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Of the Decorative Illustration of Books Old and New

Published in 1896 at the peak of his career, this work by Walter Crane (1845–1915) was developed from a series of lectures given to the Society of Arts in 1889. Although chiefly remembered as an illustrator of books for children, Crane was a versatile and knowledgeable artist and designer. His practical experience with book illustration and printing methods gives this text the weight of considerable authority. A prominent figure in the Arts and Crafts movement alongside William Morris, he demonstrates here his understanding of historical techniques of illustration since the medieval period. Drawing parallels across the ages, Crane notes in particular how Arts and Crafts aesthetics influenced book illustration in the late Victorian era. Featuring copious reproductions of illustrations ranging in date, style, technique and sophistication, this work reflects Crane's artistic ethos through the exploration of many examples of exquisite craftsmanship.



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Of the Decorative Illustration of Books Old and New

WALTER CRANE





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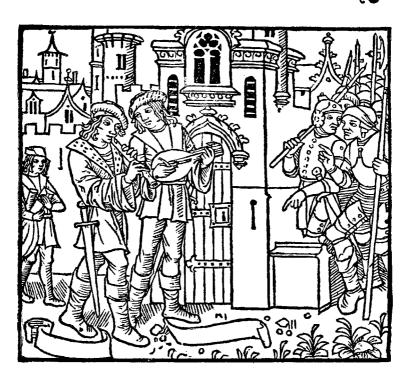
THE DECORATIVE ILLUSTRATION OF BOOKS. BY WALTER CRANE.







OFTHE DECORATIVE ILLUSTRATION OF BOOKS OLD AND NEW BY WALTER CRANE



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PREFACE.



HIS book had its origin in the course of three (Cantor) Lectures given before the Society of Arts in 1889; they have been amplified and added to, and further chapters have been written, treating of the

very active period in printing and decorative bookillustration we have seen since that time, as well as some remarks and suggestions touching the general principles and conditions governing the

design of book pages and ornaments.

It is not nearly so complete or comprehensive as I could have wished, but there are natural limits to the bulk of a volume in the "Ex-Libris" series, and it has been only possible to carry on such a work in the intervals snatched from the absorbing work of designing. Within its own lines, however, I hope that if not exhaustive, the book may be found fairly representative of the chief historical and contemporary types of decorative book-illustration.

In the selection of the illustrations, I have endeavoured to draw the line between the purely graphic aim, on the one hand, and the ornamental aim on the other—between what I should term the art of pictorial statement and the art of decorative treatment; though there are many cases in which they are combined, as, indeed, in all the most complete book-pictures, they should be. My purpose has been to treat of illustrations which are also book-ornaments, so that purely graphic design, as such, unrelated to the type, and the conditions of the page, does not come within my scope.

As book-illustration pure and simple, however, has been treated of in this series by Mr. Joseph



PREFACE.

Pennell, whose selection is more from the graphic than the decorative point of view, the balance may be said to be adjusted as regards contemporary art.

I must offer my best thanks to Mr. Gleeson White, without whose most valuable help the book might never have been finished. He has allowed me to draw upon his remarkable collection of modern illustrated books for examples, and I am indebted to many artists for permission to use their illustrations, as well as to Messrs. George Allen, Bradbury, Agnew and Co., J. M. Dent and Co., Edmund Evans, Geddes and Co., Hacon and Ricketts (the Vale Press), John Lane, Lawrence and Bullen, Sampson Low and Co., Macmillan and Co., Elkin Mathews, Kegan Paul and Co., Walter Scott, Charles Scribner's Sons, and Virtue and Co., for their courtesy in giving me, in many cases, the use of the actual blocks.

To Mr. William Morris, who placed his beautiful collection of early printed books at my disposal, from which to choose illustrations; to Mr. Emery Walker for help in many ways; to Mr. John Calvert for permission to use some of his father's illustrations; and to Mr. Pollard who has lent me some of his early Italian examples, and has also supervised my bibliographical particulars, I desire to make my cordial acknowledgments.

WALTER CRANE.

KENSINGTON: July 18th, 1896.



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