

***Lewis Carroll and His Illustrators: Collaborations and Correspondence, 1865-1898*, edited by Morton N. Cohen and Edward Wakeling. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003. xxxviii + 349. ISBN 0-8014-4148-X. \$35.00 (cloth).**

This collection of correspondence from Charles Dodgson to his illustrators affords access, for the first time, to over two hundred letters (only forty have been published heretofore) and the editors have helpfully annotated many of these letters with liberal additions from Dodgson's own diaries. To those who fear their appreciation of Carroll does not reach the heights of perusing his mail, I might allay those concerns by adding that the book offers an entertaining and fascinating insight not only into what must be the most famous collaboration between author and illustrator in literature for children (Dodgson/Tenniel), but also into the Victorian publishing industry in general, throughout a period when technological developments would revolutionise book production and publisher/author relationships.

The collection is divided into sections relating to each of five major illustrators with whom Dodgson worked: John Tenniel, Henry Holiday, Arthur Burdett Frost, Harry Furniss and Emily Gertrude Thomson. There is a short appendix collecting some correspondence with other illustrators: George du Maurier, Edwin Linley Sambourne, Walter Crane and Luke Fildes. Each of the six sections is prefaced by an introduction concerning that illustrator and his, or her, relationship with Dodgson (and some relationships are distinctly better than others). The book gathers together many of the illustrations being discussed in the letters, often with Dodgson's own sketches aligned with the finished productions. These letters, in themselves, are worth the publishing of the collection, for they not only chronicle the development of many of the famous illustrations to Carroll's works, but also an insight into the mind of an author, struggling to hold his collaborators to deadlines (notoriously so in Tenniel's case) and his own vision. The fact that Dodgson paid for the production of his own publications and the illustrators out of his own pocket (Macmillan acted only as the distributor and printer) should allow those familiar with the grinding intricacies of the book industry some little comfort, especially when we consider the initial run of *Alice* books was pulled due to a dissatisfied Tenniel at the last minute, leaving Dodgson over £600 out of pocket (more than he made in a year). This fact goes far in explaining the often pernicky details and disagreements evident in the correspondence. In an age when book production was still an art form, the age of Morris' Kelmscott Press, Dodgson insisted upon only the best of his illustrators, and for his publications. It is very evident from his correspondence that he had most particular views about the relationship between text and image, the placement of the illustrations upon the page, the printing quality and the minutiae of the illustrations' details.

The "devil," then, "being in the details," it is enthralling to note the ups and downs of Dodgson's often Faustian compacts with various illustrators. For the

second *Alice* book, the illustration of the first being such a resounding success, Dodgson had to repeatedly pester Tenniel into agreeing to collaborate once more. But the agreement was made only after the illustrator, claiming (justly, it seems) that he was extremely busy with his work at *Punch*, insisted upon working to his own deadlines. Three and a half years later, *Through the Looking Glass* went to press.

The section of the book chronicling the long and often difficult relationship between Dodgson and, by all accounts, the diabolical Harry Furniss, who illustrated the *Sylvie and Bruno* books, is fraught with recriminations and threats from both parties. The young illustrator, like Tenniel a *Punch* cartoonist, sought Dodgson's collaboration after realising the success of the *Alice* books, but was seemingly unprepared for the author's involvement in the details of the work. Furniss, later in life, when reminiscing about his work with Dodgson, would often "remember" how the writer has been unhappy with Tenniel's work and claim his own unfair treatment at Dodgson's hands. These exaggerations are not backed up by the letters between the two men, but it is very clear, and in very forthright language, that the relationship veered exceedingly close to disaster on more than one occasion.

The twenty-year collaborative relationship between Dodgson and Emily Gertrude Thomson seems to have been a much happier one. At the conclusion of this section of the book, there is an invaluable resource to Carroll scholars, and a touching example of late-Victorian reminiscence, in Thomson's "Lewis Carroll: A Sketch by an Artist-Friend." Having met with Dodgson just two months before his death, this is a fine contemporary account of the character of the author, gleaned from a two decades long relationship. This section's correspondence also details Dodgson's much-debated interest in the photography of children, and includes sketches made by him and drawings by Thomson which will, no doubt, be of interest to particular lines of criticism. The letters do present new insights into the beguiling innocence of youth and its concomitant fascination for the Victorian age.

Allowing an appreciation of the often tortuous process toward publication of Dodgson's work over thirty-five years, this new collection will be an invaluable addition to scholars of Carroll, but it also should assist those whose interest extends to Victorianism in general. The publishing industry, the Victorian artist's deliberations in the production of books, the detailed relationships of collaborative artistic ventures in the late nineteenth century, and an insight into the relationship between children and Victorian art, are all much in evidence in these letters. Combined with the excellent annotations from Dodgson's diaries, many examples of the sketches and prints under deliberation in the correspondence, and enlightening introductions to each section, this well-crafted book should satisfy critics as demanding as Dodgson was himself.

**Paul Fox**

---