



Two Hundred Sketches Humorous and Grotesque

Gustav Doré

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These drawings are, indeed, outrageously grotesque. We feel ourselves in the plight of the lover of old, "Perhaps it was right to dissemble your love, but—why did you kick me down-stairs?" So here—any queer contortions of the human face or form may pass muster: but—why all these monsters? We own to a sort of revulsion from the big-head-and-little-body kind of caricature. Respected prelates do not look well thus put into two foci: nor do imaginary beings such as those with which this book is filled. Such a preponderance of the pure grotesque seems to us to swamp genuine humour. The one natural group of "doggies," on p. 12, strikes our fancy more than most things in the book.

When M. Dore' conies to the caricature of real life, he does not seem to us to shine. E.g., "M. Berniquet's Visit to the Country" is not for a moment to be compared with the M. Jabot and M. Papon of our younger days. The likenesses are not at all well kept up, and the humour is sometimes of the flattest.

But there are some very clever things. Among them are the sketches called "Consequences of the London Exhibition of 1862." The boat full of Chinese on p. 42, and the triple groups sleeping on a roof at 300 francs each, are the best of these. Here and there we have some broad humour: but never, either in drawing or humour, does M. Dore rise to the level of our best English caricaturists. The fun is torn to rags, not quiet and lurking, as in their drawings. And four out of five of the jokes are, at least in their English dress, not worth having, to begin with.

—*The Contemporary Review*, Vol. 4

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