

**THOMAS BEWICK
AND HIS PUPILS; PP.
50-86**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649307166

Thomas Bewick and his pupils; pp. 50-86 by Austin Dobson

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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AUSTIN DOBSON

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“He would often professe that to observe the grasse, herbs, corne, trees, cattile, earth, waters, heavens, any of the Creatures, and to contemplate their Natures, orders, qualities, vertues, uses, etc., was ever to him the greatest mirth, content, and recreation that could be: and this he held to his dying day.”

LIFE AND DEATH OF BISHOP ANDREWES, 1650.

THOMAS BEWICK

AND HIS PUPILS

BY

AUSTIN DOBSON



WITH NINETY-FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS

BOSTON

JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY

1884

TO

W. J. LINTON,

ENGRAVER AND POET,

THE STEADFAST APOSTLE OF BEWICK'S "WHITE LINE,"

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.

CHAPTER V.

"GAY'S FABLES," "SELECT FABLES."

FOR many years after the termination of his apprenticeship, Bewick appears, by his own account, to have been fully employed upon the business of the firm, which consisted chiefly of work for silversmiths, watchmakers, and hardwaremen. Much time was also occupied in seal-cutting; but engraving on wood, as is clear from the small number of acknowledged works between 1774 and 1784, must have been the exception rather than the rule of his trade. Among the books belonging to this date is the well-known "Tommy Trip's History of Beasts and Birds," published by Saint in 1779, which, owing to the fact that it is supposed by Atkinson and others to have prompted the "Quadrupeds" and "Birds,"

has acquired a factitious reputation with collectors. A limited reprint of this was issued by Mr. Pearson in 1867. It is also probable that Bewick executed a few cuts when in London for Hodgson's "Hieroglyphick Bible," which appeared about this time. This again was a book for children with emblematical cuts of select scenes from the Old and New Testaments. Then there is the "Lilliputian Magazine," the letterpress of which Mr. Pearson boldly attributes to Goldsmith. It was published in 1783 by T. Carnan, the successor of Goldsmith's friend Newbery, but had probably been printed earlier by Saint at Newcastle.¹ The two volumes, however, with which we are most concerned during this period are the "Fables by

¹ The following passage respecting "Tommy Trip" and Goldsmith is taken from one of Miss Jane Bewick's letters to Mr. Edward Ford, of Old Park, Enfield, and has been kindly communicated to us by that gentleman:—

"My sister lately drew my attention to the passage you quote in the 'Vicar of Wakefield' (Goldsmith's charming little puff [in chapter xviii.] of his children's books, published by Newbery), 'Tommy Trip and his Dog Jowler,' and 'Woglog the Giant.' Well do I remember the little book—amongst many charming Newberys still preserved, that treasure has disappeared. We had it before we could read. The book contained many cuts of animals (a crocodile among the rest), the descriptions of which

the late Mr. Gay" of 1779, and the "Select Fables" of 1784, both of which were printed and published by Saint. In these, rather than the foregoing, interesting as those are from the collector's point of view, Bewick's work began its true development, and they alone constitute his real beginnings.

The illustrations to "Gay's Fables," it has been stated, had been begun during Bewick's apprenticeship. In advertising them Saint referred to the "finely engraved frontispiece" and "very curious cuts," some of which had "gained the premium of the Royal Society [*sic*]." The

were probably compiled by Goldsmith. The cuts must have been executed while my father was in London.

"I have often heard my father tell that, when he was very young, a stranger travelling on foot, and dressed in a sky-blue coat, with immensely large cuffs, called at Cherryburn, where he had some refreshment. Whilst resting, he conversed with my grandmother, and when he left she observed to her sister Hannah: 'That is no common person.' The impression made on the child (Goldsmith was sure to have noticed the little black-eyed boy) was so strong that the first time he saw a portrait of Goldsmith he felt certain that it was the poet himself who had called in. One may suppose the fare offered to have been eggs and bacon with home-brewed birch-wine, which my grandmother used to make by tapping the birch trees."