PART THREE

A PUBLIC FOR THE PAST
'Poor Men’s Galleries’

They were called the poor men’s galleries: the shop windows of the print sellers like Goupil, Graves or Buffa in the streets of Paris, London, and Amsterdam. Behind the glass, they displayed the latest engravings, lithographs, and etchings (fig. 1). In 1889 the Dutch writer Johan Gram described the window of Goupil’s shop in The Hague and the public that hold their pace looking at the prints and paintings:

Every week The Hague is treated to a new display of plates, etchings, engravings, and phototypes, that fit the time and events of the year. The middle window is reserved for an oil painting. Everyone that passes by, be they an important magistrate, a fashionable lady or a blushing maidservant with her basket, stops here to look at all the news, and it is very amusing to slip between them and to listen to the sober or witty comments.

The poor men’s galleries were part of the fascinating visual culture of the nineteenth century.