

La Lettre et la ligne II – CEEI -Thalim 2019-2020

Lignes et points :
Illustration, impressionnisme littéraire et procédés

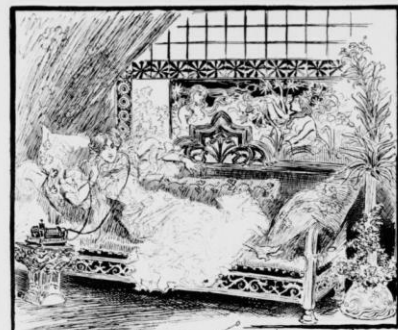
Sophie Aymes

Université de Bourgogne (EA 4182)

15 décembre 2020

Octave Uzanne et Albert Robida

Contes pour les Bibliophiles (1895)



Contes pour les
Bibliophiles

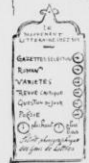
Suggestions d'avenir

LA

FIN DES LIVRES

Il fut, il y a deux ans environ, à Londres, que cette question de la fin des Livres et de leur complète transformation fut agitée en un petit groupe de Bibliophiles et d'érudits, au cours d'une soirée mémorable dont le souvenir restera sûrement gravé dans la mémoire de chacun des assistants.

Nous nous étions rencontrés, ce soir-là, — qui se trouvait être un des vendredis scientifiques de la Royale Institution, — à la conférence de sir William Thompson, l'éminent physicien anglais, professeur à l'Uni-



LOISIRS LITTÉRAIRES AU XX^e SIÈCLE

LA FIN DES LIVRES.

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stupétière. Je veux parler du Kinetoscope de Thomas Edison, dont j'ai pu voir les premiers essais à Orange-Park dans une récente visite faite au grand électricien près de New-Jersey.

« Le Kinetoscope enregistrera le mouvement de l'homme et le reproduira exactement comme le phonographe enregistre et reproduit sa voix. D'ici cinq ou six ans, vous apprécierez cette merveille basée sur la composition des gestes par la photographie instantanée; le kintographe

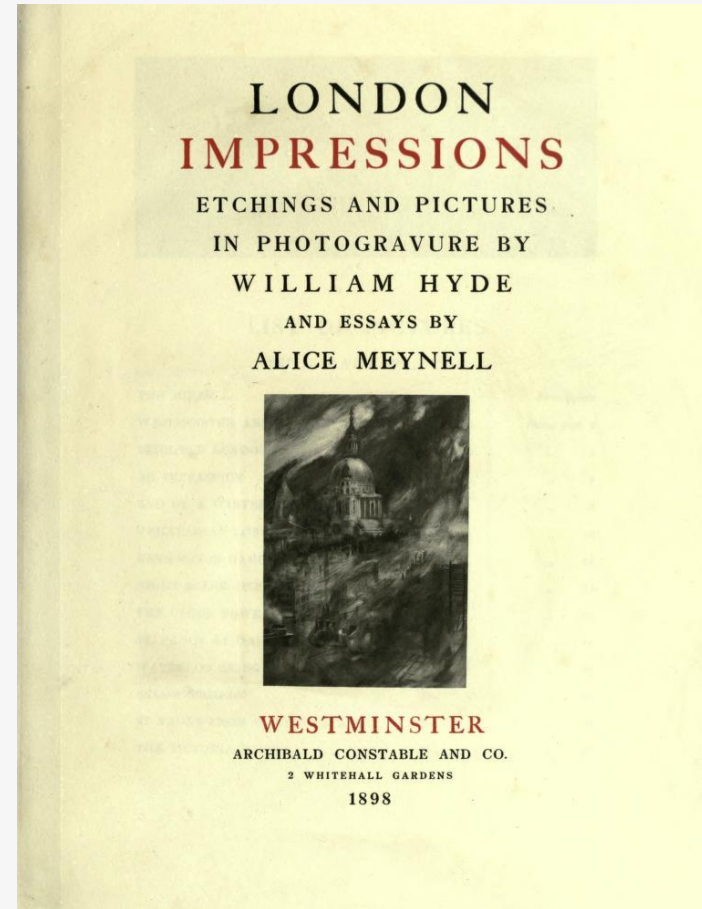
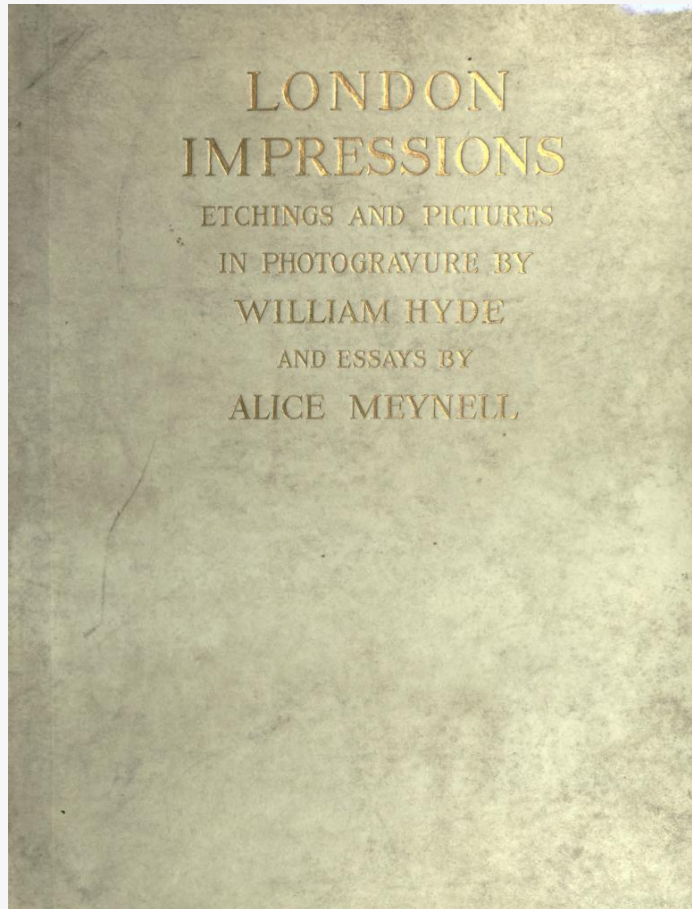


sera donc l'illustrateur de la vie quotidienne. Non seulement nous le verrons fonctionner dans sa boîte, mais, par un système de glaces et de réflecteurs, toutes les figures actives qu'il représentera en photo-chromos pourront être projetées dans nos demeures sur de grands tableaux blancs. Les scènes des ouvrages fictifs et des romans d'aventures seront mimées par des figurants bien costumés et aussitôt reproduites; nous aurons également, comme complément au journal phonographique, les illustrations de chaque jour, des *Tranches de vie* active, comme nous disons aujourd'hui, fraîchement découpées dans l'actualité. On verra les pièces nouvelles, le théâtre et les acteurs aussi facilement qu'on les entend déjà chez soi; on aura le portrait et, mieux encore, la physionomie mouvante des hommes célèbres, des criminels, des jolies femmes; ce ne sera pas de l'art, il est vrai, mais au moins ce sera la vie elle-même, naturelle, sans maquillage, nette, précise et le plus souvent même cruelle.

Je vous répète, mes amis, que je ne conçois ici que d'incertaines possibilités. — Qui peut se vanter, en effet, parmi les plus subtils d'entre nous de prophétiser avec sagesse? Les écrivains de ce temps, disait déjà

London Impressions (Constable, 1898)

<https://archive.org/details/londonimpression00meynuoft/mode/2up>



'An Impression' et 'The Embankment at Night' (*London Impressions*, face p. 6 ; p. 9)



The Embankment at Night.

THE CLIMATE OF SMOKE

It is some little treason to a natural storm to admire too eagerly the mimic wrack and menace of the paltry tempest of the smoke. Only by acknowledging the climate of London to be more than half an artificial climate, and by treating our own handiwork—the sky of our manufacture—with a relative contempt, are we excused for thinking the effects in any sense beautiful. Let us avoid serious words of description. The whirls of floating smoke that darken the sunset are 'lurid' to no very grand purpose; and the threat from even twice as many kitchen fires never would be terrible. It is a tale signifying nothing. Let us grant that there is now and then an effect of handsome grime, but there is no system in this scenery of smoke. What form seems at times to declare itself is bestowed by the light. The sun rules from a centre, whatever the circumference be made of—mist from mountain heights or vapour from that series of successive fleeting solitudes, the ocean, or refuse from a million fireplaces; and from this reigning centre his rays seem to compel a kind of organism. There is no chance-medley where he rules, because of his long, distributed lights, and straight, infallible, divergent shadows that pick off the points and pinnacles of a thousand distances. The lowering sun will not permit the smoke to show so shapeless, so lifeless, so unbounded as it is; he takes his place in the middle of a wheel, and commands at any rate a mechanical order.

Otherwise, and without a sun lowered into your picture, the smoke-mingled sky is the most unplanned in the world. It has no confederacy, and no direction. Nothing leads, and there are no figures, no troops, no companies; there is no history, nor approach. The smoke is helpless. It is perpetually subject to gravitation; no wind makes it buoyant, and no electric impetus lifts it against a wind. It constantly and

Aubrey Beardsley
Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur*
(J.M. Dent, 1894)

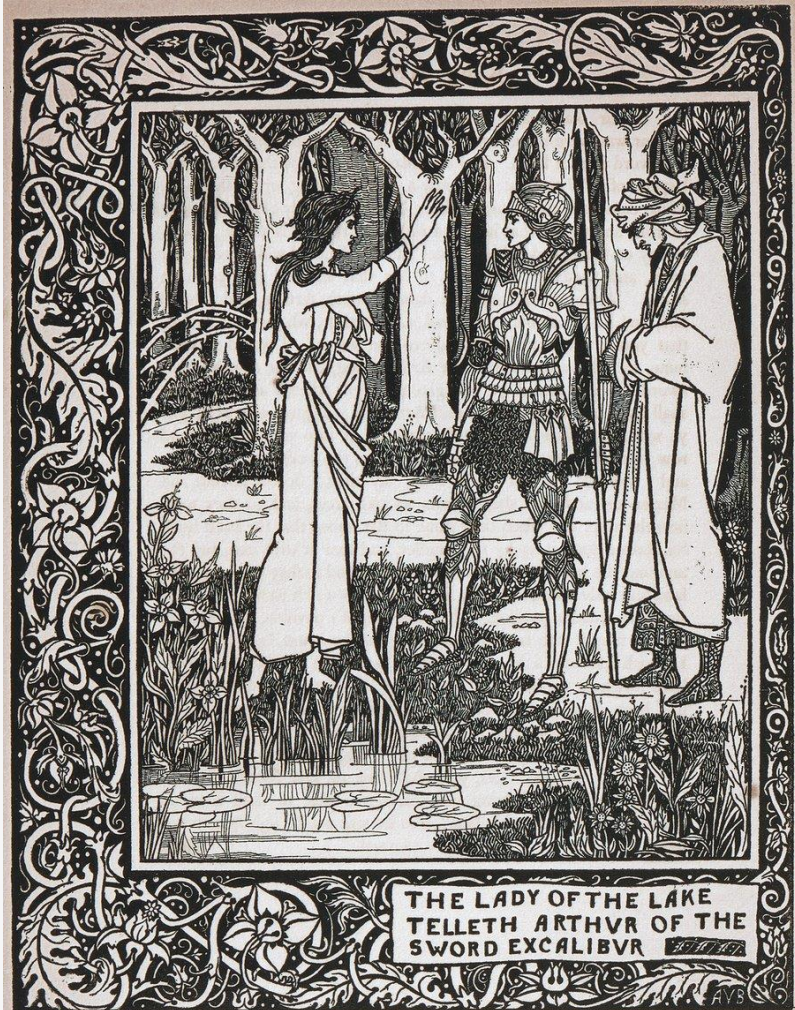
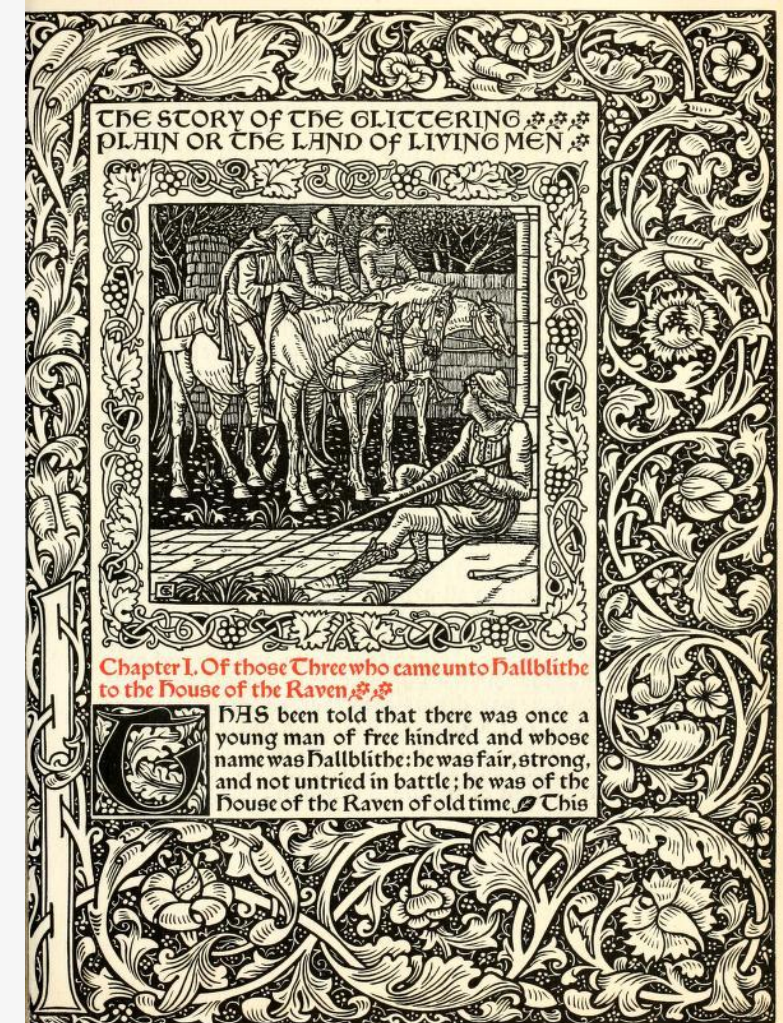


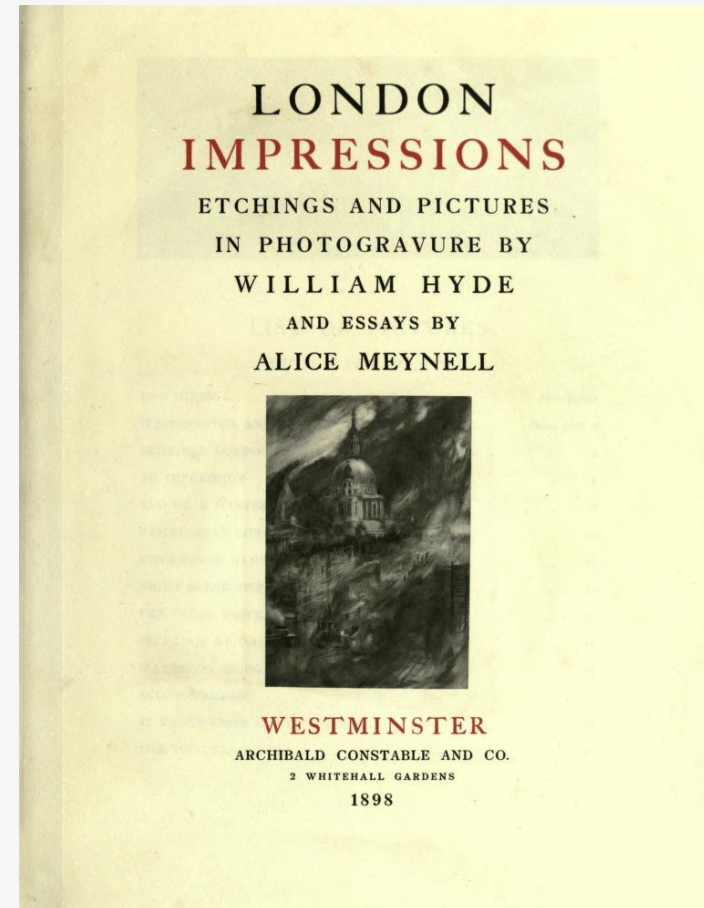
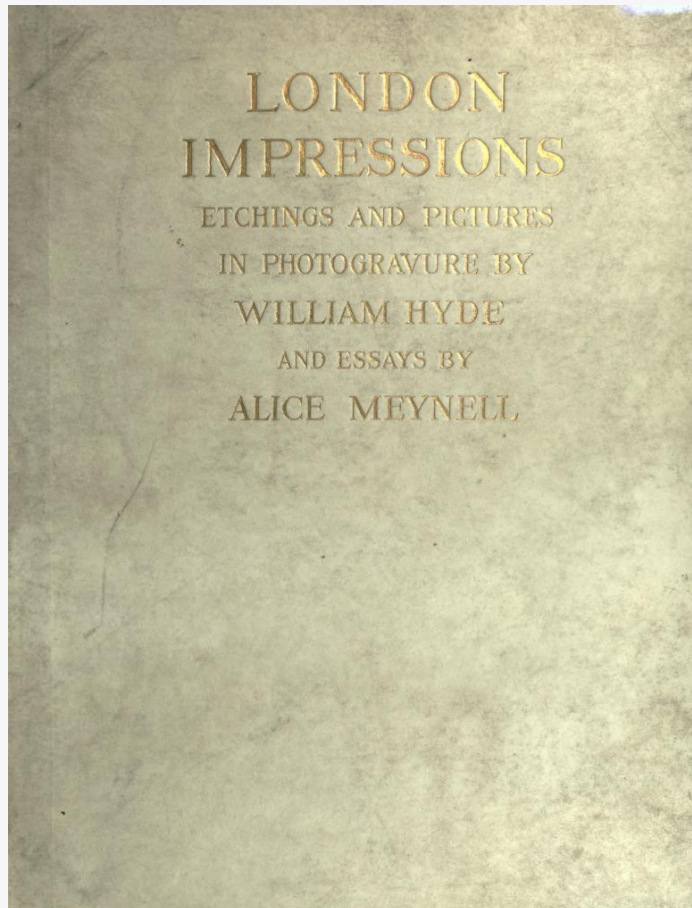
Illustration d'Aubrey Beardsley pour *La Morte Darthur* de Thomas Malory, Londres, J.M. Dent & Co., 1893-1894.
BnF, Réserve des livres rares, RES 4-NFR-108.

William Morris & Walter Crane
The Story of the Glittering Plain
(Kelmscott Press, 1894)



London Impressions (Constable, 1898)

<https://archive.org/details/londonimpression00meynuoft/mode/2up>



Alice Meynell (1874-1922)

Pall Mall Gazette
'The Wares of Autolycus'

John Singer Sargent
(1894)



William Hyde (1857-1925)

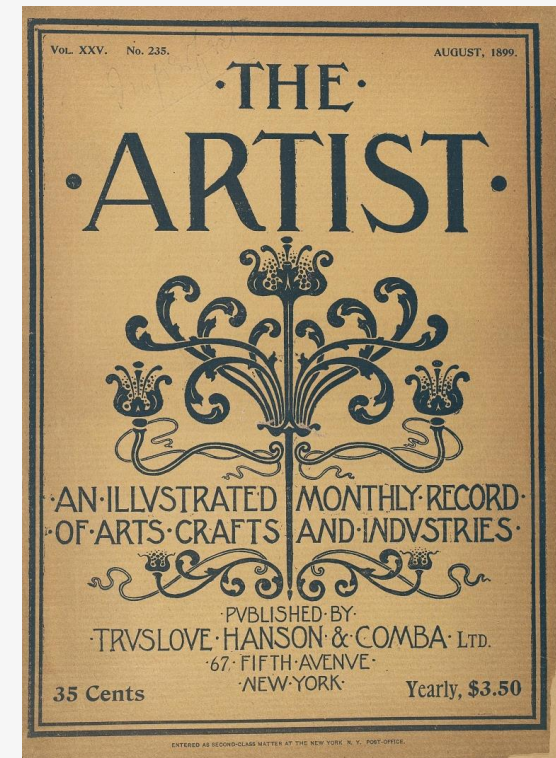
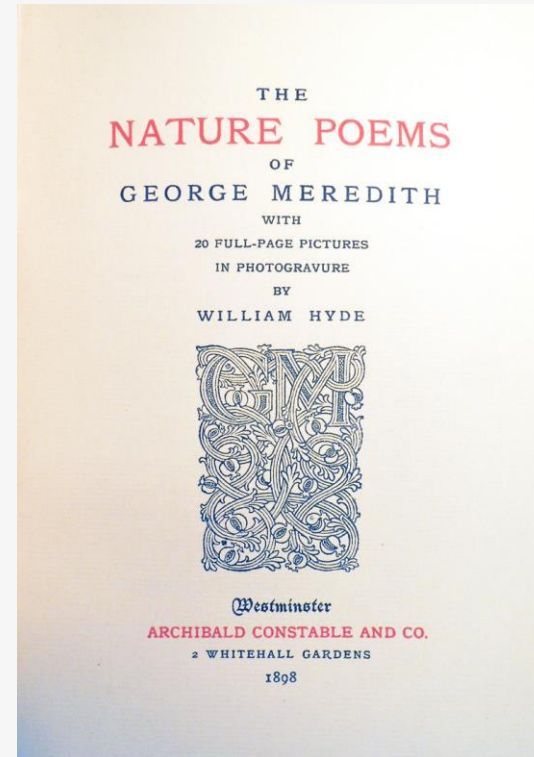
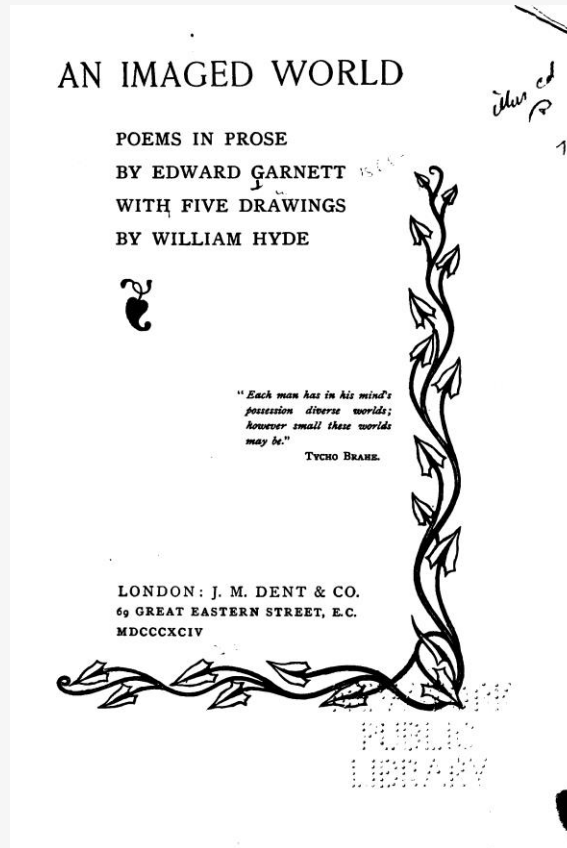


A.C. Curtis (1904)

Jerrold N. Moore, *The Green Fuse* (2007)

Frederick Evans The Linked Ring

Ford Madox Ford (Hueffer)



Arthur Rackham

J.M. Barrie, *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1906)



‘Away he flew’

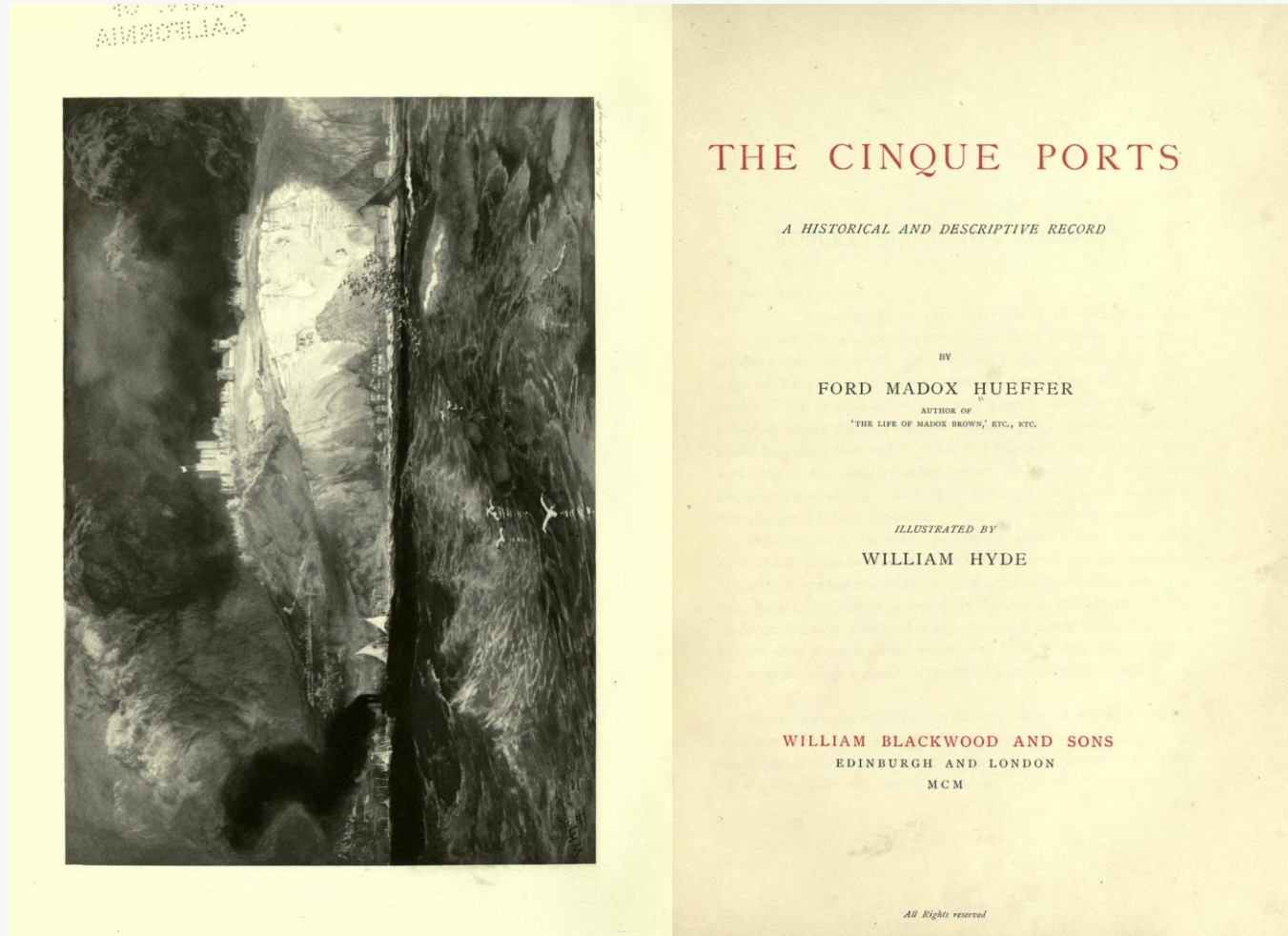


‘Put his strange case in front of old Solomon Caw’

Ford Madox Ford

The Cinque Ports (Blackwood, 1900)

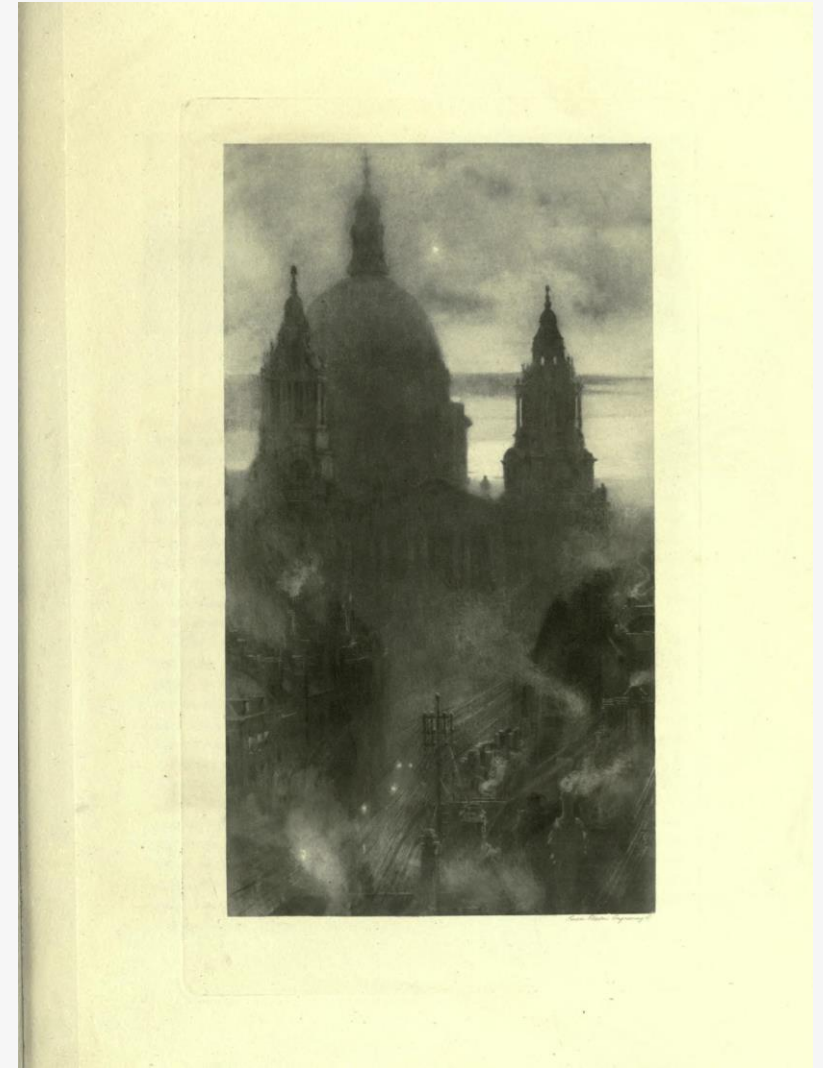
The Soul of London (1905)



‘Utilitarian London’ (face p. 11)



‘St Paul’s at Dawn’ (face p. 19)



But the roads are all expressive of **this energy of flight from a centre**. They are, as it were, signs of a perpetual explosion ; they are the fringe of the *mêlée*, the shooting, streaming outbreaks of **the photosphere of London**.

(‘The Roads’, p. 27)

Those who do not like the name of mud should see **how these lights are answered by the floor of mud in simple silver and steel**. Twice a day the motion of the wave is there, twice a day the still shore. With that cradling change go **the changes** of the boats and barges at the wharves. All is life, but there is no colour, except where you very dimly perceive **that a sail is red as the sails are on the Adriatic**. **It is a view to teach painting, to teach seeing**. (‘Chelsea Reach’, p. 17)

The swarthiness, the darkness of the colour **a brownish grey** is to be insisted upon ; yet to none but a careless eye does the lower Thames seem all brown and grey. **The dull hues are shot with one single prevailing colour red**. Innumerable red-tiled roofs are seen **as the turn of the river** shows their dusky sides [...] and everywhere are **the red sails of Venice**, dyed in the self- same dye, only differently lighted. (‘Below Bridge’, p. 23)



James McNeill Whistler

Nocturne: Blue and Silver, Battersea Reach (1870-1875)

‘The Nerves of London’ (p. 6)

THE EFFECT OF LONDON

It is no wonder if the painters of London are somewhat eager for the help of smoke. A simple glance at the streets—and the glance that would appreciate so mingled a sight as that of London must be simple—shows you that the detail of our streets is

the closest detail in the world. Nowhere else do the houses, the carriages, and the people, all alike, wear the minute spots of hard colour that make a London street by bright daylight look so sharp and small. In cities abroad, for instance, you find some blank spaces of wall on the fronts of the houses, narrow spaces in the north, but wider and wider as you go south. In other cities is here and there a closing of the eyelids with a smoothing of the faces of the streets; here alone the unshuttered windows are set close together; the street glances and chatters with the false vivacity of these perpetual windows. Shops and windows run into rows all but touching one another, or what interval there might have been betwixt is, by the care of architects, in some manner harassed and beset.

Add to this the black garments of the crowd, which make every man conspicuous in the light, and the abrupt and minute patches of white—exceedingly pure white of sharp shapes and angles—scattered throughout the drifting and intercrossing multitude. The white of a footman's shirt, the white of the collars of innumerable men, the white letters of advertisements, the white of the label at the back of cabs and hansoms, and many and many another little square, triangle, and line of white, are visible to the utmost distances. They have an emphasis that is never softened; nothing,



The Nerves of London.

‘The Climate of Smoke’

Only by acknowledging the climate of London to be more than half an artificial climate, and by treating **our own handiwork – the sky of our manufacture** – with a relative contempt, are we excused for thinking the effects in any sense beautiful. (p. 9)

There is another effect of the London climate, besides the effect of sky scenery, and that is **the local colour** wherewith the characteristic smoke, mingled with a little rain to make **a general water-colour**, has painted the surfaces of the town in variants of black.

[...] too much of the surface of London is still the work of **that dashing impressionist, the climate**. (p. 11)

‘Waterloo Bridge’ (face p. 20)



‘Below Bridge’ (face p. 22)

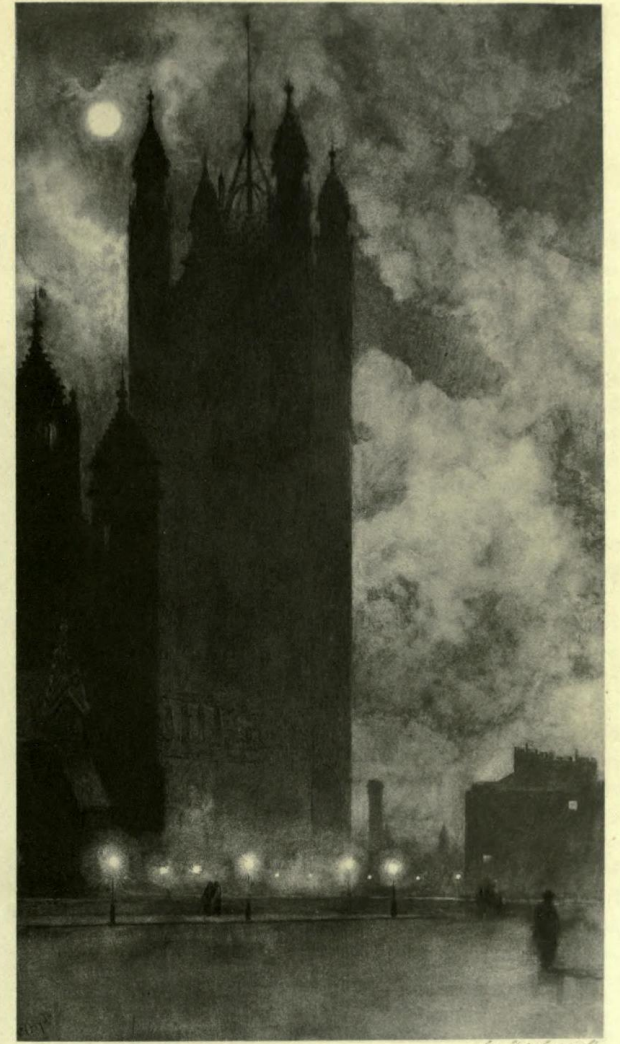


‘Kensington Gardens’
(face p. 12)

‘Victoria Tower’ (face p. 28)

As to these lights of London lamps, their beauty, which is so great, seems to depend almost entirely upon the sky. See them as they glow in the long unequal curves that follow the subtly misleading directions of the streets of London, and in all their brilliancy they make but a common show pretty enough, but not beautiful. But let any lamp or line of lamps come into visible relation with the sky, any sky, whether a mysterious night-sky softly embrowned, or a night-sky swept pure by a west wind, or the most ordinary grey of any average evening and the lamp has indescribable beauties.

(‘The Trees’ p. 14)



Swan Electric Engraving Company

Joseph Wilson Swan (1828-1914) et Donald Cameron Swan (1863-1951)

1881 : Swan Electric Light Company

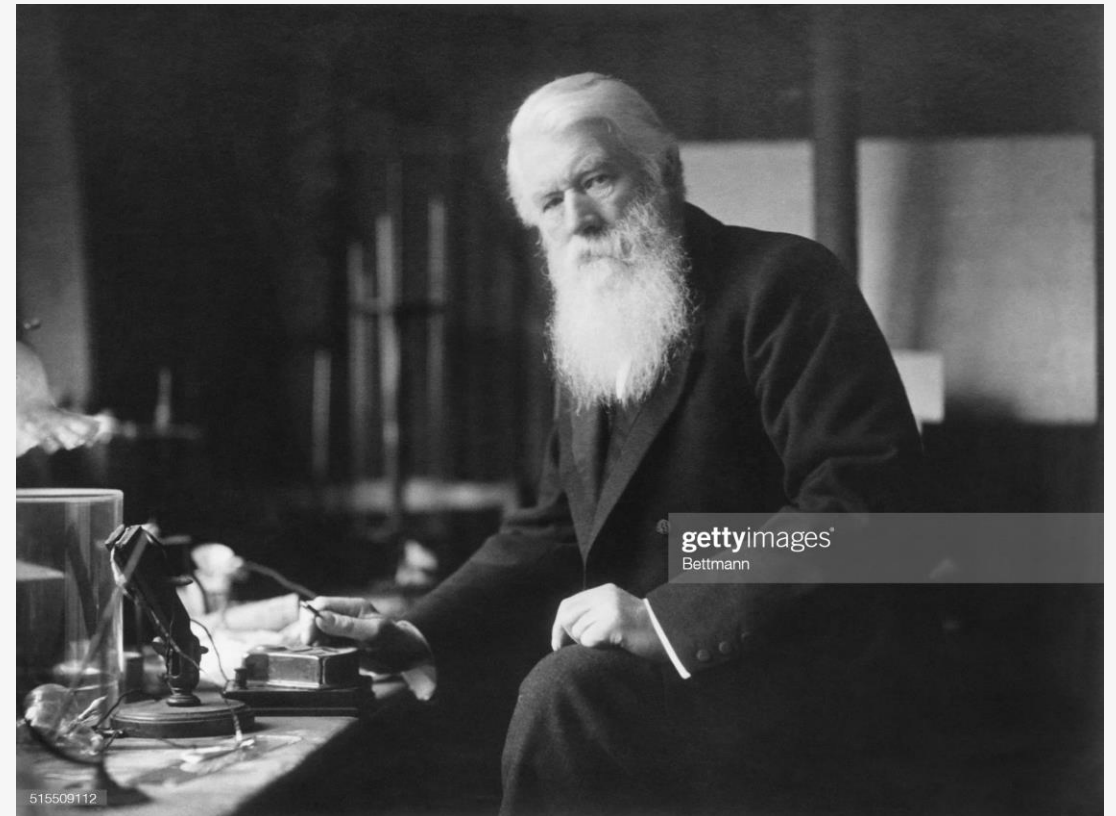
1883 : Edison & Swan United Electric Light Cy

1885 : Swan Engraving Company

1893 : Swan Electric Engraving Company

(avec Thomas Annan)

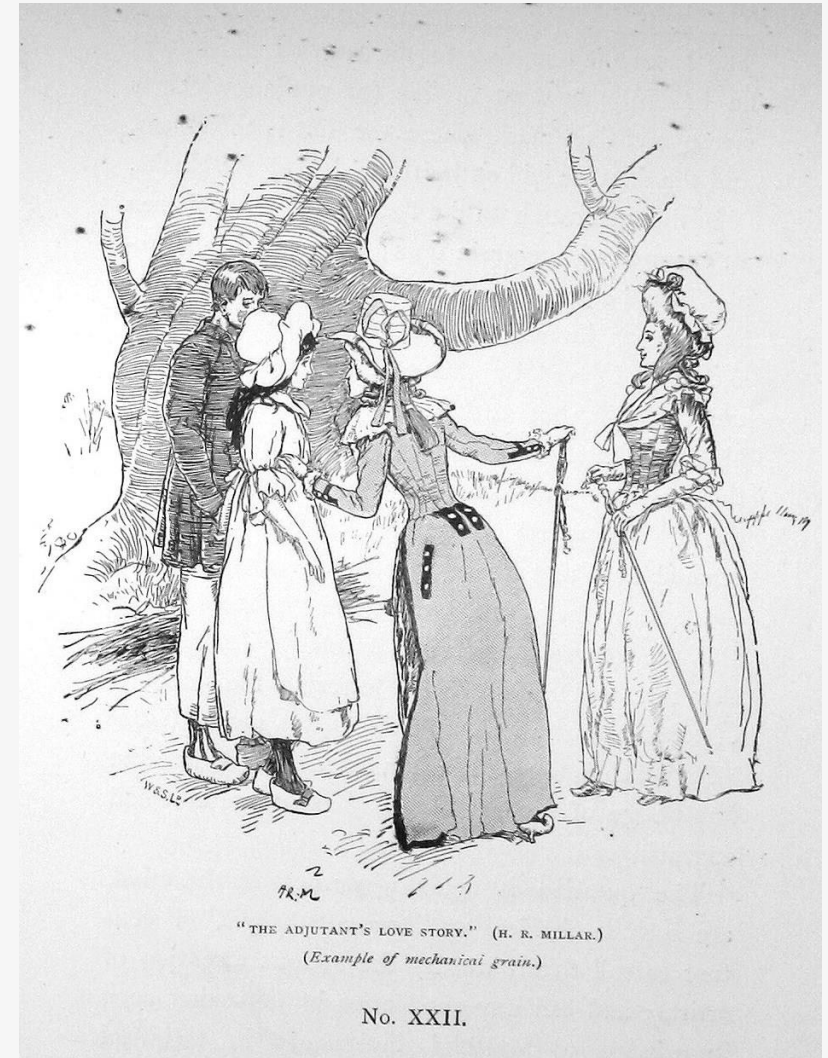
(Frederic Ives)



Henry Blackburn, *The Art of Illustration* (1894)



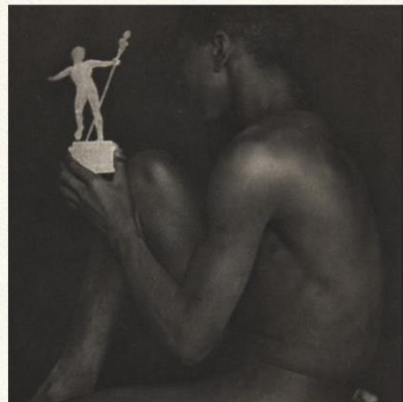
Procédé ben-day
(*mechanical dots*)



Collection Highlights

These short passages offer insight into the historical relevance and aesthetic considerations of works in the collection.

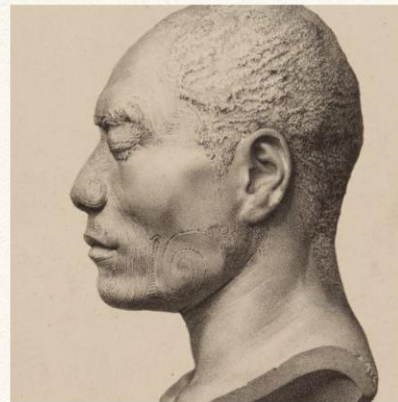
[ALL HIGHLIGHTS](#) [ARTIST](#) [BOOKS](#) [EXPERIMENTS](#) [JOURNALS](#) [PORTFOLIOS](#) [PRINTS](#)



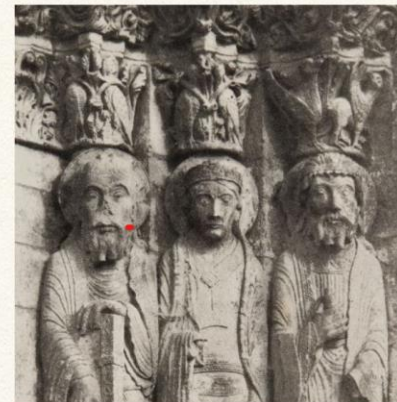
Ebony and Ivory, Holland Day and Stieglitz
1899



Baldus's Louvre Photogravures
1869



Early Rendering of the
Daguerreotype for Science
1843



Lemercier and Lithophotography
1852



Abelardo Morell's Water / Fern / Ink
2019



‘Westminster’ (p. 31)



Herbert Denison, *Treatise on Photogravure in Intaglio by the Talbot-Klic Process* (1895)

Philip Hamerton, *The Graphic Arts* (1882)

‘The River’
Frontispice

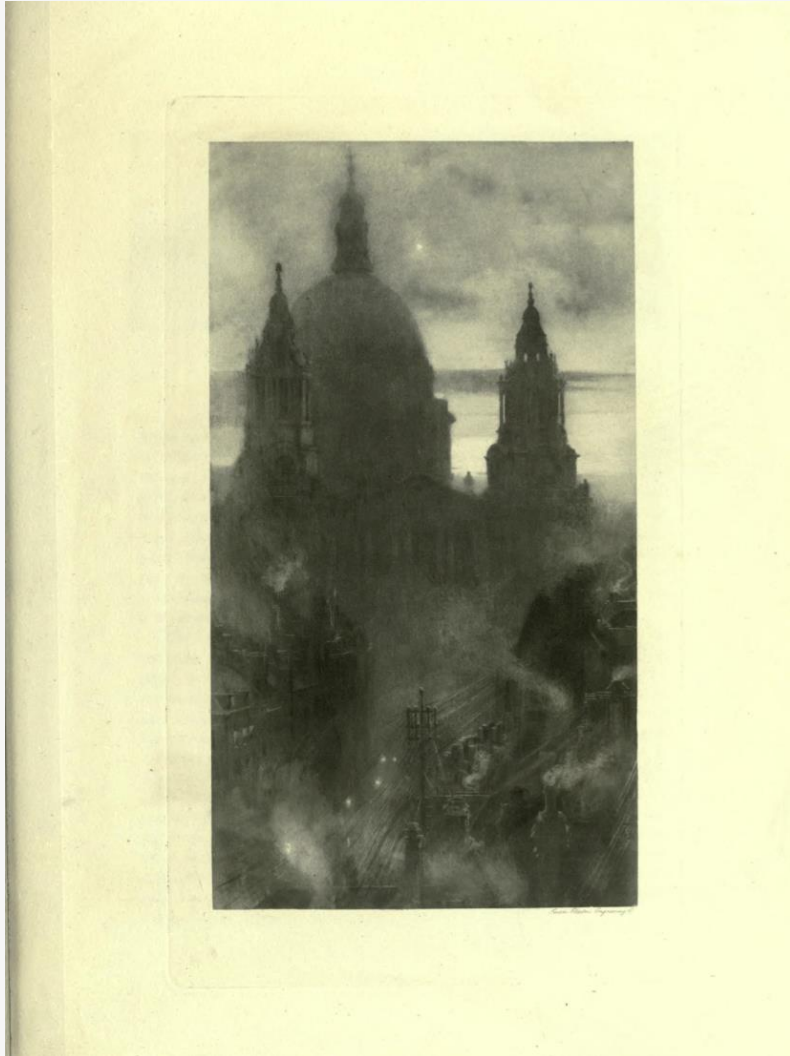


‘Below Bridge’ (p. 23-24)

It is latent, even when no red sail rises between grey water and grey sky; it lurks in hollows and inlets so darkly as to be almost black. Then suddenly the scarlet of a huge black and scarlet steamer comes along and gives you the colour without a shred of mystery, without charm, and with the most definite division.

Or now and then, at long intervals, a single flimsy puff of smoke comes between mast and sky ; it is brown, the steam is white, and the cloud silver grey ; and through each of these three with a various gleam filters the flying sunshine. Sunday seals the faces of the barns and turns the key upon the leagues of wharves ; but it leaves all the cranes and masts etched in their thousands upon the low horizon.

'St Paul's at Dawn' (face p. 19) 'St Paul's from Watling Street' (face p. 25)



“our impression is the effect of the lagging, and not of the haste, of our senses. [...] There seems to be such a difference of instants as invests all swift movement with mystery in man’s eyes, and causes the past, a moment old, to be written, vanishing, upon the skies.” (*The Rain*)

Merci !