

## WORKS IN PROGRESS

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Peter Blake's article, "George Augustus Sala: A Visual Apprenticeship," forms part of a larger project that examines the different mediums Sala worked in, including the visual field, the essay, the novel, journalism, and finally pornography.

Richard Bonfiglio's article, "Cosmopolitan Realism: Portable Domesticity in Brontë's Belgian Novels," comprises a chapter within a book project entitled, "Proximate Cosmopolitanism: The Transnational Work of Victorian Domesticity, 1848–1875."

Sean Grass's article, "Commodity and Identity in *Great Expectations*," is taken from his book-in-progress currently entitled, "An Uneasy Trade: Autobiography, Sensation, and the Commodification of Identity in Victorian Narrative."

## GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA: A VISUAL APPRENTICESHIP

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*By Peter Blake*

IN 1859 E. S. DALLAS PROCLAIMED that “The rise of the periodical press is the great event of modern history” (100). At the heart of this critical period in the history of the press was George Augustus Sala. In 1859 he had just started working for the *Daily Telegraph* after serving a seven year journalistic apprenticeship under the tutelage of Charles Dickens on *Household Words*. He was also contributing a series of articles on William Hogarth to William Thackeray’s new shilling monthly periodical, the *Cornhill Magazine*. All three of these publications were pioneering in terms of their style, content, and target audience. It would appear, then, that Sala and his style of writing was “a product of the 1850s,” as Joel H. Wiener described Sala’s friend and fellow journalist, Edmund Yates (261). In fact Sala’s style of writing was a product of the work he had undertaken in the visual field in the 1840s, and he was to be crucial in the transformation of the content and image of journalism well into the 1890s. But we will begin in the 1830s with that most Victorian of images, a sick child struggling to cope with the vicissitudes of modern life.

In 1834 at the age of six years old George Augustus Sala went temporarily blind. His nurse had inadvertently left the doors and windows of the cottage in Edgware he was residing in wide open. Sala had just suffered from an attack of the measles and in his autobiography, written sixty-two years later, he still believed this sudden exposure to the elements led to “a horrible attack of inflammation. I turned purple, I lost my hearing, and, some time afterwards, I lost my sight” (Sala 1895, 11). In fact Sala had suffered from “a known uncommon complication of measles called encephalomyelitis, which is an inflammatory condition of the brain resulting from a reaction to the measles virus” (Beeson and McDermott 201–02). Encephalomyelitis can lead to blindness and “deafness is also a known outcome of such an episode. Recovery may be slow and there may be residual disability” (202). Looking back on the event, Sala was obviously deeply physically scarred by the ordeal. Aside from all the unconventional treatments he was subjected to (having his eyes rubbed with “golden ointment,” his ears pierced and his head shaved), he also overheard his mother’s maid refer to him as “that miserable little object” (Sala 1895, 14–15). Sala recalls that “the contumelious expression of the lady’s maid cut into my heart as though with a sharp knife” (15). But it was

the disorienting mental effect that loss of sight must have had on the young boy's perception of the world around him that would be the most important product of this unfortunate incident.

Blindness in whatever form must have been especially uncomfortable in an early Victorian culture that was just beginning to live in what Jean-Louis Comolli has described as "a sort of frenzy of the visible" due to the increasing "social multiplication of images" (Flint 3). What Comolli specifically had in mind was the growth in access to visual information which the illustrated press and photography brought with them. It could also be argued that Sala's temporary blindness was to be a considerable influence on his relationship with modernity. His "personal" style of writing and his early experiments in illustration all became elements of a modernity that was to reach its culmination in the power of the press during the second half of the nineteenth century. Paul de Man defines modernity as involving "a freshness of perception that results from a slate wiped clear" (De Man 148). De Man believes that "the human figures that epitomise modernity are defined by experiences such as childhood or convalescence" (147). This point is reinforced by John Ruskin who was endeavouring in the 1850s to define the capacities of a new kind of observer: "The whole technical power of painting depends on our recovery of what may be called the *innocence of the eye*; that is to say, of a sort of childish perception of these flat stains of colour, merely as such, without consciousness of what they signify – as a blind man would see them if suddenly gifted with sight" (Crary 95). What we can endeavour to trace is how Sala's long, dark ordeal without sight created within him a freshness of perception which in turn led to a more modern way of looking at the world once the blindness had been lifted.

Throughout the misery of his loss of sight he found sweet relief in the sound of his sister Augusta's voice reading to him from the Bible as well as fairy tales, history books, travel books, biographies, and extracts from the newspapers. It is a poignant image, that of the man later to be dubbed "king of the Journalists," being first introduced to the power of the press by his older sister while he sat blindly and impotently by. Sala himself called these two blind years "sightless" and "profitable." Profitable because "during those dark twenty-four months I learned, thanks to a loving sister who was always reading to me and telling me stories, the greater part of that which was long afterwards to be useful to me as a journalist" (Sala 1871, 18). But the image also provides us with an insight into the gestation of Sala's love affair with the press as well as illustrating his embracing of the new visual culture that was to transform the very same press.

When his sight was finally restored nearly two years later, albeit leaving one eye forever a "duffer," the first task he set himself was to learn the art of writing. This was achieved by assiduously studying the "columns of the *Times* newspaper" (Sala 1895, 18). At the same time his father's solicitor presented him with a folio edition of the *Universal Penman, Engraved by George Bickham, Printed for the Author, and Sent to the Subscribers if Living within the Bills of Mortality* (1733). In his illuminating essay, "Shared Lines: Pen and Pencil as Trace," Gerard Curtis notes that the same George Bickham was responsible for a series of books that by stressing the importance of penmanship and repetitive exercises enabled the student to flourish in calligraphy, and by extension in the devising of pictures and drawing of animals (Curtis 1995, 30). This educational training "stressed . . . the aesthetics of a written graphic line that easily flowed between text and image" (30). Sala informs us that he used to sit on a little low stool with the *Universal Penman* propped up against another book while he copied "not only the different styles of handwriting, but also . . . the emblematic sculptures at the top of the pages . . . like swans, like eagles with outspread wings, like cornucopias,

like the waves of the sea, like ships in full sail, and like festoons of flowers” (Sala 1895, 19). Sala’s education was thus mirroring the growing importance taking place between writing and drawing or the verbal and the visual in the first half of the nineteenth century.

### *Pen and Pencil*

THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE TWO MEDIUMS was being “constantly reinforced in the Victorian city environment” (Curtis 29). The streets, particularly the streets of the metropolis, which were to be Sala’s playground, were being turned “quite literally into environments to be read,” with advertising hoardings, billstickers, signwriting, window displays and “spectacular promotions” (Flint 5). Mass production used visual means to circulate ideas and to stimulate desire, while in the pages of the press the dissemination of engraved and photographic images was being made possible because of the reduced costs of printing technologies. Curtis notes that “the partnership of the textual and the pictorial line, begun in *The Penny Magazine* (first edition March 1832), culminated in the *Illustrated London News* (first edition 1841), one of the great cultural achievements of the Victorian period” (Curtis 29). Kate Flint notes how periodicals like *The Penny Magazine* and the *ILN* “relied as much, if not more, on images as on words in their representation of the world” (Flint 3). Meanwhile, book illustration was reaching a new level of sophistication especially in the works of Charles Dickens and William Thackeray, and Flint notes that the pictorial images did not merely mirror the text but “provided an interpretative gloss” (4). Dickens was notoriously fastidious in his desire to find the best artists possible to deliver representations of his novels, while Thackeray, as an illustrator of his own works, saw the relationship between image and text as a self-conscious dialogue. Judith L. Fisher notes that this is emphasised in the subtitle to *Vanity Fair* (1847): “Pen and Pencil Sketches of English Society” (Fisher 1995 61).<sup>1</sup>

What all this visual stimulus amounted to in terms of the press and book production was an ideological struggle between pen and pencil, the verbal and the visual; a struggle that ultimately culminated in the subordination of image to text. Text and image had come to be seen as compatible, and indeed necessary, in the first half of the nineteenth century. George Cruikshank’s illustration of himself and William Hone, illustrator and writer, sitting at the same table creating their particular brand of art in perfect equality was an example of this. So too was Cruikshank’s title-page for the monthly parts of Dickens’s *Sketches by Boz* (1837), depicting Dickens and Cruikshank, artist and illustrator, rising above the crowds in a hot-air balloon viewing all things together and comprehensively (see Figure 45).

But by the second half of the century book and periodical illustration was not the creative and imaginative force it had been. The focus changed from excitement and sensation to elevation and improvement. Illustrators themselves felt that the imaginative as well as physical contributions they brought to novels were being neglected, and this culminated in Cruikshank’s polemical attacks on Dickens and W. H. Ainsworth.<sup>2</sup> In the twentieth century, book illustration had come to be viewed as being as outmoded as the fiction it attempted to illustrate. The pictorial had largely given way to the photographic, and although large swathes of the press clamoured for engraved images, most of these images were derived from photographs. In his autobiography, the artist William Powell Frith relates how on its appearance photography became known as the “foe-to-graphic” art and how it destroyed “line and all other styles of engraving as effectually as it has put a stop to lithography” (Frith 149). The more “respectable” publications continued to consider the embellishment

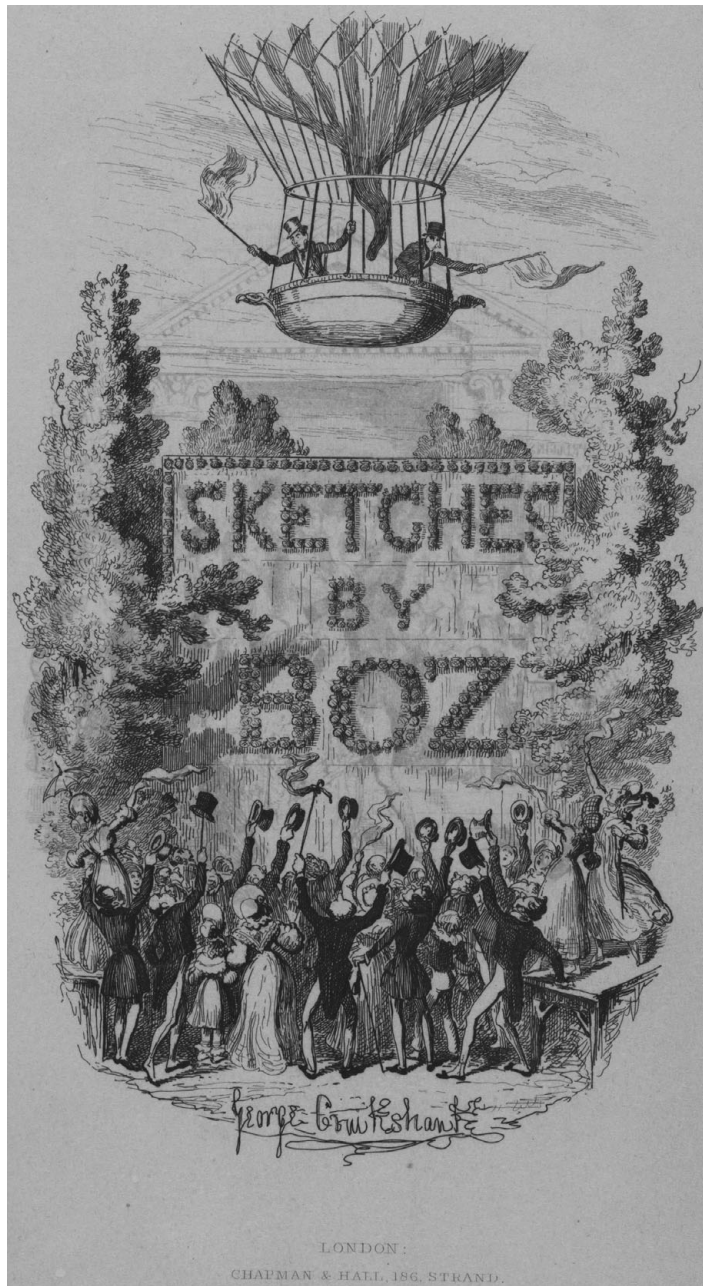


Figure 45. George Cruikshank, title page for Charles Dickens, *Sketches by Boz* (London: John Macrone, 1842). Courtesy of Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

of their pages with these engravings as vulgar and “low-brow.” In terms of visual art the rise of the Pre-Raphaelites had introduced a keener appreciation to the detail of nature and the vividness of colour, and by their engravings for illustrated editions of poems, books, and periodicals had given the art of engraving a new found respectability. But this was offset by the (ironically) incredible popularity of William Powell Frith and his photographic, social panoramas whose dense narrative content placed more importance on “reading” the painting than appreciating its poetic visuality.

What I want to display in this paper is the way that Sala’s early career mirrored this battle between the pen and the pencil. Sala’s immersion into the world of engraving and other visual forms throughout the 1840s meant that he was directly involved in a new form of print that was becoming what Andrew King and John Plunkett describe as “emblematic of the modern” (386). But as public taste changed and the pictorial became less sensational and more improving, and thus subordinate to the textual, Sala turned his back on scene painting, murals, and engraving, and embraced the dominant force in the latter half of the nineteenth century, journalism.

#### *Early Days and Artistic Designs*

SALA’S MOTHER HAD STARTED LIFE as a singing instructor. She made her stage debut at the age of thirty-five singing in an opera at Covent Garden Theatre on 14 December 1827 alongside such luminaries as Madame Vestris.<sup>3</sup> Eleven months later, on 24 November 1828, she gave birth to her last child, George Augustus Henry Fairfield Sala. Sala’s twentieth-century biographer, Ralph Straus, describes Madame Sala as “the queerest mixture of *grande dame* and second-rate artiste: as much at home in a Royal Palace or a duchess’s salon as in a provincial green-room or humble seaside lodgings” (7). The Sala’s class fluidity was to help George Augustus in later life when representing both the “high” and the “low” in his journalism, and would give him a keener appreciation of poverty than many of his peers. His mother’s theatrical background was also a major influence on the young Sala. At the age of nine, while his brothers Frederick, Charles, and Albert were attending college or school, he was given free reign in the Green Room at the St. James’s Theatre. It was there that he first met the man who would have such a huge influence on his writing style, Charles Dickens. His mother was understudy in *The Village Coquettes*, an operetta written by Dickens and composed by John Hullah. Madame Sala and Dickens went on to become good friends and, as Ralph Straus conjectures, “that night, perhaps, there was born in him the desire to become a writer himself” (23). Indeed, Sala talks of the importance of his experiences at the St. James’s as being akin to “the keystone of the arch of my life” and how his meeting with Dickens spurred on his brothers and sisters to dramatise the *Pickwick Papers*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, and *Oliver Twist* (Sala 1895 87).<sup>4</sup>

At the same time as proving their passion for the drama, the family would display their love of the visual by “setting to work copying as well as we could George Cruikshank’s illustrations to ‘Oliver’ and Phiz’s etchings to ‘Pickwick’ and ‘Nickleby’” (89). In an article written by Sala in 1871 he explains how this copying work became an obsession for him, and how whenever a new novel appeared bearing Cruikshank’s illustrations it was immediately bought not for the text but in order to reproduce the latest work from Cruikshank’s pencil (Sala 1871, 547–49). The prime example of this in terms of book publishing was Cruikshank’s work for Pierce Egan’s *Life In London* (1820). Pierce Egan recognised the growing trend

taking place among the young and fashionable for books that illustrated sporting works. Artists like Henry Alken and W. Heath were busy making their name in this field and Egan realised that if Londoners were so eager to read about country and outdoor sports then surely they would devour a work that depicted life in the metropolis. He duly created Corinthian Tom whose existence was solely for the pursuit of adventure whether it be boxing, fencing, or any of the “manly sports.” His friend was the Oxonian Bob Logic, “who left the university with more knowledge of Bacchus and Venus than of mathematics or logic” (Noakes 141). Their boisterous and drunken adventures around town took the publishing world by storm and no less than sixty-five imitations of Egan’s work were duly executed.

But it was clear that it was the pictorial element of the book that captured the public’s imagination, rather than Egan’s spurious attempts to construct a threadbare plot from Cruikshank’s engravings. In fact the text of *Life in London* is one of the best examples of the written word deferring to the visual in the first half of the nineteenth century (Meisel 32).<sup>5</sup> Sala was to work with the elderly Egan many years later on the staff of a Thomas Holt periodical. In his autobiography Sala recalls that “I had drunk deep of his [Egan’s] books from my earliest boyhood. I had copied, in pen and ink, scores of the etchings made by George Cruikshank for the illustration of ‘Life In London’” (Sala 1895, 243). This work not only inculcated Sala’s desire to be an illustrator, it also can be seen as the commencement of his life-long interest in how best to delineate the streets of London.

Sala’s French had been improved during an eighteen months sojourn in Paris. From the age of eleven he was inducted as a member of the Pension Gogo, a large boarding-house in the Rue de Courcelles. He was earmarked as a budding linguist and on his return home to England in 1841 he “not only spoke French like a native but for some little time found it difficult even to think in English” (Straus 30). This time spent in Paris would affect his literary style with its overuse of Gallicisms and the prevailing “polyglot touch to his writings” (30). But it would also affect his illustrative technique with its “rigid and systematic course of instruction in practical geometry” (Sala 1871, 552). The onus on the knowledge of lines and their properties would be invaluable to Sala when it came to perfecting his engraving technique. Sala seems to have flourished in these Parisian surroundings, undoubtedly due to the educational system which was the very opposite of the “muscular Christianity” practised at schools in England. Corporal punishment, a particular *bête noire* of Sala’s, was outlawed, and organised games and sport were kept to a minimum.<sup>6</sup> But despite these early pictorial experiments it seemed as though Sala was also forging a career as a writer. He had written a tragedy in rhyming couplets in French before the age of ten. His *Fredegonde* (1837) contained “a murder in almost every scene. Somebody was poisoned, or burnt, or put to the torture *coram publico* at the end of every act” (Straus 36). Sala recalls in his autobiography that after seeing a French play performed in Dover entitled *La Rose Jaune*, his mother enlisted his brother Frederick, his sister Gussie, and himself to translate and transcribe the play in order to be presented to a new regiment just arrived in the garrison there. Sala “made a fair copy of the piece, and wrote out all the parts, ‘cues’ and all” (Sala 1895, 139). Although no great success, *The Yellow Rose* was to be the first of several collaborations between the Sala clan. It also provided George Augustus with the excitement and novelty of seeing his own words being performed for the first time.

On returning to England he once again took up his pen and at the age of thirteen wrote his first “novel” bearing the “attractive, although not very refined title” of *Jemmy Jenkins; or the Adventures of a Sweep* (138). Ralph Straus relates that Sala was devouring

the Penny Dreadfuls of the period at this time, while Sala himself acknowledges the debt he owed to the “Newgate novels” then in vogue, particularly Edward Bulwer Lytton’s *Paul Clifford* (1830) and *Eugene Aram* (1832) and W. H. Ainsworth’s *Jack Sheppard* (1839), illustrated by George Cruikshank.<sup>7</sup> Sala first came upon that other great influence in his literary career, William Thackeray, at this time in the form of Thackeray’s satire on the Newgate Novel, *Catherine: A Story* (1840). Lytton and Thackeray’s influence could be immediately felt, along with the Penny Dreadfuls, in Sala’s next literary production, the novel *Gerald Moreland; Or, the Forged Will* (1842). The title anticipates Sala’s involvement in the sensation novel with its focus on secrets and textual discrepancy, and its “lurid melodrama is a direct acknowledgement of the ‘lower’ forms of literature he was then reading” (Straus 38). The tale is set in Ireland and is predictably populated with villains who smoke “prime havannahs” and imbibe “strong waters” (39). The Irish caricatures may well have stemmed from Thackeray’s “Irish Sketch-Book of 1842” and his scathing satire in *Punch* entitled “The Battle of Limerick.” Although clearly a juvenile production of only 12,000 words, Straus notes that, “its vocabulary . . . is considerably more extensive than that to be found in most boyish effusions” (38).<sup>8</sup>

It is not particularly surprising that this precocious young boy should have such an extensive vocabulary because at the time he was reading voraciously “not only books, but such newspapers as I could afford to buy out of my pocket-money” (Sala 1895, 157). Although the *Times* was too expensive, Sala “invested every week” in the *Sunday Times* and the *Weekly Despatch*. He was also reading the *Illustrated London News*, the *Penny Magazine*, and the *Saturday Magazine*. These last three papers are of especial importance because of their visual content and the influence their images had on the young George Sala. The *Penny Magazine* had been created by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (SDUK) which had been formed “as an upper-class offshoot of the Mechanics Institutes” (James 1963, 15). The magazine contained some historical and scientific knowledge along with a selection of classical poetry. But far more important to its early readers were the stylish woodcuts that adorned its front cover. Artists like William Harvey, G. Bonner, and Charles and Thomas Landseer contributed drawings that Louis James has described as possessing, “photographic realism and expert finish” (15). First issued in March, 1832, the *Penny Magazine*’s circulation ran to 50,000 in its first week and 200,000 by the end of the year (15). The *Saturday Magazine* was first published 7 June 1832 and was promoted by the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK). It was thus a religious counterpart to the secular *Penny Magazine*. Although the woodcuts were poorer James notes that “the less academic approach [compared to *The Penny Magazine*] made it easier to read,” and circulation settled down to 80,000 a week (16). Although critics have debated whether these magazines were ever bought by the working classes, James notes that the sheer scale of circulation suggests that “it caught the taste of those packing the Athenaeums and similar institutions” (15). Sala tends to corroborate this view later in his life in his travel book *A Journey Due South* (1885). Viewing the St. Cecilia painting by Raphael while at the Accademia di belle arti di Bologna, Sala reflects on the lack of opportunities for the working classes to view the work of the Old Masters: “all that the common people in England knew about Rafaele’s [sic] St. Cecilia would have been from a rude woodcut in the *Penny Magazine*” (Sala 1885 200). Sala provides sufficient evidence that working men read the magazine, and his testimony goes some way to explaining how a dissemination of the visual must have improved the education of the working classes. The effect of these magazines,



then, was to engender a visual culture within the periodical press. These magazines would pave the way for the two giants of illustrative journalism, the *Illustrated London News* and *Punch*, both arriving on the scene in 1841 and both spawning numerous successors all keen to “exploit the attraction of lavish illustrations” (James 1963 36).

In fact it was directly due to the *Illustrated London News* and *Punch* that at the age of fifteen in the year 1843, having just left school with, “an imperfect acquaintance with three or four languages and a capacity for drawing grotesque figures with pen and ink,” Sala decided that he might earn his living as an artist (Sala 1871, 567). Using the influence of one of his mother’s friends, the celebrated oboe player Grattan Cooke who was on familiar terms with all the famous artists of the day, Sala was able to obtain a letter of introduction to the man whose works he had assiduously copied, George Cruikshank, then living at Amwell Street, Pentonville Hill. The star struck young man handed over his pen-and-ink drawings to the fifty-three year old master and proceeded to spend over two hours in his company. Sala tells us that Cruikshank “minutely examined my drawings, pointing out their defects, showing (with a little curved gold pencil) how the faults might be remedied, but giving me words of bright comfort and hope” (Sala 1871, 568). Cruikshank advised the young pupil to turn his attention to etching and drawing on wood and to return to him when he had mastered these processes.

But long before the pen became dominant over the pencil, Sala’s mother, who had not been discouraged by Cruikshank’s failure to take on her son and who had been reading *Punch*, decided that “even John Leech’s graphic humour was not vastly superior to her son’s” (Straus 41). And so with a little help from Charles Dickens, who approved of the young Sala’s portfolio and promised an introduction, the next day they duly met Mark Lemon, then editor of *Punch*. Sala’s memory of the event was not a particularly happy one; “He [Lemon] greeted us with effusive, I may say with unctuous kindness and a whole cascade of smiles. . . . He smiled at my mother; he smiled at me; he smiled at the drawings, and promised to look over them with a view to their favourable consideration” (42). But, as Sala relates, “that dreadful portfolio came back to us in about a week with a polite intimation from Mr. Mark Lemon that he was unfeignedly sorry for his inability to make use of my very promising, but, as yet, immature productions” (Straus 42). Sala was probably conscious that his artistic endeavours were not of the standard required, but what offended him so much was the urbane charm and smoothness of Lemon’s performance. Lemon’s rejection was another blow to his artistic confidence, coming so soon after Cruikshank’s refusal to patronise him. It was also the beginning of a life-long enmity between the staff of *Punch* and George Augustus Sala.

These rejections had made it apparent to Madame Sala that professional tuition was needed if her son was ever to become an artist. In the spring of 1844 Sala signed his first articles, becoming an apprentice to a miniature painter, Carl Schiller, who lived in the then fashionable district of Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square. Sala studied artistic anatomy and perspective and trained in drawing “from the round” or drawing from plaster casts (Sala 1895, 170). The apprenticeship was to have lasted for three years, but in fact lasted only five months. Schiller’s studio was producing fewer and fewer miniatures and the commissions were drying up because of the advent of photography. Sala was thus able to witness at first-hand the effects this new medium was having on the older visual forms. In an article for *All The Year Round* written in 1859 and called “Since This Old Cap Was New,” Sala muses on how the fantastic inventions of his youth have become commonplaces in his middle-age:

Try and remember a street as you saw it in 1829, or, as I saw it in 1839. What strange novelties 1859 offers to our inspection! Look at the photographs. Could we do without photography now? And yet when the gloss was on the cap we could only go, if we wanted our portraits taken, to the gentleman in Soho or Fitzroy Square, who painted us in oils, with the column, the curtain, or the cut orange on the plate. . . . For miniatures, there was the fashionable artist in a shawl dressing-gown and a Turkish cap, who stippled us up in ivory, with pink eyes like a white rabbit or an albino, an elaborate gold chain round our necks, and a highly finished Buhl inkstand with a great quill pen to break the background on the curiously arabesqued table-cloth. . . . Photography has swept all these poor mediocre artists away. (Sala 1862, 232–33)

Sala was a first-hand witness in this sweeping away of the old visual order. He was always conscious of the shifting patterns and forces of modernity on his environment and on his employment. It was these crucial changes in artistic production that would eventually force him to concentrate instead on the written word and seminal events like the demise of the miniature artist influenced his decision to shun the visual. As for his mentor, Schiller, he was forced to move with his family to Liverpool and Sala was left once again wondering at his artistic prospects. Ironically, it was to be the ultimate symbol of modernity that provided Sala with his next career move.

### *Railway Mania*

THE YEAR WAS 1845 AND “RAILWAY MANIA” was gripping the nation. The metropolis was particularly saturated with railway schemes and it was necessary for the most precise maps and plans to be drawn and in some cases lithographed. The extraordinary amount of work required for these schemes meant that, as Jerry White has stated, “every clerk, lithographer and printer in London was seemingly engaged on plans and documents in respect of over 800 railway projects” (White 165). These clerks and printers “remained at work night after night, snatching a hasty repose for a couple of hours on lockers, benches, or the floor” (165). Sala was able to draw on stone “both with chalk and with the pen,” and because of this he was called in to help. Reminiscing many years later he recalled that “I earned from time to time goodly sums by drawing the plans for incipient railways” (Sala 1895, 177). The geometrical work learned in France was proving vital in Sala’s new career and in fact he was remunerated to the princely amount of fifteen shillings an hour for this work, often working without a break for two whole days (Straus 46).

Sala was right to claim that in the year of 1845, “I did exceptionally well,” for along with the high sums of money earned, he also had his first piece of writing published that year (Sala 1895, 177). Motivated by his experience of the railway mania Sala wrote a burlesque satirising the “Railway King,” George Hudson. Entitled “Choo-Lew-Kwang; Or The Stags of Pekin,” it appeared in the *Family Herald* on 13 December 1845. The *Herald* was a popular weekly periodical started by George Biggs in 1842. As its full title indicates, the *Family Herald: Useful Information and Amusement for the Million*, it was a light-hearted production intended for the whole, predominantly working-class, family. It included within its pages fashions, articles on working-class conditions and fiction (James 1976, 46). Louis James describes the journal as “meeting the requirements of the self-respecting family for a magazine which not only could be left about where the children might read it . . . but it could be read aloud at family gatherings” (James 1963, 39). It was also Sala’s first foray in

to the family magazine market, and one that required a certain skill in tailoring one's writing to be accessible to both parents and children. The *Family Herald* eschewed politics and controversy, an editorial from 3 May 1845 on the Maynooth question began, "Our readers need not be at all alarmed at the political appearance of the head of this article. It is not our intention to take the part of a partisan" (Sala 1845). The lightness of tone is epitomised in a leader addressing the vexed question of railway mania in an edition dated 2 August 1845: "Unlike the last '45, which is remarkable only for a national insurrection, the present is characterised by a simultaneous mania for *railing* over the whole of the civilised world" (Sala 1845). It was to this target audience, then, that Sala began his short fictional satire with a warning to those who would blindly invest in the incessant railway schemes:

Ye who listen with credulity to the whisperings of stock-brokers, and peruse with eagerness the prospectuses of railway companies – who expect that provisional committee men will perform their promises, and that the red line on the ordnance map of today will be converted into a *bona fide* railroad tomorrow – listen to the history of Choo-lew-Kwang, the CHINESE STAG. (Sala 1845)

The word "stag" in this context was first defined in the OED from the same year, 1845, as meaning "A person who applies for an allocation of shares in a joint-stock concern solely with a view to selling immediately at a profit."<sup>9</sup> Sala's use of this neologism demonstrates a budding flair for non-conventional language. The tale goes on to document the rise and fall of the avaricious and ambitious Choo-lew-Kwang. When we first encounter him he is in a suicidal state and about to jump off one of Peking's bridges due to the great debts he owes to various creditors in the town. When he hears an English voice uttering the words "By Jove! What a glorious terminus that bridge would make!" he decides to capture the speaker and turn him into the authorities, claiming a reward of five hundred taels, the going price for "securing" foreigners in Peking at the time. His prisoner claims that he can make him five hundred million taels if only he releases him and follows him back to his house. Choo-lew-Kwang's avaricious and suspicious traits get the better of him and back at his house the Englishman asks him, "Would you object, on an emergency, to sign another name instead of your own?" "By, Confucius, no!" cries out Choo-lew-Kwang and the Englishman replies, "Then, by Hudson, you shall make treble the reward. You shall be a chairman – a director, a broker." The pair disappears for six months while they prepare the way for the announcement in the *Pekin Times* that a company has been formed entitled "The Grand Peking and Canton Junction Railway Company, with a branch to Nankin and Yuen-min-Yuen."

The story mirrors the boom and bust taking place in the railway industry in England in the 1840s. Choo-lew-Kwang becomes an Oriental version of the vulgar Yorkshireman George Hudson; "He wore the costliest satins and brocades; he manacled himself with chains and rings, people pointed at him as he drove along, saying – 'there goes Choo-lew-Kwang, the Railway Emperor.'" But when the Englishman mysteriously disappears with half of Choo's fortune, and his wife asks him "what's a pan-nik, because they say there's one in the railway market," it is clear that Choo-lew-Kwang's affairs have gone horribly wrong. "His bankers failed, his brokers bolted; the Peking government refused to sanction his schemes; – to complete his misery, there came in the railway market one General SMASH." At the end of the tale Choo-lew-Kwang cuts a miserable figure "in dank and squalid rags, who loiters about the Peking coachstands and importunes the fares to buy dull pen-knives and mildewy sponges."

In Sala's first published work we can trace much that would occupy him in his future writing. There is a satirical style throughout the piece, probably derived from his reading of *Punch*, and a pre-occupation with the acquisition and loss of wealth. The use of a mock-ancient Chinese background to the story shows the influence of Charles Lamb, whose "pseudo-oriental fantasy" at the beginning of his "A Dissertation on Roast Pig" (1822) comes from *Essays of Elia* (Monsman 75). It also pre-figures Sala's obsession with travel, foreign culture, and foreigners. In attacking such a public figure as Hudson, Sala demonstrates his willingness to hold up to ridicule men in positions of power. In Thomas Carlyle's portrait of Hudson in his *Latter-Day Pamphlets* some five years later (1850), Carlyle scorned the way that a man like Hudson could literally speed up time and fashion himself into some sort of a king; "His 'worth' to railways, I think, will mainly resolve itself into this, that he carried them to completion within the former short limit of time (five years); that he got them made hastily in five years, not deliberately in fifty-five" (Carlyle 227). But unlike Carlyle's doom-laden style, Sala is capable of injecting fun and humour into his writing, along with an early indication of his bohemian tendencies. On the first night that the Englishman and Choo meet they were "quaffing huge jorums out of a tea kettle of a boiling liquid, which his companion called Wiss-ki-tod-hi, which, translated into our vernacular, means, 'Aching bones and headache the next morning.'" There are also puns on London names disguised as Chinese sites, "A magnificent pagoda was erected in Kapell Corte, [Capel Court] where railway business was transacted." Nigel Cross claims that, "the Bohemians were not earnest. They did not engage in the great debates on sanitary reform, democracy, culture and religion. . . . Their achievement was to cater for the flip-side of the Victorian coin – an insatiable craving for humour" (102). Humour would always be a constant in Sala's writing, but as with Dickens and Thackeray it was used for a purpose, more often than not to illustrate the failings of the pompous and the over-reaching in society. Hudson had climbed too far and too soon, and Sala was at hand to burst the bubble of his pomposity.<sup>10</sup>

### *The Man in the Moon*

THE PRINCELY PAY FOR DRAWING UP the plans of railways was too good to last, and with little reaction to his first published work, Sala turned once again to more artistic endeavours. This time his work was to be produced in oil and on linen and would illustrate some of the major events in the history of the Ancient Order of Foresters, a friendly society that had been grown out of the eighteenth-century Royal Foresters Society, and had been set up in 1834. The patron of this work was George Wieland, famous for his pantomimic performances and for owning the White Hart tavern, popular with theatrical folk being situated only a few yards away from the Princess's Theatre, Oxford Street. The Foresters' Lodge held their meetings in one of the rooms of the White Hart and because Charles Sala frequented the watering-hole and introduced his brother George to the proprietor the patronage was secured. Sala soon discovered that the new medium he found himself working in was not an easy one: "I got on very well with the drawing; but when it came to the painting, I was perplexed . . . the surface I was painting on being intended for a transparency, I could not, obviously, 'prime' it, and my colours ran" (Sala 1895, 178). Fortunately help was at hand from the chief scene-painter a few doors down at the Princess's, a Mr. William Roxby Beverley. Beverley advised that the application of turpentine would solve the problem and while in consultation with Sala the lessee and manager of the theatre, Mr. John Medex Maddox, took

an interest in Sala's work and offered him a job as an assistant scene-painter there. Although it was to be another four years and under the aegis of Edmund Kean and not Maddox that the Princess's became involved in "one of the greatest periods of the English theatre," the job was a promising one for a man whose family was so suffused with theatrical blood (Weiner and Hibbert 640).<sup>11</sup> Beverley was to prove himself an excellent mentor teaching his pupil the "mysteries of 'sinks' and 'slides'; mixing the colours and assisting with the 'sets'; modelling masks for the pantomime, and inventing 'effects' for the ballet" (Straus 49). Maddox persuaded Sala to "translate comedies and farces from the French, copy out the parts, draw up the advertisements for the newspapers . . . occasionally hold the prompt-book in the wing, and help the treasurer make out his accounts" (Straus 179). Sala spent thirteen months learning all the different aspects of the theatrical profession and would reflect on these experiences throughout his career. He must have felt at home being backstage again amidst the hurly-burly of opening night and the Green Room, a *mise-en-scène* where all kinds of unsavoury characters mingled with the actors, their friends and the paid-up staff of the theatre. This confluence of these assorted characters must surely have given Sala the impetus and confidence to revel in his own bohemian lifestyle some years later.

In the spring of 1847 Beverley was persuaded by Madame Vestris and C. J. Matthews to work at the Lyceum and Sala followed him, tempted by an increase in salary. But Sala was beginning to have serious doubts as to whether he was ever to excel as a scenic artist. The problem seems to have stemmed from the impairment of his vision as a child, although now it seemed to be manifesting itself in a type of colour blindness. He became known as the "gentleman in black" and Sala declares this was because "I could not be prevented from mixing black with almost every pigment on my palette" (Sala 1895, 194). Despite this impairment and the consequences it would have for his artistic career, Sala was able to join forces with Beverley's chief assistant at the Princess's, a Mr. Wilson, who had been commissioned to produce a panorama of Mexico City. Panoramas were developed and patented in 1787 by Robert Barker and were succeeded by dioramas, the first one appearing in London at Regent's Park in 1823 (Tambling 22). But the large panoramas of world cities were only just becoming popular. Dolf Sternberger posits the suggestion that it was the advent of the railroad that transformed the world, "into a panorama that could be experienced . . . it turned the traveller's eyes outward and offered them the opulent nourishment of ever changing images that were the only possible thing that could be experienced during the journey" (Flint 8). Sternberger's theory of panoramas accentuates the growing desire for visual quantification, especially of the large metropolises, that was suffusing Victorian culture. In 1844 Henry Vizetelly, then editor of the *Pictorial Times*, had commissioned a four metre-long panorama of London at the price of one shilling and sixpence, in order to tempt readers away from the *Illustrated London News*.<sup>12</sup> Sala and Wilson's panorama of the Mexican capital was commissioned because of the unrest then occurring in that city and Sala dutifully "executed all the figures required in the foreground" (Sala 1895, 50). This serious piece of work would be a forerunner to the numerous comic panoramas he would later design and must have excited his interest in foreign travel. But the lack of financial remuneration for the work and his growing disenchantment with scene-painting as a profession meant that once again Sala was in search of a career.

Throughout his time as a miniature painter, railway planner, and scene painter, Sala had managed to "accumulate a rather large collection of pen and ink drawings, mainly of a would-be comic character" (Sala 1895, 195). These caricatures, like the one of J. M. Maddox,

were mainly drawn from the people he had encountered in his working life. He had been told from the dramatist Charles Dance that there was a recently published monthly periodical “of a facetious kind” going by the name of the *Man in the Moon* that specialised in a kind of light literature of which Sala’s caricatures would be the perfect visual foil (195). On the frontispiece to the first collected volume, issued in 1847, it states that the magazine is, “Edited by Albert Smith and Angus Reach . . . With illustrations by Phiz, Kenny Meadows, Hine, Nicholson, Brough, A. Mayhew, Smythe, Cham, and others” (*Man in the Moon*, vol. 1, 1847). That Sala was to become one of the “others” and to join a staff that would include many long time friends and colleagues, came about because of an introduction to Albert Smith whose early career in the medical profession had given way to what Edmund Yates described as that of a “rollicking *litterateur*” (Yates 146). Unlike Sala’s encounter with the “unctuous” Mark Lemon, or maybe because of it, (the *Man in the Moon* was engaged in a war of words with *Punch*) Albert Smith gave Sala “at once remunerative work as a comic draughtsman” (Sala 1895 199). Sala began committing comic drawings to wood which Ebenezer Landells engraved, while Smith, Angus Reach, Shirley Brooks, and Charles Kenney were the main literary contributors. The tone was satirical but in a lighter mode than that of *Punch*. Its form was also lighter than its rival, it was of quarto size and so small that “it could be slipped into any normal-sized pocket” (Straus 51). Its size was intended to replicate one of Bradshaw’s Railway Time-Tables and the text accompanying the first edition stated that it was to be “an Act for the Amalgamation of the Broad Gauge of Fancy, with the Narrow Gauge of Fact, into the Grand General Amusement Junction” (52). Sala would have appreciated the pun, having just worked within the railway system. The opening editorial of the *Man in the Moon* sums up this light style:

In the discussion of such light matters of the day, as may come as a kind of salad to our repast; we shall in dressing them up, at all times use more of the oil than the vinegar, where such dressing is consistent. And for our dessert we shall offer various trifles that may suit all palates, and promote chit-chat and pleasant feelings, which we hold to be the great end of a dessert. (*Man in the Moon*, Vol. 1, 1847, p. 3)

There are jokes liberally spread throughout the pages of the magazine, both verbal as when the text reads “Why are oysters the greatest anomalies in nature? BECAUSE: – They wear a beard, without a chin, And leave their beds to be tucked in,” (4) and verbal and visual such as in an illustration depicting five large-nosed and oleaginous Jews with the legend “Gentlemen of the Jewry” inscribed beneath it (359). There was also a fold-out panorama in each issue, usually illustrated by Cham. The first such panorama is typical, it being titled “The Foreign Gentleman in London; or, the English Adventures of Monsieur Vanille.” It depicted the perils of the metropolis as encountered by a Frenchman newly arrived there. The first scene’s accompanying text not only gently pokes fun at the French but is also a real reminder of the ever-present threat of revolution. “On arriving at his hotel, naturally anxious to look abroad, he puts himself in great peril, by being, for the first time, introduced to an English guillotine window-sash”(10). The illustration shows M. Vanille in the act of decapitation by the afore-mentioned sash window. These comic productions would strongly influence Sala’s own panoramas and his life-long satirical view of foreigners, a view that would become increasingly disturbing in certain aspects. But being on the staff of a comic periodical at the age of nineteen and mixing with some of the more influential journalists of the period was to surpass any formal education that Sala may have received.

The *Man in the Moon's* quarrel with *Punch* stemmed from Albert Smith's time spent on the staff of that magazine three years earlier and being on the receiving end of Douglas Jerrold's "unmerciful jibes." After his departure from *Punch* we are informed by Straus that "nothing amiable was printed about the author of *Mr. Ledbury* [Smith]" (Straus 53). It was natural that *Punch's* rival would submit its own series of heavy blows in the bout and these reached a climax with the appearance of a set of verses titled "Our Flight With Punch" written by Shirley Brooks. Their sarcasm and bite were so finely administered that Mark Lemon himself was heard to utter that "that young man is formidable. He must be sought as an ally" (58). Lemon's utterance was prescient for Brooks actually succeeded him in the editorial chair some years later. It would have been no surprise to Sala, then, when he was called upon to provide a series of caricatures for a full-fledged attack on *Punch* not from the *Man in the Moon* but from an individual by the name of Alfred Bunn. Bunn had been the manager of Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres and in this position he had "come in for rather more than his fair share of contemptuous attack on the part of *Punch*" (58). In the *Punch* of 3 October 1847 an article entitled "Bunn's Prose," which mocked him for his "promotion" to manager of the Surrey Theatre and derided the advertisement of his intentions, was the final straw for Bunn who determined that *Punch* should not get away with such merciless castigation. Albert Smith helped Bunn by introducing him to Ebenezer Landells, who had also been "thrown overboard" by *Punch*, and then Sala's name was touted around as being a possible illustrator (Straus 58). In the second week of November 1847 this collaboration produced "A Word with Punch," a small booklet selling at 3d with the words "No. 1 – (to be continued if necessary)" in the top left hand corner. The frontispiece looked as if it could have been a number of *Punch* itself (see Figure 46).

Executed by Sala, his design was, in Straus's opinion, "one of the cleverest he ever drew," and certainly its satirical intention hit the mark (60). The main frame of the design shows a dejected Punch in the pillory while his dog, Toby, swings from a gibbet behind him. Around Punch's feet, in various stages of dissolution, lie the erstwhile *Punch* contributors all represented in puppet form. Thackeray lolls lazily against a drum, Gilbert a Beckett lies face down on the floor, Jerrold is a wasp staring at a dropped baton and Mark Lemon dressed as a pot-boy desperately tries to reach a pint pot. The text inside the pictorial frontispiece is no less savage an attack on *Punch's* contributors. Bunn asks if he is considered to be a public character then writers should also be considered in the public eye and as such they are fair game for any criticism they may warrant:

There will be, of course, a terrible outcry at my impertinence and audacity, in mentioning gentlemen who write for the press by their names; and I have already received many assurances that I shall be tomahawked in every journal, for daring to allude to them at all (especially in *The Times*, upon which Mr. a Beckett has some employment). . . . To my reply, that they have invariably mentioned *me* by name, I am told, that is all fair play, because I am a public character!!! Pray, Punch, are not these, your puppets, public characters? Have they not acted in public, laboured for the public, catered for the public? Has not Douglas Jerrold been hissed off the stage by the public? . . . and, as to Mark Lemon, there can be no doubt of his being a public character, for he sometimes since kept a *public* HOUSE!!! All ceremony, therefore, is at an end between us. (Bunn 1847, 3)

The savage satire worked in that the *Punch* team refused to reply to the provocation and never again insulted Bunn. For Sala it was an education in the literary backbiting and in-fighting

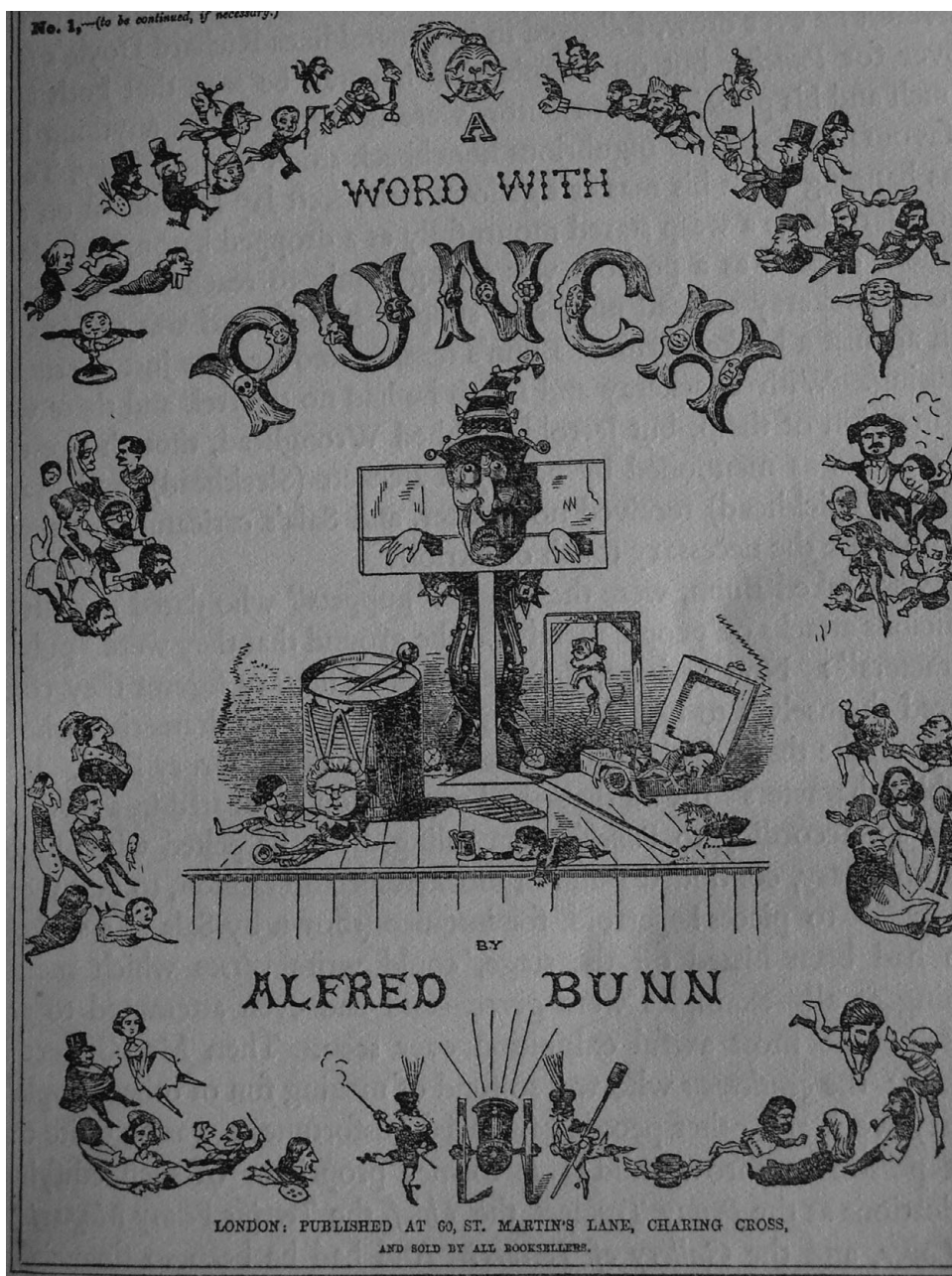


Figure 46. G. A. Sala, frontispiece for Alfred Bunn, *A Word With Punch* (London: St. Martin's Lane, Charing Cross, 1847). Courtesy of the British Library.



that would dog him throughout his own career. It is interesting to note that the man who would be on the brunt of such severe and malignant attacks from the likes of the *Saturday Review* and Matthew Arnold was involved in just such an attack himself as a young man. But his collaboration with Bunn, along with his work for the *Man in the Moon*, would ensure his blacklisting from the pages of *Punch*.

But producing satiric attacks in three-penny booklets and comic sketches in a monthly periodical did not pay well enough to justify caricature as a sole income. Fortunately for Sala, Albert Smith also gave him work illustrating a portion of the many “shilling illustrated books of wiggeries” he was then writing. Published by David Bogue of Fleet Street they had titles like “Physiologies of Evening Parties,” and the “Natural Histories of The Gent,” “The Medical Student,” and “The Ballet Girl” (Sala 1895, 204). Although Archibald Henning contributed most of the drawings for these works, Sala was able to assist him and earn some much needed extra income along the way. With these productions Smith helped popularize the form of the *physiologie* in England. Catherine Waters notes how the genre “involves the application of a quasi-scientific method of categorizing types to the humorous study of social life” (Waters 2009, 310). Influenced by Louis-Sebastien Mercier’s *Le Tableau de Paris* (1776–88), an arrangement of “eyewitness accounts of Parisian coffee-houses, changing fashions, old clothes markets, bill-stickers and so on,” they would become indispensable for the kinds of studies of life that Sala would undertake in his future career as a journalist (310). Waters notes how Sala mentions his ambition to “bring Mercer’s *Tableau* . . . down to the present day” in his preface to *Paris Herself Again* (1878–79). Indeed throughout his peripatetic perambulations across London and Paris for *Household Words*, in the description of the characters in his novels and in the representation of “types” of foreigners in his travel journalism, Sala would prove the debt he owed to his early work for Smith.

Another important early influence on his style came about due to Ebenezer Landells, the man responsible for the cuts in the *Man in the Moon* and *A Word with Punch*. He had just launched what Sala described as “the first illustrated newspaper specially intended for the edification of the fair sex” (Sala 1895, 211). This was the *Lady’s Newspaper*, and Sala was commissioned to design some of the patterns and fashion-plates featured in the paper. The time spent behind the scenes of the Princess’s Theatre as a wardrobe stocktaker must have helped Sala immeasurably when trying to reproduce the dresses and gowns of ladies of high fashion.

Working for *The Lady’s Newspaper* also contributed to Sala’s life-long obsession with “collecting fashions and fashion-books” (Sala 1895, 211) and Catherine Waters notes how this obsession “elicits Sala’s self-confessed literary craze for costume and fashion” (Waters 310). Sala would put his experience as a connoisseur of fashion and clothes to good use throughout his career, whether describing the distinctive national dress of the “Ischvostchik” in Russia or the highly fashionable costumes of one of the scheming, criminal female characters in his novels.

At the opposite end of the illustrative scale from these handsome designs for ladies’ dresses were the cheap and vulgar illustrations to be found in the large numbers of novels published in weekly numbers and known as “Penny Dreadfuls.” The chief publisher among these productions was Edward Lloyd, who had already had a string of successes in the cheap fiction market with *Lives of the Most Notorious Highwaymen* and *The Calendar of Horrors*, both from 1836 (Sutherland 380). He was also instrumental in founding a series of “People’s” papers beginning with the *Penny Sunday Times and People’s Gazette* in 1840 and

a companion sheet in 1841 entitled the *Companion to Lloyd's Penny Sunday Times* (James 1963, 35). Aimed at an artisan readership their staple fodder was sensational reportage of murders and other criminal activities. It was these Sunday papers that *Punch* satirised in "Useful Sunday Literature for the Masses" (*Punch* 17 (1849) 116), in which a bedraggled father reads aloud to his seven young children how a man has been arrested for slashing the throats of three children and battering a baby's head with a poker (King and Plunkett 346–47)!

After the incredible success of the *Illustrated London News*, Lloyd hastily issued *Lloyd's Illustrated London Newspaper*. Sala was introduced to Lloyd's chief wood-engraver, Edward Calvert, whose duty was to engrave the designs required and then employ draughtsmen like Sala to draw the same design on the wood-blocks. Sala's knowledge of fashion and period costume was especially welcome by Calvert because many of the titles he was engraving were to do with murder and assassination set in the historic past. In 1847, the year Sala began working for Lloyd and Calvert, it has been reckoned that Lloyd published thirty-eight penny-issue novels (38). Sala recollected that one of these productions was, "a romance of the days of Edward IV, and it bore the attractive title of *The Heads of the Headless*" (Sala 1895, 209). Lloyd demonstrated his awareness of the market he was catering for in what Sala called "a mild letter of remonstrance." In it he demanded of Sala more vigour in his drawings and in particular he wrote, "the eyes must be larger; and there must be more blood - much more blood!" (209) (see Figure 47).

Lloyd realised the element of sensation needed to satisfy his consumers and it was to be a lesson well learnt for the young artist who would one day with his pen so passionately defend sensation fiction. Louis James explains how the illustrations complement the text and stresses the debt owed to the theatre in these novels:

These woodcuts and the stories perfectly supplement each other. The outstretched hands point to the power of destiny, the falling curve of the heroine's body illustrates her helpless innocence, the villain's enormous eyes – Sala as a woodcutter was told to make them larger – show devouring lust. They convey the conventional poses of both actor and stock characters, designed to evoke a crude but precise response from the back of the 'gods', or a semi-literate reader struggling to understand the story. The illustrations were more than ornament. Today, when we are deluged with pictorial art, it requires an effort of imagination to see the impact of pictures on early nineteenth-century readers. (James 1963, 150)

It was the imagined impact on semi-literate readers of productions like this that turned the tide of illustrative fashion away from the sensational and towards the improvement of the reader/viewer. Once again Sala was able to witness at first hand this emblem of modernity. He also realised that this was exploitation of the working-class fiction buyer. The demand for visual accompaniment to text was high but Lloyd was content with producing the cheapest and shoddiest illustrations in order to satisfy his consumers. While Sala's experiences in the theatre must have helped him with the melodramatic poses of the figures he was illustrating, he must have realised that these crude woodcuts could never satisfy his artistic ambitions. Calvert's only assistant wood-engraver was a George Armstrong, now an old man but at one time apprentice to Thomas Bewick, father of modern English wood-engravings.<sup>13</sup> It must have been incredibly poignant to witness this once revered engraver reduced to churning out lurid, sensational images of murderers and other criminals. Money was cited as the reason



Figure 47. Anon. [G. A. Sala], *The Heads of the Headless* (Lloyd and Calvert, 1847). Reproduced in Ralph Straus, *Sala: Portrait of an Eminent Victorian* (London: Constable & Co., 1942), 56.

for the low standard of the designs and Sala wrote that, “poor old Mr. Armstrong, who in his day had executed work of the highest kind, was fain to be also a ‘scauper’ and a slasher, because the engraver could not afford to pay him a sufficient sum for really artistic work” (Sala 1895, 210). Sala quickly grew dissatisfied with his work for Lloyd and Calvert, and

although he always favoured the sensational over the commonplace, he realised that taste was changing and a new “improving” style of illustration was being developed. But as ever with Sala at this period of his life, whenever disenchantment occurred in one profession, there was always another to fall back on. Once again, Sala returned to the pen.

*University of Brighton*

## NOTES

1. For more on Dickens and illustration see Richard L. Stein, “Dickens and Illustration” in John O. Jordan (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Dickens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) pp. 167–88.
2. See George Cruikshank’s *The Artist and The Author* (1871) and Robert L. Patten, *George Cruikshank’s Life, Times and Art*, 2 vols (Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, 1992–96) for more on this attack on writers.
3. Mme. Sala sung with Paganini at his two Brighton concerts in 1831. The critic of the *Brighton Herald*, Dec. 10 1831, gives a very unfavourable report on Mme. Sala’s performance: “were we to refrain from noticing Mme Sala’s vocalism, it would perhaps be less flattering to that lady than an expression of our opinion. At no time, we believe, has a very high estimate been taken of her talents; but her efforts in the present instance were of unqualified mediocrity. Her coadjutor Piozzi’s professional reputation will never, we apprehend, be found very difficult to sustain.” Letter from Miss Geraldine de Courcy to undisclosed recipient. Brighton Pamphlet Box 21c in Brighton History Centre archives.
4. For more on the influence of a theatrical background, albeit from a female perspective, see Claire Tomalin, *The Invisible Woman: The Story of Nelly Ternan and Charles Dickens* (London: Penguin, 1991).
5. Returning to the book many years later in his *Roundabout Papers* (1860–61), Thackeray declared that “the pictures are as fine as ever . . . but the style of writing, I own, was not pleasing to me; I even thought it a little vulgar . . . and as a description of the sports and amusements of London in the ancient times, more curious than amusing” (Meisel 140).
6. Note that despite this avowed aversion to corporal punishment Sala would develop a penchant for flagellation, culminating in a pornographic text entitled *The Mysteries of Verbena House* (1882) and co-written with James Campbell Reddie.
7. Sala claimed that the “Ride to York” passage described in Ainsworth’s novel *Rockwood* (1834) was “as a piece of word-painting rarely, if ever, surpassed in the prose of the Victorian era” (S. M. Ellis, *W. Harrison Ainsworth and His Friends*. Vol. 1. London: John Lane, note to p. 238).
8. For more on stereotypical representations of the Irish in the nineteenth century see Leon Litvack, “Ireland and the Irish” in Paul Schlicke (ed.) *The Oxford Reader’s Companion to Dickens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
9. The OED’s first example of the word is taken from Thackeray in *Punch* 1845 IX. 191 “All the Stags in Capel Court.”
10. Like Dickens, Sala was ambiguous to the railways as standing for a symbol of industrial progress. Just as Dickens had criticised the destruction of neighbourhoods in the face of the relentless tide of railway building in *Dombey and Son* (1846–48) and in articles like “An Unsettled Neighbourhood” from *Household Words* (11 Nov. 1854), Sala was keenly aware that the railways have forever changed the face of the metropolis. But like Dickens he was also in awe of the sheer speed the railways have brought to everyday life, especially the journey time from London to his beloved Brighton, and just as

with the advent of photography, Sala realises that rail travel has now become a quotidian experience for most people:

Since this old cap was new, I have torn down to Brighton by the express in sixty minutes. I have written a column of close 'copy' in a *coupe*; I have been swept over the houses on the Surrey side and have seen what the good folks of Vauxhall and Lambeth have had for dinner. I have seen a queen making her progress by railway, and judges going circuit, and coffins going to the cemetery, and murderers going to be hanged, likewise, per rail. Who takes any account of these wonders? We are used to them. (Sala 1862, 229)

Sala would return to the theme of railway speculation again and again in his career. In one of his early panoramas entitled "Hail, Rain, Steam and Speed" (1850), a reference to J. M. W. Turner's painting from 1844 *Rain, Steam, Speed*, under the heading of "RAILWAY MORALS," there is the instruction, "Above all, never to be a railway shareholder if you wish to avoid . . ." and this is followed by the caricature of an obviously forlorn man incarcerated behind bars in what we are informed is . . . "Whitecross St." Built in 1813–15 as a prison for debtors, Whitecross Street held 500 prisoners before being demolished in 1870. It stood on the site where the Barbican now stands. Sala's caricature is a stark warning to those still tempted to invest in the railways.

11. Maddox was eager for Sala to undertake other tasks in recompense for his fifteen shillings a week salary. In his autobiography Sala noted in typically generous (or "whitewashed") fashion that, "although very good-natured, he had a frugal mind" (Sala 1895, 179) Sala's great friend, Edmund Yates recalls that, "stories of his wonderful fertility of resource in saving money were rife in theatrical circles." Yates described Maddox as possessing, "a short stout figure and very marked features, with a cigar always protruding from under his prominent nose, he was a constant source of delight to the caricaturists" (Yates 130). In fact Sala was to portray him in just such a caricature with these features strongly conspicuous (reprinted in Straus, 1942, p. 55).
12. Text accompanying exhibit at Maps of London exhibition, British Library (12/02/07).
13. For more on Bewick see Jenny Uglow, *Nature's Engraver; A Life Of Thomas Bewick* (London: Faber & Faber, 2006) p. 321.

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