



Artist of Wonderland

The Life, Political Cartoons, and Illustrations of Tenniel

by Frankie Morris

DESCRIPTION:

Best known today as the illustrator of Lewis Carroll's Alice books, John Tenniel was one of the Victorian era's chief political cartoonists. This extensively illustrated book is the first to draw almost exclusively on primary sources in family collections, public archives, and other depositories. Frankie Morris examines Tenniel's life and work, producing a book that is not only a definitive resource for scholars and collectors but one that can be easily enjoyed by everyone interested in Victorian life and art, social history, journalism and political cartoons, and illustrated books. In the first part of the book, Morris looks at Tenniel the man. From his sunny childhood and early enthusiasm for sports, theatre, and medievalism to his flirtation with high art and his fifty years with the London journal Punch, Tenniel is shown to have been the sociable and urbane humorist revealed in his drawings. Tenniel's countrymen thought his work would embody for future historians the 'trend and character' of Victorian thought and life. Morris assesses to what extent that prediction has been fulfilled. The biography is followed by three sections on Tenniel's work, consisting of thirteen independent essays in which the author examines Tenniel's methods and his earlier book illustrations, the Alice pictures, and the Punch cartoons. For lovers of Alice, Morris offers six chapters on Tenniel's work for Carroll. These reveal demonstrable links with Christmas pantomimes, Punch and Judy shows, nursery toys, magic lanterns, nineteenth-century grotesques, Gothic revivalism, and social caricatures. Morris also demonstrates how Tenniel's cartoons depicted the key political questions of his day, from the Eastern Question to Lincoln and the American Civil War, examining their assumptions, devices, and evolving strategies. The definitive study of both the man and the work, *Artist of Wonderland* gives an unprecedented view of the cartoonist who mythologized the world for generations of Britons.

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CONTRIBUTORS BIOGRAPHIES:

The art historian and artist Frankie Morris is the author of numerous articles on the work of John Tenniel.

ISBN:

9780718894603 (pb)

PRICE:

\$57.00 (pb)

PUBLICATION DATE:

25 February 2022 (pb)

BINDING:

Paperback

PUBLISHER:

The Lutterworth Press

IMPRINT:

The Lutterworth Press

READER INTERESTS:

Art & Art History
Nineteenth-Century
Studies