POINTS OF HUMOUR; ILLUSTRATED BY THE DESIGNS OF GEORGE CRUIKSHANK

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649541218

Points of Humour; Illustrated by the Designs of George Cruikshank by C. Baldwyn

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

www.triestepublishing.com

C. BALDWYN

POINTS OF HUMOUR; ILLUSTRATED BY THE DESIGNS OF GEORGE CRUIKSHANK

Trieste

POINTS

OF

HUMOUR;

Illustrated

BY THE

DESIGNS OF GEORGE CRUIKSHANK.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY C. BALDWYN, NEWGATE STREET.

1823.

LONDON:
Printed by D. S. Maurice, Fenchurch Street.

PREFACE.

It will be readily perceived that the literary part of this work is of humble pretensions. One object alone has been aimed at and it is hoped with success—to select or to invent those incidents which might be interesting or amusing in themselves, while they afforded scope for the peculiar talents of the artist who adorns them with his designs. The selection was more difficult than may at first sight be supposed. It is true, there is no paucity of subjects of wit and humour, but he who will take the trouble to examine them, will find how few are adapted for pictorial representation. No artist can embody a point of wit, and the humour of many of the most laughable stories would vanish at the touch of the pencil of the most ingenious designer in the world. Those ludicrous subjects only which are rich in the humour of *situation* are calculated for graphic illustration. To prove the following anecdotes are not deficient in this respect, no other appeal is necessary than to the plates themselves. Look at the breadth of the humour, the point of the situation, the selection of the figures, the action and its accompaniments, and deny (without a laugh on the face) that this portion of the work answers the end in view. In all this the writer or compiler, or whatever he may be called, claims little

merit. That the whole effect is comic, that the persons are ludicrous, and engaged in laughable groups and surrounded with objects which tend to broaden the grin, all this, and a thousand times more, belongs to Mr. Cruikshank;—the writer only claims the merit of having suggested to him the materials.

Some of the TEN POINTS, now submitted to the public, arise out of a reprint of that admirable piece of humour, the JOLLY BEGGARS of Burns;—A part of his works almost unknown to the public, in consequence of the scrupulousness of the poet's biographer and editor, who withheld them from the world. Lest we however should incur the charge, which Dr. Currie apprehended, we beg leave to prefix the observations on this subject by the first literary character in the kingdom, Sir Walter Scott, as they appeared in the *Quarterly Review*.

"Yet applauding, as we do most highly applaud, the leading principles of Dr. Currie's selection, we are aware that they sometimes led him into fastidious and over-delicate rejection of the bard's most spirited and happy effusions. A thin octavo, published at Glasgow in 1801, under the title of 'Poems ascribed to Robert Burns, the Ayrshire bard,' furnishes valuable proofs of this assertion; it contains, among a good deal of rubbish, some of his most brilliant poetry. A cantata, in particular, called *The Jolly Beggars*, for humorous description and nice discrimination of character, is inferior to no poem of the same length in the whole range of English poetry. The scene, indeed, is laid in the very lowest department of low life, the actors being a set of strolling vagrants, met to carouse, and barter their rags and plunder for liquor in a hedge ale-house. Yet even in describing the movements of such a group, the

native taste of the poet has never suffered his pen to slide into any thing coarse or disgusting. The extravagant glee and outrageous frolic of the beggars are ridiculously contrasted with their maimed limbs, rags, and crutches—the sordid and squalid circumstances of their appearance are judiciously thrown into the shade. Nor is the art of the poet less conspicuous in the individual figures, than in the general mass. The festive vagrants are distinguished from each other by personal appearance and character, as much as any fortuitous assembly in the higher orders of life. The group, it must be observed, is of Scottish character, and doubtless our northern brethren are more familiar with its varieties than we are; yet the distinctions are too well marked to escape even the southern. The most prominent persons are a maimed soldier and his female companion, a hackneyed follower of the camp, a stroller, late the consort of an highland ketterer, or sturdy beggar—'but weary fa' the waefu' woodie!'—Being now at liberty, she becomes an object of rivalry between a 'pigmy scraper with his fiddle' and a strolling tinker. The latter, a desperate bandit, like most of his profession, terrifies the musician out of the field, and is preferred by the damsel of course. A wandering ballad-singer, with a brace of doxies, is last introduced upon the stage. Each of these mendicants sings a song in character, and such a collection of humorous lyrics, connected by vivid poetical description, is not perhaps to be paralleled in the English language. The ditty chaunted by the Ballad Singer is certainly far superior to any thing in the *Beggar's Opera*, where alone we could expect to find its parallel.

"We are at a loss to conceive any good reason why Dr. Currie did not introduce this singular and humor-