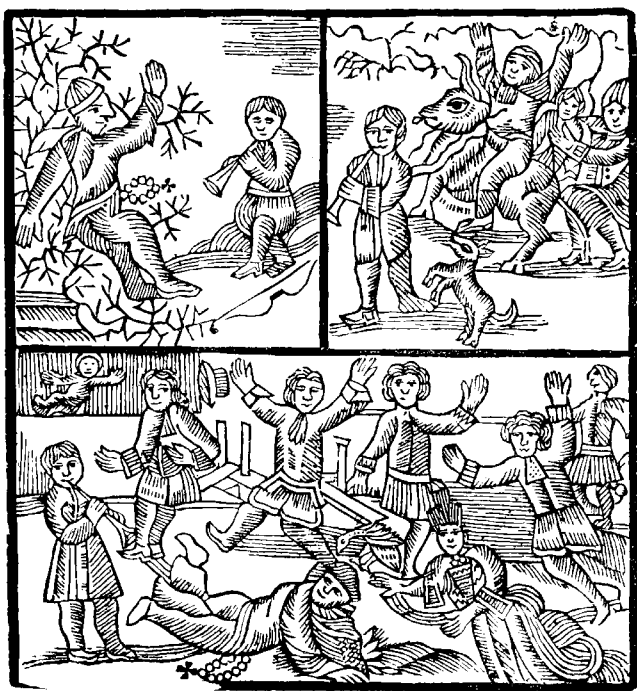
xx

*Preface.*

so entirely dissimilar could be the work of the same hand. The style of Thomas Bewick is always to be detected even in his most trivial performances. It is not always equal, but it is always individual. And it is at once absurd and dishonest to attribute to him works which detract from his well-earned fame, not from any desire to increase his celebrity, or to evidence the versatility of his powers, but—if the truth must be said—only with a studied intent to deceive the unwary, and dishonestly to give a fictitious value to articles which would otherwise be deservedly without a purchaser.

I may add that not only is there no sign of unwillingness to give high prices for genuine articles, but that the value of such is still rising. One of the copies, for example, of the Chillingham Bull on parchment, which I mentioned as being in private hands, has been sold within the last year for fifty guineas. Other instances hardly less conspicuous have been reported to me.

The process by which I have been enabled during the last two years to examine so many and distant productions, while it has proved by lack of results in various Divisions how complete were my previous acquisitions in such, has been the means of bringing before my notice many relics of singular interest unconnected with, or but distantly allied to, the subject before us. This is not the place, nor have I time at my present command, to enter into details. But, as specimens of the class of additions to which I refer, I annex impressions from two original Blocks which



Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05724-0 - The Bewick Collector: A Supplement to a Descriptive  
Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2

Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xxii

*Preface.*

I doubt not will be duly valued. The first illustrates the old and well-known poem of ‘The Friar and the Boy,’ while the latter represents the Morris Dance which was so great a favourite in the olden days of ‘merry England.’ I am well aware—and indeed it ought to be strongly insisted on—that rudeness of execution is no certain criterion of the antiquity of a Wood Block. Many which appear to be the oldest, used in the Chap Books printed at Newcastle at various times, are known to have been engraved by the printers’ apprentices in that town between the years 1770 and 1780. While a knowledge of this fact will reconcile the critic to my attribution of some in the following pages to the apparently late date to which I assign them, the primitive state of the Blocks whereof impressions have just been given is conclusive of their real and genuine antiquity.

As I may, further, presume that my reader is more than ordinarily interested in the works of the old Northern engravers and printers, I give him the benefit of another of my acquisitions which unites each of these two specialities. It is an impression (*see the next page*) from an original Wood Block by the celebrated Thomas Gent, printer, of York, with which he was so far contented as to annex his name to his work. The Block has been much injured by being employed as a “bearer,” and otherwise maltreated. I also possess a Cut of Pontefract Castle, with “T. Gent York.” engraved on the back, used at page 122 of his ‘History of the Great Eastern Window in York Min-



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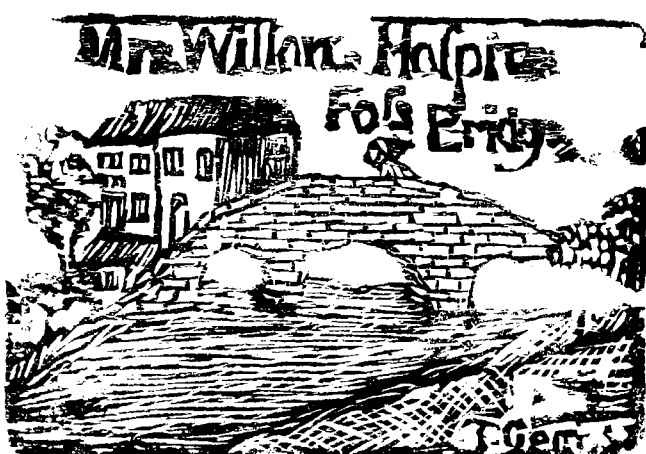
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Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Preface.*

xxiii



ster,' 8vo. York, 1757–1760; and an impression of his Book Plate, the only one that I have ever seen, in a copy of Conybeare's 'Defence of Revealed Religion,' Third Edition, 8vo. Dublin, 1732, which was formerly "e Lib. Tho. Gent, Civ. Lond. Ebor. &c.", as appears by his autograph on the title. It consists of an oval border of roughly executed foliage, enclosing the printed inscription "A.C. MDCLXXII. Mr. Thomas Gent. Printer, Æt. 80."

I have, in the last place, the pleasing duty of expressing my grateful acknowledgments for the many kindnesses and courtesies with which I have been favoured in the course of these investigations. Numerous friends have either enriched my Collection with gifts of rare or unique treasures, or have aided me with their introduction and influence, apart from whose assistance the acquisition of many of the articles would have been simply impossible. Their

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Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xxiv

*Preface.*

names, where I have been authorized to give them, are annexed to the notices of the various objects. I have omitted them, indeed, in some instances, for the reason stated in my previous volume. But such donors, although unmentioned, will be pleased to accept this poor memorial of my gratitude, which a desire to comply with their wishes makes so inadequate and to me unsatisfactory.

In concluding a work to which from the nature of things it is absolutely impossible to make any additions of more than very secondary importance, I feel that I am bidding a partial farewell to a pursuit, which, although rightly subservient to other and much beloved yet very different subjects of study, has long possessed for me a delightful fascination, and could almost wish, for the pleasure of acquiring, that the acquisitions themselves were less complete. Of course, as I have stated elsewhere, it would be folly to pretend that such a result has been attained without a long period of very large and unhesitating disbursement. This was necessary at all times—for the objects were possessed of great interest and value from the very moment of their production—and still more so for a number of years last past, partly through the reverential regard felt by their possessors for many of them as the sole surviving relics of old and celebrated Houses, and partly through the daily increasing avidity with which every thing connected with the subject is seized upon by Collectors, oftentimes more desirous of acquiring than intelligent in the selection of the ob-

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Catalogue of the Works of Thomas and John Bewick: Volume 2

Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Preface.*

xxv

jects submitted to them. Added to which have been various rare opportunities past and over, invaluable and beyond recall, long intimacy with deceased friends and business connections of the Artists themselves, and the successive dispersion of the other famous Collections made during the lifetime of both,—precious evidences of which are thickly strewn in the former and the present volume. And, lastly, the aid of living friends, able as well as willing to help, whose influence towards the conclusion has been equally propitious. Fortunate accident and designed kindness have thus combined to aid the powerful adjunct of long and liberal expenditure. And the result is that to which I have now the pleasure of welcoming my reader, with the concluding assurance to him that it is one which no zeal to acquire, no desire to oblige, nor any amount of pecuniary outlay can ever again purchase or procure.

THOMAS HUGO.

*The Chestnuts, Clapton, London, N.E.,  
Whit Monday, 1868.*

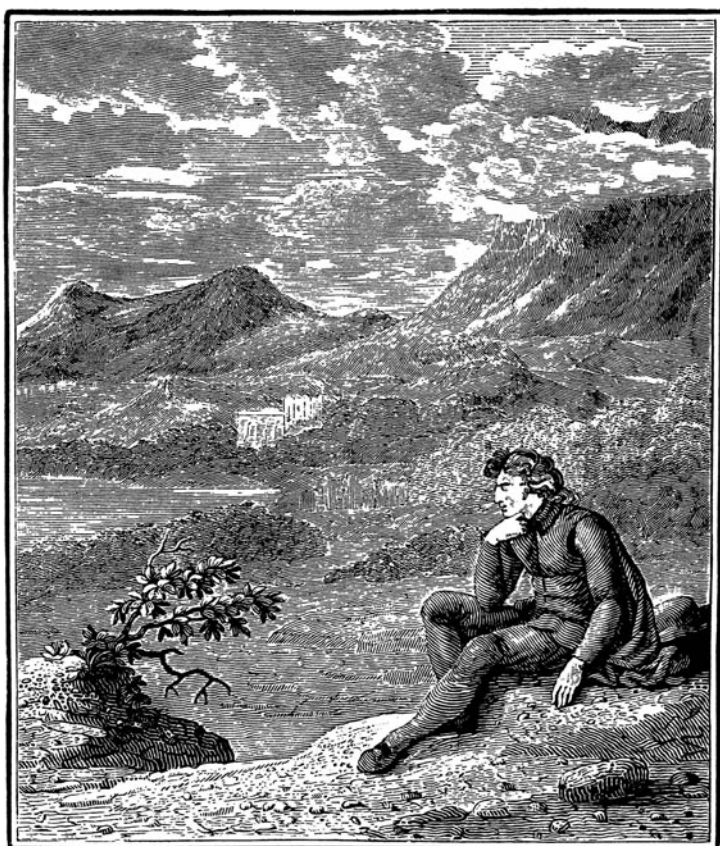
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Thomas Hugo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)



CONTENTS OF SUPPLEMENT.

	PAGE
PREFACE . . . . .	vii
CONTENTS . . . . .	xxvii
LIST OF CUTS . . . . .	xxix
ADDITIONS TO BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS . . . . .	I
„ PROOFS, ETC., OF THE CUTS IN THE ‘HIS- TORY OF QUADRUPEDS’ . . . . .	126
„ PROOFS, ETC., OF THE CUTS IN THE ‘HIS- TORY OF BRITISH BIRDS’ . . . . .	128
„ PROOFS, ETC., OF THE CUTS IN ‘ÆSOP’S FABLES’ . . . . .	130
„ PROOFS OF THE CUTS, ETC., IN MISCEL- LANEOUS BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS . . . . .	131
„ BOOK PLATES . . . . .	152
„ CUTS FOR SOCIETIES, COMPANIES, ETC. . . . .	156
„ CUTS FOR EXHIBITIONS, ETC. . . . .	164
„ RACING CUTS . . . . .	167
„ SHOP CARDS . . . . .	174
„ INVOICE HEADS . . . . .	177
„ TRADESMEN’S NEWSPAPER CUTS . . . . .	186
„ BAR BILLS . . . . .	192
„ COAL CERTIFICATES . . . . .	200
„ THE ROYAL ARMS, ETC. . . . .	206
„ ARMS OF NEWCASTLE AND GATESHEAD . . . . .	208
„ NEWSPAPER CUTS . . . . .	210
„ BROADSIDES, ETC. . . . .	216
„ MISCELLANEOUS CUTS—VIEWS . . . . .	223

xxviii                      *Contents of Supplement.*

	PAGE
ADDITIONS TO MISCELLANEOUS CUTS—ANIMALS . . .	225
"                    "                    "    VARIOUS . . .	226
"                    DRAWINGS . . . . .	228
"                    WOOD BLOCKS FOR BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS	229
"                    "                    "    BOOK PLATES . . .	247
"                    "                    "    VARIOUS SOCIETIES, ETC.	249
"                    "                    "    EXHIBITIONS, ETC. . .	251
"                    "                    "    RACING CUTS . . .	253
"                    "                    "    SHOP CARDS . . .	255
"                    "                    "    INVOICE HEADS, ETC. .	258
"                    "                    "    TRADESMEN'S NEWSPAPER	
CUTS . . . . .	263
"                    "                    "    BAR BILLS . . . . .	266
"                    "                    "    ROYAL ARMS, ETC. . .	269
"  , ARMS OF NEWCASTLE	
AND GATESHEAD . .	270
"                    "                    "    NEWSPAPER CUTS . . .	270
"                    "                    "    BROADSIDES . . . . .	274
"                    "                    "    MISCELLANEOUS CUTS—	
VIEWS . . . . .	277
"                    "                    "    ANIMALS . . . . .	279
"                    APPENDIX—BEWICK PORTRAITS . . . . .	282
"                    "                    "    MISCELLANIES . . . . .	283
"                    "                    "    WORKS OF PUPILS . . . . .	285
INSERENDA . . . . .	286
APPENDIX I.—BOOKS PRINTED FOR T. CARNAN . . . . .	297
"    II.                    "                    "    E. NEWBERY, AND J.	
HARRIS . . . . .	298
"    III.                    "                    "    J. MARSHALL . . . . .	303
"    IV.                    "                    "    WILSON AND SPENCE,	
AND WILSON AND SON	306
"    V.—A CENTURY OF BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS,	
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS INCORRECTLY AT-	
TRIBUTED TO THOMAS AND JOHN BEWICK	310
INDEX . . . . .	327