

Christ Church Library, Carroll Collection

Digitised image notes and captions by Edward Wakeling

G10 - The Hunting of the Snark - Printed Proofs of the Illustrations

Introductory Notes:

Charles L. Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) began composing the epic poem, *The Hunting of the Snark*, on 22 July 1874. He tells us that the last line of the last stanza, "For the Snark was a Boojum, you see" came into his head while on a solitary walk over the North Downs near Guildford on 18 July, and the rest was composed, backwards. That night he had helped care for his cousin and godson, Charlie Wilcox, who was dying of consumption. He recorded in his *Diaries* that he completed the poem of 88 stanzas on 6 November 1875. However, this was not the case - he continued writing stanzas until 17 January 1876, when the poem was complete in 141 stanzas, covering eight cantos, each called a "Fit." Originally intended for inclusion in another story for children, *The Hunting of the Snark* became long enough for publication in its own right.

Dodgson chose Henry Holiday, artist, sculptor, and stained-glass window designer, as the illustrator of the *Snark*. The first mention of this arrangement comes in Dodgson's *Diaries* on 23 November 1874 when he invited John Ruskin for a talk about the pictures that Holiday had submitted so far. Dodgson recorded that Ruskin, whose advice he valued, "...disheartened me by holding out no hopes that Holiday would be able to illustrate a book satisfactorily." However, the commission remained and Holiday later reminisced that Dodgson "wrote to me asking if I would design three illustrations to *The Hunting of the Snark*, in three cantos, of which he sent me the MS. It was a new kind of work and interested me. I began them at once, and sent him the first sketches, but he had in the meantime written another canto, and asked for a drawing for it; I sent this but meantime he had written a new canto and wanted another illustration; and this went on till he pulled up at the eighth canto, making, with the frontispiece, nine illustrations." (*Reminiscences of My Life* by Henry Holiday, London, Heinemann, 1914, p. 244). Dodgson refused only one of Holiday's pictures - one which depicted the Snark. Holiday noted that: "it was a beautiful beast but that he had made the Snark strictly unimaginable and desired him to remain so."

On 24 October 1875, Dodgson noted in his *Diaries*, "A sudden idea occurred, about which I wrote to Holiday and Macmillan, of publishing the *Snark* poem this Christmas, also of writing an acrostic on "Gertrude Chataway" (which I did the same night) the four stanzas to begin with "Girt, rude, chat, away." But a few days later, he heard from Joseph Swain, the engraver of the illustrations, that the task could not be completed within three months. Not daunted, he decided on 31 October that... "as *one* block (the 'landing') is done, it might be worthwhile to publish at Christmas, using it as the frontispiece: this would have the advantage of keeping the

other five pictures, to come out *new*, if the poem is ever introduced into a story." On 7 November he recorded: "Sent to Macmillan the rest of the MS. of *The Snark*, with the dedicatory verses (written October 24, 25) etc. Wrote to Fanny [sister], and Mrs. Chataway, telling them of the intended publication. No one has yet known of it but Macmillan etc., and Mr. and Mrs. Holiday."

Dodgson's plan to publish the *Snark* at Christmas 1875 with one illustration as a frontispiece also fell by the wayside. This gave Dodgson the opportunity to extend the poem and for Holiday to add more illustrations. In a letter to his publisher, Macmillan and Company, dated 17 January 1876, he wrote that the *Snark* should be advertised: "to be published on the 1st of April," and adding that surely this is the fittest day for it to appear. However, copies, now containing nine illustrations by Holiday, were available by 29 March when Dodgson wrote inscriptions in a number of presentation copies, some especially bound in coloured bindings for this purpose.

For more information, see *Lewis Carroll and His Illustrators*, edited by Morton N. Cohen and Edward Wakeling, London, Macmillan, 2003, pp. 22-35, and *Lewis Carroll's Diaries* edited by Edward Wakeling in 10 volumes, Luton and Clifford, The Lewis Carroll Society, 1993-2007.

Individual images:

G10-1

"The Landing" used as the frontispiece for *The Hunting of the Snark*. Drawn by Henry Holiday and engraved by Joseph Swain. This is a printed proof of the drawing. The subject of the illustration came from the first verse of the poem in "Fit the First." The Bellman (Captain of the ship on a quest to find a Snark) is seen landing the Banker, supporting him "on the top of the tide/By a finger entwined in his hair."

G10-2

"The crew was complete," page 5 of *The Hunting of the Snark*. Drawn by Henry Holiday and engraved by Joseph Swain. This is a printed proof of the drawing. This picture also illustrated "Fit the First" and depicts seven members of the crew; the Bellman, the Baker, the Barrister, the Billiard-Marker, the Banker, the Maker of Bonnets and Hoods, and the Broker. Not shown are the three remaining members of the crew; the Butcher, the Beaver, and the Boots.

G10-3

"To pursue it with forks and hope," page 41 of *The Hunting of the Snark*. Drawn by Henry Holiday and engraved by Joseph Swain. This is a printed proof of the drawing. This illustration is part of "Fit the Fourth" - entitled "The Hunting." In it are depicted six members of the crew with additional characters representing "Care" and "Hope." Dodgson originally intended Holiday to reproduce the heads of "Care" and "Hope" as roundels to decorate the front and back covers of the book, but eventually Holiday drew full-size illustrations showing the Bellman at the top of the

ship's mast (front cover) and a buoy revealing the words "It was a Boojum" (back cover).

G10-4

"The Baker's Tale," page 31 of *The Hunting of the Snark*. Drawn by Henry Holiday and engraved by Joseph Swain. This is a printed proof of the drawing. The picture shows the Baker taking heed of his Uncle's warning that "If your Snark be a Boojum! For then/ You will softly and suddenly vanish away," which comes from "Fit the Third."

G10-5

"Whenever the Butcher was by, The Beaver kept looking the opposite way," page 10 of *The Hunting of the Snark*. Drawn by Henry Holiday and engraved by Joseph Swain. This is a printed proof of the drawing. This is the third and final picture to illustrate "Fit the First," entitled "The Landing." It shows the Butcher sharpening his blade, and the Beaver cautiously making lace on the deck of the ship.

G10-6

"The Barrister's Dream," page 62 of *The Hunting of the Snark*. Drawn by Henry Holiday and engraved by Joseph Swain. This is a printed proof of the drawing. It comes from "Fit the Sixth" and depicts the Barrister dreaming of a court-scene in which the Snark is defending a pig accused of deserting its sty. The Snark is heavily disguised in wig and gown, and only a back-view is revealed so that his face cannot be seen.

G10-7

"The Vanishing," page 82 of *The Hunting of the Snark*. Drawn by Henry Holiday and engraved by Joseph Swain. This is a printed proof of the drawing. The picture shows a faint outline of the Baker as he softly and suddenly vanishes away having found a Snark, which happened to be a Boojum. It is included in the last canto, "Fit the Eighth," entitled "The Vanishing."

G10-8

"The Banker's Fate," page 74 of *The Hunting of the Snark*. Drawn by Henry Holiday and engraved by Joseph Swain. This is a printed proof of the drawing. This is the illustration for "Fit the Seventh," which depicts the fateful Banker who has encountered a Bandersnatch, turning him black in the face, but his waistcoat white. The Beaver and Butcher are at hand, but the Bellman encouraged them to "Leave him here to his fate - it is getting so late" and the Snark hunting continued.

G10-9

[This item has no connection with *The Hunting of the Snark*]

“Birds of a feather” drawn by Edward Linley Sambourne for *Punch*, and included in the issue for 20 March 1875 at page 128. Printed proof. Dodgson wrote to Sambourne on 22 May 1874 proposing that he illustrate a book of Dodgson’s poems entitled *Phantasmagoria* (published initially without illustrations in 1869). The proposal was accepted, and on 18 March 1875 (two days before the publication date of this drawing), Sambourne sent Dodgson a list of the poems he thought suitable for illustration. This proof may have been sent to Dodgson as an example of Sambourne’s work, although Dodgson was well aware of his illustrations through the pages of *Punch*. On 10 February 1876, Dodgson heard from Sambourne abandoning the idea of illustrating *Phantasmagoria*. But on 28 February 1877, Dodgson recorded in his *Diaries* that he had heard from Sambourne “asking if I have arranged for having *Phantasmagoria* illustrated, as he again thinks he can undertake it.” On 2 April 1878, Dodgson noted “Yesterday I sent back to Sambourne, with approval, his first drawing on ‘The Lang Coortin’” (this drawing is now missing). From this point, Sambourne is not mentioned in Dodgson’s *Diaries*. Dodgson engaged Arthur B. Frost to illustrate the book, to be called *Rhyme? and Reason?*, and Sambourne, who by this time had probably drawn a number of illustrations for the book, found that his work was no longer required.

G10-10

“The Beaver’s Lesson,” page 52 of *The Hunting of the Snark*. Drawn by Henry Holiday and engraved by Joseph Swain. This is a printed proof of the drawing. The picture illustrates “Fit the Fifth” and shows the Butcher teaching the Beaver some mathematics. Colenso’s *Arithmetic* can be seen in the bottom left corner, together with various “strange creepy creatures” who came to observe the lesson.