

wood-cut, which moved Goethe to the utterance: "If we assume that most wood-cuts are designed for the graver by painters, then we may say that herein the seed of destruction, of death to this branch of art lies prepared. For the painters only think of how they can fashion a delicate and brilliant pen-drawing, they do not know the difficulties of carving a wood-cut, and even if they were aware of these, they would have no especial interest in avoiding them. It would have been good if they had, for thereby they would have imparted more charm to this work and encouraged the practice of it." (On Wood-cuts. Propyl. Year 1.) The old method of fashioning the wood-cut must come to an end, for it resembled a parasite existence. The carver of the wood-cut must adhere strictly to the drawing designed for him by the artist. The ideal of the wood-cut carver during the period of decadence was to resemble a steel engraving as nearly as possible. It was Bewick who created the new conception of the wood-cut as an end in itself. Even before this time, the stylus was known, as well as various kinds of wood-blocks and the famous "white cross-hatching". But it was Bewick who gave new significance to all this.

Bewick set his own inward experience in place of these merely outward points of vantage. He was born in 1753. He grew up in an age which was manifestly possessed by love of nature. Pastoral idylls flourished in France together with rich floral ornament and lovely flowered textures. In Germany and England tramping became the fashion.

T H O M A S B E W I C K



Die Vögel Englands (1797)

History of British Birds