

The Victorian Illustrated Book edited by Richard Maxwell. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 2002. 448 pp. + 125 b/w illus. ISBN 0-8139-2097-3. \$45.00.

Most of the best work done on Victorian book illustration concentrates on the unique nature of the activity. Such studies are fascinating to those in the field but can serve to marginalize the discipline. *The Victorian Illustrated Book* vibrantly moves this area of study into the mainstream. The wide-ranging individual essays explore illustrations in light of the Victorian milieu of writer and illustrator, show how the Victorian reader would have encountered the text, and amplify awareness of the shared role of text and illustration in thematic and stylistic development. The volume as a whole contextualizes the study of Victorian illustrated books as part of the technological explosion, artistic innovations, and cultural tensions of the era. Coherence comes through recurring themes such as concepts of urban and rural life, a focus on elements of art design, references to Charles Dickens and his use of illustrations, and ways in which Victorian book illustration built on medieval motifs.

The opening essay by Richard Maxwell, "Walter Scott, Historical Fiction, and the Genesis of the Victorian Illustrated Book," defines the crucial role of illustration in Scott's historical narratives to describe antiquities that figured so prominently in his novel's development. With the medieval world as a chronological start, Maxwell provides a new perspective for the interpretation of Victorian illustrations. He reminds us that in the Middle Ages illustration meant "spiritual or intellectual illumination." The novels of Scott, rooted in the Middle Ages, require accurate pictorial representations of regalia and precise drawings of castles and cathedrals. Maxwell fixes this role for illustration as movement from explication to enhancement of text. His essay grounds the development of book illustration not only in the narrative pictorial styles of Hogarth and Cruikshank but in the growth of the novel and the illustrated novel's role in reflecting attitudes of Victorian culture and life.

Subsequent essays by Steven Dillon and Ronald Patten focus on the actual meanings illustrations provide about the Victorian world and narrative development. Dillon uses examples from a variety of works to discuss the role of time in society as exemplified through illustrations of watches, dials, and clocks. He also treats ideas of time, such as domestic peaceful time in contrast to tyrannical work time, and the inexorable march of time toward death. Patten's study of Hablôt K. Browne's plate – "I make myself known to my Aunt" in *David Copperfield* – isolates a specific action in the text while simultaneously telescoping previous and future events in the narrative. Patten incorporates into this analysis the complex working environment in which Browne collaborated with Dickens, as well as the nature of the artistic endeavour and its relationship to the text. In Patten's words, illustrations "enlighten, lighten up, elucidate and embellish the text." Patten maintains that