

DOUBLING ENTICEMENTS TO BUY:
J.E. MILLAIS AND ILLUSTRATED POETRY
IN *ONCE A WEEK*

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After Charles Dickens broke with Bradbury and Evans in 1859 to found *All the Year Round*, Bradbury and Evans began a rival weekly periodical that would sustain their investments as proprietors. To create a market niche, Bradbury and Evans made lavish illustrations central to *Once a Week* yet charged only three pennies an issue, compared to the two-penny, unillustrated *All the Year Round*. The new journal's other market niche was poetry. More particularly, Bradbury and Evans innovated by pairing original poetry with original artwork (rather than, like giftbooks, reprinting poems with new illustrations, or, like annuals from earlier in the century, reproducing well-known paintings for which new poems were written). This double novelty of new poems newly illustrated was central to the inaugural volume of *Once a Week*, when 42 of its 53 original poems were illustrated, some of them by Hablot K. Browne ("Phiz"), John Tenniel, and John Leech, and eight by John Everett Millais. The significance of this innovation becomes clearer when it is recalled that the illustrated *Cornhill Magazine* and evangelical *Good Words* would not debut for another six months, leaving the field momentarily clear for *Once a Week*, and that after they debuted *Cornhill* featured only one illustrated poem and *Good Words* three during the first six months of their runs.¹ At its crucial beginning point, *Once a Week* thus defined its unique place in the market by coupling original poetry and original art.

This doubling of enticements to buy had implications not just for a new commodity in the periodicals market but also for the artist who remains the most significant among the first volume's illustrators. Millais had by 1859 already achieved distinction as a black-and-white artist. In 1855 he was one of three artists whose designs accompanied mostly reprinted or revised poems