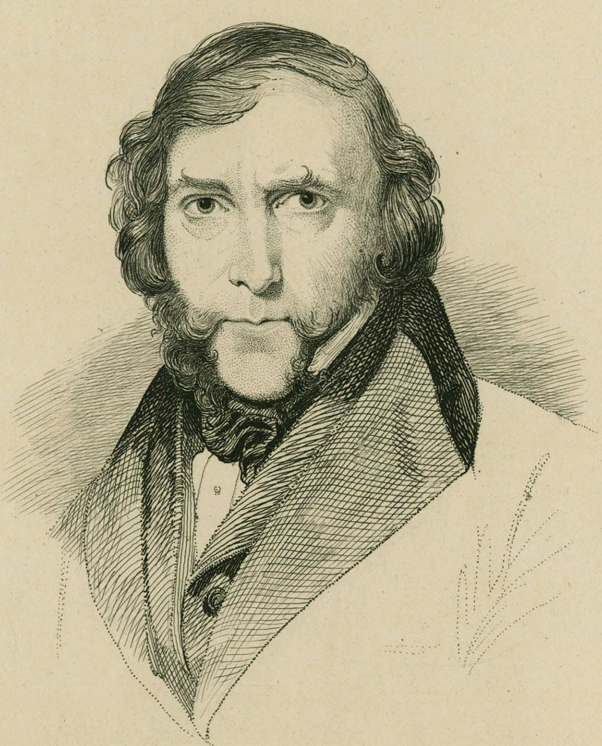

F. W. Pailthorpe fec.t

Geo Cruikshank

Printed by W & C Yates

Cruikshank's marks & Sketch

Rome right and left with a rapid succession of the hardest blows she ever received. Not more formidable was the giant with his ponderous club, in the "Pilgrim's Progress," to those who were journeying to the New Jerusalem, than must be Mr. Rogers with his "Antipopriestian" in hand, to the lady mentioned in Revelation.

IMITATION OF ANCIENT BORDER BALLADS.

[These beautiful lines were for many years privately circulated in manuscript in the South of Scotland, and were by universal consent ascribed to the late James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd. It has since been ascertained beyond all doubt, that they are from the pen of Mr. Gray, of the High School, Edinburgh.]

Lock the door, Larriston, lion of Liddersdale,
Lock the door, Larriston, Louther comes on;
The Armstrongs are flying,
The widows are crying—
The Castleton's burning, and Oliver's gone.

Lock the door, Larriston, high on the weather gleam,
See how the Saxon plumes nod in the sky;
Yeoman and carbineer,
Billman and halberdier—
Fierce is the forage, and far is the cry.

Bewcastle brandishes high his proud scimitar,
Ridley is riding his fleet-footed grey;
Hedley and Howard there,
Wardle and Windermere—
Lock the door, Larriston, hold them at bay.

Why dost thou smile, noble Elliot of Larriston?
Why does the joy-candle beam in thine eye?
Thou bold border ranger,
Beware of thy danger—
Thy foes are relentless, determined, and nigh.

Little know'st thou of the hearts I have hidden here,
Little know'st thou of our moss-trooper's might;
Lindhope and Sorby true,
Sundhope and Milburn too—
Gentle in manner, but lions in fight.

I have Mangerton, Ogilvie, Raeburn and Netherbie,
Old Sim of Whitram, and all his array;
Come all Northumberland,
Reesdale and Cumberland—
Here at the Breaken Tower, end shall the fray.

Scowled the broad sun o'er the links of green Liddersdale,
Red as the beacon-light tipt he the wold;
Many a bold martial eye,
Mirror'd the mountain sky—
Never more oped on his orbit of gold.

Shrill was the bugle's note, dreadful the warrior's shout,
Lances and halberts in splinters were borne;
Helmet and hauberk then,
Braved the claymore in vain—
Buckler and armlet in shivers were shorn.

See how they wave the proud files of the Windermere,
Howard, ah! woe to thy hopes of the day;
Here the wide welkin rend,
While the Scots' shouts ascend—
Elliot of Larriston, Elliot for aye!

SELECTED DEPARTMENT.

MR. GEORGE CRUIKSHANK.

[*From "Portraits of Public Characters," just published, by the Author of "Random Recollections," "The Great Metropolis," &c.*]

Mr. George Cruikshank, the "etcher" or "illustrator"—I believe he dislikes the name of artist, as being too common-place—is one of the most extraordinary men of the present day. He is a genius in the strictest sense of the term, and one of the most original geniuses, too, which the world ever witnessed. Who that has ever glanced at any of his singular etchings, can doubt this? Nothing like them was ever seen before; and nothing like them is to be seen even now. He not only struck out for himself the path which he is now treading with such brilliant success, but no one, among the host of his attempted imitators, has yet made any approach to his "illustrations," either in conception or execution. There is a force of expression and an impress of reality in all his designs, which the most exquisitely-finished engraving cannot equal. You see in his figures the passions which agitate the bosoms, or the joys which rejoice the hearts of men, as clearly as if the living beings, the flesh and blood, actually stared you in the face.

These remarks will, of course, be understood as applying to the more sober and subdued efforts of George Cruikshank—to, in other words, those productions in which his object is, to sympathise with nature and transfer her realities to the copper or steel on which he operates. Most of the achievements, however, of his graver—query, is "graver" the proper word in this case?—

are of a class which purposely outrage nature. They are, if other phraseology be necessary, caricatures of humanity. And in this class of George's efforts, the ideas which enter his mind are inexpressibly droll. They are such as would never occur to the mind of any other man but himself. In one of his humorous conceptions, there is more real humour than you will find in a whole volume of the most successful of our modern humorous authors. But why criticise "designs"—for that is George's favourite word—with which the whole of Europe is not only familiar, but which are universally allowed to be unequalled—nay, unapproached, by any other artist which the present or any previous age has produced?

The name of Cruikshank being but little known beyond the confines of Scotland, the general impression is, that George—he has a decided dislike to the honorary prefix of "Mr."—was ushered into the world in some nook or corner of the land which lies on the other side of the Tweed. No such thing. It is quite true that his father was a Scotchman, having first drawn his breath amid the smoke of "Auld Reekie," but George is a regular Cockney. His father, I should here remark, had a genius for etching, and produced many creditable things in that way. His elder brother, Robert, too, possesses superior talents "in the same line," and manages to earn a livelihood by what he himself calls "handling the tool;" but neither the etchings of the father nor the brother can bear a moment's comparison with those of George.

George Cruikshank began to form and execute his "designs," when a very young man. At first and for some time it was doubtful whether the weakness of his eyesight would not prove a barrier to his attaining any distinction as an artist; if indeed it did not disqualify him altogether from following the bent of his genius. Happily his own fears, and the fears of his friends on this head, proved unfounded; for his optics instead of waxing worse with the progress of years, continued to improve by exercise, until they attained a clearness and power which have rarely been excelled.

The gallery in which George first studied his art, was, if the statement of the author of "Three Courses and a Dessert" may be depended on, the tap-room of a low public house, in one of the dark, dirty, narrow lanes which branch off from one of the great thoroughfares towards the Thames. And where could he have found a more fitting place? Where could he have met with more appropriate characters? for the house was frequented, to the exclusion of everybody else, by Irish coalheavers, hodmen, dustmen, scavengers, and so forth. It was just the place in which to witness the lowest of low life in all its grotesqueness and drollery. And here I may remark, that it was George's etchings illustrative of low life in "Mornings at Bow Street" and "Life in London," that first brought him into general notice.

George commenced his artistical career on the death of his father, on his own account; but soon after entered into partnership with his brother Robert, who had by this time got himself a tolerable name and business as a miniature painter. They worked together very comfortably as caricaturists for several years; but, as the best of friends must part, the brothers dissolved the joint concern, and each started on his own account. George, however, soon got a-head of his brother; but I must not be unmindful of the old adage, touching the odiousness of comparisons.

What chiefly contributed to set George fairly on foot after the dissolution of the partnership, was the series of designs by which he illustrated the memorable political squibs of William Hone.*

With Mr. Hone he had long been on terms not only of intimacy, but of warm friendship. On political subjects, he sympathised to some extent with the author of the "Slap at Slop," though, I believe, without what is now so classically called "going the whole hog" with him. And here let me pause for a moment, to give George Cruikshank his due meed of praise for the honesty of his political views. Not only is he a decided Liberal, but his Liberalism has with him all the authority of a moral law. It is well understood among his private friends, though the public are not acquainted with the fact, that no consideration on earth, pecuniary or otherwise, would prevail on him to caricature,

* I may here mention for the information of those who may be unacquainted with the fact, that Mr. Hone though then the most noted infidel of his day, is now an humble and sincere believer in revealed truth and a member in the Rev. Mr. Binney's chapel, Weigh House, London Bridge. I have rarely met with a man possessing the same high order of conversational powers as Mr. Hone. He is now far advanced in years, and has lately been obliged, through his growing infirmities, to relinquish all sort of labour. I have seldom seen a more venerable-looking man. His mind is calm and tranquil in the prospect of his coming change. He speaks with singular feeling of the contrast between the happiness he has enjoyed since he became a convert to Christianity, and the wretchedness he felt when under the dominion of infidel principles.

however harmlessly, any of those statesmen whose political views he shares, and whose conduct he approves.

How times alter and prices rise! When George commenced his career as artist—I must occasionally use the term, though he does not like it—the charge he was in the habit of making for a large etching, even inclusive of the copper on which it was made, was only one guinea. It may be easily enough imagined that he must have been a man of surpassing industry and surpassing expedition in the "execution" of his "designs," who could have made a fortune at this rate of remuneration. But the inadequacy of the pay was not the only evil with which George Cruikshank had to contend in the earlier part of his professional career. He had in addition to his poor pay, but little to do. Now, as everybody knows, he cannot accomplish a fourth part of the work which is offered to him. The natural result of this superabundance of employment has been, what commercial men would call, "a very material rise in the price." The charge of a guinea, with which he set out on his artistical public journey, has mounted up to ten guineas, as the minimum, for a single plate. For those on which he has expended an unusual quantity of labour, he charges from twelve to fifteen guineas. In fact, his terms are entirely at his own making; and even at any terms his genius could not, for some time past, be said to have been marketable, Mr. Bentley, the bookseller, having contrived to monopolise his professional labours for publications with which he is connected. It is right, however, here to state, that "The Tower of London," now in the course of publication in shilling monthly numbers, and so largely and splendidly illustrated by George Cruikshank, is not Mr. Bentley's property, though issued from New Burlington Street. It is a sort of joint-stock affair, Mr. Ainsworth holding one share, George Cruikshank another, and a third party another; while Mr. Bentley possesses an interest in it as publisher. The production has met with great success, and proves a paying concern to all parties.

George Cruikshank possesses one quality as an artist, which was never, I believe, possessed to the same extent by any other individual belonging to that profession. I allude to his most extraordinary power of recalling to his mind's eye, at long intervals of time, the minutest peculiar features in the countenance of any person he has once seen, or of any scene he has witnessed, with all the vividness and reality of the actual persons or scenes themselves. Every other artist of whom I have heard or read could only render his powers of remembrance in such cases, serviceable to a slight extent; and even this, only in those cases where the persons or things had been familiar to him. In the case of George Cruikshank, a first and mere passing glance of a human being or object is sufficient. He sometimes sits at his window in 23, Myddleton Terrace, Pentonvile, to see the patrons of "Vite Condick Ouse" (White Conduit House,) on their way to that celebrated rendezvous of Radicals, Chartists, Infidels, and "miscellaneous characters;" and it is said, that we are indebted for many of his happiest and most humorous efforts to the passing glances he has thus obtained of the biped oddities who frequent that well-known locality on Sundays, and on other occasions. What may appear perhaps, still more extraordinary is the fact, that, though George Cruikshank plays the pedestrian along the streets with his eye seemingly fixed on vacancy, or as if unconscious that there is a single human being on the pavement but himself, he even then brings home with him the most vivid remembrance of anything droll or ludicrous, whether in the shape of a living humanity, or of any other object which may have crossed his path, or whose path he may have crossed. And not only so, but he will, at a distance of several months, summon again into his mental presence such persons or objects, and transfer them to his copper or steel, with as much fidelity and minute accuracy, as if they had been in his study for days and weeks. To call this singular power an exercise of an extraordinary memory, is not to employ the proper phraseology: it is a species of intuition: it is genius of a peculiar as well as of the highest order; it is something resembling a supernatural gift.

George Cruikshank is a very singular, and in some respects eccentric man, considered simply as what he himself would call a "social being." The ludicrous and extraordinary fancies with which his mind is constantly teeming, often impart a sort of wildness to his look and peculiarity to his manner, which would suffice to frighten from his presence those unacquainted with him. He is often so uncourteous and abrupt in his manner, as to incur the charge of seeming rudeness. I need not say, however, that he is himself unconscious of this. In an article in the last number but one of the "Westminster Review," the writer of a notice of his works complains, that when he sent a messenger to George Cruikshank, informing him that he was preparing a notice of his wonderful pro-

ductions in which every justice would be attempted to be done to his genius, and soliciting the loan of any of those designs which he himself might deem the happiest of his efforts—he treated the messenger with downright rudeness, though George himself may have meant nothing of the kind. The writer in the "Westminster" adds, that all the letters which he addressed to George on the subject—that subject being his own intended praise—failed to procure from him a satisfactory answer.

George Cruikshank is the only man I know moving in what is called a respectable sphere of life, who is a match for the under class of cabmen. Mr. Adolphus, the barrister, as I have shown in my sketch of that gentleman, keeps them in tolerable check, but then, that is by summoning them before the magistrate for their insolence and overcharges. George Cruikshank would scorn to have recourse to such a mode of warfare; he meets them on their own ground, and fights them with their own weapons. The moment they begin to swagger, and bluster, and abuse, he darts a look at them which, in two cases out of three, has the effect of reducing them to a state of tolerable civility; but if looks do not produce the desired results; if the eyes do not operate like oil thrown on the troubled waters, he at once has recourse to the employment of a few words; when in some cases assuming, and in others actually feeling, the "most decided indignation," he talks to them in tones which, aided as his lungs and words are with the fire and fury darting from his eye, and the vehemence of his gesticulation, silence poor Jehu effectually, and as promptly as if some one had suddenly thrust a handkerchief down his throat.

And yet George Cruikshank can make himself exceedingly agreeable, both in conversation and manners, when he is in the humour so to do. I have met with persons in an humbler sphere of life than himself, and whom he had never seen before, who, on their having occasion to call on him at his house, have been loaded with his civilities and attention. I know instances of this kind in which he has spent a considerable time in showing persons who were perfect strangers to him everything curious in the house—he is a collector of curiosities—in which he seemed to be the gratified, instead of the gratifying party.

The actions of George Cruikshank are sometimes as eccentric as his manner is odd. I have heard of his sending a good substantial quill to one of the publishers for whom he used to "design" a great deal, requesting that the bibliopole would forthwith place the quill in one scale, and a quantity of Bank of England "flimsy"—which being translated, means notes—in the other, and then when the scales were even, to send him the "papers;" the meaning of the matter being, that he would give the publisher value for his pounds, by sending him the requisite number of designs as indicated by the pen.

A closing word or two now on the subject of his designs. They are not only the embodiments of the most extraordinary fancies which ever floated or flitted in the human mind—so very extraordinary that a single dozen of the most felicitous of them ought of themselves to be enough to immortalise the man who could transfer them to paper; but they embrace a variety of conception and execution, which, as all coming from the same imagination, literally overwhelm us with surprise. Were a selection to be made from them, and published in monthly parts, at a moderate price, the work would have a sale that would be unexampled in the history of pictorial publications.

George Cruikshank can do what very few artists can accomplish, though the attempt has often been made—namely, take his own likeness. I have seen a small portrait of him, taken by himself, which is a singularly good likeness.

The drollery or eccentricity of George Cruikshank is visible even in his autograph. When he writes on the ordinary-sized letter-paper, it is often from three to four inches in length, and is altogether a comical piece of penmanship. The "k" with which it ends is particularly so. It is so formed as to resemble the profile of a man's countenance, the nose having a peculiar prominency assigned to it.

In person, George Cruikshank is about the middle height, and proportionably made. I have already referred to the peculiar expression of his countenance. Its complexion is something between pale and clear, and his hair, which is tolerably ample, partakes of a lightish hue. His face is of the angular form, and his forehead has a prominently receding shape. He delights in a pair of handsome whiskers, the lower extremities of which are sometimes hidden from the view by the collar of his shirt. He has somewhat of a dandified appearance. He used to be exceedingly partial to Hessian boots. Whether his taste still runs in the same direction I cannot say. His age, if his looks be not deceptive, is somewhere between forty-three and forty-five. — . . .